

## Lesson IX.

## GOD'S COVENANT WITH ABRAHAM

March 2, 1913

**BETWEEN THE LESSONS**—After Lot's choice, God promised to Abram that all the land that lay before him would be his forever and that his seed should be countless as dust. Then comes Abram's defeat of Chedorlaomer and the other kings, and the rescue of Lot, and his noble refusal to take any of the spoil (ch. 14). In this Lesson, an heir, seed as the stars, inheritance of the land, are promised and confirmed to Abram by covenant.

**GOLDEN TEXT**—He is faithful that promised.—Hebrews 10 : 23.

**Memorize vs. 5, 6. THE LESSON PASSAGE**—Genesis 15 : 5-18. Study Genesis, chs. 15 ; 17 : 1-8. Read Genesis, chs. 15 to 17.

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 turtledove, 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 carcases, Abram drove them away.

12 And when the sun was going down, a deep sleep

**Revised Version**—<sup>1</sup> tell ; <sup>2</sup> Omit unto ; <sup>3</sup> half over against the other ; <sup>4</sup> the birds of prey came ; <sup>5</sup> and ; <sup>6</sup> But, <sup>7</sup> And ; <sup>8</sup> Amorite ; <sup>9</sup> flaming torch ; <sup>10</sup> these ; <sup>11</sup> that day.

**Daily Readings**—(By courtesy of I. B. R. Association, Mr. S. C. Bailey, Secretary, 26 Old Bailey, London, England.)—M.—God's covenant with Abraham, Gen. 15 : 5-18. T.—The covenant renewed, Gen. 17 : 1-8. W.—The covenant remembered, Ex. 6 : 2-8. Th.—A greater inheritance, 1 Pet. 1 : 1-9. F.—A call for praise, Ps. 105 : 1-15. S.—In remembrance of His mercy, Neh. 9 : 6-11. S.—He faileth not, 1 Kgs. 8 : 54-61.

## THE LESSON EXPLAINED



"Tell the Stars . . So Shall Thy Seed Be"

**I. THE STARS AND THE PROMISE.**—5-7. Brought him forth abroad. Just as God appointed the rainbow as the token of His covenant with Noah, He now appoints a sign for His promise that Abram should have an heir. Look . . toward heaven, and tell the stars ; count the stars. The vision was at night. The starry sky is a striking sign of God's

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 afterward 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.

power, and a good example of what is countless. See references to the stars, Ps. 8 : 3 ; Isa. 40 : 26. He believed in the Lord. Abram's faith had to be exercised against natural appearances. Childlessness seemed the great probability of his life. Faith has always to believe in the unseen against the seen. Counted it to him for righteousness ; counted his faith for righteousness. Paul makes use of this passage to show that the works of the law are not the first necessity to salvation, for men were justified by faith alone when there was no law, Rom. 4 : 3. Brought thee out of Ur of the Chaldees ; Abram's first home.

**II. THE SACRIFICES AND THE NIGHT VISION.**—8-11. Whereby shall I know that I shall inherit it ? The stars are to be the sign of his numberless seed. Abram now asks for a sign that he shall inherit the land. Take . . an heifer . . three years old ; three perhaps a significant number, like seven. Divided them in the midst. The custom was to arrange the halves so that the contracting parties could pass between. See Jer. 34 : 18,—"They cut the calf in twain, and passed between the parts thereof." When the fowls came down. The unclean birds of prey would have polluted the sacrifice, hence Abram drove them away.

12-16. And when the sun was going down ; "was about to go down,"—almost a whole day has passed. A deep sleep fell upon Abram. The word used for deep sleep is the one that describes the sleep of Adam when Eve was fashioned from his rib ; it resembled a trance. An horror of great darkness