



LESSON VI.—AUGUST 11.

**God's Promise to Abraham.**

Genesis xv., 1-18. Memory verses, 5-7.

**Golden Text.**

'I am thy shield and thy exceeding great reward.'—Gen. xv., 1.

**Lesson Text.**

(5) And he brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them: and he said unto him, So shall thy seed be. (6) And he believed in the Lord; and he counted it to him for righteousness. (7) And he said unto him, I am the Lord that brought thee out of Ur of the Chaldees, to give thee this land to inherit it. (8) And he said, Lord God, whereby shall I know that I shall inherit it? (9) And he said unto him, Take me an heifer of three years old, and a she goat of three years old, and a ram of three years old, and a turtle dove, and a young pigeon. (10) And he took unto him all these, and divided them in the midst, and laid each piece one against another: but the birds divided he not. (11) And when the fowls came down upon the carcase, Abram drove them away. (12) And when the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abram; and, lo, an horror of great darkness fell upon him. (13) And he said unto Abram, Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years; (14) And also that nation, whom they shall serve, will I judge; and afterwards shall they come out with great substance. (15) And thou shalt go to thy fathers in peace; thou shalt be buried in a good old age. (16) But in the fourth generation they shall come hither again; for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full. (17) And it came to pass, that, when the sun went down, and it was dark, behold a smoking furnace, and a burning lamp that passed between those pieces. (18) In the same day the Lord made a covenant with Abram, saying, Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates.

**Suggestions.**

The Lord Jehovah gave to Abraham a most wonderful promise and assurance of his favor and protection. And as we are heirs of the promises (Galatians iii., 6, 14, 29) given to Abraham we can as Christians take this promise and assurance for our own life-motto:—Fear not, Christian: I am thy shield and thy exceeding great reward. God commands us not to fear, not to fret and worry over the future, if we are living close to him the evil darts of the enemy cannot really hurt us, for God himself is our shield.

God is our shield against everything that could possibly harm us. His presence in our hearts can safeguard us from sin and fear and doubt. God himself is our reward, in his presence is fulness of joy and at his right hand are pleasures forevermore. (Ps. xvi., 11). God is our exceeding great reward for in him we have eternal life and everlasting happiness.

Abraham had perhaps become a little discouraged because God's promise had not yet been fulfilled in his family, so God renewed the promise with great definiteness. Abraham asked what God would give him, and God took him out under the stars and promised that the descendants of Abraham should be as numerous as the stars in heaven. And Abraham believed God. Although the fulfilment of the promise might be a long way off, still the promise was secure. God's promises are our only hope for blessing and salvation and we can only claim them in the name of Jesus Christ our Saviour and through his merits. The fulfilment of all God's promises is conditional simply on our obedience and faith. If we

do not love and obey God we cannot expect him to bless us as he does the loving and obedient. If we claim his promises we must expect to see the answer in our own lives, and we must be ready to acknowledge his mercies before all.

Abraham believed God, he rested himself on the promise, he did not worry any more about it for he had God's word and he knew that could not fail. The Lord God delighted in Abraham's faith and sincerity, and set it to his account as righteousness. God can do wonders for any man who will really trust him. He delights in bestowing gifts and mercies, and it saddens his great heart of love to find his children so faithless and unbelieving. If all God's children really believed in him and claimed his promise in faith and obedience, this world would soon be transformed. If all God's people were really right with him, the rest of the world would very quickly want to be godly men and women too. It is the lack of faith in Christians that allows the rest of the world to remain in darkness. But each soul has to answer for himself to God, no one can hide behind his neighbor. Every soul is responsible to God.

Abraham took a heifer, a goat and a ram, and some birds, and divided them, placing half of each a little way apart from the other half leaving a little path in between through which later the fire of God passed. And by this blood covenant God again ratified his promise to Abraham, and furthermore told him how his descendants should be four hundred years in the land of Egypt where they should be afflicted until the time that God saw fit to bring them up again into the land of promise.

**C. E. Topic.**

Sunday, Aug. 11.—Topic—Enemies and arms.—Eph. vi., 10-18.

**Junior C. E. Topic.****PROPHETS OF THE BIBLE.**

Mon., Aug. 5.—Elijah discouraged.—I. Kings xix., 4.

Tues., Aug. 6.—Free-hearted Elisha.—II. Kings v., 15, 16.

Wed., Aug. 7.—The prophet of the Messiah.—Isa. ii., 1-4.

Thu., Aug. 8.—Jeremiah's call.—Jer. i., 7-9.

Fri., Aug. 9.—The vision of wheels.—Ezek. i., 15-21.

Sat., Aug. 10.—A master of magicians.—Dan. ii., 47, 48.

Sun., Aug. 11.—Topic—Lessons from Bible prophets. (Elijah, Elisha, Daniel, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, etc.)

A prerequisite for teaching in the Sunday-school is Christian assurance. By that we do not mean self-assurance. A little of that goes a great ways. Christian assurance does not come from believing in self, but in Christ. It is a consciousness of sins forgiven, and of human nature regenerated by the power of God. There can be no indefiniteness about this. It is one of the ground-work facts of our holy religion. It will not do to teach a class of bright boys or girls that Jesus is a Saviour from sin, and life to the soul, and at the same time confess that you have no assurance that the teaching is a fact.

For keeping up the numbers in a school, nothing is more important than looking after the absentees. It will not increase much, or hold its own, if those who are induced to come do not stay in. If a scholar is absent for two or three Sundays, and no one seeks to learn why, his inevitable conclusion is that it makes no difference to teacher, or superintendent, or any one else if he does stay out. If, however, he gets a visit from his teacher, or a note of inquiry from him expressing the hope that he is not sick, with a request to let him know, in some way, if he is, that scholar will have the comfort of feeling that he is missed, and in nine cases out of ten will hasten back. There is a good deal of human nature in a child. Study yourself if you would know how to deal with him successfully.—'Pilgrim Teacher.'

The man who inveigles young Christians into un-Christian amusements is usually the man who has the most to say about the inconsistency of church members.

**The Tobacco Plague.**

(By Dr. Chas. H. St. John, Ph. B., D.D.)

('Pacific Ensign.')

As a student for many years, as well as professor on the physiological and pathological effects of nicotine poison, I am compelled to say that tobacco in its various forms of use is now doing more to destroy the human family than alcoholic beverages.

The statistics and increasing number of cases are appalling. There can be no doubt that many generations can be made to suffer through the indulgence of one or both parents. I know there are those who take but little stock in the laws of heredity, usually a class who have not carefully investigated cause and effect. In tracing disease I find, in getting the history of the case, going back two, and in some cases three generations, where cancer is the disease, more than half of the cases in my practice, extending over many years, can be traced to nicotine poison. In numerous cases of bronchial consumption I have clearly traced the disease to tobacco-using fathers and mothers, mostly fathers. The law of heredity is demonstrable as the law of gravitation, electricity, or any of the known laws in science or mathematics. He that is begotten is like him that begetteth. An impure fountain-head cannot send forth a pure stream. A parent whose blood has been poisoned with tobacco must necessarily be impotent for the highest and purest impartation of vital power to his or her offspring.

Through the law of heredity and the descending stream of our humanity, tobacco subtly combines a three-fold deadly bane as fatal to unwary youth and old age as the poisoned garment of Nessus to the unsuspecting Hercules. Our race is rushing on to the awful Niagara of blindness. Our world was never so blind as in these opening hours of the most notable century the world has ever seen. Boys and girls are going blind by thousands. Tobacco in any form impairs muscular force, produces amaurosis, which is a loss or decay of sight without the visible defect in the eye. In brief, it destroys the optic nerve, producing color blindness.

There is no poison that has a greater destroying power upon the sensory nerves than nicotine. Tobacco produces heart failure. Nineteen percent of heart failures among men can be traced to nicotine poison. In each decade of years the number increases because the resisting power becomes less.

Thousands of infant children are annually sacrificed upon the altar of this Moloch, the result of tobacco and cigarette using fathers. The father, and sometimes the mother, become the destroyers of their own infants, ignorantly in the larger number of cases, but no less the agents of death to God-given offspring. If we could read the history of nervous wives, mothers and daughters, we would find secondary nicotine poison, resulting from inhaling the smoke and breath of tobacco and cigarette-using men. I have many cases in my own practice where I have found mothers suffering from a tobacco heart, though they did not use tobacco themselves, and just as soon as the father and husband gave up the use of tobacco the patient made rapid recovery. Many cases of pneumonia die as a result of tobacco smoke in the room. A case came under my observation recently, a young man given up to die by his attending physician, who was a tobacco wreck—a shame for any man who styles himself a healer of the body. I suggested pure air, no tobacco smoke, and the young man recovered.

Catarrh is greatly on the increase among men and boys, resulting from blowing the smoke out through the nose. Making