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THE Teachers' Preparation Leaflet

LESSON 11.

JUNE 10th, 1894.

2nd QUARTER.

Passage of the Red Sea. Ex. 14: 19-29.

GOLDEN TEXT: "By faith they passed through the Red Sea." Heb. 11: 29.

COMMIT TO MEMORY verses 27-29. **CHILDREN'S HYMNAL**, 145, 225, 97, 91.

PROVE THAT—God's presence means deliverance. Isa. 43: 2.

SHORTER CATECHISM—Quest. 106. What do we pray for in the sixth petition?

DAILY PORTIONS.

(The Selections of the International Bible Reading Association.)

MONDAY.	TUESDAY.	WEDNESDAY.	THURSDAY.	FRIDAY.	SATURDAY.	SABBATH.
Ex. 14: 19-31	Ex. 14: 5-12	Ex. 14: 13-18	Ex. 15: 1-10	Ex. 15: 11-19	Ps. 106: 1-12	Isa. 51: 9-16

IS THE RED SEA RED?

1. By faith they passed through the Red Sea as by dry land (Heb. 11: 29). Moses brought them out, after he had showed wonders and signs in the land of Egypt, and in the Red Sea, and in the wilderness forty years (Acts 7: 36). The Hebrew name of the Arabian gulf is *Yam-Soph*, that is, abounding either in reeds or in tangle (in new Latin, *sargassum*); the Authorized Version throughout uses as the translation of this Hebrew name the term "Red Sea." What is the meaning of this name? Is the water of the Arabian Gulf, and especially of the tongue of the Egyptian sea (Isa. 11: 15), — that is, the Bay of Suez (*sinus Heropolitanus*), — of red color, as young Raphael painted it, or purple-colored, as it is represented in the so-called red window of St. Lorenz Church in Nuremberg? By no means; it is bluish-green. Whence, then, is the name derived? There are several explanations for the name, but none of them are satisfactory. The true explanation seems to me to be that the Red Sea was originally the name of the Indian Ocean with its two bights, the Persian and the Arabian; and Red Sea, as the name of the Indian Ocean, took its rise from a misunderstanding. The name, in the language of the people bordering on it, was *Bahr Himjar*; that is, the sea which washes the land of the Himjarites (South Arabia). This was wrongly understood in the sense of *Bahr ahmar* (Red Sea), — wrongly, for in respect to the color of the water the Indian Ocean is named *Bahr akhdar* (Green Sea).

2. It cannot be definitely determined at what part of the Red Sea the passage of Israel took place. Although usually the thought turns to the northern head where Suez is now situated, near the Ataqah Mountain. But it is probable that the Red Sea extended farther north at that time, and that the basins of the Bitter Lakes and of Lake Timsah were then overflowed by the sea; for we nowhere read that in the Mosaic or pre-Mosaic time a way went out of, and into, Egypt which was situated below that passage of the isthmus separating Egypt and the desert, which is now called *el-gizr* (the bridge). It is therefore possible that the passage was made north from Suez, about where the bed of the Bitter Lakes is today, dried up or still marshy only here and there. At any rate, the passage was made through the sea, not through one of the lakes which interrupt the isthmus between the Mediterranean and the Red Sea. — DR. FRANZ DELITZSCH, in *The Sunday School Times*, July 14th 1887.

INTRODUCTORY.—While the Hebrews in their homes celebrated the first harvest, the Angel of death passed through the land of Egypt and smote all

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the first-born, "and there was a great cry in Egypt; for there was not a house in which there was not one dead." Only those behind the blood-sprinkled door posts were safe. The pride of Egypt was humbled. "The first-born of Pharaoh that sat on his throne," the gallant prince Menephtah Seti, joint ruler with his father, and "chief of the archers," shared the doom of the meanest beggar and the beasts of the field. Moses did not need to plead any longer, "the Egyptians were urgent upon the people, that they might send them out of the land in haste." It was now fully understood that this was to be no religious pilgrimage to the desert from which they were to return to their burdens, but a complete and final exodus. Parting gifts were asked and willingly bestowed, with such munificence that the people "spoiled" the Egyptians like a victorious army. Instead of taking their course directly eastward, the Lord directed Moses to lead the host to the south. The result was that they seemed to be caught in a trap between the sea and the mountains. The treacherous and vacillating Pharaoh imagined that his revenge was at hand and pursued after them to bring them back. The timid multitude of liberated slaves were in despair, but Moses, with the majestic calmness of faith, bade them "fear not, stand still and see the salvation of the Lord, which he will show you to-day: for the Egyptians whom ye have seen to-day, ye shall see them again no more forever."

NOTES AND EXPLANATIONS.

LESSON PLAN. I. The Israelites Delivered. vs. 19-22. II. The Egyptians Overthrown. vs. 23-29.

I. THE ISRAELITES DELIVERED. 19. The Angel of God—called Jehovah in ch. 13: 21, it was the second Person of the Trinity, the Son of God, who became Jesus. The pillar of cloud and of fire led the Israelites until they came into the land of Canaan, see Num. 9: 15-23. **Stood behind them**—The Lord placed himself between his people and their enemies. See the application to Christ in Isa. 63: 9, 16. 20. The cloud must have changed its form and appeared as an impenetrable wall of darkness, completely concealing the Israelites from their pursuers, who may have thought that it was only the clouds connected with the north-east wind that was blowing. "Thus the word and providences of God have a two-fold aspect, a black and dark side towards sin and sinners, a bright and pleasant side towards those that are Israelites indeed." (Bush.) The Egyptians made no attempt to attack that night for they thought that they had their runaways safe. 21. **Moses stretched out his hand**—as he had been told to do (v. 16.) In it he held his old shepherd's staff to which miraculous properties had been given (Ex. 4: 17.) At this signal the north-east wind began to blow. The waters were swept back with the ebbing tide, and the shallow bed of the sea was laid bare. The lakes remained on the north, on the left hand, and the Red Sea in pools and deeper water to the south, on the right hand. Compare the similar miracle at the crossing of the Jordan (Josh. 3: 16; 4: 23.) 22. **The waters were a wall unto them**—It is not necessary to suppose that the sea stood up perpendicularly on each side. God never works superfluous miracles. The water that remained on either side protected them like a wall from a flank attack and compelled their pursuers to follow directly in the comparatively narrow way that had been made. The poetic language of ch. 15: 8 and Ps. 78: 13 must not be understood literally.

II. THE EGYPTIANS OVERTHROWN. 23. The Egyptians pursued—Doubtless hearing the movement of the advancing multitude, but seeing imperfectly in the darkness and the gloom of the cloud, the Egyptians pursued in reckless fury, thinking, if they thought at all, that a road that was safe for the Israelites must be safe for them too. **Horsemen**—these rode in the chariots. Pharaoh is not said to have gone in. 24. The Lord looked—“We suppose the fact to have been that the side of the cloud towards the Egyptians was suddenly for a few moments illuminated with a blaze of light, which, coming as it were in a refulgent flash upon the darkness which had preceded, so frightened the horses of the pursuers that they rushed confusedly together, dashing the wheels of one chariot furiously against those of another, upsetting, breaking, and tearing them from their axles, while the horses themselves, floundering in pools, or sinking in quicksands, were thrown into inextricable confusion, and thus became an easy prey to the returning waters.” (Bush.) 25. The attempt to turn in the narrow path only completed the confusion. 29-27. The sea returned—The cessation of the wind, combined with the spring tide, for it was full moon, would cause such a sudden rush as is seen in the Solway Firth, or in our own Bay of Fundy. The fleetest horseman, not to speak of an army of disabled chariots in confusion, could not escape the “bore.” 28. It is not stated that Pharaoh was drowned. Had he been, it is altogether unlikely that the fact would have been unmentioned in the song of triumph.

SUMMARY AND REVIEW.

By Rev. D. Sutherland, Charlottetown, P. E. I.

PASSAGE OF THE RED SEA.

I. Israel's Safety.

- (a) Protected by the Cloud.
- (b) Provided for by God.
- (c) Prompt Obedience.

II. Egypt's Destruction.

- (a) Presumption.
- (b) Panic.
- (c) Paralysis.

The passage of the Red Sea meant life to Israel and death to Egypt. Teachers should make the scene vivid to their scholars by so picturing it as to cause the events of the night pass as in a panorama before their eyes. The Bible becomes a new book and its narratives grow to be very real to the young when their imaginations, trained by correct information and stimulated by careful suggestions, are brought to bear upon it. The imagination is a sadly neglected help in Sunday School work. The best preface to this lesson would be a picture of the march down the borders of the Red Sea which led Israel into a seeming trap, hemmed in on one side by impassable rocks and on the other by the sea, with the hosts of Egypt drawing near behind.

The first element in the safety of Israel was the movement of the angel of the cloud from their front to their rear. This intensified the darkness of the night for Pharaoh's army, while it flooded the camp of Israel with a glory of light that turned the night into day. So in the pilgrimage of life the night of perplexity or adversity is filled with the light of the Holy Spirit for all believers who rejoice in the presence of the Comforter. Protected by the cloud, the people had leisure and peace of mind to stand still and see the salvation of God. They could not make the pathway through the sea. That had to be provided by God, and in God's time it was provided. The faith that stands still in expectation is the temper of confidence and repose which gives strength to the believer for every crisis, whether it be in the individual life, in the church or in the state. After the standing still comes the going forward. Faith is incomplete until it has energized itself into obedience. Unhesitatingly and calmly, the children of Israel went at the appointed time into the midst of the sea, and found it to be a road of dry ground. Their prompt obedience led to their safety. So is it ever with the man or the race not disobedience unto the heavenly vision. "Faith plants its footsteps on the seeming void, and finds the rock beneath."

The destruction of the hosts of Pharaoh began with their presumption. They dared to walk where Israel had gone, forgetful of the warnings of the past. The courage of the unbeliever is the bravado of presumption. It prompted the guest at the marriage supper to clothe himself, and led to his being cast into outer darkness. Presumption inevitably paves the way for panic. The sand that was hard to the feet of Israel began to soften, so that the heavy wheels of the chariots of Pharaoh sank down, the horses plunged, and the soldiers were filled with fear and the horror of impending calamity. At last the bonds of discipline were broken, and the march forward ended in a disorderly tumult. Then struck the hour for the paralysis of the power of the enemies of God. "Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel." Fighting against the Almighty is as hopeless folly as the turning of the worm against the iron heel that would crush it.

The teacher ought to point out to his scholars the historical parallel between the passage of the Red Sea and the overthrow of the Spanish Armada. Both were escapes from the tyranny of Egypt, and both were marvellous interpositions of God on behalf of right against might. So the truth may fasten itself in young hearts that deliverance from danger will come to all who walk in the path of duty. The spiritual significance of the incident ought not to be neglected. Christians are pilgrims who have left Egypt behind and entered into the desert. They must also have an experience corresponding to the passage through the Red Sea, in which they will be baptized "in the cloud and in the sea," and by means of which old sins will be slain as completely as the Egyptians, so that they shall rise up no more in condemnation.