

in mature life, to be as silly as the rest! I am ashamed of you.' Here was the north-easter at last. A cold, cutting, neuralgic blast. But at once I drew up my hood, a hood I have learned to use at such times—the knowledge that all was intended solely for my good—and the north-easter was tempered to me. I ventured to say, 'You are mistaken, uncle, I have not married without thought. My husband is perfectly honorable, and of good family; my father thinks well of him; his position in the world is unexceptionable; and'

'Certainly, certainly,' interrupted he, with that well-known sarcastical glance fell upon me; 'all as it should be, no doubt. We have broken through no conventionalities, we have done everything in strict propriety, that is what you would say. We have a well furnished house, and a carriage at command. Society finds no fault; and, therefore, the prudence of good morals ought not. But take this to heart, young lady, your old uncle says you have committed a great mistake. Do you know what your husband is? Do you know that his last wife's blood stains the floor of this well-carpeted house? Do you know that in that very closet, and he pointed to the only one in the room, 'the history and mystery of that poor woman's end lies? Years ago you have talked to me of your childish games of Bluebeard; I tell you, now, you are dwelling in Bluebeard's house and that is his closet.'

My uncle's eyes shot fire, the veins in his forehead swelled, as they always do when he is excited, but I knew his temperament, and though struck at his allusion to what had been in my thoughts that morning, and inclined to be a little alarmed, I took off a liberal discount from the meaning of his words, and the remainder was not so formidable.

He still continued pointing to the innocent-looking closet, that I well knew contained nothing but a few bottles of wine and spirits, and a pint or two of whiskey, my husband's favorite drink. I asked, 'What do you mean, uncle? I cannot understand you. Mr. Grant is no Bluebeard, and no murder has ever been committed in this house. And, as for that closet, I have the key of it myself, and know every corner of it.'

'So much the worse, so much the worse. Will you be for ever a child? If you have the key, as you say, open it, and show me if it does not contain what I say.' I obeyed him.

(To be continued.)

INTERNATIONAL S. S. LESSON.

Sunday, July 3

Israel in Egypt, Ex. i. 1-14.

GOLDEN TEXT.—And they made their lives bitter with hard bondage in mortar, and in brick, and in all manner of hard service in the field: in all the service wherewith they made them to serve, was with rigour, v. 14.

Commit vs. 12-14.

INTRODUCTION AND CONNECTION.

The connection between our last Old Testament lesson and this is close,—the interview between Joseph and his brethren, recorded in latter part of the last chapter of Genesis, being the concluding lesson of that series. We now enter upon the proper natural history of the Israelites—a history of absorbing interest, since it is the historical unfolding of God's great plan of salvation, through which, as the central thought, we may everywhere find the Lord Jesus Christ prominently conspicuous. The Old Testament is as truly a revelation of Christ as the new; and unless we study it to find Him, we study it to very little purpose. Nothing is introduced into it is wonderful history but what bears upon, or is needful to the development of the great central purpose—the

revolution of God in the person and work of Christ.

LESSON NO. 7

(vs. 1-5.) Now these are the names of the children of Israel, which came into Egypt with Jacob. It will be seen by careful attention to the record contained in Gen. xlii., that Jacob himself is included in the number seventy of v. 5. We are there told (v. 26) that Jacob's descendants who came with him were sixty-six. To this number must be added Jacob himself, Joseph and his two sons, to make the seventy as here stated.

Dr Hales gives the list thus:—Jacob's children—11 sons and 1 daughter—12; Reuben's sons, 4; Simeon's sons, 6; Levi's sons, 3; Judah's 3 sons and 2 grandsons, 5; Issachar's sons, 4; Zebulun's sons, 3; Gad's sons, 7; Ashur's 4 sons, 1 daughter, and 2 grandsons, 7; Dan's son, 1; Nephthali's sons, 4; Benjamin's sons, 10. For 1, 66. To this he adds Jacob himself, Joseph, and his two sons, making the total number of Israelites, exclusive of their wives, who settled in Egypt, 70, as stated here. To this number he adds the wives of the 66 sons—those of two being dead, and Joseph, with himself, in Egypt; and thus makes the 75 of Acts vi. 11. (See Dr. A. Clarke on Gen. xlii.)

(6.) And Joseph and. Joseph lived to see the third generation of his descendants, (Gen. i. 23-26.) He survived the immigration of his family into Egypt about seventy years.

And all his brethren—till his own brothers—and all that generation—probably all who had been contemporary with himself. Levi seems to have been the last to die. see ch. vi. 16.

(7.) The children of Israel,—or Israelites, is a religious designation; and, as it is the history of this people in its religious bearings that is now entered upon, the proper ethnic name, Hebrews, occurs only very occasionally throughout the Bible. Were fruitful, increased abundantly . . . the land—i. e., of Goshon, there were many others scattered throughout Egypt—was filled with them. The land of Egypt was peculiarly favourable to the increase of populations; and to this was added the special blessing of God in the fulfilment of His promises to the patriarchs (Gen. xv. 5; xxvi. 4; xxviii. 14). The time covered by this verse was probably about one hundred years.

(8.) Now there arose a new king over Egypt who knew not Joseph. The name of this king has been the subject of much research, but has never been satisfactorily ascertained. It seems at least probable that a new dynasty had superseded the old, and that the engagements under which previous kings had felt themselves bound to the Israelites were, by these latter ones, disregarded and set aside. Probably the religion and occupation—that of shepherds—of the Israelites, had much to do in causing this hostility.

(9.) Mightier than we. As regards numbers, this, doubtless, was an extravagant statement. But by their wealth, energy, and force of character, the Israelites had already become formidable. We are told that large numbers of them were at this time dispersed throughout Egypt; and that, as tradesmen, artisans, &c., they wielded a very important influence. Hence, the dread and apprehension of the new monarch.

(10, 11.) Come, let us deal wisely (deceitfully, in a hard, oppressive manner) with them; lest . . . when there falleth out any war, they join also with our enemies, and fight against us, and so get them up out of the land.

This was not for the purpose of destroying at once their lives; but of reducing them to a position of hopeless bondage, to be perpetually their slaves and drudges. Therefore they did set over them taskmasters &c. &c. Their aim by such cruelty was, first, to aggrandize themselves by means of this enforced servitude; and, secondly, to break the spirit of the Israelites, and thus by weakening and harassing them, prevent their growth in numbers, power, and influence.

This policy was both unwise and wicked; and was sure in the end to recoil upon the Egyptians themselves. God's purpose was to deliver His people; and thus, though unintentionally, this wicked king was both bringing about and hastening the accomplishment of that purpose. God makes the wrath of man to praise Him, and the remainder of wrath He restrains. And they built, &c. &c. These treasure cities, as they are called, were probably built partly for the storage of provisions and military sup-

plies of various kinds, and were strongly fortified for defensive purposes in case of war. The work of the Israelites was done under taskmasters who, by harshness and cruelty, little by little, reduced them to the most abject slavery. This is a faint picture of the condition in which men are under sin, and led captive by Satan at his will—the devil's drudges, subjects of a cruel and relentless tyrant whose only object is to accomplish his purposes through them, and then reward them with utter destruction. Some suppose that beside these cities the Israelites built the pyramids.

Josephus expressly affirms this, (see Antiquities, Book 2, ch. 9, sec. 1). This may be true of the smaller pyramids, though it does not seem so clear in respect to the larger ones.

(12, 13.) But the more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied and grew. Already the wickedness of the Egyptians was beginning to defeat itself. God gave the Israelites favour in proportion as they were oppressed.

And they, the Egyptians, were grieved (waxed angry, full of apprehension) because of the children of Israel. Unhappily to prevent their growth or to crush their spirit, the Egyptians were the more incensed; and set themselves to inflict a harder and more severe service upon them. They made the children of Israel to serve with rigour—that is, with oppressive cruelty.

(14.) And they made their lives bitter with hard bondage in mortar, and in brick, (in the making of mortar and brick, and in all manner of service in the field, that is, as burden-bearers, and also, as Josephus states, in digging new channels for the river, erecting walls and ramparts to protect against its undue overflow, constructing fortifications, and, possibly, in building pyramids. All their service . . . was with rigour, or, under the lash of unrelenting taskmasters. Such was the life of God's people in Egypt. Similar is the bondage, hard and unrelenting, under which every soul is held in sin under Satan. All his service is with rigour. There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked. The wages of sin is death.

SUGGESTED THOUGHTS.

Israel, as a whole, typifies the church struggling up and out of the Egypt of sin into spiritual deliverance.

Pharaoh, the oppressive king, typifies Satan, the enemy of God and man; and appetites, passions, and lusts of fallen human nature are the relentless taskmasters under which he keeps the soul in bondage until Christ appears for its deliverance.

The Egyptian taskmasters were oppressive and cruel, but sin is more oppressive than they. Their exactions could only produce physical death—that of sin brings eternal death.

QUESTION SUMMARY.*

(For the Children)

(1-5.) How many sons of Jacob are mentioned here? How many sons had he? Where was the twelfth? and what was his name? How many of Jacob's descendants went with him into Egypt (see Gen. xl. 26). How many, then, were there of the house of Jacob when they were all settled in Egypt? (Gen. xli. 27). (6.) Who are here said to have died? What is meant by all that generation? (see note). (7.) What is said here about the Israelites? Israelites, or children of Israel, is a religious name; by what other name are they known? What part of the land of Egypt was filled with them? Where they found any where else in Egypt? (8.) Who came at length to rule over Egypt?

(9, 10.) What did he say to the Egyptians about the Israelites? In what respect were they mightier than the Egyptians? (see note). What did he mean by let us deal wisely? What was he afraid of?

(11.) How did they begin to treat the Israelites? Was that dealing wisely, do you think? What cities did the Israelites build? (12.) Did this cruelty have the effect the king wished? What took place among the Israelites? What is meant by they were grieved? (13.) Did they treat the Israelites any better? (14.) What did they make them do? Are all sinners under a worse tyrant than the Israelites were in Egypt? Who is this cruel tyrant? Who came to save us from Satan and sin? Have you accepted Him as your Saviour? If not, remember that Satan seeks constantly to ruin your souls, and that he will surely do it if you do not flee to Jesus. Oh, flee to Jesus to-day for you may not be alive to-morrow.

*Parents are urged to see that their children learn these questions, and to help them do so.

THE MORNING PRAYER.

I was staying, and had been for many weeks, with some friends in the country. The mistress of the house was a nice, pleasant lady, and had three little sons. At the back of the house was a fine large garden in which they used to play.

One day a little girl, a friend of theirs, came from the town to see them and to play with the children. They were very glad to see her, I am sure. The little boys were allowed to stay away from school for the afternoon; so they took their friend into the garden and summer-house, and in the evening they played in the house with their toys, and enjoyed themselves very much indeed.

But when eight o'clock came, which was the time for the little girl to go home, it was found to be raining very fast, and as her mother had said she might stay all night if it were wet, she did so.

As there was no bed unoccupied, I was asked to allow her to sleep with me, which of course I did.

In the morning, during dressing, I noticed that little Emily did not offer to say her prayers, though she had to wait for me several minutes during washing. I thought it might possibly be because she was shy; so when I had finished, I knelt down myself to thank my Heavenly Father for His care during the night, and to ask His blessing for the day which was before us. On my getting up I saw she had no intention of doing the same, so I said quietly to her, "Have you said your prayers, my dear?"

"No," she answered; "I never say them in the morning—I only say them at night."

"How is that, my dear?" said I. "Do you not wish to thank your Heavenly Father that He has taken care of you during the past night, and brought you safely to the light of another day? Do you not wish God to protect you during the coming day; to send you food and raiment, and to preserve you from temptations? Do you not require His Holy Spirit to help you to be kind and affectionate to your little friends, and to love and obey your parent?"

Oh! I am afraid there are many little children, both boys and girls, who make a practice of only saying their prayers at night!

Certainly at night they kneel before God to ask forgiveness, for Christ's sake, for all the sins they may have committed that day; but how many of those sins might they have been preserved from, had they sought God's help and blessing in the morning? It is the Holy Spirit alone Who can help us to do right, and this we must seek in prayer.

My young friends, say your prayers at night, but don't forget to say them in the morning.

"PLEASE HELP ME."

Four-year-old Johnnie was rearing a castle of building-blocks in the nursery. His mother sat near with her sewing, but he was so much engrossed in architecture to notice her. The finish was just being put to the chief tower, when down came the whole with a crash.

Johnnie surveyed the ruins with a flushed, disappointed face, then, folding his little hands, said, devoutly, "Dear Lord, please help me." The next effort was unsuccessful. Scarcely was it finished when the fabric came tumbling down. Hot tears rushed to Johnnie's eyes; but, repressing any word of impatience, to his mother's great joy he went down upon his knees above the scattered fragments of his childish ambition and, raising his eyes, said earnestly, "Please, Lord, help me so it won't tumble down; and don't let me get mad." With careful fingers he again began, and this time completed his work, Johnnie is "John" now, striving for college honors, but he finds help just where and just as he did then.