

would be unseemly? What proposal did he make? After questions such as these, get the scholars to discuss which had the best right to the first choice,—Abram, the older of the two men and the one to whom God had promised the land, or Lot, the younger and merely a companion of the one who had received the promise. Bring out Abram's greatness in setting aside his right to the first choice and permitting Lot to take what pleased him. It will not be hard to make the scholars see that Abram's way of settling the quarrel was best. Take a little time to press home the teaching, that "giving in" is usually better and nobler than standing up for one's rights.

Now, turn to the choice which Lot made. Bring out, by questioning, what kind of country it was which he chose and the reasons by which he was influenced. Then talk about the land that was left to Abram, question about the Lord's appearance to him and the renewal of the divine promise. Discuss frankly which had the best of it,—Lot in the beautiful Jordan plain, but near the temptations of Sodom and with the memory of a mean, selfish bargain, or Abram in the poorer country, but enjoying the presence and blessing of God.

The lesson to enforce is obvious,—not to make any choice that will deprive one of the favor of God.

THE GEOGRAPHY LESSON

[SEE SKETCH MAP, LESSON VII.]

The plain of Jordan, which Lot chose, used to be especially fertile and productive, an easy place in which to get a living. Earthquakes and other volcanic disturbances have since that time made changes in the ground, and climatic conditions have changed too, so that what was once a beautiful farming country is now quite otherwise. You can get an excellent idea of the region about the lower Jordan, if you look southwest from a hillside above the site of Jericho. Down before you is a nearly level space, where in Joshua's day the pagan Canaanites had a town. Beyond that terrace you can see the ground drops to a lower level, and, you can look off four or five miles toward where a long wall of highlands stands against the eastern sky. That broad plain was part of Lot's property, and without much doubt it was kept in fertile condition by some sort of irrigation system

utilizing water from the Judean hills up behind you. Even four thousand years ago Eastern land owners knew the importance of irrigation.

The Jordan river is flowing southward (toward the right) at the farther edge of the plain, along the foot of those eastern highlands. The waters of the Dead Sea are hard to distinguish in the hazy distance (there is almost always a veil of haze over it, caused by evaporation), but the heights along its eastern shore are quite plain. Sodom and Gomorrah and Zoar were ever at that farther (eastern) side of the Dead Sea a little to the south of the direction in which you are just now looking.

To see part of Lot's chosen ground, for yourself, use a stereograph entitled, Plain of the Jordan, Southeast From Above Ancient Jericho Toward Moab.

ADDED HINTS AND HELPS

In this section will be found further assistance under various headings.

Lesson Points

Every step is a step upward to him whose trust is in God. v. 1.

Not what our possessions are, but how we got them, is the most important question. v. 2.

A life begun in the fear of God is not likely to lack His favor. v. 3.

Where there is a contentious spirit occasions of strife will not long be wanting. v. 6.

The children of a king should be kindly in their conduct. v. 8.

True greatness is shown in making concessions rather than in pressing claims. v. 9.

He who makes the world his choice puts himself under the world's control. v. 10.

Holding to a decision is as difficult as the first making of it. v. 12.

We are safe amidst evil surroundings only