

CHRISTENDOM'S TEMPERANCE LESSON

- ISAIAH 28:1-13. - NOVEMBER 29. -

Golden Text: – "I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection." – 1 Cor. 9:27.

OUR lesson pertains to natural Israel and the fact that it was drunken with pride and prosperity and because of these warned of a coming overthrow. Only those who recognize that there is a Spiritual Israel, antitypical, are able to appreciate many of the promises of the Old Testament. The Apostle Peter declares that "Not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things now freely reported to you." (I Pet. 1:12.) Whoever, therefore, merely reads the Old Testament prophecies as relating to matters and conditions then present and impending fails to get the real instruction and blessing designed of the Lord.

Applying the lesson to Spiritual Israel, so-called Christendom, we find similar declarations of drunkenness referring to an intoxication of error, false doctrines and theories. Thus we read that the scarlet woman held in her hand an intoxicating cup wherewith she "made drunk all nations." (Rev. 17:2; 18:3.) This figurative use of the word drunkard is more noticeable in Isaiah 51:17; 63:6; Jer. 46:10, and 51:57 than in our lesson. The vomiting mentioned in our lesson is also figurative, as we shall see. We are not disputing that intemperance proportionately prevailed in olden times and that it does now prevail in Christendom. We are merely pointing out that the Lord's disputation is less with the literal drunkard than with the mentally and morally intoxicated of our day.

As prosperity led the way to the intoxication of pride, so the prosperity of Christendom during the past century has led up to great boasting, pride and self-consciousness. One denomination

boasts that it completes a new meeting-house for every day in the year. Others boast of the amount they expend upon missions, and altogether they felicitate themselves on their conversion of the world to Christ. Little do they seem to realize that if the heathen were all converted to the same condition which prevails in Christendom it would mean that they would be just ready to convert over and over again. Still worse! It would mean that larger percentages than at present would be put into prisons and insane asylums. Little do they seem to realize that the number of the heathen is twice as great as a century ago, according to their own statistics.

FALL BACKWARD, BROKEN, SNARED

These words from the last verse of our lesson remind us of similar words in the Psalms, when applied to the stumbling and fall of natural Israel from God's favor upon their rejection of Christ at his first advent. (Rom. 11:9; Psa. 69:22.) Our lesson applies to the fall of Babylon (Christendom) now in the end of this age, at the time of our Lord's second advent.

From this standpoint is seen in our lesson God's prophecy of the doom of Babylon the Great, the mother of harlots, and of her daughters, the various Babylonish systems which have sprung from her. Verses 3 and 4 tell us that the crown of pride will quickly fade, and the beauty of the great system which human ingenuity has built up and named Christendom will be like a fading flower, and like the early fruit it will quickly disappear; but that "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." That is to say, the earthly beauty of present ecclesiastical systems will disappear; but to a remnant of faithful ones here the Lord himself will become more glorious, because in this day this remnant, or "little flock," specially blessed of the Lord, will be enabled to see the breadth, height and depth of the

love of God, passing all understanding. More than this: this class will have a spirit of judgment, justice, and balance of mind in respect to the wonderful events transpiring, so that they will not be overtaken unawares in the day of the Lord, which will come, however, as a thief and a snare upon the great mass, upon the world in general. Furthermore, the Lord in this day to this [R4288 : page 359] class will be a strength and power, enabling them to "turn back the battle at the gate." (Vs. 6.) So that while outwardly there may be conflicts, inwardly they will have peace.

"THEY STUMBLE IN JUDGMENT"

Returning again to the nominal system, which is to fall, the Prophet points out that the priests and the prophets of the Church have erred through the intoxication of false doctrine. On this account "they err in vision, they stumble in judgment." They do not stumble in their feet, but in their minds. An actual spree would surely do them far less harm than the mental intoxication under which they are laboring, because it would be far easier to escape from the former than the latter. The intoxication from the cup that has made all nations drunk affects various subjects. The intoxicated think that they are about to convert the world, instead of remembering that the Redeemer said, and also the apostles, that our Lord would come at his second advent and that he would receive his Bride to himself, set up his Kingdom and then conquer the world. (I Cor. 15:23-25.) Their intoxication of error leads them to fear that the Almighty has predestinated that all the world, except the "little flock," the Elect, are bound for either purgatory or eternal torment. Such as get sobered up from this false doctrine are apt to become intoxicated with the spirit of the world and the mingled drinks of Evolution, Higher Criticism, Agnosticism, Christian Science, New Theology, etc., and this last intoxication is, if anything, worse than the first. All of these intoxications of error pervert the judgment and hinder a proper

view of the divine Word and the simplicity of the Gospel of which Saint Paul was not ashamed.

"ALL TABLES FULL OF VOMIT"

It is not supposable that all the tables of the people of Israel were literally full of vomit, with no place clean. Not literal tables were intended. In Romans 11:9 the Apostle, speaking of the Israelites, said, "Let their table be made a snare, and a trap, and a stumbling-block, and a recompense unto them." The Israelites had but one table, the table of divine truth, which God spread for them and upon which he heaped bountifully his gracious promises from the Law and the prophecies. The Israelites stumbled over those promises and became proud and vain and imagined that God's favor would not pass them by, and thus they stumbled as a people, and left the way for us who are Gentiles to be brought nigh to God, that we might have access to the spiritual table supplied with the "exceeding great and precious promises" of God's grace and Truth.

Our lesson refers to tables, whereas Israel had but one table. Christendom today is divided into various sects and parties and each has its own party which it calls the table of the Lord. Each claims that its doctrinal table is of divine provision. Examining these creed-tables, **[R4288 : page 360]** these confessions of faith, we find they do indeed present their votaries certain Scriptural truths, but alas, these have been so mixed and conglomerated with human traditions of the dark ages as to be unwholesome and some of them nauseating! None of them is presented in attractive, appetizing form. What is true of one is true of all, with slight modifications. Our Presbyterian friends on their table make a specialty of such dishes as Sovereign Grace, Divine Foreordination, Predestination, Election and Reprobation. There is an element of Truth running through all of these; but alas, in the condition in which these were prepared in

the Dark Ages, so much of the old lady's leaven is intermingled that now they are thoroughly fermented, injurious!

The Methodist table is slightly different. It omits the special viands preferred by Calvinists and instead has dishes labeled Free Grace, God's Love, A Chance for All, etc.; but when we look into these dishes our disappointment is unspeakable. The dish, Free Grace, simply signifies that God is will-less, or powerless, respecting the salvation of mankind and, doing his very best, will rescue but a handful of saints, while the great masses of mankind will be eternally lost. The dish labeled "Love of God," upon examination, proves to be merely a statement of God's willingness to show his love to his saints and "little flock," but that for the masses of mankind he has provided eternal torture as an expression of his love for his enemies, *quite in contradiction to his instruction to his saints that they should love their enemies and do good to them!*

Peering into the third dish to see what kind of chance for all is provided, we find that, stripped of subterfuges, it really means not a chance, but a certainty of eternal damnation and torture to every member of the race except the few who in the present life hear of the "only name" and accept the Gospel proposition and take up their cross to follow Christ.

The Roman and Greek Catholics have their tables, too, and, in contrast, these tables, perhaps, are not so bad as either of the foregoing. Their main dish is Purgatory and the redeeming feature of it, of which they boast, is that its roasting and boiling, frying and stewing will not be endless, but that, by virtue of masses, indulgences, popes' jubilees, etc., the hundreds and thousands of years due to be spent by mankind in the horrible place may be somewhat curtailed.

Our Baptist friends have the same dishes upon their tables that the Presbyterians and Congregationalists have on theirs –

Election, Predestination, etc., with eternal torment for the non-elect, but they have one large central dish of which they principally take note and draw to our attention. This is labeled Immersion. However, instead of this dish enlarging the scope of the Elect, it seriously contracts it by claiming that while the Elect will be saved and all the non-Elect be lost, there is the further test that all the Elect must be immersed in order to gain numbers for the Church of Christ, which alone they claim is to be saved.

PROUD OF THEIR TABLES NO LONGER

The time was when each denomination prided itself respecting its table, and publicly advertised its various dishes and the Christian strength and refreshment to be obtained from these; but that time has gone. They boast of their doctrinal dishes no longer. They are ashamed of their visions and prophecy, of the things they once saw to be beautiful and declared to be such. Now, instead of boasting of these, they seek to hide them. Their nausea as respects their own doctrinal standards is graphically pictured by the Lord in the words of the Prophet when he declares that "All tables are full of vomit and filthiness, so that there is no place clean." – Vs. 8.

Alas, alas! the Editor, and perhaps a large majority of this journal's readers, once sat down to those tables. But, thank God, clearer light upon his Word has led us to reject and eject the cruel misrepresentations of the divine character and plan which once intoxicated us! Our dear friends of the Presbyterian denomination felt so disgusted with the Westminster Confession that they spread a new cloth over it all and adopted a very short and colorless creed for public use. They made a mistake, however, in allowing the filthiness of the old table to remain. They should have gotten rid of the entire mass and should have sought the Lord and his Word for the better spiritual food he is so willing to supply. Thank God some of us have realized the

Lord's willingness to spread for us a fresh table directly from his Word, laden with the true promises of the Scriptures, exceedingly great and precious! How our souls now rejoice and we desire to continue always at this table feasting upon the "things new and old"! How we see fulfilled to us our Lord's promise that at his second advent, if we should hear the knock of his presence and open our hearts by faith to receive him, he would come in to us and cause us to sit down to meat and come forth and serve us – "things new and old"! What a rich, blessed feast we have had! Our only sorrow seems to be that our dear friends still stick by the tables and the denominational names, which in spirit they reject, and refuse to come with us and partake of the Lord's bounty, "Which satisfies our longing as nothing else can do."

"WHOM WILL HE TEACH KNOWLEDGE?"

The point here is that Christendom is astray and stumbling, because intoxicated with error, and the question is pertinent, How can the Lord correct them and teach them knowledge? – substitute knowledge for ignorance and superstition. He has given us in the Gospel of Christ a most glorious message, "Good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people"; but whom will he make to understand this? This is the query of the Prophet. The answer is given, "Them that are weaned from the milk and drawn from the breast"; them that are no longer babes in Christ, but willing to feed upon the strong meat of the divine Word.

But alas! many of these, awakening from their intoxication of error, are inclined to stumble into agnosticism in some of its forms. They are not willing to look for the Lord's message in the way he has been pleased to give it – "Here a little and there a little." They want to open their Bibles and to read therefrom, directly and explicitly, what will be harmonious and reasonable. But this is not God's way. They must accept the Truth as he

provides it for them, "Here a little, and there a little." They must be prepared to receive the message of Truth and Grace – because it is the Lord's – from other lips than those of their own denomination and in quarters from which they had not expected it to come. Whoever is really Truth-hungry and sincere must thus be marked out and separated from others. And this is the will of God, for he is seeking those who follow not human tradition, but who hearken for and follow the voice of the true Shepherd. **[R4289 : page 361]**

THEY WOULD NOT HEAR

God's message to his people is for those who have "an ear to hear" – not to the others. To the hearing ear he says, Follow my voice, by whomsoever it is proclaimed and through whatever lips, and study my Truth and receive spiritual strength therefrom – "Line upon line, and precept upon precept, here a little and there a little," and this will give you rest, peace, satisfaction. This is the rest wherewith he causes the weary to rest and this is the refreshing which he has provided for the true sheep. But others will not hear. The spirit of the world and its various intoxications attract them, hold them; and hence the Lord's final message to these is that because of their rejection of the Truth in the form in which he had presented it they will "fall backward and be broken and snared and taken." But the "little flock" who accept the divine terms are being richly blessed. These are his jewels whom the Master is now polishing and will shortly translate to glory by the First Resurrection, that they may constitute the joint-heirs in the glorious Millennial Kingdom, which shall rescue eventually all the world of mankind who desire divine favor from the blindness and intoxication and deceptions of our Adversary, the devil.

"I KEEP MY BODY UNDER"

Our Golden Text is a great lesson of itself. It brings to our attention the fact that, like the Apostle, we should recognize ourselves as New Creatures in Christ Jesus, for whom "old things have passed away and all things have become new," and, acting from this standpoint, the New Creature should keep a continual supervision of the old nature, its desires and affections, and should keep these continually under or subject to the new nature, and the higher law should bring it gradually into full subjection, yet hoping, yet praying for the glorious consummation of the First Resurrection, when the New Creature, the new mind or will shall be clothed upon with the spiritual body. Such a keeping under of the body will include wisdom and control in respect to what we eat, as well as what we drink and what we wear, and our every act, word and thought.

Those who selected today's lesson as one that would assist the cause of total abstinence undoubtedly had excellent intentions, and we desire that it may be profitable to some that we quote here some logical reasons presented favoring total abstinence. Surely all of the Lord's saintly people must feel a deep, sympathetic interest in every move made for the restraint of the great alcohol dragon which has already accomplished so much harm and which we cannot expect will be brought under full control until Messiah's Kingdom shall exercise its power and Satan shall be bound. So while we cannot take our time from the still more important message of the Kingdom, we certainly can express our sympathy towards all who take their stand in opposition to this dragon and on the side of the Lord and general righteousness. This is our excuse for the following Peloubet quotations, which may be helpful to some and specially to the children in the families of our readers: –

THE WORK OF DRAGON ALCOHOL

"We visit a hospital in company with Dr. Wilcox and inquire whether the dragon alcohol, as some say, will make you strong and healthy. Suppose we go out to the Erie County Hospital and ask Dr. Gilray, the superintendent, how many sick he had in the hospital last year, and he tells us two thousand. Well, what made them sick? Oh, a lot of causes. But did the dragon alcohol bite any of them? Oh, yes, about one-half of them were made sick because of the dragon's bite. Yes, I guess more than that if you count those whose parents were bitten by the dragon, and who fell ill because their parents were not strong.

"Again, the dragon's friends will tell you that his bite will give you a clear brain, and make you a jolly good fellow. All right, we all want clear brains in this world, so let us go to some place where they make a study of brains. The man who knows the most about brains in this vicinity is Dr. Hurd, at State Hospital on Forest avenue. Suppose we say to him, 'Doctor, how many people in your hospital this morning?' He replies, 'Seventeen hundred.' 'What made them insane?' 'Oh, a lot of reasons.' 'Well, are any of them insane because they have taken poison into their systems?' 'Yes, lots of them.' 'How many of them?' 'Well, perhaps half of them have either been poisoned themselves or born of parents poisoned.' 'What kind of poison?' 'Oh, alcohol generally.' 'Oh, then they have been bitten by the dragon alcohol?' 'Yes.' 'Well, Doctor, do you think any of them were made insane because they ate too much ice cream?' 'Oh, no, never heard of such a case,' 'Too much meat, too much milk? will any kind of healthful food make one crazy?' 'Oh, no!' 'Well, then, Doctor, if alcohol is a food, as some chemists claim it is, and if it is the only kind of food which ever made people crazy, would you advise our taking it and giving it to our friends?' 'Well, no; I wouldn't.'

"But we want a little more light on this subject of clear brains, so we take a journey down the Lackawanna railroad to

the Craig Colony, where the epileptics are cared for, and we ask Dr. Spratling, 'How many of the patients are epileptics because of alcohol?' And he answers, 'About forty per cent.' Now suppose we go to Massachusetts prison for the criminally insane, and ask the same question; then listen to the awful answer. 'Ninety-three per cent from alcohol.' Well, if that is the way it makes people have clear brains, I guess we had better eat ice cream, cake, bread and butter, etc., which have never been known to make epileptics, idiots, or lunatics."

The doctor's office is not far away. It is a good place for making inquiries, for the desire of good doctors is to prevent people from injuring their health, as well as to cure their diseases when they have them. Let us listen to a little company of them as they express their opinions.

Victor Horsley, M.D., F.R.S., Professor of Clinical Chirurgy, University College, London, speaks: "The bad effect of alcohol on persons performing muscular work is well-known. The evidence is overwhelming that alcohol in small amounts has a most harmful effect on voluntary muscular work."

Dr. T. D. Crothers, superintendent of Walnut Lodge Hospital, Hartford, Conn., declared that alcohol is more dangerous than the disease it is given to correct. "Both alcoholism and tuberculosis, one the 'great white plague' and the other the 'great black one,' are a menace to civilization."

Adolf Fick, M.D., Professor of Physiology, University of Wurzburg, states that "Every dose of alcohol, even the most moderate, diminishes strength. All that man asserts of the strengthening effects of alcohol is a delusion. The well-known poor man's glass during working hours is beyond question injurious. Every penny which the workman spends for alcoholic drinks is not only wasted but employed for a destructive purpose."

August Forel, M.D., Professor of Psychiatry, University of Zurich, says: "Life is considerably shortened by the use of alcohol in large quantities. But a moderate consumption of the same also shortens life by an average of five or six years."

THE BUSINESS VIEW OF ALCOHOL

From the doctor's office we go to the Insurance offices, where a most careful and scientific investigation has been made. The editor of the *Trumpet Call* introduces us, as they tell how alcohol takes away health and life. [R4289 : page 362]

Aetna Life: "Drink diseases the system and shortens life."

Dominion Life: "Weakens constitution to resist disease."

Equitable Mutual Life: "Drink impairs vitality; less likely to throw off disease."

Hartford Life: "Moderate use lays foundation for disease."

Knights Templar and Masonic Mutual Aid: "Total abstainer the better risk."

Massachusetts Mutual Life: "Drink reduces expectation of life nearly two-thirds."

Pacific Mutual Life: "Predisposes to disease."

Royal Templars of Temperance: "Death rate much lower among abstainers."

For the last place we can visit on this day's excursion, we will go into a Court House and listen to the judge. Rev. J. F. Hill of Pittsburg, secretary of the permanent Committee on Temperance of the Presbyterian church, will introduce us. When the judge tells his court-house story he is sitting at a banquet with

the city council and the jurymen in a noted case that had just closed.

"No, I thank you, I never indulge," said the judge, as his companions passed the sparkling wine to him.

His companions rallied him on his change to total abstinence. "Isn't it sudden?" "Wife object?" "Nothing short of the tragic could have made a prohib. out of you."

"Oh, come, tell us what brought you into the teetotaler army!"

Reluctantly the judge told his experience:

"Five years ago – it was five years ago this very day – strange!" A pause.

"You remember the Rushworth case being tried in Sawyer county? It was the longest trial known in the state, and everybody was getting tired of the complications. I was on the bench, and on the day in question had taken something to encourage me, and had also given the jurymen enough to put them in the best of humor. The verdict was 'guilty.' After passing the sentence I asked the young criminal if he had anything to say. He was only twenty years of age. I was sorry for him, but duty is duty, and I felt at that time that I had done mine honorably and justly. The court was packed, and [R4290 : page 362] as the boy arose, a hush prevailed. His mother, father, and two sisters sat in the gallery near the door. His fine eyes lit up as he caught his mother's look of love, and then he said, in a voice I have never been able to forget: 'I am guilty of the charge. I deserve the punishment. I do not wish to place the responsibility of my crime on any shoulders but my own. I am everything the judge says I am – a gambler, a forger, and a heavy drinker, and, as the last witness said, not fit to be in the presence of honest men and

women. I am glad the judge has granted me the privilege of speaking. I see some of my old chums here, and what I say may do them a little good – may keep them from stumbling over the rocks that ruined me."

He looked around until his eyes rested on the seats at the right of the entrance.

"Dr. Pickets, I took my first lesson in gambling from you! You said there was no harm if I did not 'go in too heavy!' I went 'too heavy,' it seems. The boy laughed nervously, and the doctor flushed crimson, and loosened his cravat.

"I took my first lesson in forging from you, Mr. Wyatt. The juror at my right hand jumped from his chair as if shot from a cannon, but said nothing. His adeptness with the pen was well known, and his head drooped with a sense of guilt.

"I took my first drink of brandy from a lady, who serves drinks that sting." A woman started up, she was one who had entertained royally.

"Judge, I am all you say, a gambler, a forger, a drinker, and now you have given me another name – convict. Twenty years – is that the sentence?"

"Father," he said, turning his eyes toward the gallery, "you had a great future planned for your son. I'm sorry I have disappointed your hopes and darkened your home; forgive me!"

"Four months later," continued the judge, taking a paper from his pocketbook, "I received this letter from that young man.

"I always carry it," he said. "This, friends, is what made a teetotaler of me. I've heard the greatest sermons of the greatest preachers, but nothing ever came so near making a Christian out of me as did this letter from that boy in prison. I hope it may yet.

That boy had a martyr's spirit, and I feel sure that if I am ever permitted to pass through that strait and narrow gate, Albert Rushworth will have more to do with my entering than any other human being I ever knew." Judge Morse held the soiled paper nearer the light, and read the last words from the boy he had sentenced to "twenty years at hard labor."

"Judge, I've tried to escape, and am writing this from the hospital ward. I was not quite brave enough to bear the thought that I must pass twenty years in this tomb. I much prefer the one I am about to enter – the grave. I feel sure that if you had been sober the last day of my trial, my sentence would not have been for twenty long years. I tried to escape, and the guards shot me; the doctor says I cannot recover, so you see my term will soon end. Be careful of Clarence; it is pretty hard for young men to resist the temptations that are sanctioned by law, and patronized by those in civil power. Be careful of Clarence; boys follow where men lead, and to be or do like some men is the highest ambition boys have. I followed the wrong kind of examples, but cannot die without sending you this parting message: Be careful of Clarence.

Albert Rushworth, No. 187, cell 18."

"Clarence is my second son's name," said the judge, folding the letter away in his note-book; "and he and Albert had been the closest of friends for a long time. I felt every word of that letter as a message to lead me into a better life."

[R4290 : page 362]

GIVE ME SUBMISSION, LORD

Dear Father, hold my trembling hand,
And bid my heart be still,

And help me while I waiting stand,
To know and do thy will.

Teach me, when grief has touched my heart,
Or when my pulses thrill
With some exquisite new-found joy
To trust thee and be still.

For only thou who formed the mind
Canst all its workings know;
And in thy love and pity kind
Compassion thou dost know.

For thou canst school each wand'ring thought
Till it revert to thee;
Thou canst direct each deed that's wrought
Till we thy purpose see.

Thou canst our hearts emotions calm,
Our best affections claim,
Till by thy spirit's soothing balm
They glorify thy name.

Thus what we know, and do, and feel
We give into thy hand;
Use all according to thy will,
For thou dost understand.

Thine is an "everlasting love,"
And therefore thou has "drawn;"
Thou art our magnet from above,
And so we "follow on."

We follow on by day, by night,
Whate'er thy leadings be,

Knowing the path, if dark, or bright,
Leadeth thine own to Thee.

G. V. G. Calkins.
