

SCHOLARS' NOTES.

(From the International Lessons for 1880, by Edwin W. Rice, as issued by American Sunday School Union.)

LESSON VI.

Nov. 7.]

JOSEPH IN PRISON.

Gen. 39: 21-23; 40: 1-8.

COMMIT TO MEMORY vs. 21-23.

21. But the Lord was with Joseph, and shewed him mercy, and gave him favor in the sight of the keeper of the prison.

22. And the keeper of the prison committed to Joseph's hand all the prisoners that were in the prison; and whatsoever they did there, he was the doer of it.

23. The keeper of the prison looked not to any thing that was under his hand; because the Lord was with him, and that which he did, the Lord made it to prosper.

XL.

1. And it came to pass after these things, that the butler of the king of Egypt and his baker had offended their lord the king of Egypt.

2. And Pharaoh was wroth against two of his officers, against the chief of the butlers, and against the chief of the bakers.

3. And he put them in ward in the house of the captain of the guard, into the prison, the place where Joseph was bound.

4. And the captain of the guard charged Joseph with them, and he served them: and they continued a season in ward.

5. And they dreamed a dream both of them, each man his dream in one night, each man according to the interpretation of his dream, the butler and the baker of the king of Egypt, which were bound in the prison.

6. And Joseph came in unto them in the morning, and looked upon them, and, behold, they were sad.

7. And he asked Pharaoh's officers that were with him in the ward of his lord's house, saying, wherefore look ye so sadly to-day?

8. And they said unto him, We have dreamed a dream, and there is no interpreter of it. And Joseph said unto them, Do not interpretations belong to God? tell me them, I pray you.

GOLDEN TEXT.

Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for him.—Ps. 37: 7.

CENTRAL TRUTH.

Divine providence vindicates the faithful.

NOTES.—BUTLER, the same as *suley* among the Arabians and Persians, and signifies a cup-bearer.—PRISON, Joseph was probably awaiting his trial; but, as he had charge of the prisoners, he could not have been bound or restrained of his personal liberty; he was in the royal prison.—A SEASON, literally, "days;" how long is uncertain, though it may indicate an entire year, and, as Pharaoh called them to an account on his birthday, Calmet supposes they had offended on the previous birthday, and thus had suffered a year's imprisonment.

EXPLANATIONS.

LESSON TOPICS.—(I.) THE LORD WITH JOSEPH. (II.) JOSEPH AND OTHER PRISONERS.

I. THE LORD WITH JOSEPH.—(12.) SHOWED HIM MERCY, AND GAVE HIM FAVOR, what a change from the house of a prince to the prison! But he becomes the keeper's deputy. (21.) KEEPER LOOKED NOT, Joseph was chief manager in the administration of affairs; his reverse was sudden—not less so was his promotion; THE LORD WAS WITH HIM, this was the secret of his advancement; THE LORD MADE TO PROSPER, the blessing of Him who prospered Joseph is necessary for us.

II. JOSEPH AND OTHER PRISONERS.—(1.) BUTLER, an officer of great influence in Eastern courts (see Notes); BAKER, his chief steward, counsellors or companions of the king as well as servants. (2.) PHARAOH, which of the kings, or of what dynasty this Pharaoh was, is not certainly known. (3.) WARD, in confinement; JOSEPH BOUND, where he was a prisoner; he was not personally bound, for he had charge of all the prisoners under the keeper. (4.) A SEASON, some suppose for a year, that is, that they were put in prison on the king's birthday, and came out on the next birthday of the king. (5.) DREAMED, Joseph had been called "the dreamer." (6.) SAD, because of their dreams. (7.) WHEREFORE SAD, OR, "your faces evil." (8.) DO NOT INTERPRETATIONS BELONG TO GOD? that is, a worshipper of the true God should know the meaning of dreams.

GOD Favors the GOOD Even in PRISON.

LESSON VII.

Nov. 14.]

JOSEPH, THE WISE RULER.

Gen. 41: 41-57.

COMMIT TO MEMORY vs. 46-49.

41. And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, See, I have set thee over all the land of Egypt.

42. And Pharaoh took off his ring from his hand and put it on Joseph's hand, and arrayed him in vestures of fine linen, and put a gold chain about his neck;

43. And he made him to ride in the second chariot which he had; and they cried before him, Bow the knee: and he made him ruler over all the land of Egypt.

44. And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, I am Pharaoh, and without thee shall no man lift up his hand or foot in all the land of Egypt.

45. And Pharaoh called Joseph's name Zaphnathpaneah; and he gave him to wife Asenath the daughter of Potipherah priest of On. And Joseph went out over all the land of Egypt.

46. And Joseph was thirty years old when he stood before Pharaoh king of Egypt. And Joseph went out from the presence of Pharaoh, and went throughout all the land of Egypt.

47. And in the seven plenteous years the earth brought forth by handfuls.

48. And he gathered up all the food of the seven years, which were in the land of Egypt, and laid up the food in the cities: the food of the field, which was round about every city, laid he up in the same.

49. And Joseph gathered corn as the sand of the sea, very much, until he left numbering: for it was without number.

50. And unto Joseph were born two sons before the years of famine came, which Asenath the daughter of Potipherah priest of On bare unto him.

51. And Joseph called the name of the firstborn Manasseh; For God, said he, hath made me forget all my toil, and all my father's house.

52. And the name of the second called he Ephraim: for God hath caused me to be fruitful in the land of my afflictions.

53. And the seven years of plenteousness that were in the land of Egypt, were ended.

54. And the seven years of dearth began to come, according as Joseph had said: and the dearth was in all lands: but in all the land of Egypt there was bread.

55. And when all the land of Egypt was famished, the people cried to Pharaoh for bread: and Pharaoh said unto all the Egyptians, Go unto Joseph; what saith he to you, do.

56. And the famine was over all the face of the earth: And Joseph opened all the storehouses, and sold unto the Egyptians: and the famine waxed sore in the land of Egypt.

57. And all countries came into Egypt to Joseph for to buy corn; because the famine was so sore in all lands.

GOLDEN TEXT.

Seest thou a man diligent in business? he shall stand before Kings.—Prov. 22: 29.

CENTRAL TRUTH.

Wisdom and honor come from God.

NOTES.—RING, the signet-ring was the special symbol of office and authority. The seal to this day, in the East, is the common mode of attestation, and therefore, when Pharaoh gave Joseph his ring he delegated to him his whole authority.—SPEAKER'S COMMENTARY.—ZAPH-NATH-PAN-NE-AH. The Latin version renders this "Saviour of the world;" while the Syriac, Arabic, and Hebrew interpreters render it "revealer of secrets."—AS-E-NATH, devoted to Neith, the Egyptian Minerva, or perhaps compounded of two names, Isis and Neith.—ON, Heliopolis and Bethshemesh, city of the sun; stood on the east bank of the Nile, a few miles north of Memphis, and was famous for the worship of Ra, the sun, and for the learning and wisdom of its priests. There were several obelisks at that place; one of which now stands in London, on the embankment of the Thames.

EXPLANATIONS.

LESSON TOPICS.—(I.) JOSEPH PROMOTED. (II.) THE FAMINE.

I. JOSEPH PROMOTED.—(41-45.) PHARAOH SAID, this was before the formal appointment of Joseph, and preliminary to it; HIS RING, see Notes; this was held by the grand vizier or prime minister FINE LINEN, the white byssus-robe worn by priests and persons of rank; GOLD CHAIN, a gold necklace; SECOND CHARIOT, next in rank to the king's chariot; I AM PHARAOH, that is, I reserve my royal dignity and position; you shall be ruler over all except me.

II. THE FAMINE.—(53-57.) PLENTOUSNESS ENDED, in seven years, as Joseph had predicted; SEVEN YEARS OF DEARTH, of famine; ALL LANDS, that is, all adjacent to Egypt; FAMISHED, their private stores exhausted; SOLD, he had probably bought the food in years of plenty; FAMINE WAXED SORE, from its continuance year after year; ALL COUNTRIES, see v. 51.

1881.

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