

INTERNATIONAL S. S. LESSON.—
Sunday, Nov. 14

JOSEPH, THE WISE REBEL. G. n. 11: 41-57.
GOLDEN TEXT.—Pro. 22:29.
Learn 46-49. Time, 1715 B. C.

INTRODUCTION AND CONNECTION.

Chapter forty, 9-23, gives the dreams of the chief butler and the chief baker, their interpretation by Joseph, and the results, which accorded in all respects with what Joseph had told them; yet notwithstanding Joseph's most reasonable request, the chief butler did not remember Joseph, in the sense of putting forth any effort to serve, but forgot him. Such is man. The benefit is seized with avidity, but the bestower of the benefit is forgotten. And yet it was best for Joseph that it should be so. The discipline he needed was not yet received. He might have thought more of his own skill in giving the interpretations than of God's goodness in revealing them to him, had deliverance from prison come at once. God saw fit that he should wait two full years, and that shows clearly, though it does not in the least excuse the ungrateful butler, that it was best for Joseph to be forgotten.

LESSON NOTES.

(41). Pharaoh said . . . See I have set thee over all the Land of Egypt. I have appointed, or decreed it—words at once expressive of his own absolute power in the matter, and introductory to the ceremony of Joseph's investiture with the insignia of office and rank.

(42). The first act of investiture was the placing of his own ring upon Joseph's hand. This ring bore the king's seal, or signet, used for stamping public, or state documents and was of higher authority than even the king's own sign manual. Arraged him in vesture of fine linen,—a dress of honor, worn only by high dignitaries. It is doubtful whether it was of linen, cotton, or silk; the degree of its ornamentation was in accordance with the rank of the wearer. Put a gold chain about his neck. This chain was a mark of rank, and of official dignity; and may have been symbolic of the excellence, utility, and permanence of the government he represented.

(43). Made him ride in the second chariot,—implying that there was no one higher than he, except the king. They cried before him etc. What they cried has been matter of much dispute, according as the words have been taken as Egyptian, Hebrew, or Egyptian with a Hebrew sense; and have been variously translated,—“how the knee,” “tender father,” “the father of the king,” “royal priest, or prince.”

(44). I am Pharaoh—I am the king; perhaps meaning, also, that he was the representative of the Gods, or the embodiment of their power. Without thee,—without thy will and consent—shall no man lift up his hand or his foot in all the land of Egypt. This was virtually limiting or binding himself to abide by Joseph's decisions in all things.

(45). Gaphneah—paaneah—a revealer of secrets,—or, as it has been otherwise interpreted, the Salvation, or Saviour of the world; the Sustainer of the age, etc. etc. And he gave him to wife Aseneath, daughter of Poti-pherah, priest, or prince, of On—the sun. Joseph's exaltation would not have been complete, had not a wife, of a position and dignity suitable to his own, been conferred upon him. This lady was the daughter of one of the high dignitaries of Egypt—a priest, or, according to some, a prince. Thus he who, but a day before, was tenant of a dungeon, was suddenly raised to the highest power under the king of Egypt—a power, for all practical purposes, equal to that of the king—and allied in marriage to one of the noblest families, perhaps the noblest, in the realm.

(46). Thirty years old. If Joseph was only seventeen (ch. 37: 2) when he was sold by his brethren, he had been thirteen years in Egypt. Of this time, it is supposed that he spent ten years in Poti-pherah's house, and three in prison. And Joseph went . . . throughout all the land of Egypt. In accordance with the advice he had himself given Pharaoh,

(v. v. 33-36.) this journey was probably to set on foot methods of thorough irrigation, so as to secure the utmost possible benefit from the coming years of plenty; and also to establish in the various cities suitable storehouses where the surplus produce of those years might be kept in safety against the years of famine.

(47-49) The earth brought forth by handfuls,—that is, in extraordinary abundance. Allusion is here made, we are told, “not only to the luxuriance of the crop, but to the practice of the reapers grasping the ears which alone were cut.” And he gathered up all the foot of the seven years, etc.—not literally all the food, but all the established tax, namely, one fifth.

(v. 31) Gathered corn as the sand of the sea,—a hyperbolic expression signifying immense quantities, so very much that he left numbering, or keeping a record. Without number, that is, no accurate number was attempted to be kept.

(50-52) Unto Joseph were born two Sons . . . Manasseh, (forgetting), for he said, God hath made me forget all my toil and all my father's house . . . and Ephraim (fruitful) for God hath caused me to be fruitful in the land of my affliction. Joseph had not literally forgotten his father's house, as we shall see in the course of the narrative; but he had ceased to regard his past afflictions as a misfortune, and to pine for his father's house.

(53). And the seven years of plenteousness that was in the land of Egypt were ended,—that is, the natural cause of that plenteousness ceased. What that natural cause was, has been matter of much conjecture. One theory is, that it was through the gradual draining off, by the bursting of some of its natural barriers, of one of the lakes that fed the Upper Nile, and local evidence is said to exist that such was the case.

(54). And the seven years of dearth began to come . . . and the dearth was in all lands,—that is, “all the countries dependent upon the Nile”—but in all the land of Egypt there was bread. There was plenty reserved from the supplies of the past years, over and above that stored up by Joseph, to last for a considerable time.

(55). When the land of Egypt was famished—when the people's own supplies were quite exhausted, and they began to be in want—they cried to Pharaoh for bread; and Pharaoh said . . . go to Joseph; what he saith to you, do,—that is, submit yourselves to whatever terms for the purchase of the State-supply he may see fit to dictate. Here is a whole nation—the whole world we may almost say, for we have little definite knowledge of more—at Joseph's feet crying for bread;—no bread save in that favored land, and no bread-dispenser save Joseph. It is hard to believe, with some good men, that Joseph is not a type of our Lord Jesus Christ, in the face of this fact, as well as of a great number of others equally striking and significant. The Monarch of Egypt turns away his head, even while his granaries are bursting with plenty, and says—GO TO JOSEPH; WHAT HE SAITH TO YOU, DO! How suggestive!

(56). And the famine was over all the face of the earth,—or, “over all the face of that land” (Egypt). see, the latter portion of this verse—the famine waxed sore in the land of Egypt. And Joseph opened all the storehouses, and sold unto the Egyptians.

(57). Whether the cause of the dearth that prevailed in Egypt extended to all the surrounding countries, or whether its general prevalence was merely a coincidence, is not possible now to determine; that it was general over the countries adjacent to Egypt we are plainly told—they came into Egypt to buy corn, because the famine was so sore in all lands.

SUGGESTED THOUGHTS.

The lessons of adversity are usually the most valuable the Christian can learn. Joseph's painful experiences were of a nature to undo any bad effect his father's partiality may have had upon him, and to fit him, as nothing else could, for the position that awaited him. Whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth.

Ten long years of slavery and three of imprisonment were none too many to prepare Joseph for his work. Christians should bear in mind when the Lord's hand seems heavy upon them, that He is dealing with them as with

sons;—educating them by useful methods for the exalted dignities He has prepared for them at His own right hand!

The selling of Joseph, his slavery, his temptation, his casting into a dungeon, the dream of the butler and the baker of the King of Egypt, the butler's long forgetfulness of his duty, Pharaoh's dream, the butler's tardy remembrance, Joseph's being raised to power, the years of plenty and the years of famine, the participation of other lands in the famine;—these are some of the “all things” that worked together for good for Joseph, his father, and his brethren, and for all who read and receive spiritual profit from the history.

QUESTION SUMMARY

(For the children.)

(41). What did Pharaoh say to Joseph? What did he mean? What had Joseph done for Pharaoh? Who gave Joseph the wisdom by which he interpreted dream? Does God give all men so much wisdom? Why did He give so much to Joseph? Because He was preparing, or educating Joseph for a very great work and a very high position? (42, 43) What did Pharaoh do to Joseph? What was all that for? It was to make Joseph the very highest officer in his Kingdom next to himself. (44). What did Pharaoh promise Joseph? What did he mean by that? (See note). (45). What new name did he give Joseph? What does it mean? A revealer of secrets. Whom did the King give Joseph for a wife? Why did Joseph go all over Egypt, (see note). (46). How old was Joseph when he became Pharaoh's Prime Minister? How old was he when he was sold? How many years then had he been in Egypt? (47-49). What happened in the next seven years? Was that just what Joseph had said when he interpreted the King's dreams? (See v. v. 25-29). How did the earth bring forth grain? What part of it did Joseph take from the people to lay up? (See v. 34) (50-52). How many sons had Joseph? What was the name of the oldest? What does it mean? Why did Joseph call him that? See Note. What was the name of the younger? What does it mean? (53, 54). What came after the seven years of plenty were past? What had Joseph said about that?—(See v. v. 30-32. (55). When the people had eaten all the food they had, what did they do? Did Pharaoh give them any? What did he say? Did Joseph supply them with food? (56). In what way? Was the famine any where but in Egypt? (57). Where did people come from to buy bread? Of whom was Joseph a type?

A JEWISH WEDDING.

It was when studying with a friend at Tangiers, on a brief visit from Gibraltar to the north coast of Africa, that I saw the ceremony of a Jewish wedding. One of the sons of a Jewish consul was about to be married to the daughter of a Hebrew banker and silversmith. My friend was invited to attend, and the invitation was kindly extended to me and two English officers who had crossed over with me from Gibraltar, and who were also the guests of my host. The marriage took place in an open courtyard in front of the banker's house, before a large attendance of Jews and Christians. The Jews do not think it necessary to be married in a synogogue, for, in their opinion, any place where prayers are offered up is by that act consecrated. At the east end of the quadrangle, and facing the visitors, was a large white and yellow silk canopy, supported at each of its four corners by long poles which were held by four bronzed young Hebrews. Beneath the canopy was a table, on which were a massive silver goblet and some empty wine glasses. At the side of the table was a rabbi, with his white silk talith over his head, awaiting the arrival of the bride and bridegroom. He had not long to remain expectant, for the bridegroom, attended by his father, very shortly after entered the courtyard, and took his stand under the canopy, all around crying out, “blessed is he that cometh.” Soon after his arrival, the bride appeared through the parting crowd of spectators,

and was led under the canopy, and then three times conducted round her future husband, thereby fulfilling the command of Jeremiah: “The woman shall compass a man.” The bridegroom after this escorted his bride around the outside of the canopy; whilst the Jewish guests threw grains of corn on them, saying: “Be fruitful and multiply.” “He maketh peace in thy borders, and filleth thee with the finest wheat.”

The couple now entered again under the canopy, and stood facing each other, opposite to the rabbi. The marriage ceremony then commenced. The rabbi filled one of the empty glasses with wine from the silver goblet, and taking it in his hand, amid profound silence gave the blessing. The engaged couple then tasted the wine, and immediately afterward the bridegroom put a ring on the bride's finger, repeating the Hebrew after the rabbi: “Behold thou art betrothed unto me with this ring, according to the rites of Moses and Israel.” And now the tedious proceeding of reading the *Kethurah*, or marriage contract, took place. It was written in Chaldee, and was read aloud in that language, and, as it was a tongue certainly “not understood by the people,” and the burning rays of an African sun were almost vertical, we were all greatly relieved when this most uninteresting performance was over. The rabbi, having ended, took a glass of wine, stood in front of the united pair, and pronounced the seven blessings.

These blessings uttered, the new husband and wife tasted the second glass of wine, and then an empty glass was placed on the floor, upon which the husband stamped, crushing it to atoms. All now cried out, “*Mazel tovo*”—“good luck!”—and the marriage ceremony was over. The crushing of the glass is to remind man that God can as easily crush him; and that, therefore, man should direct his thoughts not only to earthly things, but to those above. *Sunday Magazine.*

RULES FOR SPOILING A CHILD.

1. Begin by giving him whatever he craves for.
 2. Talk freely before the child about his smartness as incomparable.
 3. Tell him that he is too much for you, that you can do nothing with him.
 4. Have divided counsels as between father and mother.
 5. Let him learn to regard his father as a creature of unlimited power, capricious and tyrannical; or as a mere whipping machine.
 6. Let him learn (from his father's example) to despise his mother.
 7. Do not know or care who his companions may be.
 8. Let him read whatever he likes.
 9. Let the child, whether boy or girl, rove the streets in the evening—a good school for both sexes.
 10. Devote yourself to making money, remembering always that wealth is a better legacy for your child than principles in the heart and habits in the life; and let him have plenty of money to spend.
 11. Be not with him in hours of recreation.
 12. Strain at a gnat and swallow a camel; chastise severely for a foible, and laugh at a vice.
 13. Let him run about from church to church. Eclecticism is the order of the day.
 14. Whatever burdens of virtuous requirement you lay on his shoulders, touch not one with one of your fingers. Preach gold and practice irredeemable greenbacks.
- These rules are not untried. Many parents have proved them, with substantial uniformity of results. If a faithful observance of them does not spoil your child, you will at least have the comfortable reflection that you have done what you could.—*Christian Intelligencer.*