

SCHOLARS' NOTES

(From the International Lessons for 1880, by Edwin W Rice, as issued by American Sunday School Union.)

LESSON VI.

AUG 8.]

ABRAM AND LOT.
Gen. 13: 1-18.

COMMIT TO MEMORY vs. 14-18.

1. And Abram went up out of Egypt, he, and his wife, and all that he had, and Lot with him, into the south.
2. And Abram was very rich in cattle, in silver, and in gold.
3. And he went on his journeys from the south even to Bethel, unto the place where his tent had been at the beginning, between Bethel and Hai.
4. Unto the place of the altar, which he had made there at the first: and there Abram called on the name of the Lord.
5. And Lot also, which went with Abram, had flocks and herds, and tents.
6. And the land was not able to bear them, that they might dwell together: for their substance was great, so that they could not dwell together.
7. And there was a strife between the herdmen of Abram's cattle and the herdmen of Lot's cattle: and the Canaanite and the Perizzite dwelled then in the land.
8. And Abram said unto Lot, Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee, and between my herdmen and thy herdmen; for we be brethren.
9. Is not the whole land before thee? separate thyself, I pray thee, from me: if thou wilt take the left hand, then I will go to the right; or if thou depart to the right hand, then I will go to the left.
10. And Lot lifted up his eyes, and beheld all the plain of Jordan, that it was well watered everywhere, before the Lord destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, even as the garden of the Lord, like the land of Egypt, as thou comest unto Zoar.
11. Then Lot chose him all the plain of Jordan; and Lot journeyed east: and they separated themselves the one from the other.
12. Abram dwelled in the land of Canaan, and Lot dwelled in the cities of the plain, and pitched his tent toward Sodom.
13. But the men of Sodom were wicked and sinners before the Lord exceedingly.
14. And the Lord said unto Abram, after that Lot was separated from him, Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art northward, and southward, and eastward and westward:
15. For all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever.
16. And I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth: so that if a man can number the dust of the earth, then shall thy seed also be numbered.
17. Arise, walk through the land in the length of it and in the breadth of it; for I will give it unto thee.
18. Then Abram removed his tent, and came and dwelt in the plain of Mamre, which is in Hebron, and built there an altar unto the Lord.

GOLDEN TEXT.

Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee.—Gen. 13: 8.

CENTRAL TRUTH.

An evil choice brings evil consequences.

NOTES.—SOD-OM, "burning;" the chief of five ancient cities in the "Arabah" or Jordan valley, and which was destroyed for its wickedness. The popular belief that it was submerged, and that the Dead Sea now covers its site, is unsupported by modern researches. Whether it stood at the south or the north end of the Sea, is still a matter of sharp discussion among biblical explorers.—GO-MOR-RAH, "culture, habitation" one of the five cities of the plain mentioned with Sodom, and destroyed for its wickedness.—ZOAR, "smallness." The location of this city has given great difficulty, but it is believed, if we accept the reading of the Syriac version, "Zoar," which is a well-known city of Egypt.—MAM-RE, "father," a plain named after an ancient Amorite who dwelt near Kirjath-Arba, or Hebron.

EXPLANATIONS.

LESSON TOPICS.—(I.) ABRAM'S WISDOM. (II.) LOT'S CHOICE. (III.) PROMISE RENEWED.

I. ABRAM'S WISDOM.—(1.) EGYPT, they went to Egypt during the famine, rather than to their own country, because God wished to isolate them from kindred; UP OUT OF THE SOUTH—"Negeb," the south country lying at the entrance into Canaan from Egypt. (2.) RICH IN CATTLE, etc.; cattle, the chief form of wealth in the East. (4.) CALLED ON... THE LORD, thanksgiving, and perhaps confession of sin of deception into which he had fallen in Egypt. (7.) STRIFE BETWEEN THE HERD MEN, land was not defined or secured by law; each sought the best pasture and water. (8.) LET THERE BE NO STRIFE... WE BE BRETHREN, might have claimed superior right to rule, or have called him nephew. (9.) THE WHOLE LAND BEFORE THEE, valuing his right; gives the choice to Lot.

II. LOT'S CHOICE.—(11.) LOT CHOSE HIM ALL THE PLAIN OF JORDAN, took advantage of Abram's magnanimity, leaving to Abram the present position. Lot's choice—the well-watered lowlands of the Jordan—was made from earthly motives only; JOURNEYED EAST, from the hill country of Sechem; Jordan lay to the east. (12.) PITCHED HIS TENT TOWARD SODOM, he had no fear of moral contamination of inhabitants; placed himself in great danger, which ended in great disaster.

III. PROMISE RENEWED.—(14.) AFTER THAT LOT WAS SEPARATED FROM HIM, his gentleness and forbearance toward Lot drew God to him again. (15.) FOREVER, as long as the order

of things to which it belongs lasts. (18.) BUILT THERE AN ALTAR, the renewal of the promise acknowledged by fresh tribute of gratitude.

ABRAM LOT

In the Rough Mountains. Chose Smooth plain.

Safe Choice. Foolish Choice.

"On the rocky summit of that hill (east of Bethel), under its grove of oaks, Abraham had pitched his tent and built his altar. . . . And now, from this spot, he and his kinsman made the choice which determined the fate of each, according to the view which that summit commands. Lot looked down on the green valley of the Jordan, its tropical luxuriance visible even from thence—beautiful and well-watered as that garden of Eden of which the fame still lingered in their old Chaldean hills, as the valley of the Nile in which they had so lately sojourned. He chose the rich soil and with it the corrupt civilization which had grown up in the rank climate of that deep descent; and once more he turned his face eastward, and left to Abraham the hardship, the glory, and the virtue of the rugged hills, the sea-breezes, and the inexhaustible future of Western Palestine. It was Abraham's henceforward; he was to 'arise and walk through the length and through the breadth of it, for God had given it to him.' This was the first appropriation, the first consecration of the Holy Land."—Dean Stanley.

LESSON VII.

AUG. 15.]

ABRAM AND MELCHIZEDEK.
Gen. 14: 12-24.

COMMIT TO MEMORY vs. 18-20.

12. And they took Lot, Abram's brother's son, who dwelt in Sodom, and his goods, and departed.
13. And there came one that had escaped, and told Abram the Hebrew; for he dwelt in the plain of Mamre the Amorite, brother of Eshcol, and brother of Aner; and these were confederate with Abram.
14. And when Abram heard that his brother was taken captive, he armed his trained servants, born in his own house, three hundred and eighteen, and pursued them unto Dan.
15. And he divided himself against them, he and his servants; by night, and smote them and pursued them unto Hobah, which is on the left hand of Damascus.
16. And he brought back all the goods, and also brought back again his brother Lot, and his goods, and the women also, and the people.
17. And the king of Sodom went out to meet him, after his return from the slaughter of Chedor-laomer, and of the kings that were with him, at the valley of Shaveh, which is the king's dale.
18. And Melchizedek king of Salem brought forth bread and wine: he was the priest of the most high God.
19. And he blessed him, and said, Blessed be Abram of the most high God, possessor of heaven and earth:
20. And blessed be the most high God, which hath delivered thine enemies into thy hand. And he gave him tithes of all.
21. And the king of Sodom said unto Abram, Give me the persons, and take the goods to thyself.
22. And Abram said to the king of Sodom, I have lift up mine hand unto the Lord, the most high God, the possessor of heaven and earth.
23. That I will not take from a thread even to a shoe latchet, and that I will not take anything that is thine, lest thou shouldst say, I have made Abram rich:
24. Save that which the young men hath eaten, and the portion of the men which went with me, Aner, Eshcol, and Mamre; them take their portion.

GOLDEN TEXT.

Jesus, made an high priest forever, after the order of Melchizedek.—Heb. 6: 20.

CENTRAL TRUTH.

The Lord honors his faithful servants.

NOTES.—SOD-OM, see lesson on Abram and Lot.—CHEDOR-LA-O-MER, "a handful of sheaves," an ancient Chaldean king, believed to be identical with a king whose name has recently been discovered in bricks found in Chaldaea. He was a great warrior and successful conqueror.—MELCHIZEDEK, "king of Righteousness," a king of Salem, and also a priest, was recognized by Abram as of superior spiritual rank, and is regarded as a type of Christ. (Heb. 5: 6, 7.) Ancient Jews and Samaritans held an old tradition that Melchizedek was them, the Son of Noah.—SALEM, "peace," an early name for the town, afterward called Jebus and Jerusalem. Lot; after he "pitched his tent near Sodom," was exposed to great temptation, and involved in another danger. The five cities of the plain—of which Sodom was one—revolted against the Asiatic empire to which they were subject. Chedorlaomer fought against them, overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah, and Lot's choice was seen not to be wise, even for earthly happiness.

EXPLANATIONS.

LESSON TOPICS.—(I.) ABRAM AS A WARRIOR. (II.) ABRAM'S RECEPTION. (III.) THE SPOILS.

I. ABRAM AS A WARRIOR.—(12.) THEY TOOK LOT... AND HIS GOODS, the purpose of his choice defeated, sought happiness; but his "soul vexed," etc., sought wealth, but he, and it, taken in war. (13.) TOLD ABRAM, Abram might have neglected Lot in distress, but did not render evil for evil; THE HEBREW, so called from his ancestor Eber. (14.) BROTHER, nephews, sometimes called brothers in Hebrew; TRAINED SERVANTS,

slaves; if he could spare three hundred and eighteen he must have been very wealthy. (15.) DIVIDED HIMSELF, attacked them on two sides; BY NIGHT, took them unawares; LEFT HAND OF DAMASCUS, Hobah was north of Damascus; Orientals fixed points as they looked toward the east, hence Damascus would lie to their left hand.

II. ABRAM'S RECEPTION.—(17.) KING OF SODOM, the new king, one king had been killed in the attack (v. 10), KING'S DALE, a valley east of Jerusalem. (18.) SALEM, an ancient name of Jerusalem (Ps. 76: 2), MELCHIZEDEK, KING... PRIEST, these two offices were often united. (19.) HE BLESSED HIM, Melchizedek assumes, and Abram concedes, authority.

III. THE SPOILS.—(20.) GAVE HIM TITHES OF ALL, a tenth given to God through Melchizedek, as an acknowledgment of God, and of the priesthood of Melchizedek. (21.) GIVE ME THE PERSONS, the customary division. (22.) THE POSSESSOR, or, "the framer," the maker. (23.) I WILL NOT TAKE, according to custom still existing among Arab tribes, Abram might have retained the goods, but he, with honest pride, refused; LEST THOU SHOULDST SAY, how much wiser than Lot. He would receive entertainment from Melchizedek, but nothing from the king of Sodom, lest he should lay himself under obligation. (24.) THE YOUNG MEN, the servants whom he had led to the fight.

MELCHIZEDEK—"There is, and must always remain, great obscurity upon the history of Melchizedek and upon some important points in Abram's intercourse with him. It seems to us far from improbable that Moses, writing under divine direction, was withheld from furnishing further information respecting Melchizedek, that he might thus be rendered a more efficient type of Christ in his priestly office; and that sacred writers in later ages might find the means of illustrating, from what is known, and more from what is not known, of Melchizedek, this important feature in the official character of the Divine Redeemer."—Kitto.

CHEDORLAOMER—"Kudur-Lagamer (the Chedorlaomer of Scripture) resolved on an expedition up the Euphrates, with the object of extending his dominions to the Mediterranean Sea and to the borders of Egypt. At first his endeavors were successful. Together with his confederate kings, he marched as far as Palestine, where he was opposed by the native princes—Bera, king of Sodom; Birshah, king of Gomorrah; Shinab, king of Admah; Shemeber, king of Zebolim, and the king of Belah or Zoar. A great battle was fought between the two confederated armies in the vale of Siddim, toward the lower end of the Dead Sea. The invaders were victorious; and for twelve years Bera and his allies were content to own themselves subject to the Elamitic king. . . . In the thirteenth year they rebelled. . . . Once more the four Eastern kings entered Syria, and engaged a second time in the valley of Siddim with their old antagonists, whom they defeated a second time with great slaughter. . . . It was on this occasion that Lot, the nephew of Abraham, was taken prisoner."—Rawlinson's "Ancient Monarchies," Vol. 1, p. 161.

MORE WONDERFUL THAN THE TELEGRAPH.

George and Thomas Bates had often expressed a desire to visit the telegraph-office. One day, after school, these boys went into their father's warehouse, which was just opposite the telegraph-office, and asked him if he would be so kind as to take them to see this wonderful invention. Their father was not so occupied as to prevent his granting their request; and the next moment they were by the side of the agent, looking at the performance of the little instrument that noted down intelligence like a living thing.

The boys entreated their father to send a message to their uncle in Washington. This he consented to do, but the little machine was so busy that the agent had no opportunity to gratify them.

Tic, tic, tic, dot, dot, click, click, click, went the little pointer. By-and-by it ceased for an instant, but just as the agent was going to put in his claim it began again. After awhile their turn came. The agent hurried to put in a W for Washington, and "Ay," "ay," was the reply, to let him know that his wish was attended to, and the message was sent.

In the evening the boys could talk of nothing but the wonders of the magnetic-telegraph. "Is it not the most wonderful thing you ever heard of, father?" said Thomas.

"No," replied his father; "I have heard of things more wonderful."

"But, father," said George, "you never heard of any message being sent so quickly as by this means, have you?"

"Yes I have, my son."

"And you receiving an answer as quickly?" added George.

"Yes, much sooner," replied his father.

"Are you in earnest, father?" said Thomas, drawing his chair close to his father's, and looking eagerly in his face. "Is it possible you know of a more wonderful way of communication than by telegraph?"

"I never was more in earnest, my son, than I am when I say 'Yes' to your question."

"Well father," said George, "do tell me what it is, and in what respect it is better than the telegraph."

"In the first place," said his father, "you do not have to wait to send your message

while others are attended to, for your message can go with thousands of others, without any interruption or hinderance."

"So that is an improvement," said George; "for we had to wait a long time, you know."

"And in the next place," continued his father, "there is no need of wires, or electricity, or any machinery to aid the mode of communication of which I speak; and what is more wonderful than all, is the fact that you need not even express the nature of your communication, as, before you do so, your answer may be returned, though it is necessary that you truly and sincerely desire a favorable reception for your request."

"Besides all this, the plan of communication of which I speak is superior to all others, from the fact that you need not resort to any particular place to send your request. In the lonely desert, on the trackless ocean, in the crowded city, on the mountain top, by night or by day, in sickness and health, and especially in trouble and affliction, the way of communication is open to all. And the applicants can never be so numerous that the simplest desire of the feeblest child, properly presented, shall not meet with immediate attention."

"Is there any account published of this wonderful manner of communicating your wishes?" enquired Thomas.

"Yes, there is, my son; and I hope your interest will not be diminished when I tell you it is to be found in the Bible."

"In the Bible, father!" exclaimed both boys.

"Certainly, my sons; and if you will both get your Bibles, I will tell you where to find the passages confirming what I have said."

The children opened their Bibles, and found, as their father directed them, the twenty-fourth verse of the sixty-fifth chapter of Isaiah, which Thomas read as follows: "And it shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear."

Next George found and read the ninth verse of the fifty-eighth chapter of Isaiah: "Then shalt thou call, and the Lord shall answer; thou shalt cry, and He shall say, Here I am."

"Now turn," said their father, "to Daniel, ninth chapter, twentieth, twenty-first, twenty-second, and thirty-third verses."

"And while I was speaking, and praying, and confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel, and presenting my supplication before the Lord my God; . . . yea, while I was speaking in prayer, even the man Gabriel. . . . being caused to fly swiftly, touched me about the time of the evening oblation. And he informed me, and talked with me, and said, O Daniel, I am now come forth to give thee skill and understanding. At the beginning of thy supplications the commandment came forth, and I am come to show thee," &c.

"I see, father, from these passages," said Thomas, "that you refer to prayer."

"And I am sure you will both agree with me that this mode of communication with heaven is more wonderful than any other, for by this means our desire can be immediately known to our Heavenly Father, and we receive an answer."—Band of Hope Review.

TOTAL ABSTINENCE and TOBACCO PLEDGE cards will be sent to any address in Canada for \$3.00 a hundred. A sample sent on application to John Dougall & Son, Montreal, Q.

ANY PERSON INTERESTED in Manitoba would do well to buy a copy of "The Letters of Rusticus," with maps, for sale at the MESSENGER Office; 82 pages, price 30 cents. John Dougall & Son, Montreal, Q.

MONTREAL DAILY WITNESS, \$3.00 a year, post-paid.

MONTREAL WEEKLY WITNESS, \$1.10 a year, post-paid.

JOHN DOUGALL & SON, Publishers, Montreal, Q.

THE CLUB RATES for the "MESSENGER," when sent to one address, are as follows:—1 copy, 30c; 10 copies, \$2.50; 25 copies, \$6; 50 copies, \$11.50; 100 copies, \$22; 1,000 copies, \$200. JOHN DOUGALL & SON, Publishers, Montreal.

THE NORTHERN MESSENGER is printed and published on the 1st and 15th of every month, at Nos. 35 and 37 Bonaventure street, Montreal, by John Dougall & Son, composed of John Dougall, of New York, and John Redpath Dougall and J. D. Dougall, of Montreal.