Sunday School Lesson

September 4. Lesson X—Evils of Intemperance—Isaiah 5: 11-16, 22, 23. Golden Text—Do not drink wine nor strong drink.—Leviticus 10: 9.

ANALYSIS.

I. INTEMPERATE LIVING, vs. 11, 12.
II. A TERRIBLE "THEREFORE," vs. 13-16.
III. DRUNKENNESS AGAIN, vs. 22, 23.

INTRODUCTION—"To the prophet was granted," says Professor T. H. Robinson, "the insight born of direct communion with God to see with startling clarity that a given type of conduct, still more a given attitude of soul, carried within itself the seeds of prosperity or disaster." Isaiah of Jerusalem had plenty of opportunity to exercise this prophetic insight. He lived in one of the most critical periods of Israel's history. The Assyrian Empire was swiftly subjugating one after another of the smaller nations and bringing them under her ruthless sway. The little kingdom of Judah was in imminent danger from that troublous quarter. Yet her leaders were stupidly blind to the danger. In place of giving real leadership, they were living intemperately. They were guilty of grave social abuses—greed, luxury, drunkenness and the exploitation of the weak and defenceless. Isaiah saw clearly that such corrupt conduct on the part of the nation's leading classes, especially in view of the critical international situation, would involve the whole country in ruin. Against the great men of Jerusalem he delivered a series of powerful "woes," vs. 8-24.

I. INTEMPERATE LIVING, vs. 11, 12.

Life has become easy for the financial and business magnates of Jerusalem. They have held mortgages on the farms of the small independent peasants; now they have foreclosed these and have grown rich, v. 8. Wealth breeds indolence; indolence begets careless and dissolute living. With elemental courage Isaiah confronts these men with their shameful lives. Seven times (vs. 8-24) he pronounces on them the weird and terrible word, "woe." That "woe" on the lips of a prophet is so ominous a warning that if these profligate grandees have any conscience they will surely listen and tremble. With biting satire (of which he is a master) Isaiah attacks them. They are early risers, these great men of Jerusalem—but not to go about their work, not for any useful or noble pursuit! They rise early indeed, but only to seek their cups. Even among Israel's heathen neighbors who knew nothing of Israel's righteous God, such conduct would be a scandal. But so low have these privileged men of Jerusalem sunk, that their drinking bouts last all day. In the cool of the night they are still sitting there, heating themselves with wine, v. 11. In the evening their drunken carousals become, if anything, more abandoned. Great banquets are spread; orchestral music adds to their sensuous frivolity. The deep peace of Jerusalem's night, the slumbers of her hard-working laborers are disturbed with the loud buffoonery and the voluptuous music of her drunken leaders. Wine has befuddled their senses; it has dulled their faculty of spiritual perception. For is not God even now at work among the nations, ceaselessly weaving the pattern of the web out of the processes of history? But bleary eyes can never read "the signs of the times"; nor can besotted minds trace eternal purpose.

II. A TERRIBLE "THEREFORE," vs. 13-16.

Terrible is the word "therefore" on the lips of a prophet. Invariably it introduces coming doom. There is no call for repentance here. Isaiah realizes that the leading men of Jerusalem have gone too far in trifling with God's righteousness. Retribution is already at the door. Their destiny in exile is sealed. Further, the leadership of the wine-bibbers is bringing ruin on the whole nation. With its strength impaired through dissolute living, it will fail an easy prey to Asyria. It will be driven into exile. As invariably happens in history, the innocent suffer with the guilty. The oppressed masses must share in the retribution overtaking their corrupt leaders—the "honorable" gentlemen of Jerusalem. And note—the sin of the latter is to be punished in kind. They have been gluttonous; now in exile they will face starvation. They have been wine-bibbers; now they will feel a maddening thirst, v. 13. Nor is this all. Death will take its fearful toll. Sheol, the shadowy abode of the dead—personified by Isaiah as a greedy monster—opens its hungry maw, and down goes the once glorious Jerusalem—classes and masses together! v. 14. Such ruin of a nation is neither accidental nor meaningless. It is nothing less than the vindication and triumph of the righteousness of God. In his grim judgment of the nation, God's holiness is made manifest, v. 16. At the same time the presumption of man, who feels no sense of his creatureliness before the holy majesty of God, but rather rises up in his pride to live without God or to defy him, is shown in all its futility, v. 15.

III. DRUNKENNESS AGAIN, vs. 22, 23.

With withering words Isaiah returns to his attack on the drunkards. Heroes they are—but only in consuming wine! Men of might—but only in mixing a bowl of drink! Only of such exploits can they boast, v. 22. The prophet tracks the drunkards from their cups to the courts of justice. There they sit as judges. Oh, the irony of it! The guilty they dismiss for a bribe; the innocent they condemn. They have lost even the sense of the distinction between right and wrong.

Truth in Fiction

By Andre Maurois, in Petite Gironde, Bordeaux

Is this a true story? Are your characters taken from life? These are a few of the questions that the reader usually asks the novelist.

It so happens that the relationship between action and reality is far too complicated to be settled with a few superficial questions, even if it were possible to give an exhaustive reply to them.

An event that has actually occurred may be the starting point for a long meditation, the outcome of which will be action. In "War and Peace" Tolstoi described the love stories of his youthful sister-in-law when he created the character of Natasha. Merimee was inspired to write "Carmen" by a story told to him by Madame De Montijo. But neither a real occurrence nor a story told casually provides the necessary stuff for a novel. They can be told or described in a few words. What is really important is the physiological process of transformation of this initial cell into a complete and perfect literary creation.

The fact, the occurrence of real life, acts on a novelist's imagination like the fecundating shock on the ovum. The novelist is ceaselessly tormented by the demon of the untold. He harbors in himself a painful past, an unsatisfied craving, or unsolved problems. He strives to find some form of expression for the thoughts which haunt him, and very often even an ordinary occurrence is just that moving force which will release these hidden thoughts. This explains why there is always a link, a relationship, between the successive books of a great novelist. Again and again Stendhal turns to the conflict between success and happiness. Tourgueney clings to the theme of the weak male, prey to a strong and ardent female. Andre Gide sees in everything the conflict between puritan conscience and unfettered sensuality.

Once the fecundation has taken place the inner development of a novel is just as mysterious a process as that of the child in the mother's womb. Most of this work is unconscious. Often it happens that at a certain point the writer suddenly stops because he cannot find the right form for an episode. He lays the novel aside and takes it up maybe many months later. In the meantime his thoughts have taken a definite shape, if not on paper, then in his mind. What we call "atmosphere" is mostly the fruit of long and patient observation of the surroundings into which the novelist intends to place his hero. Slowly but systematically definite characters, types of flesh and blood, emerge from the depth of the writer's mind. The process is often reversed, that is, a type across whom the writer comes in real life strikes his imagination. The action must then be built up around this type, although it seldom happens that a character of fiction is copied after one model only. Several "real" types are usually necessary for the writer to be able to create his imaginary hero. The mistake the public only too often makes is that it picks out a type or an episode from a book and very definitely associates it with a type or an occurrence of real life, forgetting that there are many replicas of the same picture in nature, and that the best drama is that of all ages. However, this illusion is beneficial for the writer because it helps to enhance the veracity of fiction. Convinced of the historic truth of a minor detail, the reader lavishes upon a book more attention and emotion than he would otherwise do.

There comes a moment when the character has taken such definite shape in the author's mind that it becomes independent. It then speaks for itself, and the novelist can do nothing but listen. So Dickens must have listened to Mr. Pickwick and Balzac to Pe Grandet. They could not have spoken differently, even if they had found themselves in different situations. They are characters modeled after innumerable types of real life. But they are given life by the breath of the writer's soul, which is always the same.

There is, of course, something that must be taken from reality. That is the atmosphere, or rather the background of the historical novel. A novelist cannot and should not invent history. That is why the so-called political novel has always been considered the most difficult form of fiction. Perhaps the only writers that have more or less satisfactorily solved this problem were Disraeli and Barres. They took their characters from history, from reality. They placed a real Wellington or Peel next to an imaginary Coningsby. This trick helped to gain the confidence of the reader.

To our mind fiction should never be in open conflict with reality, but neither should it attempt to create an illusion of reality. A picture never steps out of its frame, and, similarly, a character of fiction should not speak and behave like a human being in flesh and blood. Reality stimulates action, while fiction invites meditation and contemplation. Therefore, if the reader asks whether a story is true, the writer should reply: "No, not quite, for, if it were a true story, it would be poor fiction."

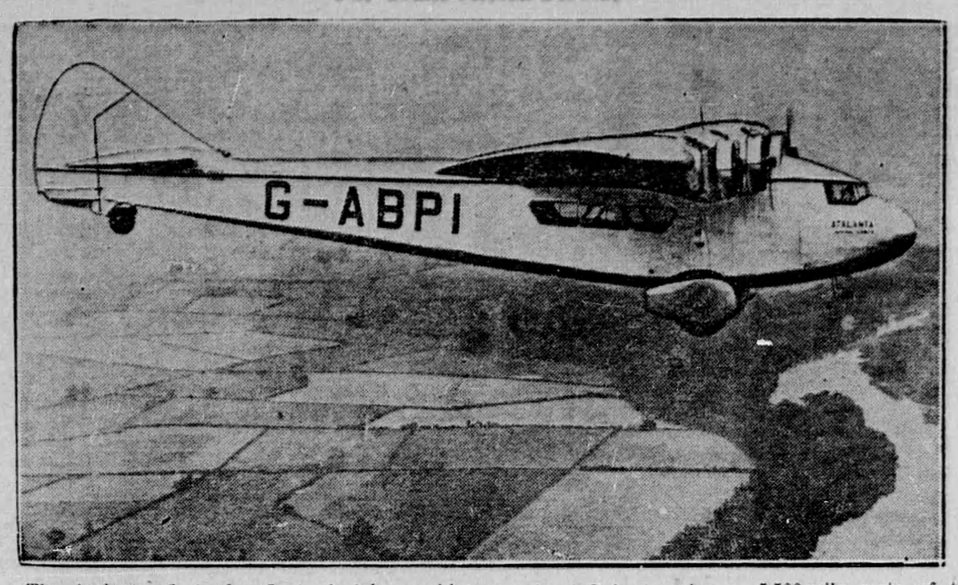
Old Houses Have Secrets

Old houses, like old gentlefolk, are shy,
For shabbiness and quaint, old-fashioned ways
Mark them the relics of those other days
Before men worshipped speed's efficiency.
They seem to sit apart ,to draw aside
From life's insistent urge. In musings deep
They dream; and tender rendezvous they keep
With all the treasured memories they hide.
A footstep—whispers—scent of rare perfumes—
An old love song—faint rustle of a gown—
A sobbing cry—gay laughter drifting down—
A sobbing cry, like old hearts, are loath to tell
Dear secrets they have hidden long and well.

—Pearle R. Casey.

A strong will is firmness. A strong wont is obstinacy.

For Trans-Africa Service



The Atalanta, first of a fleet of eight machines constructed for service on 5,500-mile route of the Imperial Airways trans-African service. The four air-cooled engines develop 1,400 horsepower and 150 miles per hour.

Why We Take Soup Before Fish

A man some time ago, to win a wager, ate a dinner backwards, beginning with the coffee and liqueurs and ending with the hors d'oeuvre.

Was the meal a freak one, or is there any justification for assuming that the order of the courses sanctioned by tradition is more than a convention?

Fashions in food change. In the eyes of the heroes of Homer, for example, fish had little favor, and 3,000 years ago a starving king swallowed a fish, under protest, for lack of anything better suited to his kingly appetite. Today fish is a staple article of diet.

Psychic Influence

Is there any reason, therefore, why soup should be regarded as an excellent first course for dinner or porridge for breakfast? The answer is yes. The active work of digestion begins in the stomach, and the digestive medium is the gastric juice, the production of which is governed by two factors, one psychic and the other chemical.

The psychic factor operates first. A well-liked dish makes the mouth water and initiates the production of gastric juice before any food enters the stomach. Hence it is true to say that, as a general rule, we best digest the foods we best like.

This psychic influence is soon succeeded by a chemical one, and it has been definitely proved that meat extracts and soups—the traditional first courses of the largest meal of the day—effectively stimulate the secretion of gastric juice. To begin dinner with a small portion of soup is an insurance policy which guarantees that the stomach will be in the fittest possible condition for dealing with the later courses.

There are three bulky types of foods: Carbohydrates, such as bread; fats, such as butter, and proteins, such as lean meat. Meals fall into one or two classes. They either consist in the main of carbohydrates and fats, such as tea, or of Carbohydrates and proteins, such as dinner.

The nature of a food determines the speed with which it is digested. Carbohydrates are digested more quickly than proteins, and proteins more quickly than fats. To mix fats with carbohydrates delays the digestion of the carbohydrates and lives to such a meal a satisfying quality which it would not otherwise possess.

Rules of Digestion

Again, carbohydrates are not stimulating foods in the sense of encouraging the production of gastric juice. It is, therefore, desirable that the protein portions of a meal (fish or meat) should be in the lower or active part of the stomach while the secretion of gastric juice is at a maximum. For these and other reasons, porridge as the first course at breakfast, the addition of bread, potatoes, and other vegetables to the meat course at dinner, the taking of meat before pudding and dessert at the end of a meal are all sound rules which help to ensure a good digestion.

Fishes Do Not Drink

When you say a man "drinks like a fish," you really imply that he does not drink. For fishes swallow no water for refreshment. When you see a fish opening and closing its mouth it is merely breathing. Water is taken in, but it does not pass down the throat to the body. While the fish breathes, its gullet is tightly constricted at the back by means of muscles encircling the throat, and the water flows away over the gills. While water does not pass the closed gullet, solid food can force an entrance. When it presses against the back of the gullet, the muscles relax enough to allow it to force a way down into the stomach. Fishes require fresh air as much as humans do.

Yankees in Argentina ..

The Review of the River Plate, an excellent weekly published in Argentina, in a recent number, gives some interesting details of American influence in Argentine history. We find that during the British invasions, when General Beresford with his handful of British soldiers was besieged in the fort of Buenos Aires, an American, William White, was the first to intercede in an endeavor to arrange terms for the pacific withdrawal of the British garrison. William Wheelwright, another American, descendant of one of the Mayflower emigrants, was a great benefactor to this country. In addition to founding the Pacific Steam Navigation Company, Mr. Wheelwright developed the Central Argentine Railway in Argentina, as well as coal mines in the neighboring Republic of Chile, and had proposed the cutting of a canal across the Isthmus of Panama long before De Lesseps and the Suez Canal were heard of. This latter anecdote shows clearly how everyone speaking English in those days was considered an "Ingles" or "Ingles loco," according to his ordinary or extraordinary capabilities, and after a time Mr. Wheelwright found it difficult to establish his identity as an American. Thus, on the occasion of the Civil War in his native country, when he placed £1000 at the disposal of the American Minister in Buenos Aires, for the care of the wounded, he wrote, "Though generally considered an Englishman, I cannot forget that I was born in Massachusetts."

KNOWLEDGE ..

Knowledge is said to be power. Knowledge is power in the same sense that wood is fuel. Wood on fire is fuel. Knowledge on fire is power. There is no more power in knowledge than there is in the stones or stars which you know, unless there be a spirit and life in the knowledge, which gives it its energy. In proportion as men have this spiritual power do they become strong in this world.—Alexander McKenzie.

Scout Tales

About Fires

Every man who goes camping or hunting must, of course, be able to cook his own food; otherwise he would be very helpless.

Every Wolf Cub, before he can become a Scout, must also be able to cook.

The best way to begin is to go and help your mother or cook in the kitchen, and see how to peel potatoes and to prepare the meat, and to make dough; how to fry, roast, bake and stew.

Then, when you know all that, you can go and practice it for yourselves out in the open, making your own fires and using a billy or camp cooking things.

To make a cooking-fire out in the open you want to get a pile of red hot embers. This you do by making your fire with lots of stout sticks, or with logs which, when half-burnt, breaks up into good embers.

Very dry cow-dung makes excellent fuel; so do old boots if dry.

It is generally best to make your fire in a trough between two rows of bricks or stones or logs. It burns more easily and keeps hotter than an open fire; and if the sides are firmly made they do to rest your kettle and cooking-pots upon.

Then you should make your own pot-hooks and hangers for holding your cooking-pot over the fire or for roasting your food. Many an old camper carries his pot-hook about with him on his belt.

Another good way of making a fire is to use an old iron bucket as a fireplace, with lots of holes punched in its sides.

We used them in South Africa when travelling over the veldt, where you went for days over open plains without seeing a tree or a bush with which to make a fire; so we carried our fire with us, slung under the wagon and we fed it now and then with dry grass-roots, cow-dung, old ox-skins, old boots, or anything we could find as we went along.

Grass and Forest Fires

Another advantage of a bucket fire is that it leaves very little mess when you have done cooking, and also it gives less risk of setting fire to the grass round about your camp; and this in summer-time is a great danger.

Old Scouts are very careful about burning bit by bit or cutting away the grass round the spot where they are going to make their camp-fire; so that when it is alight it will not spread to the surrounding veldt.

Then, when they have finished cooking, old campers are very careful indeed to pull their fire to pieces and to tread it all down, and to pour water over the smouldering ashes so that there is not a spark left which might later start a new fire.

Grass and forest fires are never started by true Scouts, but by silly, careless Tendereet.

WORSE THAN EVER

Miss Thortlebury had been invited to be a bridesmaid at a smart wedding, and spent much time planning her new frock. At last it was ready; and when she tried it on she asked Mrs. Jones, from next door, to come and see it.

"It's sweet, my dear!" said Mrs. Jones, admiringly. "And certainly you look a lady, whatever you are."

Miss Thortlebury's face told her she had made a mistake, so she corrected herself hurriedly.

"No. I mean you are a lady, whatever you look!"

GONE!

The employer called his staff together and informed them that owing to taxation and bad trade there would have to be a further reduction in wages.

"This will mean that we shall have to tighten our belts," he said, and then, more sharply, to a junior clerk who did not appear to be listening, "Do you understand what I'm saying, Smith?"

"Sir," replied Smith, "it's no good telling me that. My belt broke at the Budget before last."

The influence of Charity is essential to the peace and prosperity of human life.—Adams.

MUTT AND JEFF— By BUD FISHER

And With a Voice on the Air.