

doom "in the ears" of the prophet. And in this twentieth century A.D., He watches the actions of men as closely as in the eighth century B.C.

But they regard not the work of the Lord, neither consider the operation of his hands, v. 12. Unless ours is a clean life, God will be as unreal to us as Christ was to His disciples when they cried, as He walked towards them on the sea, "It is a spirit" (Matt. 14 : 26). Let us beware of any sin that makes Christ a phantom to us.

Therefore my people have gone into captivity, because they have no knowledge, v. 13. Drink is a danger to the nation as well as to the individual. At the beginning of last century the people of Great Britain spent £2 5s. per head on liquor. By 1850 this had risen to £3. It is now £4. The liquor bill of Great Britain in 1899 was twice as great as forty years before. One saloon in London, England, was lately watched on a Sunday and 377 women were seen to enter it with babies in their arms, and the total number of children visiting the saloon on the same day was 2,712. If drunkenness was one of the sins that sent Israel into captivity, there is danger that drunkenness will rob Great Britain of her greatness; and this is no less true of other countries as well.

Woe unto them that draw iniquity with cords of vanity, and sin as it were with a cart rope, v. 18. Iniquity is a burden which the sinner bears on his back. Sin is a cart which the sinner drags after him. This is the prophet's way of saying that sin carries in

itself its own punishment. The penalty grows out of the sin, as the oak springs from the acorn. It is not a more regular law that the waters of the ocean are drawn up into the air by evaporation, to come down on the earth in the form of rain and then flow back to the ocean in the rivers, than that sin will be punished. Haman died on the gallows he had prepared for Mordecai. The enemies of Daniel perished by the death they had plotted for him. Shylock fell into the trap he had set for Antonio. Sin and punishment are just two stages in the growth of the same evil plant.

Let him make speed, and hasten his work, that we may see it, v. 19. The ancients had a saying, "Whom the gods wish to destroy, they first make mad." What folly can be greater than the folly of those who jeer at the idea of approaching disaster, while in their own conduct there are the causes which will certainly bring it about. Imagine a man setting a match to a train leading to a powder-magazine and ridiculing a warning against the danger of an explosion. (Gal. 6 : 7.)

Woe unto them that are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight, v. 21. A drunkard is unfit to be a railway engineer, or captain of a steamship. Drunkenness equally unfits a man to control the affairs of State. But in Great Britain and Canada, as in many other lands, those engaged in the liquor traffic wield great political power. Lord Rosebery said : "If the State does not control the liquor traffic, the liquor traffic will control the State"; words sadly true.

POINTS AND PARAGRAPHS

There is nothing hid from God. v. 9.

Man's sin brings a curse upon the soil, v. 10.

Sin blinds, v. 12 (b), and binds, v. 13 (a) and grinds, v. 15.

A barren land is the penalty of a wicked people. v. 17.

The sinner, while he mocks at judgment, is dragging judgment near. vs. 18, 19.

When conscience confuses good and evil, man is like a sailor on the wide ocean without a compass. v. 20.

An invading army has often been God's executioner of justice upon an ungodly and corrupt people. vs. 26-30.

Every civilized community develops sooner or later its land question and its liquor question.—Professor George Adam Smith.

In the reign of James I., the following preamble was prefixed to an Act of Parliament : "The odious and loathsome sin of drunkenness is of late grown into common use, being the root and foundation of many other enormous sins ; as bloodshed, stabbing,