

The Quiet Hour.

World's Temperance Lesson.

S. S. LESSON—Nov. 24 Isaiah 5 : 8-30.

GOLDEN TEXT.—Isa. 5 : 22. Woe unto them that are mighty to drink wine.

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Woe unto them that join house to house, that lay field to field, v. 8. Better than such greedy hoarding is the way of the Ephesians, who used to deposit their treasures with "the great goddess Diana," whose temple was both a sanctuary and a bank. By being "rich in good works," (1 Tim 6 : 18), we may deposit our treasures with God and when He shall call us to Himself we shall receive our own with usury and "lay hold on the life that is life indeed," 1 Tim 6 : 19 (Rev. Ver.).

In mine ears said the Lord of hosts, v. 9. Wicked men may imagine that God takes no notice of their evil deeds, but in this they are greatly mistaken. He fastened the "eyes of his glory" (Ch. 3 : 8) upon the sinners of Isaiah's day, and whispered their 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 177 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 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.—Teachers' Monthly.

Seed Thoughts and Illustrations.

If Christians praised God more, the world would doubt Him less.—Charles E. Jefferson, D. D.

Some persons speak of the "burden of gratitude". There may be a burden of obligation, but never a burden of gratitude. Gratitude is never a weight, but always has wings.

Many favors which God giveth us ravel out for want of hemming, through our own unthankfulness; for though prayer purchaseth blessings, giving praise doth keep the quiet possession of them.—Thomas Fuller.

Am I to thank God for everything? Am I to thank Him for bereavement, for pain, for poverty, for toil? . . . Be still, my soul; thou hast misread the message. It is not to give thanks for everything, but to give thanks in everything.—Geo. M. Theson.

We overlook too much the common daily blessings that religion brings. Not least among these is the faculty of finding joy in little things, recognizing their divine bestowal, finding still higher blessedness in living out our gratitude to God.—Phillips Brooks.

The accent is properly on the first syllable—"Thanks-giving,"—and not, as most commonly heard, on the second—"Thanksgiving"; which may be taken as a token that the thanks, the gratitude, is the main thing. If we have that, the giving, the expression of it, will follow.

Whenever St. Felix was given anything for his monastery, he replied at once, "Deo Gratias," thanking Him who prompted the gift rather than the messenger who put it into his hand. The very children took up the word, and St. Felix was everywhere known as "Brother Deo Gratias." Are we as quick to recognize the real Giver of every good gift?

If any one should give me a dish of sand and say there are particles of iron in it, I might look with my eyes for them, and search for them with my clumsy fingers, and be unable to find them; but let me take a magnet and sweep it, and how it would draw to itself the most invisible particles by the mere power of attraction! The unthankful heart, like my finger in the sand, discovers no mercies; but let the thankful heart sweep

through the day, and, as the magnet finds the iron, so it will find in every hour some heavenly blessings; only the iron in God's sand is gold.—Oliver Wendell Holmes.

God's Use of Means.

The present series of Sunday-school lessons impresses, with remarkable power, God's use of means for the working out of his purposes.

We think of the Bible as a record of the miraculous, but when we read it with a view to finding what part miracles play in the story of God's dealing with men, we are surprised to find how very few there are. Ordinarily God used the means which were at hand in the regular happenings of the world to bring about the end which he desired. The miraculous was the great exception.

When the children of Israel were to be developed into a nation, and kept separate and distinct from surrounding peoples, they were not left in Canaan, where they would naturally mingle with their kinsmen, who were descendants of Lot, Ishmael or Esau, but were taken down into Egypt, where their trade of caring for cattle made them an abomination to their neighbors. When Israel was to be saved from famine, and their dwelling place prepared in the Land of Goshen, Joseph was fitted for his work by the ten years of service in Potiphar's home, where he was trained to administrative skill, and acquainted with the life of the court; and even the three years of prison life, while developing his character, served to prove his fitness for the higher office.

When Israel was to be led again to Canaan, and the motley herd of slaves organized into a great nation, Moses was put to school in Pharaoh's palace, trained in all the knowledge of the Egyptians, and, if tradition is correct, made a soldier and a leader in the camps of Egypt; then taught wood-craft and the wisdom of the desert by his life in Midian, that he might be fitted for the special work which God had for him to do.

When the Master came, even he used natural means, and in the miracles he performed he exercised his special power only when the men he wished to help had done their part. He might feed the multitude, but he required that the people show their faith by sitting to receive, and he bid the disciples carry to each his portion of the bread and fish.

Throughout the Bible story we see how God has used the ordinary work a day world, just as it is, and men and women such as we are, to bring about the greatest things in all his plan.

So now, in all his promises, in all his work, Christ uses means, and the most ordinary things of life are blessed by him to the fulfilling of his word. Sometimes he uses us, when we are found to be worthy, and the burdens and the sorrows of our lives are made to work together for good.

We are not to look for strange experiences or marvelous manifestations, but we are to learn to recognize, in humble things, the hand of God, over-ruling the happenings of life, and to submit ourselves in faith and confidence as instruments of his will.—Christian Observer.

Card playing and wine-drinking in the home make up a pair of the most insidious sins that can invade the domestic realm. They lead to gambling and drunkenness often, and to any other result.—Texas Christian Advocate.