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### OLD TESTAMENT BOOKS.

In *Genesis* the world was made by God's creative hand.

In *Exodus* the Hebrews marched to gain the Promised Land.

*Leviticus* contains the Law, holy and just and good.

*Numbers* records the tribes enrolled—all sons of Abraham's blood.

*Moses*, in *Deuteronomy*, records God's mighty deeds.

Brave *Joshua* into Canaan's land the host of Israel.

In *Judges* their rebellion oft provokes the Lord to smite.

But *Ruth* records the faith of one pleasing in his sight.

In *First and Second Samuel* of Jesse's sons we read.

Ten tribes in *First and Second Kings* revolted from his seed.

The *First and Second Chronicles* see Judah captive made;

But *Ezra* leads a remnant back by princely Cyrus' aid.

The city walls of Zion *Nehemiah* builds again;

While *Ester* saves her people from the plots of wicked men.

In *Job* we read how faith will live beneath afflictions' rod.

And David's *Psalms* are precious songs to every child of God.

And *Proverbs* like a goodly string of choice pearls appear.

*Ecclesiastes* teaches men how vain are all things here.

The *Song of Solomon* exalts sweet Sharon's Rose;

While Christ, the Saviour and the King, the "rapt Isaiah" shows.

The warning *Jeremiah* apostate Israel scorns;

His plaintive *Lamentations* their awful downfall mourns.

*Ezekiel* tells in wondrous words of dazzling mysteries;

While kings and empires yet to come, *Daniel* in visions sees.

Of judgment and mercy *Hosea* loves to tell.

*Joel* describes the blessed days when God with men shall dwell.

Among *Tillia's* herdsmen *Amos* received his call;

While *Obadiah* prophesies of Edom's final fall.

*Jonah* enshrines a wondrous type of Christ our risen Lord.

*Micah* pronounces Judah lost—lost but again restored.

*Nahum* declares on Nineveh just judgment shall be poured.

A view from Chaldaea's coming doom *Habakkuk's* visions give.

Next *Zephaniah* warns the Jews to turn, repent and live.

### III. THE THREE NON-CONFORMISTS.—Vers. 16-18. 16. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego.

The three young men who joined with Daniel in refusing to defile themselves with the king's meat (Dan. i. 6-7, etc.).

They must have been at this time 30 to 35 years old, in the prime of young manhood and usefulness.

They were rulers in the province of Babylon, and therefore prominent men.

When all the rest at the sound of the music had bowed down in worship before the golden image, these three men stood up and were conspicuous all over the plain.

Then they found it their opportunity and reported these stubborn Jews to the king. He summoned them before him, and gave them one more opportunity to worship the golden image, and declared, "If ye worship not, ye shall be cast the same hour into the midst of a burning fiery furnace; and who is that God that shall deliver you out of my hands?"

They answered promptly, showing that they had carefully considered the subject, and that with them it was a matter of principle. They did it in a respectful manner. They calmly looked at their own duty, and resolved to do it, leaving the consequences with God.

God's TWO WAYS OF DELIVERANCE. (1) *By saving from trouble.* 17. If it be so. If it be wise and best. Our God whom we serve is able to deliver us. If God did not deliver them it was not because He was not able, nor because He did not love them, but because it was not best for them, and for the cause they loved. And He will deliver us out of thine hand, in the way that seems best to Him.

(2) *By making the sufferings work out more good than the deliverance would have done.*

18. But if not. If God should not see fit to save them from the furnace. They add this "if not" to show that they did not presume to tie God to this deliverance absolutely; for God knows how to deliver, and sometimes to suffer His saints to glorify Him by suffering. They were resolved to venture suffering rather than sinning. We will not serve thy gods. They could not do wrong, come what might. They could die, but they would not sin.

THE TEMPTATION. True religion implies a determined purpose to do right, whatever may be the consequences. It matters not what follows—wealth or poverty; honor or dishonor; good report or evil report; life or death—the mind is firmly fixed on doing right. This is the religion of principle.

IV. CAST INTO THE BURNING FIERY FURNACE. Vers. 19-23. 19. Then was Nebuchadnezzar full of fury. Their refusal was in direct opposition to his will. His feelings got beyond control. Heat the furnace one seven times more.

20. The burning fiery furnace. This furnace seems to have been constructed for the purpose of smelting ore. Remains of such furnaces built by the Romans have been discovered in several places. They resemble a lime kiln, being banked around with earth, and having an opening at the top, through which the material to be melted was introduced (ver. 23), and a door on one side, beneath, out of which the ashes and slag were raked. The victims were cast into the furnace through the opening in the top, while they were seen by the king through the door on the side, and through this also they came forth.

21. Bound in their coats, their hosen, and their hats. These separate articles, consisting of easily inflammable material, are doubtless mentioned with reference to the miracle that followed, that even these remained unchanged in the fiery furnace.

The flame slew those men that took up, etc., to the opening of the furnace. When the opening at the top of the furnace was opened; the flames rushed out with such violence as to kill the executioners.

V. THE MARTYRS' DELIVERANCE.—Vers. 24-28. 24. Then (soon after they were cast into the furnace) the king was astonished. An old and obsolete form of the word "astonished." The king looked through the door into the furnace and saw a sight at which he was astonished and terrified. The thought flashes upon him that he has come into conflict with a new and unknown Power.

25. Four men loose. The Babylonians were accustomed to bind their captives and prisoners with chains (Jer. xl. 4; lli. 11), and only a miracle could burn the chains while the men were unharmed. And they have no hurt. The form of the fourth is like the Son of God. Only a divine being, the king knew, could live thus in the fire himself, or preserve others there. Of course he knew nothing of the true Son of God which came into the world, but was only an unconscious prophet. No doubt in reality it was the Son of God, who, "as the angel of the Lord" at various times appeared to the Old Testament saints.

26. Then Nebuchadnezzar came near to the mouth. The king himself draws near, to see and verify the strange appearance, and to release the men. Ye servants of the most high God. This is a recognition that, in comparison with his own Babylonian deities, the God of Shadrach is greater than they.

### LESSONS.

1. These three men, by their faithfulness in their earlier life (chap. 1), were prepared to withstand the greater temptations of a later life, and thus to exert a wider influence for good.

2. The trial of our faith. The trial of faith strengthens faith, and ennobles character. The trial of faith manifests it to others. "The Christian's afflictions are like a bell, to call the attention of the world to God's power in saving men."

3. The religion of principle. (1) It is founded on intelligent convictions of truth, so fixed in the heart as to be beyond the reach of argument. (2) It is founded on obedience to the sense of duty without regard to consequences. (3) It is the only type of religious character which commands the confidence of the world. (4) It is the only kind that is certainly genuine.

### A BLEAK HOME.

On the map of Iceland may be seen a speck of an island called Grimsey! It is the most northern and consequently the coldest, of the Iceland Group. Eighty-eight people, no more, live on it. They have tried to keep a few cows, but the winters are too hard for them. Two horses and a few sheep, with very coarse fleeces, are the only animals of the kind on the island.

A minister whose name is Peter Goodmanson, lives in the remote place. He is a poet and an astronomer, and is employed to take observations for the Meteorological Institute, at Copenhagen. Once or twice a year some of the islanders visit the mainland; but the stormy seas, covered with icebergs, make the passage always dangerous.

On one side of the island, which is a high precipice, countless birds build their nests, and the collecting of eggs is one chief means of living for the little settlement. Men are let down over the face of the rock by ropes. They wear suits thickly wadded by feathers, to save themselves from being hurt on the sharp rocks. Each man carries a pole to help himself with, and a ladle for scooping up nests he can not reach with his hands. There is in his frock a great pocket, in which he can put one hundred and fifty eggs. There he works with the sea roaring beneath him.

### HOW TO TREAT CHILDREN.

Four good rules are given by Gertrude R. Lewis in *The Interior*:

1. Do not promise punishment for a certain offence without giving it, if need be, and do not delay it; fear as well as hope deferred maketh the heart sick and the temper sour. Do not refer to it again, and never send a child hungry to bed for any offence. It is a crime against the child's health and welfare.

2. Do not "fib" if you don't want your child to do so. I saw a child punished on the second day of April for telling the "white lie" her elders had told the day before. Many a mother would be horrified at being thought untruthful who doesn't hesitate to tell a falsehood to get something away from a child or pacify it when papa leaves. Do you suppose the child does not soon see through your subtleties?

3. Let the *meum* and *teum* in the household be strongly defined, and do not force generosity. Let exact justice come first, and insist only upon that, always giving the child due appreciation for all its little sacrifices. A very good rule of division was that adopted by two sisters. One divided, and the other took her choice. You can rest assured there was never a candy more in one pile than the other, and much distress of mind was saved thereby.

4. If you want your little boy to cordially detest the little fellow next door, throw the latter's virtues at him on every occasion.

OLD HUNDRED.—Every boy and girl has heard of Old Hundred, but not every one knows how old it is. An English clergyman has written a history recently of this ancient tune. It is pretty certainly established that it was written as early as 1546 by William France, a German. Since this time it has undergone many alterations, and many forms of it are in existence. One curious fact about it, and one which makes us regret that the original form has been changed, is that it was of a much more lively nature at first than it is now.

In all charity believe that your brother desires to hold only Christ's truth; but do make sure that you hold it yourself, whether he holds it or not. This is the best undenominationalism in the world.—*Spurgeon.*

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