

Sunday School Lesson.

LESSON X.—SEPTEMBER 5, 1880.

LOT'S ESCAPE FROM SODOM.—Gen. 19: 12-26.

TIME.—B. C. 1897. Immediately after the last lesson.

PLACE.—Sodom, one of the five cities of the plain. Probably located on the southern border of the Dead Sea, about 20 miles from Hebron.

INTRODUCTION.

The nineteenth chapter of Genesis contains the conclusions of the dismal history of the cities of the plain. The guilt of Sodom and Gomorrah had been long ripe for judgment. They may be likened to a tree seared and blasted by the autumn winds, but having a few leaves on the topmost branches withered and dead: the next powerful gush of wind will dash them to the earth. The more the reader thinks of Lot, the more difficult his case seems to us. From all that appears in the history, there was nothing very lovely in his character; for even his being eventually saved was more for Abraham's sake than for his own. He appears, from his history, to present to our view a very weak and selfish character. For all that appears in the history, we might have strong fears for this man's state. But St Peter calls him a just man, and says that while in Sodom "he vexed his righteous soul, from day to day, with the filthy conversation of the wicked." This reveals us, by showing that his character was still substantially true. But it does not altogether clear him from these imputations. It shows that he had good feelings and perceptions, but was a feeble-spirited man, lacking the strength to act on his own convictions. He was content to mourn over the guilt he saw; and would rather passively sit down amid the certainties of danger and probabilities of judgment, than rouse himself to one great and energetic effort to be free, and, at whatever sacrifice, depart from the abominable and tainted place.

EXPLANATORY.

Hast thou here any spies. Ten righteous men would have saved the city; but there seems to be only one. He, however, shall at all events escape. Sons-in-law, sons, daughters, or whatever he had, are directed to be brought out of the doomed city, which was rapidly approaching the crisis of its fate. That remarkable feature of the divine administration by which the wicked are blessed for the sake of the righteous is here most signally illustrated; for that such were the sons-in-law, is evident from the contemptuous manner in which they received the warning, and the fact that they perished in the perdition of the city.

Sons-in-law, which married his daughters. It is commonly thought that his two daughters were betrothed but not yet married; betrothal being sufficient to give the title "son-in-law" or "bridegroom" to their affianced husbands. It is more likely that he had two daughters at home, and others married to these sons-in-law. As one who mocked. One can almost imagine that he hears them saying, "What! this entire city to be destroyed! These goodly houses and temples to be overthrown, and sink in flames! These active multitudes to perish in a body, and that by such an unheard-of judgment as a fire rained down from heaven! Incredible! Impossible!" Thus too often is the gospel message spurned and made light of, as if its ministers were playing upon the fears and credulities of their fellow men. Hastened Lot. It was natural that he should still cleave to his home.

While he lingered, the men laid hold upon his hand. The word properly implies that "he suffered himself to be hindered and embarrassed with distracting cares," perhaps relative to his property.

Escape. They were unsafe, even near the city. Look not behind. Neither stay thou in all the plain. Lot was to escape from the whole of the devoted region which he had coveted for his own, and where, when he parted from Abraham, he had made his habitation, and sought to enrich himself (13: 10). Escape to the mountain. The mountains are those of Moab, on the other side of the Dead Sea.

I cannot escape to the mountain. Lot, instead of cheerfully obeying the commandment of the Lord, appealed to the great mercy shown to him in the preservation of his life, and to the impossibility of his escaping to the mountains without the evil overtaking him, and entreated therefore that he might be allowed to take refuge in the small and neighboring city, which received the name of Zoar (ch. 14: 2) on account of Lot's calling it little.

It is a little one. The plea that Zoar should be spared rested on the fact of its smallness. It would not be a passing by of any great amount of wickedness.

I have accepted thee. His infirmity is not rebuked; his request was granted; the city was spared for his sake. In this God designed at once to show how much the fervent prayer of a righteous man avails, and at the same time to teach his short sighted servant how much wiser a part he would have acted had he confided in a childlike manner in God, and fled to the mountains in the first instance. For it is clear from the sequel, verse 30, that his terror would not suffer him to remain in the place he had chosen, but that he was soon glad to take refuge in the very mountains which he had foolishly declined to seek.

The Lord rained upon Sodom. Brimstone and fire. The words are to be understood quite literally, as meaning that brimstone and fire, i.e., burning brimstone fell from the sky. Brimstone. Sulphur is one of the most inflammable substances known, and will melt in fire, but not in water. The meaning of the word "sulphur" is the burning or fiery stone. "The Lord rained upon Sodom and Gomorrah brimstone and fire" (or burning brimstone). As these cities were situated in the vale of Siddim, which, as the sacred writer informs us, was full of bitumen-

pits, many learned men are of opinion that God saw fit to employ natural agencies in effecting the purposes of his will. In accordance with this view, we find the materials, as it were, of this awful visitation near at hand. For, at the present day sulphur is found on the shores of the Dead Sea, which occupies the site of the cities of the plain; and the Arabs obtain enough from the cliff to make their own gunpowder. The history of the catastrophe has not only remained in the inspired record, but is inscribed in the memory of the surrounding tribes by many a local tradition and significant name.

Those cities. Besides Sodom and Gomorrah which are chiefly named, were the cities of Admah and Zeboim (Deut 29: 23. Comp. Hos. 11: 8), and all in the valley of Siddim, Zoar alone being exempted. The present area of the Dead Sea is about forty-five miles by eight. Along the lower shores is the famous Salt Hall, called by the name of "Usdom" (Sodom). The bed of this portion of the lake is a soft bituminous mud into whose mire the cities may have been sunk and buried out of sight forever. The law is written on our own hearts and the world around us. Sin, and you will suffer.

But his wife looked back. In violation of the command. Her heart yearned for Sodom. From behind. Hence she lingered more than Lot. Pillar of salt. A fearful judgment at once overtook her. She a monument of wrath, and Lot a monument of mercy. We are not to suppose that she was actually turned into a pillar of salt; but having been killed by the fiery and sulphurous vapor with which the air was filled, and afterwards incrustated with salt, she resembled an actual statue of salt; just as even now, from the saline exhalation of the Dead Sea, objects near it are quickly covered with a crust of salt. What a caution against delay! "Almost saved, lost after all." Jesus himself pointed to this sad case for a beacon to all such.

ILLUSTRATIVE.

Lot contaminated by Sodom.—The German professor, when his daughter thought it safe to go into doubtful company, handed her a piece of coal. She hesitated to take it. "But it will not burn you." "No," she said, "but it will soil my hands and dress." "So," he said, "bad company may not destroy you, but it will soil."

About ten years ago a large tract of land (some 40 acres) on the Presumpscot River, near Portland, Me., suddenly and silently sank one night to a level 20 feet below its former level, without any convulsion of nature, but by the secret undermining of quicksands. So easily, without any other convulsion, could the plain of Siddim, when burnt out, have sunk beneath the level of the Dead Sea.

THE SUNDAY-SCHOOL VERSUS TOBACCO.

There ought to be a pretty vigorous war commenced in the Sunday-school against tobacco. It is the fifth that borders the stream of drunkenness. When a boy has set his foot in that he is liable to be whirled away by the fierce torrent just beyond. Although there is a growing sentiment against its use among professing Christians, there is an alarming increase in the habit itself. Boys, especially, are far more addicted to its use than formerly. There is one point that we have to pass nearly every day, where a cigar manufactory keeps out upon the sidewalk in a box the stems and refuse of the leaves they use in their business. Invariably it is surrounded as thickly by boys as a sugar hogshead is by bees. They, it is true, are of the lower and rougher class, but, in the suburban town where we live, a tobacco epidemic seized upon the boys so strongly that there were few, even of the best families, that were not infected by it. And there are few homes anywhere so isolated or so secure, but that, sooner or later, the tobacco question has to be fought out. And, usually, it occurs after the boy secretly has acquired the habit, so that all the odds are in his favor. Teachers in the Sunday-school should do all that they can to avert this conflict or help the parent to perfect and easily-won victory. The clear is the devil's cloud by day and pillar of fire by night by which he is leading hosts of boys and young men away from the promised land instead of into it.—International S. S. Teacher.

NOVEL READING.—It is ascertained that in New York city, during the last year, the whole number of volumes issued to readers from the Mercantile Library, was 177,936. Of these 108,864 volumes were novels! Now, when it is remembered that far the largest proportion of these readers are comparatively young persons, may it not be feared that by this kind of reading, correspondingly light and fictitious, or unreal and false ideas of life and human responsibility, of virtue and of truth, of religion and all noble principles are early given? and that the legitimate fruits are seen in the easy morality, the fraudulent business courses, and the flagrant crimes that are alarmingly multiplying every year? All this, too, is more and more seen in what have been deemed the cultured classes. May not the startling steps for these fearful things be often found in the reading which the young man or woman has? If so, what call there is to beware.—United Presbyterian.

RELIABLE EVIDENCE.—"We undersigned, residents of Cornwallis, Nova Scotia, having observed the astonishing effects resulting from the use of GRAHAM'S PAIN ERADICATOR, and having used it ourselves and in our families with the best success, for the removal of complaints for which it is intended, confidently recommend it to the public as surpassing any Liniment or Pain Killer in use.—William Murray, Pastor of the North Cornwallis Presbyterian Church. James Parker, Pastor of the 3rd Cornwallis Baptist Church. James G. Hennigar, Wesleyan Minister, Canning. David Freeman, Pastor of the Baptist Church, Canning. John R. Jean, Pastor of the Congregational Church, Canning. John Read, Wesleyan Minister, Ferwick, Cornwallis. Ebenezer Bigelow, J. P. Levi W. Eaton, J. P. John H. Clark, J. P. David Ellis, J. P. Philip Weaver, J. P. Peter Wickwire, J. P. Thomas Lovitt, J. P. Charles Best, J. P. Hanley C. Shier, J. P.; and many others omitted for want of space.

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Messrs. Scott & Bowne: 66 West Thirty-sixth street, New York, Sept. 2, 1876.

GENTS—I have frequently prescribed SCOTT'S EMULSION OF COD LIVER OIL with HYPOPHOSPHITES during the past year, and regard it as a valuable preparation in scrofulous and consumptive cases, palatable and efficacious. C. C. LOCKWOOD, M.D.

MESSRS. SCOTT & BOWNE—Gentlemen—Within the last year I have used in my own family, and in my private practice prescribed very extensively SCOTT'S EMULSION OF COD LIVER OIL with HYPOPHOSPHITES and found it a most valuable preparation, especially in diseases of children. It is agreeable to the most delicate stomach; which renders it a very reliable agent as a nutritive remedy in consumptive and scrofulous cases. Yours respectfully, A H SANTON, M.D. Baltimore. October 12, 1879.

MESSRS. SCOTT & BOWNE—Gentlemen—Within the last two months I have fairly tried SCOTT'S EMULSION OF COD LIVER OIL with HYPOPHOSPHITES, and I candidly declare that it is the finest preparation of the kind that has ever been brought to my notice; in affections of the lungs and other wasting diseases, we consider it our most reliable agent, in a perfectly elegant and agreeable form. December 10th, 1878. Very truly J. SIMONAUD, M.D., New Orleans, La.

MESSRS. SCOTT & BOWNE—Gentlemen—In September 1877, my health began to fail, and my physician pronounced spinal trouble; under his care I got some relief from pain, but my general health did not improve, and early in the winter, I began to raise blood and rapidly grow worse. It may last I was taken with a violent bleeding which brought me to my bed and my life was despaired of for many weeks; violent symptoms appeared, night and morning coughs, night sweats, short breath, and a return of the spinal trouble. My physician stopped the bleeding and then ordered God's Emulsion and Lime; and I used various preparations, but they did me no good. I lost all hope of life, and was an object of pity to all my friends. Last September I purchased a bottle of your Emulsion, before it was all taken I was better. I then bought a dozen bottles and have taken all with the following results: Cough subsiding, night sweats stopped, appetite returned, pains in spine disappeared, and my weight increased from 118 to 140 pounds in sixteen weeks. I am perfectly well. I frequently meet some friend on the street who asks, what cured you and I answer SCOTT'S EMULSION OF COD LIVER OIL, &c. I have a friend who has not spoken aloud for 15 months and he is getting better. I gave him a bottle, and he bought two more, then got a dozen and says that it is food and medicine for him. He was given up to die a year ago, but he is improving now wonderfully. My recovery is exciting the surprise of many people, and I shall do all I can to make known your valuable medicine. Very truly yours, H F SLOCUM, Lowell, Mass.

About the 25th of last April I got a bottle of your EMULSION, and at that time I was so prostrated that no one who saw me thought I could live but a few days at most. I could retain nothing on my stomach and was literally starving. I commenced the use of the EMULSION in small doses; it was the first thing that would stay on my stomach; I continued its use, gradually increasing the dose; and from that hour I commenced mending, and now am able to ride and walk and am gaining flesh and strength rapidly. I have advised other parties to try it, and some two or three have already tried it. I am sure I shall entirely recover. I am yours R W HAMILTON, M.D. For Sale by all Druggists at \$1 per bottle.

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board into things of beauty. was adorned from top to bottom with her handiwork. Her sighs that she found no work, so much was she of this. beautiful you make your an admiring visitor. "What at you have; and so much of perseverance!"

ailed, well pleased at the She was setting out for to the home of a lady who to teach her a new mys-

art of home decorations. a severe headache it is true, were troublesome, and there per to get for father and the en she must not fail to keep important appointment for

went away. But soon plan came tripping home from

ave a headache, I know, said as she put away her at. "Let me take Floy, on the lounge a little while, put a wet cloth on your get tea as well as not if tell me what we are to

ded about like a good little ng more real sunshine into all Carrie's picture-frames. deeds are what make a

There is no art that can painting and gilding. Even and most unaccomplished this joy to a home fireside.

ng, helpful daughter is al-her's sunshine," and God a blessing on dutiful

well for girls to be ornamen- lar, but it is more neces- household that they should be useful in the kitchen, and kitchen are necessary

ete home.—Child's World.

A MAN ON RICHES.

wing story, says The Way- of Jacob Ridgway, a wealthy Philadelphia who died many leaving a fortune of five or dollars.

Idgway," said a young man the millionaire was convers- are more to be envied than

nan I know." responded Mr. Ridgway, aware of any cause for which particularly envied."

air!" exclaimed the young onishment. "Why are you onaire? Think of the thou- income brings you every

what of that?" replied Mr. "All I get out of it is my clothes, and I can't eat more than's allowance or wear more suit at a time. Pray, can't much?"

," said the youth, "think of eds of fine houses you own tal they bring you!"

better off am I for that?" rich man. "I can only live use at a time. As for the ceive for rents, why, I can't ear it; I can only use it to

ouses for other people to live are the beneficiaries, not I." can buy splendid furniture, res, and fine carriages and fact anything you desire."

Mr. I have bought them," Mr. Ridgway, "what then?" look at the furniture and d the poorest man who is not to the same. I can ride no fine carriage than you can bus for five cents, without

of attending to drivers, foot- ostlers; and as to anything can tell you young man, s we desire in this world the shall be. All my wealth me a single day more of life, back my youth; cannot pur- cure power to keep atar of death; and then, what il when, in a few short years ie down in the grave and for ever. Young man, you use to envy me."

CHARLES DICKENS ON THE MENT.—In the recently pub- ers of Charles Dickens there passed to his son Henry while was at College, advising him of debt and confide all his s to his father. The letter s follows: "I most strongly onately impress upon you the value of the New Testamen- tudy of that book as the one guide in life. Deeply respect- ed bowing down before the of our Saviour as separated ain constructions and inven- ed, you cannot go very wrong, ways preserve at heart a true veneration and humility, impress upon you the habit

Christian prayer every night ng. These things have stood through my life, and remember d to render the New Testa- dligible to you and lovable by you were a mere baby. And eas you."