

The Sunday-School

FOURTH QUARTER,
LESSON IX.—Nov. 27.

WORLD'S TEMPERANCE SUNDAY.

Isaiah 28: 1-13.

THE LESSON includes the verses selected, with their applications to the present day.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*They also have erred through wine, and through strong drink are out of the way.*—Isa. 28: 7.

HISTORICAL SETTING.—Time. About B. C. 725, two or three years before the tragic end of the northern kingdom, B. C. 722.

THE PROPHET CALLS ON THE PEOPLE TO LOOK AT WHAT IS TAKING PLACE IN THE NORTHERN KINGDOM.—Vs. 1-6. The prophet is troubled on account of his own people. He sees them drifting toward destruction. Palestine lay between two great nations—Assyria on the northeast and Egypt on the southwest. Each wanted this narrow intermediate country. The Assyrians from trying to capture Samaria and devastating the country. Egypt was making overtures to Judea, and the latter had made an agreement with them, which the prophet calls a "covenant with death." But the Jews seemed unconscious of their danger. To open their eyes the prophet bids them see what was going on in the kingdom of Israel.

Their moral condition.—*Woe. A warning that woe was coming. To the crown of pride. The capitol. To the drunkards of Ephraim.* Put for the whole kingdom, because Ephraim was the leading tribe. Whose glorious beauty is a fading flower. It was soon to wither before the Assyrian invasion. *Which are on the head of the fat valleys.* Samaria was thus situated. *Of them, etc.* The possessors of these rich valleys were overcome with wine. *Overcome with wine.* A description of the intellectual and moral effects of drunkenness.

The Consequent Overwhelming Scourge. *The Lord hath.* God was using the Assyrians for punishing these wicked people. *A tempest of hail . . . a destroying storm . . . a flood of mighty waters* describe the violence, the devastating force of the Assyrians. *The crown of pride (of) the drunkards.* Their capital, their riches, all would be trodden under feet. Samaria became a heap of ruins. *Shall be a fading flower.* Withering quickly away. *The hasty fruit.* Samaria was in its beauty, and the power which destroyed was even then ravaging the land.

A Door of Hope.—*In that day.* The better day, the day of redemption, the day of the Messiah's kingdom. There is always a residue of his people, usually translated now as "the remnant." For these shall the Lord of hosts be for a crown of glory. It will be a glory of righteousness, and love. The Lord will bring to them a *spirit of judgment, justice and righteousness, to him that sitteth in judgment, to the rulers.* For strength to defend themselves against all enemies so that they can turn (back) the battle to the gate of the city whence the enemy came.

THE PROPHET'S "THOU ART THE MAN." Vs. 7-13. The prophet now, like Nathan to David, turns to his own people, and warns them. *But they also, those in Judah, who saw the destruction of the neighboring kingdom. They have erred through wine. Like a*

drunkard, their steps were unsteady, they erred from God's commandments. They have wandered into sins of all kinds through the influence of intoxicating liquors. *The priest and the prophet have erred.* Strong drink leads astray even the religious teachers. The highest, the best, are not safe when they use intoxicating liquors. *They are swallowed up of wine.* It eats up their substance, it devours their health, it gnaws off the fine edges of their sense of honor. They become wholly absorbed in their appetite. *They err in vision.* They cannot see things as they are. *They stumble in judgment.* They cannot judge anything correctly.

Filthiness.—Strong drink produces filthiness of mind and body.

The People Resent the Prophet's Interference.—Vs. 9 and 10 are the resentful reply of the Jerusalem drinkers to the prophet's appeal. *Whom shall he teach knowledge?* What right has Isaiah to talk to us thus? *Are we babies just weaned from the milk?* Are we mere children to be chided in this way? *For precept must be upon precept.* The prophet is telling the same story all the time, continually repeating the same warning. *For with stammering lips.* Better, as R. V., "but by men of strange lips." The Assyrian hordes, *will he speak to this people to whom he said, This is the rest.* God had pointed out to them how they might have heard. Therefore by the Assyrian invasion, they should find precept upon precept etc., till they fell backward, and be broken, as came to pass in later years.

TEMPERANCE APPLICATIONS.

THE OVERWHELMING SCOURGE OF STRONG DRINK.—As God had planned for Israel and Judah to become a kingdom of righteousness, an example to all the world, so every one who comes into this world is created for greater things. The wise man watches carefully the effect of different principles, and kinds of living, and habits, as a means of guiding his own life, and a warning against evil. There is always a door of hope. However bad things seem, however many times righteousness and temperance may be defeated for a season, there is no permanent defeat.

All boys should look the following facts in the face:

Mr. Henry L. Boltwood, principal of the high school in Evanston, Ill., wrote to the Chicago Advance, of April, 1902: "At a recent meeting of saloon men in Ohio, one of them warned the others that their craft was in danger unless the army of drinking men could be constantly recruited. 'Men past thirty,' he said, 'seldom acquire a drinking habit. It is the boys who grow up to drink who will furnish our regular customers. Nickels judiciously expended in treating boys will yield us dollars in the future.' The same reasoning will explain why cigarette dealers are anxious to secure the custom of boys.

"Of all forms of the use of tobacco, the cigarette seems best adapted to lead up to the formation of an uncontrollable appetite. 'I firmly believe,' said a prominent physician, himself a smoker, 'that the cigarette is an invention of the devil to kill off the boys. This year I have treated twelve boys under sixteen for heart disease brought on by the use of cigarettes.'"

Every drunkard was once an innocent child. The whole army of drunkards has been made out of innocent children.

A LIVING CHRISTMAS WREATH.

A Suggestion for a special exercise that can be made an attractive part of a Christmas-giving anniversary:

This Christmas wreath will require 14 children, preferably of about the same height,—seven boys and seven girls. Each child has a large red letter cut from thin cardboard or from stiff paper, and fastened in front, with another letter exactly the same fastened to his back, so that, in turning to form the wreath, the letter is never hidden from the audience. The 14 letters spell MERRY CHRISTMAS.

All of the children are concealed behind the scenes or behind a curtain, and come on to the platform one at a time. The second one does not appear until the first has recited his verses, and so on, until the children have spoken. It is well to have the first five children, spelling MERRY, remain in a row until Y has recited, and then, as C appears these five can begin to walk toward the back of the platform, thus starting to form a circle. When the last of the 14 has spoken, the first—letter M—by this time should have reached him, so that the circle is complete. The first and the last child may each have a large loop and end of red ribbon, so that when all join hands the ribbon will make the bow to the wreath. Each child in the wreath may have a short piece of a rope of evergreen to show yet more clearly the wreath idea, and instead of joining hands, they can catch, hold each of the other's bit of green.

The wreath is adapted especially for use where a Santa Claus is a feature of the entertainment, as it makes a good introduction for him. While the last S is reciting, the ringing of sleigh-bells is heard at the proper moment, and at the end of the verse the children jump up and down, shouting Santa Claus. He then appears, and the two ribbon children separate, letting him enter the wreath, and all dance about him. After a speech by Santa Claus, he may receive the gifts of the school.

The boys and girls alternate. As the last verse is more suitable for a boy, it is well to have the wreath start with a girl. The verses follow:

M is for Magi, the wise men of old,
Who came from far countries, their
King to behold,
When his bright star 'way up in the sky
did appear;
And who was their King? Why, a wee
baby dear!

E is for East where the bright star was
seen,
Far over the hills and the wide mead-
ows green.
The wise men kept on both by day and
by night,
And ever their faces were set toward
that light.

R is for Rays from that great glowing
star
That beamed on the Magi who travelled
so far.
The rays shone out softly with tender-
est light,
And showed to the wise men which
pathway was right.

R is for Riches the Magi did bring
From their countries afar to the dear
baby King.



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Fading Hair

They never complained that too long was the way,
And the best that they had at his feet they did lay.

Y is for Yuletide,—that's Christmas, you know,
When trees bloom with toys and with candle-lights glow;
And Y is for young who all love Yuletide, too,—
I'm sure that you love it, for Y stands for You!

C is for Christ-child, the first Christmas gift;
For him, in our carols, glad voices we lift,
For Christ came, all people from sin to set free,
And 'tis in his honor we've lighted our tree.

H is for Hills, where the shepherds by night
Were watching their flocks when the star shone out bright.
'Twas there in the stillness that great message came,
And there that they first heard the dear Christ-child's name.

R is for Ready, and ready were they
When the message was heard, to arise and obey.
Their sheep did they leave, from the hilltops went down,
And came with all haste into Bethlehem town.

I is for Inn where no room could they find
For the dear little baby, the King of mankind.
The inn-keeper knew not how great was the guest
Obliged with the cattle and sheep to find rest.

(Continued on page 15.)

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