

Devotional Sermon

(The Missionary Text-Book for this year is "Methodism in Canada," by Rev. A. Sutherland, D.D. The missionary topics correspond with the chapters of this book, which can be secured from Dr. P. C. Stephenson, Wesley Building, Toronto. Price, postpaid, in cloth, 50 cents; in paper covers, 35 cents.)

JAN. 13.—"HOW GOD'S IMAGE IS PRESERVED IN US—OR LOST."

Gen. 1. 26; Col. 3. 1-10.
(TEMPERANCE TOPIC.)

HOME READINGS.

- Mon., Jan. 7.—Created anew. Eph. 4. 23-32.
Tues., Jan. 8.—Like our Father. Heb. 1. 1-8.
Wed., Jan. 9.—Manifesting God. John 17. 1-3.
Thurs., Jan. 10.—A marred image. Gen. 3. 8-19.
Fri., Jan. 11.—A restored image. Luke 9. 28-36.
Sat., Jan. 12.—We may bear it. 1 Cor. 15. 45-49.

BIBLE LIGHT.

In God's image. (Gen. 1. 26.) God is a Spirit. Man is like God in this, for while part of his complex nature is material, he is spirit, too. This it is which makes him capable of having communication with God Himself.

Man is like God in sympathy. The heart of God is a well-spring of sympathy, and man differs from other orders of creation in the fact that he is able to sympathize with his fellows, and to express love.

Man is like God in the fact that he is a thinking being. Not the lightning of the skies goes further or faster than our thoughts.

Man was created like God in purity. He did not know how sin was until actual transgression came into the world.

The image has been defaced through sin, but not entirely destroyed. The temple is in some sense a ruin, but it is beautiful in its decay, and it shall be beautiful in its restoration. (Col. 3. 1.)

The Divine likeness is still upon the lost and missing count. Dust and mire have gathered on it, rude hands have scraped away the precision and delicacy of the cutting, but it is God's image still. (Col. 3. 10.)

The more we love God the more we will hate the things that He hates. "Put off all these." (Col. 3. 8.)

The more a man stands in awe of God, the more will he stand in awe of himself, since he is made in the image of God.

SUGGESTIVE THOUGHTS.

The image of God is defiled through sin which leaves its impress upon the face and upon the whole being.

There is nothing sadder than a human wreck. We cannot look upon a ship that has been cast upon the rocks and shattered, or upon a locomotive that has been hurled from the track and crushed and destroyed without mourning. How much more serious is the ruin of a life.

Nothing so effectually obscures God's image in men as intemperance. It defiles, blackens and ruins the whole life. It degrades men so that they sink to the lowest depths.

And yet there is hope for the worst case. The image may be restored, the life may be saved. Such cases as Jerry Macaulay, S. H. Hadley and others should encourage us to work for the lowest and the worst. While we seek to secure prohibition, let us not forget to put forth

personal effort for the salvation of the drunkard.

Preserving the image of God is, however, much more important than restoring it. To induce a boy to sign the pledge and keep himself from the defiling influences of intemperance is a better thing than to lift the sot out of the gutter.

God's image is preserved by purity of thought, and righteousness of act. Constant watchfulness is necessary in guarding against the insidious influences of sin.

In restoring and preserving God's image we need grace and strength from on high. Our own personal efforts will not suffice, but "the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin."

ILLUSTRATIONS.

Doubtless there are many priceless paintings of the masters hidden behind coatings of dust and dirt. Clean every canvas and look for the artist's name.

The Boston Museum of Fine Arts is to be moved away from the centre of the city to a more open region, for fear of fire. How careful men are of images of paint and marble, and how careless of the image of God in the soul!

James Gilmour, the famous missionary to Mongolia, when he was a young man in college found once in his rooms a quantity of strong drink. He promptly poured it out of the window, saying, as he did so, "Better on God's earth than in His image."

The only right attitude toward intoxicating liquor is that taken by Brigadier-General Frederick Dent Grant, the son of the great U. S. Grant, and the Commander of the Department of the East. In a recent interview, which he confirmed in a letter to me, he said: "Tall the young men that General Grant does not drink a drop of liquor—has not for eighteen years—because he is afraid to drink it. I have found that it is an impossibility to drink moderately. Drink is the greatest of curses, because practically all crime and all disaster are the result of it."

QUOTATIONS.

Into whatever path the philanthropist may strike the drink demon starts up before him and blocks his way.—Lord Brougham.

There are many people like those described by Dr. Guthrie when he said: "They know no Sabbath, read no Bible, enter no place of worship, and care neither for God nor man. So far as they care or are concerned the cross with its blessed bleeding burden might never have stood on Calvary."

It has been truly said that many parts of heathen lands to which missionaries have been sent are a paradise compared with many places in the very heart of London, England. With heaven-defying industry multitudes trample God's commands beneath their feet, profane His day, and blaspheme His name. This British idolatry is more loathsome and degrading than that of Juggernaut.—Rev. W. H. Withrow, D.D.

Before God and man, before the Church and the world, I impeach intemperance. I charge it with the murder of innumerable souls. I charge it as the cause of almost all the poverty and crime, and misery, and ignorance and irreligion that disgrace and afflict the land.—Dr. Guthrie.

"Nothing so effectually counter-works God's purposes of grace, hance the souls that He would bless, and destroys the bodies of mankind as the giant evil-intemperance. It is the ally of the devil, the enemy of all righteousness, the incentive of every lust and sin, to every crime

and violence, to every cruelty and wrong."

"This vice seizes the young people of our Sunday-schools, effaces the holy lessons written on their hearts and changes them to a foul palimpsest, inscribed all over with the vile characters of sin. Many of them find their way to prison, and figure in the annals of crime."

QUESTION SUPPLIES.

What are we doing to restore God's likeness in men who have been degraded by the liquor traffic?

Give instances of men who have been reclaimed from the power of strong drink.

What was it that helped to save them? Show how much more important it is to prevent than it is to cure.

What benefit is there in young people taking the pledge?

What is the great and only effectual cure for drunkenness?

HINTS FOR THE LEADER.

The helps for this topic are presented in the form of mere hints and suggestions which the leader of the meeting should utilize in his own way. One person might speak for a few minutes on "How God's image is lost," and another on "How God's image is preserved."

As usual the quotations, illustrations, and suggestive thoughts may be given to different members to read with some added comment of their own.

The application of the topic may be presented in the form of the questions which may be asked informally, giving everybody the opportunity of answering. This meeting will afford a favorable opportunity for presenting the pledge and calling for signatures.

JAN. 20.—"MORE THAN CONQUERORS. THE VICTORY OVER TEMPTATION."

Gen. 3. 4-6; Matt. 26. 41; Rom. 8. 37.

HOME READINGS.

- Mon., Jan. 14.—David's temptation. 1 Chron. 21. 1-8.
Tues., Jan. 15.—A tempted church. Rev. 2. 8-11.
Wed., Jan. 16.—Fighting temptation. Eph. 6. 10-16.
Thurs., Jan. 17.—Jesus our helper. Luke 22. 37-34.
Fri., Jan. 18.—Temptation overcome. John 12. 23-33.
Sat., Jan. 19.—We shall overcome. 1 John 5. 1-6.

FOREWORD.

It should be distinctly understood that temptation is not sin. The purest and best man this world ever saw was sorely tempted, and was "yet without sin." The truth is expressed in the lines:

"Yield not to temptation, for yielding is sin."

The next thought that naturally follows is that there is no necessity for any one to yield to temptation. God has implanted in each of us the power of resistance, and by watchfulness and determination it is possible for us to be "more than conquerors."

Another fact worth noting is that every temptation successfully met and overcome makes us stronger to meet the next. The North American Indian believed that when he slew an enemy in battle, the strength of that enemy's arm passed into his own.

"Each victory will help you, some other to win."

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