



LESSON XI.—SEPTEMBER 11.

Sinful Indulgence.

Amos vi., 1-8. Memory verses 3-6. Read the whole book.

Golden Text.

'They also have erred through wine, and through strong drink are out of the way.' Isa. xxviii., 7.

Daily Readings.

- M. Amos vi., 1-14.—Sinful indulgence.
- T. Isa. v., 8-25.—Woes upon sinful indulgence.
- W. Isa. xxviii., 1-17. — 'Out of the way through strong drink.'
- T. Prov. xx., 1-17.—'Wine is a mocker.'
- F. Luke vi., 17-26.—'Woes upon those who are at ease.'
- S. I. Thess. v., 1-28.—'Let us watch and be sober.'
- S. Eph. v., 1-21.—'Be not ye . . . partakers with them.'

Lesson Story.

After the death of Elijah, the man of God the people increased in worldly prosperity but greatly declined in morality. The three conquests which had been promised over the Syrians had been gained, and the kingdom of Israel had been greatly enlarged. The wealthy people had become more wealthy, from their wars and conquests, but the poor were ground down and oppressed. Vice followed hard in the steps of luxury, and the whole kingdom was full of corruption. Suddenly, into the midst of this, Amos, the prophet, launches his warnings, and foretellings, of the wrath of God. Unrepentant sinners must be punished. Those who dwell in fancied security must be warned that there was no safety except in repentance and righteousness. Those who idly imagined that because they had no fear no punishment would overtake them, must be warned that the Lord God means exactly what he says, and that he will punish iniquity whether sinners believe he will or not. Those who spend their time in revelling and drinking must be made to understand that the wrath of God will come speedily upon them and consume them with their iniquities.

Lesson Hints.

- 'Amos'—a native of Tekoa, a village six miles south of Bethlehem. Amos was not an educated man, but a poor farmer taught by God as were the disciples.
- 'Zion'—Jerusalem, the capital of Judah.
- 'Samaria'—the capital of Israel.
- 'Calneh'—a city across the Euphrates.
- 'Hamath'—a Syrian city.
- 'Gath'—a Philistine city.
- 'Put far away the evil day'—in their own thoughts and expectations, leading others to disbelieve that that day is coming.
- 'Stretch themselves'—a symbol of laziness.
- 'Eat the lambs'—all this is a picture of the vicious luxury of the day.
- 'Drink wine in bowls'—large vessels, making themselves drunk.
- 'Not grieved'—selfish, no thought for any one else, so long as they gratified their own lusts and evil desires.
- 'Shall go captive'—both Judah and Israel were carried away captive some years later because of their disobedience to God.
- Drinking brings in its train many other vices. It is the moderate drinkers who make the drunkards. One man who can drink in moderation will lead a hundred other men to ruin by his example. Very few would begin drinking if they saw and believed what it would lead to. Those who truly love God will have nothing to do with the accursed stuff and will do all in their power to save others from it.

Questions.

1. Give four texts to show that we should not take wine or strong drink.
2. Why were the people of Israel not happy with all their wealth?
3. What punishment was God about to bring upon them?

Suggested Hymns.

'Yield not to temptation,' 'Have courage, my boy, to say No,' 'Why do you wait, dear brother?' 'Stand up for Jesus,' 'He is able to deliver you,' 'Jesus saves.'

Practical Points.

A. H. CAMERON.

A flowery bed of ease is not the resting-place of a true soldier of the cross. Verse 1. The mightiest nations of to-day are those in which the gospel is preached and practised. Verse 2. Selfishness is the parent of many sins. Verses 3-5. Lovers of wine are seldom active Christian workers. They who love the Church of Christ will be grieved when the wolf attacks the flock. Verse 6. Sin is always punished, either in the person of the sinner, or in his Substitute. Verses 7, 8.

LESSON XI. ILLUSTRATED.—Sept. 11.

This is the quarterly temperance lesson, and our blackboard, in illustrating the fall of men in general through drink, also illustrates the condition of Israel before the captivity, when drunkenness hastened their fall. We have the road of holiness running over a mighty bridge from earth to heaven, the



only connecting way. Over the walls of this road some having wandered are falling down to ruin. 'Out of the way,' for 'no drunkard shall inherit the kingdom of heaven.' It is bad enough to have them fall alone, as in our illustration, but in real life they nearly always drag some one or more down with them.

Christian Endeavor Topics.

Sept. 11.—Self-indulgence, or self-denial?—I. Cor. ix., 24-27; Gal. v., 16-24.

A Hopeless Case.

A teacher in a Sunday mission-school at the West End of Boston had a boy in her class who seemed to be proof against every good influence. It was a wonder that she secured his attendance for any length of time; but by her tact and kindness she held her other pupils, and he came apparently for company's sake, and for the fun and mischief he could stir up among the other scholars. He gave no signs that her teaching had touched his moral nature—or, in fact, that he had any moral nature. He grew apparently more unprincipled as he grew older, until all she had done for him seemed wasted pains; but she continued to treat him kindly, and never forgot him in her prayers. One day she heard of his arrest for complicity in a recent burglary. She did what she could to secure him legal counsel in his trial, and through the two years' imprisonment which followed, occasionally visited him. He never gave any indication of penitence. His sullen, defiant temper greatly discouraged her; but her faith and love were invincible. He disappeared after his release. All who knew him, supposed him dead or lost under a feigned name somewhere in the criminal herd of the cities. Nearly thirty years passed. The lady went to California. In the meantime she had married. Her children were grown, and she, with her husband, was visiting friends in the Pacific States. In one city where she stayed a question of political reform was

agitating the people, pending a change in the municipal government. Her host and hostess were to entertain one of the candidates for the mayoralty. 'He is our man,' they said, 'and we hope to elect him; for he is an earnest Christian, and stands for high principle in public and in private life.' The gentleman came, and was about to be introduced to the visitor, when, to her surprise, he spoke her name. She could not recognize him in the handsome, bearded man before her, but he was her bad boy of the Boston West End Sunday-school. 'I lived a reckless life for several years after I left Boston,' he told her, 'but I was not able to forget your great patience and kindness, nor some of the things you said to me. Under God I owe what I have to-day of true manhood to you.' Examples of apparently utter depravity are met by every lover of his kind who gives himself to the uplifting of humanity, but it is an unsolved problem whether there really ever was a 'hopeless case.' We are told that 'genius loves difficulties,' and it is equally certain that supreme faith in Christ and in his teachings loves the hopeless cases—let the phrase mean what it may. — 'Youth's Companion.'

Patience With Our Scholars.

What shall be done with unruly scholars? Shall they be turned out of school? No; prayer and patience must be exercised. Suppose bad conduct continues for many Sundays, shall they be turned out then? No; prayer and patience, and adapting the lessons to the wayward wills, must be tried. Tell how the Saviour suffered for the worst, and that he gave his life for his murderers. Use every effort to gain them as trophies for Christ. They must not be turned out of the school till they have been put to the last test of love, patience, prayer and zeal to bring them to the knowledge of the precious Saviour. The teacher must have patience. There are as many different temperaments as there are members in a class. The apostles of the great Teacher had widely varying temperaments. God can subdue the hardest and most obdurate. What encouragement for his workers to pray that he may give greater power to move the unruly! Forgiveness should be granted 'until seventy times seven,' and patience exercised in every circumstance. The Sunday-school teacher's work is one of the highest importance; it needs the greatest devotion and consideration. It must not be taken up indifferently and treated with coolness and half-heartedness.—'Sunday-school World.'

A Grave Responsibility.

(Grace Duffield Goodwin, in S.S. 'Times'.) Dr. Edward Judson, of New York, when lately addressing a Sunday-school convention, said, from his wide experience in the work, that he recognized the tendency to imitate in children, and he believed more in evangelical, hand-to-hand, loving, friendly converse of teacher and pupil than in evangelistic, urgent work among large numbers at a time. The reason for it lies in the nature of children, which we are only beginning to understand. A preacher of an older day once said: 'I prefer hand-picked fruit, When you shako the tree you bruise the apples.' But there is another and more important side to this question. Destruction is far easier than upbuilding. We must not think that when we have condemned our duty is done. On the contrary, those of us who disapprove of evangelistic methods as applied to children, have taken upon ourselves by this very disapproval, a solemn responsibility. Who is to do this work which we often dread to see the evangelist attempt? Surely we ourselves are under a grave obligation to redouble our personal efforts. Every pastor or preacher who says in public or in private that he disapproves of evangelistic methods should be held far more responsible for the personal evangelical work done in his parish or in his school than the one who freely invites the evangelist to do his work for him. We have never borne down hard enough on this point. We condemn, disapprove, withhold our sympathy or presence, and then shirk the duty which we have so obviously assumed. It rests with us to disprove the need of these hurried, general, impatient methods, by offering in their stead devoted, laborious, patient zeal in bringing in the kingdom of God, 'when all shall know him, from the least to the greatest.'