

TEN MILLIONS FOR MISSIONS.

A PRESBYTERIAN VIEW.

It is sadly evident that the Presbyterian Church in the United States is not doing what it might do for the salvation of our country and of the world.

The number of communicants, as reported to the General Assembly in 1885, was over 720,000. Many of them are women and children, but it is safe to estimate the number of families at 300,000. Each of these families has an annual income varying from \$500 to \$50,000 and over. Presbyterians are generally thrifty and in good circumstances. Very few of them are absolutely poor. It is safe, therefore, to put the average annual income of these 300,000 families at \$1,000. Now, should not all of these families as stewards of the Lord, give at least five percent of their income to Him for His work at home and abroad? Well, five percent of \$300,000,000—the gross income of our 300,000 families—is \$15,000,000. But there are a great many rich Presbyterians in this country. Men whose income is above \$5,000 a year ought to give a great deal more than five percent. If I earn \$2,000 a year, and contribute \$100 of that to the Church, living comfortably on \$1,900 or less, my brother who earns or receives from his investments \$10,000 a year, and whose living expenses need not be greater than mine, ought to contribute, not \$500 in order to be even with me, but \$8,100, for this leaves him \$1,900 for family expenses. The special donations of the rich should increase the \$15,000,000 to at least \$17,000,000. Last year our congregational expenses, as reported, were about \$7,500,000. Every body knows that these are higher than they need to be. But let us strike off only half a million for extravagant expenditures in music, etc. We then, having an aggregate income for the Lord's cause of \$17,000,000, take \$7,000,000 of it for congregational expenses, and there is left \$10,000,000 for missions and Christian education—four times as much as we gave to those objects last year.

Does it seem incredible that our Church could quadruple its contributions to missions in a single year? Review the figures just presented. Is there any error in them? Is there anything unreasonable in claiming that every one who has given himself to the Lord should give one-twentieth of his income to the Lord?

The principal reason that our benevolent contributions are not four times greater, is that we neglect the gospel rule as laid down by Paul in 1 Cor. 16:2. We do not lay by in store, on the first day of the week, as God has prospered us. Suppose in our 300,000 Presbyterian families every Sabbath morning the question were asked, How much can we spare for the Lord from the income or earnings of this week? Or to put it in a better form, How much ought we to lay aside for the Lord of the money He has given us this week? Suppose this question were asked after family worship, when all hearts were aglow with communion with God! Would not \$1 for the week seem quite small enough as a thank-offering in at least 200,000 of these homes? And are there not ten, or twice ten thousand where five times that amount would seem the merest pittance? In nearly all these homes is there not more than \$1 expended every week for things not really needed? Could not \$1 a week be saved in providing for the table, and yet the family have all the necessities and many of the luxuries of life? Could not \$1 a week be saved in the family wardrobe and yet all its members be well dressed?

Ten millions a year for the salvation of the world! Why there are no less than 1,000,000,000 who have never heard the Gospel. For their evangelization our great church would give, year by year, a cent for each soul! A million of dollars for each one hundred millions who are perishing in their sins.

But while the field is the world our own country is to us the nearest and the most important portion of that field. Suppose that of the ten millions for missions we could have five millions next year to sustain our feeble churches, to explore new fields, to endow institutions of learning, to build houses of worship, to evangelize and educate the freedmen.—*The Interior.*

THE TONGUE of the wise useth knowledge aright: but the mouth of fools poureth out foolishness.—*Proverbs xv., 2.*

IMPORTANT FACTS.

The following facts are gleaned from the London *Lancet*. We thus give the substance of elaborate articles, or important facts illustrative of more general truths.

It must be admitted that the will of inebriates is weakened and dulled by the general nervous anesthesia, which forms an important consequence of alcoholism. In view of the degeneration of the brain and the resulting mental and moral failure, and the analogy with certain forms of insanity, the argument is not without force that the drunkard, and in some cases even his children, should be disqualified from the discharge of civil duties, and exculpated, as unsound in judgment, from the full penalty of their offences.

At the cost of fifty cents, the dresses of the whole household may be rendered incombustible by dipping them in a solution of tungstate of soda—one pound in two gallons of water. The most delicate color will not be effected by it, and the ironing will not interfere with the effectiveness of the process. In the case of starched dresses, instead of dipping them in the solution, to three parts of good dry starch add one part of tungstate of soda, and use the starch in the ordinary way. Ladies should decline to purchase light dress materials which are not shown to be practically fire-proof.

Two years ago an epidemic of sore throat broke out in England which soon showed an infectious character, and the schools had to be closed. The district was previously free from sore throat diseases of every kind. It was ascertained that the first cases had their milk from a particular farm. This being visited, it was found that, within a few months, there had been five separate attacks of foot and mouth disease, and that one cow was still suffering from it. There is evidence that diphtheritic sore throat has been communicated in the same way.

A regiment being lodged in new barracks, provided with unfiltered water from the Seine, forty of the soldiers were attacked with typhoid fever at the same time. On removing the regiment to the camp, the epidemic ceased.

In typhoid fever the fluid portion of the blood is lessened in quantity, and water should be taken as a medicine, as well as to relieve thirst.—*Youth's Companion.*

THE CLERGYMAN WARNED.

"Excuse me, sir, that bank ain't safe." The words were addressed to a gentleman in clerical attire, who, leaning against a big tree, was watching the water of a wide river as it ran among the reeds and water-lilies at the foot of the bank. He turned slightly at the words, and saw Abel Snawley, a laborer on the farm. He had just been paying a pastoral visit to Abel and his wife, both of whom seemed to him sunk in indifference and formalism. Their conception of their situation toward God was summed up in the notion that, if they were regular at church every Sunday morning, and were not guilty of open sin, they were "all right," and had no need of any "new-fangled notions about conversion which the new clergyman had brought into the parish." The visit had been a failure, and the preacher felt depressed as he stood there idly watching the river.

"Thank you, Abel," he said, as he rose to an upright position and moved away from the edge. "I had no idea it was dangerous. Is the river very deep here?"

"Not so very," said Abel, "but it's the reeds and the willows as makes it bad; they twine around your feet and hold you like a net, or mayhap trip you up, and you lie on your face and can't get up. I had a son drowned just there ten years ago. He was standing just where you were, and there was a slide, and in he went. We never knew till it was too late. I can't bear to see any one there ever since."

"And so you warn folks, eh, Abel? Well, that's kind of you, and just what I should expect of a good-hearted man. Why I might have slipped in and lost my life, just as your son did, if you had not taken the trouble to warn me."

"Don't mention it, sir. 'Tain't no trouble; it's duty, that is."

"Do you know, Abel," said the clergyman, as he turned and walked back with the old man, "that's just how I felt this morning when I came to your house? I felt you were standing in a dangerous place, and you did not know it was dangerous. Many have fallen in there and have been lost forever. I want you to be safe, so I came to

warn you. That is my work, you know, to tell people of their danger. 'Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.' You know who said that, Abel?"

"That's a new way of looking at it, sir. I'll think about it." And Abel did think of it, and sought and found safety in Christ.—*Christian Herald.*

SCHOLARS' NOTES.

(From International Question Book.)

LESSON VI.—FEBRUARY 6.

LOT'S CHOICE.—GEN. 13:1-13.

COMMIT VERSES 8-11.

GOLDEN TEXT.

Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness.—Matt. 6:33.

CENTRAL TRUTH.

Brotherly love brings peace to the community and blessings to the soul.

DAILY READINGS.

M. Gen. 13:1-13.
T. Ps. 138:1-3.
W. 1 Cor. 13:1-13.
Th. Phil. 2:1-15.
F. Rom. 12:10-21.
Sa. Matt. 6:24-34.
Su. Prov. 1:10-33.

CONTEMPORARY HISTORY.—We now are in the dawn of secular history. Egypt was near the height of its grandeur. Babylonia and Chaldea had been founded 400 years before this. Tyre and Sidon had been built and had a large commerce. Greece had already begun to be settled.

INTRODUCTION.—In our last lesson we began the study of Abraham, the father of the chosen people, and followed his journeyings to the Promised Land, and his encampment near Bethel. After a time he went further south, and in a time of famine he went down into Egypt. Our lesson begins with his return from that country after a very long sojourn there.

HELPS OVER HARD PLACES.

1. ABRAM . . . OUT OF EGYPT.—Abram, in his fear of the great despot, Pharaoh, deceived the king to save his life, and got into trouble; but God helped him, and he soon left Egypt for the land to which God had sent him. THE SOUTH—a proper name, the Negeb, the country south of Palestine. 3. BETHEL—twelve miles north of Jerusalem. HAI—Al, five miles to the east (see last lesson). TENT . . . AT THE BEGINNING—his first dwelling-place, the place from which he started for Egypt. He probably did not stop long at Shechem, his first station in Palestine. 6. LAND . . . NOT ABLE TO BEAR THEM—not pasturage enough for such large flocks and herds. 7. STRIFE—to get the best pastures and wells. 8. BRETHREN—Lot was nephew and brother-in-law to Abraham. They were also brethren in religion, in feeling, in race. 9. IS NOT THE WHOLE LAND, etc.—this land was all promised to Abraham, but he yields every right of his own. He is generous, loving, self-denying. 10. THE PLAIN OF THE JORDAN—the wide valley through which the Jordan runs. GARDEN OF THE LORD—the Garden of Eden. EGYPT—the most fertile land then known. ZOAR—rather Zor; not the Zor to which Lot afterwards fled, near the Dead Sea, but the border land of Egypt, its richest portion, through which Lot came on his way home from Egypt.

QUESTIONS.

INTRODUCTORY.—Of what nationality was Abraham? Why did he come into Canaan? Who came with him? In what places did he settle? How long ago did these things occur?

SUBJECT: BROTHERLY LOVE.

I. THE RETURN FROM EGYPT (vs. 1-4).—Why did Abraham go down into Egypt? (12:10.) Into what sin did he fall there? How was he punished for it? Does his conduct afterwards show that he thoroughly repented? To what place did he return? In what circumstances? How did he show his gratitude and repentance?

Had Abraham reason to fear Pharaoh? Did he tell a lie? Had he the same light upon duty as we have? Were these things excuses for his conduct? Was his sin the fruit of weakness of faith? Why does the Bible record the weaknesses of its saints and heroes? Could God use this experience of Abraham in making him better and stronger in faith?

II. THE OCCASION OF STRIFE (vs. 5-7).—Between whom did a quarrel arise? About what? Why was the land less able to sustain Abraham and Lot than when they were there a few years before?

What other inhabitants were in the land? Why is this fact mentioned? Should the fact that unbelieving men are observing us make us more careful how we act? Why?

III. THE STRIFE AVERTED BY BROTHERLY LOVE (vs. 8, 9).—Who made the first advances toward peace? What generous proposal did Abraham make? What reason did he give? Had Abraham the first right to the land? (12:7.) Was it not just as much Lot's duty as it was Abraham's to be generous? Show how duty, love and faith were manifested in Abraham's conduct? How did God reward him? (13:14-17.)

Show how the following Scriptures were fulfilled in Abraham.—Matt. 5:9; Prov. 15:1; Rom. 12:10, 18, 24; 1 Cor. 13:4-8; Heb. 13:1; Ps. 133; Matt. 6:31-34.

IV. THE UNWISE CHOICE (vs. 10-13).—Which part of the land was the most fertile? What is said of it? What objection was there to it? Why did Lot choose it? Was it right for him to go there? Did he go further than he intended at first? (Comp. v. 12 l.c. with 14:12.) Did this choice injure Lot's character? Did he gain happiness by it? (2 Pet. 2:7, 8.) In what two ways did he lose the very wealth he sought? (14:1, 11, 12; 19:17.)

In what ways do men now "pitch their tent toward Sodom"? Is it right to make companions of bad men for the sake of worldly advantages? Was Paul injured, or are missionaries made worse by dwelling among the heathen? Why not? Sum up the gains and losses Lot made by his choice.

Show "How" following Scriptures apply to

Lot:—1 Cor. 15:33; 2 Thess. 3:6, 14, 15; 1 Cor. 5:9-11; Ps. 1:1; Prov. 1:10-16; 4:14; 13:20; 22:24, 25; 2 Cor. 6:11-18; Rev. 18:4.

LESSON VII.—FEBRUARY 13.

GOD'S COVENANT WITH ABRAM.—GEN. 15:5-18.

COMMIT VERSES 5-7.

GOLDEN TEXT.

Fear not, Abram, I am thy shield and thy exceeding great reward.—Gen. 15:1.

CENTRAL TRUTH.

Faith the source of righteousness and blessing.

DAILY READINGS.

M. Gen. 14:1-24.
T. Gen. 15:1-21.
W. Rom. 4:1-14.
Th. Rom. 4:15-25.
F. Ex. 6:1-13.
Sa. Gal. 3:5-29.
Su. James 2:14-23.

INTRODUCTORY.—Soon after Lot went toward Sodom, Abraham went thirty miles south to Hebron. For a few years all seemed to go well with Lot and then the great eastern nations came down upon Sodom, and sacked the cities of the plain, and carried away captive Lot, his family and his property. Abraham soon heard of it, and being as brave as he was good, he took his 318 armed servants, pursued after the retreating army, and by a sudden night attack, rescued Lot and recovered his property. Even this lesson did not make Lot remove from Sodom.

HELPS OVER HARD PLACES.

Abraham seems to have been discouraged. (1) There may have been reaction from his heroic exploit; (2) disappointment that Lot went back to Sodom; (3) fear that the great kings from whom he had rescued Lot would return and destroy him and his; (4) delay of the promise. God, therefore, gives him his promise of protection in a vision, and confirms it with a sign. 5. TELL THE STARS—about 5,000 stars are visible to the naked eye, but no one can tell the exact number. The stars seen by telescope are innumerable. There are 18,000,000 in the Milky Way alone. Some of the nebulae are supposed to be systems of stars as large as the one to which our nightly heavens belong. So SHALL TRY SEED BE—his natural and also his spiritual descendants (Gal. 3:7, 29). 6. COUNTED IT TO HIM FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS—accepted it in the place of good deeds he could not do, but would do if he could. It was regarded by God as real goodness, for it was the source and soul of real goodness. It is what we most desire in our children. If they trust and love us, all else we ask will come. 10. DIVIDED, etc.—the animals were divided lengthwise, and the pieces ranged in two rows. 11. FOWLS—birds of prey: eagles, hawks, vultures. DROVE THEM AWAY—this ceremony was begun in the morning, and Abraham watched all day. So should we drive away the worldly thoughts and evil suggestions that would interrupt our hours of devotion. 13. FOUR HUNDRED YEARS—a round number for the 430 years from Abram's call to the Exodus, or the exact number from Isaac to the Exodus. (See Acts 7:1; Gal. 3:17.) 14. JUDGE—execute the judgments, as the ten plagues on Pharaoh. 15. GOOD OLD AGE—175 years. 17. SMOKING FURNACE—circular fire-pot, from which came THE BURNING LAMP, i.e., a flame like a torch. Probably it was the divine fire that consumed the divided sacrifices, a sign of acceptance and permanency, for the parts burned together could never be separated again. 18. RIVER OF EGYPT (the Nile) TO EUPHRATES—fulfilled in Solomon's time. (1 Kings 4:21.) It always belonged to Israel, whether they kept possession or not.

QUESTIONS.

INTRODUCTORY.—What choice did Lot make in our last lesson? Where did Abraham then go? (13:18.) What misfortune befell Lot for going to Sodom? (14:1-12.) Give an account of his rescue by Abraham. (14:13-16.) Why is true piety brave?

SUBJECT: THE TRIUMPH OF FAITH.

I. THE TRIALS OF FAITH.—How long had it been since the first call and promise of Abraham? Had he either the promised land or the promised descendants? What had he reason to fear from the kings he had attacked? May he have been disappointed that Lot went back to Sodom? (19:1.)

What time of discouragement had Elijah? (1 Kings 19:1-4.) What had John the Baptist? (Matt. 11:2-6.) Are any without such seasons?

II. ENCOURAGEMENTS TO FAITH (v. 5).—In what way did God speak to Abraham? (15:1.) What did he say? How was God his shield? His exceeding great reward? How would this promise comfort and strengthen the patriarch? What troubled him in relation to the former promise in chap. 13:15, 16? (v. 2.) What sign did God give him now? Who are Abraham's seed?

How many stars are visible to us? Can any one count the actual number of the stars? How could the stars be a sign to Abraham? Compare it with the rainbow sign to Noah. Are the brightness, steadfastness of the stars, and the fact that they shine in the dark, a part of the sign? In what sense are all believers children of Abraham? (Gal. 3:7-29.) Can these be counted? Name some of the encouragements God gives to sustain our faith, better than visions or signs.

III. THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF FAITH (vs. 6, 7).—How did Abraham receive the promise and sign? Why did it require great faith to believe God's promise? What is faith? How was it counted unto him for righteousness? How does Paul use this verse? (Rom. 4:1-5, 16-18.) How did James use it? (James 2:17-24.) Did Abraham show his faith by his works whenever it was possible? Give examples. (12:1-4; 22:18.) How did such faith honor God? Why did God refer to the past in v. 7?

IV. THE COVENANT OF FAITH (vs. 8-18).—Describe the ceremonies of the covenant? What interfered with the silent worshippers during the day? (v. 11.) What birds of prey interfere often with our devotions? (Luke 8:5, 12; Matt. 15:19.) What glimpse of the future did God give Abraham? How was the covenant completed? What is God's covenant with us? (Gal. 2:16; 3:22; Heb. 9:12-14.) What is our part? (John 3:14-16.) Does God ever disappoint those who trust in him?