MOSES AND ISRAEL. INTERNATIONAL SUNDAY SCHOOL COMMENTARY. VOLUME THREE- JANUARY TO JULY, 1874. SACRED TEXT OF THE LESSONS

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MOSES AND ISRAEL.

INTERNATIONAL

SUNDAY SCHOOL COMMENTARY.

VOLUME THREE—JANUARY TO JULY, 1874.

SACRED TEXT OF THE LESSONS.

REVISED BY

PROF. MEAD, D.D., AND PROF. BLISS, D.D.

WITH NOTES PREPARED EXPRESSLY TO MEET THE WANTS OF THE SUNDAY SCHOOL TEACHER. EMBRACING COMMENTARY, BIBLE DICTIONARY AND SPIRITUAL INSTRUCTION.

BY

REV. FRANKLIN JOHNSON, D.D.,

AUTHOR OF NOTES IN VOLUME SECOND, LESSONS IN MATTHEW.

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REVISER'S PREFACE.

THE revised translation of the passages of Scripture embraced in the following Lessons, aims to give the sense of the original as directly, and as exactly as possible, and in a manner as nearly analogous to that of the Hebrew as English idiom will allow. The author has endeavored scrupulously to observe the distinction between *translation* and *interpretation*, and has asked constantly, not What is the most agreeable, or even the clearest, expression, but What is most precisely adequate to the Hebrew; not What does the sacred writer probably mean, so much as What has he actually said. This idea will have been realized just in proportion as the common English reader shall be enabled to apprehend at once from these pages what a common Hebrew reader might have so apprehended from the original writings in the days, say, of Malachi,—the plain portions plainly, the figurative portions figuratively, those of doubtful signification doubtfully, and so the whole revelation of God's word and ways *just as* it was first given. Such is the high ideal! None know so well the difficulty of attaining to it as those who have most earnestly and patiently labored at the task. None can be more ready to offer than they to receive intelligent criticism which may help their work toward its more perfect accomplishment.

In the Lessons taken from the Book of Exodus, the reviser has had, besides the most important published versions and commentaries, the valuable assistance of notes on the translation of this Book, furnished for the American Bible Union, by Professor C. M. MEAD, of the Andover Theological Seminary. From the judgments expressed in those notes he has seldom been constrained to differ (although he has ventured upon changes not contemplated in them), and he has much to regret that the benefit of so much learning, discretion, and taste could not be had at a greater number of points and through the whole extent of his work.

GEO. R. BLISS.

UNIVERSITY AT LEWISBURG,
November 24, 1873.

PREFACE TO THE COMMENTARY.

THE notes of this volume have been prepared with special reference to the wants of Sabbath School teachers. These wants are threefold:

1. A commentary upon the lesson which shall furnish him with the results of the latest investigations. It should avoid those doubtful speculations with which the horizon of every age is filled, which constitute the vanguard of discovery, and which, having served their purpose of provoking discussion and research, disappear forever. But, on the other hand, it should reject no sound conclusion because it is recent. Whilst, therefore, it need not refute false theories, unless they have obtained such currency as to mislead the teacher, it should largely supply the materials of intelligent criticism, answering, so far as possible, every question which the most deligent study of the lesson can suggest, and stating not simply the conclusions of scholars, but the processes by which they have been reached. It must also furnish a minute criticism of the text, pausing to explain its grammatical connections, passing no word because it is small, and embracing thus a mass of elementary matter not found in commentaries addressed to the learned. It should so explain the text as to answer the objections of unbelievers; yet it should avoid a too polemic tone, lest it impress the teacher, and through him the class, with evil suggestions that would otherwise never enter the mind, and thus defeat the very purpose of its being.

2. A Bible Dictionary in which the persons and places mentioned in the lesson are discussed at length. The localities of the text should not merely be identified, but described. Dr. John Hall has recently called the attention of teachers to the interest which history derives from vivid descriptions of its scenes, and to the importance of rendering Scriptural history fascinating by enabling the pupil to see in fancy the places to which it conducts him. The author of a Sabbath School commentary should furnish the necessary assistance.

3. A book teaching the way of life. The object of Sabbath School teaching is not merely to reach the intellect and store the mind; it also aims to win the soul. Our most able instructors are more and more impressed with the importance of this work. Without it the teacher is like one who should perpetually lay the foundations of buildings and leave them to perish uncompleted. The illustration of the lesson to the intelligence of the pupil is but the beginning of his task; to touch the heart is the real object of his toil. But this part of his duty is not only most important; it is also most difficult. It requires very diligent study to derive from the lesson those practical inferences which can alone make its inculcation a spiritual benefit. The Sabbath School commentary should furnish the largest facilities for this exercise, so necessary and yet so often neglected, so delightful to the teacher who performs it, and so disheartening to many who feel at once its importance and their own neglect.

Such is the ideal which the author has proposed to himself. He is conscious of having fallen often far below it; yet he is not without the hope that his labors may

prove helpful to those for whom he has wrought. He has had at his command the admirable library of the American Bible Union, the Astor Library, the Boston Public Library, and the General Theological Library of Boston. The discussions of localities have been derived from the best and most recent sources; and in some instances the writer has been assisted by his own recollections of a brief Eastern journey in the spring of 1869. Great attention has been paid to the typical element of the Old Testament. Everything of a denominational character has been avoided. Every topic vitally related to the lesson, even though not directly suggested by its words, is fully treated. The historical links connecting the lessons are briefly sketched; and a connected life of Moses is thus supplied. The practical observations, designed as skeletons and hints of child-sermons, are given in great abundance, with the hope that, while no one teacher will be able to employ all those attached to any lesson, each will select such as are best adapted to the pupils committed to his charge, and seek to make them profitable by enlarging and illustrating, as practice will speedily enable him to do.

FRANKLIN JOHNSON.

116 SHERMAN AVENUE, NEWARK, N. J.,
December 1, 1873.

THE BOOK OF EXODUS.

THE larger number of the following lessons are selected from the Book of Exodus, which is so called because it is chiefly occupied with the departure of Israel from Egypt, and the events which immediately preceded and followed it: the name is derived from the Greek, and means *a going forth*. In Hebrew the book is named from the first words which occur in it: *And these are the names*. That it was written by Moses he himself affirms, Ex. 24 : 4; and our Lord recognized him as the author, Mark 12 : 26; Luke 20 : 37. As we pursue its study we shall often admire the minute accuracy of its allusions to the customs and institutions of Egypt and to the geography of the Sinaitic peninsula. This accuracy, which the researches of scholars and travellers have fully demonstrated, proves that the book was written by one who, like Moses, was "instructed in all the wisdom of the Egyptians," and was an eye-witness of the events which occurred in the wilderness.