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THE TEACHER.

BIBLE LESSONS FOR 1872.

DANIEL AND HIS TIMES.

SUNDAY, October 27th, 1872.

The Interpreter.—Dan. ii. 27-35.

GOLDEN TEXT.—“But there is a God in heaven that revealeth secrets.” vs. 28.

SCRIPTURE SELECTIONS.—Palm cxxxix; Revelation xix.

SUMMARY.—From God nothing is hid, to men he reveals what he will, by whom he will.

ANALYSIS.—I. The revealing God. II. The revealed dreams.

EXPOSITION.—The subject.—An “interpreter” is one who explains or expounds. To interpret the king's dreams, was to tell what was its meaning, what events it foretold. Hence it would not include the revelation of the dream itself. In our lesson, however, it must be extended to include this revealing; for to tell what the dream was, had to precede the telling what it meant. Indeed this lesson regards Daniel only as revealer. He first appears as interpreter in verse 36. Yet strictly, as we shall see, it is not Daniel that either reveals or interprets but God. Daniel is really but his spokesman, or “prophet.”

The last lesson.—Recall its main points, the dream forgotten, the king's demand, the diviners' failure, the wrathful death-decree, Daniel's interposition with Arioch and request to the king, delay of the slaughter, the prayer-meeting the answer to prayer.

Meanwhile.—1. He offered that beautiful, earnest, appropriate prayer, recorded in verses 20-23. Before the prayer-meeting he only had an assurance that the secret would be made known. Beyond all was dark. When the lost dream came into mind, the heart of the Lord's servant was relieved of distress, and of a great burden. It sprang right up into joyful, thankful praise. Here was life for the praying band; life for the whole multitude of learned men; and glory for the God of heaven above all the idols, to the confusion and shame of all the idols, in the face of the mightiest idol-worshipping nation, in the very palace of the king who, as conqueror, was holding captive the chosen but wicked people of this very God of heaven.

2. He paid to Arioch a second visit. vs. 24. How unlike the first! Then it was to inquire why the slaughter? Now he goes as master of the situation, a victor, the dream all clear in mind, the interpretation at his full command; and so he can, almost as though himself king, a king in God's name and above the Babylonian monarch, countermand the marshal's orders. “Destroy not the wise men. Bring me in before the king.” A proud, happy moment that to the young saint.

3. Then came the introduction to the king. Arioch did the will of Daniel “in haste.” He was glad to escape his slaughter-work, glad to save those whom wrath had doomed. He believed Daniel,—had no doubt. Hence his positive assurance to the king. vs. 25. But the king, in his first sentence, shows at once eager hope and painful distrust. “Art thou able,” thou, a single stripling, where the collected veterans failed “able,” really; for it is a

great thing, since you have to give both the dream and its interpretation. “A rare thing,” as they said; a terrible test, as they found.

Verses 27-30.—There is a singular regularity and harmony in this introductory speech. It has a personal construction, i. e., each part of it takes up and successively treats of a part. (1) The diviners.

(2) God. (3) The king. (4) Daniel. Such is the plan of the speech, and as we go on, we shall see how wise the plan was. It proves quite as strikingly as what follows, that ch. i. 17 is true.

Verses 27.—Daniel gives here his judgment of the general order to which, by his education in Babylon, he belonged. He only affirms what they had been driven to confess. He well knew that their pretension to supernatural wisdom and power was vain, that this abuse of their knowledge and position was abuse, that the heathen gods were nothing, that the wise men labored under a delusion, and kept others in delusion. But note. He does not say all that to Nebuchadnezzar. He does not seek their harm, the reverse. He is their friend, not their accuser. So he brings out the one fact already known, and that solely to turn the king's mind away from those who cannot do, to Him who can. We are not to identify ourselves unduly and beyond the verity with any class of men to whom, in some measure, we belong. Daniel is with the wise men; but it is not as one of them that he reveals the dream. How finely does he here draw the line of division. So much for the diviners.

Verses 28.—They cannot, God can. The contrast. The plan was made to give it. Already appears the youth's truthful modesty. It is not, *They* cannot, but *I* can; leading the king to trust him instead of them, building himself up at their expense. “There is a God in heaven,” look to him. He is no dumb and senseless idol. He knows, he tells. If he does not dwell on earth, he is on earth to speak when and to whom, and by whom he will. “Secrets,” the dream of the king which included many particulars, and hence the plural. “*Maketh known to the king*” by the dream, as now to be interpreted. See here how the providence of God included not the chosen nation only, but heathen nations also. “*Latter days*,” i. e., the days of Messiah, the Christian era, so *Keil*, because though much of the dream, indeed most of it, related to events before Christ, it was only because of their relation to his coming. The previous kingdoms are mentioned to show the relation of his kingdom to them. Daniel speaks in this verse of God, and that which interests God, for which he made and preserves the world and the race, is not great kingdoms and great kings with their brief, scant, fading splendor, but redemption, the Redeemer, the everlasting glory of his reign.

Verses 29.—“*As for them*,” this is the third head of his discourse. “*Thy thoughts*,” not the dream or vision, but the anxious thought, of a great monarch, at the beginning of his reign. He sat on his throne. He looked back into the past. He looked around over his vast domain. He was at the head of a tremendous power, a tremendous movement. Think what a solemn, mysterious moment for Nebuchadnezzar, as now his doubt changes to assurance. The prophet of God stands before him, the dream all on his tongue to tell it, the interpretation all at hand; the future, the wondrous future, about to rise up to this view. What awe. How must the king have felt his very heart grow still from its beating, if not his very hair stand on end! But what was that moment, to the hour when a soul stands at death's crisis, and knows that now, now, now at length, God's hand is to draw aside the curtain that hides eternity. For even with revelation in our hands, how much is still hidden!

Verses 30.—“*As for me*,” Daniel; the last head of discourse. He will not leave to inference his own powerlessness, clear as the inference was from verse 28. He will state it, “*I am nothing*, God is all.” Yes, Daniel, yes, you are right. You learned that lesson, as well as Paul did some centuries later, 2 Cor. xii. 9, and how much better then have we. We are nothing, God is all. And the purpose of taking Daniel was not to glorify him, but “that the interpretation might be known to the king.” Such is the thought, not as our version has it, “for their sakes,” etc. See the margin of the reference Bible.

QUESTIONS.—To whom did Daniel first turn after he received the secret? vs. 20-23. Why to him first? What lesson for us? To whom did he next go? vs. 24.

Why to him? Compare this with his former interview with Arioch. vs. 14, 15. To whom next? vs. 25. Why the “haste”? Does Arioch seem to have believed Daniel? What did the king say? vs. 26. What do you suppose he thought of Daniel?

What did Daniel answer? vs. 27. Did he wish to harm the wise men? Why did he say this? Was it not he one of the order? Did he join them in their divinations?

Of whom did he next speak? vs. 28. With whom does he contrast “God in heaven”? vs. 10. What did Nebuchadnezzar worship? Was Daniel's testimony both bold and wise? In what ways can we imitate this act? What is meant by “latter days”? Heb. i. 2. In what King and kingdom does God's interest centre? Col. i. 15-17.

Of whom does Daniel next speak? vs. 29. Is he respectful? What were the “thoughts” mentioned?

Of whom does he next speak? vs. 30. What does this show of Daniel's character? What does Paul say in 2 Cor. xii. 9? In what ways can we show the same spirit? vs. 30. What was the revelation made by Daniel? vs. 30. What was the dream? vs. 31-35.

Scripture Catechism, 75, 76.

SUNDAY, Nov. 3rd.—The Brave Young Men.—Dan. iii. 13-18.

Youths' Department.

CHILDREN'S MISTAKES.

BY LOUIE CARSON.

“Why can we not see God?”
“God is a spirit, and therefore invisible.”

This was a question and answer in Harry's Sunday-school lesson, which he asked me to hear him repeat on Saturday, so he might be sure he knew it perfectly.

And then Harry said:

“When grandma died, Louie and you told me God took her. I thought he must have come in the night, because I didn't see God at any time.”

Little Lily, leaning her soft cheek on the window-seat, and looking up earnestly, as she loves to do, into the blue sky, remarked confidently:

“I know why we can't see God.”

“Why?” I asked.

“Because,” said Lily, “the sky is a veil. We can't see through it because it is so far off; but God can see through it, and the angels too, because it is close to them.”

“If we could see through the sky,” said Harry, “we could see heaven.”

“Yes,” said Lily, “certainly we could see the gates of pearl.”

And so these little ones talked of heaven, while I listened, learning trust from their imperfect utterances.

“Children's mistakes,” some call them, yet is there not often a golden grain of truth in what we call their ignorance?

For instance, said Lily, one day, “No body can get to heaven without Jesus. I think” (a favorite expression with this young theologian. What a tender little flower-like creature it is, to think!)—“I think if I could go to Heaven without Jesus, God would not let me stay!”

But presently added, “I do love Jesus. I love him any how.”

“Verily, except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall in no wise enter the kingdom of heaven.”

A LITTLE GIRL'S ANSWER.

The King of Prussia, while visiting a village in his land, was welcomed by the school children of the place. After their speaker had made a speech for them, he thanked them. Then taking an orange from a plate, he asked: “To what kingdom does this belong?”

“The vegetable kingdom, sire,” replied a little girl.

The King took a gold coin from his pocket, and holding it up, asked: “And to what kingdom does this belong?”

“To the mineral kingdom,” said the little girl.

“And to what kingdom do I belong, then?” asked the king.

The little girl colored deeply, for she did not like to say “the animal kingdom,” as he thought she would, lest his majesty should be offended. Just then it flashed into her mind that “God made man in his own image,” and looking up with a brightening eye, she said, “To God's kingdom, sire.”

The king was deeply moved. A tear stood in his eye. He placed his hand on the child's head, and said, most devoutly: “God grant that I may be accounted worthy of that kingdom.”

Thus did the words of a child move the heart of a king. Little children learn from this that even your words may do

both good and harm. A pert word from a child may wound the heart of a mother; a loving one may make it glad. My little children, let your words be kind, true and right.—Exchange.

“STOP THIEF!”

“Lay down your book and get ready for school, Matty.”

“Yes, mamma, in a minute.”

“My child, your ‘in a minute’ is the secret of all your school troubles and disgraces.”

At this Matty languidly pulled herself up from the large rocking-chair in which she was lounging and reading the last pages of a story-book, and began to hunt up her geography, and hurry her mother to prepare her lunch and tie her shoes, and peep into a neglected spelling-lesson, while the long hand of the clock pointed to fifteen minutes before nine. Harry was calling “Come, Matty!” at the front door, and her seat-mate waving a beckoning hand to her as she hurried by the house.

Just as Matty shut the gate, her uncle Harry came along, his face ruddy with exercise in the frosty air. Seizing Matty's hand, and taking her dinner-pail and books, he cried out, “Stop thief! stop thief!” and before she could have time to collect her thoughts, he was running with her so fast that her little feet seemed hardly to touch the ground.

The loitering children, seeing uncle Harry's speed, and hearing his cry of “Stop thief!” joined in the pursuit, hardly daring to look over their shoulders for fear of being seized by a pursuing highwayman. They reached the schoolhouse just as the clock had commenced striking nine; and for the first time in two weeks Matty sat in her seat at the opening exercises, instead of standing in the vestibule among the tardy ones.

Uncle Harry remained sitting in the visitors' seat until after the opening exercises; then rose and left in haste, as he said, for fear the thief who had been chasing his niece and the other loitering children would waylay and rob him of what he valued most.

Before leaving he said a few words to the eager-eyed little ones, with his watch in his hand for fear he should overstay his time.

“He is a terrible enemy, dear children, who has been after us to-day. If he gets hold of you, he will keep you unhappy, and what some people call ‘unlucky,’ all your days. What is worse than all, he will try to steal your opportunity to make your peace with God. Dear children, fear Him more than you do rattlesnakes or mad dogs, or ugly bulls, for, after all, they can only destroy your body. This thief, after he has destroyed character, home, and business, will prevent your entering heaven, just as he tried to keep you from coming into this schoolroom in time for prayers.”

The children looked at each other and at uncle Harry with a gaze of great curiosity and surprise. But uncle Harry soon relieved their suspense. As he borrowed the teacher's chalk to write the name of the thief on the blackboard, the boys and girls could hardly be kept in order by the frowns and signs of their teacher.

“Now, children, see the name of the thief who is always at your heels! Look out for him! Don't give him a chance to look at you.”

As uncle Harry took his leave, the children saw printed in large letters, “PROCRASTINATION is the Thief of Time.”

A REVELLING METHODIST'S PRAYER.

It was in the mid-winter of 1836, that the passer-by of the “Sailors Home,” so called, in H—, might one evening have heard sounds of boisterous merriment proceeding from the crowded bar-room, while occasionally a stunning oath fell upon the ear. The room was filled with a motley crowd, such as usually were to be found there—sailors, boatmen, and raftmen—and all apparently in high uproarious mirth. On one side of the room was a cheerful fire, around which sat a number of dozing toppers, while on the opposite side was the bar, with the usual array of well filled decanters dimly seen through the murky cloud of smoke.

In the centre of the crowd, and the object of their undivided attention, stood a man, in appearance about fifty years of age. In former years he had been distinguished in political life, and was known as a man of fine talents and acquirements. In his early life he had become a member of the Methodist church, and was still remember-

ed as having been a prominent and favorite class-leader. His hair was gray, tangled and matted, and fell in sparse locks upon his shoulders. His eye was dim and bloodshot; his face bloated and unheavenly, and his whole appearance gave evidence of his wretched and miserable condition. A silly smile was playing over his haggard features as he listened to the rude and profane com-

mendations of the wretches around him, for he had just finished a song.

“Give us another, Jim,” said one. “Give us one more,” roared the crowd.

“Well, and what shall it be, gentleman?” said he. “Methodist,” said the first speaker, and a peal of laughter followed. “Give us a regular Methodist, old fellow.”

For a moment he hesitated, and then, with a voice shattered, but still noble, he commenced a favorite and beautiful Methodist hymn.

As he proceeded, it seemed to come home to his heart, for at times his voice faltered and his face seemed as if a shadow had fallen upon it. Where the turbulent fountains of the heart being troubled by an angel? or had that simple melody brought back a tide of recollections of olden times—bright, hopeful, happy days long since passed, and which had long been to him but as a dream?

He ended, and the rude and noisy crew loudly applauded, mingling many an oath in their commendations. But his face had lost its smile.

Then one called upon him for a prayer “to end with,” as he expressed himself, and they all gathered still closer around him.

“No, no, I can't pray; I can't pray now,” exclaimed the poor wretch, and he seemed to be troubled. But they would have no refusal; he must give them a prayer. Prayer! He used to pray much once, for then it was dear to him, and it seemed to make life brighter, and joy and happiness nestled in his heart. But that was a long time ago, and many a weary day and even year had passed since then.

Sometimes, to be sure, in his utter and degraded misery, as memory reflected a gleam of momentary light from the past; startled in the instant, perhaps with hand hard-pressed on an aching, burning brow, he would cry out “O Lord!” but it was of bitter, despairing misery, and not hope; and then, unable to endure such terrible, remorseful thoughts, he would plunge into mad intoxication till all reflection was gone.

It was not always thus. At times better and kindlier thoughts came to him, and though he had fallen very low, still he would resolve to reform and be a better man; and so, as it were, “smiting on his breast,” and scarce daring to lift up his eyes, he would arise and go softly on, till overpowering temptation within and without seized him and flung him back again.

But now as he stood there, kind thoughts and even tender, called up by that song, had touched his desolate heart, and hope seemed returning once more to him—perhaps God would hear his prayer. So slowly lifting his hand from his hat, he said, “Let us pray.”

The peal of laughter was upon the lips of those around, but the unaffected solemnity of his manner awed and suppressed their noisy mirth, and they gazed upon him in silence.

“Our Father, which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.” His voice was broken with emotion; but as he proceeded it became clearer. The spirit of other days had seemingly returned upon him, and he prayed as of old, moving as with the Spirit of God the hearts of all who heard him. He prayed with agonized earnestness for pardon, for reconciliation with the Saviour, for strength in the hour and moment of temptation, and light through all of future life to guide and direct in every devious path, and that at last they might all attain to eternal life through a crucified Redeemer.

He ceased; but a spell had fallen upon that crowd, and not a word was heard. He took up his hat, and turning away, left the house. From that hour he became an altered man, and the earnest, self-denying, Christian labors of many subsequent years were not, we trust, in vain.

“The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh and whither it goeth, so is every one that is born of the Spirit.” John iii. 8.—*American Messenger*.

Morality does not make a Christian, yet no man can be a Christian without it.