

First Quarter : The Patriarchs and Early Leaders of Israel

LESSON FOREWORD—After the giving of the Ten Commandments, Moses received many other divine laws for the regulation of Israel, and also instructions regarding the Tabernacle, its furnishing, ritual and priesthood. But what was happening among the people at the foot of Sinai during Moses' forty days' absence? This is what our lesson tells us.

Lesson VIII.

MOSES PRAYING FOR ISRAEL

February 23, 1919

THE LESSON PASSAGE—Exodus 32 : 7-14.

7 And the Lord said unto Mo'ses, Go, get thee down; for thy people, which thou broughtest out of the land of E'gypt, have corrupted themselves :

8 They have turned aside quickly out of the way which I commanded them : they have made them a molten calf, and have worshipped it, and have sacrificed thereunto, and said, These be thy gods, O Is'rael, which have brought thee up out of the land of E'gypt.

9 And the Lord said unto Mo'ses, I have seen this people, and, behold, it is a stiffnecked people :

10 Now therefore let me alone, that my wrath may wax hot against them, and that I may consume them : and I will make of thee a great nation.

11 And Mo'ses besought the Lord his God, and said,

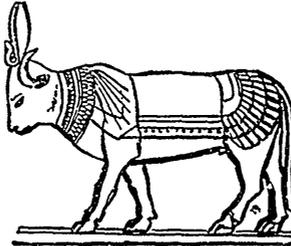
GOLDEN TEXT—The supplication of a righteous man availeth much in its working.—James 5 : 17 (Rev. Ver.).

SENIOR AND HOME DEPARTMENT TOPIC—The Value of Intercessory Prayer. ADDITIONAL MATERIAL—1 Sam. 12 : 19-25 ; Jer. 7 : 16-20 ; 15 : 1 ; Matt. 6 : 5-15 ; John 17 ; Rom. 9 : 1-5.

THE LESSON EXPLAINED

I. ISRAEL'S SIN.—7, 8. *Get thee down* ; from Sinai where he had been for forty days receiving God's commandments and ordinances. *The people have corrupted themselves.* In Moses' absence, the people had gone far astray. Missing his authority and leadership, they had asked Aaron to make them a god. Aaron, the type of leader who leads by giving people what they desire, weakly consented and a calf was made out of the jewelry of the women. *Turned aside quickly.* The incident illustrates the necessity of true leadership. The glory of democracy is not that it needs no leaders, but that it chooses them. Democracy's peril is, that it will choose badly. *Out of the way I commanded.* God's desire was to have Israel think of him as a spirit and worship him as such. *These be thy gods.* Not only did Israel accept the calf as god for the future, but they gave it credit for their past deliverance.

II. JEHOVAH'S ANGER.—9, 10. *A stiffnecked people* ; stubborn. *Let me alone.* Do not seek



A CALF IDOL

Lord, why doth thy wrath wax hot against thy people, which thou hast brought forth out of the land of E'gypt with great power, and with a mighty hand ?

12 Wherefore should the Egypt'ians speak, and say, For mischief did he bring them out, to slay them in the mountains, and to consume them from the face of the earth ? Turn from thy fierce wrath, and repent of this evil against thy people.

13 Remember A'braham, I'saac, and Is'rael, thy servants, to whom thou swarest by thine own self, and saidst unto them, I will multiply your seed as the stars of heaven, and all this land that I have spoken of will I give unto your seed, and they shall inherit it for ever.

14 And the Lord repented of the evil which he thought to do unto his people.

to turn me from my purpose. *Consume them* ; not punish simply but wipe out. *I will make . . . thee a great nation.* The promises made to Abraham were to be fulfilled through Moses and his children.

III. MOSES' INTERCESSION.—11-14. *Besought God* ; "made sweet the face of,"—entreated. This is a splendid light on the character of

Moses. God's proposal would have satisfied him if he had been only an ambitious leader. But Moses loved his people. He had sacrificed a royal life for them once, now he is willing to be blotted out of the book of life for their sake, v. 32. This self-sacrificing spirit is realized in its perfect form by Christ. Paul was willing to be a cast-away for his people's sake. *People which thou hath brought forth.* Moses appeals to the past. God had begun a work. Why should it be left undone. Moses does not seek to explain or explain away Israel's sin. God had begun in mercy, why would he not continue. *Wherefore should the Egyptian speak.* It would be a pleas-