

Then he took the dumb-bells, and holding them high in the air, with head and shoulders thrown back a few inches, face turned toward the ceiling, lungs nearly full of air, he let the bells slowly down till his arms were on a level with his shoulders. This exercise was to stretch the ribs, and strengthen a weak chest. Then he interlaced his fingers, touched his palms to the top of his head, then turned the palms upward toward the ceiling, fingers still interlaced, and stretched them high as possible over his head. This he did a number of times, then with his hands still over his head, he walked across the floor twenty-five times. Before he got through he felt the warm blood tingling in the veins of his stomach.

There were scores of other exercises given in the little book, for every muscle in the body, but Ted was now pretty tired out, and he put them aside for future practice, and opening his window a few inches top and bottom, for the little book said if he wanted health he must keep fresh out-of-door air in his sleeping room—and raising an umbrella to keep the wind from blowing on him, he fell asleep to dream of gold watches and Uncle Joe. Six months later Uncle Joe came back from Europe, Ted heard of the arrival and rushed down stairs to greet his uncle; but Uncle Joe, to Ted's astonishment, did not know him. When Uncle Joe became convinced that this fine looking boy with broad, deep chest, shapely shoulders, sparkling eyes, well developed arms and legs, rosy cheeks, and firm warm hands was really Ted, his own nephew, his delight knew no bounds.

"How did it all happen, Ted?" he asked. "The little book, the dumb bells, the Indian clubs and the trapeze bar did it. Uncle Joe, I promised, you know, and practised half an hour night and morning, not missing a single day, and," added Ted, looking proudly down on his shapely body—"and this is the result." "Well done, Ted, you have gained the mastery, and you shall have the reward."

Uncle Joe took Ted to the jeweller's and bought him a handsome Geneva watch, stem-winder, a gold chain, and a stone seal. On the seal were the words, "Labor omnia vincit."—"Labor conquers all things."—*Grandmother's Children.*

"POOR NELSON MILLER."

BY ERNEST GILMORE.

There were a great many truly excellent people in G—. That was proven when Nelson Miller came home after sowing many wild oats broadcast, and told his family that he had "turned over a new leaf." There were many pages between the old leaf and the new one. In the former he had been down in the depths—a poor, bruised, tattooed, degraded young man, spurned by the masses and pitied by the few; in the latter he had been healed, washed, and raised to respected manhood. He was doing well now; that was the verdict of all the kindly people, and many were the warm hand-clasps he received and the encouraging words spoken to him. There was no happier man in G— than Deacon Miller, now that his son had returned "clothed, and in his right mind." He was offered a good salary as book-keeper in an influential house, and accepted it. A year passed, he gaining day by day a warm place in the hearts of his employers.

"Such a noble fellow!" they said to each other admiringly; "he will make his mark yet."

This was his father's opinion, too, and his dear but weak-minded mother's. "Nelson'll make his mark; I'm sure of that," Deacon Miller said proudly, his eyes looking humid as he thought of the then and the now—the then when people never dared to speak of the wayward runaway, Nelson Miller, the now, when everyone he met in G— congratulated him upon his son.

But was he as strong as they thought? Poor Nelson could have told you no. He could yet scarcely endure the smell of wine; the taste would have plunged him back into the depths—he felt quite sure of that. But he was a determined fellow; he would not be such a simpleton as to taste what he knew would prove the destruction of his soul.

It was a lovely day in early spring when Nelson was to make a public profession of his love for his Saviour. Deacon Miller

and his wife lifted their souls in a prayer of thanksgiving. It seemed to them to be the dawning of a day to be ever consecrated as "a white day" in their calendar. Alas! alas! that it proved a black one, whose shadows would haunt them to their last moment.

How lovely the church looked that bright spring morning! How sweet it was with the breath of many fragrant flowers, looking up from the vine-draped pulpit-stands! How thrillingly the choir sang, "Whiter than Snow!" How tender grew Nelson Miller's heart as he looked, and listened, and waited for the summons that was to unite him publicly with the Lord's people! What a handsome fellow he was! How noble he looked! And what a helper he would be in the church! This seemed to be the opinion of the church full of worshippers. And Nelson intended to be a helper.

But the current of his thoughts was soon interrupted by a peculiar aroma arising from nothing more or less than wine poured slowly, carefully from the silver pitcher into the silver goblets. A distressed look came into Nelson's face, a troubled thought into his mind. What had been the matter with him that he had not thought of this? Surely he had been a strange person not to have recalled the fact that fermented wine was always used in this church at communion. Mrs. Miller glanced at her son, and saw him wipe the thick perspiration from his forehead. She leaned toward him, and whispered lovingly, "Are you sick, dear boy? You look distressed." And he whispered back—this dear, dear boy, on the brink of a fearful precipice—"Mother, I am distressed. Is it necessary for me to touch that wine? Couldn't I waive it by when my turn comes?"

"Just touch it to your lips, Nelson, dear; that will be enough," advised the mother. "And it was enough! That very night all hope for Nelson Miller was buried forever. The taste of the wine had awakened the slumbering demon, and a few years later this was the closing scene of his earthly life. "I found in the street a corpse half enveloped in mud and in sleet, a foul, bloated thing, but I saw in the face a something that told of its boyhood's grace."—*Church and Home.*

THE BIRTHDAY GLASS.

Birthdays should be bright, and joyous, and glad. They ought to be kept in every home; but I know mothers, not a few, who bitterly regret that the sparkling wine had ever a place on the birthday table. Where is curly-haired Charley now? What has become of little Frank, who used to make such a demonstration as he drained every drop of his birthday glass of fine old port? We who know their life-stories, dare not ask the question. Their names must not now be mentioned to the fond mothers who would give anything to undo the past. "What father likes and what mother sanctions must be right," is the argument which naturally commends itself to every child. A birthday party is an event looked forward to with keen anticipation by all the young folk. Well kept, it can be looked back upon with satisfaction by both old and young. Keep your birthdays, then, by all means, but keep them sweet and clean from every evil habit and vicious practice.—*F. Sherlock, in Home Words for October.*

SCHOLARS' NOTES.

(From International Question Book.)

LESSON VI.—FEBRUARY 7.

THE FIERY FURNACE.—DAN. 3: 16-23.

COMMIT VERSES 18, 19.

GOLDEN TEXT.

Our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace.—Dan. 3: 17.

CENTRAL TRUTH.

God will deliver in the hour of temptation and trouble those who are faithful to him.

DAILY READINGS.

M. Dan. 2: 1-23.
T. Dan. 2: 24-49.
W. Dan. 3: 1-15.
Th. Dan. 3: 16-30.
F. 1 Pet. 4: 12-19.
Sa. Matt. 5: 10-20.
Su. Rev. 3: 1-13.

TIME.—18th year of Nebuchadnezzar, B.C. 587. About 16 years after the last lesson; and near the time of the fall of Jerusalem (Lesson 4).

PLACE.—The plain of Dura, about five miles south-east of Babylon.

RULERS.—Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon (605-561). Zedekiah, the last king of Judah. Pharaoh Hophra, king of Egypt. The "seven wise men" in Greece.

PROPHETS.—Jeremiah, at Jerusalem. Ezekiel, by the River Chebar in Babylonia. Daniel, at Babylon.

INTERVENING HISTORY.—Soon after Daniel and his friends had become officers in Nebuchadnezzar's kingdom, Daniel had an opportunity to show his wisdom by revealing and interpreting a dream for the king. Then Daniel was made chief ruler, and his three friends were exalted to high office at his request.

HELPS OVER HARD PLACES.

1. THE GOLDEN IMAGE was erected on the plain of Dura, five miles from Babylon. It was 60 cubits (90 feet) high, and 6 cubits (9 feet) broad. This included the pedestal. It was probably of wood or clay, and covered with plates of gold. Diodorus tells us of three golden images in the temple of Bel, at Babylon, worth, with their altars of gold, \$86,000,000. 2. THE INAUGURATION—the officers and chief men from all parts of the empire were summoned to Babylon and compelled to bow down and worship before the golden image, on pain of being cast into the fiery furnace. When the music sounded, all bowed before the image except the three men who were with Daniel in our last lesson. 16. SHADRACH, etc.—see last lesson. SAID TO THE KING—when they were summoned to him for not worshipping the image. 17. IF IT BE SO—if God sees this to be best. 19. FULL OF FURY—(1) because their conduct was in direct disobedience to his command. (2) It interfered with his plans of unifying the empire. (3) It was against his religion. (4) It seemed a bad example to his subjects. 20. FIERY FURNACE—such as was used for smelting metals; a hole in the top into which the men were cast, and an opening in the side, through which they were seen, and came forth. 21. BOUND—with iron chains (Jer. 40: 4). COATS—a long robe. HOSEN—inner tunic. HATS—rather, cloaks. These are mentioned because they were combustible, and yet were not burned. 24. ASTONIED—astonished. 25. THE SON OF GOD—a son of God, a divine being, an angel (v. 23).

LEARN BY HEART vs. 17, 18; 1 Pet. 1: 7; Rev. 2: 7.

QUESTIONS.

INTRODUCTORY.—What opening toward usefulness and renown came to Daniel soon after our last lesson? What offices did he and his three friends hold after that? How many years between those events and the lesson for to-day? What prophets lived at this time? Who was king of Judah? What great event took place there, not far from this time?

SUBJECT: SERVING GOD AT ANY COST.

I. THE GOLDEN IMAGE.—What plan did Nebuchadnezzar form to consolidate his new empire? Describe the golden image? Where was it placed? Who were summoned to worship it? What punishment was threatened to those who should refuse?

What were the probable objects of this great gathering? Why is so much said of the music? Why was there so severe a penalty for refusing to worship?

II. THE MEN OF TRUE RELIGIOUS PRINCIPLE (vs. 16-18).—What three men refused to worship the image? What other proof of religious principle had they shown before? What office did they now hold? (Dan. 2: 48.) Give an account of their summons before the king? What was their reply to his demand? Did they know that God would rescue them? If they had known, would it have required great courage and piety to do what they did?

What excuses might they have made for complying? What is meant by "a religion of principle"? The difference between steadfastness to principle, and obstinacy? Is there any other true religion than a religion of a principle? Before what golden idols does the world now command the Christian to bow down? Under what penalty?

III. WHAT MEN DID TO THEM (vs. 19-23).—How did the king feel about their refusal? Why? What did he do to the men? What kind of a furnace was this? Why was it heated so hot? What showed the greatness of the heat? Why are their garments mentioned?

IV. WHAT GOD DID FOR THEM (vs. 24-28).—What three wonders did the king see while looking at the fiery furnace? What was the fourth person like? Who was it? Why made thus visible? What did the king then do? What shows how unharmed they were? What was the effect of all this on the king? Did these three men know that God would release them? Would or should this have any difference as to their conduct? (vs. 17, 18.)

Into what fiery furnaces are we sometimes cast? Does God always deliver us from them? In what other way does he sometimes save us? (Rom. 8: 20; 2 Cor. 12: 7-10.) What is the effect of firm endurance of trials upon ourselves? Upon others?

LESSONS FROM THE MEN IN THE FIRE.

I. By faithfulness in early life these men were prepared for greater trials and greater victories.

II. The trial of our faith strengthens our character.

III. The trial of our faith manifests God's power and love to others.

IV. The world expects us to bow before the golden images of wealth, success, pleasure, lax religion, and easy morals.

V. Its fiery furnace is persecution, unpopularity, ridicule, social ostracism.

VI. True religious principle will do right regardless of consequences.

VII. God saves his children either from trouble or in trouble. He delivers them out of it, or makes it minister to their good and the good of their cause.

LESSON VII.—FEBRUARY 14.

THE HANDWRITING ON THE WALL.—DAN. 5: 1-12, 25-28.

COMMIT VERSES 3-6.

GOLDEN TEXT.

Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting.—Dan. 5: 27.

CENTRAL TRUTH.

Sin offends God and works the ruin of the sinner.

DAILY READINGS.

M. Dan. 4: 1-18.
T. Dan. 4: 19-37.
W. Dan. 5: 1-16.
Th. Dan. 5: 17-31.
F. Isa. 13: 1-22.
Sa. Isa. 45: 1-13.
Su. Jer. 51: 27-41.

TIME.—B.C. 538. Almost 50 years after the last lesson.

PLACE.—Babylon.

RULERS.—Nabonidus, king of the Babylonian empire; now at Borsippa. Belshazzar, his oldest son, associated with him and reigning at Babylon. Cyrus, king of the Medes and Persians.

DANIEL.—Now about 80 years old. For more than 60 years he mentions but one incident of his life, that of interpreting Nebuchadnezzar's dream. He was now in some official position (Dan. 8: 27), but probably a subordinate or retired one.

BELSHAZZAR, the grandson of Nebuchadnezzar through his mother. He was associated with his father, as king. He was probably 16 or 17 years old. His father, having attacked Cyrus who was besieging Babylon, was defeated, and was kept from returning to the city by the besieging army. So that Belshazzar was the only king now in Babylon.

THE CIRCUMSTANCES.—Cyrus had been besieging the city for two years. But the walls were strong. There was food enough in the city to last 20 years. The citizens felt safe. An annual festival to some idol now occurred, and king and people engaged in a great revel.

HELPS OVER HARD PLACES.

DRANK WINE: it was the excitement of strong drink that led the king to the sin and to ruin. 2. GOLDEN VESSELS OUT OF THE TEMPLE—taken by Nebuchadnezzar, B.C. 601 and 686, 68 and 48 years before. DRANK IN THEM—thus profaning them. He insulted God by using them in a revel, and in a feast to idols. see vs. 22, 23. 5. FINGERS—the fingers that held the pen, with no arm or person to move them, showed that it was supernatural. OVER AGAINST THE CANDLESTICK—that stood on the king's table, so as to be seen in the brightest light. 7. CHALDEANS—i.e., a priest class of wise men. THIRD RULER—i.e., next to the king, who was second, his father being first. 8. COULD NOT READ THE WRITING—so as to understand what was meant. THE WORDS were familiar enough. 10. QUEEN—the mother, not the wife of Belshazzar. She remembered Daniel in her father's days. 25. MENE—these are Aramaic (i.e., the Hebrew of the time of Christ) words. 26. MENE—e, numbered, the last number of its years counted. And Daniel applied it to the king. 27. TIKET—e, weighed. 28. PERES—divided, broken to pieces. This is singular, of which UPARSIN is the plural. PERSIAN is the same word.

Even while this was going on, the army of Cyrus had entered the city, by drawing off the water of the river Euphrates, which ran through the city. His army marched up the river-bed, and entered by the brazen gates, which in their revuls the guards had left open. See Jer. 51: 30-32; 53-55.

LEARN BY HEART Prov. 1: 24-31.

QUESTIONS.

INTRODUCTORY.—How many years between the events of this lesson and the last? What event in Daniel's life during this time is recorded? How old was Daniel at this time? How long before Christ was the capture of Babylon?

SUBJECT—SIN AND ITS CONSEQUENCES.

I. THE SIN (vs. 1-4).—Who was now besieging Babylon? Who was king in Babylon? How old was he? What great feast did he hold? Who attended it? What did he do when under the influence of wine? What was the wickedness in this? When had these golden vessels been taken from the temple? (2 Kings 24: 10-13; 25: 8, 13-15.) With what sin does Daniel charge him? (Dan. 5: 18-23.) How many sins do you find in these accounts as committed by Belshazzar? In what ways do young people treat sacred things with irreverence?

How did Belshazzar come to be king alone in Babylon at this time? Where was his father Nabonidus? How have lately discovered inscriptions of Babylon confirmed the Bible here?

II. THE WARNING (vs. 5-9).—What appeared during these revels? What made it seem supernatural? On what part of the wall were the words written? How did this affect the king? Why did it trouble him? What did the king offer to the person who should tell him what the writing meant? Why are sinners troubled by anything that manifests God's mysterious power?

In what language was the writing? Why could not the wise men read and understand? Who are meant by Chaldeans here? Why did God give the king this warning?

III. THE PUNISHMENT (vs. 10-12, 25-28).—Who told the king where to learn what he wished? What description is here given of Daniel? Where had he shown his wisdom? What were the words? What did they mean? Did it require courage in Daniel to say these things? When and how were his words fulfilled? How did his drunken revelry help to bring the punishment? What warning does God give us against our sins? In what balances are we weighed? When are we found wanting? How do our sins help to bring their own punishment?

PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS.

I. Intemperance leads to many other sins. II. The king was guilty of intemperance, idolatry, profanity, irreverence, pride, carelessness, godlessness.

III. Irreverence in the house of God is a great sin.

IV. God warns us by conscience, by His Word, by His Providence, by His Holy Spirit.

V. God weighs our characters, our actions, our motives, our intentions.

VI. We are weighed when we are tested by temptation, by opportunities to do good, by the Bible.

VII. Sin helps to bring its own punishment, as we see in the case of intemperance.