

# INTERNATIONAL BIBLE LESSONS.

## THREE MONTHS WITH SOLOMON AND THE BOOKS OF WISDOM.

### DECEMBER, 1884.

NOTE.—The Scripture verses to be committed to memory are indicated by an index [§§] at the side.

R.C. 990.]

[December 7.]

#### LESSON X.—DRUNKENNESS.

Proverbs 23. 29-35.



§§ 29 Who a hath woe? who hath sorrow? who hath contentions? who hath babbling? who hath wounds without cause? who hath redness of eyes?

a Chap. 20. 1; Isa. 5. 11; Eph. 5. 18.

§§ 30 They that tarry long at the wine; they that go to seek mixed wine.

§§ 31 Look not thou upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth his colour in the cup, when it moveth itself aright:

§§ 32 At the last it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like a adder.

a Or, a cockatrice.

33 Thine eyes shall behold strange women, and thine heart shall utter perverse things:

34 Yea, thou shalt be as he that lieth down b in the midst of the sea, or as he that lieth upon the top of a mast.

b In the heart of the sea.

35 They b have stricken me, shalt thou say, and I was not sick; they have beaten me, and c I felt it not; when c shall I awake? I will seek it yet again.

b Chap. 27. 22; Jer. 5. 3.—c I knew it not; Eph. 4. 19.—c Deut. 29. 19; Isa. 56. 12; 2 Pet. 2. 22.

#### GENERAL STATEMENT.

The greatest evil in our day and in our land is that of strong drink, which holds millions in its chains of slavery, and annually digs the graves of sixty thousand people. It costs the United States seven hundred million dollars every year, and the money is worse wasted than if thrown into the sea, for with it we buy poverty, and crime, and disease, and ruin. It does no good to any man, and does incalculable harm to millions. The word of God lifts its voice against this evil in the lesson before us, which reads as if written for our time, not for an age and a civilization long since passed away. There were drunkards reeling through the streets of Jerusalem in Solomon's day, as there are drunkards in the gutters of New York and Chicago. And the warnings of the word strike home now as deeply as they ever did. With powerful pencil, and in bold lines, the wise man draws the picture of the drinking man in all his hideousness: with bleared eyes, slobbering tongue, reeling gait, heart full of lust, and hands ready for quarrel. He points us, too, to the only safeguard, total abstinence, urging us not to moderation, which is Satan's counsel, but to "look not on the wine," to avoid it, turn from

it, and pass away. No man was ever made a drunkard by following the precepts of the Bible; and here we read both the warning of danger and the exhortation to the way of safety.

#### EXPLANATORY AND PRACTICAL NOTES.

Verse 29. Who hath woe? Literally, "Who hath O?" an interjection expressing distress. This clause might be taken as a text for the entire lesson, which describes the woes of the drunkard of three thousand years ago, but as aptly of to-day, for drunkenness is the same in all ages. Who hath sorrow? The Hebrew word means first, poverty, then misery, both of which are results of intemperance. In our land there would be bread enough and to spare were it not for liquor. The witty Josh Billings has said, "Some folks smile at the folly of youth in dragging a sled up-hill for the fleeting pleasure of riding down on it; but that youth is a sage compared with the man who works hard all the week, and then drinks up his wages on Saturday night." Who hath contentions? "Quarrelsome in his cups," is the old saying; and everybody knows that many a man is ready for a fight when drunken who is peaceable enough when sober. Nearly all the quarrels, brawls, and murders take place in liquor-shops, and between drunken men. Who hath babbling? "When wine is in, wit is out." Listen to the incoherent drivel of an intoxicated man, and see how true to the life is Solomon's description. Liquor muddles the brain and thickens the speech. Wounds without cause. The patriot shows with pride the scars won in defence of his country; but the drunkard's bruises tell the story, not of glory, but of shame. Redness of eyes. The drunkard is easily recognized by his blood-shot eyes and purple face, which show the presence of disease as the result of drink.

30. They that tarry long at the wine. In the East it is not uncommon for a company of men to sit down beside a cask of liquor, and not leave it until all is consumed. There are in every community drunkards whose "sprees" are protracted through days and even weeks. Go to seek. The same word in the original is used of seeking after knowledge. Job 11. 7; Prov. 25. 2. As one seeks for truth, so another seeks for that which destroys him, body and soul. Mixed wine. Wine made more powerful by the mixture of spices. So the weaker leads to the stronger, the cider to wine, the wine to whiskey, the whiskey to brandy.