

Lesson VIII.

WORLD'S TEMPERANCE LESSON

November 23, 1902

Isaiah 28: 1-7. Study Isa. 28: 1-13. Commit to memory v. 7. Read Isaiah, 28.

1 Woe to the crown of pride to the drunkards of Eph'raim, whose glorious beauty is a fading flower, which is on the head of the fat valleys of them that are overcome with wine!

2 Behold, the Lord hath a mighty and strong one, which as a tempest of hail and a destroying storm, as a flood of mighty waters overflowing, shall cast down to the earth with the hand.

3 The crown of pride, the drunkards of Eph'raim, shall be trodden under feet:

4 And the glorious beauty, which is on the head of the fat valley, shall be a fading flower, and as the hasty fruit before the summer; which when he thant

Revised Version—1 Of; 2 And to the fading flower of his glorious beauty; 3 Is; 4 Of; 5 Fading flower of his glorious beauty, which is on the head of the fat valley, shall be as the hasty fruit, etc.; 6 Back the battle at the gate.

EXPLANATION

Connection—The temperance lesson of to-day is from Isaiah. In his day not judges, but kings, governed the people. There were two kingdoms, Judah, with Jerusalem as capital, and Israel, or Ephraim, the northern kingdom, with Samaria as capital. Isaiah is addressing the rulers of Judah (v. 14), warning them to profit by the terrible fate (v. 2) that was about to overtake Samaria, because of the people's sin, v. 1. One of the greatest sins of the age was drunkenness.

1. Woe! implying coming calamity. To the crown of pride . . . and to the fading flower; referring to Samaria, the capital of the northern kingdom. The city is here called: (1) The pride-crown (it crowned the hill), that is, the crown of which they are proud, and (2) the fading flower: through the vices of the people its glory was quickly to pass away. The drunkards; hard drinking was a crying sin of the age. (See Amos 6: 6.) Of Eph'raim; the northern kingdom of the ten tribes (1 Kings 11: 31), so called because Ephraim was the leading tribe. On the head of the fat valleys. Samaria was situated upon a vine-clad hill, like a lofty crown, at the head of the fertile valley of Shechem.

2, 3 A strong one; the power of Assyria, the strongest nation of the time. It was the instrument which God used for the punishment of His people. A tempest of hail, etc. Like a storm of hail, or a great flood, Assyria was to sweep Samaria away. Trodden under feet; as a flower is crushed by the

looketh upon it seeth, while it is yet in his hand he eateth it up.

5 In that day shall the Lord of hosts be for a crown of glory, and for a diadem of beauty, unto the residue of his people.

6 And for a spirit of judgment to him that sitteth in judgment, and for strength to them that turn the battle to the gate.

7 But they also have erred through wine, and through strong drink are out of the way; the priest and the prophet have erred through strong drink, they are swallowed up of wine, they are cut of the way through strong drink; they err in vision, they stumble in judgment.

storm. Three years later the people were carried into captivity, 2 Kings 17: 6.

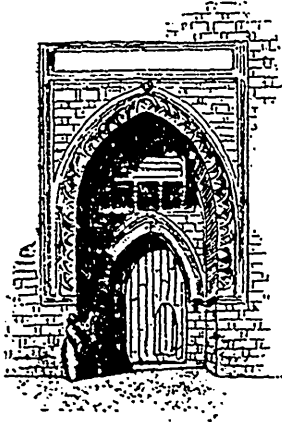
4 The hasty fruit. The Rev. Ver. reads "the firstripe fig." It was an early June fig, and therefore greatly relished. The fig harvest is usually in August. While it is yet in his hand, etc. It passed from hand to mouth as soon as pulled. The figure denotes the eagerness with which Assyria would seize and swallow up Samaria.

5 In that day; of terrible judgment against Samaria. A crown of glory; instead of the "crown of pride," v. 1. A diadem of beauty; as opposed to the fading beauty of Samaria, v. 1. The residue; those who remain, when the pride and beauty of the drunkards have perished. God will crown them with the joy and delight of His presence, if they will but obey Him. Most of these were in the land of Judah, the southern kingdom, but there were some faithful souls in the northern kingdom also. It is often the "residue" that saves an erring people from utter and swift destruction.

6 For a spirit of judgment. He will inspire them with a spirit of justice. That sitteth in judgment; that is, to administer justice, Ps. 9: 4. And for strength. He would give them manly vigor and valor. That turn the battle to the gate; to the enemy's gate, carrying the war into his territory.

7 But they also; the people of Judah. Have erred through wine. Judah had sinned, as well as Samaria, and must repent. The priest, etc. The sin of intemperance had defiled even the religious teachers. (See Lev. 10: 9.) Swallowed up of wine. They swallowed the wine, and it in time swallowed them in ruin. They err in vision; could not see God's will clearly. Stumble in judgment; giving wrong decisions.

8-13 A revolting picture of drunkenness is given in v. 8; the mocking reply of the drunken revellers in vs. 9, 10; and in vs. 11-13 Isaiah tells them of the punishment of their sin. "He will now speak to them through foreign conquerors, v. 11; compare Deut. 28: 47-49. If we will not hear God's loving and patient call to repentance, He will speak to us through cruel enemies. God had called them to 'rest.' They would not hear that call; so He now sent them conflict and destruction."



A City Gate—Peloubet