



MARCH 25, 1906.—LESSON XII.

A Temperance Lesson.

Proverbs xxiii., 29-35.

Golden Text.

At the last it biteth like a serpent and stingeth like an adder.—Prov. xxiii., 32.

Home Readings.

Monday, March 19.—Prov. xxiii., 29-35.

Tuesday, March 20.—I. Cor. xiii., 1-13.

Wednesday, March 21.—Is. v., 11-23.

Thursday, March 22.—Is. xxviii., 1-13.

Friday, March 23.—I. Cor. vi., 9-20.

Saturday, March 24.—Hab. ii., 12-20.

Sunday, March 25.—Eph. v., 11-21.

By Davis W. Clark.

Israel's poet king and prodigy of wisdom set himself to the task of painting the drunkard's portrait. It is a faithful likeness, and horrid because faithful. The royal artist persists in his undertaking, though his canvas grows lurid and frightful under each successive stroke of the pencil. His picture has proved a veritable danger signal, flashing its warning color upon successive generations for three thousand years. Its red light has proved a powerful deterrent to multitudes. Nowhere in literature is the woe, the sorrow, the folly, the fate of the drunkard so powerfully depicted. . . . That such a picture could be painted thirty centuries ago, sufficiently proves the antiquity of the vice. Drunkenness is no modern sin or mere accident of our civilization. It is as old as Noah and older. Intoxicating liquors undoubtedly inflamed the race before the flood and led on to that nameless depravity which had to be drowned out in that awful judgment. And each succeeding generation has suffered the crushing weight of this dreadful woe; each has been burned, bitten and poisoned by this vice; from each has burst the sorrowful and despairing interjections: 'O! 'Alas!'. . . . Old as it is, Solomon's picture is the verisimilitude of the drunkard of to-day. Three thousand years have not sufficed to change the causes or effects of intemperance. Study the successive strokes of this masterful delineation. . . . Those who tarry at wine, by the increase of the powerful and subtle appetite are compelled to seek stronger potations (mixed wine). The gradation from light wine to red wine, and the highly alcoholized wine, with its eyes or beads, is inevitable. Then follow the facial signs of inebriety (redness of eyes); next quarrelsomeness, causeless wounds, and the inflaming of sexual passion. Finally, incipient dementia, which makes the drunkard oblivious to personal danger and to indignities visited upon him by hooting mob or officer of law—a dementia in which, however, the appetite persistently asserts itself, the worm dieth not, the fire is not quenched. All is forgotten, all is lost; but among the debris of mind, heart and manhood, the conqueror stalks, 'And carth naught for the awful ruin he hath wrought.' . . . This is no pleasing fancy sketch of genius, nor happy aesthetical study; but it deserves the close, respectful attention of every one who loves himself and his neighbor. No Christian can push this picture aside unless his Bible permits him to say, 'I am not my brother's keeper.' No truly philanthropic spirit, Christian or not, can turn with indifferent coolness from this inspired canvas. It pictures the all-embracing 'woe' making its piteous appeal to everyone who professes to love his species. And if neither Christianity nor philanthropy is sufficient, from sheer self-interest the citizen must sooner or later give attention to this mirror which Solomon holds up before our time. Individuals in their col-

lective or governmental capacity, must take stand against a traffic which produces deteriorated manhood, insanity, pauperism, crime and death.

THE TEACHER'S LANTERN.

This book of kingly authorship will never lose its charm. Jesus tells us how the wisdom of its author attracted the Queen of Ethiopia. Aristotle is thought to have reproduced Solomon and Aesop to have imitated the eldest of fablers. The Book of Proverbs is the 'sanctification of common sense,' and 'the philosophy of practical life.' Its aphorisms show the wisdom of goodness and the folly of sin.

. . . The Old Testament is not old. It is virile in its application to current life. The Book of Proverbs illustrates this. Its pithy periods stick in memory like arrows in a target. . . . The book is splendidly broad—as a rule it deals with general principles. For example, the intemperance against which it animadverts is not only the unrestrained use of intoxicating liquors, but ambition, pride, gluttony, and sexual indulgence. . . . True, Solomon throws more darts at intemperance in drink than in other vices. The best temperance tract could be made of these aphorisms, without note or comment. They picture the costliness, shamefulness, uselessness and deadliness of intemperance in a manner unsurpassed. . . . The glory of the Bible is that it does not merely animadvert, it presents the antidote. It goes to the root of the matter in this instance when it says that wisdom in the heart is the safeguard against all temptation. A wise heart! Religion roots in the affection. He who loves rectitude is least liable to deflect from the right line.

C. E. Topic.

Sunday, March 25.—Topic—Bountiful sowing: our gifts to Christ's cause. Luke vi., 33; II. Cor. ix., 1-15. (A missionary topic.)

Junior C. E. Topic.

Monday, March 19.—The drunkard's reward. Prov. xxiii., 21.

Tuesday, March 20.—Who hath woe? Prov. xxiii., 29, 30.

Wednesday, March 21.—Like a serpent. Prov. xxiii., 31, 32.

Thursday, March 22.—It leads astray. Isa. xxviii., 7.

Friday, March 23.—It leads away from God. Isa. v., 11, 12.

Saturday, March 24.—Avoid those who drink.—Prov. xxiii., 20.

Sunday, March 25.—Topic—What the Bible says about strong drink. Prov. xx., 1.

The Scotchman's Silenced Lawyer.**A True Story.**

A Scotchman who has a difficult field in Indian Territory said: 'One day I was travelling with a lawyer from Pittsburg. He was a pessimist. Nothing seemed to please him. So, whenever I saw a rock or a stump in the road, I tried to bump it hard, hoping to get the dark thoughts out of him, but I did not succeed. "What is the use of scattering literature as you are doing, and organizing Sunday schools which will die the moment you leave?" he growled.

'I did not need to answer, for just then we came across a little girl who was carrying two heavy buckets of water from the forest spring to her dugout home. I had been in the house some time before, and had left papers and cards. When she saw me, she set her pails down hastily,—so hastily that they tipped over and all the water was spilled. The lawyer thought of the hard climb from the spring, and said, "Too bad!" But the bonny lass only laughed.

"No, not too bad!" she said. "I'm so glad to get the cards and papers, I do not worry about a little thing like the water. I can carry more. We had no Bible before he came and no Sunday school. No, not too bad;"

"The lawyer was silent, and I never heard him utter another complaint, or say a harsh word against literature distribution. He went back to Pennsylvania. His brother writes me that he is a different man."—Sunday School Times.

A Few 'Pointers' for Holding Young Men.

Given a class of a dozen young men,—a farmer or two, two or three business men, mechanics, etc. All are accustomed to using their brains about their daily occupations, but never having seen much occasion for real thought over a Sunday school lesson as usually taught, are quite unaccustomed to putting their minds upon it with any genuine interest. Have you ever tried to arouse them to thought and study by enthusiasm of speech and manner, by new ways of putting the old truths, by constant suggestion and inquiry?

With the present lessons, for instance, give the general plan, as an architect sees complete before him a whole building before the first brick is laid.

Very old to the teacher may be the facts that Luke, being a physician, describes therefore with special knowledge all sickness; that Matthew, dealing in money, notes with accuracy in his record any financial items; that John puts in all the little tender touches; and that Mark is the man of action,—but by the average Sunday school scholar, careless and uninterested, none of these things have been noted. If now brought up with each change of lesson, the personality of each writer will add interest to his record, and make a new line of thought for the student.

Again, let each Bible character who appears in the lessons be brought out clear and strong. But this can never be done by the teacher who waits until Saturday night to begin the study of the lesson, and who, in a lifeless manner, goes through the questions in the lesson-help, satisfied with answers that require no thought. Arouse the chagrin of the young men at their own lack of Bible knowledge, and show the wonderful possibilities and suggestions for research within the few verses of the prescribed lesson.

Try again the plan of giving out beforehand questions to be looked up, suiting each to the capacity of the man to whom it is given. Ask the farmer to apply the agricultural figures and references to outdoor life, of which there are many. Let the carpenter explain the probable sorts of work which occupied Christ's private life. Interest the man who has books in contemporaneous Roman history and government as it bore upon Jewish life. He who has neither library nor imagination can at least look up intervening events between lessons. Use constant variety in your lesson plan and in your questions. Put a question a dozen different ways if the answer is worth getting at. Steadily review the new knowledge gained, and let there be pleasant competition as to who remembers most.

Encourage the freest expression on the part of the class, having special patience for those who are slow of thought and speech. If this leaves small time for talk on the teacher's part, so much the better. To stimulate thought and keep the discussion in profitable channels is both more difficult and more desirable than to fire at the class a succession of facts, which are retained not so long as it takes to tell them.

Of course this sort of teaching needs, first, love of study, as much concentration of mind as one would bring to the obscurities of Browning, or the consideration of Trusts; and second, it requires love of teaching, genuine, steadfast enthusiasm, such as is not easily produced by the teacher who frankly admits she 'doesn't like to teach.' To such there should be inspiration in the thought that not even the minister in the pulpit has so great an opportunity. He preaches often at random, not being well enough acquainted generally with the soul-needs of his people to enter into their difficulties. But the Sunday school class with its smaller circle and greater freedom gives the privilege of close touch and hand-to-hand work.

Finally, it needs love for the young men, not merely the wish to 'hold them in the Sunday school,' but a great desire to awaken in them the divine spark and fan it into a glowing fire as mind and soul expand in the growing life.

In short, fellow-teachers, let us try brains, our own and those of our pupils, and be possessed and constrained by the Love which many waters cannot quench, neither floods drown.—Sunday School Times.