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BIBLE LESSONS FOR 1874.

INTERNATIONAL SERIES: SUNDAY, February 22nd 1874. The Exodus.—Exodus xiii. 17-22.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"He brought them forth also with silver and gold, and there was not one feeble person among their tribes."—Psalm cv. 37.

COMMIT TO MEMORY: Verses 20-22.

SUMMARY.—In a way of his own choosing, the Lord led from Egypt his own people.

ANALYSIS.—I. The route. vs. 17, 18-20. II. The relics. vs. 19. III. The pillars. vs. 21, 22.

EXPOSITION.—Review.—Call to mind the events of the last lesson which introduce us to those of this lesson. We had there four things: 1. The arrangements for the night of deliverance; 2, the arrangements for the perpetual memorial festival of the Passover; 3, the reverent, universal obedience of the people in making the arrangements prescribed for the night; 4, the escape. So we left the nation which for more than 400 years had been in Egypt, which rather in that time had there from a family grown to be a nation, and which had for many years endured a most cruel bondage. They had mastered their masters—or, rather, God had done it for them. With their backs to their tyrants, their faces toward Canaan, gladness and hope in all eyes, they were now ready to move. Onward march! The spoil of their spoliators, the riches of Egypt in their possession, they are off—the goodly land, for freedom, sweet freedom—a long, long rest! The writer of Genesis just halts in his story long enough to draw out and set forth the duties appropriate for the Passover festival (chap. xiii. 1-16), and then he bids us look on the army of triumphant slaves, as they march from the prison of bondage to the home of national independence.

Verse 17.—It appears from chap. xii. 37, that the Israelites, by Pharaoh's command, gathered at Rameses, and from that city took their march. This, as we have seen, was one of the treasure cities in Goshen, built and enlarged by the Hebrews. Chap. xi. 1. This Hengstenberg identifies with Hieropolis, the correct position of which, he says, was first determined by the scholars of the French Expedition. There was a short route from this place to Palestine, running east north-east, only some 200 miles to Gaza, in the south of Palestine. Over this route the forefathers of these released slaves had gone. Joseph passed it with the company who bought him. The ten brothers who sold him had gone back and forth to buy corn, and at last the old man Jacob, and all the households of all his sons. This direct and short way would have taken the Israelites far away to the north of the northern extremity of the Red Sea, as a glance at the map will show any one. This route is here described as the way of the land of the Philistines, and is so called because the Philistines, a wealthy, powerful, warlike people occupied and held the southern part of Palestine and the adjacent country, to which this direct route lay. Their five principal cities were Gaza, Ashdod, Ashkelon, Gath, and Ekron. (Josh. xii. 3) The reason given why it was not well to go that way is, "Lest peradventure the people repent when they see war, and they return to Egypt." It is here assumed that the Philistines would not allow them to pass into, or through their country, if it were in their power to prevent it; and that as yet the mob of untrained Hebrews were utterly unable to cope with them. It is also assumed that God would not by miracle interfere in their behalf to strike down the power of Philistia, as he had that of Egypt.

Verse 18.—They did not take the short way, but instead, God led the people about through the way of the wilderness of the Red Sea. Or, more literally and better, "God turned the people the way," etc. That is, he caused them to turn away from the short way just described, and to take this other long, devious, difficult way of the wilderness of the Red Sea. Their first stopping-place after leaving Rameses was Succoth—baōths—(chap. xii. 37; then second, "Etham in the edge of the wilderness" (vs. 20). It seems from Num. xxxiii. 8, that the part of the desert lying to the north and northeast of the sea was called Etham, from the name of this town

where they encamped. On the west or Egyptian side of the north end of the sea, was a desert region also, as appears from Ex. xiv. 3, 11, 12. Of the latter, it is said that in it "is no trace of cultivation or of inhabitant, no shade, no verdure, no flowing water—in a word, nothing which can sustain life." The whole distance from Rameses to Etham "is about thirteen French leagues [30 to 35 miles], and this distance does not appear too great, but just sufficient, if it is considered that the Israelites departed in haste." It seems that Moses, and probably Aaron, knew beforehand that this was to be the route, for at "the bush" God had said, "When thou hast brought forth the people out of Egypt ye shall serve God upon this mountain";—that is, upon Horeb, which was in the Arabian Desert, west of the Red Sea, near the place where Moses spent forty years with his father-in-law. Went up harnessed out of the land of Egypt. The word "harnessed" means, clad in full armor. Prepared and equipped for the journey, and marching forth as an organized host, and not hurrying out, helter-skelter, as a rabble. Six hundred thousand on foot that were men, besides children." (Chap. xii. 37.) This justifies "us in supposing the whole population of the Israelites, including women, children and servants, to have consisted of at least two and a half million of souls." They were prepared, after such a series of miracles, and especially after the last and decisive one, to recognize Moses as God's prophet, and God as their Deliverer.

Verse 19.—Took the bones of Joseph. We learned in the last of our Old Testament lessons of last year that, after Joseph's death, "they embalmed him, and he was put in a coffin in Egypt." (Gen. i. 26). We are not to think of the uncovered bones of Joseph as collected and borne away, but of the entire body as preserved by embalming; in other words, his mummy. The body of Jacob, we saw, was carried to the promised land immediately after his death. Straitly sworn the children of Israel, etc., as appears from Gen. i. 25. This desire to have his body repose in the land of his love and hope was very natural. The request of Joseph, whether preserved by tradition, or put on record in writing, was faithfully and sacredly fulfilled. In Josh. xxiv. 32, we are informed that they buried him "in Shechem, in a parcel of ground which Jacob bought of the sons of Hamor for an hundred pieces of silver, and it became the inheritance of the children of Joseph." Think of the care taken of the revered form during the wearisome forty years.

Verse 21.—And the Lord went before them by day in a pillar of cloud to lead them the way; and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light, to go by day and night. It seems that in those ancient times a custom existed analogous to the miraculous fact here recorded. A fire-bearer preceded the Spartan army on its march, and Alexander "ordered a lofty pole, visible from all sides, to be raised over the General's tent, and from the top of this pole streamed a signal, conspicuous everywhere to every one—Smoke by day, and by fire by night." Whether the pillar by day was literally vapor, like the ordinary clouds, and the pillar by night literally fire, like ordinary fire, we are not told and need not know. Enough that thus it seemed; and as such was the sign and symbol of the Divine presence.

Verse 22.—They changed, but not the pillar. It did not cease. There it was, by day rising dark and grand in the clear, burning sunlight, high up in the presence of all the host. There it was in the night's darkness, all affluant and alight—shining on their way and shining over their ranks, and moving just where and just as they were to move, never failing, always in its place. We need no such local signs. We have in Christ, as set before us in Holy Scripture, the crowning proof and exhibition of God's abiding, saving presence. He is our Guide and stands to our spiritual deliverance as the fiery and cloudy pillar did to the national deliverance of the Hebrews. By Christ we make from sin and death our final exodus.

QUESTIONS.—State the chief points of the last lesson. Vs. 17. From what city did Israel start in leaving Egypt? Chap. xii. 32. What do you know of that city? Chap. i. 11. What was the shortest way thence to Palestine? Why were not the Hebrews permitted to take it? What like that now occurs to God's people? What do you know of the Philistines? 1 Sam. xiv. 22. Vs. 18. Which way did God lead the people? What direction was it? What

direction did the other road lead? What wilderness here is mentioned? Why is this life sometimes called a wilderness? What is meant by the word "harnessed" in this verse? How many were there in the host? Chap. xii. 37. Where did they first stop? Where next? Vs. 20. Vs. 19. What was done to Joseph's body at his death? Gen. i. 26. What was now done to it? Why? Gen. i. 25. Why do you suppose Joseph had wished this? Was his wish fully accomplished? Josh. xxiv. 32. Vs. 21. Who guided Israel? How? Why the difference in the pillar by day and by night? Did the Hebrews march by night? Vs. 22. What is here said of the pillar? Has this any lesson as to God's care of us? Do we need such visible tokens of his presence? Why not?

Abridged from the Baptist Teacher. Scripture Catechism, 170.

SUNDAY, February 27th, 1874.—The Song of Moses.—Exodus xv. 1-11.

HINTS AND HELPS.—1. Which would be the nearest and easiest way of going from Egypt into the land of Canaan? 2. By what longer route did God prefer to lead the Israelites, and why? 3. Why might they not as well have fought first as last? 4. How many souls went down into Egypt and how many came out? 5. Where, in Genesis, does Joseph give commandment concerning his bones, and why was he so careful about them? 6. Why was visible guidance given then, and not now?

Youths' Department.

A RAMBLE ON THE SHORES OF THE GALILEE.

(By a Holiday Correspondent.)

We were accustomed to rise at six o'clock, and were often in the saddle before sunrise, or just as the mountaintops were aflame, and the gorges which lay open to the east were roscate and glorious in the first beams of the sun. The twilight in Palestine, both morning and evening, is wonderfully short, and this may account for the seeming discrepancy, of which sceptics are not slow to make mention, regarding the time of the resurrection of our Lord; or rather at which the women came "while it was dark"; another that they were there at the rising of the sun. Now there was probably not fifteen or perhaps ten minutes between the two mentioned times. While in Jerusalem, I went one morning to the "housetop, while it was yet dark," and watched the dawn purple on the mountains of Moab, and was surprised to see the sun so quickly appear.

On the morning of the 5th of November, we were not behind our usual time, for that night we were to camp by the Sea of the Galilee! and we felt the excitement and glow of the coming experience. Leaving the camp, we broke into a gallop over the plain which still stretched its broad acres of fertile soil for miles before us. The southern end of it was covered by a growth of herbs sometimes reaching above our heads, as we rode through it. It was, I am confident, the mustard spoken of in the Scripture. Its seed, which was ripe, is very small, and has the taste of aniseed. Innumerable flocks of birds hovered over them, and lodged in their branches." Two hours brought us to the end of the plain, and our way lay over the shoulder of a mountain which sweeps down from the highlands of Naphtali, around the north end of the Sea of Galilee. It is a bare and broken mass of rock, with a zig-zag bridle-path which it seemed impossible to pass over without peril to our horses' legs. I was behind, when the foremost of our party, nearly half a mile ahead, on reaching the top of this ridge, shouted out: "The Galilee, The Galilee!" I was not expecting it for an hour yet. My first impulse was to put my horse into a gallop, but this could not be done, and then I did not want to. What a rush of thought came over me! In ten minutes I shall behold that sea made hallowed by the memories and sacred by a Presence, which have enshrined it in the heart of the

Christian world for ever. Was I dreaming, or was I, early awake and in Palestine? My horse dropped into a slow walk, and as I approached the crest of the hill, I held my umbrella over my eyes. There was only one first time that I could look upon that scene I wanted to reserve it, to keep it in my power, to indulge a few moments longer the luxury of anticipation before the luxury of realisation. When I was a little past the top, I raised the umbrella, and the vision was full before me! The whole breadth and nearly the whole length of the lake was in view. "It lay without a ripple, a mirror from heaven in its frame-work of hills. I was full eight hundred, perhaps a thousand, feet above it, and though at the distance of two or three miles, it seemed quite at my feet, reflecting the light, fleecy clouds that floated above it and the Gadarene mountains beyond, whose deep-gorges were softened by their distance and darkened by their depths.

Apart from all its associations, the Sea of Galilee is one of the most beautiful objects in nature.—It lacks foliage and verdure, it is true, at this season of the year; it lacks the wildness mingled with the softness and grace of some of the Scotch and Swiss lakes. But the contrast of the deep, blue waters, with the brown and ochre mountains that stand around it;—the variety in outline of its shores, here rising abruptly a thousand feet, here sloping gently away, here rolling upwards like receding waves, and here, with a grassy reach of glen, lost in a dark gorge beyond, and here, with a white edge of sand and pebbles, swelling back with a plain, mottled with clumps of thorn and oleanders, now in bloom—as thus beheld it presents a scene of chaste and sober beauty, of calm and tender repose that one hardly meets with elsewhere.

We lunched within the walls of an old Castle of Crusaders, fast falling to ruins; and then struck off, quite to the disgust and sorely against the will of our dragoman, who was determined to take us to Safed and not to Capernaum, where, he said, there "was nothing but a mass of old stones," to the left, through fields destitute of even a path, and full of "the stones of emptiness"; and after an hour and a half of the most tortuous and hazardous riding, reached the "Tell Hum," which most modern scholars fix as the site of Capernaum. It is on the shore of the sea, near the north-western end, a mile or two from the place where the Jordan enters, and in an utter waste. Two hovels, made with the ancient stones and covered with brush and straw, and a kind of stable for sheep and goats in the foundation of what had once been a large and imposing structure, were the only habitations. The whole scene was a perfect desolation. Two or three filthy, sinister-looking Arabs, stealthily gliding about in the distance, seemed to make the "desolation doubly desolate."

This, I believe, is the true site of Capernaum, and this one ruin of fallen and broken columns is relieved by Lieut. Wilson, as stated in his recent survey, to be the synagogue which the pious Centurion built for the Jews; to which allusion is made in Luke vii. 5: "For he loveth our nation and hath built us a synagogue" or as it is in the Greek, "the synagogue"; the article showing that it was some marked and named building.

I examined these most interesting remains with all the care that a burning sun and the brief hour or two allotted me, would allow of. I found eleven bases of columns in situ, and three others out of their original places. These measured at the top nearly three feet in diameter, and the columns that once stood upon them were two feet four inches in diameter. The ornamental architrave which these pillars supported, and which was lying about in fragments, were three feet in height. The brown stone which composed the sides was twenty inches in thickness. The building was in the Corinthian order, and the workmanship very creditable, though not of the highest style; the coarseness of the material would not admit of this. The exact form of this edifice it was difficult to make out, but the fragments of it covered nearly the third of an acre, and further excavations, I am sure, would reveal something of far greater interest.

Was this the veritable synagogue in which Jesus taught, where He restored the man with the withered hand? If so there is no more interesting ruin in all Palestine, or in the world. The order of architecture, the style of workmanship is that which prevailed among the Romans at this period; and the antiquity of the ruins cannot, I think, be less than the

beginning of our era. Here was the home of Jesus during the three years and tabernacles of His public life. Here He lived, a man among men. Where I was standing He had stood. Over these desolations, where once were busy streets and thronging crowds, He had walked. Here by the shore He had rambled, and perhaps upon these very pebbles His foot had stepped! How near to me it brought the Blessed One. To the north, a couple of miles or so, is a small plain, the delta of the Jordan; on which were situated, most likely, the cities of Bethsaida and Chorazin. There is hardly a vestige there to identify them. As we read the solemn denunciations of the rejected Saviour recorded in Matthew iii. 20-23, uttered upon these three cities, could anything be more impressive than the scene around us!

About three o'clock p. m. we left this most interesting spot, and took our way northward, along the shore of the lake. It was a most perfect day. Soft, fleecy clouds were here and there floating in the sky. The air was cooled by the coming evening. There was not a sound but the dull clang of our horses' hoofs on the rocky path. Not a sail on all the lake, nor a thing of life was to be seen, through all the ride to our tenting ground, but here and there scattered flocks of sheep and and goats. That ride and that hour I shall never forget. My eager eyes took in every feature of the scene and daguerretyped it upon my mind, in lines and colours that will never be effaced. My heart went up in thankfulness to God that he had allowed me this great joy, which I had so long and so ardently desired.

We found our camp pitched at Ain et Ting—the Fountain of the Fig Tree; or, as the place is more commonly called, Khan Misyeh. Before reaching this, we passed the Fountain of Tabiga, or, as it has often been called, the Fountain of Capernaum, a fountain second in size only to the chief fountain of the Jordan. Here were once situated extensive mills and tanneries, as the name signifies, and the remain, of an old aqueduct, cut in places through the solid rock, show that the waters from this fountain were anciently used to irrigate the plain beyond.

The place of our encampment was upon the first green spot that I had seen in Palestine. The water which flowed from the spring near by had made an half-acre of as bright and velvety lawn as you ever saw. Here I lay for an hour, and saw the sunlight leave the sea and climb the mountains on the other shore and linger on the brow of Hermon far away to the north. The lake is about four miles across at this point. Nearly opposite us is "a desert place," with a valley—the opening of the gorge, and even now we can see that it is grassy. Isn't that the place where the five thousand were fed? The multitude could easily, when they saw Christ and His disciples departing by ship, have gone around the north end of the sea; and, if the wind had been contrary, or even light, have followed Him on foot and got their feast. And isn't that the mountain to which He retired to pray? and half-way between here and there, on the darkening waters, may we not almost fix the spot where Christ came "walking on the waters," on that tempestuous night, and first terrified and then so gladdened the hearts of His disciples? "Aye! and doesn't He walk on the waters now, when they beat rough and darkly about the soul? and may not the eye of faith discern the bright Form, and the ear catch the sweet accents: "It is I, be not afraid?" I took my Testament and read the 14th chapter of Matthew, and the whole scene came before me.

We bathed in the lake. The water was delightfully warm, and the swim was as refreshing to the body as the scenes and memories were to the soul. Our camping-ground was upon the north edge of a plain which extends along the sea for some six miles, and falls back from it, perhaps, half that distance. This is the ancient and famous "Land of Gennesaret," on which stood, and those fragments about "Khan Misyeh" may, and as Dr. Thompson believes, do mark it still. This plain is exceedingly fertile, and when watered by the great fountain of Tabiga, must have been a very garden, and crowded with life. Here, upon this little spot, our Saviour spent the most of those three and a-half years of His wonderful life. Here He taught; here so many of His wonderful miracles were performed; along this shore He chose His apostles, here He appeared to them after resurrection. Here, more than any other spot on earth, was lived that life which has ever since been lifting up the world to the life of God.

We are li... But how... never again... memories of... camp, and... whole length... a cane frun... grew at the... end of the... Mejel, the... Mary Magd... of wretched... stones, once... home. A... head above... This is the... The plain of... —The B... Cor... A Por... The book... company to... an influen... good. Col... books adap... of them, o... that of su... should be... may be rec... filed cast... pressions... eronous... a stand po... pervert the... order to u... To the lat... belong w... to the s... Divine or... estimation... secure pas... of heart... That s... work nam... ceived by... the vener... attentive... edly coun... of ardent... ness, faith... strict piet... work is v... While... the learn... and edify... plain, and... therefore... writer pu... is reason... ing yet... Cramp in... the langu... instances... commin... determin... After... early li... conversio... transform... Apostle... debtedne... saying... I am... "Be ye... Christ... effects of... Paul; his... lic adm... his Chr... all belie... great m... From... its abid... ble argu... truth of... that a... proved... endowe... could n... ceived... of the... course... exclude... results... excitem... flatter... ease, e... ful sub... tion, r... finally... the sli... clearly... stedd... Redde... decisiv... this ca... that i...