

AUG. 7 1901

The Sabbath School.

INTERNATIONAL LESSON.

Third Quarter Lesson 7. Aug 13 1901

ABRAHAM'S INTERCESSION—Genesis 18: 16-33.

GOLDEN TEXT.—The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.—JAS. 5: 16.

LEARN BY HEART.—Vs. 23-25; Matt. 7: 11; Isa. 62: 1

HISTORICAL SETTING.

Places.—Abraham was in Hebron at the Oaks of Mamre, in the environs of the city. Lot dwelt in Sodom.

Time.—About 15 years after the last lesson. B. C. 1897, according to Usher's dating.

Abraham was 99 years old. His son Ishmael was 13 years old.

During the interval of the fifteen years since the covenant made in our last lesson, Ishmael was born, and had grown to be 13 years old. The covenant of circumcision was made, and a new promise given that Sarah should have a son to be named Isaac.

TWO ORIENTAL SCENES.—One day the aged Abraham, now 99 years old, was sitting in his tent door, when, suddenly, looking up, he saw three strangers near him. He immediately welcomed them in the Oriental manner, and entertained them with the utmost hospitality. It was not long before he perceived that they were angels, and one of them was the Angel of the Lord who had appeared to him five times before.

"Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares" (Heb. 13: 2)

It is uncertain whether Sodom and its sister cities, Gomorrah, Admah, Ziboin, and Zoar, were at the southern or the northern end of the Dead Sea. The most important things to notice are: (1) the character of the Sodomites, which was about as bad as could be imagined. Every form of vice and crime, all manner of revelry and drunkenness, all the basest and meanest sins, flourished.

(2) In the city lived one man, comparatively good, who "vexed his righteous soul" from day to day at their conduct. Lot's pain at the sinfulness around him was a sign that goodness was not dead in him. Peter calls him righteous. He was hospitable, public-spirited, courageous, and preserved his own personal purity of life amid vile surroundings. Yet he was tainted with Sodom's sins. He was an imperfect good man.

THE TWO ANNOUNCEMENTS OF THE ANGELS.—The first announcement was that Sarah should have a son within a year, who was to be the heir of the promises, and of the covenant with Abraham. The second was that God was about to visit Sodom with some terrible judgment on account of its wickedness.

ABRAHAM'S PRAYER FOR THE DOOMED CITY.—Va. 22-32. And the men turned their faces from thence. This is said to show in vivid colors that God never punishes rashly or unjustly. Abraham stood yet before the Lord in the person of the third angel. And Abraham drew near in bodily presence and in holy fervency. Abraham had this privilege because of his life and character (v. 19). It is only the prayer of the righteous man that avails much in its working. Will thou also destroy the righteous with the wicked? Abraham seems to feel that the only way to save the righteous was to save the wicked. Even if Lot be saved, his home, his property, his friends, are destroyed. Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right? Implying that of course God would do right. But it was an appeal to God to vindicate his character, and show clearly that what he does is right. The same question still troubles men. Good and bad are often involved in the same catastrophe. The same storm that overwhelms a pirate ship wrecks the Morning Star of the missionaries. And yet more certain than the sun in its course is the justice and righteousness of God in all he does.

NOTE. 1. That in many cases we do not know enough of the circumstances to make a true judgment. 2. God cares for each individual, and even in a general destruction will let nothing happen to any one unjustly, or not for his good. 3. Often the righteous are partakers of the guilt. They have become contaminated. 4. We are to look forward to another world for the complete vindication of the ways of Providence. There all things will be seen to have worked together for their good. 5. As a matter of fact the righteous were warned and did not suffer with the city. If I find in Sodom fifty righteous, He would spare Sodom on this condition, because the city in that case was not hopeless. These few righteous men would be enough to leave

the city. Even Lot might have done great things for the city had he been unselfish and labored for the salvation of its inhabitants. I... which am but dust and ashes. I, who am unworthy, and do not ask it for my own sake.

The safety of the city being granted on this occasion, Abraham takes courage and asks still larger things; he drops 45; then to 40; then to 30; then to 20; and finally to 10.

I will not destroy it for ten's sake. But not even ten were found in the city.

Lessons on Intercession. 1. One of our great privileges is that of praying for others. We can reach by prayer those whom we can reach in no other way.

2. The one deadly enemy to a country is unrighteousness. The ancient civilizations have perished by this poison.

3. Therefore we should intercede for our country, and prayer will help us to do all in our power to make the country right.

4. Lot prayed for himself, Abraham for others.

5. Lot was enabled to escape. The city was destroyed because that was the best thing for Abraham's promised land, and for his descendants. The cancer must be cut out lest it destroy the whole body.

THE ESCAPE OF LOT FROM SODOM.—Abraham's prayer was answered in the escape of his nephew. The angels went to Sodom as strangers and were ill-received by the Sodomites. But Lot rescued them, welcomed them to his home, and found he had "entertained angels unawares."

The angels warned him of his danger. He warned his married children, but they thought he was joking with them. With his wife and two unmarried daughters he escaped from Sodom. His wife looked back, and became a pillar of salt. Lot escaped to Zair with his two daughters. Lot was saved, but he lost everything for the sake of which he had gone to Sodom. His wife and some of his children were destroyed; the others were contaminated. And yet, no doubt, it was largely for their sakes that he pitched his tent toward the fertile fields of Sodom. He lost his home, his flock and herds, and all his property. He escaped, a poor, forlorn, seemingly broken-down man. The poorest investment he ever made was in property in Sodom. There are Lots still living, who have pitched their tents toward Sodom.

It is not enough to go outside of the walls of the Sodom of flagrant acts of sin, and disreputable and degrading vices; but we must not stay in all the plain. Keep as far away from sin as possible, from thoughts of sin, from secret sin. The only safety is in a new heart and new life through Jesus Christ. Make no delay in escaping sin.

THE DESTRUCTION OF SODOM.—Two elements were engaged in the destruction of Sodom,—the fire from heaven, and the inflammable material of the city and the soil on which it was built. "This event not only demonstrates the reality of miracles, but also serves to illustrate their nature. A miracle is not a violation of natural law, but a use of natural law by One wiser to comprehend and more powerful to use than law than man."

Practical Lessons. 1. It is necessary, when the wicked are beyond hope of reformation, and are only a leaven of evil in the world, that they should be destroyed. Their punishment is both justice and mercy.

2. The wicked have within them the elements of their own punishment,—their moral natures, memory, conscience, bad character, remorse. These are often dormant till God's outward punishment sets them afloat.

The Mending-Basket.

Says a writer in the Western Christian Advocate: Do many of the young people of the present day know what an art the mending of stockings and inserting of a patch used to be with the women of the household in the days that are past? We remember hearing an enthusiastic cousin exclaim—and this was years ago: O mother, you never in your life saw anything like old Aunt C's darning! Why, Grandma L's isn't to be mentioned beside it, for all we always thought grandma's darning was such a wonder. But Aunt C's was like embroidery. . . .

Every girl should surely know how to repair her clothing and keep it in presentable order as she grows old enough to do so. There are comparatively few families where there are mother and daughters or sons who can afford to discard stockings, socks, and other articles of wearing apparel as soon as they begin to show signs of wear. The weaving in-and-out stitch that constitutes darning is very easily and neatly done with a little care and caution as to evenness, and the precision with which one stitch must go over and the other under when it comes to crossing the first line of stitches. There are one or two

things suggested by experience that it may be well to set down here. Men and boys usually have underwear that it pays to repair. Where a patch is to be put in underwear, either high or vests, it is an excellent way to take the best and least worn portion of an old undervest, and neatly insert it. Sew the piece that is to be inserted directly over the worn part and run it on. Then cut out the worn part, leaving a raw, narrow edge of perhaps an inch on both sides. Next catsfoot these raw edges, the one inside, the other outside, and you have no hard seam, no unsightly darn, but only a rather artistically-inserted piece of perfectly whole material, stitched to the garment just as in a fancy crazy-quilt the little pieces are catsfooted together.

Then again, it sometimes becomes difficult to know how best and most neatly to fasten the edges of embroidery or to finish them off. An ingenious way is to cut the embroidery straight up at the end of a collar, and buttonhole it along the edge. This makes a firm and perfectly neat edge. When night-dresses must have new Hamburg put on, it is often hard to run the edges out of sight, as has been done with the original trimming; but any embroidered edge can be nicely finished in the way just described.

If a single little rent appears in a fine expensive handkerchief, do not attempt to darn it, this makes the mending too apparent; simply draw the edges together, paring them a little if frayed, then catch them together firmly over and over. A handkerchief will not last long after it begins to go, but a little rent repaired in the way described would simply pass as a crease in the ironing, and the delicate bit of cambric muslin would stand a few more washings. It is, of course, the washing that wears out fine handkerchiefs, the reason why many ladies prefer to launder them themselves.

Where a piece of nice lace is to be repaired, the torn edges can be neatly disguised by running a thread across from one figure to another, then buttonholing it with precision, so putting in here and there a neat, strong line scarcely distinguishable from the threads of lace. Lace also can be very skilfully joined at the edges where used for sleeves by lapping the edges and darning across and across, occasionally making a buttonhole stitch by way of making it firm.

Take time to show the young maidens these things. A slipshod, untidy wardrobe is a disgrace to any one calling herself a lady. And the man who must run to the tailor to hire a mender to keep his clothes in repair must feel that a very important part of his wife's home instruction is sadly wanting. The mending that is such a bugbear in many well-ordered homes, after all, an easily-accomplished duty if only "the way to do it" is rightly understood.

Let the Home Help.

After all the home has the heaviest responsibility in the work of teaching the truth of God and of aiding in the salvation of the soul. God looks there first, and makes there the strongest demand. He declared: "These words which I command thee this day shall be in thine heart and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down and when thou risest up." No Sunday-school, or pulpit, or any other agency relieves the home of its high duty. Let that never be forgotten.

It follows that the home should steadily second every effort to teach truth to its children or to save them. Not attempting to put his duty away but doing that and helping any who try to assist.

The Sunday-school is, without doubt, one of the best helps of the home, and the home owes it to itself to make the most of this splendid agency. It should join in the studies, or at least, encourage and assist the students. A word from a father or mother—anything to show interest—will mightily reinforce the superintendent and teacher. Neglect in the home renders ineffectual much faithful work in the school.

We beg parents to realize the value of the Sunday-school and the necessity of helping them. Teach the lessons during the week, send the children regularly—or, better still, go with them; ask about the school when they return, and enforce the lessons that they have been taught. The conversion and development of your children may be of great reward.—Southern Advocate.

PICKING THE NOSE is a common symptom of worms in children. Mothers who suspect their child is troubled with worms should administer Dr. Low's Pleasant Worm Syrup. It is simple, safe and effectual. Price 25 cents.

"Too Near My Price."

There is a story well known in naval circles, of an honest old commodore—a man of frank and witty speech—who commanded a blockade squadron in Southern waters during the Civil War. A fine-looking, well-mannered man came to him one day, at a time when no vessel had been able to pass the blockade for weeks, and introduced himself as the representative of certain firms abroad, whose commercial need for cotton was desperate. After explaining this point fully, he made an open offer to the commodore of \$50,000 if he would manage to let one single ship, laden with cotton, pass the blockade. He even opened his wallet, and spread the crisp bills out upon the table to emphasize the amount.

The commodore listened with indifferent air, and said nothing until the man was through with his offer. Then he answered, still indifferently: "This thing is absolutely impossible, sir. Good morning," and bowed him out. So little indignation did he show, indeed, that a week later the persevering agent came back with a new offer. "Commodore," he said, "I am authorized to offer you even more than I did. If you will do as I ask, here are \$100,000 which I will leave upon the table," and he began to take a roll of bills out of his wallet as before.

This time, however, the old sailor was not indifferent. Taking the briber by the neck, he kicked him out of the cabin without ceremony, saying as he did so: "Get out of here, you scoundrel! You're coming too near my price!"

It was a true speech and a wise one. The temptation which does not tempt us may be met with indifference, but when we feel that a danger-point is near, we need to act quickly. Every man, the cynic says, has his price. Perhaps so; but the man who knows when his price is being approached, if he has the resolution to take temptation by the shoulders then and there, and turn it out, is safe. Never let an enemy get inside your guard, is an old rule. When the tempter gets too near our price, then is our time to resist him stoutly. A little later may be too late; but the old sailor's example, if followed, will bring us triumphantly.—Selected.

Do You Know?

Do you know that every cruelty inflicted on an animal in killing or just before death poisons to a greater or less extent its meat?

Do you know that every cruelty inflicted upon a cow poisons to a great or less extent its milk?

Do you know that fish killed as soon as taken from the water by a blow on the back of the head will keep longer and be better than those permitted to die slowly?

Do you know that birds destroy millions of bugs, mosquitoes and harmful insects, that without the birds we could not live on the earth, and that every little insect-eating bird you may kill and every egg you may take from its nest means one less bird to destroy insects?

Do you know that a check-rein which will not permit a horse to put his head where he wants to when going up a hill is a cruel torture to the horse?

Do you know that the mutilation of a horse by cutting off his tail compels him to suffer torture from flies and insects every summer as long as he lives?

Do you know that every kind act you do and every kind word you speak to a dumb animal will make not only the animal but yourself happier, and not only make you happier but also better?—Geo. T. Angell.

What the Bible is Like.

It is like a large, beautiful tree that bears sweet fruit for the hungry, and gives shelter and shade to weary pilgrims.

It is like a casket of jewels and precious stones, not to be merely looked at and admired, but used and worn.

It is like a telescope, which brings distant objects and far-off world very near, so that we see their beauty.

It is like a storehouse of things, useful and valuable, to be had without money.

How to Cure Headache.—Some people suffer untold misery day after day with Headache. There is rest neither day or night until the nerves are all unstrung. The cause is generally a disordered stomach, and a cure can be effected by using Parmelee's Vegetable Pills, containing Mandrake and Dan-delon. Mr. Finlay Wark, Lysander, P. Q., writes: "I find Parmelee's Pills a first-class article for Bilious Headache."

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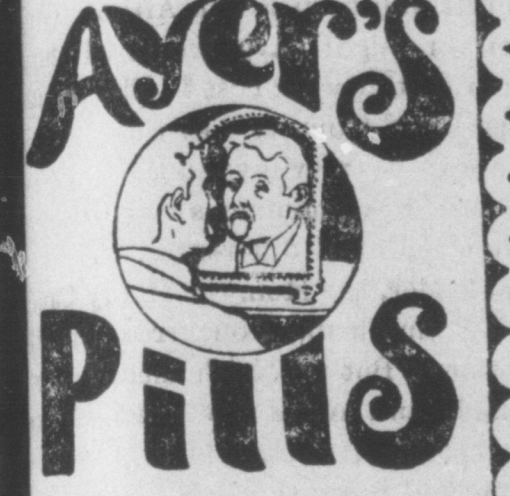
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