

SUNDAY
SCHOOL

The Quiet Hour

YOUNG
PEOPLE

DANIEL IN BABYLON

By Rev. C. McKinnon, B. D., Winnipeg.

Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself, v. 8. When Sir Walter Raleigh was shamefully executed in the reign of James I, the executioner asked him which way he would lay his head. He replied: "So the heart be right, it is no matter which way the head lies." Like the British Parliament, which consists of three departments, the House of Commons, where a Bill is introduced, the House of Lords, where it is reviewed, and the royal authority, by which it is sanctioned, our life has also its three departments: the heart, where desires arise, the conscience, where they are discriminated, and the will, by which they are executed. The peace and purity of one's life, then, depend upon a good heart that will originate only good desires. Not that a false intellect is a matter of indifference, but a pure heart more than anything else will best correct the errors of the understanding.

Now God had brought Daniel into favour, v. 9. "Make as many friends as you can," is a good motto for life. Friends will stand us in good stead in many a time of need. It was sound advice that old Polonius, in Shakespeare's Hamlet, gave to his son Laertes:

"Those friends thou hast, and their adoptions tried,
Grapple them to thy soul with hoops of steel."

And to make friends we need not flatter or grovel. There is no call for us to give up a manly independence. It is never required that we sacrifice our principles. We have but to meet the world with a frank, honest, cheerful face and heart, and as surely as the magnet passed through a heap of sand gathers up the particles of iron in it, will we attract to ourselves friends steadfast and true.

Then shall ye make me endanger my head, v. 10. "Go easy with the crusade against the liquor traffic, or it will endanger our business. Don't speak so strongly against gambling, or the fashionable people will be down on you." So the man of good intentions is often tempted to say, unless he believes firmly in God. But to the man of faith it can never be right to do wrong. The peril for him lies all the other way. Like a sailor who was undertaking a dangerous task, he will exclaim, "My life hangs by a single thread; but that thread is in my Father's hand."

Prove thy servants, v. 12. A man of science may be able to analyze the various kinds of food into their elements, and so discover which is the best. But there is a simpler test that the plainest man can practise. When he eats the food, and finds that it makes him healthy and strong, that is proof enough for him. And when we see the religion of Jesus Christ making people pure and unselfish and joyful, this ought to convince us that it is a good thing for us.

As thou seest, deal with thy servants, v. 13. There is the true ring about this appeal. It is the utterance of a manly heart. Here is one, we feel, who will not depend upon "pull" or favoritism for getting on, but will make his way by merit. All he asks is a chance to work, and he is quite content to be judged by

S. S. Lesson—Daniel 1:8-20. Study the chapter. Commit to memory vs. 16, 17. Read ch. 2. Golden Text—Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself.—Daniel 1:8.

the kind of work he does. He does not want a dollar he has not earned, or a position of which he is not worthy. This is a lad of the right stamp, and the world has plenty of room for more like him.

Poise, v. 16. Plain living and high thinking, according to the old saying, go well together. Look at the men who are at the top in their profession or business. How many of them have come from homes where the fare, though wholesome, was simple, and the luxuries were few. Much of their success they owe to the frugal rearing, which sent them out into the world with a clear brain and strong muscles and a vigorous constitution—"a sound mind in a sound body."

God gave them knowledge and skill, v. 17. There is an ancient story of one who was imprisoned in the cause of a leader. When at last he regained his freedom, his leader gave him a chain of gold, link for link, as heavy as the iron one with which he had been bound. It may be that hardships, perhaps the keenest suffering, will come to us in the path of obedience to God. He does not promise that His servants will always have an easy, pleasant time. But no one ever suffered for His sake who did not receive a hundredfold reward now and the promise of eternal life hereafter.

None like Daniel, etc. ten times better than all the magicians, vs. 18, 19. Many start in the race of life with a heavy handicap. It may be poverty, ignorance, or ill-health. But if one is on God's side and is doing His will, he is sure to win out. When at last he reaches the goal, he shall receive a crown that will be all the brighter because of the difficulties he has met and manfully overcome. The relish of this first triumph doubtless remained with Daniel to his latest day, and the remembrance that it was by risking all for God, that he had won.

Therefore stood they before the king, v. 19. From captive to counsellor in the royal court. A wonderful advance! And yet it was so natural and certain; for every duty well done is a rung in the ladder which we climb to the highest success. Success, indeed, is just the mountain top, the journey to which is the steady, persistent pursuing of the daily round. A prosy version of success, you say. So be it; but thus it is. The brilliant flights are few, and the heights reached by them are notoriously uncertain. And especially is it true, that success won by ill-doing, is worse than failure. It is like the flimsy balloon-like building, which at the first touch comes tumbling about one's ears.

SUNLIGHT CHRISTIANS

Being lighted is never the end of the Christian's life—not even being lighted from above. Being lights—that is the end. The moon is bright when it happens to be in a bright place; when the earth comes between it and the sun it turns dark. There are moonlight Christians, who are bright enough when lighted by God's manifest favor, but if the darkness of earth—a sorrow or burden—rises between them and God, they are black and dark. Christ enjoined upon His disciples that their whole body should be full of light. Their oneness with the brightness of God was to be such that they should become lights, not merely lighted. No earth-shadow then could ever come between them and their light. Christ would have us so dwell in the light that we may become children of the light, in whom there is no darkness at all.—Sunday School Times.

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION IN JAPAN

It is not so difficult a task to impart knowledge by education, but to impart to the young man a good, strong character, character thoroughly reliable and trustworthy, is what the educator finds most difficult. In order to build up a perfect character it is most important to have the personal influence of a living man.

Dr. Harris, who was so closely associated with the founding of this school, is remembered by our countrymen with grateful feeling and profound respect for his disinterested sympathy and love extended to our fellow-countrymen; and Mr. Honda, president of this institution, is a friend of mine of long standing. As these gentlemen are living the true Christian life, putting Christian faith into the daily practice, I can safely believe that the teachers who, approving the principle and spirit of these two gentlemen, are engaged in education here in this school are also such honorable gentlemen; and it is my firm belief that you have obtained inestimable benefit in building up your character through the living personal influence of these educators. It is quite a simple matter to learn the Bible, but the hardest thing is to practice its teachings.

I have the most sincere sympathy with any educational institutions whose purpose it is to educate the rising generation of Japan. And therefore it goes without saying that I have no little sympathy with this Methodist College, Aoyama Gakuin, and I entertain the most grateful feeling for the friendship of our honored seniors, the Americans. The Aoyama Gakuin was founded by our philanthropic neighbors to meet the demands of the time. Nobody but an ungrateful scoundrel will begrudge thanks for the noble work it has done.

On reviewing the educational work of the Aoyama Gakuin I find that such an organization best meets the demands of the twentieth century. Although I can not say that I have deeply studied religion, yet I believe that Protestantism is the most advanced form of Christianity. There is a possibility, I think, that the center of civilization will come round to the continent of the Far East, when this advanced religion has rightly been interwoven into the thoughts of the nation and the nation has progressed with the times. I believe any nation which makes an antiquated religion its state religion will in no long time cease to exist. Therefore, I hope the students as well as the teachers of the Aoyama Gakuin will endeavor to live up to the teaching of Christ.

The Constitution of Japan grants individual religious liberty, and so we can select and believe the best form of religion in the world. On this point it is just the same with the United States of America. I am sanguine enough to believe that the result of this present war will bring about a harmonious combination of Western and Eastern civilizations; and no man can more highly appreciate than I do the noble labors of the Aoyama Gakuin as one of the best instruments in bringing about this happy union. It is my earnest prayer that prosperity will crown the work of this college; and that the existing happy relations between America and Japan may grow more intimate and friendly; and that thanksgiving for preserving the people of the nation from becoming higher and nobler, thus enabling them to add more luster to the civilization of the twentieth century.—Extracts from an Address by Count Okuma, in the Japan Evangelist.

To endure and suffer for righteousness' sake has its reward; but to imitate one's self on the altar of another's crankiness is folly.