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THE TEACHER.

BIBLE LESSONS FOR 1872.

DANIEL AND HIS TIMES.

SUNDAY, Dec. 1st, 1872.

The Conspiracy.—Dan. vi. 4-10.

GOLDEN TEXT.—The wicked plotteth against the just; and gnasheth upon him with his teeth. Psalm xxviii. 13.

SCRIPTURE SELECTION.—Psalm xxxv.

SUMMARY.—A prominent position in the State is open to the envy of opponents, and requires all the support religious principle can give to maintain a course of strict integrity.

ANALYSIS.—(1.) Daniel's enemies acknowledge the genuineness of his piety and on this very ground conspire against him. 4-9. (2.) Conscious of the risk, Daniel refuses to alter his course, 10.

EXPOSITION.—The age of Darius or Cyaxares II. given by Daniel, ch. v. 31, agrees with that given by Xenophon. He reigned from B. C. 509-536. Although Darius alone is mentioned here, yet Cyrus, also called Thoresch, was the leader in the assault, and this appears to have been known to Daniel (see vs. 28; Jeremiah li. 11, 28). The name Darius, or Darius, i. e., Lord-king was applied to many of the Medo-Persian Kings as Darius Hystaspis in whose reign the decree was carried into effect for rebuilding the temple. Ezra iv. 5; Haggai i. 1; Darius Codomanus called the Persian, Nehemiah xii. 22; Darius-Cyaxares II. There were a hundred and twenty satraps set over the conquered provinces. Cyrus having charge of Babylon. It had probably become known that Daniel had prophesied the fall of Babylon, and he was therefore regarded as the most suitable to put over the whole. His wisdom commended him to Darius as it had previously to the queen mother, ch. v. 12.

Verse 4, 5.—Being so exalted, Darius, who was a weak and profligate sovereign, was easily incited to jealousy. Daniel would choose for his subordinates those on whom he could rely, and doubtless rejected the men of a like spirit to the king; and so received their hate, and a combination was formed against him. But on no other pretext except that of his religion could a flaw be discovered.

Verse 6.—They came together hastily and tumultuously beset the king that he would put a test to Daniel such as would be sure to entrap him into apparent disloyalty. Darius, who had so recently acquired the sovereignty, had not probably been informed of the like test applied to Daniel's three companions, many years ago, under their former king Nebuchadnezzar. The Chaldeans had just been conquered, and Darius was easily persuaded that this would afford a test of those on whom he could rely, and discover to him those who would continue in a hostile position.

Verse 7.—The test was invented by the officials and was to be applied to all, and the doom named for all alike, but would in all probability only fall on Daniel and his friends. The punishment of the burning fiery furnace is not here brought into requisition. The Persians were fire worshippers but the Babylonians were not.

Verse 8.—The decree once signed by the

king could not be recalled. Cyrus, the Persian was subordinate to Darius the Mede, hence the order "Medes and Persians." Cyrus reigned after Darius's death, and they were then termed the "Persians and Medes." Esther i. 14, 19.

Verse 9.—Although the decree appears to be very arbitrary and tyrannical, yet it was not unprecedented as a test of loyalty. Persecution is usually placed in as mild a form as possible. Some necessity is pleaded. We are not informed who else besides Daniel refused to obey the mandate as it was known that it was specially aimed at him.

Verse 10.—Daniel was perfectly conscious of what was impending, and on whom it was intended to apply, but it did not deter him from pursuing his usual course. At the appointed times although the keen eyes of his enemies were watching him, he left his place in the court for his usual devotional exercises. He opened his window as usual, he would have nothing intervening between him and the place in which God had chosen to dwell. 1 Kings viii. 44, 48; 2 Chronicles vi. 29, 34, 38; Psalm v. 7. The chamber or upper room was by the Jews regarded as the appropriate place of prayer. Acts i. 13. The third, sixth and ninth hours were the times of prayer. Acts ii. 15; x. 9, 30; iii. 1. He did not do this in contempt of the King's command, but "as a foretime." The bitterness of those who sought Daniel's destruction is shown by their getting the king to confirm his decree again before letting him know how Daniel had been found at prayer in opposition to the king's decrees.

The remainder of the narrative shows that the unalterable laws were used as a trap to ensnare the king. The people were all regarded as the property of the king to be disposed of as he thought proper; the idea that "the king can do no wrong" has grown out of this principle. The weakness of Darius is so evident here that it confirms the facts of profane history respecting him. He was but a feeble instrument in the hands of his princes.

Scripture Catechism, 84.

SUNDAY, Dec. 8th.—In the Den of Lions. Dan. vi. 14-23.

Youths' Department.

DO IT NOW.

If I were to give you a motto to go through life with, one that would stand by you for warning and counsel in any strait that you might find yourselves, I believe I would give it in this one word, Now!

Don't waste your time and your strength and your opportunities by always meaning to do something—do it. Only weakness comes of indecision. Why, some people have so accustomed themselves in this way—dawdling along from one thing to another—that it really seems impossible for them to squarely make up their minds to anything. They never quite know what they mean to do next, and their only pleasure seems to consist in putting things off as long as possible, and then dragging slowly through them, rather than begin anything else. Don't live a single hour of your life without doing exactly what is to be done in it, and going straight through it, from beginning to end. Work, play, study, whatever it is, take hold at once and finish it up squarely and cleanly; and then do the next thing, without letting any moments drop out between. It is wonderful to see how many hours these prompt people contrive to make of a day; it's as if they picked up the moments the dawdlers lost. And if you ever find yourself where you have so many things pressing upon you that you hardly know where to begin, let me tell you a secret; take hold of the very first one that comes to hand, and you will find the rest all fall into file and follow after, like a company of well-drilled soldiers; and though work may be hard to meet when it charges in a squad, it is easily vanquished if you can bring it into line. You may have often seen the anecdote of the man who was asked how he had accomplished so much in his life. "My father taught me," was the reply. "when I had anything to do, to go and do it." There is the secret—the magic word now.—*Earnest Worker.*

INDIFFERENCE.

I have seen a young lady, who had taken the solemn vows of God upon her, rise late in the morning, and without time for more than a hasty word of prayer, go forth to shop, drop in to chat with her friends,

come home to dine, go out again to ride, and return again to make an elaborate toilette for an evening party, pausing longer over the great question, "What shall I wear?" than her conduct seemed to evince she had over "What shall I do to be saved?" I have seen her, when asked to take a class of young immortals in the Sabbath school, to point them to the Savior she had vowed to honor before the world, shake her head and answer: "No, I cannot; I have no talent for that kind of thing." Ah, thought I, is there not danger that at last she will find that, like the foolish virgins, she has no oil in her lamp?

I have seen a professedly Christian mother more wrought up over mud brought in upon her carpet by her boy's shoes, than over the lie which sullied his conscience and proclaimed him a coward. I have seen her exhibit more anxiety (when detained from church) to hear from her daughter's lips how this and that one was dressed, than what the man of God said concerning the great thrones of death and eternity. Ah, thought I, will she through her instrumentality, find these children at the right hand on the last great day?—*Western Missionary.*

DAYLIGHT FIREWORKS.

The Japanese have fireworks made expressly to be let off by daylight. A recent festival in Japan, at which a display of these ingenious toys were exhibited, is thus described in the Yokohama Herald: The second day was occupied with exhibitions of the ingenious daylight fireworks, of the manufacture of which the Japanese appear to be the sole masters. As usual, these consisted mostly of bombs which, exploding high in the air, discharged sometimes various colored jets of smoke, and sometimes closely folded packages of wire and paper, which unfolded themselves into parachutes of great bulk and symmetrical design. They were sometimes fish, which swam leisurely through the atmosphere to the ground; or snakes, which writhed themselves away over the tree-tops; or great birds, that hovered kite-like and motionless for an incredibly long time. Occasionally they took the shape of cottages, temples, human beings, magnified crests of daimios, trees and flowers—almost anything that a lively imagination could suggest. The smoke figures, however, were the most amusing. One of the most frequently attempted was a cuttle-fish, with a body of thick, fuliginous black, and arms of lighter hues. Of course the illusion was very brief, the wind not allowing the smoke to remain undisturbed for more than a few seconds; but while it lasted it was perfect.

THE GREAT WALL IN CHINA.

Mr. Seward, in speaking of the great wall in China, which he examined during his late trip to the East says: "The Chinese have been for at least two or three thousand years a wall making people. It would bankrupt New York or Paris to build the walls of the city of Peking. The great wall of China is the wall of the world. It is forty feet high. The lower thirty feet is of hewn limestone or granite. Two modern carriages may pass each other on the summit. It has a parapet throughout its whole length, with convenient staircases, buttresses, and garrison houses at every quarter of a mile, and it runs not by cutting down hills and raising valleys, but over the uneven crests of the mountains, and down through their gorges, a distance of a thousand miles. Admiral Rodgers and I calculated that it would cost more now to build the great wall of China through its extent of one thousand miles, than it has cost to build the fifty five thousand miles of railroad in the United States. What a commentary it is upon the ephemeral range of the human intellect to see this great utilitarian enterprise, so necessary and effective two thousand years ago, now not merely useless, but an incumbrance and an obstruction."

NOVEL COURT SCENE.

The Utica Observer tells a story of a judge in Otsego county, who arraigned and punished himself for getting "overtaken in liquor." He formally opened court, and then he called his own name as defendant in a suit in which "the people" charged him with an offence against the law, went over the circumstances in detail, so far as he could remember them, read "the statute in such cases made and provided," and then asked "the prisoner what he had to

say." In the role of a prisoner he pleaded guilty to the offence, said it was a shame for a man of his years and position, but hoped "the court would not be too severe on him, as he was determined to reform." The prisoner will stand up," said the stern old justice. Then the prisoner arose. "Now," said the justice, "I am very sorry you have been brought into this court on a charge which so seriously affects your good name and standing in society; you have set a bad example, and if you go on at this rate, you will bring sorrow and disgrace on yourself and family. I sentence you to pay a fine of \$10 and costs, or to thirty days' imprisonment in the county jail." The "prisoner" said he would pay the fine, and then the court closed. He walked over to the poor-master of the town, and paid the ten dollars.

WHAT IS GOING ON IN THE SUN.

The theory has been advanced, and is gaining ground, that the more marked and permanent features of our climatic phenomena are not dependent upon earthly conditions alone, but are influenced more or less by what takes place in the sun. Observers have thought they could trace a direct connection between certain solar disturbances and the aurora borealis. It has been more than once suggested that periods of prolonged severe or abnormal cold may be produced by an unusual predominance of spots on the sun; and it has been hinted that great solar eruptions may be followed by increase of heat. This hypothesis receives new illustration and no little apparent confirmation in the observations which have been recorded lately, by the Italian spectroscopist, Tacchini. This physicist, and others, his countrymen, as Respighi and Secchi, have been watching the solar chromosphere closely. They have taken drawings of it and of the prominences, and have noted the vapors they saw, as well as what could be learned of the heat at which these vapors exist, their pressure, their rate of motion, and other like circumstances.

The intensity of the July heat has been noticed as remarkable in Europe and Asia, as well as in America. Pertinently to this fact comes Tacchini's report of his recent observations, as follows: "I have observed a phenomenon which is altogether new in the whole series of my observations. Since May 6th, I had found certain regions in the sun remarkable for the presence of magnesia." Some of these extended half-way round the sun. This state of things continued, the extension of these magnesium regions gradually growing greater, until at length, "on June 18th," says Tacchini, "I was able to recognize the presence of magnesium quite round the sun—that is to say, the chromosphere was completely invaded by the vapor of this metal. This ebullition was accompanied by an absence of the colored prominences, while, on the contrary, the flames of the chromosphere were very marked and brilliant. It seemed to me as though I could see the surface of our great source of light renewing itself." While this was going on, Tacchini noticed (as had frequently happened before in his experience) that the bright streaks on the sun, which are called *faculae*, were particularly brilliant close to those parts of the edge of the disc where the flames of the chromosphere were most splendid and characteristic. The granulations also, which the astronomer can recognize all over the sun, when a large telescope is employed, were unusually distinct.

Tacchini concludes that there had not been a number of local eruptions of magnesium vapor, but complete expulsions or outflows. The aspect of the sun seems to have been appreciably modified by the emission, since "more than one person," says Tacchini, "has told me that the light of the sun has not, at present, its ordinary aspect; and at the Observatory we have judged that we might make the same remark. The change must be attributed to magnesium."

NIGHT.

How beautiful is night!
A dewy freshness fills the silent air,
No mist obscures, nor cloud, nor speck, nor stain
Breaks the serene of heaven;
In full orb'd glory yonder moon divine
Rolls through the dark blue depths,
Beneath her steady ray
The desert circle spreads
Like the round ocean, girdled with the sky.

To wish to do without our fellows, and to be under obligation to no one, is a sure sign of a soul void of sensibility.

SKIPPING THE HARD POINTS.

Boys, I want to ask you how you think a conqueror would make out who went through a country he was trying to subdue and whenever he found a fort hard to take, let it alone. Don't you think the enemy would buzz wild there, like bees in a hive, and when he was well in—the heart of the country don't you fancy they would swarm out and harass him terribly?

Just so, I want you to remember, will it be with you; if you skip over the hard places in your lessons, and leave them unlearned, you have left an enemy in the rear that will not fail to harass you, and mortify you times without number.

"There was just a little bit of my Latin I hadn't read," said a vexed student to me, "and it was just there the professor had to call upon me at the examination. There were just two examples I had passed over and one of those I was asked to do on the blackboard."

The student who is not thorough is never well at his case; he cannot forget the skipped problems; and the consciousness of his deficiencies makes him nervous and anxious. Never laugh at the slow, plodding student; the time will surely come when the laugh will be turned. It takes time to be thorough, but it more than pays. Resolve when you take up a new study that you will go through with it, like a successful conqueror taking every strong point.

If the inaccurate scholar's difficulties closed with his school life it might not be so great a matter for his future career. But he has chained to himself a habit that will be like an iron ball at his heel all the rest of his life. Whatever he does will be lacking somewhere. He has learned to shirk what is hard, and the habit will grow with years. Now nothing we get in this life is to be had for nothing. Success is not to be thrust upon a man. If you want any good you must work for it. The eye that never falters and the nerve that never quails are the true elements of victory in the mental and moral, as well as the physical world. Don't skip the hard points.—*School-day Visitor.*

Dr. L., of St. Louis, who is something of a wag, called on a colored Baptist minister, and propounded a few puzzling questions:

"Why is it," said he, "that you are not able to do the miracles that the apostles did? They were protected against poisons and all kinds of perils. How is it that you are not protected in the same way?"

The colored brother responded promptly: "Don't know about that, doctor. I expect I is. I have taken a mighty sight of strong medicines from you doctors, and I is alive yet."

THE IDOL BUSINESS.—Calcutta papers state that the proprietors of the Quintard Iron Works, New York, are the American firm engaged in supplying the Hindu market with idols. We trust the demand for idols will steadily and rapidly decline, even if that involves the utter failure of the Quintard Iron Works.—*National Baptist.*

By a recent amendment to the general railway law in Massachusetts, all railways connected with Boston are required to run a six o'clock morning and evening train and issue tickets therefor at a rate not exceeding three dollars per mile per year, for any distance not exceeding fifteen miles. The object of the law is to provide cheap transportation for working people.

A good action performed in this world receives its recompense in the other, just as water poured at the root of a tree appears again above in fruit and flower.

Mrs. Shoddy puckered up her mouth genteelly and told a gentleman friend that one of her lovely daughters was a "blue-net," and the other a "bronze."

Chicago's real estate would sell for more now than before the fire, so it seems that the \$200,000,000 burned up was well invested.—*Boston Post.*

The King of Abyssinia has sent a messenger with letters to Queen Victoria, also to the Governments of Germany, Russia and France, asking for intervention against the threatened invasion of his country by Egypt.

The only way to meet affliction is to pass through it solemnly, slowly, with humility and faith, as the Israelites passed through the sea. Then its every wave of misery will divide, and become to us a wall on the right side and on the left, until the gulf narrows and narrows before our eyes, and we land safe on the opposite shore.—*Miss Mulock.*

Dr. LIVING'S DAUGHTER. Agnes publishes a list from her father saying that he gave money the materials to write a book, and saved the Americans' good and generous friends.