Only Thirty and Gray

How is this?
Perhaps sleepless nights caused it, or grief, or sickness, or perhaps it was care.
No matter what the cause, you cannot wish to look old at thirty.
Gray hair is starved hair.
The hair bulbs have been deprived of proper food or proper nerve force.

Ayer's Hair Vigor

increases the circulation in the scalp, gives more power to the nerves, supplies missing elements to the hair bulbs.
Used according to directions, gray hair begins to show color in a few days. Soon it has all the softness and richness of youth and the color of early life returns.
Would you like our book on the Hair? We will gladly send it to you.

Write us!

If you do not obtain all the benefits you expected from the Vigor, write the doctor about it. He may be able to suggest something of value to you. Address, Dr. J. C. Ayer Co., Lowell, Mass.

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The Sunday School.

INTERNATIONAL LESSON.

Third Quarter, Lesson 4, July 23, '99

THE HANDWRITING ON THE WALL.—Daniel 5 : 17-31.

Read Chapters 4 and 5.

Commit Verses 24-28.

Golden Text.—God is Judge.—Psa. 75 : 7.

HISTORICAL SETTING.

Time.—538 B. C (Hommel makes it 539). The year that Babylon was taken by Cyrus; forty or fifty years after our last lesson.

Place.—Probably in Babylon, on the Euphrates. The book of Daniel does not say where, and an inscription on a tablet speaks of him as being in Accad.

The Jews.—It was near the close of the seventy years' captivity, and just before the return permitted by Cyrus.

Rulers.—Nabonidus, the king of Babylonia. Belshazzar; his eldest son. Cyrus, emperor of the Persians and the Manda or Nomads, and the Medes, and afterwards of Babylon.

A PICTURE OF BABYLON.—The new Babylonian empire was short lived, beginning with Nabu paluzur the father of Nebuchadnezzar (B. C. 625). It rose in grandeur, power, and extent of dominion till Babylon was taken by Cyrus, B. C. 538, 9. Nebuchadnezzar converted his capital, Babylon, into one of the most magnificent and most beautiful cities of antiquity. Herodotus, who visited it about B. C. 450, describes it as forming a square of nearly fourteen miles on each side. The walls surrounding the city were three hundred feet high and eighty feet broad. A hundred gates permitted entrance to the city. Such a city was never seen before, and was the work of Nebuchadnezzar. The bricks marked with his name, and the inscriptions he wrote, being hidden in the ruin, have now come forth from their grave as witnesses to the truth of God's Word. In those days Babylon was the metropolis of the world, the center of commerce, art, and wisdom. The wealth of the world poured into the coffers of the Babylonish merchants.

At time the of this lesson Nabonidus was the king. We have learned from the stone tablets that he had a son, Belshazzar, of whom nothing was known before. He was the crown prince, and may well have been acting as king during his father's absence from the city at this time. At the time of this lesson Cyrus was encamped around the city.

A PICTURE OF BELSHAZZAR'S FEAST.—Belshazzar was but a youth of fourteen or sixteen years, rash, wild, and giddy with his uncontrolled power. Secure in his defenses, he made a great feast to a thousand of the nobles. He thought how he could enrich the splendor of his feast by the sacred goblets and dishes of gold that Nebuchadnezzar had taken from the temple at Jerusalem. They were brought, and made to be instruments for drunken revelry and lust, and worship of idols, thus declaring that the idols had given them the victory over the God of the Jews.

The Wickedness of this act consisted, (1) In profaning these sacred utensils to base uses. (2) Increasing the insult by doing it at a feast to an idol, thus implying that the idol was superior to the living God. (3) In doing it at an immoral and drunken revel, thus insulting the moral law of God.

THE HANDWRITING ON THE WALL—Seated on his lofty and jeweled throne, suddenly in the midst of the revelries the king saw

"A dark and bodiless hand,
Gliding in shadowy, slow, gigantic blackness!
Lo, fiery letters, where it moves, break out."
—H. Milman.

"The yelling laughter was hushed and all
Was still as death in the royal hall,
And see! And see! on the white wall high
The form of a hand went slowly by,
And wrote, and wrote, on the broad wall white,
Letters of fire, and vanished in night."
—Heinrich Heine.

"A sudden light illumined the pillared hall!
No lamp, no earthly fire could pour such beams.
From sun or comet no such splendor streams.
See—where in flame, yet dazzling, strong, and clear—
That shadowy hand doth trace its words of fear."
—N. Michell.

The flush of youth and of wine faded from his cheek; his thoughts troubled him; his knees smote one against another, as he stood arrested by the awful sight. He ordered that the whole familiar tribe of astrologers and soothsayers should be summoned.

DANIEL INTERPRETING THE HANDWRITING.—Vs. 17-28. Belshazzar, in his terror summoned his wise men to declare what the strange apparition and the blazing letters meant. They failed. Either they could not make sense of the letters, or could not perceive what meaning they had. Even if they had understood, it is not likely that one of them would dare to speak it out before the king.

Then the mother of Belshazzar spoke of Daniel as one who had shown great gifts at interpretation to his grandfather Nebuchadnezzar. Daniel was sent for, and came. He heard the king's offer, and then spoke brave and true words which might easily cost him his life. *Let thy gifts be to thyself.* As a prophet of God he cannot speak for money or any reward. He must speak God's truth without fear or favor. *The most high God gave Nebuchadnezzar.* The true God is shown to be over all and above all. Then Daniel repeats the story told in chap 4. *And thou....hast not humbled thine heart, though,* etc. You have not sinned through ignorance, but have gone on in a wicked course in spite of God's lessons of warning. *But hast lifted up thyself.* Exalted thyself as if thou couldst defy with impunity *the Lord of heaven,* the God above all. *Vessels of his house.* From the temple of Bel, where they have been treasured up since the conqueror had carried them from Jerusalem. *Drunk wine in them.* Drinking wine from the vessels taken out of Jehovah's temple in Jerusalem was intended as an insult to God. *In whose hand thy breath is.* Who gave him life, and in whom "he lives, and moves, and has his being." *Whose are all thy ways.* Who has given you all you have, who has power over all your course of life. *Then was the part of the hand sent.* As a warning message. *This is the writing. Mene;* *God hath numbered thy kingdom.* Counted out the term allotted to it, which has now reached its limit. *And finished it.* The days of its existence are counted out in full. The last number is reached "Mene" is repeated for the sake of emphasis. *Tekel,* which means weighed resembles a word which signified "light," light of weight, like a counterfeit coin. The application is that Belshazzar had been *weighed* as to his moral character and actions, and been *found wanting,* of light weight. God had tested him, and he had failed. *Peres* is the singular, while *upharsin* is the plural of the same word. It is given in v. 25 in the plural, for emphasis, just as "mene" is doubled. It means divided. *Thy kingdom is divided.* Not divided into two parts, but broken into pieces, destroyed. *Given to the Medes and Persians.* Media was a large country lying east of Assyria, north of Persia, and southwest of the Caspian Sea.

DANIEL REWARDED.—V. 29. *Clothed Daniel with scarlet.* The royal purple. *Third ruler in the kingdom.* Either, one of three; or, more probably, next under Belshazzar, who was the second, being under his father, Nabonidus, the king over all.

THE DESTRUCTION OF BABYLON.—Vs 30, 31. *In that night was Belshazzar....slain.* According to Herodotus, Babylon itself was besieged by Cyrus for months, and was taken only by stratagem. The Persian invader drained off the waters of the river, and his army, under the shelter of night, crept into the city through the empty channel. *And Darius the Median took the kingdom.* No such person is known in history, as a little while ago neither Sargon nor the Hittites were known. It has generally been held by conservative writers that he reigned under Cyrus for a time. More light on these questions will doubtless be found

PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS.

The crimes for which Belshazzar was condemned were neglect of God, and the warnings God had given his fathers, and profaning holy things to base uses. All irreverence in the house of God, all punning and jesting with sacred things, as the Bible and hymns, all worldly use of holy time and holy things, is akin to the sin of Belshazzar.

There is a handwriting of warning and of doom on the wall for every sinner. The eternal laws of God, and his providence, are a gigantic hand writing the doom of every nation that refuses to be righteous.

Note the faithfulness of Daniel in reproving the king.

Compare John the Baptist and Herod, Elijah and Ahab, Amos and Jeroboam II., Hugh Latimer and Henry VIII.

What are 'the balances' God uses? In general, his Word; then, also, the work he means a man to accomplish; sometimes reason estimating advantages; often the exigencies of providence making fidelity imperative; education and opportunity; and always conscience.

If you want to be healthy during the warm weather see that your bowels move regularly every day. If they don't, take Laxa-Liver Pills, the natural laxative, that never gripes urges or sickens.

A Teacher in Trouble.

A rap at the door of the minister's study, and one of the Sunday-school teachers of his church followed the invitation to come in.

Pastor, I want to talk with you a little about my Sunday school class.

All right, said the pastor; I shall be most happy to talk with you.

I have come this morning because I feel utterly discouraged about my class.

How long have you had the class?

Five years.

What is your particular trouble.

I really do not know, and that is why I came to you. I have had the class so long, yet none of them are Christians, and it seems as though something must be wrong somewhere.

Have you ever talked with them personally about accepting Christ?

No, not personally, but I have several times talked with them all together, urging them to be Christians,

Did you give them an opportunity at such times to show whether they wanted to accept Christ?

No. I never thought of that.

Do you really think you care for the souls in your class?

I thought I did, and yet never gave them a chance to accept Christ. When talking with them together in the class, I can see now that I might have given them some opportunity of making some sign. But then I really have no time to talk with them personally. I only see them Sundays, and then only during the Sunday-school hour.

How much time did you spend during the week praying for your class?

Well, I am ashamed to say it, but some weeks I never pray for them at all.

About the personal work—have you no time at all?

Not a moment, so far as I can see.

Did you ever pray for time to talk to each scholar personally?

I never thought of pray for time.

How about writing to them? Could you not write to at least one every week, if only a few lines?

Oh, yes; I could do that.

When any of your scholars are absent, do you go to their homes to see why?

No; I have no time for that either.

How about sending them a postal card, telling them that you are sorry that they were away, and that you will be glad to see them in the class next Sunday.

I really begin to feel as though I had not been doing anything.

Is there no time on Sunday that you could see them, besides the Sunday-school hour?

I do not see where there is a minute to spare. You see there are regular church services to attend, the young people's prayer-meeting, sometimes the missionary service, and then oftentimes an anniversary in another church that I want to attend.

I am glad you feel so loyal about attending the church services, and are anxious to know what is going on in other churches, but I would very much prefer that you leave out one of your church services entirely, spending the time in calling on and talking personally with the members of your Sunday-school class. For what more important business can we have on our hands than leading the children of the Sunday-school into the kingdom of God!

I also believe that if you will make this matter a subject of earnest prayer you will find many times in the week when some effort, however slight, may be made that will help your scholars.

First, there must be a willingness on your part to sacrifice for the young souls entrusted to your care. It is certainly a matter of vital importance that every Sunday-school teacher should be in the closest touch with their scholars, not tiring them with the subject of their salvation, but constantly keeping before them this great question in a tender, gentle, loving way.—Our Young People.

Slackness.

What made the bridge break and the train go through, and tortured men and women give up their lives in wreck and flames and misery? A careless workman made some imperfect bolts out of poorly heated iron; a careless inspector let him pass, thinking a few flawed ones would not count in a keg of many hundreds; a careless builder slipped them into the bridge work, not noticing the flaw, or thinking it did not matter, and so slackness committed murder. A verse in the book of proverbs, long ago, put the pith of this matter rightly before us, when it said: He also that is slack in his work is brother to him that is a destroyer.

There are two sins against the world's work which tempt us; there is the sin of not doing at all, and there is the sin of not doing well. These are both freighted with sore misfortune for ourselves and for others.

History tells us that the son of Napoleon III., the Emperor of France, was called by his mother, Mr. Ten Minutes, because he was always wanting to wait ten minutes longer, for getting up, for going to bed, for taking a drive, for studying a lesson; it was always, Oh, just put it off ten minutes. And he was killed, as is so well known, by the Zulu savages in South Africa, because, while on a reconnoitering party with a company of British soldiers, when the captain said it was dangerous to linger longer over a hasty breakfast, Napoleon said: Oh, just wait for ten minutes. And the youth's slackness was the man's destruction; and the destruction, too, which is always more the pity, of the company which were with him.

The results of spiritual slackness are not so immediately clear, for the results of spiritual faithfulness or carelessness are not found upon life's surface. But it is sure that if a man is slack in the matters of his mind, his heart, his spirit, the ruin of that carelessness will return to plague him. A man who builds in character carelessly is as apt to find his work a tumbling ruin, as he who works heedlessly in brick and mortar.

It is well that the ancient word be spoken to us in all its broadest meaning, urging us to do with our might what our hand or our heart finds to do.

Thorns.

He that plants thorns should never go barefoot is an old saying. Of course you know what that means. The planted thorns are quite sure to come up, and in the path of the one who planted them, so that if he goes barefoot he will feel their sharp pricks himself.

There is another way of putting it: Those who carelessly or purposely make trouble for others find trouble for themselves. Isn't that true?

There are a great many kinds of thorns. There is disobedience which is a sadly sharp one. We have, too, unkindness, selfishness, forgetfulness, impatience, rudeness, teasing, and a dozen of others. Did you ever know anyone who was guilty of doing these things, which is another way of saying that he planted these thorns, who was always happy and pleased, and had always a smooth path for himself? You never did.

Thorns grow very fast. They never have to be weeded and watered, as flowers do. Plant them and they will grow. So wrong thoughts and wrong deeds bring forth their fruit fast enough without any care whatever. And things of this kind always hurt more than one person. You will notice that.

People ought always to do right for the sake of doing right and because it pleases the Saviour, but it is so easy to forget that it is a very wise thing that doing wrong brings trouble to the wrongdoer, for this makes it easier to remember the right.

Don't plant thorns. You never can protect yourself against them. Trouble others and you will get hurt. Scatter seeds of kindness and you will have a harvest of gladness yourself.—J. H. F., in Sunday school Advocate.

MAKING A FORTUNE.—It is often said of certain men that they have been the architects of their own fortunes. So must every one be. But may not one fall heir to a million? He may, indeed, but that million is not a fortune to him unless he makes it so. Quite likely it may prove to be his worst misfortune. Nature may endow another with fine eyesight, but if he uses his eyes mainly in the search for things degrading, if, through them, he takes delight in abominations, his eyes are his misfortune. And so of all possessions. It is what we do with them that makes them a fortune or a misfortune to us.—S. S. Times.

Drunkenness, ravelry, and excess lead to crimes.

GOOD DIGESTION SHOULD WAIT ON APPETITE.—To have the stomach well is to have the nervous system well. Very delicate are the digestive organs. In some so sensitive are they that atmospheric changes affect them. When they become disarranged no better regulator is procurable than Parmelee's Vegetable Pills. They will assist the digestion so that the hearty eater will suffer no inconvenience and will derive all the benefits of his food.

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