

The Sunday School

BIBLE LESSON

Abridged from Peloubets' Notes.

Fourth Quarter.

WOES OF INTEMPERANCE

Lesson IX. November 26. Prov. 23: 29-35. Temperance Sunday in Great Britain.

Commit Verses 29-32.

GOLDEN TEXT.

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

EXPLANATORY.

I. FIRST PICTURE. THE PORTRAIT OF A DRUNKARD.—V. 29. Note the main features in this portrait. Woes, pains, diseases, troubles, quarrels, a passionate disposition, grumbling bodily injuries, bad vision, both natural and spiritual,—all proclaimed to every looker on. The marks that distinguish the drunkard from others are first described as a sort of prison costume, by which prisoners are known, or as the brand F ("fur," thief) on the face of a Roman thief.

29. WHO HATH WOE? WHO HATH SORROW? The words corresponding to the two substantives are, strictly speaking, interjections, as in the margin, "Who hath Oh? who hath Alas? The woes are too great and too many to name separately. They are woes of body and woes of mind; woes in one's self, woes in his family; pains, diseases, poverty. A man sick on account of his sins suffers very differently from one sick in the providence of God. A prison, a cross, may be a glory, or it may be a shame. WHO HATH CONTENTIONS? may mean the conflict between desire and conscience; more probably, quarrels and bickerings. "Quarrelsome when in his cups" is an old saying. It excites tongue and brain; and "when wine is in, wit is out," and every evil word is spoken that stirs up bad feeling in others. "What quarrels, fightings, and even murders are constantly growing out of the drunkard's 'contentions'!" Strong drink inflames the passions, and, at the same time, removes the restraint of conscience and will,—it first maddens, and then unchains the tiger. WHO HATH BABBLED? Foolish talking, vile conversation, noisy demonstrations, revelation of secrets. His tongue is "set on fire of hell."

The R. v. translates, "Who hath complaining?" "The word is now commonly regarded as meaning, 'sorrowful complaint; for example, over the exhausted purse, the neglected work, the anticipated reproaches, the diminishing strength.'" Nothing goes right with the drinker. He complains of God, he complains of society, he complains of his family, of his circumstances, of everything. Nothing can be right to one who is so wrong. WHO HATH WOUNDS WITHOUT CAUSE? Wounds received in careless or wholly unprofitable disputes, wounds and stripes such as come of the brawls of drunken men. WITHOUT CAUSE. Upon very slight provocation, which men inflamed with wine are very apt to take. The thought may go much farther than this. Drinking men are especially exposed to accidents and diseases which temperance would have prevented. WHO HATH REDNESS OF EYES? The word does not refer to the reddening, but the dimming of the eyes, and the power of vision. The copper nose is another of the signs of the slave of strong drink, who "makes his nose blush for the sins of his mouth."

II. SECOND PICTURE. A PORTRAIT OF THE ARTIST WHO MADE THE DRUNKARD'S PICTURE.—V. 30 THEY THAT TARRY LONG AT THE WINE. The tendency of strong drink is to continue drinking, to spend hours, often the whole night, in carousals. THEY THAT GO TO SEEK MIXED WINE. They go to the wine house, the place of revelry. Septuagint, "those who hunt out where carousals are taking place." "Mixed wine undoubtedly here signifies 'spiced, drugged, medicated' wine, the intoxicating power of which is increased by the infusion of drugs and spices." Such men "drink the cup of a costly death."

Note. Here are indicated four dangerous passes. Who does not enter the first will not be waylaid in the fourth. (1) Keeping bad company. (2) Slipping the wine. (3) Drinking to excess. (4) Drunken carousals.

Note. That every drunkard was once an innocent child. Every one was first a moderate drinker. No one ever yet became a drunkard who refused to touch intoxicating drink. Not all who drink moderately do become drunkards, but no one ever became a drunkard who did not first drink moderately.

Note in this portrait the power of a bad habit. Note again, in this portrait, how strong drink blinds the eyes, perverts the eyesight, and narrows the vision. The drunk-

ard sees clearly the gratification of his appetite, but everything good and noble is thrown without the range of vision, or seems small in the comparison.

The victims of intemperance will trample over everything to reach strong drink. Put wife and children in the path before them, and they cast them aside. Put respectability and honor and manhood there; they gaze at them a moment, and fling them away. Bring heaven and Christ and salvation to withstand their downward way and they trample them under their feet. Lay remorse, with all its coiling serpent tongues and scorpion stings in the path, yet they walk on. Pile up miseries, sorrows, pains, diseases before them, but they still seek the mixed wine.

III. THIRD PICTURE. A SECTION OF THE "BLACK VALLEY ROAD" to the drunkard's condition, with its snares, and traps, and pitfalls.—V. 31. LOOK NOT THOU UPON THE WINE. Do not put yourself in the way of temptation. He who goes freely into temptation is already more than half fallen. WHEN IT IS RED. Red wines were most esteemed in the East. The wine of Lebanon is said to be of a rich golden color, like Malaga. WHEN IT GIVETH ITS COLOR. Literally, "its eye," the clear "brightness," or the beaded bubbles on which the wine-drinker looks with complacency. IN THE CUP. Sparkles or bubbles when poured out or shaken; "carries a bead," which is regarded to be an indication of the strength and quality of the liquor. Some wines are celebrated for their brilliant appearance. WHEN IT MOVETH ITSELF ARIGHT. Better as in R. V. "when it goeth down smoothly." This does not refer to the sparkling of the wine; but rather it "describes the pellucid stream flowing pleasantly from the wine-skin or jug into the goblet or the throat." This verse thus pictures out the attractive side of wine, when it seems perfectly harmless to sip a little when it is bright and inspiring, thrilling the nerves with delight, promising all joy and freedom. It is the shining side of evil that is so dangerous, this embroidered veil that hides the death beyond, this flowery entrance to the path that leads to death.

IV. FOURTH PICTURE. THE DRUNKARD'S HARVEST FIELD.—V. 32. In this great gallery we pass through many rooms till we come to the last one lighted with a lurid blaze, and we gaze on the saddest picture of all.

32. AT THE LAST IT BITETH LIKE A SERPENT. Like a serpent it will be brilliant of color, and glide with easy motion; and like a serpent it will bite. ADDER. The second word, "adder," is the more specific, and is said to be the Cerastes, or horned snake, the first more generic. The Cerastes is exceedingly venomous. It lurks in the sand, coiled up perhaps in a camel's footprint, ready to dart at any passing animal.

The Serpent and the Adder. The East is woefully cursed with poisonous reptiles of all kinds. The special point to be observed in the present instance, however, is that the comparison of wine to the serpent begins in the thirty-first verse rather than in the thirty-second. This may be seen better in the following rendering of the two verses: "Look not on the wine when it reddeth, when it showeth its eye in the cup—glideth smoothly. After that it biteth like the serpent and stingeth like the hissing serpent."

"Hal see where the blazing grog-shop appears, As the red waves of wretchedness swell, How it burns on the edge of tempestuous years The horrible LIGHTHOUSE OF HELL."

"At the first it is the wine of pleasant fellowship; at the last it is the 'wine of the wrath of Almighty God, poured out without mixture.' At the first it is, the agreeable excitement of an evening; at the last it is the long-drawn agony of an endless perdition. At the first it is the grateful stimulus of an hour; at the last it is 'the worm that never dies, and the fire that never shall be quenched.'"

"A Hoosier genius has invented a cap for the neck of bottles containing poison. The cap bristles with needles, which, even in the darkest night, will give the careless a sufficiently plain warning that the bottle holds poison. We should like to arm in such porcupine fashion every bottle of strong drink."

THE PLEDGE. WE HEREBY PLEDGE OURSELVES TO ABSTAIN FROM ALL INTOXICATING LIQUORS AS A BEVERAGE. Get all to sign the Pledge. This is one of the most effective ways of promoting temperance.

DEAR SIRS,—I was for seven years a sufferer from Bronchial trouble, and would be so hoarse at times that I could scarcely speak above a whisper: I got no relief from anything till I tried your MINARD'S HONEY BALM. Two bottles gave relief and six bottles made a complete cure. I would heartily recommend it to any one suffering from throat or lung trouble. J. F. VANBOSKIRK, Fredericton.

They have a queer way of dispensing justice in the New Jersey courts. The other day at Newark, five small boys were brought before a local justice there, charged with stealing fruit. Instead of affixing the regular penalties to the offences of the boys, the justice sent for their parents and requested them to spank all the boys in his presence. This was done, each parent spanked his own boy, and the incident was closed.

A Scientific Moth-Preventive.—L. O. Howard, U. S. Entomologist, concludes from his experiments that furs and woolsens can be kept in cold storage at 40 degrees F during summer, without injury from insects.

Perforated Court Plaster.—The latest Viennese novelty is court plaster perforated like postage stamps. The perforations are made at varying distances from two centimeters down to half a centimeter each way, so that it is very easy to get a piece of the desired size at once.

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