

THE LIQUOR PROBLEM.

In a communication to the Congregationalist the Rev. S. L. Blake, D.D., brings together important statistics in respect to the economic aspect of the liquor traffic. The following paragraphs, eminently worthy of serious consideration by all sober, patriotic, humane and godly citizens, are taken from his essay:

As to the social aspect of the case. It holds the balance of political power in most of the towns and cities of 4,000 and upward, in which at least one-third of our population dwell. As we shall see, this power commands a vast wealth which it uses to carry elections. The Brewers and Malsters' Association of New York claim to control 35,000 votes; a margin quite large enough to decide an election in the State. In 1877 it was admitted at Milwaukee that \$10,000 were spent to defeat the temperance party. In 1878 and 1879 the liquor lobby at Albany admitted the expenditure of \$100,000 for the same purpose. In 1884 thirteen of the twenty-four aldermen of New York were liquor dealers. In Chicago, Milwaukee, Syracuse and Boston the case was similar. The Boston committee of police were composed of three, two of whom were liquor dealers. In Boston there is one saloon to 66 voters; in Cleveland, one to 40; in Chicago, one to 36; in New York, one to 34; in Philadelphia, one to 29; in Cincinnati, one to 25; in the Rocky Mountain States and Territories, one to 43; in the States and Territories between the Rocky Mountains and the Mississippi, one to 112. It does not require a profound knowledge of arithmetic to see that here is a vast and mischievous political power, which often controls our elections, and to which we are sometimes unwilling slaves.

But the social phase of this evil which is most alarming is its crime against society. Dr. Hitchcock, President of the Michigan State Board of Health, "estimates the annual loss of productive life, by reason of the premature deaths produced by alcohol, at 1,27,000 years, and that there are constantly sick or disabled from its use 98,000 persons in the United States." It sends 400,000 a year to the poor-house, of whom one-half are orphans; 100,000 a year to prison, 300 of whom are murderers; 60,000 a year to drunkards' graves. Of the inmates of our prisons, 75 percent are young people under thirty. Of these, 84 percent are criminals because of this traffic. It reaches out its ugly hand and touches the home and prostrates it in the dust; ruins the boys and girls before they come to manhood and womanhood; and drives from the fireside that love which God, in the beginning, placed upon its throne. A father said, One of my boys is old enough to be influenced by the saloons, and is already drinking. I shall vote to wipe them out before my other boys are old enough to be ruined by them. Two school girls in Louisville, Ky., were bosom companions. One married a liquor dealer, another married one of his customers. The one rode in her carriage and lived in elegance; the other walked the streets in poverty, and sustained a wretched life by menial toil. What other traffic, causing half the destruction which this causes, would be tolerated for an hour?

A BIBLE DRILL.

BY HOPE LEDYARD.

It seems to me that, as we begin a new course of Bible study, every school should be well drilled in the use of the Bible, and made familiar with the names of its books. Let the superintendent ask such questions as the following: What is the name of this book? (Showing a Bible). What does "the holy Bible" mean? Why is this the holy book? Did God write it? How? (Answer: "Holy men of old," etc. 2 Peter 1:21.) Was it all written at one time? Tell me how many parts it is divided into? How many books are in the Old Testament? In the New?

Then let two or four books be named, the next Sunday two or four more, till all are learned.

Another excellent plan is to have each scholar stand with Bible in hand. Then say: "Open to the middle of the Bible." What book? Turn to Deuteronomy, the scholars holding up their Bibles the instant they find the book named. By such a drill they soon learn to turn to the Old Testament for Haggai, or to the New Testament for Philemon, etc.

Another excellent exercise is to ask: "Which books did John write? Moses? Mark? Luke? We seniors are apt to forget how much youngsters enjoy such a drill, and I venture to hint that it might not come amiss for some teachers.

Why not begin now to learn just what each book in the Bible tells of. Genesis—the Book of the Beginnings? Why? Because it tells of the beginning of the world, of the beginning of man, and of the beginning of the Jewish nation. Why is the second book called Exodus? Because the name means "going out," and Exodus tells of the going out of the children of Israel from the land of Egypt. I need only indicate such an exercise.

And now will you permit me to point to a great opportunity which may be yours in the future? It is this: To give every scholar—the smallest tot as well as the Bible scholars—a copy of the Gospel according to St. Matthew. A copy of St. John's Gospel was given to every child in a certain primary class, and those copies have been wonderfully blessed in the homes of the children. The print is so clear, and then the book is the child's own. But many of us could not afford to give every scholar a seven-cent copy unless we begin now to save for it. So let us begin now to save for next July. Drop into a box or jug the odd nickles and dimes, with a prayer each time for the child who shall use that Gospel. If you do this, you will never regret it, and many souls shall be blessed.—S. S. Times.

SCHOLARS' NOTES.

(From International Question Book.)

LESSON X.—MARCH 6.

ABRAHAM OFFERING ISAAC.—GEN. 22:1-14.

COMMIT VERSES 10-13.

GOLDEN TEXT.

God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering.—Gen. 22:8.

CENTRAL TRUTH.

The duty of entire consecration of all to God.

DAILY READINGS.

- M. Gen. 21:1-21.
T. Gen. 21:22-34.
W. Gen. 22:1-19.
Th. 1 Pet. 1:3-21.
F. Heb. 11:17-26.
Sa. James 2:14-26.
Su. Rom. 4:13-25.

TIME.—About B.C. 1871, 26 years after the last lesson.

PLACE.—Abraham had left Hebron, was now living at Beersheba. The sacrifice was on Mount Moriah, afterward the site of the temple at Jerusalem.

ABRAHAM.—Now 125 years old, with two sons, Ishmael, 20 years old, and Isaac perhaps 25. He was living at Beersheba, 25 miles south-east of Hebron.

ISAAC.—Born at Beersheba. Josephus says that he was 25 years old at this time. CONNECTING HISTORY.—After Abraham had witnessed the destruction of Sodom, he left that region, and went toward the south-west, to the country of the Philistines. Here he had the same trouble with Abimelech that he had had in Egypt years before. He finally settled in Beersheba. Isaac his son was born to him. Hagar and her son Ishmael were driven away. Abraham remained here a number of years, till his son was almost grown up.

INTRODUCTION.—Now comes the greatest trial of Abraham's life. He was commanded to sacrifice his son, by whom the promise was to be fulfilled that his seed should be as many as the stars. It was a test of his obedience and faith. God did not intend to let him sacrifice his son, but stopped it—not to encourage, but to oppose, human sacrifices. We see God's meaning only when we see the end of the trial.

HELPS OVER HARD PLACES.

1. AFTER THESE THINGS—as described in the previous chapter, and "Connecting History" above. TEMPT.—put to trial or test, not tempt in the sense of inducing to do wrong. 2. ONLY SON—the only son of the promise, the only son of Sarah, the only son at home. ISAAC means "laughter"; he was now about 25 years old. MOUNT MORIAH—the hill where afterwards the temple was built. 4. THIRD DAY—it was 45 miles from Beersheba to Moriah. 12. NOW I KNOW THAT THOU FEAREST GOD—he had shown his perfect faith and obedience. The trial need go no further. 14. JEHOVAH-JIREH—"the Lord will see," or provide. SAID TO THIS DAY—it became a proverb, from this experience of Abraham's on the Mount, that God would provide in case of difficulty. BE SEEN—or provided.

QUESTIONS.

INTRODUCTORY.—Where did Abraham go after the destruction of Sodom? From what place? Where did he make his home for a long time after this? (21:33.) What son was born to him here? (21:3.) How old was Isaac at the time of this lesson?

SUBJECT: ENTIRE CONSECRATION TO GOD.

I. THE GREAT TRIAL (vs. 1, 2).—What is the meaning of "tempt" in this verse? How do you reconcile this verse with James 1:13, that God tempteth no man? What two reasons are there for trials? (Deut. 8:2; 1 Pet. 1:7; James 1:3.) Do any of us escape them? Are many little trials as really a proving as great ones?

What was Abraham's trial at this time? What things made it especially hard? What showed his great faith? (Heb. 11:17-19.)

Was it right for Abraham to slay his son? Did God expect him to do it? How was

this transaction a protest against human sacrifices?

II. GIVING UP ALL TO GOD (vs. 2-9).—To what place did Abraham take Isaac? How far was it? What afterwards marked this spot? (2 Chron. 3:1.) Describe the journey. What conversation took place on the way? What was done on Mount Moriah? What shows that Isaac had faith as well as his father?

Was it the duty of Abraham to give up his son? Ought we to give up everything to God? Is it duty sometimes to give them up to be missionaries or soldiers? Ought we to be willing to die for Jesus' sake? What does Paul call this in Rom. 12:1? Why?

III. THE SACRIFICE ACCEPTED.—(vs. 10-14) How far had Abraham gone toward sacrificing his son? What prevented him? What had Abraham proved? Does all this go to favor or oppose human sacrifices? When and why is the will accepted for the deed?

What substitute was found for Isaac? In what respects is Isaac a type of Christ? Meaning of Jehovah-jireh? How did this event become a proverb? What is its teaching to us?

LESSON XI.—MARCH 13.

JACOB AT BETHEL.—GEN. 28:10-22.

COMMIT VERSES 15-17.

GOLDEN TEXT.

Surely the Lord is in this place.—Gen. 28:16

CENTRAL TRUTH.

Every true life is a ladder from earth to heaven.

DAILY READINGS.

- M. Gen. 21:1-67.
T. Gen. 25:27-34.
W. Gen. 26:12-35.
Th. Gen. 27:1-29.
F. Gen. 27:30-46.
Sa. Gen. 28:1-22.
Su. Ps. 91:1-16.

PLACE.—Bethel ("house of God") 12 miles north of Jerusalem.

ABRAHAM lived 60 years after the last lesson. He died B.C. 1821, aged 175. Sarah lived to be 127. Both were buried at Hebron, in the cave of Machpelah.

ISAAC.—117 years old at this time. He had married, when 40 years old, his cousin Rebekah, and they had two children, twins, Jacob and Esau.

JACOB AND ESAU were born B.C. 1838, when Isaac was 60 years old. Esau was a hunter, a brave, sensual, worldly, jovial man. Jacob was a farmer, plain, shrewd, selfish at this time.

SELLING THE BIRTHRIGHT.—When they were about 32 years old Esau, being very hungry, sold his birthright to Jacob for a mess of pottage (Gen. 25:28-34.) This was not so much a double portion of property, as the inheritance of the promises.

THE BIRTHRIGHT OBTAINED BY FRAUD.—25 years after when Isaac was old, he proposed to confer the birthright on Esau, the elder. Jacob, knowing that it was designed for him by God, and that he had purchased it; but now it seemed to be about to be given to Esau. So he and his mother deceived Isaac, and obtained the blessing. They paid dearly for obtaining a good thing in a bad way. Esau was angry, and Jacob was sent secretly to his uncle in Padanaram.

HELPS OVER HARD PLACES.

10. BEERSHEBA—Isaac's home. HARAN—a city in Padanaram, Mesopotamia, from which place Abraham came. It was 450 miles away. 13. AND THE LORD STOOD—he confirms Jacob in the birthright by confirming in him the promises made to Abraham 130 years before. 17. AFRAID—conscious of guilt, he could not but fear at the nearness of a holy God and a holy heaven. 18. Poured oil upon it—an act of consecration to God. 19. BETHEL—see Place. 20. IF GOD WILL BE—rather, SINCE GOD IS; not a condition, but a statement of a fact. 21. THE LORD BE MY GOD—the choice that leads to conversion. TENTH—as an acknowledgment that all comes from God.

QUESTIONS.

INTRODUCTORY.—How many years between the last lesson and this? Name some of the events in Isaac's life. Point out on the map the places named in the lesson.

SUBJECT: THE LADDER OF LIFE.

I. THE TWIN BROTHERS.—What were their names? Their parents? How old were they at the time of the lesson? Which was the older? For what did Esau sell his birthright to Jacob? How long before the events of this lesson? To whom did Isaac propose to give the birthright? How did Jacob obtain it? Point out the sin in this.

What was the birthright? Had it been designated to Jacob by God? Did his purchase give him any right to it? Would God have given it to him had he not taken it by deceit? How was Jacob punished? Is it ever safe to do a right thing in a wrong way?

II. THE FLIGHT FROM HOME (vs. 10, 11).—Why did Jacob leave home? (27:41.) What was his ostensible object? (27:40.) Where was he going? Who lived there? How far was it? Was it a dangerous journey? In what place did he spend one night? Who had been there before? (13:3, 4.)

III. THE LADDER TO HEAVEN (vs. 12-15).—What vision was shown him from his pillow of stones? What was represented by this ladder? By the ascending and descending angels? In what respects is this ladder a type of a true life? What is taught by this vision's being shown from a pillow stone? How would it comfort Jacob? How do you know it came in answer to prayer? (ch. 35:3.) What promises did God make to Jacob? To whom had they been made before? (15:5, 6; 17:6, 8.) Illustrate more fully this ladder as a type of every true life, in its beginning, progress, means, steps, end.

IV. THE BEGINNING OF A NEW LIFE (vs. 16-22).—What were Jacob's feelings when he awoke? Why was he afraid? What made that place a house of God? Can every home be a house of God and a gate of heaven? How can we make the house of God a gate of heaven for ourselves and others? What did Jacob

name the place? Meaning of Bethel? What vow did Jacob make? Was this a conditional promise? How did he promise to show that he accepted God as his God? Was this an instance of true conversion? Should we make the same vow?

Why did Jacob pour oil on the stone pillar? What advantage in such memorials? Have we a right to make any conditions to our service of God? Ought we to give tithes to God?

LESSON XII.—MARCH 20.

JACOB'S NEW NAME.—GEN. 32:9-12, 24-30.

COMMIT VERSES 28-30.

GOLDEN TEXT.

And he said, I will not let thee go except thou bless me.—Gen. 32:26.

CENTRAL TRUTH.

God hears and answers earnest, humble, self-surrendering, persevering prayer.

DAILY READINGS.

- M. Gen. 31:1-9, 17:24.
T. Gen. 31:22-55.
W. Gen. 32:1-12.
Th. Gen. 32:13-32.
F. Gen. 33:1-20.
Sa. Gen. 35:1-15.
Su. Luke 11:1-13.

PLACE.—Peniel, 15 or 20 miles east of the Jordan, on the north side of one of the fords of the Jabbok, a stream 50 miles long, entering the Jordan from the east, about half way between the Dead Sea and the Sea of Galilee.

JACOB.—Ninety-seven years old, rich in flocks and herds, with eleven sons and two daughters.

INTERVENING HISTORY.—After his vision at Bethel, Jacob goes on to Mesopotamia. At Haran he finds his uncle Laban, marries his cousins Rachel and Leah, works for Laban at least 20 years. He continues his sharp practice, and suffers on account of it.

JACOB'S HOUR OF NEED.—Hard feelings having arisen between Jacob and his cousins on account of Jacob's prosperity, he determines to go back to Palestine. This was his first trouble. Then, as he draws near, he must pass through the regions where Esau roamed. He does not know how much Esau lays up against him, but learns that he is approaching with 400 soldiers. Thirdly, his conscious guilt weighed on his soul. He knew he had wronged his brother, and not kept his vows to God.

HELPS OVER HARD PLACES.

9. O GOD—this is the first recorded prayer in the Bible. SAIDST, RETURN (ch. 31:3). 10. TRUTH . . . SHOWED—fulfill performance of his promises. TWO BANDS—into which he had divided his flocks and herds. His wealth is shown by the fact that his present to Esau consisted of 580 animals. 22. ROSE UP (read intervening verses.) ELEVEN SONS—Benjamin was not yet born. 24. WRESTLED A MAN WITH HIM—an angel, or the Angel of Jehovah in the form of a man. The wrestling was a type of prayer. 25. TIGHT OUT OF JOINT—this was to teach Jacob that all his help came from God, not himself. 28. JACOB—supplanter, expressing his former crafty, shrewd, self-seeking character. ISRAEL—a prince with God, expressing his changed character, his higher life henceforward. HAST PREVAILED—he received the blessing of safety from Esau, and also higher character and spiritual life. 29. TELL ME THY NAME—now he wants a higher blessing, even knowledge of God. The name stands for the person. 30. PENIEL (same as Peniel)—meaning "The face of God."

QUESTIONS.

INTRODUCTORY.—Why did Jacob leave his home at Beersheba? Where did he go? What vision did he have on the way? What was Jacob's experience on arriving at Mesopotamia? (29:1-20.) How was he prospered here? (30:1-3.) How many sons did he have? (32:22.) How long did he remain? Point out Haran, Peniel and Jabbok, on the map.

SUBJECT: PREVAILING PRAYER.

I. THE HOUR OF NEED.—What trouble did Jacob have with his cousins? (31:1-7.) What did Jacob and his family then do? (31:17, 18.) What danger did he have reason to fear? (32:3-7.) What guilt lay on his conscience? Why did these things lead him to God? Had Jacob been more faithful to God than to man? Why does a guilty conscience make us afraid? Is it usually true that it takes great needs or troubles at some time to make us go to God? Name some of the crises in our lives, when we have special need of wrestling with God.

II. THE PRAYER (vs. 9-12).—What are the characteristics of this first recorded prayer? Find in it the one to whom to pray; pleading promises; confession; humility; petition. How had God blessed Jacob? How was this a reason for expecting help now?

III. WORKING AS WELL AS PRAYING.—As they drew near Canaan, what plan did Jacob make to appease his brother? (32:13-20.) What precautions did he take with his own family and property? (32:7, 8.) Have we a right to expect God to do for us what we can do ourselves? (Jas. 2:17.) Is there any opposition between praying and working? How are they related?

IV. WRESTLING WITH GOD (vs. 24-26).—Where did Jacob go after he had sent his family over the ford? What took place there? With whom did he wrestle? (Hos. 12:4.) What did this wrestling mean? Why must God be importuned for his blessings? (Matt. 5:6.) Why did the angel disable Jacob? (2 Cor. 12:10.) How did Jacob show his perseverance? How did all this fit him to receive the blessing? What promise is given in James 5:16? What in Luke 11:9, 13?

V. THE ANSWER TO HIS PRAYER (vs. 27-30).—Where is given the answer to the petition in v. 11? What is the answer to the petition in v. 28? Meaning of Jacob? How does it express his former character? Meaning of Israel? What change in him does this name express? Was this one of the best answers to his prayer? What more did Jacob ask? Was it granted? Do we know God's name? By what names is God revealed in the Bible? Does earnest praying for earthly help lead us to pray for larger blessings? What is meant by "And he blessed him there?"