

**Wycliffe.**

Wycliffe! Now half a thousand years  
are sped  
Since to the music of our English  
tongue,  
Those thin white fingers cunningly did  
wed  
What holy men of old had said or  
sung!

First Protestant! First scholar for the  
poor!  
First to tell out in home-born, fireside  
speech,  
To simple folk within their cottage door,  
What words of life those sacred lips  
did teach.

As comes the star upon the dim, sad sky,  
To tell of dawn upon its rosy way,  
So from our Orient, serene and high,  
Thy beams presage our bright and  
golden day.

Hard was thy task, strong heart! Still  
struggling on  
Against the scowl of bitter monk and  
priest,  
Falsed and sick, and yet thy work was  
done,  
And follows thee, now entered into rest.

Bend from thy rest, if it be given, O  
Saint,  
Now worn and baffled in thy toll no  
more!

Hark! How thy language, tuneful, dear  
and quaint,  
Tells the glad tidings upon every  
shore!

What though thy foes, in febleness of  
wrath,  
Thy ashes on the wandering waters  
flung?  
The roverent waters smoothed for thee a  
path  
O'er smiling tides all lauds and isles  
among.

And when thy work's millennium shall  
be,  
Can that millennium yet linger long,  
When o'er all nations Truth has victory,  
And Peace lifts up her sweet and end-  
less song?

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**Pleasant Hours:**

A PAPER FOR OUR YOUNG FOLK.

Rev. W. H. Withrow, D.D., Editor.

TORONTO, JULY 31, 1897.

**BIBLE STUDY.**

One of the most encouraging features of the day is the increased study that is being given to the Word of God. The time was when students in schools and colleges must know all about the pagan poets, Ovid and Horace, and yet might know very little of Isaiah and St. Paul; but now even secular institutions, and the scores of summer assemblies throughout the continent, give ample opportunities for the study of the Bible. Professor Harper, of Yale, by his organization of the American Institute of Bible Study, which has its branches in many cities and summer assemblies, is doing much to promote this important work.

There is a charm and attraction in the study of this venerable book whose interest increases from year to year. In addition to the study of the Bible itself,

a study of the part that it has played in human history will also receive special prominence.

The Bible is the Magna Charta of all our freedom, body, mind and spirit, and if ever there has been a time when it was important to know what it cost to give us the Bible open and free for all to study, it is to-day.

The era of John Wycliffe, briefly treated in this number of Pleasant Hours, and his opening of the English Bible to the people, is one full of vital interest to all lovers of civil, intellectual and religious liberty.

**A WOMAN'S STORY.**

"I tell you I heard a testimony the other night, that I won't forget in a hurry," said a friend to me a short time since. "You see I had gone on business for the firm out to ——" naming a small town some sixty miles distant. "I found things in a bad jumble, and I had to stay all night. I was invited to stop at the house of the man whose books I was overlooking, and I accepted, for I knew that the hotel was a poor one. After supper, my hostess asked me if I cared to attend a temperance meeting, a series of which were being held at that time in the church. Well, we went. It was a good meeting. The music was lively, and the speeches pointed. An opportunity was given during the meeting for any one to speak who had been reclaimed from intemperance. After a pause a woman near the front of the church arose and moved out in the aisle. She was very pale and thin, but she had a pair of the blackest, and, at the same time, most mournful looking eyes, I ever beheld in any human being. When she first started to speak you could hardly hear her; but the church soon became almost deathly still and she raised her voice a little. I will give you her words as near as I can. She said:

"I want to tell you my story. May be some one here will be induced by it to sign the pledge to-night. I was born and brought up in old England. I was the only child of fond parents, who gratified my slightest wish. I had many friends as I grew up to girlhood. Before I was twenty years old I was betrothed to John Hardy, a noble looking and good dispositioned young man, a mason by trade. My parents gave a glad consent to our speedy union, for they thought John was just about perfect. I don't think there was a happier home in all England than ours. John had steady work, and never spent his evenings in the ale-house, as so many men did.

"Our happiness was complete when, five years after our wedding day, John held in his arms our first-born child, a lovely little boy with flaxen hair all in ringlets around his head. Six months after I was taken down with typhoid fever, which was very prevalent that spring. I was very bad, and when the turning point came, my life hung in the balance for many days. John spent a great deal of that time on his knees beside my bed praying for me. I firmly believe I was restored to health in answer to his prayers. How often since have I wished that I had died then. How much disgrace and misery would have been spared. As I rallied a little the doctor ordered me brandy and wine to give strength. John opposed this, but he was over-ruled.

"It is needless to say I formed a strong liking for it, and kept on taking it without my husband's knowledge, after I was fully recovered. Before long my doses grew larger; and one night John came home from his work and found me lying on the sofa drunk. I shall never forget the look of despair that settled on his face, as he fully realized the state I was in. The next morning when I was sober he pleaded with me to give it up entirely. I was very penitent and promised faithfully never to touch it again. But alas for good resolutions! Made only to be broken. I trusted in my own strength, and when the thirst and longing for it came over me again I weakly yielded. A week passed before I drew a sober breath. My husband tried all means to keep it from me; but it seemed I was possessed with almost Satanic cunning, and got it in spite of him.

"One day I woke out of a drunken sleep and found our babe lying on the bed beside me. His face and hands were burning with fever. He wanted a drink, and I rose with unsteady feet and aching head to get him one. On going to the kitchen I found two of the neighbour women there. Their pitying looks stung me deeply; and I went out of the house, and staggered to where I knew I could get more whiskey; leaving strangers to wait on my sick baby.

"The next morning when I awoke the first thing that met my gaze was a tiny coffin resting on two chairs. For

a few seconds I looked on it in horror. Then I got up and looked in it. There lay my darling baby with a white rose between his waxen fingers, while over his face hovered an angelic smile. He was an angel now, while I, his mother, had just wakened out of a drunken sleep. Those were terrible moments.

"For a long while after that I kept perfectly sober, and my husband began to look more hopeful. The ale-house keeper had asked me several times to come and taste a new brand of ale, but I told her I had reformed, and was not going to drink any more. She only laughed at me; and one day sent me over a quart pail full of the deadly stuff. The smell of it fairly drove me wild, and I drank the whole of it. My husband at that time was working on a building a little way from our home. He saw me staggering around the yard. Turning to a companion, he said, in a despairing voice: "God help me. She is drunk again." He turned to go down the ladder; his foot slipped, he lost his hold, and fell heavily to the ground, striking on his back. He was brought to the house, and a doctor was summoned. After a careful examination, he said his back was broken. The neighbours came in to wait on him, for I sat on a chair stupid with drink; but when the doctor came and told me that John was dying, I was sober in an instant. He lived three days and I never left his side. On my knees, beside his bed, I sought and obtained the pardon of God. John was so glad. He told me over and over, that he did not regret his life, if by that means I should be saved from a drunkard's grave.

"After he was buried I came to this country, and I have been here ten years next month. By the grace of God I have been kept from touching the poison drink. The doctor tells me I am liable to drop dead any moment from heart disease, and I am living in the hope of soon seeing my husband and child in the gardens of Paradise. Oh, will not some poor tempted soul sign the pledge to-night? Then the grief, and the heart-ache that it has cost me to tell you my story, will not have been in vain.

"She stopped and stood looking at the audience, many of whom were in tears, in a silence that could almost be felt. Pretty soon there was a movement in the body of the church, and twenty-three persons, all of whom had been against the temperance work before, came forward and signed the total abstinence pledge. Her fervent 'Thank God,' when the last one had signed his name was something to be remembered for a life time.

"Did you sign it?" I asked; for I knew that he was not a temperance man. "Yes, I did. And I mean to stick to it. That woman's story was not in vain. I am temperance from this time forward," was the prompt reply.

**THE COLOURS OF FLAMES.**

WITH EXPERIMENTS.

It was long since discovered that alcohol would burn even when mingled with water. Before they had instruments for measuring the proportions of alcohol in liquids to find out how strong they were, they proved them in a rough way by using gunpowder. You observe that when the alcohol is burned off, the water is left in the dish. (Burn two or three spoonfuls of gin to show this, turning the water out afterwards so that they can see it). When the water left behind was not sufficient to prevent the explosion of gunpowder, it was called "proof." We will show how it worked. (Put half a teaspoonful of gunpowder on a plate, standing on a tray or bare board. Add a spoonful of alcohol. Set fire to it, and when the alcohol is burned off the gunpowder will go off in a series of little explosions).

Gunpowder is known to be a dangerous thing to handle. Alcohol is more so. They have both done a vast amount of mischief in the world. In war gunpowder has killed its myriads of men. Even in times of peace when careless boys use it in pistols, or on Dominion Day, to make an empty noise, they very often hurt themselves and others. Many lives are lost in that way.

But alcohol is burning up those that drink it, even 'a tin's of peace. In the twenty-five years since our last war, it has killed more people in this country than all the soldiers that were killed by gunpowder during the four years of war. It is believed that every day as many as one hundred and sixty-five persons die from the use of alcoholic drinks. So you see that alcohol is far more to be feared than gunpowder.

It is a curious fact, too, that drunkards are very careless about fire. It is to be expected that when they lose their senses

they would not know how to be careful about anything.

They handle lamps carelessly, but they are specially careless about their pipes and cigars. Many a drunken tramp has, in this way, set fire to the barn where he has taken shelter for the night. A servant-girl when left alone in a farm-house drank freely of cider, and then going to the barn with a lighted candle, when she should have carried a lantern, set the hay on fire, and all the buildings on the premises were burned.

It is said in Maine, where they have a law forbidding the sale of liquors, they do not have half so many fires as they did before the passage of that law.

You are often warned against playing with fire. Children playing with fire have been seriously burned through their foolish carelessness. But alcoholic drinks are far more dangerous. They do not look like fire, and so people do not believe that they will burn. But they not only burn the life out of the body; they destroy property and reputation and character and usefulness in this world, and all hope of happiness in the world to come. The sufferings of a burned body are but trifles compared with the agony of a man who has destroyed soul and body by the use of alcoholic drinks.

**JUNIOR EPWORTH LEAGUE.**

PRAYER-MEETING TOPIC.

AUGUST 8, 1897.

Messiah's reign.—Psalm 72. 8-11.

**UNIVERSAL.**

Verse 8. This Psalm is a beautiful portion of the Holy Scriptures. The rapid progress of the kingdom of Christ is vividly portrayed, and here we have its universality. Other kingdoms are limited in their extent, but this kingdom covers the whole world. Read this verse again. While the kingdom is to extend from sea to sea, no particular sea is named; we may understand the description to signify that no sea nor river can be a barrier in its way. "From sea to sea" is a proverbial expression, which is intended to set forth the universal monarchy of the King of kings.

**SECURE PLACES.**

Verse 9. Cities and centres of population are sure to be visited, and feel the righteous reign of the Son of God. But Christ comes not to shed his benign influence merely in the high places of the world, but those who live in the wilderness—or obscure places—shall be made the participants of the gracious influences of the Sun of righteousness, the rays of which shall penetrate the most retired abodes of mankind, who will gladly receive him as their sovereign Lord. "His enemies" will lick the dust, which means that they will be completely vanquished.

**OTHER KINGS.**

Verse 10. Tarshish monarchs will become his subjects, and even the dwellers in the isles will put themselves under his authority. No class of the community will be too high for him to gain the ascendancy over them, and none will be so low as to be beneath his notice. In the days of Solomon, the kings of these places aided Solomon in the erection of the temple, but a greater than Solomon is here. Those monarchs who have swayed the sceptre of authority over their people, sometimes to their disadvantage and injury, will readily and gladly bring their gifts to King Jesus and own him the Lord of all.

**NO EXCEPTION.**

Verse 11. All kings will acknowledge his authority and put themselves under his control. They will not regard themselves as being degraded by thus acting. They will willingly acknowledge him as their sovereign Lord and count themselves as honoured by being adopted into the society of those who crown him Lord of all.

Not only will the Jews receive him, but all nations will serve him. The Gentiles will put themselves under his yoke, and will rejoice to become his subjects.

"Arabia's desert ranger  
To him shall bow the knee,  
And Ethiopia's stranger  
His glory come and see,  
With anthems of devotion,  
Ships from the isles shall meet,  
And pour the wealth of nations  
In tribute at his feet,  
For he shall have dominion  
Over river, sea and shore,  
Far as the eagle's pinion,  
Or dove's light wing shall soar."

"Why, my man, there used to be two mills there."  
"Yes, sir; they found there was only wind enough for one."