

ignorance of truth. **Are gone.** The prophet sees the future as if it were present. **Into captivity.** Their captors are wine and strong drink. **No knowledge.** They learn neither by their own experience nor by that of others. **Honorable men.** Aristocrats. **Multitude.** Common people. All alike are brought into distress. And yet it is questionable if these sinners suffered more than those who habitually drink intoxicants now, whose physical torments pass description; or if the misery which these drunkards brought upon the innocent people of Samaria because of their excess was as great as the unspeakable misery brought to thousands of innocent hearts to-day by relatives whose appetites turn them temporarily into idiots and lunatics.

14. Hell. The unseen realm of spirits, rather than the place of torments. **Hath enlarged herself.** As if the power of darkness were not prepared for such a wholesale turning to evil. It is one of the strongest possible figures of speech. Death and hell are throughout the Scriptures represented as yawning ferociously for the souls of men; but in this case the frenzied sinners of Israel are trooping so eagerly to destruction that the very appetite of hell has to be enlarged for the consumption of the unanticipated spoils of strong drink. "When our judges tell us from the bench that nine tenths of pauperism and crime are caused by drink, our physicians that if only irregular tipping were abolished half the current sickness of the land would cease, and our statesmen that the ravages of strong drink are equal to those of the historical scourges of war, famine, and pestilence combined, surely to swallow such a glut of spoil, the appetite of 'hell' must have been still more enlarged, and the mouth of 'hell' made still larger."—*G. A. Smith.*

15. The mean and mighty alike are humbled. The scene in verses 14 and 15 needs only to be pictured clearly to our classes to produce a lasting effect. Death rapidly enlarges her bottomless pit for the unwonted harvest of souls while they with insane revelry indulge in their glory, their multitude, their pomp, and their song, dancing in merriment into destruction.

16. Exalted. In the view of mankind the righteous judgment of God will be indorsed. **Sanctified.** Regarded as holy. We could not revere God in our hearts if he tolerated sin.

17. After their manner. At their own will. The fences are all down, the rich gardens and farms are all desolate, and the lambs grown wild are heedlessly permitted to feed among the vineyards and orchards and gardens of those who have been deported as chained captives to Nineveh. **Waste places of the fat ones.** The deserted lands of the rich. One of the incidental evidences of the awful condition of poverty of the masses in the antique world is found in the Bible and in pro-

fane writings by the constant allusions to the richer classes as the fat ones, and to the peasantry as men lean and poor in vi-age; the fact being that the millions under the sway of Nineveh and Egypt and Rome lived and died in hunger.

18. Draw iniquity. It should be "draw punishment." They harness themselves like horses to a cart—a cart loaded with punishments for themselves—and eagerly drag it along. They strain every nerve in sin.

19. A verse full of defiance to God.

20. This woe is directed against those who confound the distinction of right and wrong.

21. A woe against those who, nerved by strong drink, assert themselves in state affairs. One cannot help longing for an Isaiah to speak out in our own Senate halls.

22, 23. Intemperance, like every other sin, is but a link in the chain. These rich revelers are sordid bribe-takers, justifying the wicked, for they are paid to do so, and tempting the righteous to do wrong by offering a bribe to him.

Thoughts for Young People.

On God's Punishment of Sin.

1. *There can be no law without penalty.* The evil results of sin are as truly its natural consequences as broken limbs are consequent on violent falls.

2. *Fate cannot be ignored by blinding one's eyes.* These merry-hearted revelers who danced into destruction were as really destroyed as if they had mournfully moved thither in funeral robes. There is no iniquity hidden from God. These bribe-givers and bribe-takers, these under-handed as well as out-spoken sinners, were all under the immanent eye of their almighty Judge, and so am I, and so are you.

3. *God's love is shown in punishing iniquity as really as in rewarding good.* Were there no divine court of appeals to which we could turn with confidence—had we not as full faith in God's justice as in his love—the moral universe would be turned into chaos.

4. *In the midst of all scenes of sorrow we may look up to God with confiding love.* He takes no pleasure in the death of him that dieth. He hates sin, but loves sinners. His judgments are always measured, but his mercy is immeasurable.

By Way of Illustration.

A generation of children are growing up with an hereditary taste for strong drink. Many a man sits down to write his will and says, "In the name of God. Amen. I will and bequeath to my children my property, share and share alike. Signed and sealed in presence of witnesses." But he does not know that he is at the same time making a double