

SCHOLARS' NOTES.

(From Westminster Question Book.)

LESSON X.

Dec. 7, 1884.]

[Prov. 23: 29-35.]

DRUNKENNESS.

COMMIT TO MEMORY VS. 29-32.

29. Who hath woe? who hath sorrow? who hath contentions? who hath babbling? who hath wounds without cause? who hath redness of eyes?

30. They that tarry long at the wine; they that go to seek mixed wine.

31. Look not thou upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth its color in the cup, when it moveth itself aright.

32. At the last it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder.

33. Thine eyes shall behold strange women, and thine heart shall utter perverse things.

34. Yea, thou shalt be as he that lieth down in the midst of the sea, or as he that lieth upon the top of a mast.

35. They have stricken me, shalt thou say, and I was not sick; they have beaten me, and I felt it not: when shall I awake? I will seek it yet again.

GOLDEN TEXT.

"Be not among winebibbers."—Prov. 23:20.

HOME READINGS.

M. Prov. 23: 29-35 Drunkenness.

T. Prov. 23: 12-23 Be not among Wine-

W. Dan. 1: 1-21 A T o t a l-Abstinence

Th. Jer. 35: 1-19 A T o t a l-Abstinence

F. Isa. 28: 1-16 The Drunkards of Eph-

Sa. Isa. 5: 11-25 Judgments Denounced.

S. Heb. 2: 12-20 Woe to the Drunkard-

Maker!

LESSON PLAN.

1. The Deceitfulness of the Cup. 2. The Curse of the Cup.

Time.—About B.C. 1000. Place.—Written by Solomon at Jerusalem.

INTRODUCTORY.

The part of the book of Proverbs from which this lesson is taken begins with chapter 22: 17. It is there entitled "The Words of the Wise," as if containing the utterances of many wise men. It was probably compiled from various sources by Solomon. It comes to us not only with his authority, but also with that of God himself, by whom it was inspired. Our lesson passage is just as important now as it was in the days of Solomon. It shows us the deadly effects of drunkenness, and points out the only way to avoid them.

LESSON NOTES.

I.—V. 29. WHO HATH WOE—a very vivid picture of the effects of drunkenness, but no picture can be as vivid as the reality; such woe—such sorrow—who hath it? CONTENTIONS—brawls and disputes. BABBLING—"anxious care." WOUNDS WITHOUT CAUSE—such as come from drunken brawls—often to brutal murder. REDNESS OF EYES—the disgusting evidence of excessive drinking. V. 30. MIXED WINE—mixed with drugs and spices to make it stronger. V. 31. LOOK NOT—avoid the allurements of sin; "touch not, taste not, handle not," do not even look at it. WHEN IT IS RED—its very color, its sparkling transparency in the cup, the relish with which it moveth itself aright, or "goes down smoothly," all tend to excite the debasing appetite. For, whatever be its present zest, at the last it biteth like a serpent and stingeth like an adder. Did it bite first, who would touch it? If poison were seen in the cup, who would taste it? Is the poison less deadly because it is unseen? Is the cup less dangerous because it is deceitful? The adder's sting is concealed, yet fatal. There is death in the cup. If the strong language of Solomon was true of the wines of his time, how much more applicable is it to the vile and poisonous liquors that are measured out in the drinking-saloons that abound in our days!

II.—V. 33. Drunkenness leads to impurity. PERVERSE THINGS—filthy, foolish utterances that seem wit to the man turned into a brute. V. 34. IN THE MIDST OF THE SEA—giddy and reeling like a rolling vessel. UPON THE TOP OF THE MAST—unconscious of danger. This infatuation is the most awful part of the curse. V. 35. Even the senses seem to be stupefied. Stricken and beaten he may be, but he thanks his drunkenness that he feels it not. Therefore the fool returns to his folly. I WILL SEEK IT YET AGAIN—lost to shame and more senseless than the brute, he gives himself up to his debasing, destroying sin. Woe to the drunkard! Drunkenness is like sliding down hill on a sled—the farther you go the faster you go, and the more difficult it is to stop. It hurts the body, the mind, the character, the reputation, the comfort of life, the peace of society and the good order of the world. It hardens men in wickedness, and issues in misery both here and hereafter. No drunkard shall inherit eternal life. We lose nothing by total abstinence; we avoid danger for ourselves, and our example may be the salvation of others. Let every one who studies this lesson solemnly pledge himself never to taste the intoxicating cup.

WHAT HAVE I LEARNED?

1. That drunkenness is a most fearful evil and sin.
2. That there is danger in the use of intoxicating drinks.
3. That we should abstain entirely from their use.
4. That we should do all we can to discourage their use by others.
5. That we should discountenance their sale as a beverage.

LESSON XI.

Dec. 14, 1884.]

[Eccles. 2: 1-13.]

VANITY OF WORLDLY PLEASURE.

COMMIT TO MEMORY VS. 10, 11.

1. I said in mine heart, Go to now, I will prove thee with mirth; therefore enjoy pleasure: and behold, this also is vanity.

2. I said of laughter, It is mad; and of mirth, What doeth it!

3. I sought in mine heart to give myself unto wine, yet acquainting mine heart with wisdom; and to lay hold on folly, till I might see what was that good for the sons of men, which they should do under the heaven all the days of their life.

4. I made me great works: I builded me houses; I planted me vineyards;

5. I made me gardens and orchards, and I planted trees in them of all kinds of fruits;

6. I made me pools of water, to water therewith the wood that bringeth forth trees;

7. I got me servants and maidens, and had servants born in my house; also I had great possessions of great and small cattle above all that were in Jerusalem before me;

8. I gathered me also silver and gold, and the peculiar treasure of kings, and of the provinces; I gat me men-singers and women-singers, and the delights of the sons of men, as musical instruments, and that of all sorts.

9. So I was great and increased more than all that were before me in Jerusalem; also my wisdom remained with me.

10. And whatsoever mine eyes desired I kept not from them. I withheld not my heart from any joy: for my heart rejoiced in all my labor; and this was my portion of all my labor.

11. Then I looked on all the works that my hands had wrought, and on the labor that I had labored to do; and behold, all was vanity and vexation of spirit, and there was no profit under the sun.

12. And I turned myself to behold wisdom, and madness, and folly: for what can the man do that cometh after the king? even that which hath been already done.

13. Then I saw that wisdom excelleth folly, as far as light excelleth darkness.

GOLDEN TEXT.

"Wisdom excelleth folly, as far as light excelleth darkness."—Eccles. 2: 13.

HOME READINGS.

M. Eccles. 1: 1-18 Worldly Wisdom

T. Eccles. 2: 1-11 Worldly Pleasures

W. Eccles. 2: 12-26 Human Wisdom and

Th. Eccles. 6: 1-12 "What is Man the Bet-

F. Luke 12: 13-21 The Rich Fool.

Sa. Luke 16: 19-31 Worldly and Heavenly

S. Eccles. 12: 1-14 The Conclusion of the

Whole Matter.

LESSON PLAN.

1. The World's Pleasures Tested. 2. The Result of the Test.

Time.—About B.C. 977. Place.—Written at Jerusalem by Solomon, after his repentance and restoration from idolatry.

INTRODUCTORY.

The book of Ecclesiastes was probably written by Solomon near the close of his life, when he had repented of his sin and folly, and was convinced of the vanity of everything except piety toward God. The word "Ecclesiastes" means preacher, and by this name the author is designated throughout the book. Our lesson passage gives us the confession of one who had tried worldly pleasures and found them wanting.

LESSON NOTES.

I.—V. 1. I WILL PROVE THEE—will test whether thou canst find solid good in pleasure. MIRTH—the self-indulgence that excites mirth; gay, merry society. V. 2. MAD—puts men beside themselves, out of their own control. V. 3. UNTO WINE—the pleasures of the table, rich feasting and abundant drinking. ACQUAINTING—not abandoning himself to indulgence, but carefully observing its effects upon him—a dangerous experiment to which he became a victim. V. 4. GREAT WORKS—from the lusts of the flesh he now passes to the lusts of the eye and that pride of life which seeks and delights in outward splendor. HORSES—see 1 Kings 7: 1-12. GARDENS AND ORCHARDS—parks of beautiful trees, with fruit trees. V. 6. POOLS OF WATER—the remains of these pools or reservoirs are still seen a few miles south-west from Jerusalem. V. 7. GOT—brought or procured. BORN IN MY HOUSE—these from their natural faithfulness were, on this account, esteemed of special value. V. 8. SILVER AND GOLD—see the account of Solomon's riches in 1 Kings 10: 14-29. PECULIAR TREASURE—rare and curious things highly esteemed. V. 10. WHATSOEVER MINE EYES DESIRED—he had no wish ungratified.

II.—V. 11. THEN I TOOK—he took a careful survey of the whole, and found that all he had gained was not worth the labor. NO PROFIT—no permanent, satisfying portion. Life with its highest joys is profitless without a higher end—without another life. V. 12. WHAT CAN THE MAN DO—or other man could possibly have the power to make the trial of these things as he had. V. 13. WISDOM EXCELLETH FOLLY—worldly wisdom, not heavenly or true piety, is here meant. It exceeds folly as much as light exceeds darkness. But it does not yield the solid, permanent good that man craves. All worldly things are unsatisfying. The wisdom that is from above, the hope of a blessed life beyond the grave, is the only satisfying good.

WHAT HAVE I LEARNED?

1. That sensual pleasures are unsatisfying and debasing.
2. That wealth and luxury cannot afford real enjoyment.
3. That worldly honors can give no enduring joy.

4. That worldly wisdom and learning yield but temporary satisfaction.

5. That we should set our affection on things above, not on things on the earth. Col. 3: 2

THE TEACHER IN HIS CLASS.

In every lesson, as far as possible, stick to one point. Do not attempt to cram the mind of your pupil with too much. Say to yourself, "Such and such is the point in my lesson, let all the rest of my teaching revolve around that." One point fixed on the mind is better than twenty "in at one ear and out at the other."

Be simple. Do not shoot over the head off your scholar. Little Johnnie was very anxious to go to Aunt Susan's. When his mother inquired why he was so very anxious to go there, he replied, "Because aunt Susan always puts the ginger-snaps on the lowest shelf." If the teacher in a Sunday-school class talks of "protoplasm," "antipodes," "the sun culminating at noon," and like things, there will be little or no interest, but if he puts "the ginger-snaps on the lowest shelf," he will not fail to hold the attention of the little ones.

Do not preach. Here is a temptation, especially if the love of God is in your heart. But there is a time for everything, and in teaching children, bear in mind that they will remember long what they tell you but will soon forget what you tell them. This is the difference between a good teacher and a poor one. A good teacher will draw out the observations and reflections of the scholar, and so make him remember; a poor teacher gives him a lot of information, which is no sooner heard than forgotten, because the child has not been worked, and takes no part in the lesson.

Don't neglect the dull children. There is such a temptation to push forward the clever ones and neglect the rest, but it is the second half of a class which is the test of a good teacher. It is easy enough to teach a child who is anxious to learn, but the dull and stupid ones surely want most care.

For their benefit be graphic. You are teaching the parable of "the sower." Picture out the crowds, the lake, the hills around, the boat, throw life and reality into the scene. An able writer, describing this, makes little boys trying to spell Peter's name backwards on the stern of the boat. Or your lesson is on Simeon detained by Joseph as a prisoner. Picture the feelings of the wives watching the return of their husbands from a distance, and seeing one short—their agony of suspense to know which it was. A young teacher once described Peter praying on the house top—the flat roof, the sea-beach below him, the sun shining on the waves, etc.—to a class of big manufacturing "Brummagem" boys, and the next Sunday the lesson had hardly begun, before one began, and the whole number chimed in: "O teacher, please tell us again about Peter, and the waves, and the roof—it was so nice!"—Selected.

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