



LESSON VIII.—Nov. 25.

Sober Living.

(WORLD'S TEMPERANCE SUNDAY.)

Titus ii., 1-15. Memory verses, 11-14. Read Isaiah xxviii.

Daily Readings.

M. Not defiled—Dan. i., 8-21.
 T. Rechabites—Jer. xxxv., 1-19.
 W. Nazarites—Numb. vi., 1-21.
 T. A Raging—Prov. xxiii., 29-35.
 F. A Mocker—Prov. xx., 1-11.
 S. Be strong—Eph. vi., 10-20.

Golden Text.

'We should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world.'—Titus ii., 12.

Lesson Text.

(1) But speak thou the things that become sound doctrine: (2) That the aged man be sober, grave, temperate, sound in faith, in charity, in patience. (3) The aged women likewise, that they be in behavior as becometh holiness not false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things; (4) That they teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, (5) to be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed. (6) Young men likewise exhort to be sober-minded. (7) In all things showing thyself a pattern of good works; in doctrine showing uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity, (8) sound speech, that cannot be condemned; that he that is on the contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of you. (9) Exhort servants to be obedient unto their own masters, and to please them well in all things; not answering again; (10) not purloining, but showing all good fidelity; that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things. (11) For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, (12) teaching us that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world; (13) looking for the blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; (14) who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works. (15) These things speak, and exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no man despise thee.

Suggestions.

As this is Temperance Sunday all over the world, it would be well to make a special feature of Temperance, by having an address on the subject, and perhaps a recitation or two, and a signing of the pledge by the whole school as far as possible. In back numbers of the 'Messenger' may be found materials for a talk on the evils of intemperance. Every teacher should try to persuade her own class members to sign the pledge, and if a large one could be made of cardboard and hung up in the school-room, when as many names as possible were secured, it would be an effective reminder to all. Some pledges read, 'I promise to abstain from intoxicating drinks, tobacco and bad language, for one year.' Many will sign for one year who do not at first like to sign for their whole life.

Every child that means to have great victories in manhood or womanhood, should get little victories in childhood. The control of temper, the assertion of mastery over appetites, the refusal to indulge even in innocent things, the setting one's self to tasks of memory, or other achievement, is a drill in kingship,—is getting the hand used to a scepter, and the head fitted for a crown.—Bishop H. W. Warren.

Spurgeon says:—'This age is the battlefield in which the soldier of Christ is to fight. Society is the place in which Christianity is to exhibit the graces of Christ. It is of no use for you to scheme to escape from it.

You are bound to breast this torrent, and buffet all its waves. If the grace of God is in you, that grace is meant to be displayed, not in a select and secluded retreat, but in this present world.

'This life is described in a three-fold way. You are first, to live soberly—that is, for yourself. "Soberly" in all your eating and your drinking, and in the indulgence of all bodily appetites—that goes without saying. You are to live soberly in all your thinking, all your speaking, all your acting. There is to be sobriety in all your worldly pursuits. You are to have yourself well in hand; you are to be self-restrained. The man who is disciplined by the grace of God becomes thoughtful, considerate, self-contained, and he is no longer tossed about by passion, or swayed by prejudice.

'As to his fellow-man, the believer lives "righteously." . . . If you profess to be servants of God deny all partnership with unrighteousness. Dishonesty and falsehood are the opposites of godliness. A Christian man may be poor, but he must live righteously; he may lack sharpness, but he must not lack integrity. A Christian profession without uprightness is a lie. Grace must discipline us to righteous living.

'Towards God we are told that we are to be "godly." Every man who has the grace of God in him will think much of God, and will seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness. God will enter into all his calculations, God's presence will be his joy, God's strength will be his confidence, God's providence will be his inheritance, God's glory will be the chief end of his being, God's law the guide of his conversation.

'What is the way to be ready to meet Jesus? It is the same Jesus that went away from us who is coming, then let us be doing what he was doing before he went away. If it is the same Jesus that is coming, we cannot possibly put ourselves into a posture of which he will better approve than by going about, doing good. If you would meet him with joy, serve him with earnestness. If the Lord Jesus were to come to-day I would like him to find me at my studying, praying or preaching. Would you not like him to find you in your Sunday school, in your class, or out there at the corner of the street preaching, or doing whatever you have the privilege of doing in his name?'

Questions.

What advice is given for old men? What for young men? How should servants behave? Does this apply to all Christians? How should we live in this world? Why did Christ give himself for us? What are we doing for him?

THE OLD DECANTER.

There was an old decanter,
 and its mouth was gaping wide;
 the rosy wine had ebbed away and left its crystal side;
 and the wind went humming,
 humming, up and down the sides it flew,
 and through its reed-like, hollow neck,
 the wildest notes it blew.
 I placed it in the window,
 where the blast was blowing free,
 and fancied that its pale mouth sang the queerest strains to me.
 "They tell me—puny conquerors!
 the Plague has slain his ten,
 and War his hundred thousand of the very best of men; but I"—'twas thus the bottle spake—"but I have conquered more than all your famous conquerors so feared and famed of yore.
 Then come, ye youths and maidens all, come drink from out my cup, the beverage that dulls the brains and burns the spirits up;
 that puts to shame your conquerors that slay their scores below,
 for this has deluged millions with the lava tide of woe.
 Though in the path of battle darkest waves of blood may roll; yet while I killed the body, I have damned the very soul.
 The cholera, the plagues, the sword, such ruin never wrought as I, in mirth or malice, on the innocent have brought.
 And still I breathe upon them, and they shrink before my breath; and year by year my thousands tread the dismal road of DEATH."
 —Anon.

C. E. Topic.

Nov. 25.—Praise the Lord. Ps. cxlvii., 1, 20. (Thanksgiving meeting.)

Junior C. E. Topic.

BE YE THANKFUL.

Mon., Nov. 19.—For the past. Ps. cvii., 4.
 Tues., Nov. 20.—For health. Ps. xxx., 3.

Wed., Nov. 21.—For our land. Jer. xxxii., 22.
 Thu., Nov. 22.—For our schools. Prov. viii., 11.

Fri., Nov. 23.—For the Bible. II. Tim., iii., 15.

Sat., Nov. 24.—For Jesus Christ. Luke i., 68.

Sun., Nov. 25.—Topic—Praise God! for what? Ps. cxvii., 1-20. (Thanksgiving meeting.)

Studying the Lesson at Home

(By Rev. G. W. Miesse, in 'Living Epistle'.)

For two Sundays in succession the Sabbath schools at — Were closed on account of an epidemic of scarlet fever then prevailing in the community. It was a trying time for those who were accustomed to attend church and Sabbath school every Sabbath. The closed churches and silent bells gave to the day a sombre aspect instead of that lively cheer which it usually brings to those who delight in the services of God's house, and many were really glad when the day was past.

To some, however, the disappointment was a lesson in disguise that opened their eyes to recognize a long neglected duty and privilege, viz., the study of the lesson at home. In a number of families the lessons of the day were taken up and studied, so that instead of only two Sunday schools in that town on those two Sundays, there were probably a score or more. This alternative, under the circumstances, proved quite satisfactory. One brother remarked to his pastor, 'that never in all his life had he been so interested in a Sunday school lesson as he was on those two Sundays,' and nearly all came to the conclusion that it pays to study the lesson at home. Let us hope that the good work may continue, not only in those families and in that particular community, but that by some means a new interest in this direction may spring up all over the field of Sunday school work, for surely there is great need of it.

Let it be understood, however, that the study of the lesson at home should not be designated as a substitute for Sunday school attendance, but that it should be pursued with the view of attending Sunday school. Home study should bear the same relation to the Sunday school as the morning and evening studies of the child sustain to our public schools. No matter how familiar one may become with the lesson by studying it alone, there still remains much to be made clear to the comprehension by a mutual interchange of thought in the Sunday school class.

The lack of this kind of home work accounts mainly for the shallow work and lagging condition of many Sunday schools where it is a common thing for scholars to come to the school without any previous knowledge of the lesson, and in many instances, the best that some teachers do is to 'look over the lesson' just before coming to Sunday school, so that instead of looking into and through the lesson they only look over it, which, of course, is the best they can do in so short a time. A lesson well studied at home by teachers and scholars makes an interesting Sunday school, no matter what other equipments it may lack. Pastors and Sunday school superintendents should urge this matter strongly and continually both by example and precept.

No one should plead the lack of time for this important work, for there is enough time wasted the year round which, if utilized in the study of the lesson, would give each person seven solid hours per week for this work, and still there would be plenty of unemployed time left. One of the best books a certain author ever produced was written while he was obliged to wait in the sitting room of his boarding house for his meals after being called, and so if only a portion of our unemployed fragments of time are employed in the study of the Sunday school lesson, it will be surprising to see how much we can learn during the week.

The teacher to be successful must be a constant learner. If he ceases to be a learner for himself, he might as well cease to be a teacher of anybody else. If his mind is not taking in fresh truth, it is not likely to give out old truth as if it were fresh.—'Living Epistle.'