

I Thank Thee, Father.

CAN I thank thee enough, my Father,
For thy wonderful gifts to me,
For the days that grow brighter and brighter,
For the joys that are yet to be
I've a house that is full of sunshine,
My friends who are tender and true,
And to find a happier heart than mine,
One may search the wide world through!

And this life, though so sweet in the living,
Is the pathway to future bliss,
And the love still so constantly giving,
Has something far better than this!
I've a home in the mansions of beauty above,
I've a Saviour there, tender and true,
And to find a happier heart than mine,
One may search the whole world through!

I am sure of a loving welcome
Where my Jesus waits for me;
I am sure of the dear home faces—
Of those who have died in thee:
I am sure of my home in glory,
If my faith keeps firm and true,
So to find a happier heart than mine,
One may search the whole world through!

I thank thee again, my Father,
For the sweet hopes given to me,
For the truth that shines the brighter
The nearer I come to thee.
I'll praise and love and serve thee—
It is all that I can do,
And to find a happier heart than mine,
One may search the whole world through!

LESSON NOTES.

SECOND QUARTER.

STUDIES IN THE OLD TESTAMENT.

B.C. 1728] LESSON I. [April 3

JOSEPH SOLD INTO EGYPT.

Gen. 37. 23-36. Mem. verses, 26-28.

GOLDEN TEXT.

But the Lord was with Joseph, and showed him mercy. Gen. 39. 21.

OUTLINE.

1. A Brother. 2. A Bondman.

TIME.—1728 B.C.

PLACES.—Dothan. Egypt. Hebron.

RULERS.—The Pharaohs in Egypt of the Shepherd King dynasty.

CONNECTING LINK.—The last lesson of the last quarter left Jacob at the brook Jabbok, after his struggle with the angel Jehovah. Eleven years have passed. Jacob has fulfilled his vow, made so many years before, and has erected his altar at Bethel. Rachel is dead. Her last born son, Benjamin, remains the pledge of her affection for this man of many trials. Isaac is dead. Jacob and Esau have buried him. Esau has gone into Mount Seir. Jacob has full possession of his paternal inheritance in Canaan. The sons have become men, and are engaged in their duties as keepers of their father's flocks. A bitterness of feeling had grown up among the ten brethren because the boy Joseph was his father's favourite, and because, boy like, he had told to his father some of their rule misdoing. The opportunity for hate to work its purposes soon came. Our lesson tells the story.

EXPLANATIONS.—Coat of many colours—Pictures from Egyptian discovery seem to indicate that this was a garment made of different pieces, sown together, of varied colour. Pit was empty. This was a cistern or well dug to catch and preserve the rain-water, and, at this season, was dry. Company of Ishmaelites. A travelling company, or caravan, on their way to Egypt. One of the indications of the early developments of commercial pursuits. Spicery and balm and myrrh—Gums from trees in the mountains of Gilead, highly prized by the Egyptians for their uses in the arts. Twenty pieces of silver—Probably not coin; but bars or cut pieces of silver. As there were ten brothers there would be two bars each. Reuben returned into the pit—This shows that considerable time had elapsed since the beginning of this story, and Reuben, being away with the flocks, did not know of the caravan and the sale. But he seems to have joined

Joseph in the story to his father, and probably took his two bars of silver. Reuben's flocks—Tore down toward the lower hem of his skirt. A common sign of grief. Sack cloth—The customary sign of mourning. All his daughters—Dinah is the only daughter whose birth is mentioned; but there may have been more, or the wives of the sons may be meant.

QUESTIONS FOR HOME STUDY.

1. A Brother.

Where did Joseph find his brethren? What custom of patriarchal life is suggested by their wandering?

What must have been the relation of Jacob and his family to the Canaanitish peoples?

What meteorological condition is suggested by the dry cistern?

What picture of Egypt as the commercial metropolis of the East is shown?

What was the motive for the hate which these men showed?

What was their position before God, as tested by Christ's interpretation of the law?

What was the sole motive for the changed purpose of these men?

What were the sins of which they were guilty before the end of this trouble came?

2. A Bondman.

To how many parties was Joseph in bondage?

From what did the first bondage cut him off?

From what did the second separate him?

To what did the third consign him?

What was the condition of the slave in ancient times?

What was the sequel of Joseph's sale to Potiphar?

What was the character of Joseph when sold into bondage?

PRACTICAL TEACHINGS.

Sin is never content till it is absolute master of the situation. See how it led these brothers into personal violence, heartlessness, venality, deceit, falsehood, filial dishonour.

Conscience asserts itself when men least expect it. Poor Reuben.

God's purposes cannot be foiled by men. The dreamer's dreams were still to be fulfilled.

Jacob's agony was from seed of his sowing. There ought not to have been a coat of many colours.

DOCTRINAL SUGGESTION—The power of sin.

CATECHISM QUESTION.

16. What was the sin by which our first parents fell from their holy and happy state?

Eating of the fruit of the tree of which God had forbidden them to eat.

Genesis ii. 16, 17; iii. 6.

B.C. 1715] LESSON II. [April 10

JOSEPH EXALTED.

Gen. 41. 38-48. Memory verses, 38-40.

GOLDEN TEXT.

Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in him, and he shall bring it to pass. Psalm 37. 5.

OUTLINE.

1. The Counsellor. 2. The Ruler.

TIME.—1715 B.C. Thirteen years since events of last lesson.

PLACE.—Egypt, at Pharaoh's capital, perhaps at Memphis or Heliopolis. Ramesses was built later.

RULERS.—Pharaoh, one of the dynasty of Shepherd Kings.

CONNECTING LINKS.—The years have passed. Joseph has passed through a varied experience. A slave in Potiphar's house, a trusted servant, tempted and victorious, his fate casts him into prison on a false accusation; spared and honoured in the prison, he is at last, by a chain of circumstances, brought into Pharaoh's presence to find honour and exaltation.

EXPLANATIONS.—Man in whom the Spirit of God is—That is, one who is endowed with ability to execute such a plan as has just been unfolded by Joseph. Only in the throne—He thus makes the second ruler in his absolute monarchy. Took off his ring—The signet ring was the special symbol of office or authority. Veilures of fine linen—The peculiar dress of the Egyptian priests. I am Pharaoh—He pledges his royal word and takes oath by his name as representative of the gods that Joseph should be supreme.

By handfuls—Not literally, the expression signifies the wonderful fertility of the earth in those years.

QUESTIONS FOR HOME STUDY.

1. The Counsellor.

What were to be the requisites of the counsellor who was to be chosen? ver. 33.

What confession as to his own officers is made by Pharaoh's question?

On what ground did Pharaoh choose Joseph?

Was the advice of ver. 33-36 called for in the interpretation of the dream?

What were the characteristics of the counsel he offered?

What was his own character as shown through these thirteen years?

Is the counsel an evidence that Joseph schemed for his own advancement when once he was in Pharaoh's presence?

2. The Ruler.

What wonderful change of condition is narrated in this lesson?

What was Joseph, the counsellor?

What was Joseph, the ruler?

What was his duty as ruler?

What outward sign of his rank was bestowed upon him?

What special preparation had Joseph had, which fitted him to be ruler?

What other Hebrews in Scripture history attained high position under foreign kings?

What prophetic intimation had come to Joseph years before that he should be exalted as a ruler?

PRACTICAL TEACHINGS.

Here we have three lessons in character building:

Rectitude of life is the best preparation for peculiar trust.

Discretion in speech is the best evidence of fitness for peculiar trust.

Fidelity to peculiar trust is the natural result of fidelity to God.

Discretion and wisdom are the gifts of God. Pharaoh spoke a greater truth than he was aware.

Here is a lesson in practical economy. Jesus himself taught it. "Let nothing be lost." Joseph gathered all the food. There was no waste.

DOCTRINAL SUGGESTION—The providence of God.

CATECHISM QUESTION.

17. Why were they commanded not to eat of this fruit?

To try them whether they would obey God or not.

18. Wherein lay the evil of eating the forbidden fruit?

In the spirit of disobedience to God, unto whom, as their Creator and Benefactor and Lord, they ought to have been in entire submission.

YOUTH is the time to begin the service of the Lord. Few ever become Christians who do not begin young. It is a fearful risk to wait "for a more convenient time," with the intention of turning to God at some future day. Satan tells you to wait. He says there is time yet. He will tell you the same thing to-morrow, and the next day, and the next. "Now is the excepted time; now is the day of salvation."

EVERY song has a key-note—heard all the way through—pervading the song as the fragrance of flowers pervading the air of a garden, as a vein of gold stretches through a mine, or as some central point in a picture gives tone and character to the whole. Redemption is the key-note of Christianity. Redeeming love is the sweet sound that makes its melodies so ravishing to the ears of men and angels, the crimson cord that reaches through the warp and woof of sacred song. It is the blood-red rose of Calvary, that flashes out fairest and fullest among all the bloom of earth.—Rev. T. M. Griffith.

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