

INTERNATIONAL SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON

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LESSON FOR OCTOBER 26

SIN OF MOSES AND AARON.

LESSON TEXT—Numbers 20:1-13.
GOLDEN TEXT—"Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in Thy sight, O Jehovah, my rock and my redeemer." Ps. 124.

Forty years have passed since Israel committed its fatal mistake of disobedience. This lesson is a three-sided picture. A murmuring, blindly disobedient people; God, the righteous director of the affairs of men; Moses and Aaron, the divinely appointed but sorely tested leaders of the people.

I. The people's petition, vv. 1-5.—The name of this place was Meribah (v. 13), which means strife. It was not the fault of God nor the desired leadings of Moses that brought these people to this place. Forty years of wandering seemingly had not taught them this lesson. Many people accuse God when they themselves are to be blamed for the evil that comes upon them. James 1:13-15. What a terrible sin ingratitude is and how incredibly ungrateful these people are.

Their Usual Plan.

II. God's Plan, vv. 6-8. Moses and Aaron followed their usual, and the wisest plan of taking their difficulty to God. Separated from the people they throw themselves upon their faces before him and he graciously manifested himself unto them and gave them explicit directions (v. 8). Other times Moses had had this same experience, ch. 14:5; 16:4, Ex. 17:4, etc. It is an inspiration to recall the multiplied times God has used these common agencies in the hands of his consecrated servants to work his mighty deeds—an ox-goad, a boy's sling, a lamp and a pitcher, a few loaves and two small fishes.

III. Moses' and Aaron's Pride, vv. 9-13. These servants began very properly to carry out God's instructions. They took the rod from God, "as commanded" (v. 9). They gathered the people together in the right place "before the rock." But then began their failure. Some may plead extenuating circumstances or great provocation. But Moses, for he takes the place of leadership, made a four-fold mistake which was too serious to be overlooked or to go unpunished. (1) He deceived the people. He had just come from "tent of meeting" (v. 6) and, as heretofore, the people expected some message from Jehovah, whereas he gave them not God's words, but those of his own coining. This ought to be a warning to ministers and teachers, viz., that the people have a right to expect from their God-called and instructed leaders, his word, not the opinions of man nor the wisdom of the sages.

Considered Them Rebels.

Moses in his pride separated himself from the people. He assumed a "holier-than-thou" attitude. He looked upon the people, over this line of separation, as being rebels, and God will not allow Christian leaders to stand out admonition upon a platter of anger. (2) He took the glory to himself. This was more serious still and was in direct violation of the spirit of those laws he had received upon the Mount, Ex. 20:5. "Must we fetch you water," is quite different from "Thou shalt bring them forth." This is that which has set aside many Christian workers. We must not lean to our own understanding nor fail to acknowledge that it is God that works, and he is to be the glory. Look up Gen. 40:8; Dan. 2:28-30; Acts 3:12-16; I. Cor. 3:7. (4) Moses smote the rock. God had told Moses to "speak unto the rock" (v. 8) whereas he smote the rock as though the power were in the rod or the strong arm back of the rod. Exact obedience is expected by God and to do anything else is to doubt his power, to reflect upon his word and to draw attention away from him and upon ourselves. Our attention has been called to the fact that on a previous occasion, Ex. 17:5, 6, God had commanded Moses to smite the rock, that the rock suggests Christ (I. Cor. 10:4), that he was to be smitten but once and thereafter nearly a word of prayer would bring forth water, see Luke 11:13. No man is essential to God's plan though God's plans are always worked out through men. When men fail to see this God speedily sets them aside and appoints other leaders. Moses and Aaron fell through unbelief (v. 12) and Moses is compelled to give up his place of leadership and is not allowed to enter the land of promise though graciously granted a view of it. (Deut. 3:23-26; 32:49, 50; 34:4). Moses "spoke unadvisedly with his lips." Moses had also to suffer for Israel.

IV. The chief points. There are three great teachings in this lesson. The wrong of having a provoked spirit, one contrary to that of the God of Mercy and Grace. It is hard to learn that God is hindered by those who profess to be his servants but who manifest such a spirit. Again God must be represented, glorified, by those who profess to be his servants. To let our methods, our personality or our ideals come between man and God involves his jealousy. And lastly, the measure of privilege is the measure of responsibility and understanding.



FRAN

BY JOHN BRECKENRIDGE ELLIS

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SYNOPSIS.

Fran arrives at Hamilton Gregory's home in Littleburg, but finds him absent conducting the choir at a camp meeting. She repairs thither in search of him, laughs during the service and is asked to leave. Abbott Ashton, superintendent of schools, escorts Fran from the tent. He tells her Gregory is a wealthy man, deeply interested in charity work, and a pillar of the church. Ashton becomes greatly interested in Fran and while taking leave of her, holds her hand and is seen by Sapphira Clinton, sister of Robert Clinton, chairman of the school board. Fran tells Gregory she wants a home with him. Grace Noir, Gregory's private secretary, takes a violent dislike to Fran and advises her to go away at once. Fran hints at a twenty-year-old secret, and Gregory in agitation asks Grace to leave the room. Fran relates the story of how Gregory married a young girl at Springfield while attending college and then deserted her. Fran is the child of that marriage. Gregory had married his present wife three years before the death of Fran's mother. Fran takes a liking to Mrs. Gregory. Gregory explains that Fran is the daughter of a very dear friend who is dead. Fran agrees to the story. Mrs. Gregory insists on her making her home with them and takes her to her room. It is decided that Fran must go to school. Grace shows persistent interest in Gregory's story of his dead friend and hints that Fran may be an impostor. Fran declares that the secretary must go. Grace begins nagging tactics in an effort to drive Fran from the Gregory home, but Mrs. Gregory remains staunch in her friendship. Fran is ordered before Superintendent Ashton to be punished for insubordination in school. Chairman Clinton is present. The affair ends with Fran leaving the school in company of the two men to the amazement of the scandal-mongers of the town. Abbott, while taking a walk alone at midnight, finds Fran on a bridge telling her fortune by cards. She tells Abbott that she is the famous lion tamer, Fran Nonpareil. She tired of circus life and sought a home.

CHAPTER XI.—Continued.

As he looked into her eyes, all sense of the abnormal disappeared. "I have the imagination, Fran," he exclaimed impulsively, "if it is your life." "In spite of the lions?" she asked, almost sternly. "You needn't tell me a word," Abbott said. "I know all that one need know; it's written in your face, a story of sweet innocence and brave patience." "But I want you to know," "Good!" he replied with a sudden smile. "Tell the story, then; if you were an Odyssey, you couldn't be too long." "The first thing I remember is waking up to feel the car jerked, or stopped, or started and seeing lights flash past the windows—lanterns of the brakemen, or lamps of some town, dancing along the track. The sleeping car was home—the only home I knew. All night long there was the groaning of the wheels, the letting off of steam of the calls of the men. Bounder Brothers had their private train, and mother and I lived in our Pullman car. After a while I knew that folks stared at us because we were different from others. We were show-people. Then the thing was to look like you didn't know, or didn't care, how much people stared. After that, I found out that I had no father; he'd deserted mother, and her uncle had turned her out of doors for marrying against his wishes, and she'd have starved if it hadn't been for the show-people." "Dear Fran!" whispered Abbott tenderly. "Mother had gone to Chicago, hoping for a position in some respectable office, but they didn't want a typewriter who wasn't a stenographer. It was



"Poor little Nonpareil!" murmured Abbott wistfully. Winter—and mother had me—I was so little and had! In a cheap lodging house, mother got to know La Gonzatti, and she persuaded mother to wait with her for the season to open up, then go with Bounder Brothers; they were wintering in Chicago. It was such a kind of life as mother had never dreamed of, but it was more convenient than starving, and she thought it would give her a chance to find father—that traveling all over the country. La Gonzatti was a lion-tamer, and that's what mother learned, and those two were the ones who could go inside Samson's cage. The life was awfully hard, but she got to like it, and everybody was kind to us, and money came pouring in, and she

was always hoping to run across a clue to my father—and never did." She paused, but at the pressure of Abbott's sympathetic hand, she went on with renewed courage. "When I was big enough, I wore a tiny black skirt, and a red coat with shiny buttons, and I bent the drum in the carnival band. You ought to have seen me—so little. . . . Abbott, you can't imagine how little I was! We had about a dozen small shows in our company, fortune-tellers, minstrels, magic wonders, and all that—and the band had to march from one tent to the next, and stand out in front and play, to get the crowd in a bunch, so the free exhibition could work on their nerves. And I'd bent away, in my red coat . . . and there were always the strange faces, staring, staring—but I was so little! Sometimes they would smile at me, but mother had taught me never to speak to anyone, but to wear a glazed look like this—"

"How frightfully cold!" Abbott shivered. Then he laughed, and so did Fran. They had entered Littleburg. He added wickedly: "And how dreadfully near we are getting to your home."

Fran gurgled. "Wouldn't Grace Noir just die if she could see us!" That sobered Abbott; considering his official position, it seemed high time for reflection.

Fran resumed abruptly. "But I never really liked it because what I wanted was a home—to belong to somebody. Then I got to hating the bold stare of people's eyes, and their foolish gaping mouths, I hated being always on exhibition with every gesture watched, as if I'd been one of the trained dogs. I hated the public. I wanted to get away from the world—clear away from everybody like I am now . . . with you. Isn't it great!"

"Mammoth!" Abbott declared, watering her words with liberal imagination.

"I must talk fast, or the Gregory house will be looming up at us. Mother taught me all she knew, though she hated books; she made herself think she was only in the show life till she could make a little more—always just a little more—she really loved it, you see. But I loved the books—study—anything that wasn't the show. It was kind of friendly when I began feeding Samson."

"Poor little Nonpareil!" murmured Abbott wistfully.

"And often when the show was being unloaded, I'd be stretched out in our sleeper, with a school book pressed close to the cinder-specked window, catching the first light. When the mauls were pounding away at the tent-pins, maybe I'd hunt a seat on some cage, if it had been drawn up under a tree, or maybe it'd be the ticket wagon, or even the stake pile—there you'd see me studying away for dear life, dressed in a plain little dress, trying to look like ordinary folks. Such a queer little chap, I was—and always trying to pretend that I wasn't! You'd have laughed to see me."

"Laughed at you!" cried Abbott indignantly. "Indeed I shouldn't."

"No!" exclaimed Fran, patting his arm impulsively.

"Dear little wonder!" he returned conclusively.

"I must tell you about one time," she continued gaily. "We were in New Orleans at the Mardi Gras, and I was expected to come into the ring riding Samson—not the vicious old lion, but cub—that was long after my days of the drum and the red coat, bless you! I was a lion-tamer, now, nearly thirteen years old, if you'll believe me. Well! And what was I saying—you keep looking so friendly, you make me forget myself. Goodness, Abbott, it's so much fun talking to you I've never mentioned all this to one soul in this town. Well—oh, yes; I was to have come into the ring, riding Samson. Everybody was waiting for me. The band nearly blew itself black in the face. And what do you think was the matter?"

"Did Samson balk?" "No, it wasn't that. I was lying on the cage floor, with my head on Samson—Samson the Second made such a gorgeous and animated pillow!—and I was learning geology. I'd just found out that the world wasn't made in seven United States days, and it was such surprising news that I'd forgotten all about cages and lions and tents—if you could have seen me lying there—if you just could!"

"But I can!" Abbott declared. "Your long black hair is mingled with his tawny mane, and your cheeks are blooming—"

"And my feet are crossed," cried Fran. "And your feet are crossed; and those little hands hold up the book,"

Abbott swiftly sketched in the details; "and your bosom is rising and falling, and your lips are parted—like now—showing perfect teeth—"

"Dressed in my tights and fluffy lace and jewels," Fran helped, "with bare arms and stars all in my hair. But the end came to everything when—when mother died. Her last words were about my father—how she hoped some day I'd meet him, and tell him she had forgiven. Mother sent me to her half-uncle. My! but that was mighty unpleasant!" Fran shook her head vigorously. "He began telling me about how mother had done wrong in marrying secretly, and he threw it up to me and I just told him. He's dead, now. I had to go back to the show—there wasn't any other place. But a few months ago I was of age, and I came into Uncle Ephraim's



It Was as if Abbott Had Suddenly Raised a Window in a Raw Wind.

property, because I was the only living relation he had, so he couldn't help my getting it. I'll bet he's mad, now, that he didn't make a will! When he said that mother—it don't matter what he said—I just walked out of his door, that time, with my head up high like this . . . Oh, goodness, we're here." They stood before Hamilton Gregory's silent house.

"Good night," Fran said hastily. "It's a mistake to begin a long story on a short road. My! But wasn't that a short road, though!"

"Sometime, you shall finish that story, Fran. I know of a road much longer than the one we've taken—we might try it some day, if you say so." "I do say so. What road is it?"

Abbott had spoken of a long road without definite purpose, yet there was a glimmering perception of the reality, as he showed by saying tremulously: "This is the beginning of it—"

He bent down, as if to take her in his arms.

But Fran drew back, perhaps with a blush that the darkness concealed, certainly with a little laugh. "I'm afraid I'd get lost on that road," she murmured, "for I don't believe you know the way very well, yourself."

She sped lightly to the house, unlocked the door, and vanished.

CHAPTER XII.

Grace Captures the Outposts.

The next evening there was choir practice at the Walnut Street church. Abbott Ashton, hesitating to make his nightly plunge into the dust-clouds of learning, paused in the vestibule to take a peep at Grace. He knew she never missed a choir practice, for though she could neither sing nor play the organ, she thought it her duty to set an example of regular attendance that might be the means of bringing those who could do one or the other. Abbott was not disappointed; but he was surprised to see Mrs. Jefferson in her wheel-chair at the end of the pew occupied by the secretary, while between them sat Mrs. Gregory. His surprise became astonishment on discovering Fran and Simon Jefferson in the choir loft, slyly whispering and nibbling candy, with the air of soldiers off duty—for the choir was in the throes of a solo.

Abbott, as if hypnotized by what he had seen, slowly entered the auditorium. Fran's keen eyes discovered him, and her face showed elfish mischief. Grace, following Fran's eyes, found the cause of the odd smile, and beckoned to Abbott. Hamilton Gregory, following Grace's glance—for he saw no one but her at the practices, since she inspired him with deepest fervor—felt suddenly as if he had lost something; he had often experienced the same sensation on seeing Grace ap-

proached by some unattached gentleman. Grace motioned to Abbott to sit beside her, with a concentration of attention that showed her purpose of reaching a definite goal unsuspected by the other.

"I'm so glad Fran has taken a place in the choir," Abbott whispered to Grace. "And look at Simon Jefferson—who'd have thought it!" Grace looked at Simon Jefferson; she also looked at Fran, but her compressed lips and reproving eye expressed none of Abbott's gladness. However, she responded with—"I am so glad you are here, Professor Ashton, for I'm in trouble, and I can't decide which way it is my duty to turn. Will you help me? I am going to trust you—it is a matter relating to Mr. Gregory."

Abbott was pleased that she should think him competent to advise her respecting her duty; at the same time he regretted that her confidence related to Mr. Gregory. "Professor Ashton," she said softly, "does my position as hired secretary to Mr. Gregory carry with it the obligation to warn him of any misconduct in his household?"

The solo was dying away, and, sweet and low, it fell from heaven like manna upon his soul, blending divinely with the secretary's voice. Her expression "hired" sounded like a tragic note—to think of one so beautiful, so meek, so surrounded by mellow hymn-notes, being hired!

"You hesitate to advise me, before you know all," she said, "and you are right. In a moment the choir will be singing louder, and we can all talk together. Mrs. Gregory should be consulted, too."

Grace, conscious of doing all that one could in consulting Mrs. Gregory, "too," looked toward the choir loft, and smiled into Hamilton Gregory's eyes. How his baton, inspired by that smile, cut magic runes in the air!

"Mrs. Gregory," Grace said in a low voice, "I suppose Professor Ashton is so surprised at seeing you in church—it has been more than five months, hasn't it?"

"Mrs. Gregory could not help feeling in the way, because her husband seemed to share Grace's feeling. Instinctively she turned to her mother and laid her hand on the invalid's arm.

"They ain't bothering me, Lucy," said the old lady, alertly. "I can't hear their noise, and when I shut my eyes I can't see their motions."

"I have something to tell you both," Grace said solemnly. "Last night, I couldn't sleep, and that made me sensitive to noises. I thought I heard some one slipping from the house just as the clock struck half-past eleven. It seemed incredible, for I knew if it were anyone, it was that Fran, and I didn't think even she would do that."

It was as if Abbott had suddenly raised a window in a raw wind. His temperature descended. The other's manner of saying "That Fran!" obscured his glass of the future.

Mrs. Gregory said quickly, "Fran leave the house at half-past eleven? Impossible."

"How do you know," Abbott asked, "that Fran left the house at such a time of the night?" The question was

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

PETRIFIED FALLS IN ALGERIA

Remarkable Mineral Formation Which Puzzles Scientists Called "The Bath of the Damned."

With all the beauty of a cataract of living water, there is in Algeria a remarkable petrified waterfall which recently has been engaging the attention of scientists.

This is the Hammam-Meskutin, which means "The Bath of the Damned," and is located 62 miles from Constantine, on the site of the ancient town of Cirta. This solidified cascade is the production of calcareous deposits from sulphurous and ferruginous mineral springs, issuing from the depths of the earth at a temperature of 95 degrees Centigrade.

"The Bath of the Damned," even from a near viewpoint, looks for all the world like a great wall of water dashing into a swirling pool at its foot, yet its gleaming, graceful curves and the apparently swirling eddies at its base are as fixed and immovable as if carved from the face of a granite cliff.

Many centuries have, of course, gone to the making of the deposits, and the springs were well known to the an-

cient Romans. The name Hammam-Meskutin was given to the stone cataract in an allusion to a legend that the waterfall was petrified by Allah, punishing the impiety of unbelievers by turning all the members of a tribe into stone. At night, so the story runs, its stone dwellers of the remote past are freed from their strange fetters, come to life and resume their normal shapes.

Queer Uses for the Crocus. The crocus is nowadays held to justify its existence by its beauty, but in bygone centuries it was cultivated with an eye to profit—its saffron being in high demand both as an aromatic and as a flavoring for cakes and pies. A distinction of crocus blossoms, also, was held to be good for strengthening the lungs and heart, and as a preventive of plague. Evidence of the flower's commercial value survives in the name of the chief center of its cultivation, Saffron Walden, but saffron nowadays is appreciated only by the sparrows, who wreck the crocuses to obtain it.

Ammonia water that has been used for washing may be used for plants. It is an excellent fertilizer.