

SUNDAY
SCHOOL

The Quiet Hour

YOUNG
PEOPLE

WOES OF DRUNKENNESS.*

By Rev. Dr. McMillan, B. A.

Strong drink v. 7. Why is it called strong? Because it is strengthening? Surely not. When Benjamin Franklin was working at his trade as a printer in London, all the other workmen used to take their tankards of ale regularly. They said they needed them in order to accomplish a hard day's work, and were mightily astonished at the young American who could outwork them all and drink nothing but cold water. And now leaders in the British Medical Association declare that one of the forward movements in the science of healing consists in the lessening of the amount of alcohol prescribed. It is drink that is strong to weaken. The old woman put it well who said that her husband had a "strong weakness" for whisky.

The priest and the prophet, v. 7. When religion goes wrong, there is little hope for anything else. The whole history of the chosen nation shows that when they served Jehovah they prospered, and when they served idols they suffered. Once Dr. Robertson, the great Home Missionary Superintendent, asked the owner of a town site in British Columbia for the gift of a lot for a church. He replied, "We don't want any churches in this town." "All right," said the Superintendent, "let it be known that you want have a church in your town, and you will see how many people, and of what sort, you will get to inhabit it." The lot was donated, for the owner was a business man, and knew what part religion played in the life of a town.

Err in vision, v. 7. There is a disease of the brain which causes the victim to express the very opposite of what he means. Looking at a young man, he will say, "See that old lady." Asked if he would like a drive, his perverse anality forces him to answer, "No, I hate driving," when it is perhaps one of his dearest delights. Such, after a fashion, is the effect of intemperance. The drunkard contradicts his true and better nature. His appetites shame and degrade him, but they imperiously rule over him. He sinks from the condition of free-willed manhood to that of slavery, slavery to his own base relentless passion.

Whom shall he teach knowledge, v. 9. When the Crimean War was being agitated, its advisability was a favorite subject with the orators of Hyde Park, London. One of them was opposing it on the score of expense. He said, "I do not deny that it is just, or that there is much to be gained from it; but it will cost hundreds of millions of pounds, and where is the money to come from?" A drunken tramp who was staggering about in the crowd, lurched up and said, "Go on with your war, I will stand the expense." To eyes inflamed with drink, mere questions of economy seem paltry and foolish. Little things, of which life is made, seem unworthy of attention.

Rest, v. 12. One way to find sleep is to become intoxicated. And that sleep will do almost anything for you but refresh you. It may betray you into lying down in a snow drift, from which you will never rise. It invites the highwayman, who is lurking about to rob you. Or, if you escape such accidents, it wakens you to headache, fever, shame, and an uncontrollable passion

to drink still more. This is the exact opposite of the peace of the Spirit, which refreshes both body and soul, fitting them for service of man and of God.

Yet they would not hear, v. 12. Every true prophet has a two-fold message from God to the sinner. He must speak words that cause his hearers to tremble and shiver for very fear, as he speaks of the awful and certain consequences of sin. But from the lips of the same prophet there come other and far different words. He brings the assurance that the wickedest men can be different, if they only will. The worst can be saved, for the Saviour proclaimed to them is none other than the God of boundless power and changeless love.

Precept upon precept, v. 13. We never know anything really well, till we have learned it over and over again. One of the tutors in a University, who was famed for his brilliancy, so that some of the gentlemen of the first year thought that he never needed to study, confessed that he had worked through one mathematical text-book fifteen times. That is the way to plough a field: run one furrow beside another almost innumerable times. And that is the way to impress on the mind either the lessons of the school books or the lessons of divine truth.

Broken, snared, taken, v. 13. A young man who was recently convicted of theft in a Canadian Police Court, answered the magistrate's question with these words: "Drink did it. My friends asked me to drink, and I did not refuse. They were fools like myself. What do they care? They drag you down, and then come to this court room out of curiosity to see how you come out of it." That was the end of a few months of living for pleasure. The issue does not always come so soon, or in just that way, but it cannot but come. If a man sows the wind, he must reap the whirlwind.

CROSSING THE BAR.

(Tennyson.)

Sunset and evening star,
And one clear call for me!
And may there be no moaning of the bar,

When I put out to sea.
But such a tide as moving seems
asleep,
Too full for sound and foam,
When that which drew from out the
boundless deep
Turns again home.

Twilight and evening bell,
And after that the dark!
And may there be no sadness of farewell,

When I embark;
For, though from out our bourne of
time and place
The flood may bear me far,
I hope to see my Pilot face to face
When I have crossed the bar.

There are purposes which God fulfills on earth through you, and every sin of your is a barrier set in God's way. To be sinning, not against yourself, but against the universe; in yielding to your own indolence or neglect to be a hinderer of God's great ends in the world—that is what gives awfulness to every thought of sin. To injure, blot, ruin yourself—that may be a small matter; but to hold back the vast mechanism of creation—that gives your little life significance.

LIGHT FROM THE EAST.

By Rev. James Ross, D.D.

Vomit—Nothing could more graphically describe the horrors of a scene of drunkenness, which was not very common in the East, except in a time of moral degeneracy. Drunkenness was a sin chiefly of the wealthy. Cheap intoxicants produced by distillation and the use of drugs were unknown, and wine was within the reach of the poor only for a short period every year. Then, a man would need to work two weeks to procure the means for intoxication; now, he can earn enough in an hour. But the Oriental was accustomed to rush to a mad extreme when he did break out. Yet even such a carousal on pure wine was far less harmful than the effects of the poisons which are drunk among us to-day. Among the many woes of the ancient drinker, delirium tremens was unknown. There is some secret drinking among wealthy Turks now, but almost none among the poorer Moslems of any race. It is largely confined to the Christian sects, who are a minority, and have difficulty in getting drink unless they are wine-growers. European and American travellers are introducing the Western vice of drinking along the ordinary routes through Palestine and Egypt, and now many traders will offer a tourist brandy before beginning business with him.

MAKING SURE OF OUR BELIEFS.

A man may believe all the best truths in the universe, and gain nothing by it. Mere belief never helped any one. Belief that controls life and action is the only belief that counts. A striking illustration of the results of the two kinds of belief is found in the life-and-death contrast between Pilate and the thief on the cross. Both Pilate and the thief believed in the innocence of Jesus: "This man hath done nothing amiss," said the thief; "I find no crime in him," said Pilate. But Pilate's publicly expressed and reiterated belief failed utterly to influence his action; while the thief, because of his belief, committed himself to one who proved to be his Saviour. Had Pilate treated Jesus fairly even as a man, he would probably have discovered him as God and Saviour. He rejected the man, and lost a Saviour. Every failure to live up to our beliefs to-day loses us a blessing. The better our beliefs, the worse off we are if we betray them; but with every act of loyalty to our beliefs, we grow in power to believe and to do.

PRAYER.

Almighty God, Fountain of light and life, we again bring to Thee our sacrifice of prayer and praise. Let us hear Thy loving kindness in the morning for in Thee is our trust. We come to Thy Mercy Seat by that new and living way which Christ has consecrated for us by His atoning death. Acknowledging our sins and frailties we cast ourselves on Thy Fatherly compassion. May we hear the assuring words: "I will be merciful to your unrighteousness; your sins and your iniquities will I remember no more." Keep us this day without sin. Give us the courage of faith, and show us our duty in all the paths of life. Whatever our hands find to do may we do it with all our might. Vouchsafe to us and to all our dear friends this day health and strength, comfort and peace. Amen.

*S. Lesson March 24, 1907. Isaiah 28: 7-13. Commit to memory v. 7. Golden Text—Wine and new wine take away the heart.—Hosea 4:11.