

The Sabbath School.

LESSONS FOR FEBRUARY.

FIRST SABBATH.

SUBJECT:—*The Patriarchal Sabbath*,—Gen. 8: 6-12.

The flood lasted five months. The "seventh month" in verse 4 is the seventh of the year. *Ararat* is in Armenia. Tradition points to a mountain, now called *Ara Dagh*, as that on which the ark rested. Its summit consists of two peaks, the higher of which is 17,750 feet and the other 13,420 above the level of the sea. We learn from verse 5 that the waters decreased gradually, the flood being nearly twice as long in disappearing as in rising.

V. 6.—*Forty days* after the ark had touched the ground. No wonder that Noah was anxious to know when the ground should be dry, and he could once more breathe the fresh air and see the green earth. The window was a "sky-light." Glass had not then been discovered, but some other transparent material may have been used.

V. 7.—The raven would feed on the remains of men and animals which would be so sadly abundant on the surface of the turbid waters. The shy and greedy bird would probably rest on the roof of the ark, and keep out of Noah's reach.

Vv. 8, 9.—The dove, being a clean bird that could neither feed nor rest like the raven, returned to her old abode in the ark.

Vv. 10, 11.—After a week he sent forth the dove again, and this time she came back after a day's flight, with an olive leaf in her bill, a sure sign that the waters had abated so much that the low lands where the olive grows were dry.

V. 12.—The dove was guided in her movements by Him, without whom not even a sparrow falls to the ground. The reason that the dove returned no more was that she could find food and rest in the outer world.

LESSONS.

1. Here we have an indication of the division of time into weeks, and consequently, of the keeping of a Sabbath by Noah. Compare Gen. 4: 3. Margin:—"At the end of days"—probably on the Sabbath.

2. Here we have an example of patience. Noah waited until it was safe and proper for him to leave the ark, although no doubt the time seemed very long.

3. The dove has ever since been accepted as a messenger of peace; and the olive branch has become a sign of peace. Compare the descent of the Holy Spirit in the

form, or after the manner, of a dove on Jesus.

4. If Noah observed a seventh day to commemorate creation, much more should we devote one day in seven to the celebration of the work of Redemption. The great end of the Sabbath is to bring us to Christ, and to enable us to work with Him.

DOCTRINE.

God's worship the proper work of the Sabbath,—Isaiah 58: 13. Isaiah 66: 23.

SECOND SABBATH.

SUBJECT:—*The Sabbath in the Wilderness*,—Exod. 16: 23-30.

V. 23.—Manna was given in abundance on the Jewish Saturday (our Friday) so that the people might collect enough for the Sabbath. [A tree now found in the desert exudes a whitish gum, which some travellers and commentators have thought to be manna. It is now proved that this gum is quite unfit for food, and is simply a medicine. The manna of the Israelites was manifestly a miraculous gift.] Observe that even the cooking had to be attended to on the day before the Sabbath.

V. 24.—Compare verse 20.

V. 29.—The Lord hath given you the Sabbath, as a great favour. It was a blessing from the beginning and shall be till the end of time. The command not to leave their houses on the Sabbath day had reference to going forth to gather manna or do any worldly work.

LESSONS.

1. See how the Lord can help His people by miracle after miracle. Here we have four, (1) the manna; (2) the double supply of manna on the sixth day; (3) the absence of a fall of manna on the Sabbath; (4) the preservation of the gathered manna on the Sabbath.

2. Mark how the Lord honoured the Sabbath by working three miracles to secure its due observance.

3. Note that we have the Sabbath mentioned here before the people had reached Sinai, before the Fourth Commandment was delivered. There is proof in this chapter, therefore, that the Sabbath was observed from the beginning.

5. "The people rested on the Sabbath day;" what an example to us! We have Gospel ordinances to gladden our Sabbaths, and we have the hope through Jesus Christ of an endless Sabbath in Heaven.

DOCTRINE.

Profanation of the Sabbath severely punished. The Fourth Commandment is a part of the moral law, and to break it is therefore a heinous sin,—Gal. 3: 10; Rom. 6: 23. Refer to punishments in the Old

