

## The Quiet Hour.

### Temperance Lesson.

S. S. LESSON—March 23rd. Eph. 5 : 11-21.  
GOLDEN TEXT—Eph. 5 : 18. Be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess.

BY REV. J. MCD. DUNCAN, B. D.

Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, v. 11. In Tennyson's "Gareth and Lynette," the poet tells us how young Gareth, while in the King's kitchen, refused to join in the ribald jesting of his fellow-servants.

"But if their talk were foul,  
Then would he whistle rapid as any lark,  
Or carol some old roundelay, and so loud,  
That first they mocked, but, after, revered him."

But rather reprove them, v. 11. History presents to us no more striking examples of moral courage than men like Elijah, who poured forth his fearless and fiery rebukes on the royal sinner, Ahab, or Amos the desert-prophet, who lifted up his voice against the rich, brave, profligate Jeroboam, or John the Baptist, who spoke out manfully about the wickedness of Herod. It is the duty of Christians to rebuke sin when it is open. But reproof should be administered in the spirit of love. No one denounced sin so unsparringly as Jesus. But His eyes filled with tears of pity when He thought of the doom of Jerusalem.

It is a shame, v. 12. It is not the business of a Christian to act as a moral detective, prying into the hidden sins about him dragging them out into the light. The surest way to spread some sins is to make them public. Silence and darkness are the best remedy for these evils. It is a disgrace for one bearing the name of man to poison the minds of the young and innocent with the disgusting details of crime.

Whatsoever doth make manifest is light, v. 13. The most powerful rebuke of evil is a pure life. The unconscious influence that radiates from a good man as he walks through life drives away impurity from his neighborhood, as the slimy, crawling creatures of darkness slink away before the light of the sun. It is said that when Thorwaldsen, the Danish sculptor, brought back to Denmark the splendid works of art which he had chiselled in Italy, the servants in unpacking the marbles, scattered the straw, which was wrapped around them, on the ground. Next summer the flowers of Rome were blossoming on the streets of Copenhagen from the seeds thus carried and scattered by accident. So, unconsciously to himself, the one whose life is modelled after that of Christ makes his influence felt in opposition to surrounding evil.

Awake thou that sleepest, v. 14. There is no danger greater than the danger of spiritual insensibility. The daisy growing in a field in which a man is ploughing, nods its head gaily in the breeze and sends forth its fragrance on the air, just as if the furrow were not coming straight towards it to tear it up by the roots. Birds build their nests in the bellies or beside waterfalls, undisturbed by the ringing of the bells or the roar of the cataracts. So, many, in spite of frequent warnings, slumber on in fancied security, while they are in imminent peril. For every unsaved man it is the greatest folly to be at rest. When a house is on fire the one whose danger is greatest is the one who

is calmly asleep amid the flames. In a ship that is going to pieces, the man who is asleep is in the most perilous position. To every one wrapped in spiritual slumber, God says, "Awake! Awake!" Beware lest that spiritual slumber pass into spiritual death.

Look therefore carefully (Rev. Ver.) v. 15. The story is told of a young American and a young Englishman who ran a foot-race on Vesuvius. The edge of the crater was to be the goal of the race. The American outran his competitor and of course intended to stop in time. But he had gained such momentum that he could not check himself and went over the brink into the blazing abyss below. Everyone who begins to tittle intends to stop short of being a drunkard, but how many are ruined by drink in spite of their intentions!

Redeeming the time, v. 15. Our days have been compared to the summer fields from which the farmer hopes to reap a plentiful harvest. Each week is a seven-acre field. How does it look from the hilltop of the Sabbath?

Be not drunk with wine, v. 18. It is a great step towards temperance, when we face the fact that, as individuals and as a nation, we drink because we like it. We do not use alcohol because of the nutritive elements in it, for these are found more abundantly in other substances which are harmless. Nor do we drink because alcohol is a medicine, for if we did we would stop as soon as the doctor would allow us, as we throw aside quinine at the first opportunity.

Be filled with the Spirit, v. 18. In 2 Timothy 3 : 4, the apostle describes some who were "pleasure-loving rather than God-loving." We shall not be truly temperate until in us the love of pleasure has been mastered by the love of God.

### A Life Prayer.

BY REV. JOSEPH PARKER, D. D.

Men do not learn to pray in death. In death they utter their greatest prayer; they take up all their prayers together and consummate them into one climax, with which they victoriously assail the opening gates of heaven. We shall pray best in death if we have lived in God. Living should be praying. Praying should never be a separate act, detachable from the current of daily experience and action. Prayer should be part of ourselves. "Prayer is the Christian's native breath!" When our religion is superimposed, it is an encumbrance; when it grows up in the heart or soul under the inspiration and sanction of God the Holy Ghost, then it is part of ourselves—not an external quantity, but an inward and eternal breath.

There is no more patriotic dollar than the dollar spent for home missions, and at the same time no dollar that is spent brings a larger return. It saves itself many times over in the diminishing of the expenses brought about by crime, drunkenness, gambling, and the like. If this saving came to the man who gave the dollar, instead of to the nation at large, how eagerly men would force their money upon the mission treasures!

### Abiding in Abiding Love.

All things change but Love abides. The years are fleeting—the future moment refuses to stay. Our lives, like a stream, are ceaselessly flowing towards their destined goal. "The morn of life wears on to noon and evening, and then comes the night. Friends change and "forsake us." Death robs us of the most cherished. Fortune takes wings and flies away. But Love abides. It is not ours. It is not earth-born, or it, too, would be temporal. It is God's; the expression of his inmost essence. God is Love. Love is heaven-born, and so it abides. Amid the changes and chances of this mortal scene, hearts made for God need a safe anchorage. The swinging life needs a fixed centre, and amid the perishing pomps of earth we need an abiding power. Love—God's love to us—furnishes all these needs.

How unique is God's love as manifested in the love of Jesus. He says to grief-stricken men, almost paralyzed in mind and heart by imminent and cruel bereavement, "As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you." What a great "as" that is! God is love in all its power. He is capable of loving to the highest power love can reach. He is an everlasting love: absolute! full of tenderness and infinite in its compassion. It is not a blind love, but one "full of eyes" to see things lovable. More than this, Jesus is not only the "altogether lovely" but the altogether lovable. When the Infinite heart beholds the well beloved Son, there is nothing save that which calls forth love. There is ready and complete response to all love's wooing. The all loving loving the altogether lovable! When we can measure that in all its length and breadth, depth and height, and know it through and through, then can we estimate the force of the "as". "As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you" How this magnifies Jesus! How it makes known to us the love to God! Just as God is able to love Jesus, so Jesus loves us. What a precious gift! What an infinite comfort! Jesus, the sinner's friend, loves me as God the all loving Father loves him.

More than this, this dearly loved and loving Jesus offers my heart a home in the sacred shelter provided by such a love. He says, "Continue ye in my love." His love is to be the atmosphere which I breathe. I am never to leave it behind me, but to take it with me wherever I go. It is not to be as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land merely, beneath whose grateful shade I can lay me down to rest, but it is to be my home, the roof under which I dwell, the walls that screen me from the outside world, the very breath that sustains the life of my soul. His love is to be home to me. Outside fears cannot here disturb my peace. The evil one cannot break through this wall. The sounds of strife cannot break in upon this sanctuary. His love is my home. Exceeding great and precious is this invitation to continue in his love, for not even death can snatch me away from it. Even this great terror can but open the door, letting me into a still larger room of more abundant love.

So fitted to my need is this Heart of Love that he not only invites me to dwell in this Home of Love, but he also assures me how I can do so with absolute certainty and safety. Obedience is all. "If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love." "Whatever he saith unto you, do it," turns not only life into a wedding feast, but also the ordinary fare of life into wine. In pointing out this method of "continuing," my