



LESSON XI.—DECEMBER 15.

The Passover

Exodus xii., 1-17. Memory verses 12-14.
Read Chapters xii and xiii.

Golden Text.

'Christ our passover is sacrificed for us.'—
I. Cor. v., 7.

Lesson Text.

(3) Speak ye unto all the congregation of Israel, saying, In the tenth day of this month they shall take to them every man a lamb, according to the house of their fathers, a lamb for an house: (4) And if the household be too little for the lamb, let him and his neighbor next unto his house take 'it' according to the number of souls: every man according to his eating shall make your count for the lamb. (5) Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year: ye shall take 'it' out from the sheep, or from the goats: (6) And ye shall keep it up until the fourteenth day of the same month: and the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it in the evening. (7) And they shall take of the blood and strike 'it' on the two side posts and on the upper door post of the houses, wherein they shall eat it. (8) And they shall eat the flesh in that night, roast with fire, and unleavened bread; and with bitter herbs they shall eat it. (9) Eat not of it raw, nor sodden at all with water, but roast with fire his head with his legs, and with the purtenance thereof. (10) And ye shall let nothing of it remain until the morning; and that which remaineth of it until the morning ye shall burn with fire. (11) And thus shall ye eat it; with your loins girded, your shoes on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and ye shall eat it in haste: it is the Lord's passover. (12) For I will pass through the land of Egypt this night and will smite all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment: I am the Lord. (13) And the blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where ye are: and when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you, when I smite the land of Egypt. (14) And this day shall be unto you for a memorial; and ye shall keep it a feast to the Lord throughout your generations; ye shall keep it a feast by an ordinance forever.

Suggestions.

'The thought of bringing the people up out of the land of Egypt by means of slaying a lamb was probably a new one to Moses. Certainly it was not of his devising. Left to himself, there was no reason why he should not have supposed that it would have been enough for God to have slain all the first-born, without putting the children of Israel in peril. Why should not God separate between them and the Egyptians, as he did in the case of the previous plagues?

'God did, indeed, tell Moses that he and the Egyptians should see that "the Lord doth put a difference between the Egyptians and Israel." But he did not tell him at that time that the difference was one that stood in the fact that Israel should be protected by the blood of the lamb that was sprinkled over them. And this truly is the main difference between saved and unsaved people. It is not that there is by nature any difference; nor practically is there any difference in the quality of the good works done by believers and unbelievers. "For," saith the Scripture, "there is no difference: for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." The Israelites were as bad as the Egyptians, perhaps worse, seeing that with them there was the knowledge of God, as he had been known to Jacob their father and to Joseph their elder brother. The only difference, therefore, was a difference which the Lord put between them. That difference was that Israel was under the blood, and Egypt was not.

'As we come into the clear light of the New Testament, we learn, in the face of Christ, that the Redemption Lamb was not only of God's appointment, but also of his providing. This sets forth the grace of God to us sinners most wonderfully. Why should he accept any redemption at all? Why should he not let us perish altogether from his presence and the glory of his power, as he has done with the angels who kept not their first estate? Surely, having sinned, we had no claim upon him, even as these Israelites had no claim upon him. But more than this, is it not amazing grace that he not only has thoughts and purposes of grace for us, but that he himself provides, in so wonderful a way, a Lamb—and such a Lamb! for our redemption? For when there was no eye to pity, and no arm to save, his eye pitied us, and his arm brought us salvation (Isa. lix., 16; lxxiii., 5). "Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year." (Ex. xii., 5.) Why the lamb should be without spot or blemish is most apparent. (I. Pet. i., 18-20). If it was to be a type of Christ, as we have seen it to be, then it must be a spotless lamb. Christ was holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners. (Heb. vii., 26). It must needs have been so. If he is to redeem sinners he himself must be without sin. And that this might be more manifest: before he was slain, his human nature was subject to every temptation that has beset man. He did not offer himself up as an untried or improved substitute. For God sent him forth into the world, born of a woman indeed, without the taint of Adam's sin on him, but with Adam's nature in him; and in that nature he was put under the law, and driven into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil, that he might be proved able as well as willing to undertake for us.

"The lamb must be slain," (Ex. xii. 6). It is not enough to choose out a lamb: the lamb must be slain. This introduces us into the very centre of the mystery of our redemption. It is not the teaching Christ, or the miracle-working Christ, or the holy and faithful Son of God, living out a loyal human life before God as an example to and for us, that saves us; or stands between us and the avenging judgment of God upon sin: but it is the death of Christ, the slain Lamb. "The blood must be sprinkled in God's sight." (Ex. xii., 7). In this passage we have a most important truth: the striking of the blood on the outside of the house, and not on the inside. It is also to be observed that this blood was not an offering to Pharaoh. The offering of Jesus Christ is not made to the devil. Satan has no rights in us, or over us. His power is a usurped power, and it is broken, not by blood, but by the power of God. Neither is the offering of blood made to sinners. It is for them, but not to them. But the offering was made directly to God. When the high-priest in later times made atonement for the sins of the people, he bore the blood into the most Holy Place, and there sprinkled it on the Mercy Seat under the eye of God alone. Jesus, at once our High-Priest and our Sacrifice, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the Holy Place, having obtained eternal redemption for us; having through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God. (Heb. ix., 11-12-14.)

'It was not enough that the Hebrews had the blood sprinkled on the door-posts of their houses. They must take refuge under that blood. For we are assured that danger and death awaited anyone who went out of their houses till the morning. (Ex. xii., 22.) Now it would not have availed to save any of the firstborn of the children of the Israelites, even though the blood were shed and duly sprinkled on the door-posts, if they had not passed under it into their houses. So it is of no avail to sinners that Christ has been slain on the cross, and his blood presented to God as a sufficient atonement for sin, if sinners do not avail themselves of it by a cordial and hearty acceptance of God's mercy built and established thereon.

'The ground of peace (verse 13)—notice here, in the first place, that they had the sure word and promise of God, that, having taken refuge under the blood, he would pass over them. So we have the Word of God, that, having fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope of eternal life in Christ Jesus, we shall never be confounded. (Heb. vi., 17-20). The blood was the ground of safety; the

word was the guaranteeing promise.'—From 'Out of Egypt,' by Dr. Pentecost.

C. E. Topic.

Sun., Dec. 15.—Topic.—Imperialism of Christianity.—Dan. ii., 44-45.

Junior C. E. Topic.

TEMPERANCE IN THE SCRIPTURES.

Mon., Dec. 9.—What temperance is.—Rom. xiii., 14.

Tues., Dec. 10.—Intemperance brings woe.—Isa. xxviii., 1.

Wed., Dec. 11.—Causes loss of friends.—1 Cor. v., 11.

Thu., Dec. 12.—Overcomes judgment.—Isa. xxviii., 7.

Fri., Dec. 13.—Liquor destroys nations.—Prov. xxxi., 4-5.

Sat., Dec. 14.—Drunkenness punished.—Matt. xxiv., 46-51.

Sun., Dec. 15.—Topic.—What the Bible teaches about temperance.—Prov. xx., 1.



Power of Example.

(From an Address by the Rev. Dr. Crawford Johnston at the inauguration of the Twentieth Century Temperance Crusade.)

The Greeks were in the habit every year of making their slaves drunk and exposing them thus in the arena of an amphitheatre, to warn their children by the disgusting spectacle. As the wounds of Caesar pleaded more eloquently than the words of Antony, so the degradation, the misery, the shame of the drunkard pleaded with most convincing eloquence, and warned men of the ruin that lurked in every berry of the vine. Whilst the example of the drunkard was a beacon to warn, the example of the moderate was like the false light on the Cornish coast, which often lured to wreck and ruin. Take the case of a young man whose grandfather perhaps had lived very quietly, and all his life had taken strong drink in moderation. His grandson had just come to a place like Belfast, where he was surrounded by temptation. He began to drink, and they went to warn him, but he replied—'Look at my grandfather; he drank all his lifetime, and never became a victim to drunkenness, and I can do so too.' But look at the difference between the two men. The old man was very modest in his appetite—his appetite was strong. The old man had a stalwart will—his will was flaccid, vacillating, weak. The old man led a quiet, rustic life—the young man lived in the midst of gin palaces, theatres, and low casinos. The old man had a cool head—the young man was made of quicksilver, restless, excitable, active. The old man was careful of his money—the young man was generous to a fault. The difference between grandfather and grandson was enormous—but the youth forgot this, and in trying to copy the dear old man passed down to a drunkard's grave, and a drunkard's doom. The example, alas! of his grandfather had proved a snare and a curse. At a temperance meeting in Philadelphia a Christian minister spoke in favor of wine as a drink, and after he sat down an old man, having asked permission to say a few words, said:—'A young friend of mine who had long been intemperate was at length prevailed upon to take the pledge of total abstinence. He faithfully kept the pledge until one evening at a social party wine was handed round. A clergyman present took a glass, saying a few words in vindication of the practice. This young man immediately said, "If it is right for a clergyman to take wine, it cannot be wrong for me," and he took a glass. It revived the slumbering appetite, and he died of delirium tremens.' After a moment's pause the old man added, 'That young man was my son; and that clergyman was the gentleman who has now addressed you.' He maintained, therefore, that since the example of a drunkard was a beacon to warn, and the example of a mod-