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Christian Messenger.

HALIFAX, N.S., DECEMBER 4, 1872.

THE TEACHER.

BIBLE LESSONS FOR 1872.

DANIEL AND HIS TIMES.

SENDAY, Dec. 8th, 1872.

In the Den of Lions.—Dan. vi. 14-23.

GOLDEN TEXT.—God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Psalm xli. 1.

SCRIPTURE SELECTION.—1 Peter iv. 7-16.

SUMMARY.—God is able to defend and deliver his servants.

ANALYSIS.—(1.) The sentence of the king executed upon Daniel. vs. 14-17. (2.) The king's trouble thereupon, vs. 18. (3.) Daniel's safety, 19-23.

EXPOSITION.—The charge of Daniel's enemies does not appear to have injured Daniel in the king's estimation. He had discovered the secret of their enmity. They do not say, Daniel the first of the presidents and reveler of dreams &c. but "That Daniel of the children of the captivity of Judah;" a slave, being careful also to say he "regardeth not thee." Acts. iv. 19; v. 20.

Verse 14.—A change of mind was the last thing to be thought of by a Median King; he was only displeased with himself that he had allowed himself to be entrapped into issuing such a foolish decree. Prov. xxix. 20. He wished that something might arise to shew him how to save Daniel and his own reputation.

Verse 15.—Lest the king should succeed in this the conspirators came in a body to urge him to carry out his mandate.

Verse 16.—"The God of Darius did not regard God as his God." They believed in the interposition of the gods on behalf of their worshippers, and so believed that Daniel's god would interpose to prevent his destruction. He admitted his own inability to deliver the prophet and so confessed his weakness, to prevent an unjust sentence taking effect.

Verse 17.—Stone, sealed. Although so much troubled he carries out his evil decree. There is a strong analogy between this and the sealing of the stone at the burial of Christ; so that there may no possible failure, and if the lions spare him no enemy may go and kill him.

Verse 18.—The king indulges in fears and regret, but takes no step to deliver Daniel.

The Greek historian Xenophon describes Darius as vain and without self control, given up to wine and vice. The abstaining from food and merriment shew that he was perfectly conscious of the wrong he was perpetrating on an innocent man.

Verse 20.—Darius here recognizes God as "living," not like their many lifeless gods. "Continually" he bore testimony to Daniel's consistent piety, and went hoping but not fully assured that God was able to deliver from lions.

Verse 21, 22.—Daniel has no anger against the king or his courtiers but is courteous as ever, and accepts the deliverance as from God by the interposition of an angel. Psalm xci. 1; xxxiv. 7. Heb. xi. 33; 1 Peter v. 8. Daniel's plea of innocence had reference to the charge of disloyalty. In chapter ix. 7, 18 he wholly disclaims such a state as absolute innocence. He recognizes the difference be-

tween proper honor to those in authority, and the honor due to God. "Before thee O king have I done no hurt." Matthew xxii. 21; 1 Peter ii. 17.

Verse 23.—"Because he believed in his God." See Hebrews xi. 33. It was not merely believing that he would be delivered but that his dependence was wholly on God and in His faithfulness.

The subsequent acts of the king shew that he was incited to anger against the conspirators, and would not allow them again to stir him up to such acts. They were probably thoroughly ashamed of this plot. The fact of the lions feeding on them shews that it was not that they were fully fed, and therefore would not touch Daniel, but was clearly a miraculous arrangement for the protection of the prophet. The "wives and children" of these envious Persians were also to be cast into the den. This was contrary to Jewish law. Deut. xxiv. 16; 2 Kings xiv. 6, but in entire harmony with Persian law where those suffering for capital crime had all their families similarly treated with themselves. Scripture Catechism, 85.

SUNDAY, Dec. 15th.—Prayer and Answer. Dan. ix. 16-23.

THE MOUNTAINS OF THE BIBLE.

A CONCERT EXERCISE.

I. All o'er the Holy Bible's varied pages, The summits of the sacred mountains rise. Hear how they speak to us from distant ages,

As we behold them with the Spirit's eyes. Ans.—Before mountains were brought forth, or ever Thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, Thou art God.—Ps. xc: 2 Truly, in vain is salvation hoped for from the hills, and from the multitude of mountains: truly in the Lord our God is the salvation of Israel.—Jer. iii: 23.

II. Lebanon, decked with cedars, crowned with glory. What place hath he in sacred song or story?

Ans.—I will be as the dew unto Israel; he shall grow as the lily and cast forth his roots as Lebanon. His branches shall spread, and his beauty shall be as the olive tree, and his smell as Lebanon.—Hos. xiv: 5, 6.

III. Excellent Carmel, "in the Western Sea dipping his feet;" what wonders witnessed he?

Ans.—Ahab gathered the Prophets unto Mount Carmel. . . And Elijah said, Call ye on the name of your God, and I will call on the name of the Lord; and the God that answereth by fire, let him be God. . . And the fire of the Lord fell and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and when all the people saw it they fell on their faces, and they said, The Lord he is God. The Lord he is the God.—1 Kings xviii: 20, 24, 38, 39.

IV. Up rugged, rocky Hor, who went to die. Mid its lone wilds when life's last hour drew nigh?

Ans.—And the Lord spake unto Moses and Aaron in Mount Hor, by the coast of the Land of Edom, saying.—Take Aaron and Eleazar, his son, and bring them up unto Mount Hor. And Moses stripped Aaron of his garments and put them upon Eleazar, his son, and Aaron died there in the top of the Mount.—Num. xx: 23, 35, 38.

V. Ebal and Gerizim, to curse and bless, Who hither came from out the wilderness?

Ans.—These shall stand upon Mount Gerizim to bless the people when ye are come over Jordan; Simeon, and Levi, Judah and Issachar, and Joseph and Benjamin. And these shall stand upon Mount Ebal, to curse: Reuben, Gad and Asher, and Zebulun, Dan and Naphtali.—Deut. xxvii: 12, 13.

VI. And lonely Nebo, Whose calm footsteps trod Thy slopes, to find his grave, known but to God?

Ans.—And Moses went up to the plains of Moab, unto the mountains of Nebo, to the top of Pisgah. . . So Moses, the servant of the Lord, died there in the Land of Moab, according to the word of the Lord. And he buried him in a valley, in the Land of Moab, over against Bethpeor.—Deut. xxxiv: 1, 5, 6.

VII. Horeb and Sinai, say what scenes we saw, When God sent down to man His Holy Law.

Ans.—Mount Sinai was altogether on a smoke, because the Lord descended upon it in fire.—Ex. xix: 18. Even Sinai itself was moved at the presence of God, the God of Israel.—Ps. lxxviii: 8. Moses. . . Came to the mountain of God, even to Horeb. And the angel of the Lord appeared unto him, in a flame of fire, out of the midst of a bush.—Ex. iii: 1, 2.

VIII.

Where was the royal David's kingly home, When first he Judah's chosen had become?

Ans.—And the Lord said unto him, Go up. And David said, Whither shall I go up? And He said, unto Hebron.—2 Sam. ii: 1.

IX.

Fair Mount Moriah, where God's home hath been, Of whose strong faith, once the triumphant scene?

Ans.—And He said, Take now thy son, thy only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the Land of Moriah, and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the Mountains which I will tell thee of.—Gen. xxii: 1, 2.

X.

Where came the tossing Ark to rest again, When God closed up the fountains of the rain?

Ans.—And the Ark rested in the seventh month, on the seventh day of the month, upon the mountains of Ararat.—Gen. viii: 4.

XI.

In song and psalm here David's glad notes ring, Of fair Mount Zion, City of the King!

Ans.—Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth is Mount Zion, on the sides of the north, the city of the great King.—Psalms lxxviii: 2.

XII.

How tells the Prophet of the glad time when Israel, rejoicing, shall come home again?

Ans.—For there shall be a day, that the watchmen upon the Mount Ephraim shall cry, Arise ye, and let us go up to Zion unto the Lord our God.—Jer. xxxi: 6.

XIII.

What was Ezekiel's word of solemn fate, Against Mount Seir, the lone and desolate?

Ans.—Son of Man, set thy face against Seir, and prophesy against it, and say unto it, thus saith the Lord God: Behold on Mount Seir I am against thee, and I will stretch out mine hand against thee, and I will make thee most desolate.—Ezek. xxxv: 2, 3.

XIV.

'Twixt Lebanon and Hermon what fair height Sought Jacob, when he made his hurried flight?

Ans.—So he fled with all he had; and he rose up and passed over the river, and set his face toward the Mount Gilead.—Gen. xxxi: 21.

XV.

When Saul, the valiant, fought, at last, in vain, Where was he with his sons together slain?

Ans.—And it came to pass on the morrow when the Philistines came to strip the slain that they found Saul and his three sons fallen in Mount Gilboa.—2 Samuel xxxi: 8.

XVI.

What shall we say of that "high Mount, apart?" Its story tell, dear to the Christian heart.

Ans.—And after six days Jesus taketh with Him, Peter and James and John, and leadeth them up into an high mountain apart by themselves, and was transfigured before them.—Mark ix: 2 The north and the south, Thou has created them: Tabor and Hermon shall rejoice in Thy name.—Ps. lxxxix: 4.

XVII.

And Olivet, sweet Mount of Olives: hear Why thrills the Christian at thy name so dear?

Ans.—And his feet shall stand in that day upon the Mount of Olives; and the Mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof.—Zech. xiv: 4. And He came and went as He was wont, to the Mount of Olives: and His disciples also followed Him.—Luke xxii: 39.

XVIII.

Mount than all hills more grand, oh, tell us why Our hearts should turn with love to Calvary.

Youths' Department.

HABITS OF FLOWERS.

Flowers have habits or ways of acting, just as people have. I will tell you about some of them. All flowers naturally turn toward the light, as if they love it. You can see this if you watch the plants that are standing near the window.

The flowers will be bent toward the light if you let the pots stand the same way all the time. By turning the pots a little every day or two while the blossoms are opening, you can make the flowers look in a different direction.

There are some flowers that shut themselves up at night, as if to go to sleep, and open again in the morning. Tulips do this. I was once admiring in the morning some flowers that were sent to me the evening before by a lady. Among them were some tulips, and out of one of these, as it opened, flew a bumble-bee. A lazy, drowsy bee he must have been, to be caught in this way as the flower was closing for the night. Or, perhaps, he had done a hard day's work in gathering honey, and just at night was so sleepy that he stayed so long in the tulip, and so was shut in. A very elegant bed the old bee had that night. I wonder if he slept any better than he would have done if he had been in his own homely nest.

The pond-lily closes its pure white leaves at night, as it lies upon its watery bed. But it unfolds them again in the morning. How beautiful it looks as it spreads out upon the water in sunlight! The little mountain daisy is among the flowers that close at night, but is as bright as ever on its "slender stem" when it wakes up in the morning. When it shuts itself up it is a little green ball, and looks like a pea. You would not see it in the midst of the grass if you did not look for it. But look the next morning, and the ball is opened and shows a "golden tuft within a silver crown." And very beautiful it is when so many of the daisies are together that the grass is spangled with them in the bright sun. It is supposed by many that this flower was first called "day's eye" because it opens its eye at the day's dawn, and after a while it became shortened to daisy.

The golden flowers of the dandelion are shut up every night. They are folded up so closely in their green covering that they look like buds that had never yet been opened. There is one curious habit which the dandelion has. When the sun is very hot it closes itself to keep from wilting. It is in this way sheltered in its green covering from the sun. It sometimes, when the weather is very hot, shuts itself up as early as nine o'clock in the morning.

Some flowers hang down their heads at night, as if they were nodding in their sleep; but in the morning they lift them up again to welcome the light. Some flowers have a particular time to open. The evening primrose does not open till the evening, and hence comes its name. The flower named four-o'clock opens at that hour in the afternoon. There is a flower commonly called go-to-bed-at-noon, that always opens in the morning and shuts up at noon.

Most flowers last for some time; but there are some that last only a few hours. The red flowers of the delicate and rich cypress vine open in the morning, and in the afternoon they close up never to open again. It is delightful to one who loves flowers to see every morning a new set of these bright blossoms appear among the dark green leaves of this vine.—Worthington Hooker.

"I CANNOT PRAY FOR FATHER ANY MORE."

A child knelt at the accustomed time to thank God for the mercies of the day, and pray for his care through the coming night. Then, as usual, came the "God bless dear mother and—" But the prayer was stilled, the little hands unclasped, and a look of sadness and wonder met the mother's eye, as the words of hopeless sorrow came from the lips of the kneeling child, "I cannot pray for father any more."

Since her little lips had been able to form the dear name she had prayed for a blessing upon it. It had followed close after mother's name. But now he was dead. I waited for some moments and then urged her to go on.

Her pleading eyes met mine, and with a voice that faltered, she said:

"O mother! I cannot leave him all out; let me say, 'Thank God that I had a dear father once;' so I can still go on and keep him in my prayers."

And so she still continues to do, and my heart learned a lesson from the loving ingenuity of my child. Remember to thank God for mercies past as well as to ask blessings for the future.—The Christian.

CHRIST THE REAL SAVIOUR.

Christ the real Saviour came into the world to save real sinners. When Luther was under a bitter sense of sin, he said: "Oh! but my guilt is so great, I cannot believe that Christ can save me." But one who was helping him much said to him: "If thou wert only the semblance of a sinner, then Christ would only be the semblance of a Saviour, but if thou be a real sinner then thou shouldst rejoice that a real Saviour has come to save thee." If we meet with a man who says: "Yes, I am a sinner, I know I am a sinner, but I do not know that I ever did much amiss; I have always been honest and correct"—such a person has a name to be a sinner and no more. He is a sham sinner, and a sham Saviour would suit him well. But for another who confesses that he has been a grievous transgressor, there is a real Saviour. Rejoice, O ye guilty ones, that the Christ of God himself really came with real blood, and presented a real atonement to take away real sins, such as theft, drunkenness, swearing, uncleanness, Sabbath-breaking, lying, murder, and things I need not mention, lest the cheek of modesty should blush; even these can be blotted out by the real Saviour who has come to save the chief of sinners from suffering what is due to their sins. Oh, that we could ring this great gospel bell till the hills and valleys were filled with its music. May the Lord open men's ears and hearts, that those who hear the glad tidings may accept the Saviour who has come to save them.—Spurgeon.

CHINESE COMPLIMENTS.

It is not always safe to joke, even with the benighted Celestials. A fine young lady of Portland, Oregon, on hearing from one of her Chinese domestics his determination to return to his native land, twitted him upon the subject of matrimony.

"Well, well! Ah Wam is going to get a wife, I suppose?"

"Me? Yes."

"What sort of a girl is she?"

"Belly nice woman, nice woman!"

"Well, tell us, Ah Wam, is she one of the aristocratic sort—'A No. 1,' you know—nice girls who have such little wee feet?"

Ah Wam (very innocently). "Oh no, no! oh no! but little feet! great big feet! all same yours."—Harper's Magazine.

A CLERGYMAN TURNING A MANGLE.—I have the greatest admiration for the one Brixton clergyman, and this is based entirely upon a single circumstance. He stands higher in my estimation than any clergyman I know, and that because the other day he was seen turning a mangle! Not a dignified occupation, you will say. No; but Christianity knows very little about dignity, and a great deal about duty, and more still about charity and loving kindness. The clergyman, going his visiting rounds, called on a poor woman who kept a mangle, and who was "at her wit's end," seeing that her husband was ill, and she could get no one to take a turn, "so that she might get her work home in time, so as not to lose her customers." The kindly clergyman listened to her tale, saw her difficulty, and said he supposed turning a mangle required no particular skill—could he do it? The woman protested that such a thing was impossible; but in spite of her remonstrances, the reverent gentleman insisted on trying his hand and continued at her work far into the night, until all the clothes were ready for delivery next morning. This was a true muscular Christian of the Apostolic type, and if ever a memorial window should be raised to him in his church, it should represent him in the most glorious action of his ministry—turning the mangle.

"GOD MAKES NO MISTAKES"—In a town in Massachusetts there is a young man of fine talents for active life who for years has been a cripple, paralytic, and so helpless that he would starve if left alone. A friend was pitying his condition, he slowly raised his withered hand, "God makes no mistakes." How noble the sentiment! "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?"