

Sabbath School Teacher.

LESSON XIII.

FIRST QUARTERLY REVIEW.

THE SONG OF MOSES. (Exodus xv. 1-18.)

PARALLEL PASSAGES.—Ex. i. 7-22; Ex. iii. 1-18; Ps. cx. 1-15; Ex. xiii. 8-22; Ps. xvi. 1-10; Ps. cxi. 1-10; Ex. xvii. 8-10.

LEADING TEXT.—Who is like thee, O Lord, among the gods? who is like thee, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders? Ex. xv. 11.

We have been watching, step after step, the progress of one of the most famous struggles of history. A soldier in a battle is unable to take in the whole situation. He is busy with his own place and duties. The commander, surveying the field from a height can take in the whole issue. In each particular lesson, we—pupils and teachers—are as the soldiers, doing the best we can in that particular place. To-day, we survey like a general, the whole field, and see the two opposed powers, their hosts, their respective weapons, and the final result.

We can study this conflict with advantage in connection with this noble inspired hymn of Moses; because it describes in the most grateful spirit, and with many allusions such as an eye-witness would make, the closing scene, in which are collected all the features of the great and lengthened struggle.

I. THE OPPOSED POWERS.—God and the world, of which Satan is the god (2 Cor. iv. 4). The "world" represents all that is not of God and opposed to God. In heathen lands it teaches to worship idols. In all lands it leads men to seek their good without God. Among us it leads to the worship of mammon, or fashion, or power, or whatever is counted chief good for men. There it sets up nature, under the various forms in which fruitfulness or beauty or usefulness is represented, and it taught men to worship first the unseen (ideal) nature, and then the outward and sensible signs of this nature; and as always happened, the people soon worshipped the creatures themselves according to Rom. i. 25, which see.

Hence the sun, and other heavenly bodies, the Nile, the cattle ("sacred animals"), even the beetle, were objects of worship, and against these "gods of Egypt" Jehovah executed vengeance. The result might well lead Moses to sing "He hath triumphed gloriously" (v. 1).

II. THE HOSTS IN THE FIELD.—Israel and the Egyptians. It is easy to see which might have been expected to conquer. The Israelites' condition gave no hope—few, feeble, without military skill, enslaved, spirit-broken, and strangers in the land. Contrast with this the Egyptians' position—strong, numerous, warlike, rich, skilled, at the head of the civilization of that time.

Notice also that when Israel had no hope or courage, God, who chose their fathers, and loved them of his grace, stirred them up to look for deliverance. He was their "fathers' God" (v. 2).

But when he would show his power over the world he selects the strongest and greatest nation of that time. But he does impel that nation to war with him. The nation is driven "by its own lusts." Its spirit, from first to last was that of pride, ambition, greed, and oppression. The words spoken in hot haste, as eager men gasp out their sentences in the midst of busy preparations, were true of their thoughts throughout. "I will pursue—I will overtake—I will divide the spoil—my lust shall be satisfied upon them—I will draw my sword—my hand shall destroy them" (v. 9).

The challenge of battle is from Pharaoh. "Who is the Lord that I should obey him?" "The Lord's claim is just and reasonable. Let my people go that they may serve me."

Notice how much of God is seen in this warfare; as his grace in choosing and leading his people; his love; his patience in bearing with the slowness and timidity of Moses; his wisdom in providing fitting proofs of the mission of Moses and Aaron, first of the elders of the people and men for Pharaoh, and in gradually making the people ready to quit Egypt; his long-suffering, for Egypt has many an opportunity to repent and save herself, but does not; his power in successive plagues; his faithfulness in making good the promises to the patriarchs; his compassion in pitying the sorrows of Israel; his holiness, for Moses cried in hesitating, and Aaron is given to him as a concession, and proves more than once a trouble to him, when he might, going in the strength of the Lord, have had the undivided honour of delivering the people; and his "praiseworthiness" for his glory he will not give to another. "I am the Lord, that is my name" (Isa. xlii. 8).

The host of Egypt is fighting the world-battle (v. 6). It is strong in visible resources—chariots of iron, mailed warriors, (see pictures of them in armour plated with bronze, who "sank as lead in the mighty waters"), a king for their leader. It is to the world as Goliath to the Philistines. See the slender resources of the other side—people not yet organized, unused to war, at sight of Pharaoh's host, unable to cope with an army. The resources of Israel all unseen; the life a hidden life. So it is ever.

III. THE WEAPONS EMPLOYED. On Egypt's side, power, crushing oppressor, lies, deceit, false miracle, force of arms. These are the ways of God's enemies against God's people still. (See in illustration. 2 Thess. i. 7-10.) The power was put down, the lies and deceit and false miracles exposed, the oppression ended, and the armies overthrow.

On God's side there was divine energy. Nature was controlled, made God's instrument. His common laws were not set aside. Moses was the agent, and he was for sufficient reasons ordered to use his rod, but the Lord wrought the works from first to the last (v. 6). Did Pharaoh attempt war? Then (v. 9) "the Lord is a man of war."

Did he boast of power? Then "Thy right hand, O Lord, is become glorious in power" (v. 6). Did they set up as gods the gifts he gave? Then he turns them into plagues. Did they order the drowning of Israel's male children? Then, with a terrible retribution, he slays their first born and drowns their chief captains (v. 4, 7).

Israel did nothing all through this struggle but stand still and "see the salvation of God. God is the king, Israel is his people. God is the Lord. Egypt's gods are idols. Well may Moses and the people sing "Who is like unto thee, O Lord, among the gods?" (v. 11).

The truth even children can understand, and teachers should teach and never forget for themselves, "Christ died for us, and now he lives in us. The former gives us peace, the latter gives us power."

IV. THE FINAL RESULT. The immediate result was the deliverance of Israel and the complete overthrow of the Egyptians. But this was the last of a series of wonders, the effect of which reaches much beyond the time of Moses. For example,

(1) A solemn warning was given to all the tribes of men then sinking into debasing idolatry.

(2) A strong feeling was created in favor of Israel as a people under Jehovah's care, and for whom he would drive out the Canaanites (v. 14, 15, 16).

(3) A great lesson of trust in divine power was taught the Hebrews (v. 13).

(4) The audacity, folly, and hardness of the human heart was displayed in Pharaoh and his counsellors; and also the effects of human resistance. Who can harden himself against God and will prosper? And, let alone of God, what heart will not be hardened?

(5) Great moral and spiritual truths are taught (see as illustration, Lesson on the Passover). The following questions might be raised and answers obtained from Exodus. How does deliverance from divine justice come? What sort of sacrifice does God require? What is the atoning element in sacrifice? What has to be done in order to receive the atonement? What is the ground of security? Is it repentance or communion? Have we done with the Lamb of God whom we believe? What is it to feed on Christ? To whom are God's true Israel gathered? What effect has deceit or hypocrisy on communion with God and his people? (Leaven in the house—the family "cut of from" the fellowship of "the congregation.")

(6) The church as in this final miracle the type of her communion with Jehovah. She sings "the Song of Moses the servant of God and the Lamb" (Rev. xv. 3) when she has gotten the victory over the beast and all that he represents, in gratitude for past deliverance and in confident hope of final triumph.

Acquisition of Languages

There is a popular idea that French is easy, that Latin is easy, that Italian is easy; that German is more difficult, yet by no means insuperably difficult. It is believed that when an Englishman has spent all the best years of his youth in attempting to learn Latin or Greek, he may acquire one or two modern languages with little effort during brief residence on the Continent.

It is certainly true that we may learn any number of foreign languages so as to speak them badly, but it certainly cannot be easy to speak them well. It may be inferred that it is not easy because the accomplishment is so rare. The inducements are common; the accomplishment is rare. Thousands of English people have very strong reasons for learning French, thousands of French people could improve their position by learning English, but rare, indeed, are the men and women who know both thoroughly.

The following propositions based on much observation, of a kind wholly unprejudiced, and tested by a not inconsiderable experience, will be found, I believe, unassailable.

1. Whenever a foreign language is perfectly acquired, there are peculiar family conditions. The person has either married a person of the other nation or is of mixed blood.

2. When a foreign language has been acquired (there are instances of this) in quite absolute perfection, there is almost always some loss in the native tongue. Either the native tongue is not spoken exactly, or it is not spoken with perfect ease.

3. A man sometimes speaks two languages correctly—his native and his mother's, or his own and his wife's—but never three.

4. Children can speak several languages exactly like natives, but in succession, never simultaneously. They forget the first in acquiring the second, and so on.

5. A language cannot be learned by an adult without five years' residence in the country where it is spoken, and without habitual close observation in a residence of twenty years is insufficient.

This is not encouraging but it is the truth. Happily, a knowledge which falls short of mastery may be of much practical use in the common affairs of life, and may even afford some initiation into foreign literature. I do not argue that, because perfection is denied to us by the circumstances of our lives or the necessities of our organization, we are therefore to abandon the study of every language but the mother tongue. It may be of use to us to know several languages imperfectly, if only we confess the hopelessness of absolute attainment. That which is truly and deeply and seriously an injury to our intellectual life is the foolishness of the too common vanity which not only deludes itself with childish expectations, and then tortures itself with late regret for failure which might have been easily foreseen. *Hamerton's Intellectual Life.*

A Paris telegram of Jan. 19th, says *L'Univers*, the leading ultramontane Catholic journal of Europe, has suspended publication. The cause is not stated.

Our Young Folks.

March.

In the snowing and the blowing, In the cruel sleaz,— Little doves begin their growing, Far beneath our feet Softly taps the Spring, and chirring, "Darlings, are you here?" Till they answer: "We are nearly, Nearly ready, dear."

Where is Winter, with his snowing? Tell us, Spring, they say. Then she answers: "He is going, Going on his way. Poor old Winter does not love you. But his time is past, Soon my birds shall sing above you— Not you here at last!"

—M. J. D. in St. Nicholas.

Waiting and Working.

An army was advancing to fight against the enemy. The enemy was in sight and the general had begun to draw up his men for the battle. Some he ordered to advance in one direction others in another, and every one was ready and willing. But turning to one regiment he said, "This regiment must wait here; no man is to stir a step till the order is given."

In a few minutes the battle had begun. Regiment after regiment marched on past the soldiers that were waiting, and very soon all but that one regiment were engaged in battle. It was hard for the brave men that were waiting, to see their friends march on past them to fight the enemy, and not to be able to march along with them. But at first it was not so very hard, for at first the enemy were driven back on every side, and shouts of victory came from their friends and the men in the waiting regiment said, "How lucky they are they will beat the enemy without us."

But presently all this was changed. Down from the hills behind the enemy there poured fresh soldiers, who gradually drove back the army step by step. And now the sound of the battle came nearer and nearer, and the men perceived that their friends were being beaten, and it seemed hard indeed to wait. Wounded men were carried past them, whom they knew; and as the enemy pressed nearer still, they could see their friends cut down or run through the body, and that made the brave men almost mad with anger. Presently the shots began to fall among them as they stood close together, and though the general sent orders to them to lie down, yet some were shot dead without having struck a blow against the enemy. All this was so hard to bear that some of the young soldiers began to murmur, and one of them cried out, "Why does he not let us charge? Are we to die lying here like sheep?" But the old soldiers, though they ground their teeth in anger, said, "Be still. We must obey orders. Our general knows what he is about."

The next moment the order came, "Up and charge." Immediately they leaped up and dashed forward at the enemy. For no more fighting remained to be done, for at the mere sight of these fresh soldiers, the enemy turned and fled, and would not wait till the soldiers could get near them to strike a blow, so the battle was won without hardly any loss.

As they were marching back in triumph, the young soldiers that had complained during the battle, said to one of his comrades, "The battle has been won, but we have done nothing to win it; it has been won by our friends, and not by us. But his comrade said, "You are wrong there; I have fought a dozen battles before this, and I never seen anything as hard as this. It is easier to fight than to wait. But after all, whether one fights or waits, it is all one to a good soldier; a soldier's business is to obey orders, and to obey orders you are doing a good service, whether it is your turn to fight or to wait."

Christ our Master has set us all our tasks, and he will come and ask each one of us some day, "Have you done the task I set you?" "If we have done our best at it, He will say, "Depart from Me."

Do not say, "I could do a more difficult work; Jesus has given me nothing to do." Whatever is done for Jesus, though it be only waiting, will please Him. Jesus looks not on the outside but on the heart. Some children have done nothing for Jesus, except waiting patiently on a bed of sickness, and bearing pain without complaining. But to all those children Jesus will say, "Come with Me into a place where there is no more pain or sorrow."

Let me end by telling you a short story about waiting. One of the greatest poets in the world, named Milton, grew blind as he grew old. His blindness troubled him very much. In his days Englishmen were fighting against each other, and Milton wished to do what he could to serve God by gaining liberty and peace for England. But he said to himself, "I can do nothing, for God has made me blind," and he felt inclined to complain against God. Then God said to him, "I do not require work from you that you cannot do. Be patient and wait. If you do that, you will be serving Me." They also serve who only stand and wait.

And while he waited, God taught him wonderful things, which Milton has taught us, and which you must learn when you grow a little older. So it always is. If we are patient and wait for God, He will use us for his glory in the best way.—Parables for Children.

The Tablet says.—The increase in the Catholic vote will be one of the most substantial and practical triumphs of the election for 1874. Ireland and only thirty-seven Catholic members when the Parliament was dissolved; the new Parliament will open with forty nine, the largest number that was ever sent from Ireland. Roman Catholics will rank next to Episcopalian Protestant members, and above Presbyterians, or those of any single Protestant sect, but will still be considerably under half their due share.

The Prayer Meeting

The prayer-meeting is the domain of the heart, the arena for expressions of love, hope, faith, desire; and this should never be forgotten. Instruction, discussion, scriptural exposition, all that is said and done, should be subordinate to and inspired by the heart. An intellectual prayer meeting is for a certain time, an attempt at excellence of speech or a critical ear for blunders and incongruities is alike out of place and hurtful. The leader should set himself against them; throw his own heart into the lead, go along with tenderness and sympathy; create strong currents of thought and feeling calculated to cheer and encourage the weak; dash aside that paralyzing respect for propriety which often fastens upon people when they come together, and lead everyone to feel that any testimony, and simple prayer, will be in perfect order and warmly welcomed. He should study his people and discern just where they need help and how he may help them, always remembering that the heart must lead the intellect, and that the social meeting is not to display cultured talents alone, but to arouse and develop the weak and hesitating as well.

Honest Work.

Mr. Carlyle has written a characteristic and striking letter on the present relations of capital and labor in England. The *London Spectator* points out the fact that this letter is noteworthy from containing the first explicit indication of the old philosopher's belief in a personal Deity. Heretofore he has had a great deal to say about the Eternities and Immensities; but in this letter he uses the phrase, "the eternal commandment of Almighty God, who made them." This is worthy of notice, especially as Mr. Carlyle has been supposed to disbelieve in personal immortality and a personal God. Has his opinion undergone a change, or is the altered phraseology a mere trick of rhetoric?

However that may be, the veteran cynic omits some wholesome truth on the labor question. He thinks things look ominous for England. And the difficulty has come from attempting to substitute machinery for morals, and make sheer selfishness do the work of sympathy, justice, and humanity. His letter deserves reading for the striking emphasis it lays on this point. There is no question that the greed of corporations and capitalists has had the effect of destroying the sense of moral obligation on the part of laborers. The former have gone on the principle of getting the utmost work for the least possible wages. They have squeezed working people like so many oranges, until the last drop of life blood was pressed out, and then have thrown them away. They have consulted nothing but their own selfish pleasure and profit, and have shown a marvellous insensibility to the welfare of the community and the rights and needs of the laborers as a class. The inevitable has followed. Selfishness begets selfishness. The working man, finding himself treated like a beast of burden turned out to die when no longer serviceable, has shown a refreshing indignation to work when not paid for doing so. He has made personal selfishness the principle of his life, and acting on the motto of each man for himself, he has tried to discover how he can get the most pay for the least service and of the poorest kind. And this is where the matter stands to-day. Selfishness has resulted in industrial anarchy.

The complaint of poor work comes from all quarters. Everything is slighted and botched and shammed. The working-men have become so imbued with the spirit of selfishness that they seem to have no other thought than that of rendering the least equivalent for their wages. The consequence is that most of our work is miserably done. Our houses tumble down because no conscience is put into the mortar. The plaster falls on our heads because there was no honesty in its composition. Our furniture breaks at the first usage, because there was no integrity in its mortice. In fact there is scarcely an article in daily use that is honestly made or that can be used without provocation. The workmen in scarcely any of our trades can be trusted out of sight of their employer. It is eye service that they render. It is hand work that they do. It is a sheer waste of material, a delusion, and a sham. And all for the want of that old-fashioned feeling of personal responsibility which made a workman proud of his work and ashamed to do mean work. It is heart, conscience, moral accountability, and dignity that our workmen want more than anything for themselves as individuals and for success in life. The workmen who to-day shall do honest work of whatever kind will not want long for work to do, and at the highest wages. Our working people have learned a lie which they must make haste to unlearn before they achieve the prosperity they aspire to. They must learn that a city is not built up on selfish principles, and will not hold together without conscience, and that neither science, organization nor art can ever take the place or do the work of a kind and honest heart. And they should shame their employers into the semblance of decency by refusing to be parties to a conspiracy to cheat the public by the manufacture of shams.—*New York Daily Graphic.*

The French Protestants are sadly affected by a recent decision of the National Assembly. M. Andre, a Protestant member, had proposed that the soldiers belonging to the Protestant religion should not be compelled to kneel down before the Holy Sacrament. The Assembly decided that they would be compelled to do so, notwithstanding they considered it as idolatrous.

The following is a specimen of Ritualistic advertising:—"Wanted, in a priest's large family, in the West of England, a strong, hard-working intelligent woman, over 30, to cook, and manage a dairy, single-handed. Must be a good Churchwoman, an early riser, and not object to Australian meat." If this dairy-maid and pew-opener is required to fast on all the saints' days observed by the Jesuits she will not consume much Australian meat.

Miscellaneous.

A church in Boston, U.S., was the scene of an amateur theatrical performance recently; the vestry was used as a green-room.

According to the *Rock*, the confessional was unobtrusively introduced in St. Paul's Cathedral during the mission week by the "missioners," and was actually practiced.

The *Congregationalist* explains what it means by "lightning-bug piety."—"Bright while it lasts, but cold, and soon out."

The English Church Union is seeking appeals for funds to enable it to crush all attempts of the Church Association to prosecute Romanising priests.

The Cambridge University Union has rejected a motion "That it is expedient for all monastic and conventual institutions to be placed under the inspection of the State."

A pastor of a Congregationalist church was once asked if he were an Independent member, and replied, "Far from it; I am the minister of an Independent congregation."

The *Congregationalist* says that Congregationalists of common sense are not always in the heart of sinning D.D. to their names. This limits the capacity of Congregationalists of common sense in a most fearful degree.

The Rev. J. A. Panton, B.A., Airdrie, has written a nuptial ode on the occasion of the marriage of the Duke of Edinburgh, for which he has received the thanks of the Queen.

The fourth volume of the "American Cyclopaedia" has been issued by D. Appleton & Co. This volume continues the letter O from the word "Carmina" to "Coddington."

Great scandal has been caused in the Peterborough diocese, at Leicester, by the conduct of a clergyman who has been receiving at confession the daughter of a brother clergyman without her father's knowledge or consent.

The Duke of Argyll's "Reign of Law" is about to appear in a Norse dress by the Finken Augusta Rudmora, of Fersley, a young Danish lad. Dr. Robert Brown's "Races of Manland" is also to receive double honor of translation in the Danish and Magyar languages.

Principal Dawson, of Montreal, has commenced in the *Leisure Hour* a short series of papers on Pre-historic Remains in America, which throw new light on various disputed questions of European archeology and on the antiquity of man.

A correspondent of the *Chicago Inter-Ocean* has been trying the experiment of putting a spoonful of tea into a plate of nice-looking white syrup which had been supplied to the family breakfast table by the family grocer. The result was that it turned black as ink, thus proving that it was made of sulphuric acid and rags. He hopes that others may profit from his experience.

The Senate of the University of St. Andrews conferred the degree of LL.D. on the following gentlemen on Tuesday:—Mr. John Boyd Baxter, solicitor, of Dundee; Mr. John Gwyn Jeffreys, F.R.S., F.R.A.S., &c., London; the Rev. John Percival, Provost of Exeter and head-master of Clifton Colleges; the Rev. John Struthers, of Prestonsparis; and Professor Whitney, of Yale College, America.

Great interest is now awakened for Christianising the Jews. More than \$800,000 were contributed in Great Britain alone the past year for this object. In Jerusalem there are sixty Jewish meetings daily to hear the gospel, ministers are now welcome in every house in Jerusalem. Within the last sixty years, since the establishment of the society, 25,000 people have been converted to the Christian religion.

Mr. Spurgeon recently complained the inconsiderate people sometimes put questions to him which it was very unpleasant to answer. The other day a gentleman asked him what the Tabernacle would do when he was dead. He answered this question with another, "Pray, sir, what will your wife do when you are dead?" His interrogator did not relish the suggestion, and changed the subject.

Dr. Livingston says that Schele, a famous African chief, observed to him on the occasion of his preaching to his tribe, "Do you imagine that these people will ever believe by your merely talking to them? I can make them do nothing except by thrashing them; and if you like I will call my head-men, and with our whips of rhinoceros hide we will soon make them all believe together."

Sweden has hitherto maintained the most intolerant State Church in Europe. In order to quit it an applicant had to undergo personal examination by the minister of his parish, at the discretion of the latter, as to his motives, and to repeat his request officially a second and third time. No civil marriage existing, and no Church but the Lutheran being recognised. Dissenters' children were practically illegitimate unless the parents were united in the Lutheran Church. They were subject to frequent legal difficulties when their parents refused to have them baptised as Luthed, and, this being the only legal manner of registering their births, and consequently their ages. At there are nearly 10,000 Luthedists in Sweden, and several thousand Methodists, the grievance has been a most serious one. The Synod of the Church has now approved of the law passed by the Chambers, and which was submitted to it before receiving the Royal sanction. Under this simple declaration of desire to leave the Lutheran Church for another Christian denomination, repeated at the end of two months, it is to be held valid for any person not under the age of eighteen, and is to be registered officially by the pastor of the parish. Small as this reform appears, it is understood it will lead soon to an official recognition of the Dissenting communities. They will then receive corporate rights and religious privileges hitherto withheld.