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Sabbath School.

BIBLE LESSONS.

FIRST QUARTER.

(Condensed from Peabody's Select Notes.)

Lesson III. Jan. 17. Isa. 28: 1-13.

OVERCOME WITH WINE.

QUARTERLY TEMPERANCE LESSON.

GOLDEN TEXT.

"Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging; and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise."—Prov. 20: 1.

EXPLANATORY.

I. THE OVERFLOWING SOURCE. INTemperance.—Vers. 1-4.

THE HISTORICAL SITUATION. Shalmaneser IV. had just succeeded Tiglath-pileser (B. C. 727) as king of Assyria. This seemed a favorable moment for Hoshea, the king of Israel, who had been paying tribute to Assyria, to break away from his subjection, and, encouraged by Egypt, the great power, he refused the tribute (2 Kings 17: 4).

The court and leaders at the capital gave themselves up more and more to self-indulgence and luxury, lay upon beds of ivory, drank wine from bowls, feasted to the sound of the viol, and even invented fresh instruments of music (Amos 6: 4, 5). At the same time they persisted in regarding themselves as secure (Amos 6: 13). But Isaiah saw the gathering storm in the north-east. The Assyrian empire was still maintained by a standing army of veteran soldiers, commanded by able generals, and their legions would sweep like a hurricane over Israel, beat upon Samaria, and Judah could not wholly escape its fury. Isaiah therefore raised his voice.

1. *Woe.* Not a wish or a prayer for woe, but a warning that woe was coming, so called because it crowned the hill, or because its battlemented walls resembled a crown. To (better of) the drunkards of Ephraim; put for the whole kingdom, because Ephraim was the leading tribe. *Whose glorious beauty.* The "glorious beauty" of Samaria was a beauty of magnificent luxury. *Is a fading flower.* It was a kind of beauty that was liable to fade. It had nothing of the riches that endure, and which no power of man can take away. It was soon to wither before the "Sirocco of Assyrian invasion." *Which are (rather, is) on the head (or decks the head) of the fat valleys.* Samaria was built on a hill of an oval form, which rose up in the midst of a fertile valley shut in by mountains.

2. *Behold the Lord hath.* He used the Assyrians as a rod wherewith to punish these wicked people. Had they been good, He could have saved them, for the Lord wielded the rod. *A strong one.* the Assyrian power. *A tempter of hall.* a destroying storm. *A flood of mighty waters.* describe in vivid speech the irresistible violence, the devastating force with which the Assyrians were about to overwhelm them.

3. *The crown of pride (of), the drunkards.* Their capital, their riches, all they most rejoiced in, were to be trodden under feet. Samaria became a heap of ruins.

4. *As the hoasty fruit.* Rev. Ver., the first ripe fig, before the summer, before the usual season for figs. "The usual time for gathering figs is not before August. The only fig gathered in June is a rarity and a delicacy." Hence it is eagerly seized and quickly eaten. Such a delicacy, so eagerly desired, would Samaria be to the Assyrians.

THE APPLICATION of this historical fact, and prophetic vision, to Intemperance, is plain. The overflowing scourge, tempter of hall, the destroying storm, are but faint symbols of the curse.

II. THE CROWN OF GLORY AND DIADEM OF BEAUTY. TEMPERANCE. 5. *In that day.* The day when the drunkards of Ephraim perished, because they would not take warning and repent. *Shall the Lord of hosts be for a crown of glory.* He will sustain, defend, and bless, beyond the power of the heart to conceive, those who obey Him. He will be a crown of glory and a diadem of beauty, both spiritually and outwardly.

For a spirit of judgment; of discerning the right, and governing with justice and equity. There is nothing like a supreme love of God, and trust in God, for clearing the mind and guiding the judgment. *For strength to them that turn the bottle to (Rev. Ver.) at the gate.* These words are applied by all the later writers to those who drive the war back to the enemy's own gates, or as it were carry it into his own country. The two great requisites of civil government are here described as coming from Jehovah. *The Spirit of the Lord is not a mere influence, but God Himself.*

APPLICATION TO TEMPERANCE. God would persuade men to a life of temperance by showing not only the evils of intemperance, but the heavenly blessings of temperance. To those who are truly temperate, who love every passion whose words are applied by all the later writers to those who drive the war back to the enemy's own gates, or as it were carry it into his own country. The two great requisites of civil government are here described as coming from Jehovah. *The Spirit of the Lord is not a mere influence, but God Himself.*

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have, and all they hope for, in this world and in the next,—family, fortune, happiness, life, heaven, everything,—to gratify their appetite for strong drink.

FOURTH. *They err in vision.* They cannot see things as they are.

FIFTH. *They stumble in judgment.* They cannot judge anything correctly. Intoxicating liquors destroy the business judgment, and the clear discernings of conscience.

SIXTH. *No place clean.* Intemperance defiles both mind and body.

IV. *THEY REFUSE WARNINGS.* Many regard these verses as spoken by those reproved by Isaiah, "the mocking reply of drunkards over their cups." In that case they should be in inverted commas. "Are we school children, that he treats us with endless platitudes?" "We must conceive the abrupt, intentionally short, reiterated, and almost childish words of verse 10 as spoken in mimicry, with a mocking motion of the head, and in a childish, stammering tone." The original runs thus: "Ki tsav la-tsav, tsav la-tsav, qav la-qav; qav la-qav; z'air sham z'air sham."

10. *For precept must be:* rather is.

7. *THE WAY OF SAFETY.* This is Isaiah's reply. 11. *For with stammering lips:* a beginner speaks a foreign language. Rev. Ver. *Nay, but by men of strange lips.* That is, you think I speak to you in childish, stammering tones, but if you will not listen, the result will be exile among a foreign people, who will speak to you in their strange language. Or it refers to the nearer time, fifteen or twenty years later, when the Assyrians were besieging Jerusalem, and spoke in their language (Isa. 36).

12. *To whom He said, This is rest, etc.* To these very persons God had pointed out where they could find a life at rest, from fears, and full of refreshing, like a spring rain after a drought.

13. *The Word of the Lord . . . line upon line.* God speaks slowly; He repeats His lessons by word and by deed; and if they will not repent, His warnings and His punishments press on the sinner till he falls backward and is snared and taken. *That they might go:* as a punishment and also a discipline. He makes them drink the dregs of the bitter cup in order that they may hate it evermore.

What Saved Jack Alcott.

BY ANNIE L. HANNAH.

"Dolly, Jack Alcott's going to the ball."

Little Mrs. Haywood, lying on the couch in front of the blazing wood fire studying her husband's handsome profile, had just arrived at the highly satisfactory conclusion that her Will was the finest looking man she had ever seen. At these words, however, the happy smile on her face died quickly away as she answered:

"I'm afraid you are right, Will." And then the silence fell again.

Jack Alcott, the subject of that brief conversation, was a handsome, well-to-do, low, lumpy-necked, seagreen-eyed, and with a deeply affectionate nature with nothing whereon to expend itself. Had the mother lived it might have been different, for the sight of her distress and suffering over his reckless life would have proved a restraint. Poverty also would have been a blessing, but deprived of these two safeguards the young fellow seemed bent on going blithely and with no uncertain steps on toward that goal designated in popular parlance as "the bad."

Finally Mr. Haywood spoke again. "Can't we do something, Dolly? Jack's much too fine a fellow to go to waste like that!"

"I wish we could, but he comes so seldom now. Can't you speak to him, dear?"

"I know Jack better than you do, Dolly, and speaking would not be of the slightest use. He would lend me an ear, so to speak, might even pull up for awhile just to please me, but that's all it would amount to. Things have to go deeper than that with Jack to make an impression."

"Well, I think he's a hard-hearted, ungrateful fellow!" exclaimed Mrs. Haywood, wrathfully, at the sight of her husband's anxious face. "When he knows how much you care for him and how his conduct must grieve you. It's a disgrace for such a man as he might be to be what he is."

"Of course it is," answered her husband. "And I'm going to trust you to think of some plan, Dolly, by which he may become what God intended he should be. If he only had some sweet, good woman like you to love him there would be some hope. But what right has any good woman to venture on the experiment of trusting herself to such a man as he is now, for all he is so lovable? But I must go, dear. I'm sorry to leave you feeling so miserable, but I will be back in two hours."

Then he stooped and kissed her and went away, and Dorothea lay looking at the dancing flames, with a happy flush on her sweet face, thinking of "poor Jack Alcott."

Not five minutes had passed when a tap on the library door was followed by the subject of her meditations, who entered smiling and handsome. She did not reproach him with his long absence, but simply looked glad to see him and held out her hand with a word of warm welcome.

"Will was obliged to go out, so you are doubly welcome," she said. "For I have such a wretched cold that I need company."

But she was not to have it after all, for at that moment a maid entered with a note, at which on opening Dorothea first laughed, then looked as though she wanted to cry.

"What is it?" asked Jack, and she handed it to him.

"Bob's teacher," it said.

lovable. He was not out last Sunday and I intended to go and see him, but this cold has kept me in. 'O, I wonder if he might not go to-night?'

"Certainly not. It would be your death in such a night."

"But fancy the poor little fellow waiting me! It breaks my heart to think that he will be wondering why I do not come. If Will would only come home—"

"Why, I will go and explain it gladly, if you will tell me where the little scamp is to be found."

"He and his brother have a tiny room at the top of a tenement house. O, how good you are!" and she seized a bit of paper and wrote off the address.

"First time I have ever been accused of that," he said dryly, as he took the paper and went off, promising to come back and report.

Jack Alcott experienced a rather peculiar sensation as he climbed the fourth flight of stairs in a tumble-down tenement, knocked at a certain door and, in response to a rough, boyish voice, entered. Directly before him, on a miserable apology for a bed lay an evidently dying child, who, with eyes bright with fever, was looking beyond him as he crossed the room to the still open door.

"Didn't she come?" he asked pitifully, when he found that Jack was unaccompanied.

"She couldn't, Bob, she was sick herself," and Jack Alcott felt a strange lump rising in his throat as he saw the little boy's eyes turn to the blue eyes.

"The other boy, presumably Sam, turned suddenly away, and muttered between his teeth: 'He's been a-waitin' and a-waitin' and a-waitin' for her.'"

"Poor little chap," said Jack, seating himself on the miserable bed. "She cried out where they could find a life at rest, from fears, and full of refreshing, like a spring rain after a drought."

"I wanted to see her awful! I wanted to ask her something!" Then, after a moment, looking up into Jack's face as the young man took the dry, hot little hand between his cool ones, he said: "But I s'pect you could tell me. You're good, too, like she is."

"The dickens I am!" thought Jack. "You're not like me that has stole lots an' lots of times an' done all sorts of bad!" he went on in this feeble voice.

"But I was a-tryin'—told her I was a-tryin'—but it was awful hard when yer, hungry mostly an' ain't had nothin' all day. But I wished I stoyed hungry an' not stole!"

"But what I want ter ask yer is do yer know He'll let me in? She said He was sorry for me, and do yer think He knows I wor a-tryin' an' me'd let me in, where no person ain't never hungry any more, and where yer don't want to steal, nor nothin'?"

"Yes, Bob, yes!" said Jack, almost with a gasp. "He'll let you in, He surely will if you ask Him!"

"Then I know; yer're good like her, an' yer will for sure."

"The thin, hot hands were folded, the blue eyes closed, and Jack Alcott, watching in the dim light of the poor candle, saw the lips move. The eyes were opened again, and a radiant smile fairly glorified the little face."

"I've asked Him, an' He's goin' ter let me in! He surely is!"

"Tell her," he went on presently, the voice growing faint and weaker, "told her that yer very good ter me, and tell her I wor a-tryin' like she tol' me, an' that I've asked Him an' He's goin' ter let me in."

"A moment's pause, then, 'Yer'll kinder look after Sam, won't yer?'"

"Yes, Bob, yes!" said Jack, almost with a gasp. "He'll let you in, He surely will if you ask Him!"

"Then I know; yer're good like her, an' yer will for sure."

bootblacks and worse, and that a shadow called Sam was ever beside him as his right-hand man.—*Congregationalist.*

THE NEW YEAR.

Beneath the moonlight and the snow Lies dead my latest year: The winter winds are waiting low Its dings in my ear.

I grieve not with the moaning wind, As if a loss befell; Before me, even as behind, God is, and all is well!

His light shines on me from above, His low voice speaks within; The patience of immortal love, Outwearing mortal sin.

Not mindless of the growing years Of care and loss and pain, My eyes are wet with thankful tears For blessings which remain.

—Whittier.

False Shame of Young Men.

Young men who come from the country to the town, and who get on in the world, are often ashamed of their parents, of the rustic dress they once wore, and of the simple but honest and kindly ways of their childhood. And too often when they assume the fashionable clothes and adopt the fashionable ways of their new friends, they leave behind them the religion of their childhood, and forget the piety which they learned at a mother's knee. They have outgrown the priestly dress in which their mother dedicated them to God, and their religion old-fashioned and worn-out.

This is a false shame. It is an shame against the dearest and most sacred instincts of our nature. So far from it being manly, it is mean and dastardly. Depend upon it, the man who will have most of the esteem of his fellow-creatures and of the favor of heaven, will be he who keeps unchanged all through life the mantle of heavenly devotion with which his mother clothed him. He who makes the religion of his youth the habit of his life—his garment and way of acting all through—will come to honor, and will enjoy the proud blessing of consistency.

His life will be a genuine verity, like that of Samuel; it will have an steadfast purpose running through it all. The outer life will be of one piece with the inner; one part will not reproach the other; and what he seems, that he ever is.—*Selected.*

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—Minard's Liniment cures Dandruff.

—A tailor was startled the other day by the return of a bill which he had sent to an editor with a notice that the "manuscript" was respectfully declined.

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