



LESSON.—SUNDAY, APRIL 28, 1907.

Joseph Faithful in Prison.

Gen. xxxix., 20; xl., 15. Memory verses, 21, 22. Read Gen. xxxix., 40.

Golden Text.

Be thou faithful unto death and I will give thee a crown of life. Rev. ii., 10.

Home Readings.

- Monday, April 22.—Gen. xxxix., 20; xl., 11.
- Tuesday, April 23.—Gen. xl., 12-23.
- Wednesday, April 24.—Ps. xxxvii., 1-20.
- Thursday, April 25.—Ps. xxxvii., 21-40.
- Friday, April 26.—Dan. i., 1-20.
- Saturday, April 27.—I. Pet., ii., 11-25.
- Sunday, April 28.—I. Pet., iii., 8-22.

For the Junior Classes.

How many can tell me what we learnt about last Sunday? Yes, about Joseph, of course, and how his brothers hated him and sold him for a slave. To-day we are to learn more about Joseph. He was seventeen years old when he was carried away from home to be sold in Egypt, and it must have seemed a very awful thing to happen to him. However, God was with him, and he was sold to a very kind master, who soon grew to trust him greatly. So much, indeed, that by-and-bye Joseph was made the head of all the slaves his master owned, and was given a place of great honor. It was when he was in this position that someone accused him of a very great sin, and his master, who was Pharaoh's chief of police, we might say, commanded that Joseph be put into prison. Have any of you been punished for doing something that was wrong? I'm afraid that we all know what that is like, but very few of us have ever been punished for something we really did not do at all; yet that was what happened to Joseph. It made the punishment so much the harder to bear, but he didn't lose heart or forget to trust God still.

The lessons on Joseph's life are all easily understood by the children, and it ought to be possible to get them to answer questions readily. Bring out the point of Joseph's readiness to sympathize with, and help others even while in trouble himself, and don't forget to apply the Golden Text with all its promise of God's watchfulness and ultimate reward.

For the Seniors.

Joseph's is one of the finest characters the Bible portrays, and it is impossible to neglect the evidence that this was owing to his trust in God. In everything he recognized God's leading, felt his presence, and acknowledged his power. He would have been more than human had he never questioned God's care and justice. Living at home, justly loved by his father, and trying to do right, he is in a day torn from comfort and plenty for the life of a slave. Here, when by his own worth and faithfulness he had risen to a position of honor he was again struck down in a moment to a place of misery. The accusation under which he suffered must have been peculiarly hateful to him and the patience with which he bore it, doubtless preferring the ignominy to paining an indulgent master, shows his marvellous self-control. It is evident that he had a real belief in dreams from to-day's text, and this will explain why his own visions had taken so strong a hold on his mind. Apart from the interest of this character study, the subject of ancient Egypt, its civilization, and the marvellous remains existing to-day pre-

sents a great attraction. The lesson is a peculiarly full one.

(Selections from Tarbell's 'Guide.')

The position of Joseph, as head over all the slaves in his master's house, and over all the household affairs, was one which constantly presents itself from the earliest times on the monuments and in the literature of Egypt. Every great family had a slave thus placed over the rest, and, indeed, Joseph himself, after his elevation, had such a major-domo. Whenever grain is being measured, or metal weighed, or building or agricultural work is going forward, the paintings show us the head-overseer of the household with a short rod in his hand, or with a writing tablet in his hand and a pen behind his ear, to take down the number of sheaves, or of casks, or of the cattle or flocks; and, like Joseph, he is expressly described as the 'overseer.'—Geikie, 'Hours with the Bible.'

14. Make mention of me unto Pharaoh. The cup-bearer's office, we can see on the inscriptions, was one of honor. It was near the King's birthday, and it was common to have rejoicings on that day. It was considered holy, and, as now, amnesties for past offences were granted; all Joseph asks is that his case may be mentioned to Pharaoh.—Henry A. Harper.

15. I have done nothing that they should put me into the dungeon. Conscience is either the best friend on earth, or the greatest enemy on earth. And man had better have all the world against him, than to have his conscience against him; and if all the world be against a man, yet if his conscience be for him, if his conscience befriend him, it will help him to bear up with comfort.—Samuel Slater.

A man who had adopted a course that was magnanimous and unselfish, and had carried it through at no small cost of effort and self-sacrifice, was met with remonstrances by his friends. 'You have done more than duty required of you,' they said. 'You were not obliged to take up that burden; no one had a right to ask it of you.'

'No one did,' he answered. 'I did it because I should have to live with myself afterward, and I might not be pleasant company if that thing were left undone.'

His reason was a strong and valid one. There can scarcely be a more uncomfortable companionship than having to live with a condemning self, and whatever friends or advisors may say, the final judgment rests with our own inner consciousness. Other voices, however, consoling, die away, but self, approving or accusing, must be lived with. Life can not take on its full meaning or dignity until we have learned to know and respect the power of that strange regent—the ego, the self.—New Guide.

(From Peloubet's 'Notes.')

'The iron crown of suffering precedes the golden crown of glory.'—F. B. Meyer.

'Take out of your own life all your difficulties, all that ever pained, agitated, depressed you, all that disappointed or postponed your expectations, all that suddenly called upon you to act in trying situations, all that thoroughly put you to the proof—take all this away, and what do you leave but a blank, insipid life that not even yourself can see any interest in?'—Expositor's Bible.

The chief baker (v. 2). 'The Pharaoh's kitchen was organized on an elaborate scale; Egypt had long been celebrated for its cooking and its confectionery, and the different kinds of bread and cakes that were made were numberless. Equally numberless were the officials who superintended the royal kitchens and bakehouse, and whose titles and order of precedence are enumerated in the papyri. Like the cupbearer, the chief baker was an important officer of state.'—Sayce.

'The ingratitude of the butler, inexcusable as it was, left Joseph in the prison until the moment came when he would be needed for

a work of stupendous importance. While God's purposes were slowly ripening in the world outside Joseph's character also was ripening into strength and self-discipline within the dungeon walls.—F. R. Miller.

If the cupbearer had reported Joseph's case to the king earlier, 'it does not seem that Pharaoh would have done more for him than transfer him to some other department in which he would have still been a slave, or at the most give him liberty to return to Canaan, to his father's house and the persecution of his brothers, and in either case he would have gone forth to obscurity.'—W. M. Taylor.

Verse 7. Wherefore look ye so sadly to-day? Notice Joseph's ready sympathy, 'Had he sulked in prison, had he grown sour and malicious, he might have remained there till death.'—Dods.

'Joseph had suffered like them, and therefore he understood their feelings. We do not often remember that suffering is absolutely necessary to capacitate us for sympathy.'—Robertson.

BIBLE REFERENCES.

Isa. xliii., 2, 3; Job. xxxi., 6; Gen. xlix., 22-24; Ps. cv., 16-22; I. Cor. xv., 58.

C. E. Topic.

Sunday, April 28.—Topic—Foreign missions: Christ in the continent of Asia. Isa. ii., 8-13.

Junior C. E. Topic.

BAND-OF-MERCY MEETING.

Monday, April 22.—Lessons from ants. Prov. vi., 6-8.

Tuesday, April 23.—The beasts shall teach thee. Job. xii., 7, 8.

Wednesday, April 24.—Rocks for the conies. Ps. civ., 16-22.

Thursday, April 25.—Like a spider's web. Job. viii. 11-14.

Friday, April 26.—Bold as a lion. Prov. xviii., 1.

Saturday, April 27.—Be not as the horse. Ps. xxxii., 9.

Sunday, April 28.—Topic—What we may learn from the animal world. Prov. xxx., 24-28. (Band-of-Mercy meeting.)

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