

ous and destructive to health, is well known. A thoroughly reliable Christian captain informed me years ago that thousands of barrels of water were thus turned into expensive wines and strong drinks on the voyage between Europe and Canada. (c) "They tarry late into the night," continue drinking all day. What a shameful waste of time and degradation of manhood. "Till wine inflame them," v. 12, till their passions are so excited and heated that they cease to be rational. (d) They add music to their drunken orgies. It was so in the days of the prophets, chap. 24: 8, 9; Amos 6: 5, 6. It is so still in our saloons, licensed and protected in their destructive and disreputable traffic by the strong arm of law.

2. *The consequences of the depraved conduct described.* These are physical, mental, moral, spiritual. (a) The functions of all the organs of the body are impaired and usually ruined by persistence in such excesses. The incontrovertible proofs of this statement are visible in the streets of our cities, our prisons, asylums, poor houses, and thousands of homes throughout the land. Unutterable miseries in families, waste of property, want and crime, come from the same source. (b) Weakness and unreliability of all the mental faculties, especially of the will and memory, accompany the deterioration of the physical organism of the inebriate. No sensible employer of labor desires to retain him in his service. (c) The moral nature is debased, the conscience is debauched. Ability to distinguish between right and wrong, between what ought and ought not to be done, is gradually so weakened that the man is not to be trusted, v. 20. (d) Spiritual perception is dimmed. "They regard not the work of the Lord," v. 12. His great redemptive work, the theme of the gospel, is neglected and even scoffed at. "Neither have they considered the operation of His hands." They treat lightly the solemn and awful fact that no physical or moral law of God can be disregarded and violated with impunity. (e) This moral and spiritual depravity affects the administration of justice. Those who are "men of strength to mingle strong drink justify the

wicked for a reward, and take away the righteousness of the righteous from him," vs. 22, 23. (Rev. Ver.). They resort to bribery and smirch the character of upright men.

3. *God's decision touching the whole matter.* He denounces woe against the evil doers. This woe is (a) temporal, belonging to the present state. We have already shown this in part. Intemperance and riotous gormandizing inflict pain, wretchedness and remorse upon those who indulge in them. But God threatens specific woes. "Therefore my people are gone into captivity," they are carried away from their homes and their country. The exalted and the lowly are alike famished, v. 13. They are consumed like stubble, devoured by fire. "Their root shall be as rottenness," etc., because of their contempt for God and His law, v. 24. The woe pronounced extends to the future state: "Therefore hell hath enlarged her desire" etc., vs. 14-17. The life we now live is inseparably joined to our eternal existence. If we sow to the flesh, if we yield to depraved appetites, we shall of the flesh reap corruption both here and hereafter. And how thankful should we be for the assurance that if we sow to the Spirit, we shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting, Gal. 6: 8.

#### For Teachers of the Boys and Girls

This passage from Isaiah is one of the most vivid of God's warnings against intemperance. The effort should be to get at the exact meaning of the passage in its historical setting.

Jehovah, the God of Israel, is the speaker.

Isaiah, the greatest of the Old Testament prophets, is the medium through whom God speaks.

The warnings are addressed to God's own people, who had so sadly departed from His commandments. If the words are sharp, it is because the sin is grievous and God's love is great.

It begins with a parable (vs. 1-7) of the well-cared-for vineyard, which was yet fruitless, and which the owner will therefore destroy. God's people are the fruitless vineyard, and the woes to be visited upon them are set forth.