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THE Teachers' Preparation Leaflet

LESSON 13.

SEPTEMBER 23rd, 1894.

3rd QUARTER.

Daniel's Abstinence. Dan. 1: 8-20.

GOLDEN TEXT: "Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself." Dan. 1: 8.

COMMIT TO MEMORY verses 8, 9. CHILDREN'S HYMNAL 121, 117, 114, 122.

PROVE THAT—Intemperance excludes from Heaven. 1 Cor. 6: 10.

SHORTER CATECHISM—Quest. 95. To whom is baptism to be administered?

DAILY PORTIONS.

(The Selections of the International Bible Reading Association)

MONDAY.	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY.	THURSDAY.	FRIDAY.	SATURDAY.	SABBATH.
Dan. 1: 8-20	Dan. 1: 1-7	Jer. 35: 1-10	Jer. 35: 12-19	1 Thess. 5: 14-28	Rom. 14: 13-21	1 Cor. 10: 15-23

NOTES AND EXPLANATIONS.

INTRODUCTORY. Daniel was a Hebrew youth of noble lineage, who had been selected with others to be trained for service about the person of the king of Babylon. In thus entering the royal service his foot was placed on the first rung of the ladder of political advancement. All the rewards of ambition were placed within his grasp. He had every inducement to conform to the customs of the court and king. By flattery and cleverness he could have risen as others were doing. But he believed that it was better to be right than to be prime minister. He started out with the determination to refuse to do what conscience forbade. No life can fail that begins in this way.

Daniel. He would be about 14 years of age at this time (B. C. 605-3), and died after B. C. 536. So that he lived to be at least 85 years old. He was carried away captive by Nebuchadnezzar, and saw the exiles under Zerubbabel set out on their return. Give some of the incidents of his eventful life.

Babylon. On the Euphrates, 500 miles from Jerusalem. It was at this time twice as large as London, and surrounded with walls 14 miles long on each of its four sides. These were 300 feet high and 80 broad, and surmounted by 250 towers. Twenty-five streets ran across the city each way, terminated by 100 gates, and in the centre of each square was a garden. The "hanging gardens," planted on immense terraced artificial hills, were one of the wonders of the ancient world. The luxury and profligacy of this immense city have made its name infamous forever. In the midst of all this temptation Daniel kept himself pure.

LESSON PLAN. I. Temperance Purposed. vs. 8-9. II. Temperance Tested. vs. 11-16. III. Temperance Rewarded. vs. 17-20.

I. TEMPERANCE PURPOSED. 8. Daniel purposed in his heart—This does not mean that he made a secret resolve, but that it was a heart-purpose, a firm and fixed resolution. **Defile himself**—since it was customary among the heathen to offer to the gods a portion of the food to be eaten, scrupulous Jews felt that they could not partake of any of it without conforming in a measure to idolatry (Deut. 32: 38). This sentiment also existed in the early Christian Church (1 Cor. 8: 7, 10; 10: 27, 28; Acts 15: 29). Also many articles of food in common use at Babylon were considered unclean by the law of Moses (Lev. 11). To refuse these every time they were offered to him would involve Daniel in constant unpleasantness, and many of them might be so disguised by culinary art that he would not recognize them. (Compare Ex. 4: 13; Hos. 9: 3.) It was better at the first to place himself in an unequivocal position. The Jews, too, were very careful to see that the animal food used was entirely free from blood (Deut. 12: 23-25). Even at the pres-

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ent day they will not purchase from gentile butchers if they can help it. On this point it would have been impossible for Daniel to satisfy himself without unseemly intermeddling with the lowest menials of the court. He and his three friends took the wisest and safest course—total abstinence. Compare Ex. 23: 2; Josh. 24: 15; Heb. 11: 24, 26. It may be lawful to drink wine and other alcoholic beverages if one is very careful, but no one is safe from the subtle influence that they exert upon the will, and the example set often leads others to ruin.

The portion of the—Omitted in the R. V. The rare and foreign word which was formerly thought to mean "a portion of food," is now believed to signify "princely, or delicate food," dainties. (S. S. Times).

Nor with the wine—It is only honest to say that Daniel refused the wine because of its having been "consecrated," so to speak, by pouring out a portion as a libation to idols. Still the broad principle under which he acted is the soundest basis for temperance teaching. Abstain from everything that is likely to lead you or others into sin, or compromise your Christian consistency. Individually the course taken by these Hebrew youths was productive of the best result: to their bodies. Plain food and no stimulants will minister to health and cheerfulness. The laws of nature are in harmony with the laws of the Bible.

He requested—Had he offensively asserted his scruples, he would have received a very short and impatient answer. Now, as in later life, he tried courtesy and kindness first. Had he been refused, we know, from his conduct narrated in ch. 6, what he would have done. But in no case would he have forgotten to be "peaceable" as well as "pure." (Jas. 3: 17.) Note the moral courage necessary for a boy of 14 to mention his religious scruples to a heathen officer, who would only despise them.

The prince of the eunuchs—Ashpenaz (v. 3) who was directly responsible to the king for these youths. He was the royal "lord chamberlain."

9. God had brought Daniel into favor—The obstacles we dread in any course of duty are all removeable by God. He controls circumstances and influences the minds of men with whom we have to deal. All we have to do is to "go forward." (Ex. 14: 15). Compare the case of Joseph (Gen. 39: 21); Solomon's prayer answered (1 Kings, 8: 50). Read Ps. 106: 46; Prov. 16: 7.

Tender love—such as a father has for his son, (Kitto). R. V., "compassion."

10. Worse-liking—An obsolete form of expression for "in a worse condition." In Job, 39: 4, we have "good-liking." The Hebrew word means morose, sad, pitiful in consequence of inferior food (Keil). Ashpenaz thought that the boys would not thrive on simple fare, and that they would become dissatisfied and fretful.

The children which are of your sort—R. V., "the youths which are of your own

age" or "term" (margin, lit. "circle"). The others who were in training with him.

Endanger my head—An oriental despot would think that he did merely justice if he executed him for disobeying orders. The Shah of Persia, or the Sultan of Turkey would do this without compunction. "Nebuchadnezzar was not a man to take liberties with."

II. TEMPERANCE TESTED. 11. Melzar—R. V. "the steward" or "chief butler," who supplied the daily portion to the youths. Some suggest that the chief of the eunuchs was quite willing to wink at a violation of rules if he were not held responsible. But it is much more in keeping with Daniel's openness of character to suppose that he gave his consent to the experiment proposed.

Daniel—"God my judge," changed to *Beltshazzar*, "the treasurer of the god Bel." **Hananiah**—"Grace of Jehovah," same as "John," changed to *Shadrach*, "the messenger of the god Rak." **Misrael**,—"Asked of God," changed to *Meshaek*,—"a devotee of the god Shesack." **Azariah**—"The Lord is my keeper," changed to *Abednego*, "the servant of Nego." Nebuchadnezzar did his best to make them forget God and serve the idols of Babylon. It would not be out of place here to remind scholars that they, too, were devoted to God at baptism, the time when it is customary to announce a child's name, and that they should feel as truly belonging to God, and bound to serve him, as if his name was combined with theirs.

12. Prove the servants—This was a fair proposal that would endanger nobody. He felt sure that God would not let him suffer for his scruples. The request was so reasonable that the steward couldn't refuse it.

Pulse—The Hebrew word stands for a vegetable or grain food in general. Anything grown from seeds (Gesenius). The English word "pulse" means the seed of leguminous plants, such as peas, beans, &c.

15. Their countenances appeared fairer, and they were fatter in flesh—R. V. It does not follow from this that it is every one's duty to abandon animal food, live only upon vegetables, and drink nothing but water. Daniel and his friends were not governed by mere regard to the laws of health. It was with them a question of principle, (Green). Compare the First Temptation and our Lord's reply, (Deut. 8: 3). It is evidently implied that God blessed the fare in an unusual or supernatural manner.

16. Took away—He saw that there was no danger of harm to himself or his chief. "The prudence of Daniel and his friends deserves to be commended in this transaction, as well as their firmness and conscientiousness. Instead of a contumacious resistance to the king's command, regardless of the prejudices or difficulties of those with whom they had to deal, they skilfully and with admirable tact put the case before them in its least objectionable form, and sought to smooth the way to

fore them until that was found to be practicable which had at first been pronounced impossible." (Green).

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III. TEMPERANCE REWARDED. 17. **God gave**—Their superiority is traced to its true source. Daniel is not egotistical in writing this, for he gives God all the glory of their advancement. Read Exod. 31 : 2, 3 ; 1 Kings 3 : 12 ; Job 32 : 8 ; Jas. 1 : 5, 17. Boys who could refuse to do wrong when there was every temptation to "do in Rome as the Romans do," would not be sluggards at their books. God's blessing came as the result of industrious application. Mere genius will never amount to much unless it is combined with perseverance, self-denial and hard work. A lesson here for our clever scholars and an encouragement to the less gifted.

Knowledge—Compare Moses, (Acts 7 : 22.) Babylon was then the most learned city in the world. They easily surpassed all their classmates.

Visions and dreams—The magi and astrologers prided themselves upon this branch of their learning. But their rules were based upon what are now rightly considered silly fancies, and their interpretations had no real value. Daniel was divinely inspired to receive and interpret visions, and to explain the meaning of dreams sent by God to others as warnings. The greater part of the book is filled with these prophetic disclosures. Compare Joseph (Gen. 40 : 5 ; 41 : 1, 8), Zechariah (2 Chron. 26 : 5).

18. **At the end of the days**—the three years of training (v. 5). The steward handed them over to the prince of the eunuchs, and he brought the whole company of candidates before the king.

19. **The king communed**—examined them as to their proficiency and ability to fill important positions. **Stood before the king**—were appointed to places of honor and responsibility near the king. Gen. 41:46; 1 Kings 10 : 8 ; Prov. 32 : 29.

30. **Magicians**—priestly scribes. They were the learned men of the day, the *Magi*, the "wise men" who came to Bethlehem belonged to this class. **Astrologers**—men who studied the stars, astronomers, but mingling their science with much superstition. The R. V. reads "enchanters," men who professed to predict the future, and influence human life in a mysterious and supernatural manner.

TEMPERANCE LESSONS from Daniel's Early Example, (Peloubet's Notes).

I. VICTORY OVER TEMPTATION.

1. If Daniel could overcome the temptations to which he was exposed, we have no excuse for faltering before ours.

2. Thank God for early Christian training toward God, and duty, and religion.

3. Previous right conduct, and good character formed, is a great means toward the victory over any temptation.

4. God will always open a way of escape to those who put their trust in him.

5. When away from home, among strangers, join yourself to some good Christian companions. Daniel was stronger for his companionship with the three other religious boys.

6. The source of strength is in 'God. Look unto Jesus, who was tempted like as we are, yet without sin.

II. THE DUTY OF TEMPERANCE.

1. One fundamental principle of temperance is not to defile ourselves.

2. Temperance is not merely total abstinence from all that can intoxicate, but from all excess, all wrong use of the appetites, all indulgence in that which defiles or injures the body.

3. It is our duty to care for the health of the body because it is a temple of the Holy Ghost, and an instrument for doing God's work.

4. It is a great help to pledge ourselves openly, and to join with others in opposition to all intemperance.

5. The advantage of temperance has been tested by a multitude of facts.

6. Religion is the true basis of temperance principles and temperance reform.

III. TEMPERANCE, AND ITS ALLIES, THE WAY OF SUCCESS.

1. God's favor to those who love and obey him.

2. Good character, strong, true to principle, upright, overcoming temptation.

3. Amiability, courtesy, wisdom in dealing with others.

4. True religion that trusts in God, and does right under all circumstances.

5. Diligence and faithfulness in study, and preparation for life's work.

6. Temperance, and care for the health of the body.

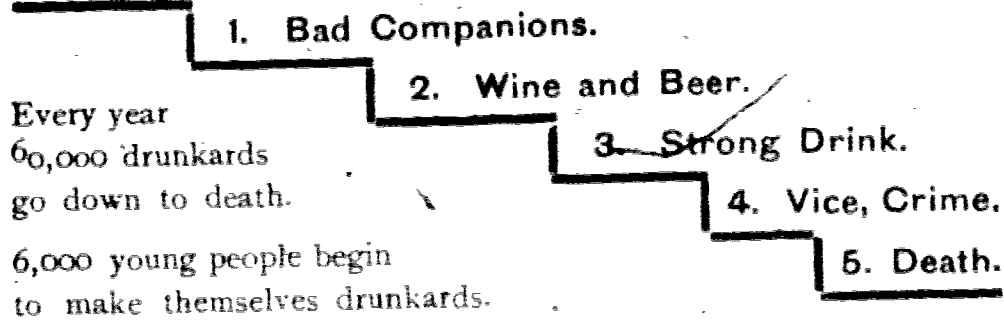
7. Faithfulness to those whom we serve.

8. God will honor and bless those who honor him.

SUMMARY AND REVIEW.

Our lesson is intended to teach total abstinence from intoxicating liquors. We must not omit to apply the broad principles taught in it to the specific subject assigned for today. After teaching the text of the lesson, let some such outline as the following, taken from Peloubet's Notes, form the skeleton for earnest words on the use of stimulants and narcotics:—

FIVE STEPS TO RUIN.



Wine is a M OCKER
Strong Drink is a M U R D E R E R .

Or this from the *Sunday School Times* :—

SOWING THE SEED

OF

HEALTH
LONG LIFE

MAN'S FAVOR
GOD'S BLESSING

Do men gather grapes of thorns? or good grain from wild oats?

Ten Minutes Normal Drill

Based on the text-book, "The Sabbath School Teacher's Handbook; or, The Principles and Practice of Teaching, with special reference to the Sabbath School," and prepared by Principal Kirkland of the Toronto Normal School.

PRINCIPLES OF MEMORIZING. * (Continued.)

The following is a brief summary of the principles of memorizing:—

1. A complete and accurate knowledge of the thing to be memorized.
- (4) Make the subject to be committed as attractive as possible. Excite pleasurable feelings at the time in connection with the object of acquisition.
- (5) Point out the need, present or prospective, to the learner.
- (6) Keep the thought before the mind as long as possible. Put the subject before mind again and again, so that a deepening impression may be made.