

The Sunday School.

May 22.—The Passover.—Exod. 12: 1-14.

GOLDEN TEXT.—Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us.—1 Cor. 5: 7.

CENTRAL TRUTH.—Deliverance by the slain lamb.

Connected History.—As Moses hesitated to go alone at God's call, Aaron was sent with him to Pharaoh, to ask that the Israelites be set free. Pharaoh stoutly refused. Nine terrible plagues had been sent upon Egypt, because Pharaoh refused to obey God's command and allow the Israelites to go and serve the Lord. The tenth was the most terrible of all when the destroying angel cut down the firstborn of all the Egyptians. Then "Egypt was glad when they departed." Ps. 105: 38. In order that the angel might pass over the houses of the Israelites, God directs Moses to institute the feast mentioned in this lesson, and in whatever house that feast was being held it was to be indicated by the mark of the blood of the lamb on the lintel and posts of the outer door.

EXPLANATIONS.

This month: called Abib, 13: 4, later called also Nisan, corresponding to our March or April; first month: not only in time, but in importance. Tisri, our September or October, had formerly been the first month of the year. It remained first of the secular, while Abib became first of the religious year; congregation: assembly, literally "a gathering together;" tenth day: i. e. the fourth before the Passover; according . . . fathers: that is, one for each family. Without blemish: perfect, Lev. 22: 20-24, comp. 1 Pet. 1: 19; male of the first year: "son of a year," not over a year old; as in place of the firstborn male child of the family; fourteenth day: Christ was crucified on that day; kill it: all the families of the Israelites at the same time; in the evening: or "at even" or "between the evenings," as in margin of Revised Version; that is, between one sunset and the next sunset. Christ died at 3 p. m.; strike it: "put it," it was done with a branch of hyssop, or kind of marjoram having a thyme-like odor. In that night: after sunset, therefore the 15th Abib; and unleavened bread: "with unleavened cakes," comp. 1 Cor. 5: 7, 8, made of dough without leaven or ferment, and therefore more quickly prepared, Deut. 16: 3; Exod. 12: 39: raw: or half cooked; sodden: the past participle of seethe, "boiled," Gen. 25: 29; Lev. 6: 28; fire: was always used in sacrifice, signifying the divine presence; purification: "inwards." "This entire consumption of the lamb constitutes one marked difference between the Passover and all other sacrifices." Loins girded, the long outer garment tucked up under the girdle; shoes on your feet: or sandals, ordinarily taken off while in the house, and at a meal; staff: as if to set out on a journey; Lord's passover: he mercifully passes over, or by the Israelites, sparing them in his flight, while as to the Egyptians he will pass through: in judgment and with destruction; smite: strike dead; man and beast: all living creatures; gods: "chief ones," "great ones," both men and idols, the latter being worshipped in the form of almost every animal; token: mark, sign and pledge; memorial: commemorative of God's mercy; feast: festival of joy and thanksgiving; ordinance for ever: perpetual rule or custom.

PRACTICAL TEACHINGS.

1. Christ our Lamb has been slain for us.
2. His blood when applied to us secures freedom from death.
3. We must partake of his nature and righteousness by faith.

Accept of the means of salvation God has provided.

May 29.—The Red Sea.—Exod. 14: 19-31.

GOLDEN TEXT.—When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee, and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee.—Isa. 43: 2.

CENTRAL TRUTH.—The Lord delivers his people and defeats his enemies.

Introductory.—Urged by the Egyptians, Ex. 12: 28-33, the Israelites

leave God, then, taking with them many valuable gifts of jewels, silver, gold and clothing from the previous oppressors. The Lord himself led the way in a pillar of cloud by day and in a pillar of fire by night, Ex. 13: 21, 22. Pharaoh, regretting his permission, sends a great army, Ex. 14: 7, and overtakes them as they are encamped on the shores of the sea. The Israelites are filled with terror, and forgetful of the hand which was leading them, they again approach Moses, who replies, "The Lord shall fight for you, and yeshah, hold your peace." Then God tells them to go forward.

EXPLANATIONS.

Angel of God: angel of the covenant, the Lord Jesus; went before: see Ex. 13: 21, 22; before: from the front or van to the rear, so that while it was a light to the Israelites, it hid them from the Egyptians; stretched out: see verse 16, very early in the morning, or even before midnight; east wind: God used natural means; go back: recede; the waters were divided; there was a separation between the waters of the sea south and those north; a wall: a protection on each side, so that they could not be attacked, see Nahum 3: 8; pursued . . . went in after them: thinking they too might cross before the waters would return; all Pharaoh's horses: all that had come in pursuit, verse 7; morning watch: about 6 a. m.; looked unto: or "looked forth," not only beheld, but manifested himself in judgment, Ps. 77: 16-20; through: by means of the pillar; troubled: or "discomfited," threw into confusion; took off . . . wheels: in the heavy sand and mud into which they sank. For "took off" we may perhaps understand "clogged." The Egyptians recognized the hand of Jehovah in it; waters may come again: that the waters may flow back and be as before; to his strength: its usual depth; morning appeared: when it became day; fled against it: or through the deepening tide; overthrew: "shook off," that is from their chariots, wasting them off by the waves, overturning them, and putting the whole host in confusion. Covered: drowned the Egyptians: water . . . right . . . left: this fact is repeated as if to assure us of a miracle, believed in the Lord. They only half believed before this.

PRACTICAL TEACHINGS.

1. Blessed are those whom the Lord leads.
2. They are safe who follow where God directs.
3. Not human power and skill, but obedience to God gains the victory.
4. God's presence is comfort and strength to the believer, and confusion and destruction to the unbeliever.
5. The ruin of those who oppose God.

June 5.—The Manna.—Exod. 16: 4-12.

GOLDEN TEXT.—Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life.—John 6: 35.

CENTRAL TRUTH.—The Lord gives bread from heaven.

Introductory.—The utter and signal destruction of Egypt's host with its leader forbids further pursuit of Israel, and was the occasion of the song of triumph which we have in Ex. 15: 1-21. Leaving the Red Sea they march into the wilderness to Marah, where there were bitter waters unfit to drink, until Moses, as directed by God, sweetened them by a tree which he cast into them. At Marah the Israelites, forgetful of the Almighty Hand which had led them, murmured against Moses. Thence they marched southeast to Elim, and then on toward Sinai. Travelers now find this region barren, and wanting in good water. The tamarisk tree gum, found there, the Arabs now call manna, but it does not resemble the manna given of God. There is a substance now found in the East, which the people eat, and now call the bread of heaven, see Parmalee's "Homes by the Rivers of Eden."

EXPLANATIONS.

Will rain: "am about raining," implying abundance; bread: food; from heaven: the sky, marking its miraculous character; certain rate every day: or "a day's portion every day;" each day only enough for that day's use; prove: try, then whether they will trust him from day to day;

walk in my law: obey the command to gather no more than one day's supply; sixth day: the day before Sabbath; prepare: see verse 23; twice as much: enough for that day and the Sabbath, when there was no manna to gather, verse 27; said: in order to appease their murmuring; at even: see 12; shall know: by what will take place; the Lord: not Moses and Aaron; glory of the Lord: not the miraculous supply of food, but the wonderful manifestation mentioned in verse 10; against the Lord: because Moses was God's representative; flesh: of quails, verse 13; bread: verse 14, 15; not against us, but: complaint and quarrel against God. Come near: to behold the manifestation of God's presence; glory . . . in the cloud: it was in or through the pillar which appeared like a cloud by day that God showed his glory; at even: or literally, "between the two evenings," as in Ex. 12: 6; "in the evening." It refers to quails which were sent, see verse 13. The quails came in the evening and the manna was found in the morning.

PRACTICAL TEACHINGS.

1. How soon we forget God's blessings.
2. How sinful it is to find fault with God.
3. God provides food, but we must "gather" it.
4. Our life is a journey through a wilderness.
5. We quickly forget God's wonder-providences and deliverances.

June 12.—The Commandments.—Exod. 20: 1-11.

GOLDEN TEXT.—Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart.—Matt. 22: 37.

CENTRAL TRUTH.—Our duty to God.

Introductory.—Leaving the wilderness of Sin, the Israelites come to Rephidim (now Wady Feiran), where there being no water, they not only murmur, but almost rebel against Moses. Out of "the rock in Horeb," a miraculous supply is given, and the place called Massah and Meribah, to commemorate their temptation and strife. Some time after, they are called upon to fight their first battle. Amalek opposes their march, but God being on their side they gain the victory. Jethro, the father-in-law of Moses, hearing of all the wonders which God had wrought for Israel, visits Moses, and advises him to divide the people into companies, and appoint over each, rulers or arbiters to settle petty difference. Now, in the third month from the time they left Egypt, we find the people in the wilderness, at the foot of the Sinai range, where "the ten commandments" are given to Moses. The prevailing opinion is that Moses received the law from God on Jebel Musa (Mount of Moses), a mass 2 miles long by 1 broad, having at the north end a peak 7,363 feet high, and proclaimed it to the people from Ras Sufsef, the northern peak of Jebel Musa, which is 6,987 feet high. At the base of this peak is a plain, El Rahah, 2 miles long by a half mile wide, which affords more than sufficient standing room for the 2,000,000 Israelites. The ten commandments are called the ten words, and are part of God's moral law. In this lesson we study the first table of the law, or our duties to God.

EXPLANATIONS.

God spake: from the mount, in the hearing of men and angels, Deut. 5: 4; Ps. 68: 17; Acts 7: 53; Gal. 3: 19; words: precepts, commandments; Lord: Jehovah; house of bondage: or of slaves, referring to their servile condition; v. 2 gives a reason why God alone is to be worshipped; grateful love for deliverance. It is the preface; before me: "before my face," or as in the margin, "beside me," graven image . . . likeness: meaning any carved image or form, for the purpose of worship. Bow down . . . nor serve them: not to be made for worship. They were not to be idolaters; jealous: God is love, and love claims fidelity, and he is "jealous for his own honor." Visiting the iniquity: or wrong doing; not its guilty penalty but its consequences descend to nations and individuals; hate me; sin is practical hatred of God; showing mercy unto thousands; God's mercy endureth forever, Ps. 138: 8;



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take in vain: use lightly, irreverently and falsely; prohibits profanity and perjury; it may also apply to those who assume to be called by his name vainly. Hold him guiltless: pronounce innocent, acquit. Remember: keep in mind, observe; Sabbath: "rest after labor;" keep it holy: sanctify it, Deut. 5: 12, set it apart for sacred purposes; seventh day: since Christ rose from the grave on the first day, Christians observe it instead of the seventh day; of the Lord: "unto the Lord;" thou shalt not do any work: strictly, thou shalt do no worldly work. Stranger: foreigner, not a Jew. The law of Sabbath observance is worldwide; within thy gates: within the whole district wherever they might be located; hallowed: made holy.

June 19.—The Commandments.—Ex. 20: 12-21.

GOLDEN TEXT.—Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.—Matt. 22: 39.

CENTRAL TRUTH.—Our duty to man.

Introductory.—Some suppose that the six commandments in this lesson were written on the second tablet of stone, and the four in the last lesson on the first tablet. The Jews and the Christian Fathers divided the commandments equally between the two tablets. So Josephus says, Moses "put the two tablets whereon the ten commandments were written, five on each table, and two and a half upon each side of them," in the ark. Paul in referring to the commands of the second table omits the fifth, Rom. 13: 9, as if classing it in the first table. But the prevailing division among Evangelical churches is, to place the first four in the first table, and the last six under the second; 1. Duties to God. 2. Duties to man.

EXPLANATIONS.

Honor: revere, show regard. Father . . . mother: as representing God. The range of this law extends to rulers. Days may be long: that thou mayest live long in the land, Deut. 5: 16; Eph. 6: 3. Kill: "murder," applies only to the taking of human life from malice. On this and the next commandment, as to adultery, see Christ's words, Matt. 5: 21-32. Steal: depriving God or man of what belongs or is due to either, whether goods or money, reputation or estate. Bear false witness: Deut. 19: 16-19; "answer falsely," with reverence to a court of justice; but applicable to all our intercourse with our neighbor, said by Rabbins to mean only a fellow Jew; by Christ as equivalent to our fellow-man, Luke 20: 25-37. Covet: "desire," Deut. 5: 21; the sin consists in allowing the desire to be a motive to disobedience of any commandment. The Roman Catholic Church, omitting the Second Commandment, divides the Tenth into two, so as to retain the number ten. Saw: perception through any of the senses; hear they heard and saw. Of the trumpet: not from a real trumpet, but resembling the sound of the cornet. Removed: "trembled," as in Revised Version. Speak thou with us: they felt their need of one to speak for them. Hear: give heed and obey; the heads of the people and the elders spoke. Lest we die: the awful phenomena terrified them, Deut. 5: 23-27. Fear not: God will not destroy you. To prove you: to give you an opportunity to show your obedience, trust. His fear may be before your faces: that regard and reverence for him may be ever in your hearts and minds, and prevent you from sinning against him. Moses drew near: "was made to draw near." Thick darkness: probably of the cloud upon the mount.

PRACTICAL TEACHINGS.

1. Watch your words and your feelings; God does.
2. God wants us to respect our parents.
3. We are to preserve our purity and our neighbor's life, goods, and chastity.
4. We are to tell the truth.
5. God requires us not to desire things belonging to others.

"It is my Boy."

Through Rochester, New York, runs the Genesee River, between steep and rocky banks. There are falls in the river and dark recesses. One time a gentleman who lived in the city had just arrived on the train from a journey. He was anxious to go home and meet his wife and children. He was hurrying along the streets with a bright vision of home in his mind, when he saw on the bank of the river a lot of excited men.

"What is the matter?" he shouted.

They replied: "A boy is in the water."

"Why don't you save him?" he asked.

In a moment, throwing down his carpet-bag and pulling off his coat, he jumped into the stream, grasped the boy in his arms and struggled with him to the shore, and as he wiped the water from his dripping face and brushed back the hair he exclaimed: "O God, it is my boy!"

He plunged in for the boy of somebody else and saved his own. So we plunge into the waters of Christian self-denial, labor, hardship, reproach, soul-travail, prayer, anxious entreaty, willing to spend and be spent, taking all risks, to save some other one from drowning in sin and death and save ourselves.—The Presbyterian.

Desiring and Choosing.

"O," said a poor drunkard, "I desire above all things to reform, and be a steady man."

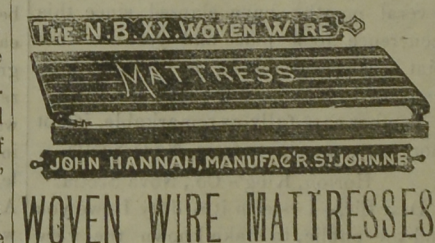
Yes, you may desire it, but do you choose it? There is a great difference between desiring a thing and choosing a thing. If you choose to be a reformed man you will be one.

Ask a poor, ragged vagabond, "Do you wish to become rich." Of course he will say, "Yes." But he does not choose it; he desires to be lazy much more than to earn a living; therefore he is a vagabond.

"Charlie, do you desire to be a scholar, and stand at the head of your class?"

"Indeed I do," cried Charlie; but Charlie is at the foot of everything, because he likes his ease better than he likes to study.

Lucy said, "I really desire to be obliging and sweet-tempered." "Then you must choose to be," answered her mother.



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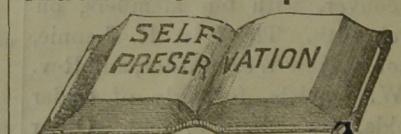
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