

(Drill your class on the following outlines, taking one each week, until they can give the facts without hesitation).

Old Test.	Historical.	Doctrinal.	Prophetical.	The
39	17	5	16	Minor Prophets,
17H+5D+17P	5P+9HI+3HJ	J P P E. SS.	4 major 12 minor	Ho Jo Am
30	14	3	16	Ob Jo Mi Na
				Ha Ze Ha Ze Ma

## NOTES AND EXPLANATIONS.

Around our lesson cluster all the incidents connected with one of the most awful judgments that ever smote mankind. The dark background of the picture must be viewed in order that the true beauty of mercy interceding with justice may be perceived.

*Where were the cities of the plain?* They were visible from Bethel, and were not far from Mamre (13: 3, 10; 19: 27, 28). The geological evidence proves conclusively that they cannot lie at the bottom of the Dead Sea. They must have been situated either at the northern or at the southern end of it. The preponderance of opinion is decidedly in favor of the former locality.

*How were they destroyed?* The simple and unscientific terms of the narrative are consistent with the view of Sir William Dawson, who suggests that the description is that of a bitumen, or petroleum, eruption similar to those which have been so destructive in the "oil districts" of Canada and the United States. We have only to suppose that reservoirs of condensed gas and petroleum were suddenly discharged, say by an earthquake, and we have all the conditions necessary for the terrific conflagration which consumed the cities and burnt up the soil. This would also account for the peculiarly dense smoke seen by Abraham.

*Why were they destroyed?* For the same reason that the antediluvian world was destroyed. They were past reforming, and had become a moral cancer. The only cure was to cut it clean out. Better that this should come on them, than that their utter corruption should infect their neighbors. Their destruction was an unmitigated blessing to the world, and a wholesome warning to man. Note how frequently it is referred to in the New Testament (Matt. 10: 25; 11: 24; Mark 6: 11; Luke 10: 12; 17: 28, 29; Rom. 9: 29; 2 Pet. 2: 6-8; Jude 7; Rev. 11: 8). The actors in the vile attempt narrated in chapter 19 were not the mere "hoodlums" of the town but "the men of the city, both old and young, all the people from every quarter." This one incident reveals a depth of immorality fortunately unparalleled in the history of our race.

The utter vileness of Sodom is thus vigorously illustrated by one of the editors of Hurlbut's "Illustrative Notes."

"There are squares in Chicago where only depraved men and women live; but the worst slums of our worst cities are Sunday Schools compared with Sodom. Make up a town of "dives" and "joints" and rum-shops and "gambling hells;" leave out of it all churches and police and street lights and city directories and true moral sentiment—every safeguard and every means of tracing crime to its source—then draw men's hospitality and art and love and worship, all into the service of loathsome sin; and that is Sodom. Such sinners, in Paul's words, "received in themselves that recompense of their error which was meet," and their territories became as pestilential and as infectious of physical disease as the foulest of lazar houses. There was but one way to preserve the human race, and that was to destroy these sinners. What would we do with such a community if we had it on our hands to-day? Even where such sin is "localized" and overawed by the religious sentiment of Christians (as it is in our own land) the problem is perplexing beyond measure.