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THE Teachers' Preparation Leaflet

LESSON 4.

JANUARY 28th, 1894.

1ST QUARTER.

God's Covenant with Noah. Gen. 9: 8-17.

GOLDEN TEXT: "I do set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be for a token of a covenant between me and earth." Gen. 9: 13.

INTRODUCTORY DRILL—INTERESTING AND DIFFICULT QUESTIONS.

THE STATE OF SOCIETY IN THE ANTEDILUVIAN WORLD. The Scripture narrative gives no countenance to the view that man has developed from a state of savagery into civilization. In the childhood of the race we find, not wild hunters and fishers, but farmers and shepherds; cities are founded; musical instruments are well known; and implements of brass and iron are in common use. At least one scrap of song has come down to us. The extraordinary age to which men survived gave room for an accumulation of talent and skill such as our brief "three score years and ten" can never acquire.

For some time, doubtless, the descendants of Cain dwelt apart, heirs of their father's curse. But, as population increased, the uninhabited regions which at first intervened, would become settled and the two divisions of the human family would more or less intermingle. The time came when intermarriages became common. The result of this was, as it would be now, that the race of Seth became corrupted (2 Cor. 6. 14) and only Noah, the grandson of Methusaleh and great grandson of Enoch, remained true amid the almost universal lawlessness and lust. It is interesting to notice in these brief chronicles of the antediluvian world, the expression given to the strongest instincts of human nature. We have seen Eve fondling her babe as "God's gift," and comforting herself in Seth whom the same divine Giver had "put" in Abel's place. Revenge finds its apologist in Lamech, of the evil race of Cain, while his namesake, the Sethite, erects an imperishable monument, in the name of his son (ch. 5: 29) to the "rest" and satisfaction which right minded men, weary with the day's toil, ever take in the sweet surroundings of the family circle.

SONS OF GOD AND DAUGHTERS OF MEN. Only two views need be considered. (1) "Sons of God" mean angels. But angels "neither marry nor are given in marriage." There could be no such alliance between bodyless spirits and "flesh and blood." If such an enormity had been possible, it would not have been tolerated for 120 years, but would have been stamped out at once. (2) "Sons of God" means descendants of Seth, and daughters of men? descendants of Cain." The terms appropriately distinguish those who acknowledged their obligations to a superhuman power and those who lived wholly for the world and refused subjection to God's law. In contracting these marriages the Sethites disregarded all higher interests and followed the impulse of their unrestrained fancy. Their children became notorious for their lawless and violent conduct. They were the "Ishmael-

THE TEACHERS' PREPARATION LEAFLET is published weekly by the General Assembly's Sabbath School Committee, Presbyterian Church in Canada, at 35 cents a year, or 25c. if four or more copies are sent to one person. Address Rev. T. F. Fotheringham, 107 Hazen Street, St. John, N. B. Editing Committee: Rev. T. F. Fotheringham, Jas. Turnbull and Principal Kirkland.

tes" of that early age. The degeneracy of the race received a tremendous impulse when godly men, in choosing their wives, made physical beauty alone, regardless of spiritual character, the object of their unchastened desires.

GIANTS. These are distinguished from the offspring of the mixed marriages. It is reasonable to believe that in nature's springtime exuberance the human frame was sometimes of gigantic proportions.

THE EXTENT OF THE DELUGE. It was universal so far as man was concerned. The language can hardly bear any other sense and the end could not otherwise have been attained. There are serious difficulties, however, in the way of believing that the whole world was covered with water. (1) There is nothing in the narrative requiring us to hold this. "The whole earth" referred to means the world of man's habitation. (See Prof. Taylor Lewis' Excursus in Lange's commentary). (2) There are scientific reasons for believing that certain portions of the earth could not have been under water within the last five or six thousand years. (For scientific considerations bearing upon the question, See Hugh Miller's "Testimony of the Rocks"). (3) A total submergence of the whole world for a year would have exterminated a large number of marine and fresh water animals with the majority of plants. (4) Whilst an appeal to the power of divine omnipotence might be made, yet it is without analogy that God should bring creatures from all parts of the world to one spot. The miracle would be more stupendous than that of creation. (5) How could carnivorous animals be supplied with food in the ark and yet the species on which they preyed be preserved by one pair? (6) It was simply impossible for the ark to have contained representatives of the whole world's "living things."

Although the destruction of the apostate race was necessary to the redemption of mankind as a whole, yet God is "longsuffering toward them." His spirit is not withdrawn at once, but continues his gracious strivings for 120 years longer; Noah proclaims, like Jonah of a later age to people living on the same ground, the righteous judgment impending, reasoning doubtless, like Paul, "of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come." The ark, too, slowly building before their eyes, was both a testimony to Noah's sincerity and an invitation to escape the approaching doom.

(Question on the foregoing, writing down the words as the answers lead to them).

High Civilization.

Moral Degeneracy.

Total Destruction

Agriculture.

Mixed Marriages.

Respite.

Pastoral Pursuits.

Giants.

Warning.

Music and Poetry,

Outlaws.

Refuge.

Metal Implements.

NOTES AND EXPLANATIONS.

INTRODUCTORY.—The human race seems to have deteriorated morally with great rapidity. The godly race of Seth ("sons of God") inter-married with the godless descendants of Cain ("daughters of men") and the result was the same as it would be now. The former were dragged down to the level of the latter (see 2 Cor. 6; 14). Mighty men, of strength and prowess, were leaders in deeds of violence and famous by reason of their infamy. The whole earth was corrupt and God had but one witness for righteousness, as far as the narrative relates. There was but one course left if the race was to be preserved from utter extinction by evil and God's plan of redemption carried out. A new beginning must be made. Accordingly God announces to Noah his intention of bringing a flood of water upon the earth to destroy mankind. The covenant is to be established with him, and through him with a new humanity. Ample warning is given to the wicked; for 120 years Noah preaches and warns; but when the appointed time has come, God shuts the door of the Ark upon his faithful servant and his family (eight persons) and the creatures with him. (Compare the Parable of the Ten Virgins).

The Ark was large enough to hold an immense cargo. It was 450 feet long, 75 wide and 45 high, and could easily have contained all the animals which would be unable to escape from the rising waters to safer regions, for only that portion of the earth inhabited by man was covered. No wild beasts are mentioned as being in it. (Murphy). The following table may be called

THE ARK'S LOG-BOOK.

Noah's age	Month.	Day.	Events.	Reference.
600	2	17	Entered the Ark. The flood begins	7: 11
"	3	27	Raining for 40 days. The Ark floats.	7: 17.
"	7	17	Drifting about for 110 days. Ark grounded (no entry for 10 weeks and 3 days).	8: 3, 4
"	10	1	Tops of mountains visible.	8: 5.
"	11	11	The raven sent out.	8: 6, 7
"	"	18	The dove sent out and returned.	8: 8, 9
"	"	25	The dove sent out and returns with leaf.	8: 10, 11
"	12	2	The dove sent out and does not return. (no entry for four weeks).	8: 12
601	1	1	Water gone, ground appears to be dry. (no entry for 8 weeks).	8: 13
"	2	27	All disembark. Log-book closed	9: 14-19

LESSON PLAN. I. The Promise. vs. 8-11. II. The Token. vs. 11-17.

I. THE PROMISE. 8. Noah—The human race takes a fresh start from him. 9. My covenant—Referred to in ch. 6: 18. The covenant of redemption through the promised "seed." It is always conditioned on faith, which in Noah's case was not wanting (Heb. 11: 7). God deals with Noah as the representative of the race. He frequently refers to this covenant, Gen. 17: 7; Lev. 26: 42; Isa. 54: 9, 10; Jer. 31: 35, 36; 33: 20. 10. The inferior animals are to share in man's blessing as they have suffered through his fall. Ps. 45: 9. From all that go out of the ark to every beast of the earth. This would seem to imply that there were animals in the earth which did not come out of the ark. But some explain it by adding, "to every beast of the earth that shall proceed from them in the future," a promise is given to the seed of inferior animals as well as to the seed of Noah. The R. V. reads "of all that go out of the ark, even every beast of the earth," which is more in keeping with the context. (Gen. 6: 19; 7: 14; 8: 1). The writer of this narrative does not take into consideration the rest of the world where man did not reside, and says nothing about its animals. 11. 2 Pet. 3: 6. God's plan of redemption will be carried to completion without another interruption. His covenant is "established" with the descendants of Noah.

II. THE TOKEN. 12, 13. I have set my bow (R. V. marg.)—It was placed there when rain and sunbeams first kissed each other, long ere Adam was made. It is God's bow, a symbol of peace not of war. It shall be for a token—A visible remembrancer. Compare circumcision, water in baptism, bread and wine at the Lord's supper. See other memorials, Gen. 28: 18; Ex. 28: 12; 1 Sam. 7: 12. God's bow appears again in Ezek. 1: 28; Rev. 4: 3; 10: 1. "As it lights up the dark ground that just before was discharging itself in flashes of lightning, it gives us an idea of the victory of God's love over the black and fiery wrath; originating as it does from the effects of the sun upon the sable vault, it represents to the senses the readiness of the heavenly light to penetrate the earthly obscurity; spanned between heaven and earth, it announces peace between God and man; arching the horizon, it proclaims the all-embracing universality of the covenant of grace." (Delitzsch).

SUMMARY AND REVIEW.

Our lesson really covers the whole narrative of the flood, and the scholar should be familiar with its story. Bring this out by question and answer. How long since last lesson? Name some of the persons who lived before the flood and what they were famous for. Jabal, Jubal, Tubal-Cain, Enoch, Methuselah. Give a brief picture of the state of society. How was it that wickedness spread so much? Don't have anyone as your friend who makes fun of religion. What two men are said to have walked with God? How were they related? How is Noah described? (ch. 6: 9). What did God tell Noah he was going to do? What did he tell Noah to do? (Recount the story by questions). What did Noah do as soon as he came out of the ark? What promise did God give him? What covenant is referred to? Why did God spare Noah and his sons? He wished to save mankind, not destroy it. If all had been drowned there would have been no sinner left to die for, and Jesus never could have performed his work of love. Press home the ingratitude of continuing to

grieve him while he bears with us. The sun must cease to shine before God can cease to forgive.

A striking conclusion to the review would be to have a rainbow prepared beforehand, and write upon it God's own description of himself, putting an attribute on each color. Or, using the proper colors, written out as below—

THE LORD

THE LORD GOD

abundant in

MERCIFUL (violet) and

GRACIOUS (dark blue)

LONGSUFFERING (light blue) and

GOODNESS (green) and

TRUTH (yellow)

KEEPING MERCY (orange) for thousands,

FORGIVING (red)

INIQUITY, TRANSGRESSION and SIN.

NORMAL DRILL

based on the text-book, "The Sabbath School Teacher's Handbook; or, The Principles and Practice of Teaching, with special reference to the Sabbath School," and prepared by Principal Kirkland of the Toronto Normal School.

PRINCIPLES OF TEACHING. (CHAPTER V.)

Definition of Principles. Principles are fundamental truths from which other truths are derived that can be applied as guides to human conduct.

Principle I. In Teaching we must always begin with the known and proceed to what is unknown; that is, instruction must always be based upon some idea already in the mind of the pupil.—This principle is of vital importance, and is of universal application in education both sacred and secular. It is an established fact that when the mind receives an impression it refers it to a previous received impression that happens to resemble it. Thus every new impression is interpreted by means of old ones, and nothing can be really known or recognized until reference and comparison have been made to something previously known. Besides the mind has a liking for what it knows, and this liking extends itself to all that can be connected with the object. This principle was employed by the Apostles in addressing the Jews. See Acts 2: 14-36; Acts 13: 17-41; Acts 14: 15-17; Rom. 1: 18-32.

Principle II. The Teacher should understand the order in which the faculties of children are unfolded, because the wisest teaching will be directed to those powers that are conspicuously active at the time. The teacher must adapt his teaching to the age and capacity of the pupils.—This principle may be illustrated from the teaching of Our Lord. "I have many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now." John 16: 12. See also Matt. 4: 33. The mind of the child consists at first of few active faculties. In young children the memory and the imagination are the controlling powers. Comparing, judging, and reasoning come at a later period.

Principle III. In communicating knowledge, whether religious or secular, we should start from the concrete and end with the abstract.—This was the method of the Great Teacher. The mind of the child can only grasp the abstract through the concrete.

Principle IV. The acquisition of Religious Knowledge by the child should accord in mode and arrangement with the way in which mankind has acquired religious ideas.—God has dealt with the world as a judicious teacher deals with his pupils. A careful study of the way in which truth was revealed during old Testament time will greatly aid the teacher in helping his pupils to acquire the same truths.