



LESSON IV.—JULY 23.

The Handwriting on the Wall

Dan. v., 17-31. Memory verses 24-28.
Read chapters iv., and v.

Golden Text.

'God is the judge.'—Psa. lxxv., 7.

Home Readings.

M.—Daniel 5: 1-9. Belshazzar's feast.
T.—Daniel 5: 10-16. Daniel called.
W.—Daniel 5: 17-31. The handwriting on the wall.
Th.—Jer. 52: 12-19. The Temple vessels.
F.—Jer. 51: 47-58. Prophecy against Babylon.
S.—Acts 12: 18-23. Herod's punishment.
Su.—Luke 12: 13-21. Found wanting.

Lesson Text.

Supt.—17. Then Daniel answered and said before the king, Let thy gifts be to thyself and give thy rewards to another; yet I will read the writing unto the king, and make known to him the interpretation.

School.—18. O thou king, the most high God gave Neb-u-chad-nez'zar thy father a kingdom, and majesty, and glory, and honour:

19. And for the majesty that he gave him, all people, nations, and languages, trembled and feared before him: whom he would he slew; and whom he would he kept alive; and whom he would he set up; and whom he would he put down.

20. But when his heart was lifted up, and his mind hardened in pride, he was deposed from his kingly throne, and they took his glory from him:

21. And he was driven from the sons of men; and his heart was made like the beasts, and his dwelling was with the wild asses: they fed him with grass like oxen, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven: till he knew that the most high God ruled in the kingdom of men, and that he appointeth over it whomsoever he will.

22. And thou his son, O Bel-shaz'zar, hast not humbled thine heart, though thou knewest all this;

23. But hast lifted up thyself against the Lord of heaven; and they have brought the vessels of his house before thee, and thou, and thy lords, thy wives, and thy concubines, have drunk wine in them; and thou hast praised the gods of silver, and gold, of brass, iron, wood, and stone, which see not, nor hear, nor know: and the God in whose hand thy breath is, and whose are all thy ways, hast thou not glorified:

24. Then was the part of the hand sent from him; and this writing was written.

25. And this is the writing that was written, ME'NE, ME'NE, TE'KEL, U-PHAR'SIN.

26. This is the interpretation of the thing: ME'NE; God hath numbered thy kingdom, and finished it.

27. TE'KEL; Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting.

28. PE'RES; Thy kingdom is divided, and given to the Medes and Persians.

29. Then commanded Bel-shaz'zar, and they clothed Daniel with scarlet, and put a chain of gold about his neck, and made a proclamation concerning him, that he should be the third ruler in the kingdom.

30. In that night was Bel-shaz'zar the king of the Chal-de'ans slain.

31. And Da-ri-us the Me'di-an took the kingdom, being about three-score and two years old.

Suggestions

Belshazzar is supposed to have been the grandson of Nebuchadnezzar, his father Nabonidus was the real king, but the young Belshazzar was reigning at this time. The taking of Babylon occurred about the year 538 B.C., forty or fifty years after the events of the last lesson. Daniel was one of the great men of the kingdom having continued faithful in serving the Lord Jehovah.

The young King made a feast to a thousand of the noblemen of Babylon, as they were drinking and carousing, they sent for the sacred golden dishes and goblets which Nebuchadnezzar had brought from Jerusalem.

From these they ate and drank in their drunken idolatrous feast, thus insulting Jehovah by using the holy vessels for common purposes and specially by using them in a feast to idols (ver. 4).

Suddenly the fingers of a hand appeared on the wall writing strange and awful words. Every eye was fastened on the writing. What could it mean? Fear and astonishment filled every heart. The laughter was hushed and with a cry of terror the young king called for the magicians and astrologers so plentiful at his court. These all came but could make nothing of the writing. At last the queen hearing the uproar came into the banquet hall, and finding out the trouble, advised Belshazzar to send for Daniel, who had so wonderfully revealed dreams to Nebuchadnezzar.

Daniel, by the power of God, saw at once that the message was one of warning and judgment. But he did not hesitate to read the sentence. The character and actions of the king and his people had fallen so far short of the standard God had set for them, that they were now to be destroyed. They had resisted the godly influence of the righteous men among their Jewish captives and thus had brought upon themselves their own doom.

The Bible Class.

Judgment.—I. Pet. iv., 17, 18. Matt. xi., 22-24. John v., 22, 26-29. II. Pet. II., 4-6. Rom. II., 3-6. xiv., 10, 13. Psa. I., 5, 6; lxxxix., 14. Isa. xxx., 18; lxi., 8. Jer. ix., 24. Rev. xx., 12-15.

Warning.—Ezek. xxxiii., 2-7. Psa. xix., 7-11. Acts xx., 31, 32. I. Thess. v., 14.

Profanity.—Ex. xx., 7. Lev. xix., 12. Rom. II., 23, 24. Ezek. xxxvi., 21-23. Matt. v., 34-36.

Application.

The crimes for which Belshazzar was condemned were neglect of God, and the warnings God had given his fathers, and profaning holy things to base uses. All irreverence in the house of God, all punning and jesting with sacred things, as the Bible and Hymns, all worldly use of holy time and holy things, is akin to the sin of Belshazzar.

There is a handwriting of warning and of doom on the wall for every sinner. It may be invisible for a time, like that kind of writing which is invisible till brought to the fire or touched with chemicals, but it is written where his eye shall sometime see it. The eternal laws of God, and his providence, are a gigantic hand writing, the doom of every nation that refuses to be righteous. It is well for them if they see the writing before it is completed.—Peloubet's Notes.

C. E. Topic.

July 23.—Honoring the Lord's Day. Ex. 20: 8-11; Rev. 1: 10.

Junior C. E.

July 23.—What we owe to our parents. Prov. 10: 1; 13: 1, 22; 17: 6.

Jesus!

(By Amy Parkinson.)

Jesus, my Guide!

The way is all unknown,—walk Thou before.

So I may plant my feet where Thine have been.

And stray no more.

Jesus, my Light!

When night falls thickly down, shine through the dark,

So shall I fearlessly press on until

I reach the mark.

Jesus, my Life!

Though heart and flesh may fail, Thou art the same;—

Give of Thy strength, so shall my soul forget

Her weary frame.

Jesus my King!

Let me but hear Thy voice, and I obey; Thou art my Life, my-Light, my Guide through gloom.

To endless day.

Jesus, my God!

The close can not be far, of earthly years; The time draws nigh when Thine own tender touch

Shall dry my tears.

—'Endeavor Herald.'



Tobacco Catechism.

CHAPTER VII.—AFFECTS THE BLOOD, TEETH, AND SIGHT; AND CAUSES CANCER.

(By Dr. R. H. McDonald, of San Francisco.)

1. Q.—What is the blood?

A.—It is the red fluid which circulates through the arteries and veins; and is essential to the nutrition, growth, and healthy action of every muscle, bone and fibre of the body.

2. Q.—Does tobacco affect the blood?

A.—It affects every particle of the blood. Healthy blood always coagulates on cooling, but blood poisoned by nicotine is found after death not to be coagulated (or clotted).

Also, when leeches are used to suck out an inveterate smoker's blood, they are instantly killed by it.

3. Q.—How is the most important element of the blood injured?

A.—The little globules or corpuscles of the blood are seriously affected, and their form is changed.

4. Q.—Are those persons who smoke, the only ones who suffer from smoking?

A.—No! Every person who breathes the smoke of a cigar, pipe, or cigarette, has the blood in his veins more or less poisoned with nicotine.

5. Q.—What fact in regard to smoking is not generally known?

A.—That smoke, when drawn into the mouth, absorbs the decayed or rotten particles of food and other matter which collect there, and diffuses them in the air we breathe.

Hence, as we walk or ride along, the streets, we are compelled to breathe air poisoned by tobacco fumes, and foul emanations of decayed teeth, filthy mouths, and diseased lungs.

6. Q.—Does tobacco injure the teeth?

A.—Yes, it causes them to turn yellow and decay; and the gums of men who use tobacco grow soft, spongy, and tender, so that occasionally even the sound teeth drop out.

7. Q.—Does it preserve the teeth?

A.—It does not. The salivary and mucous glands, the gums, and other soft tissues of the mouth are irritated and inflamed by the constant use of tobacco.

8. Q.—What does Dr. John Allen, the father of dentistry in New York, say of fitting teeth in the mouth of a tobacco user?

A.—He says it is almost impossible to get artificial teeth to fit closely in the mouth of a tobacco user on account of the tenderness and flabbiness of the gums.

9. Q.—Does tobacco impair the sight?

A.—It does; examples have been given of the finest marksmen who have become so nervous, and their sight so destroyed, by the use of tobacco, that they could scarcely hit a target.

10. Q.—What effect does smoking have on the eyes?

A.—It confuses the sight, and makes it wavering; it causes color blindness; and sometimes produces paralysis of the optic nerve, and total blindness.*

11. Q.—What does an English surgeon testify as to tobacco and blindness?

A.—That out of thirty-seven patients suffering from paralysis of the optic nerve, and loss of sight, twenty-three were confirmed snuffers.

12. Q.—But why do not men stop using tobacco when they find that it is injuring their sight?

A.—Because they rarely believe that tobacco is the cause until too late; and paralysis comes suddenly, and without warning.

13. Q.—Does tobacco produce cancer?

A.—Eminent surgeons testify that the most terrible cases of cancer of the lip, mouth, tongue, and stomach, are often occasioned by smoking.

14. Q.—Can you give examples where death was caused by cancer, brought on by smoking?

A.—Senator Hill, one of the most eminent men of the South, United States Senator from Georgia, died in 1833 of cancer of