

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL

WORLD'S TEMPERANCE LESSON.

Nov. 12, 1916. Rom. 14:13-15:3.

Golden Text: "It is good not to eat flesh, nor drink wine, nor to do anything whereby thy brother stumbleth." Rom. 14:21.

The great truth presented in this lesson is, that we ought not to do anything that will cause another to sin. We are especially to guard against setting an example that will lead another into evil. A strong man may do many things and so control himself that he does not go to great excess. But the weak man, seeing him indulging in such practices without apparent hurt, thinks he can do likewise; he attempts to follow the example of the strong man; but, being weak, he fails and falls.

There are many kinds of sin in which men indulge, where some do not go very far, but where others cannot restrain themselves. This is pre-eminently true of indulging in strong drink. A great deal is said about the confirmed drunkard being a curse to the community in which he lives—and it is true—but he is not so dangerous by far as the moderate drinker. It is rarely the case that the man who is often found in the gutter can do anything to induce a young man to begin drinking. Young men are led astray by the example and influence of the moderate drinker. The longer he has drunk in moderation, the more will he influence others to follow his example. The young man, seeing that he controls himself, imagines that he can do so also. Oftentimes he fails.

Christian people, and all others, who have the good of their fellow-men at heart, ought to do all in their power to oppose the use of liquor by anyone. They should never use it themselves, no matter how well they may be able to control its use. Keep constantly in mind the danger to the weaker brother.

Here are some incidents to show the curse of strong drink, and how it influences, not only the drinker, but all others that are connected with him:

A True Story of One Woman's Life.

Rising suddenly in the meeting, she spoke as follows: "Married to a drunkard? Yes, I was married to a drunkard. Look at me! I am talking to the girls."

We all turned and looked at her. She was a wan woman, with dark, sad eyes, and white hair placed smoothly over a brow that denoted intellect.

"When I married a drunkard, I reached the acme of misery," she continued. "I was young, and, oh, so happy! I married the man I loved, and who professed to love me. He was a drunkard, and I knew it—knew it, but did not understand it. There is not a young girl in this building that does understand it unless she has a drunkard in her family; then, perhaps, she knows how deeply the iron enters the soul of a woman when she loves and is allied to a drunkard—whether father, husband, brother or son. Girls, believe me when I tell you that to marry a drunkard is the crown of all misery. I have gone through the deep waters, and know. I have gained the fearful knowledge at the expense of happiness, sanity, almost life itself. Do you wonder my hair is white? It turned white in a night, bleached by sorrow, as Marie Antoinette said of her hair. I am not forty years old, yet the snow of seventy rests on my head and upon my heart. Ah! I cannot begin to count the winters resting there," she said,

with unutterable pathos in her voice.

"My husband was a professional man. His calling took him from home frequently at night; and when he returned, he returned drunk. Gradually he gave way to temptation in the day, until he was rarely sober. I had two lovely girls and one boy." Here her voice faltered, and we sat in deep silence. "My husband had been drinking deeply; I had not seen him for two days; he had kept away from his home. One night I was seated by my sick boy; the two little girls were sleeping in the next room, while beyond was another room, into which I heard my husband go as he entered the house. The room communicated with the one in which my little girls were sleeping. I do not know why, but a feeling of terror took possession of me, and I felt that my little girls were in danger. I arose and went to the room. The door was locked. I knocked on it frantically, but no answer came. I seemed to be endowed with superhuman strength, and, throwing myself with all my force against the door, it gave way and flew open. Oh, the sight! the terrible sight!" she wailed out in a voice that haunts me now; and she covered her face with her hands, and when she removed them it was whiter and sadder than ever.

"Delirium tremens! You have never seen it, girls; God grant that you never may! My husband stood behind the bed, his eyes gleaming with insanity. 'Take them away,' he screamed, 'the horrible things! They are crawling all over me. Take them away, I say,' and he flourished the knife in the air. Regardless of danger, I rushed to the bed, and my heart seemed suddenly to cease beating. There lay my children, covered with their lifeblood, slain by their own father. For a moment I could not utter a sound. I was utterly dumb in the presence of my terrible sorrow. I scarcely heeded the maniac—the man who had brought me all the woe. Then I uttered a loud scream, and my wailing filled the air. The servants heard me and hastened to the room, and when my husband saw them he suddenly drew the knife across his own throat. I knew nothing more. I was borne senseless from the room that contained the bodies of my slaughtered children and the body of my husband. The next day my hair was white, and my mind was so shattered that I knew no one."

She ceased. Our eyes were riveted upon her wan face. Some of the women sobbed aloud, while there was scarcely a dry eye in that temperance meeting. We saw that she had not done speaking, and was only waiting to subdue her emotion to resume her story.

"For two years," she continued, "I was a mental wreck. Then I recovered from the shock and absorbed myself in the care of my boy. But the sin of the father was visited upon the child, and six months ago my boy of eighteen was placed in a drunkard's grave; and as I, his living mother, stood and saw the sod heaped over him, I said, 'Thank God! I'd rather see him there than have him live a drunkard'; and I turned unto my desolate home a childless woman, one upon whom the hand of affliction had rested heavily.

"Girls, it is you I wish to rescue from the fate that overtook me. Do not blast your lives as I have blasted mine; do not be drawn into the madness of marrying a drunkard. You love him! So much the worse for you; for, married to him, the greater will be your misery because of your love. You will marry and then reform him, you say? Ah! a woman sadly overrates her strength when she undertakes to do that. You are no

match for him, I say. What is your puny strength beside his gigantic force? He will crush you, too. It is to save you, girls, from the sorrows that wrecked my happiness that I have unfolded my history to you. I am a stranger in this great city; I am merely passing through it. But I have a message to every girl: Never marry a drunkard."

I can see her now as she stood there amid the hushed audience, her dark eyes glowing, and her frame quivering with emotion, as she uttered her impassioned appeal. Then she hurried out, and we never saw her again. Her words, "fitly spoken," were not without effect, however, and because of them there is at least one girl single now—The American Issue.

The Bridal Wine Cup.

"Pledge with wine! Pledge with wine!" cried young and thoughtless Harvey Wood. "Pledge with wine!" ran through the bridal party.

The beautiful bride grew pale; the decisive hour had come. She pressed her white hands together, and the leaves of the bridal wreath trembled on her brow. Her breath came quicker, and her heart beat wilder.

"Yes, Marian, lay aside your scruples for this once," said the judge in a low tone, going toward his daughter; "the company expects it. Do not so seriously infringe upon the rules of etiquette. In your own home do as you please; but in mine, for this once, please me."

Pouring a brimming cup, they held it, with tempting smiles, toward Marian. She was very pale, though composed; and her hand shook not, as, smiling back, she gracefully accepted the crystal tempter and raised it to her lips. But scarcely had she done so when every hand was arrested by her piercing exclamation of "Oh, how terrible!"

"What is it?" cried one and all, thronging together, for she had slowly carried the glass at arm's length, and was fixedly regarding it.

"Wait," she answered, while a light, which seemed inspired, shone from her dark eyes—"wait, and I will tell you. I see," she added slowly, pointing one finger at the sparkling ruby liquid, "a sight that beggars all description; and yet, listen! I will paint it for you, if I can. It is a lovely spot. Tall mountains, crowned with verdure, rise in awful sublimity around; a river runs through, and bright flowers grow to the water's edge. But there a group of Indians gather. They flit to and fro, with something like sorrow upon their dark brows. Among them lies a manly form, but his cheek, how deathly! His eyes are wild with fitful fire of fever. One friend stands before him—nay, I should say, kneels; for see, he is pillowing that poor head upon his breast.

"Oh, the high, noble-looking brow! Why should death mark it, and he so young? Look, how he throws back the damp curls! See him clasp his hands. Hear his thrilling shrieks for life. Mark how he clutches at the form of his companion, imploring to be saved. Oh, hear him call piteously for his father's name! See him twine his fingers together as he shrieks for his sister—his only sister, the twin of his soul, weeping for him in his distant native land.

"See!" she exclaimed, while the bridal party shrank back, the untasted wine trembling in their hands, and the judge fell overpowered upon his seat—"see! his arms are lifted to heaven; he prays—how wildly!—for mercy. Hot fever rushes through his veins. Then he moves not; his eyes are set in their sockets. In vain his friend whispers the name of father and sister: death is there—death, and no soft hand, no gentle voice, to soothe

him. His head sinks back; one convulsive shudder—he is dead."

A groan ran through the assembly. So vivid was her description, so unearthly her look, so inspired her manner, that what she described seemed actually to have taken place then and there. They noticed, also, that the bridegroom hid his face in his hands and was weeping.

"Dead!" she repeated, her lips quivering and her voice more broken. "And there they scoop him a grave; and there, without a shroud, they lay him down in that damp, reeking earth, the only son of a proud father, the only idolized brother of a fond sister. There he lies, my father's son, my own twin brother, a victim to this deadly poison. Father," she exclaimed, turning suddenly, while the tears rained down her beautiful cheeks, "father, shall I drink now?"

The form of the old judge was convulsed with agony. He raised not his head, but in a smothered voice he faltered:

"No, no, my child; no!"

She lifted the glittering goblet and let it suddenly fall to the floor, where it was dashed in a thousand pieces. Many a tearful eye watched her movement, and instantly every wineglass was transferred to the marble table from which it had been served. Then, as she looked at the fragments of crystal, she turned to the company, saying: "Hereafter let no friend who loves me tempt me to peril my soul for wine. Not firmer are the everlasting hills than my resolve, God helping me, never to touch or taste the poison cup. And he to whom I have given my hand, who watched over my brother's dying form in the last solemn hour, and buried the dear wanderer there by the river in that land of gold, will, I trust, sustain me in that resolve."

His glistening eyes, his sad, sweet smile, were her answer. The judge left the room. When, an hour later, he returned, and with a more subdued manner took part in the entertainment of the bridal guests, no one could fail to read that he had determined to banish the enemy from his princely home.—"Touching Incidents and Remarkable Answers to Prayer."

Protect the Boy From the Saloon.

Answer these questions honestly, and see if your conscience will permit you to remain inactive:

Would you want to die in the saloon?

Would you want to see your mother in the saloon?

Would you want to meet your wife in the saloon?

Would you want your daughter to frequent the saloon?

Would you admit the saloon-keeper into your home as your social equal?

Would you advise your son to spend his leisure time in the saloon?

Would you want a saloon operated next door to your home?

Would you point to the saloon as one of the good institutions of your town?

Would you like to see your minister enter the saloon?

Would you like to make companions of those who hang out at the saloon?

Would you place the saloon on the same equality with the grocery, the dry goods store, and the meat market?

Would you consider it an honor to be known as a saloon patron?

Would it add to your standing in your town to be known as a saloon sympathizer?

If you answer these questions in the affirmative, there is no reason why you should oppose the saloon.

If you answer them in the nega-