

SCHOLARS' NOTES.

(From the International Lessons for 1881, by Edwin W. Rice, as issued by American Sunday-School Union.)

LESSON II.

JULY 10.]

THE COMING DELIVERER.

Exod. 2: 5-15.

COMMIT TO MEMORY VS. 9, 10.

5. And the daughter of Pharaoh came down to wash herself at the river; and her maidens walked along by the river's side; and when she saw the ark among the flags, she sent her maid to fetch it.

6. And when she had opened it, she saw the child: and, behold, the babe wept. And she had compassion on him, and said, This is one of the Hebrews' children.

7. Then said his sister to Pharaoh's daughter, Shall I go and call to thee a nurse of the Hebrew women, that she may nurse the child for thee?

8. And Pharaoh's daughter said to her, Go. And the maid went and called the child's mother.

9. And Pharaoh's daughter said unto her, Take this child away, and nurse it for me, and I will give thee thy wages. And the woman took the child, and nursed it.

10. And the child grew, and she brought him unto Pharaoh's daughter, and he became her son. And she called his name Moses: and she said, Because I drew him out of the water.

11. And it came to pass in those days, when Moses was grown, that he went out unto his brethren, and looked on their burdens: and he spied an Egyptian smiting an Hebrew, one of his brethren.

12. And he looked this way and that way, and when he saw that there was no man, he slew the Egyptian, and hid him in the sand.

13. And when he went out the second day, behold, two men of the Hebrews strove together: and he said to him that did the wrong, Wherefore smitest thou thy fellow?

14. And he said, Who made thee a prince and a judge over us? intendest thou to kill me, as thou killedst the Egyptian? And Moses feared, and said, Surely this thing is known.

15. Now when Pharaoh heard this thing, he sought to slay Moses. But Moses fled from the face of Pharaoh, and dwelt in the land of Midian: and he sat down by a well.

GOLDEN TEXT.—By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter.—HEB. 11: 24.

CENTRAL TRUTH.—Help comes from the Lord.

INTRODUCTORY.—The cruel measures mentioned in our last lesson having failed, Pharaoh directed all the male children to be murdered at their birth or to be thrown into the River Nile.

NOTES.—THE RIVER, the Nile, not so named in the Bible, but Sihor or Shihor, flowing from Central Africa through Egypt, about 4,000 miles long. To its annual overflow Egypt owes its fertility; it was regarded as sacred, and was worshipped as a god.—ARK, or "chest," made of the papyrus reed (bulrushes), fastened together and made water-tight by the slimy mud of the river, and pitch.—FLAGS, another kind of bulrush.—HEBREWS, a name given to the Israelites from the word "Eber," which means "to pass over," or from the same word "Eber" one of their ancestors, Gen. 10: 24; 11: 14; Abraham was first called "the Hebrew," Gen. 14: 13; and who crossed the river Euphrates.—MOSES, "son" or brought forth, third child of Amram and Jochebed, descendants of Levi. Aaron his brother was three years older, Ex. 7: 7, and his sister Miriam may have been from ten to twelve years older.—MIDIAN, STRIFE, the land east of the Red Sea, extending at least to Moab and Mount Sinai, or perhaps beyond that to the desert and the banks of the Euphrates.

EXPLANATIONS.

LESSON TOPICS.—(I.) MOSES' CHILDHOOD. (II.) HIS MANHOOD.

I. MOSES' CHILDHOOD.—(5-10.) DAUGHTER OF PHARAOH, the Bible does not give her name, but as a princess she had an exalted position; TO WASH, or bathe, perhaps she believed in the waters having health-giving properties; ARK, "mercifully spared" him. It led her to take the babe under her protection; SISTER, see Notes. She had been watching for the purpose, v. 4; CHILD'S MOTHER, see Notes. Perhaps she was not far off, watching her babe; BROUGHT HIM, at what age we do not know; she and her husband were good people, Heb. 11: 23, and feared God rather than the king; MOSES and his brother and sister would have a good example before them; BECAME HER SON, was legally adopted into the royal family, where he was educated in all the learning of the Egyptians, Acts 7: 22.

II. HIS MANHOOD.—(11-15.) THOSE DAYS: when he was fully 40 years old, Acts 7: 23; GROWN in stature, wisdom and influence; WENT TO HIS BRETHREN, either left the palace entirely to share their hard lot, Heb. 11: 24-26, or paid a friendly visit; LOOKED ON, seeing; EGYPTIAN, one of the oppressors, 1: 11; SMITING, with a long, heavy, pliant scourge; THERE WAS NO MAN, he saw no one; HID HIM, buried him to prevent discovery; STROVE, "fighting"; FELLOW "brother," Acts 7: 26; A PRINCE AND A JUDGE, he was so truly, Acts 7: 21; INTENDEST THOU, &c., this expression showed Moses that his deed was not only known, but in danger of being made public at any moment; THIS THING, the deed which was done. It had become known to Pharaoh; SOUGHT TO SLAY, manslaughter under any circumstances was rigorously punished in Egypt, even where the criminal might be high in rank; FACE, beyond his power; A WELL, literally "the well," a well-known watering place at this time.

TEACHINGS:

- (1.) The helpless babe is watched over and nursed.
- (2.) The child of the slave becomes the prince of the palace.
- (3.) He neither forgets nor neglects to help

his distressed brethren, though it may cost him his all.

- (4.) His good intentions and efforts are unheeded by those whom he wishes to benefit.
- (5.) He becomes a fugitive.

MOSES.—His person. We are informed in Ex. 2: 2, that he was a goodly child, and in Acts 7: 21, that he was exceeding fair, or "uncommonly, superlatively beautiful." "Some extraordinary appearance or remarkable comeliness led his parents to augur his future greatness. Beauty was regarded by the ancients as a mark of divine favor. Josephus and Philo seem to intimate that the striking feature in the child's appearance was not so much beauty of countenance as a certain nobility of air which augured future greatness. This is not mentioned, however, by the sacred historian as the chief inducement for the preservation of Moses. It was only a secondary reason, though it might have stimulated their hopes that God would bless their endeavors to save him, which were not founded on any special revelation made directly concerning him, but originated in their faith and implicit reliance on the Divine promises."—Jamieson's Crit. and Exper. Com.

LESSON III.

JULY 17.]

THE CALL OF MOSES.

Exod. 3: 1-14.

COMMIT TO MEMORY VS. 6, 7.

1. Now Moses kept the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of Midian: and he led the flock to the backside of the desert, and came to the mountain of God, even to Horeb.

2. And the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush: and he looked, and, behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed.

3. And Moses said, I will now turn aside, and see this great sight, why the bush is not burnt.

4. And when the Lord saw that he turned aside to see, God called unto him out of the midst of the bush, and said, Moses, Moses. And he said, Here am I.

5. And he said, Draw not nigh hither: put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground.

6. Moreover he said, I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. And Moses hid his face: for he was afraid to look upon God.

7. And the Lord said, I have surely seen the affliction of my people which are in Egypt, and have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters: for I know their sorrows;

8. And I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land unto a good land and a large, unto a land flowing with milk and honey; unto the place of the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Amorites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites.

9. Now therefore, behold, the cry of the children of Israel is come unto me: and I have also seen the oppression wherewith the Egyptians oppress them.

10. Come now therefore, and I will send thee unto Pharaoh, that thou mayest bring forth my people the children of Israel out of Egypt.

11. And Moses said unto God, Who am I, that I should go unto Pharaoh, and that I should bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt?

12. And he said, Certainly I will be with thee; and this shall be a token unto thee, that I have sent thee: When thou shalt have brought forth the people out of Egypt, ye shall serve God upon this mountain.

13. And Moses said unto God, Behold, when I come unto the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you; and they shall say to me, What is his name? what shall I say unto them?

14. And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel: I AM hath sent me unto you.

GOLDEN TEXT.—And he said, Certainly, I will be with thee.—EXOD. 3: 12.

CENTRAL TRUTH.—The presence of God is the power of his servants.

INTRODUCTORY.—Moses lived in Midian for forty years in the employ of Reuel or Jethro, whose daughter Zipporah he married. In the meantime the Pharaoh from whom he had fled died. His successor, Meneptha II., continued the oppression of the Israelites, and reigned in Egypt at the time the events narrated in our lesson took place.

NOTES.—JETHRO, "his excellence," a prince or priest of Midian; probably a descendant of Abraham by Keturah, Gen. 25: 1, 2.—HOREB, "dry," also called Sinai, unless the two terms designate separate localities. Both names appear to have been applied sometimes to the whole range, and sometimes to a single portion of the range.—GOD OF ABRAHAM, &c., the name by which God had made himself known to the patriarchs in blessing and promise, see Gen. 22: 15-18; 26: 24; 28: 13-15.—CANAANITES, descendants of Canaan the fourth son of Ham, Gen. 10: 6, prior to the conquest by Joshua used for all the inhabitants of Palestine, after that, for a distinct tribe.—HITTITES, descendants of Heth the second son of Canaan, who were settled at first in the southern part of Judea.—AMORITES, a Syrian tribe descended from Canaan. They were of great stature and courage and occupied the mountains between the Mediterranean and the Jordan.—PERIZZITES, were those who lived in the small villages scattered throughout Canaan.—HIVITES, mainly in the north-western part of Palestine, about Mount Hermon and Lebanon.—JEBUSITES, held Jerusalem and the district around.—PHARAOH, see Intro.

EXPLANATIONS.

LESSON TOPICS.—(I.) THE DIVINE APPEARANCE. (II.) THE DIVINE PURPOSE. (III.) THE DIVINE COMMISSION.

I. THE DIVINE APPEARANCE.—(1-5.) Now, toward the end of Moses' 40 years sojourn in Midian; KEPT, was feeding, &c., as a shepherd; FLOCK, of sheep and goats; PRIEST, or "prince"; the patriarchal chiefs were at the same time the priests of their tribe, comp. Gen. 32: 28; DESERT, "wilderness," not in our sense a barren waste, but here though uninhabited yet affording pas-

ture; MOUNTAIN OF GOD, so called with reference to the future divine manifestations; HOREB, see Notes; THE ANGEL OF THE LORD, a minister or messenger, of Jehovah, here in the form of a flame of fire, Ps. 104: 4; A BUSH, "the bush," or thorny acacia shrub, common in that region; NOT CONSUMED, was not burnt at all, comp. Dan. 3: 25-27; HERE AM I, expression of attention and obedience; PUT OFF THY SHOES, "thy sandals," according to ancient custom a mark of reverence; HOLY, became so by God's presence.

II. THE DIVINE PURPOSE.—(6-9.) MORE-OVER, &c., God recalled his relationship to Abraham, &c., as "not the God of the dead, but of the living," Matt. 22: 32; HID HIS FACE, in awe and humility, he was afraid; SURELY SEEN, observed with pity; CRY, of pain and distress caused by their TASKMASTERS, "oppressors," not same word as in 1: 11; COME DOWN, in manifestation of power, comp. Gen. 11: 5, 7; 18: 21; GOOD LAND, fertile and abundant; LARGE, in comparison with Goshen. Its extent is shown by the enumeration of the tribes occupying it; FLOWING WITH MILK AND HONEY, the chief dainties of the earlier ages, the good land abounded in these, 2 Sam. 17: 27-29.

III. THE DIVINE COMMISSION.—(10-14.) COME NOW THEREFORE, "and now go"; THEE... THOU, he was to be the deliverer; WHO AM I, &c., words implying humility but not fear nor want of faith; I WILL BE WITH THEE, "with God all things are possible," if God be for us who can be against us?; A TOKEN, "the sign," pledge, promise, demanding simple faith; I AM THAT I AM, expresses absolute, unchanging and eternal being. "I am what I am."

TEACHINGS:

- (1.) God's manifestations are wonderful.
- (2.) They compel reverence, fear and love.
- (3.) God knows our every trouble and sorrow.
- (4.) With God we need fear nothing.
- (5.) God is forever the same.

LESSON IV.

JULY 24.]

MOSES AND AARON.

Exod. 4: 27-31; 5: 1-4.

COMMIT TO MEMORY V. 31.

27. And the Lord said to Aaron, Go into the wilderness to meet Moses. And he went, and met him in the mount of God, and kissed him.

28. And Moses told Aaron all the words of the Lord who had sent him, and all the signs which he had commanded him.

29. And Moses and Aaron went and gathered together all the elders of the children of Israel:

30. And Aaron spake all the words which the Lord had spoken unto Moses, and did the signs in the sight of the people.

31. And the people believed: and when they heard that the Lord had visited the children of Israel, and that he had looked upon their affliction, then they bowed their heads and worshipped.

V. 1. And afterward Moses and Aaron went in, and told Pharaoh, Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, Let my people go, that they may hold a feast unto me in the wilderness.

2. And Pharaoh said, Who is the Lord, that I should obey his voice to let Israel go? I know not the Lord, neither will I let Israel go.

3. And they said, The God of the Hebrews hath met with us: let us go, we pray thee, three days' journey into the desert, and sacrifice unto the Lord our God; lest he fall upon us with pestilence, or with the sword.

4. And the king of Egypt said unto them, Wherefore do ye Moses and Aaron, let the people from their works? get you unto your burdens.

GOLDEN TEXT.—He sent Moses his servant; and Aaron whom he had chosen.—PS. 105: 26.

CENTRAL TRUTH.—God finds fitting instruments for his work.

INTRODUCTORY.—God assured Moses that the issue of his mission would be successful, and in answer to the objection that his brethren might urge, that he was not divinely commissioned, God wrought two wonderful miracles. Moses states another difficulty personal to himself, his slowness of speech; is promised a "spokesman" in Aaron his brother, who is even then about to visit him. In these ways the scruples of Moses are graciously set aside by God, who commanded him to take the rod which had been turned into a serpent (ch. 4: 3), wherewith he might work miracles. Thereafter he left Midian with his wife and children, whom, however, he sent back after meeting Aaron (18: 2), and arrived in Egypt.

NOTES.—MOSES, "Three qualities give him immortal interest and prominence. (1.) Faith: 'By faith he esteemed the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt,' Heb. 11: 26. (2.) Prayerfulness: In every hour of emergency his immediate resort was to Jehovah. (3.) He coveted no distinction and sought no prominence: his greatness came to him, he did not go after it."—Schaff's Bible Dict.—AARON, "mountaineer" or "enlightened," elder brother of Moses' sojourn in Midian. Being the eldest son of Amram who was a descendant of Kohath the second son of Levi, and because of natural talents, he was a prominent man among the Israelites. He is called "the saint of the Lord," Ps. 106: 16. He was a better servant than master. He yielded like wax to the impression of the moment. When he died on Mt. Hor at the age of 123 years, Num. 33: 38, 39, he was sincerely mourned.—HEBREWS, see Notes Lesson 11.

EXPLANATIONS.

LESSON TOPICS.—(I.) IN THE WILDERNESS. (II.) BEFORE ISRAEL. (III.) BEFORE PHARAOH.

I. IN THE WILDERNESS.—(4: 27, 28.) AARON, see Notes; WILDERNESS, the whole region of Sinai was so called. Aaron received definite instructions where to go; KISSED HIM, the brothers not having seen each other for 40 years, the kiss here meant more than the common mode of salutation, comp. v. 14; ALL THE WORDS, the precepts and promises of God; SIGNS, the promised token of God's presence and power, vs. 8, 9.

II. BEFORE ISRAEL.—(29-31.) WENT, from Sinai to Goshen in Egypt; ELDERS, "either the heads of tribes or the oldest or most judicious of the people" and their representatives; DID THE SIGNS, i. e. Moses did, not Aaron; PEOPLE, a public assembly was held called by the elders; BELIEVED, they credited the testimony which the signs fully warranted; HAD VISITED, been present as a physician; LOOKED UPON, observed narrowly; THEIR AFFLICTION, not only the aggregate of all but each separate affliction of whatever kind or however arising; BOWED THEIR HEADS AND WORSHIPPED, they adored and rendered homage to God, see Ps. 95: 6.

III. BEFORE PHARAOH.—(5: 1-4.) WENT IN, where this interview with Pharaoh was held is not certainly known; most likely Zoan, now San, 12, 43, which is identified with Panis, now San, on the Nile, in Lower Egypt; LORD, "Jehovah"; LET MY PEOPLE GO, a remarkable request considering the opinions of the heathen that it was right that the gods should be worshipped; FEAST, a sacred festival with worship and sacrifice; WILDERNESS, some retired region where there would be no interruption; WHO IS THE LORD, a question indicating either scorn or ignorance; I KNOW NOT THE LORD, he has not been made known to me, but it does not matter, I will not allow the people to go; HATH MET, hath appeared to us; LET US GO, i. e., the Israelites; LEST, if by your refusal; PESTILENCE, a plague then known in Egypt; SWORD, attacks by other nations; LET THE PEOPLE, "cause to desert," hinder. He rebukes them as impudent stirrers up of sedition, and commands them also to engage in the same oppressive labor with their brethren.

TEACHINGS:

- (1.) Speech for God cannot be better than that furnished by His own word.
- (2.) Hearers cannot worship Him better than by believing in His word.
- (3.) Ignorance of God or His word will not avert punishment from those who disobey Him, or disregard it.
- (4.) God's message is to be offered pleadingly, and enforced threateningly to the unbeliever.
- (5.) God's children are sometimes wrongly accused and made to suffer innocently.

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