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BIBLE LESSONS FOR 1875.

INTERNATIONAL SERIES. Heroes and Judges.

SUNDAY, January 3rd, 1875.—Joshua Encouraged.—Joshua i. 1-9.

GOLDEN TEXT.—Thou therefore my son be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. 2 Timothy ii. 1.

EXPOSITION.—1. Now. The conjunction in the original is most commonly employed, like our word and, to connect that which follows with that which precedes. The Book of Joshua is thus grammatically connected with that of Deuteronomy, which closes, as the Book of Joshua opens, with a reference to the death of Moses. This conjunction stands at the beginning of Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers, thus linking them with Genesis, as a connected historical series. This connection of the sacred books is not observed in the Common Version.

After. How long after we do not know. BUSH: "The time referred to was probably at the conclusion of the thirty days of mourning for Moses, Deut. xxxiv. 8.

The Death. It occurred in consequence of the sin at Meribah-Kadesh, Num. xx. 7-13, on one of the heights of Moab, east of the camp of Israel. It was, like the death of every saint, at once a penalty for sin and a happy deliverance from the power of sin, transferring the soul to a scene of great glory, Luke ix. 30, 31. Even in visiting upon him the penalty of his transgression, God comforted him, showing him the land of Canaan and conversing with him like a friend, Deut. xxxiv. 1-4. Thus ever, God draws mercifully near to the saint in the hour of death.

Moses was born in Egypt at a time when the native Egyptian dynasty had just expelled the Asiatic shepherds from Lower Egypt, and repossessed the whole country. The Israelites, themselves Asiatics and shepherds, and high in favor with the defeated power, were naturally detested by the Egyptians. The Egyptian government formed a plan which seemed wise: it determined to keep the Israelites in the country as laborers and defenders of the frontier, but to reduce them in numbers by destroying the male infants, and to degrade them and break them down by excessive toil, so that they should be incapable of alliance with foreign enemies and of forsaking Egypt for the conquest of Palestine. Moses was born when this persecution was at its height. His extraordinary beauty led his parents to use extraordinary vigilance in the preservation of his life. Placing their trust in God, Heb. xi. 23, they concealed him three months. In his early manhood he had dreams of delivering the Israelites from bondage, and was willing to abandon all his princely honors at the royal court, in order to effect this holy purpose, Heb. xi. 24-27. As a prophet of God, and a mediator between God and man, he was a type of our blessed Lord, Deut. xviii. 15. He was inspired to write the five books of the Pentateuch, which are on this account called the Books of Moses. The 90th Psalm is also from his pen.

The servant, or minister, mediator, deputy or vicegerent of God, the honored organ through whom he communicated his will to his chosen people and managed all their varied interests being 'found faithful in all God's house as a servant.' God himself is pleased to so denominate him, vs. 2, but also in Rev. xv. 3, where it is said of the company standing upon the sea of glass, that they sing the song of Moses the servant of God. The same term is applied to others in the Old Testament, but only to those who are eminent in piety and good works and specially honored of God, Gen. xxvi. 24; Ps. xviii. 1; 2 Chron. xxxi. 16; Is. xx. 3; xlii. 1-7; xlix. 3, 5, 8; lii. 13-15.

Lord, or Jehovah. The later Jews held the word Jehovah to be so sacred that they would not pronounce it. The most common names for God in the Old Testament are, Elohim and Jehovah. Yet the two names are to be distinguished. According to its derivation the word Jehovah means the Existing One. The word Elohim, usually and properly rendered God in the Old Testament, corresponds to our word Almighty. It is to be regretted that this distinction between the two words, Elohim expressing the abstract idea of God as a supreme power, and Jehovah the idea of God as graciously manifested to his people, in his most endearing rela-

tions, is quite obscured in the Common Version. Said. The communications of God with Joshua were not so frequent and so familiar as those with which he favored Moses, Num. xxvii. 21; Deut. xxxiv. 10-12; Josh. v. 13-15.

Joshua, first mentioned in Ex. xvii. 9, where his appointment as commander of the Israelite armies is recorded. This office he retained until his death; and in the text God adds to it the prerogatives of Supreme Judge, such as Moses himself had possessed. The name of Joshua was originally Hoshea, help, Deut. xxxii. 44; Num. xiii. 8. The divine name of Jah was afterwards added to it, and it thus became Jehoshua, or Joshua, Jehovah's help, a name which appears in its Greek form as Jesus.

He accompanied Moses to the Mount of the Law; he was one of the twelve spies, Num. xiii. 17, and one of the two who gave a correct report, Num. xiv. 6. Near the close of the life of Moses, he was solemnly and publicly invested with authority over the people, Num. xxvii. 18, and he afterwards received a special charge from God through the mouth of the dying law-giver, Deut. xxxi. 14, 23. In his eighty-fifth year, in obedience to the divine commission which our lesson rehearses, he assumed command of the people, and began a career of conquest which for both the difficulties and splendid successes which attended it, stands almost without a parallel. He died at the age of one hundred and ten years, after a life of stainless piety and brilliant achievements.

Nun, was the father of Joshua, and of the tribe of Ephraim, 1 Chron. ch. 7.

2. Moses my servant is dead. Joshua was grieving for the loss of his master, which fact could not be altered by grief; why then suffer it to unfit the mind for duty? The death of Moses had left the people dependent upon Joshua, Numbers xxvii. 18; Deut. xxxi. 14, 23; xxxiv. 9, and there was imperative need that he should arouse himself to the difficult tasks which were before him.

Arise, etc. The time passes. The people have now no leader but you.

Go over.—As impossibility, so far as human skill was concerned, Josh. iii. 15.

Jordan. The name is from a root which means to descend; hence the meaning is the down flowing, or the descender, in allusion to the rapidity of its current.

The Land. Canaan, Ex. vi. 4. An appellation derived from the name of Ham's fourth son, Gen. x. 6; 1 Chron. i. 8, whose descendants constituted a large part of the inhabitants of Palestine, Gen. x. 15-19; 1 Chron. i. 13-16. It is desolate now; but we know, not only from the Scriptures, but from profane history, that it once supported a very dense population, which it could not have done had it not been exceedingly well-watered and productive.

Which I do give. It is to be theirs not by ordinary conquest, but by my gracious permission and bestowment.

Israel was the name given to Jacob after he had wrestled with the angel at Peniel, Gen. ii. 28. The national name came to be used in the time of Saul, in a narrower sense, 1 Sam. xi. 8; 2 Sam. xx. 1; 1 Kings xii. 16; and on the division of the nation it was applied, almost exclusively, to the northern kingdom.

3. Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon. Abraham was not permitted to possess a foot-breadth of the land; his descendants possessed every foot-breadth of it.

As I spake to Moses. The reference is to Ex. xxiii. 30, 31.

4. The boundaries of the land are given as in Deut. xi. 24.

The wilderness. The great Desert of Arabia Petraea, on the south of Palestine. The Israelites had passed through a part of it. It is inhabited now, as it was then, by tribes of Arabs, who live in tents, and wander from place to place as the exigencies of the seasons and the condition of the scanty pasturage demand.

This Lebanon, from a Hebrew word which means "to be white;" and signifies, hence, the white mountain. In winter it is capped with snow; and in summer the lime-stone, of which it is built, glitters almost as white as snow; and travelers seem frequently to have mistaken the distant outcropping rock for patches of snow. The Bible always represents Lebanon as lying on the northern border of Palestine, Deut. i. 7; iii. 25; xi. 24; Josh. xi. 1. Its renowned cedars once furnished timber to all the bordering countries; Solomon used them in constructing the Temple and other buildings; but at present only a few remnants of the ancient forests are found. The

highest peaks are Jebel Mukhneh, which reaches an altitude of about 10,200 feet, and Hermon, which rises, conspicuous in nearly every part of Palestine, 10,000 feet. The scenery of Lebanon is the grandest in the East. Euphrates. The largest, the longest, and by far the most important of the rivers of Western Asia. Its entire length is about one thousand seven hundred and eighty miles, more than two-thirds of which are navigable for small steam-vessels. For the same reason it is called emphatically "the river," 1 Kings iv. 21; Ezra. iv. 10, 16. It was one of the rivers of Paradise, Gen. ii. 14. The empire under David and Solomon was bounded by this river on the east, 2 Sam. viii. 3-8; 1 Ch. xviii. 3; 1 Kings iv. 21; comp 2 Chron. ix. 29. Ad the land of the Hittites, here used with reference to the Canaanites in general, as in 1 Kings x. 29; 2 Kings vii. 6; Ez. xvi. 3. Sometimes, similarly, the Amorites are mentioned in place of all the nation of the land, Gen. x. 15. Abraham dwelt among them for a time, and purchased from them the field and cave of Machpelah, Gen. xxiii. 19; xv. 9. At that time they seem to have been commercial, rather than warlike; and their courtesy was marked; but they were comparatively weak, Gen. xii. 6; xiii. 7. It was from the Hittites that Esau obtained his first two wives; and judging from these, the people must have been irreligious and immoral, Gen. xxvi. 35; xxvii. 46; xxviii. 2.

The great sea. The Mediterranean, the western boundary, called in the Bible "the great sea," because the greatest known to the Israelites; "the sea," emphatically, for the same reason, Gen. xlix. 13; Ps. lxxxix. 11; cvii. 23.

Coast, a word which is now used only with reference to the border of a sea.

5. Not any man shall stand before thee. As an enemy in battle, successfully. The promise made to the whole nation, in Deut. xi. 25, is here made to Joshua as the leader of the nation.

As I was with Moses, etc. This was not only an encouragement to Joshua, but an admonition that his success was not to proceed from his own skill and courage merely, but from the special divine blessing.

6. Be strong and firm. Denotes rather firmness in the knees, and ability to maintain one's position against the attack of foes. This expression occurs with increasing emphasis four times in this chapter. Of course it refers, figuratively, to the attitude of soul which Joshua should maintain. Compare Isa. xxxv. 3.

Which I swear. Literally, which I lifted up my hand, the form of taking a solemn oath. See Gen. xiv. 22; xxvi. 3.

7. Only. This word introduces the condition upon which God would fulfil the preceding promises. The promises of God are in one aspect conditional, and in another absolute.

All the law. Not such parts of it as seemed expedient; nor such as man might consider most important; but all. We are prone to consider a commandment important when it is agreeable, and unimportant when it is disagreeable. See Matt. v. 19; Ps. cxix. 6.

Which Moses my servant commanded thee. There may be special reference to the commands in Deut. v. 32; xxviii. 14; xxxi. 7, 8; but the general reference is to the Mosaic legislation at large.

To the right hand or to the left. This does not present the exact picture of the original, which is not that of a traveler pursuing steadily a wrong path, either to the right or the left of the proper way, but that of a traveler who dallies and wanders out of the road first on one side and then on another, as he is allured by various novel scenes and objects.

That thou mayest prosper. The original word rendered prosper may mean to act wisely; and inasmuch as wisdom brings prosperity, it also means to prosper.

8. This book of the law. The Mosaic writings. Depart out of thy mouth. Joshua is here commanded to teach the law to the people, and to make it the chief topic of his private conversation.

Meditate. It was his duty not only to teach it in public and in private, but to make it the subject of his constant study. See Ps. i. 2.

9. Have not I commanded thee. The interrogative form, as the most emphatic mode of expressing the thought.

Be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed. Joshua needed this divine encouragement; for there was much in the enterprise of conquering Canaan to dismay the stoutest heart.

Thy God is with thee. "As the soldier's valor is stimulated by the eye of his captain, so a vivid realization of the immedi-

ate presence of God is the best safeguard against unmanly terror."

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.—1. When one great man dies, another is raised up to fill his place. The cause of Christ is not dependent upon the life of any one.

2. We should not permit grief for the death of even our dearest friends to unfit us for the ordinary duties of life.

3. "The servant of Jehovah," vs. 1, is the highest title of honor.

4. We win our way to the higher stations by performing faithfully the duties of the lower.

5. Strength of will and firmness of purpose are absolutely necessary to him who would fight in behalf of God and his own soul.

6. The earthly Canaan a type of the heavenly, vs. 2-4. Consider (1) The pilgrimage by which it was reached, (2) The abundance of its delights, (3) Its perpetuity as the possession of the chosen people, and (4) The special manifestation of God in it.

7. Joshua as a type of Christ.

8. The Bible is an infallible guide; this book, vs. 8.

9. The greatest heroism is his who follows all the commandments and ordinances of God, unswerving to the end, vs. 7-9.

10. God promises Canaan to the Israelites, but also directs them to conquer it, and gives them every place that the soles of their feet should touch, that is, every place that they should occupy as conquerors.—From "Heroes and Judges."

Youths' Department.

CHILDREN'S NEW-YEAR SONG.

New-Year is coming, is coming, New-Year is coming to-night, And we'll give of our store to the needy poor, And fill their sad hearts with delight. Happy New-Year, happy New-Year, We'll give of our treasures some sad heart to cheer.

New-Year is coming, is coming, The children exultingly cry, As they join in the strain—in the glad refrain, And swell the chorus on high. Happy New-Year, happy New-Year, Joy bells ring loudly, ring loudly and clear.

New-Year is coming, is coming—The watchers have met to pray, Watching to welcome the "New-Year" in, As the "Old-Year" passes away. Happy New-Year, happy New-Year, Songs are for thee; for the old, a tear.

New-Year is coming, is coming, Oh, what will his coming bring? Some will find sad and sorrowful hours, Others will laugh and sing. Happy New-Year, happy New-Year, Come you for woe? or, come you for cheer?

New-Year is coming, is coming; And so let the wintry wind blow, While the snow lies white in the starlight dim, The fire has a brighter glow. Happy New-Year, happy New-Year, Bringing thy gladness our hearts to cheer.

New-Year is coming, is coming, New-Year is coming to-night, Lift up your voices and join in our song, And hail the young King with delight. Happy New-Year, happy New-Year, Bringing thy treasures, our hearts to cheer. Little Sower.

PARLOR GAMES.

One of the party selects in his own mind a distinguished person or thing, and then announces that he has a thought. The others undertake to guess it from his answers to their questions, and he must be familiar with the history of the subject in his mind so as not to mislead by wrong answers. Each one is entitled to twenty questions, unless he hazards a guess and misses, which puts him out. The right guesser is entitled to the next thought.

Let me tell you of an evening at home, just as I remember it. We are all seated around the student lamp in the family room; the rattle of the "Tribune," falling from father's hands, is a signal that the news-gleaning is over. Martin yawns over "Ninety-three." The click of mother's knitting-needles is perhaps a little less frequent, and Mary loses both needle and temper over yards of dress-trimming, when Annie, who generally manages to keep cool over her pretty crochet work, announces the important fact to the company that she has a thought. All are on the qui vive at the idea, and at once the catechism begins.

"Does it belong to the animal, vegetable, or mineral kingdom?" asks Mary.

"Animal," is the answer.

"Male or female?"

"Male."

"This continent or the other?"

"This."

"Is he living or dead?"

"Dead."

"Was he a native of the Eastern, Middle, Western, or Southern States?"

"He was born in the Eastern, yet lived mostly in the Middle."

"Did he figure in the literary, religious, or political world?" asks father.

"Perhaps more directly in the political,

yet he stirred the religious world somewhat."

"Did he serve the government," quizzes Martin.

"Not officially; and it was not generally considered good service in his day; yet he was counted a patriot and warrior."

"Is it considered good service now?"

"The very best, by some, but perhaps more doubt the wisdom of it."

"Was he famous at all?" doubtfully asks Martin, who cannot, from the answers, fasten on any one.

"Both in song and story," answered Annie.

"Has he been dead long?"

"His death occurred within all your memory, except Josie's who was engaged in a by-play of house-building from piles of Crandall timber by her side, and who was the only one, save the cat and canary, but were included in our game.

"How old are you, Josie?" asks Martin; adding, "this may seem a side issue, but it is really to the point."

"Seven, last May."

"Add eight to that, and you have the year of his death," says Annie.

"Well, I am glad we have something definite—something to hang fast on. Died—fifteen—years—ago;" slowly repeats Martin, while thinking. Did one act bring him notoriety?"

"One particular act brought out his whole life, and made his death long remembered."

"Was he looked upon as a martyr by some?" pursued Martin.

"Very much in that light."

"Did he die a natural death, or was he killed?"

"Killed," emphatically.

"Were the two first letters of his name John Brown?"

"John Brown's body lies a-mouldering in the grave, His soul is marching on,"

sings Martin, who, having guessed right, is entitled to the next thought, and he determines to have a puzzler. At the end of five minutes he professes readiness for the cross-questioning. The first question elicits the fact that the object in search of belongs to the vegetable kingdom.

"Is it a remarkable species or a noted one of a species?" asks Annie.

"It is one of a species."

"Did any of us ever see this particular one?"

"The species is supposed to be as old as sin, and to be somewhat and somehow connected with it. We see daily the species; the famous one we only know from history. It figured in the fourteenth century.

"Will you tell us in what part of the world it did exist?"

"In Switzerland."

"Was it in itself remarkable, or did the acts of another bring it into notice?"

"Its greatness consists in its being associated with a famous act which occurred on the eve of a great revolution. We are told, in fact, that this act hurried it on."

"Are we familiar with it?"

"Every schoolboy is. It was a case where a person's skill was turned against him—used as a means of punishment. The name of possessing this remarkable possession of the power itself got him out all right, as it most always will."

"I don't see what all this has to do with a certain vegetable or fruit," argues impetuous Mary.

"No," says Martin, "I suppose not, but I do."

"Well, was this act or incident real or only legendary?" continues Mary.

"It is handed down to us as a veritable fact, and I have always accepted it as such; but you know the truth of the story of Pocahontas and Captain John Smith is doubted by some, and even Shakespeare is considered a myth. I can only say the incident is as real to us as if it had truly happened."

"Was the fruit sweet or sour?" asks father, who had only been studying the answers of late.

"Metaphorically speaking, very sour at first, to the taste, but it proved a sweet savor of life."

"I have it," says father. "Was it the apple that William Tell shot on his boy's head to save his life?"

"The very same," answered Martin.

There is another game called "Word and Question," which would interest many. Each one is furnished with a slip of paper and is told to write a word at the top of the paper, fold it over and pass it to the next left hand neighbor. Now each one writes a question under the word, and folds it over again. The slips are all dropped into a basket and thoroughly stirred up. Then each one draws a slip, opens and reads to himself, and writes a rhyme, in which the word is introduced and the question answered. After all are written, they are collected and shaken well together, and one of the party is chosen to draw and read.

You may, at first, think it a dry game, but the reading batches out a good deal of fun—such odd things are connected together, and of course nobody is supposed to know who wrote which.—Christian Weekly.