

of the image, commanding them to fall down and worship it at a given signal. Daniel's three companions, refusing to commit idolatry, are summoned before the king to defend their attitude.

I. A Bold Answer, 16-18.

Vs. 16, 17. *Shadrach*, etc. ; who had been specially accused of disobeying the king's command by those who were probably jealous because these Hebrews had been so promoted by the favor of the king. *We are not careful* ; better, as in Rev. Ver., "we have no need." It is likely that they meant that their attitude toward idolatry was well enough known to answer for them. *If it be so*, etc. ; better, "If our God . . . is able . . . he will deliver us." The three Hebrews were not questioning the power of God, but they recognized that God might not see fit to deliver them. *From the . . . furnace, and . . . out of thine hand*. We shall not be harmed by the fire, nor can the king devise any other means to harm us.

V. 18. *But if not*, etc. Even if God does not see fit to deliver them, their refusal to fall down and worship the image is still absolute, their loyalty to God is an unconditional loyalty. *Thy gods* ; the chief of which was the god Marduk, originally regarded as a sun-god.

II. The Fiery Furnace, 19-23.

Vs. 19, 20. *Full of* ; better, "filled with." *Fury* ; a storm of anger. *The form* ; the outward aspect. *Visage* ; countenance. The outward change in the king's appearance was a plain indication of his inner fury. *The furnace*. The word used here is still used in Syria to denote a lime-kiln. *Than it was wont* ; than it was the rule or custom to heat it. *The most mighty* ; rather, as in Rev. Ver., "certain mighty."

V. 21. *Coats*. The meaning of the word used here is very uncertain. It may mean trousers, or hose, as in Rev. Ver., or mantles. It probably means mantles,—long, flowing robes, peculiarly liable to catch the flames. *Their hosen* ; another word of uncertain meaning. It may mean tunics, as in Rev. Ver., or turbans. *Their hats* ; still another word the meaning of which is not easy to determine. The Rev. Ver. gives "mantles," but there is something to be said for the view

that the word refers to some sort of head-gear.

Vs. 22, 23. *Urgent* ; better, sharp. Obedience to it demanded haste. *Exceeding hot*. See v. 19. *Fell down bound* ; utterly helpless. Their doom was apparently sealed.

III. The Wonderful Deliverance, 24-27.

V. 24. *Was astonished* ; better, was alarmed, filled with fear. "Astonied" is the Old English form of astonished. *Rose up* ; the king being evidently seated where he could see what was going on. *Spake* ; rather, answered, in the sense of commencing to speak. *Counsellors* ; ministers, or possibly, associate-judges. *Did not we cast* ; the sight which the king sees being so amazing that he wonders if some mistake had been made.

V. 25. *Loose* ; the three Hebrews having been cast in bound. *Form* ; the aspect or appearance. *Like the Son of God*. This is a mistranslation. It should be, as in Rev. Ver., "a son of the gods,"—that is, a heavenly visitor or angel. (See Gen. 6 : 2 ; Job 1 : 6.)

Vs. 26, 27. *To the mouth* ; to the door or opening of the furnace. *The most high God* ; a title used most often in Hebrew poetry, usually without the word God. It is a title of dignity and respect as applied to God, particularly reminding us that he rules over the world. *The princes* ; the satraps, a word derived from a Persian word meaning, "protector of the realm." It is used to denote the chief ruler of a province. See ch. 6 : 1 for an account of how Darius organized his kingdom under the rule of these satraps. *Counsellors* ; ministers, as in v. 24. *Changed* ; for the worse. (See ch. 5 : 6.)

Light from the East

CHRISTIANS AND THE WORSHIP OF THE EMPEROR—It was just such severe tests that tried the loyalty of the early Christians to Jesus. If Nebuchadnezzar demanded that men fall down and worship an image of gold, it was demanded of the Christians that they do homage to the statue of the Roman emperor. The aged Polycarp suffered in Smyrna about the year 156. One who saw it all wrote of him : "When he was brought forward, the Pro-Consul asked him if he were Polycarp, and when he admitted it, he tried to persuade him to deny, saying, 'Respect your age,' and so forth, 'Swear by the genius