

INTERNATIONAL S. S. LESSONS.

The S. S. lessons that you study are used all over the Christian world. Men from different countries meet and prepare them. The aim has been to study the Bible in course, so that one who follows the lessons for seven years will have gone over almost the whole of it. It is now twenty-one years since this system of lessons began, and the Bible has been gone over three times. With this year's lessons a new course is beginning, and the aim is to go through the scriptures this time in six years. Every chapter will not be taken up in the lessons, but enough to give one a thorough knowledge of the whole. Read carefully the parts between each lesson and all that is connected with the lesson. In this way only will the end in view be gained.

For the first half of this year the lessons will be in the first part of the Old Testament. Then for a year they will be from the gospels, the life and work of our Lord. For the last half of next year they will be from the Old Testament.

In the six lessons that you have already had this year you have had the history of more than two thousand years. First you had the creation of man. Then you had the "Fall," how sin got into the fair world. Next you had a result of that sin, a brother killing his brother, and all the sad surroundings of that sad scene.

Your next lesson was more than a thousand years later. The world had gone so far astray that God gave it up as hopeless, and selected the one good man, Noah, to start the race anew on a better line, while the wicked were all destroyed.

Then comes another space which showed how that evil thing, sin, again led men astray, and this time God did not destroy them, but left them to themselves and called one good man, Abram, to come out to another country and start the Hebrew nation, a people who should be God's own people.

Next you had the agreement which God made with Abram, promising that all the world should be blessed in one who was to be his descendant. Read carefully again the first eighteen chapter of Genesis, and now we come to the lesson for

February 18.

Les. Gen. 18: 22-33. Gol. Text, Gen. 18: 25.
Mem. vs. 23-26. Catechism. Q. 89.

Read chapters 18 and 19.

One day, about 1897 B.C., just about as long before Christ, as this year is after Christ, an old man of ninety-nine years, in appearance like the Arabs of to-day, was sit-

ting at the door of a rude tent, a coarse cloth thrown over a framework of rough sticks, near Hebron, a town in Southern Palestine. His wife was in the tent. His boy Ishmael, aged 13 years, was out somewhere at play. His flocks with their keepers were scattered over the neighboring hills.

Looking up he saw three men coming. He rose and welcomed them, and set food before them with true Eastern hospitality. Wondrous visitors! Two of them proved to be angels, God's messengers, while the third was Jehovah himself in human form.

Two messages they had for him, one joyous, the other sad. They first gave him the glad one, which concerned himself, that Isaac his son, the heir of the promise, would soon be born.

Then just as they were leaving they told him the sad news, that Sodom, some twenty miles distant, where Lot his nephew lived, was to be destroyed on account of its sin.

Abraham at once thinks of Lot and his family and wonders if they too shall perish, and then he offers that wonderful prayer, his courage and faith growing stronger as God grants more and more, until he has the promise that Sodom will be spared if but ten good are found there.

Some good lessons are taught in these verses, on

1. Hospitality. Abraham did not know they were angels, but he treated them as well as he could, and how thankful he would afterward be that he had done so.

The story is told of a woman in Russia who heard that Christ was to come and take supper at her home. Carefully she prepared for him. At length a poor man came along and asked for food and shelter. She could not take him in or provide for him for she was expecting Christ. He went on his way and she learned too late that that was her opportunity of doing good to Christ. "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto me of the least of these, ye have done it unto Me." Be not forgetful to entertain strangers for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.

2. We learn a lesson about prayer. That was true prayer, just asking God for what he wanted. God loves to have us persevere in prayer and ask more and more. God is as near to us when we pray as he was to Abraham, and can hear us as well.

3. We learn how helpful good people are to a place, when God would spare thousands of the wicked for the sake of ten good people.

4. We learn from Lot the danger of living in Sodom, living among the wicked. When young people leave home, they should not only go where they can get the best wages, but where they can have good company, which will help them upward in life.