

of Cæsar, turn and say, Away with the atheists\* (meaning Christians);' but Polycarp, with a stern countenance, looked on all the crowd of lawless heathen in the arena, and waving h's hand at them, he groaned and looked up to heaven and said, 'Away with the

atheists.' But when the Pro-Consul pressed him and said, 'Take the oath and I will let you go, revile Christ,' Polycarp said, 'For eighty and six years have I been his servant, and he has done me no wrong, and how can I blaspheme my King who saved me?'

### THE GEOGRAPHY LESSON

[SEE SKETCH MAP, LESSON XI.]

The chief productions of Babylonia were wheat, which gave from fifty to a hundred-fold return; sesame, which yielded oil; and the date palm, introduced at a very early period from Arabia. "This tree satisfied all the remaining wants of the people, since from it they obtained wine, vinegar, honey, flour and material for all kinds of wickerwork. The stones were used by smiths as a substitute for charcoal, and when steeped served for fattening oxen and sheep. The reed which grew by the numerous canals, attained a

height of 15 feet, and was used for building huts and for the construction of mats, and even boats. Stone and minerals were almost unknown in that alluvial soil. The absence of these was, however, atoned for by the excellent building material that lay to hand in the clay, while the best possible mortar was obtained from the asphalt contained in the numerous naphtha wells. All the buildings in ancient Babylonia were accordingly constructed of brick. How wonderful these were has been revealed by modern research.

### THE LESSON APPLIED

When Christian, in the Pilgrim's Progress, entered the House Beautiful he carried no weapon but his staff; when he left he was clothed in armor. He came in a pilgrim; he went out a warrior. For the Christian must face a constant struggle against temptation. Daniel and his companions pass from one trial to another. As they move forward, however, to each new testing, their triumph is more assured. For "each victory will help you some other to win." To resist the present temptation is to make resistance easier when the next temptation comes.

Loyalty to principle often costs much. "Do as I bid you or burn," is the alternative placed before the three young men. But they never faltered. When it was asked of Dr. John Duncan if the theology of some of the early fathers was not rather meagre, he replied, "Perhaps they could but poorly write for Christ, but they could fearlessly burn for him." There is something sublime about this absolute fidelity to conviction regardless of immediate consequences. What are you willing to *suffer* for Christ?

They had a strong faith in God. "Our God whom we serve is able to deliver us." It was because they feared God so much that they feared man so little. It was because

they were so sure of God that they were so confident of their duty. "But if not"—here their faith strikes the highest note. If God's will means death, death is better than shame. The loss of life is better than the loss of a clear conscience.

We think of Job, when Satan insinuated that he served God because it paid him to do so, and God let Satan put Job to the test. Stroke after stroke fell upon this servant of the Lord, but he only said, "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord." And after he had been tested almost beyond endurance, still he kept his faith. "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him." An unconquerable faith in God means an unconquerable life.

They had a manly self-respect. "Be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods." One time a lady, world-weary and self-sick, confessed to Madame Antoinette Sterling that she had made up her mind to end the miserable struggle by drowning. The answer of the great contralto was in effect, "If you must do it, you must; only it will be nothing more than your clothes you know, that you will leave behind you in the water; you will be yourself when you have thrown away your body." Next day