

Israelite to partake of such food would have been to identify himself with the heathen and with their worship. The "king's meat," that is, the royal dainties supplied to the captives from the monarch's own table, as well as the wine he drank, were, according to custom, first dedicated by the offering of a small portion of them to an idol, so that Daniel and these three friends ran imminent risk of being mixed up with idolatry. But Daniel saw in the light of God's commandment what he ought to do, or rather, from what he ought to refrain, and he showed his friends a stepping-stone on which he determined to place his own foot, and thus "cleanse his way." "Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the king's meat, nor with the wine which he drank." He set his foot deliberately upon the stepping-stone of obedience.

But this was not all. Might not Daniel tremble on that stepping-stone as he saw the danger around him? Would he be allowed to remain in this steadfast purpose? Should the king notice a difference between the appearance of the Jewish youths and their companions of another race, his displeasure would fall on the officer who had charge of them. For his own safety this man might force them to comply. But Daniel had light on this portion of the way also. Was it not written in the blessing wherewith Moses blessed Israel, "The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms?" Deut. 33. 27. And had not David said: "Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass?" Ps. 37. 5. This was enough for Daniel and his friends, and they made a bold venture: "Prove thy servants, I beseech thee, ten days . . . Then let our countenances be looked upon before thee, . . . and as thou seest, deal with thy servants." They feared not the issue. They set their feet quietly upon the stepping-stone of trust. And these stepping-stones brought them safely over. Their "way" was kept clean, and both in physical and mental gifts they surpassed all their companions.

"Do you think," says a young girl, "it is possible for me to lead a Christian life as I am placed?" "It is of no use my becoming a Christian, for I am obliged to do what is wrong," says a youth. "No one can possibly live like a Christian there," says another lad. What does the story of Daniel say to such? It says plainly that they are mistaken—that a young man may cleanse his way, and a young woman, too, "by taking heed thereto according to thy word." Not that the cleansed way will of course be smooth. Daniel and his three friends had to follow it at the cost of no small degree of self-denial, day after day, and month after month. We shall read next Sunday how the three followed it at the risk of their lives. But it can be done, for the light is true, and the stepping-stones are sure.

#### Berean Methods.

##### Hints for the Teachers' Meeting and the Class.

Give some account of these young men, and how and when they came to Babylon, showing how their trouble

became a blessing. . . . Illustrate the principle of the benefits of trial, from the lives of Joseph, of Jacob, of Moses, of David, etc. . . . The circumstances under which these young men served God—far from home, in exile, in a dissolute court, among idolaters, etc. . . . The spirit which they showed, principle, will, purity, temperance, gentleness, faith, etc. . . . Present each trait in their character as exhibited by their conduct. . . . Show the results of their conduct: 1.) On their bodies, in contrast with effects of intemperance; 2.) On their minds; 3.) On their spiritual nature; 4.) On their social relations; 5.) On their prospects in life. . . . Do not fail to make emphatic the lesson of total abstinence from strong drink. . . . Take as a lesson-thought for the class, "Daniel purposed in his heart," the first sentence of the lesson. Show the benefits of having a purpose in life.

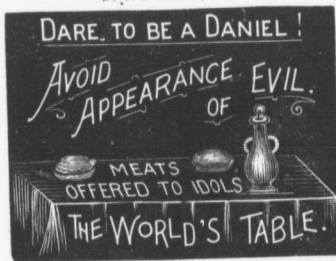
References. FREEMAN. Ver. 20: Magicians, 70.

#### Songs from the Epworth Hymnal.

160. Take the name of Jesus with you.  
152. Take my life, and let it be.  
182. Far out on the desolate billow.  
205. Yield not to temptation.  
214. Am I a soldier of the cross?

#### Blackboard

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The lesson-thought of the blackboard is the necessity of avoiding every appearance of evil. The world's table is spread with meats offered to idols, and the young men and women are invited to eat. Each one must be brave and courageous like Daniel. Dare to be like him, and avoid the appearance of evil.

[NOTE.—The drawing may be simplified by letting a single line across the board represent the "World's Table."]

#### "FOUR CHILDREN"

REJECTED	RECEIVED
UNLAWFUL MEATS AND WINE.	KNOWLEDGE AND SKILL AND FAVOR.

#### Primary and Intermediate.

LESSON THOUGHT. *The Reward of Obedience.* The story of Daniel is one of such vivid interest that the attention and sympathy of a class can be easily secured by its recital. But we shall do a better work, if we can weave in the lessons to be learned from it in such a way that the children will feel that they belong to the story and touch it with a light from heaven. God in Daniel, is the charm of this story; can we show him to the children? is, the question to be considered alone with God.

*The King's Command.* Tell how Daniel and his