

AN EPOCH PRODUCED A MAN

The International Sunday School Lesson For March 30 Is, "God's Hand in a Nation's Life"—Joshua 24:14-28

By WILLIAM T. ELLIS

Opportunities and possibilities mark this lesson. Like much of the present-day discussion of the world's need, it is concerned with the theme of a man for the hour. The greatest glory of these recent epochal days in the history of the western world is the emergency of men who under old conditions have been submerged. Within two short years a galaxy of men have attained national proportions on the basis of sheer force and ability, while a whole host of machine-made "leaders" have dropped out of sight. The hope of thoughtful patriots in these latter days is that the new stress that is being laid on the stamina of our boys in France will effect an increased stability of personal char-

acter among the people of the land generally. For it is more than that we need. We have been driven sharply back upon the old, old truth that only personality is the salvation for the times; that all of the world's needs are embodied in its need for manhood. The events of the war, with all their homiletic character, and all their exhortation to return to the first principles of morality and religion, will yet have failed to produce their ultimate results if out of them have not come more men of increased might, ready to take up the burdens of the public weal. Undoubtedly there is apparent throughout the length and breadth of the continent a new sense of individual

sovereignty. The soldiers have taught us all. Men are realizing their responsibility. That would never before. They are talking less about the privileges of patriotism and more about its duties. The plain man in the commonplace sphere is lifting up his head with new consciousness that he has a right to challenge the acts and deeds of the mightiest public servant. Surely these are good times for manhood. While the statisticians write the staggering figures of the new world's wealth, they are overlooking the greatest asset of all, namely the sheer manhood which, in its increasing degree, is the sovereign characteristic of the new era.

A MAN LOOMING LARGE
What has this to do with the present Sunday School Lesson which is indicated as a review of the forty years' history of the life of Israel from the Exodus to the death of Moses. Simply that those forty years spell one grand word of three letters—Moses. Whoever peers into the dim, dusky gray years finds, looming mountain high above the blinding glare of the desert sand—above the din of the gangling voices of a many-minded people, the strong figure of which the world has said, "There was a man." The greatest contribution of those forty years was just Moses. One man's greatness redeemed the entire nation from the mire of the Egyptian slaves into a new national identity, and gave to the formless mob a place forever brilliant among the nations of the world, why he has contributed to the imperishable annals of history a portrait of a great man, one of the world's very greatest.

Moses died without ever reaching the land of promise. He labored and others entered into his rest. But in all Canaan there was no personality, until a Greater than Moses came, equal to that of the man learned in the wisdom of the Egyptians, and equipped with the greater wisdom that comes from communion with Jehovah, who had shaped Israel's destiny and given her her law. Among the great figures who adorn the rotunda of the magnificent Library of Congress at Washington, may be seen the figure of Moses, calm and majestic, seeming even in the cold marble to be walking apart from the common order of things. No better review of this quarter's Sunday School sessions can be made than a consideration of the qualities which marked the greatness of Moses.

A Man Who Dared
All the world's sages have declared that courage ranks among the first of human virtues. It was from first to last a man of appalling audacity. He dared attempt the highest possible destiny for himself. That takes courage. Most people are content to die with the years, to come to them with the years. Only the rare man, so rare as to be called great, resolutely achieves for himself the character which he, in his moments of clearest perception, has deemed worth while. The courage that wins character must come from the inbred littleness of human nature every day. His environment tends to compress life. Moses rose above his environment. He was a great man when in the court of Pharaoh; he was a great man when on the lonely mountain side, he played the part of a shepherd; he was a great man, when, in majestic solitude, he led Israel through his forty years of wandering.

One shrinks from saying—lest it seem to be merely a conventionally pious remark—that the secret of Moses' courage was his religion. But we have abundant record that he was a timid man. If left to himself he would have spent his day in obscurity. His greatness cannot be credited to natural endowment. He braved the brave because he was not inborn courage, but imparted courage. It took the "fear not" of Jehovah to stiffen his backbone. That is why religion does not make a man a hero. The sublime moral heroism of the world has mostly been on the part of spiritually-minded men, whose cowardice has been consumed in the bright glare of faith. If Moses had not first met with God, he would not have dared to meet with Pharaoh. There is significance in the fact that the heroes of recent developments in American life have been for the most part Christian men.

The Man Who Can Wait
The twentieth century is in such a desperate hurry that its bridges are buckling, its big buildings collapsing and its men being sent to sanatoria. A modern person almost gasps when he contemplates the forty years of retirement which Moses spent in the wilderness. Yet there is no truth more plainly taught in history than this, that preparation must precede performance; that great goals must wait for the patient man. Enduring deeds cannot be done overnight. Character is not a product of a camp meeting. One deep emotional experience does not make over a life. Slow and quiet accretions of the years are necessary to bring a spirit to ripeness. So he who would work for his fellow men and who would work with God, must be willing to take time, as Moses did. A very human man and no demigod, was this Moses; his fits of impatience link him closely to the common run of us. Yet these only serve to throw into high relief his essential patience. When he found what was God's program, he was willing to wait on it. His natural impulsiveness is shown at the slaughter of the Egyptian, became well retained in before he reached Mount Nebo and had his first and last look over the Promised Land. Write it deeply that patience must be at the foundation of greatness of character.

Where There is No Vision
"Where there is no vision the people perish" says the wise man. The salvation of any society is the men and women of imagination who dream dreams and see visions. This Moses had a seeing eye. He could see God in the bush, he could see God on the in-burned, became a nation of a brow-beaten, spiritless horde of captives. Countless obstacles confronted him in the great task he undertook, but he had the gift of seeing through and over the obstacles to the victory which lay beyond. This power of vision which rises above the petty circumstances and which does not magnify the near at hand into all important, is vital to peace and power in life. If some people had a little more vision, they would be able to take a square look at the pettiness, puerility, sordidness and vanity of their own lives. They would see the inconsequentialness of most of the pursuits that engage their powers. They would be spurred to live for ends worth living for. Canaan, flowing with milk and honey, is the instance not of the grumbling ones who are concerned primarily with food, raiment and physical comfort, but of those who pursue great ideals.

This western world is a product of vision. Its greatness is assured until it loses its vision. That would be a worse calamity than the greatest financial panic that could overtake the country. Of all the advances of war, none is greater than the opened eyes of our soldiers and of our people.

The Essence of Patriotism
The patriotism of Moses was linked vitally with the vicariousness, which is the essence of patriotism. Moses lived and labored for the sake of others. His trials were not his own, but his peoples. He loved his fellow countrymen better than he loved his life. For their sake he was willing to be accused; for their sake he dared the wrath of Jehovah; for their sake he underwent all the rigors of the wilderness; from the first blow that felled the Egyptian to the last sublime strain of his dying song, his thought was of Israel and not of himself.

The devil looks out for number one so do great many people. But all those who bear in their spirits the marks of the truly great, which is to say the marks of the Lord Jesus, have a concern for their fellow-men. They are hardened by society's woes; the ills that afflict mankind touch their hearts, their lives are given, not to any bread and butter existence for the mere maintenance of their physical selves, but to the great causes of human service. There is one invariable test of greatness—no man is more than commonplace and small who is looking out primarily for himself. In

this sense "number one" indicates the lowest grade. It thus comes about that the world calls to its places of leadership the men whose unselfishness it has tested. In the long run mankind knows the lovers of their fellowmen. Society ever demands the Moses virtue of vicariousness of the man whom it calls to its head.

TROOP 28 HIKES
At a regular meeting of Troop 28 on Friday March 21, the plans for a hike were made. The hike took place on Monday following. The scouts and Scoutmaster Martin hiked out to a wooded hollow near Paxtang Park where a fire was built

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and the members of the troop were treated to toasted marshmallows. We also had some drilling practice on the way under the direction of our new Assistant Scoutmaster, Frank LeVan.

JACOB MATTER, Scribe.

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39c value Seco Silk, 27-inch width, all colors, 29c.
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