



LESSON,—MARCH 28, 1909.

Temperance Lesson.

Prov. xxiii., 29-35. Memory verses 29, 30.

Golden Text.

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

Home Readings.

- Monday, March 22.—Prov. xxiii., 29-35.
Tuesday, March 23.—Prov. xxiii., 15-25.
Wednesday, March 24.—Isa. v., 11-24.
Thursday, March 25.—I. Kings xx., 13-21.
Friday, March 26.—Matt. xxiv., 42-51.
Saturday, March 27.—Gal. v., 13-23.
Sunday, March 28.—Eph. v., 6-20.

FOR THE JUNIOR CLASSES.

If there is an end to anything, Willie, do you think it is likely to have a beginning? Does everything that has an end have a beginning, too? Suppose you were to travel along the longest road you know of, would you ever come to the end? Yes, because everything that has a beginning has an end, too. It is the end of something that our golden text speaks about to-day. Who can say the golden text? 'At the last' it says; that means 'when you come to the end.' What about the end that this verse speaks of? It isn't pleasant, but very much the reverse. Every one of you has been stung at some time, haven't you, either by a mosquito, a bee, or a wasp, or something like that, and the sting was very disagreeable. That was because of the poison that the little insect put into your body. It irritated and hurt you because the body doesn't like poison, and tried to get rid of it. A snake's bite is something like that only very much worse. Do you know that the snakes in India kill thousands of people and animals every year? An adder's bite is very poisonous. But what our verse speaks about isn't really a serpent or an adder, but something that is 'like' them. What do you think it is? It is the drinking of strong drink that is meant. We have often spoken about the harm that is done in the world by this great evil, but so long as it keeps on fighting us we have to keep on fighting it and training up more soldiers to fight it all the time. You know a soldier has to keep on drilling and doing the same things over and over again so as to be quite ready at any time when he may be called upon to fight, and we are temperance soldiers drilling so as to be always ready to fight for God against His great enemy, strong drink. We said at the beginning of our lesson that everything which had an end had a beginning, too. Now if the end that a drinker of strong drink comes to, is so disagreeable that it is like a serpent's bite, what is the beginning like? Does our lesson say anything at all about the beginning? (verse 31).

FOR THE SENIORS.

The temperance question is more than ever a live question in the world to-day. Not that in all the history of the world true wisdom has been anything but a declared enemy of fermented liquor as a beverage. The cry of the wise man against it in to-day's lesson is by no means the only warning from the long dead past that time has preserved for us. Among the Egyptian papyri there is one as old as 3,600 B.C., on which we find among the moral aphorisms a warning against wine-shops. "My son," it says, "do not linger in the wine-shop; thou fallest on the ground, thy limbs become weak as those of a child." Homer, the great Greek poet of antiquity, makes his hero Hector say:
Inflaming wine, pernicious to mankind,
Unnerves the limbs and dulls the noble mind.
It is by no means a new warfare that we are waging to-day, but the length and bitter-

ness of the struggle is no reason to the brave heart for giving up and playing the coward. No matter how small we may think our influence is let us at least cast its weight on the right side. We can at least sign the pledge and keep it. In the early days of Israel Moses laid upon every man who built a house (with the flat-roofs that were used in the East) the necessity of building a battlement about the roof (Deut. xxii., 8). No one might plead the excuse that the house was built for himself and that he was quite able to keep himself from falling over the edge. The fact remained that another not so confident might venture upon the roof where his friend walked with such pleasure and comfort, and the builder of the house must guard against the possibility of the fall of such an one as well as any mischance or false step of his own. Our liberty on a question which we say concerns ourselves alone may well be the warrant for another not so seemingly strong to copy our walk, and who shall then say that God does not regard us as bearing that man's 'blood on our soul'? We cannot escape the fact that, whether we like it or not, we are our brother's keeper. Even human law will bear that out: should you know that one man was lying in wait to murder another and do nothing about it, would your plea be admitted that 'it was none of my business'? Some one has wisely said that, if it is a small sacrifice to give up wine, one should do it for the sake of others, but if it is a great sacrifice, that alone should be a wise man's warning, and one should do it for one's own sake.

(SELECTIONS FROM TARBELL'S 'GUIDE.')

Verse 31. 'Two Boundary Lines.' Between the State of Ohio and the State of Kentucky the boundary is established and defined. Any one crossing from one state into the other would know it, if not otherwise, by the state of his wet feet. But between the State of Ohio and the State of Indiana, while the boundary is equally well established, it is not defined at all to the traveller. Any man might easily pass from one state into the other without knowing that he had crossed the line, and without intending to do so at all.

And so likewise in the moral life. Between abstinence and temperance, not only in the matter of drink, but in all questions, there is a boundary line both established and defined. No one will ever have any difficulty in perceiving this line. A blind man can locate it. But between temperance and excess there is no such line at all, and a man may pass from the country of temperance into the country of excess without any intention of doing so, with indeed the firmest purpose to do nothing of the kind. It is the invisibility of its boundaries that makes the moral danger of residence in the land of temperance indulgence so much greater than the Spartan citizenship of total abstinence. Men do not mean to go over from temperance to excess. As a matter of fact, I suppose that almost no one ever deliberately goes over the boundary into excess, meaning to do so. He only gets over because the boundary line which he has crossed was unmarked and undetectable.—Robert E. Speer, in 'The Marks of a Man.'

It takes two centuries to transform the savage into a citizen: let the saloon do its work, and it takes but a single hour to transform the citizen into the savage.—Luther B. Wilson.

Beware of corkscrews; corkscrews have sunk more people than cork-jackets ever saved.—Sir Thomas Lipton.

If thou wouldst conquer thy weakness, thou must never gratify it.—Penn.

Junior C. E. Topic.

Sunday, March 28.—Topic—Mohammed's followers in Persia and Turkey. Acts iii., 25, 26. (Missionary meeting.)

C. E. Topic.

- Monday, March 22.—The book of Jonah. Jonah iv.
Tuesday, March 23.—The book of Daniel. Dan. ii., 28-45.
Wednesday, March 24.—Ruth, the immigrant. Ruth i., 15-22.
Thursday, March 25.—The book of John. John iii., 16; xx., 30, 31.
Friday, March 26.—The book of Acts. Acts i., 6-12.

Saturday, March 27.—The book of Revelation. Rev. xi., 15; xxii., 1-5.

Sunday, March 28.—Topic—Great missionary books, home and foreign. Isa. lxii., 6-12.

Religious News.

The Rev. F. B. Meyer has recently returned from South Africa, where he made some interesting discoveries. He spent one evening at the house of a great-granddaughter of William Carey, and saw in her possession the Bible used by Carey in translating the Scriptures into Hindu. The book contains Carey's own signature, and is dated May 9, 1845. Another discovery was a letter written by Dr. Livingstone to Dr. Murray, now in the care of his daughter, Miss Murray, the head of the Girls' Seminary at Graaf Reinet. This letter, written in 1843, contains an appreciation of the hospitality Dr. Livingstone received during a stay at Dr. Murray's mission.

As if by enchantment, the old order has changed, and the capital of China no longer typifies the moldering traditions of the Manchu hierarchy, but rather the new national instincts and aspirations of the Chinese people. On the immediate causes of the transformation we need not dwell, for they are known to the world—the aftermath of the Boxer madness, which brought the railway and the outer world to the very gates of the Palace; the continued occupation of the city, and its road to the sea, by the military forces of the allied Powers; then, five years later, the amazed awakening of all Asia to the earth-shaking fact that Oriental armies had successfully challenged the boasted supremacy of the white races; last, and most vital, the creation and pressure of Chinese public opinion, articulate through the new press.

As a secular journalist, F. A. McKenzie, the well-known foreign correspondent of the 'London Mail,' says in the London 'Christian World': 'The greatest civilizing force in China during the last half-century, and especially during the last fifteen or twenty years, has been Christianity. It has broken down the barriers and has transformed the attitude of the people.'

And again: 'A stranger stopped me. "I can not understand," he said, "why you, a newspaper man, should advocate missionary work. It is not your business. Why do you meddle with it?" "I do it because I am a Christian Imperialist," I replied. The man still looked puzzled, so I went on: "I believe that England stands for good homes, for kindness to children, for a high standard of womanhood and for peace. The white man's civilization is the best the world has seen, and the white man's civilization is based on Christianity. The more British influence spreads the more our ideals prevail. I know that every missionary is an active campaigner, not merely for a new theology, but also for a new life, a life based on the foundation of our civilization—the cross. I want the white man's ideals to triumph not for the glory of the whites, but for the betterment of woman life and child life throughout the world."

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