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The Sabbath School

INTERNATIONAL LESSON.

Fourth Quarter Lesson 3, Nov. 24 1901

WORLD'S TEMPERANCE LESSON.—Isaiah 5: 8-30.

Print Verses 11-17, 22, 23.

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

HISTORICAL SETTING.

The Author.—Isaiah prophesied from the last years of Uzzah, B. C. 759, till about the close of the reign of Hezekiah, B. C. 698, more than sixty years.

This Prophecy may be a general one, as part of the introduction prefixed by Isaiah to his book of prophecies. It refers to the sins of Judah and their punishment, in order to warn the people against the dangers toward which they were wilfully hastening.

Time.—In the year B. C. 742, ten or eleven years after the first humble shepherd bute had been put up on the site of what was one day to be Rome, Ahaz succeeded his father Jotham as king of Judah. Reaching into other lands, he not only brought back articles of commerce, but luxury and idolatry, vice and intemperance. "Isaiah of Jerusalem raised his voice against the evils of such times, and fortunately we have one of his protests in chaps. 2-5 of his prophecies."—Geikie.

Place.—Jerusalem and Judea.

THE GARDEN OF VINES AND FRUIT TREES. A PARABLE.

What God did for his vineyard. In the first part of the chapter the prophet compares the nation of Israel to a vineyard planted by God. He did everything possible for them, that they might bring forth the best fruits. He placed them in the best country in the world for the purpose. He hedged them round with laws and divine institutions, and with his own loving care. He planted in this vineyard the vines of his promise, his word, his commandments, institutions of religion, instruction in holy things. He placed there the wine-press, which represents the various advantages conferred on the people to help them to bring forth good fruit and present it to the Lord. He gave them prophets and teachers, and hymns and Sabbaths. He prospered them in worldly things. He gave them homes and children. He gave them the possibilities of paradise regained.

What God had a right to expect. He had a right to expect all the fruits which should flourish naturally under such circumstances,—gratitude, obedience, sincere worship, love to God, love to man, intelligence, character, courage, faith, benevolence, missionary work among other nations, indeed, all the fruits of the Spirit.

But the expected fruit was not borne on these vines. "He looked that it should bring forth grapes, and it brought forth wild grapes."

These are described in the verses that follow, including our lesson. They are catalogued in a series of woes, fruits all of them of love of money and love of wine. On account of these sins the Israelites suffered untold woes. They were overwhelmed by enemies. They lost property and the fruits of prosperity. They were carried away captive. And, worse than all, they failed in goodness, usefulness and peace.

The modern gardens of God. God has entrusted to each of us a blessed and fruitful vineyard, which we are to culture for Him. He gives us every means of grace. He expects good fruits. So also to every Christian nation God has certainly given a vineyard, fruitful and protected. Every advantage has been given us for bringing forth the fruits of righteousness, liberty and religion.

THE APPLES OF SODOM.

I. COVETOUSNESS.—Vs. 8-10. Covetousness leads to the selling of strong drink, to renting buildings for saloons and gambling dens. Even members of the church disgrace their profession and their Master by doing this. Officials take bribes, and policemen protect crime and saloons for money in some cities. Nothing but the love of money could induce men to enter upon the degrading business of selling liquor.

II. THE TYRANNY OF STRONG DRINK.—V. 11. *Woe unto them.* Not a wish, but a warning; not vengeance, but a statement of fact. That is up early in the morning. The first thing they think of. That they may follow strong drink. They do not wait for it to tempt them, but seek the tempter. That continues until night. Drinking is the chief business of the day. Whosoever drinks intoxicating liquors at all is in danger of coming to that stage where drinking is his main

business. Till wine inflame them. It sets him on fire of hell. It kindles every bad passion. It burns up body and soul. And the harp and the viol and all the powers of music, and feasting, and social life are joined to enhance the enchanting power of strong drink. The music and song intended to elevate the soul and move the nobler emotions is made to be the procures of vice.

III. DEADNESS OF THE MORAL NATURE.—V. 12. *They regard not the work of the Lord.* They will not look around them and see what God is doing to save them, nor the punishment he sends upon those who continue in their course. Strong drink is an opiate to the conscience, and blinds the eyes to the law of God.

IV. CHAINS AND CAPTIVITY.—V. 13. *My people are gone into captivity.* The northern kingdom was carried captive by the Assyrians while Isaiah was preaching to Judah. This was a warning they should have taken to heart. The intemperate become the slaves of appetite, driven into all excesses and crimes by their taskmaster.

V. IGNORANCE.—*Because they have no knowledge,* which they might have possessed. They were wilfully ignorant. They learned nothing from observation or experience.

VI. POVERTY.—*Their honorable men . . . their multitude.* The distinguished and the undistinguished alike suffer from famine and from thirst. With such examples as we have before us in history and literature, it is idle for any man to pretend to feel insulted by a suggestion of the possibility of his becoming a slave to drink. Neither education nor intellect necessarily places any man above danger.

VII. DEATH AND DESTRUCTION.—Vs. 14-17. *Therefore he that ploweth, because so many more perish through intemperance,* who would have otherwise continued to live many years. *And opened her mouth.* Like some monster ravenous to destroy. *And their glory.* Every good is ruined by intemperance. Great men, great causes, great ideas, great virtues, everything that makes the glory of a nation, have an inveterate enemy in intoxicating liquors. Either the drink habit must perish, or the glory of the nation must perish. It is for every person and every nation to choose. *Their multitude.* Numbers cannot prevent the ruin, but only add to it. *The mean man, etc.* All classes and conditions. *Shall be.* Rather, "is." *The Lord of hosts shall be exalted in judgment.* Every one will see that the punishment is just and necessary, and tends to righteousness. *Then shall the lambs feed after their manner,* the city shall become but a pasture land. *The waste places of the fat lands,* where the few sheep in wide pastures grow fat. *Shall strangers.* Foreigners. This verse is a continuation of the description of the ruin that falls upon those who disobey God.

VIII. INTENSITY OF THE APPETITE AND DESIRE.—V. 18. *That draw iniquity with cords of vanity,* such as deceptive excuses. *With a cart rope.* So strong is their desire for forbidden things that only the strength of a cart rope can express it. The worst punishment of sin is a sinful nature. The worst punishment of drinking is an appetite so strong that it breaks through all restraints, and insists on being satisfied at any cost to self or to others.

IX. DEFIANCE TO GOD AND HIS LAWS.—V. 19. *Let him make speed.* Let God come to punish us if he will; who fears? They do not believe that the evil threatened will ever come.

X. DISTORTED VIEWS OF RIGHT AND WRONG.—V. 20. *Call evil good.* They baptize wickedness with good names. They advocate the cause of strong drink as promoting temperance and liberty. People will sell liquor, and let their buildings for saloons, and yet not seem conscious of sin.

XI. SELF CONCEIT.—V. 21. *Wise in their own eyes.* The drunkard is often the last person to know how much he is under the power of liquor. He thinks he is safe when all his friends know that he is on the brink of a precipice.

XII. TENDENCY TO EXCESS.—V. 22. *Mighty to drink wine.* The habit grows by indulgence. They can do great things in drinking. But the cup is mightier than they.

XIII. DISHONESTY, BRIBERY.—V. 23. *Which justify the wicked for reward.* Who for the sake of votes or money or influence, give wrong judgments in court, help the wicked to escape justice, make bad laws. *Take away the righteousness,* etc. Deprive men of their just rights for the sake of bribes.

THE RESULTS, vs. 24-30, are compared to a devouring flame, and to a devastating army, "whose arrows are sharp," and "their wheels like a whirlwind," the sound of their coming like "the roaring of a lion,"

and "like the roaring of the sea."

WHAT SHALL WE DO ABOUT IT?

1. Cultivate all the good fruits. Good crops help to drive out the weeds, the poison plants, the apples of Sodom. Every virtue is so much gained over vice. Every truly converted person is one saved from the ruin of intemperance. Every heart full of love is a victor over passion and appetite.

2. Take the pledge, first in your hearts, and then openly as a safeguard, and as a power by which to influence others; and then get every one possible to sign the pledge.

3. Let us do all we can to shut up grog shops, to make every town, and village, and country place and the whole country prohibitionist by law.

"A little girl whose elder brother's lack of compassion for small creatures distressed her, injected this into her bedtime prayer. 'Oh, Lord, don't let the little birds get into Robbie's trap in the garden. Please don't let them! Oh, I know they won't! They can't! Amen.'"

"Dolly," said her mother, "what makes you so certain?"

"Why, cause—cause I went out in the garden and smashed the trap."

"We pray for souls threatened by the traps of Satan, but that's not enough. We smash the traps."

Pass Them On.

What do you do with all the old papers and magazines you don't want? asked a young lady of an older one.

Oh, I keep a barrel in the wood-house for such things. The girls use some of them to start the fire and to rub off the stoves, but when they accumulate too fast I have Pat make a bonfire in the back yard.

The young lady made some sort of a noise that sounded like a groan. What's the matter? Are you sick? questioned her friend.

O, was the answer, I was thinking of all the good literature you've burned up. I wish you'd let me ransack that barrel in the woodshed.

Her friend laughed. You are welcome to do so, she said. Go and help yourself, and if you find any treasures, you will—

Pass them on, said the young lady, smiling.

She found treasures, even more than she had expected. There were magazines, illustrated papers, good religious papers, and children's publications. With a big kitchen apron on, belonging to the cook, the young lady sifted everything in the barrel. She was obliged to go home after her small brother to help carry the treasures. He was delighted to come to the rescue with his little cart, especially as he received five shining new coppers for his assistance.

What are you going to do with all these books and papers, Marion? he asked.

Pass them on!

Yes, to those who haven't any.

Oh, let me have that pretty little picture-book for Jim Stone, won't you, Marion? he asked eagerly.

Who is Jim Stone?

Oh, he's a boy lives over in the alley; he broke his leg. I've been to see Jim, Marion and he's awful poor. He gets awful lonesome, he says. Can't he have this book?

Why, yes, of course he can, was the ready answer.

Oh, if you could have seen the joy that little book, with gaily colored pictures and bright stories, carried to the small, sick boy, you too would have called it a treasure. Before the day closed Marion had distributed all of the literature rescued from the barrel.

The children's periodicals went to the Children's Hospital, making many a weary heart glad, and causing many little pale faces to glow.—Mrs. W. S. Farley, in New York Observer.

Arrows Shot at a Venture.

A vain woman is a woman in vain.

Not all are despicable who are despised.

The devil may be idle and catch a lazy man.

One may join the church and not be a part of it.

He who would be well-spoken of by all, must die.

To call any man a divine is to reproach divinity.

A diamond on the finger may be one less jewel in the crown.

Majorities have a right to rule only when majorities rule right.

He who digs pits for others will not be pitied if he falls in himself.

Never slander even the devil; don't blame him for what you are responsible for.

He who is in want of anything which he might get if he chose, wants most of all a purpose to get it.

Sweep not your anger out through the door of the lips, but burn it up within in the fires of the heart.

Long-suffering is a fruit that blossoms in the night, ripens in the shade and is, rich with the flavors of heaven.

He who takes as his motto,—every man for himself and the devil take the hindmost, is himself the last in the race.

Majorities have no right to do wrong.

The best place to prune a bad tree is at its roots.

He who eats the eggs will raise no chickens.

Some people's clothes are the best part of them.

You will never wash out sin with ro-c-water.

The soul that trusts Christ fully will be fully blest.

A diamond is not less a diamond even though covered with mud.

Better be with a minority in the ark than with a majority in the flood.

He who waits for a dead man's shoes would much better earn his own.

Sorrow for the dead is a light thing compared with sorrows for the dead in sin.

The most impolite of all guests is death, who often comes without warning and unwanted.

He has true meekness who, being wronged, sees his enemy harming himself most and sorrows for him.

He who gets between the devil and the deep sea, better fight the devil, for the devil will flee, but not the sea.

Worshipping the Creator through his works is apt to degenerate into worshipping a creature more than the Creator.—The Free Baptist.

Boys and Girls in the Bible.

What is the first Bible story about a boy?

What boy had a present of a beautiful coat from his father?

What became of his coat? What became of the boy?

What girl kept watch of a little babe who afterwards became a mighty ruler?

How were many boys and girls saved from death while many others were slain?

What boys were blessed by Jacob?

What boys played by Joseph?

What girl caused the recovery of her master from a fearful disease?

What boy became king when eight years old?

What girl did Jesus take by the hand?—Exchange.

Christ began His sermon on the mount by declaring that the poor, the suffering, the mourning, are blessed. Those whom we call unhappy, He calls blessed for they shall be comforted.

More dear in the sight of God and his angels than any other conquest is the conquest of self, which each man, with the help of Heaven can secure for himself.

It is easier to go six miles to hear a sermon, than to spend one quarter of an hour in meditating on it when I come home.

The richest experiences of life never come to those who try to win them selfishly. Anna R. Brown.

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