

# SUNDAY SCHOOL BANNER

for  
TEACHERS  
AND  
YOUNG PEOPLE.

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MAY, 1892.

[No. 5.]

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# SUNDAY SCHOOL BAZAAR

for  
TEACHERS  
AND  
YOUNG PEOPLE.

VOL. XXVI.]

MAY, 1892.

[No. 5.



THE MOUNTAINS OF LEBANON.

## The Mountains of Lebanon.

BY THE REV. GEO. J. BOND, B.A.

As we reached the table-land above our camping-ground, we caught glimpses through the hill-tops of the wide plain beyond, and of the chain of Lebanon on its farther side. Light, fleecy clouds, saturated with sunlight, rolled over the lofty mountain summits, and hung suspended in the blue sky above the plain. I never saw anywhere such glorious cloud effects, such wealth of sunlight and shadow, as I did that brilliant morning. Ordinarily the Syrian sky is cloudless, and the mountains we had passed before were sharply outlined against the clear blue. Here glorious masses of cloud

sailed, like sun-laden argosies of the air, between the twin yet distant ranges of Lebanon and Anti-Lebanon, or lay at anchor beside their tops. Soon we reached the crest of the hill, and the rich plain lay at our feet stretching away as far as the eye could see on either hand, and walled in on one side by the long range of Anti-Lebanon, on which we were standing, and on the other by glorious and historic Lebanon,

WE are like little children strayed from home; and God is now fetching us home; but we are ready to turn into any house, stay and play with every thing in our way, and sit down on every green bank, and much ado there is to get us home.—*Baxter.*

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## Sunday School Banner.

W. H. WITHROW, D.D., EDITOR.

TORONTO, MAY, 1892.

### Charities and Correction.

UNTIL the present century the policy of Europe, in dealing with crime and pauperism, was the best possible if the object had been to propagate and increase them both. The States of the New World necessarily copied many of the methods of the old. Unfortunately, along with much that was true and wise, they copied and perpetuated many old blunders. But with the advance of modern thought, especially with the enormous widening of the sphere of scientific knowledge, have come new and better ways of dealing with the defective, the criminal and the pauper.

To spread abroad and make popular the better ways in charity and reform is the object of the National Conference of Charities and Correction, which meets annually in one or other of our great cities, and will hold its 19th Annual Session in Denver, Colorado, next June. It combines the best philanthropy of all creeds and all shades of political opinion upon the broad platform of humanity. Its program for the year has just been issued, and is an interesting paper, its topics covering many of the social problems of the time.

The membership of this Conference is unique. It has no salaried officers and no selfish benefit

to offer to anyone, so its doors are open to all the world; whosoever will may come in, on a footing of the most perfect equality. The fact that you are interested in its work, makes you a member, and entitles you to a seat and a voice in its discussions. Anyone desiring further particulars as to reduced railroad fare, hotel accommodations, etc., may address Alex. Johnson, Secretary, Indianapolis, Ind., who will send circulars and answer inquiries.

### "Now I Lay Me."

WEARILY I turned the pages, as the daylight turned to gloom,  
 And heard the children's voices growing softer in their room,  
 I knew that with their mother they were at their evening prayer;  
 And I closed my eyes and listened, in the twilight gathering there.

"Now I lay me"—It was Mary, and her voice was low and sweet;  
 I could almost see her figure, kneeling at her mother's feet.  
 "Down to sleep"—She soft continued, and I wondered if the blest  
 Ever knew a sweeter slumber than the infant's dewy rest.

Then the words went on in murmur—those familiar words to me.  
 I could see my own poor child—self bending at my mother's knee.  
 "If I should die"—Had those words meaning in the prayer I used to say?  
 "Before I wake"—The same petition that my child-self used to pray.

"My soul to take"—The prayer is ended and my baby's words have flown  
 To the farthest depths of Heaven, to the precincts of God's Throne.

Years had marked my brow with wrinkles, since that simple prayer I said,  
 Since I prayed the Lord to keep me as I knelt beside my bed;  
 And I doubt if once I pondered, as I lay me down to rest,  
 That my life was in the power of that Lord who knoweth best.

But this night, the simple beauty of that child-prayer came to me,  
 And when I knelt, the words unbidden, that I learned at mother's knee,  
 Spoke themselves, and, as in childhood, I had prayed the Lord to keep;  
 So the man with "Now I lay me" prayed as he laid down to sleep.

—John M. Whitman.



## Truthfulness and Pureness.

BY AUSTIN Q. HAGERMAN.

PERHAPS not all teachers realize the extent of the temptations to impurity and untruthfulness to which the young are nowadays exposed. Business lies, fashionable deceptions, equivocations and exaggerations are rife. And the very air would seem to be full of the taint of uncleanness, and the foul, demoralizing echoes of abominable scandals. Loose ideas of truth are thus fostered, and "vile affections" incited and pampered. There is reason to fear that the very bodies of the young are in danger of being dishonored thereby.

The disease must be bravely combated and specifically dealt with. The medicine of straightforward Bible precepts must be directly applied. General truths are not immediately available in guiding or restraining the conduct of a child. Truth must be specialized in order to have full power. The child must be plainly told *what* to avoid and *what* to do.

The heart of the teacher may shrink from speaking plainly upon these points. And it may not be done rashly. Only the pure and true have power to adequately handle the case. But the heart that is full of Christ can speak with gentleness, propriety and power.

A New England educator recently said concerning the common school, that the real problem is "how to awaken in the many and confirm in the few the love of truth for its own gracious self; how to enlighten the confused minds of little children concerning moral distinctions; how to lead or lift them out of evil habits already formed . . . how to produce that intelligent and conscientious tendency toward truthful intention, speech and conduct, which will bring the child in due time out into a sincere and truthful manhood or womanhood." If this be the problem to be considered in the common school, how much more should it be the problem to be considered and solved in the Sunday-school.

## A Starting Point.

TEACHERS should get down to the level of the scholar's knowledge, and then build upward. Too often they instruct from their high standpoint, and what they say fails to be understood. There ought, in order to success, to be a common starting point of intelligence. To find out the degree of knowledge possessed by the pupil, ply him with questions, and see what he knows. Then add to his stock of information. Thus advance from Sabbath to Sabbath, and he will come up to that measure of intelligence which will make your teaching more pleasant and helpful. It may be discouraging work for a while, but it will pay in the end, and better accomplish the end you have in view—a well-informed and saved class.—*Presbyterian Observer.*

## Opening and Closing Services.

### SECOND QUARTER.

#### OPENING SERVICE.

- I. Silence.
- II. The Doxology.
- III. Responsive Sentences.
 

*Supt.* I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help.

*School.* My help cometh from the Lord, which made heaven and earth.

*Supt.* For the Lord is great, and greatly to be praised.

*School.* He is to be feared above all gods.

*Supt.* Honor and majesty are before him.

*School.* Strength and beauty are in his sanctuary.

*Supt.* O worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness.

*School.* Fear before him all the earth.
- IV. Singing.
- V. Prayer.

#### LESSON SERVICE.

- I. Class Study of the Lesson.
- II. Singing Lesson Hymn.
- III. Recitation of Title, Golden Text, Outline, and Doctrinal Suggestion by the school in concert.
- IV. Review and Application of the Lesson, by Pastor or Superintendent.
- V. The Supplemental Lesson.
- VI. Announcements (especially of the Church service, and week-evening prayer-meeting).

#### CLOSING SERVICE.

- I. Singing.
- II. Responsive Sentences.
 

*Supt.* The Lord bless thee, and keep thee;

*School.* The Lord make his face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee;

*Supt.* The Lord lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace.
- III. Dismissal.

## INTERNATIONAL BIBLE LESSONS.

## SECOND QUARTER.

## LESSON V. THE PRAYER OF THE PENITENT.

[May 1.]

**GOLDEN TEXT.** Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me. Psa. 51. 10.

## Authorized Version.

**Psa. 51. 1-13.** [*Commit to memory verses 10-13.*]

1 Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy loving-kindness: according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions.

2 Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin.

3 For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me.

4 Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight: that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest.

5 Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me.

6 Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts: and in the hidden part thou shalt make me to know wisdom.

7 Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.

8 Make me to hear joy and gladness; that the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice.

9 Hide thy face from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities.

10 Create in me a clean heart, O God: and renew a right spirit within me.

11 Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy Holy Spirit from me.

12 Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free Spirit.

13 Then will I teach transgressors thy ways; and sinners shall be converted unto thee.

## Revised Version.

1 Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy loving-kindness:

According to the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions.

2 Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin.

3 For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me.

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And in the hidden part thou shalt make me to know wisdom.

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12 Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation: and uphold me with a free spirit.

13 Then will I teach transgressors thy ways; and sinners shall be converted unto thee.

**DOCTRINAL SUGGESTION.**—Repentance from sin.

## HOME READINGS.

*M.* The prayer of the penitent. Psa. 51. 1-13.

*Tu.* The prayer continued. Psa. 51. 14-19.

*W.* Ezra's confession. Ezra 9. 5-15.

*Th.* Prayer of Nehemiah. Neh. 1.

*F.* The publican's prayer. Luke 18. 9-14.

*S.* The prodigal's return. Luke 15. 11-24.

*S.* Joy of pardon. Psa. 32. 1-7.

## LESSON HYMNS.

No. 105, New Canadian Hymnal.

Would Jesus have the sinner die!

No. 103, New Canadian Hymnal.

Lord, I despair myself to heal.

No. 106, New Canadian Hymnal.

Pass me not, O gentle Saviour,

## DOMINION HYMNAL.

Hymns, Nos. 77, 78, 80.

## QUESTIONS FOR SENIOR STUDENTS.

1. Penitence, v. 1-5.

Who wrote this psalm?

What great sin has he committed?

Who had reproved him? (Read 2 Sam. 12. 1-10.)

What is sin? (1 John 3. 4; 5. 17.)

Who are sinners? (Rom. 3. 23; Gal. 3. 22.)

Who keeps a record of all our sins?

How may this record be blotted out?

How is sin a defilement?

Who only can wash it out?

In what must it be washed? (Rev. 1. 5.)

What must the sinner do?

What is it to repent?

Against whom is all sin committed?

Why is it always in his sight? (Job 31. 4.)

In acknowledging our sins how do we justify God?

In what attribute of God is the sinner's only hope?

### 2. Pardon, v. 6-9.

What does God desire, in our most hidden acts and even in our motives?

Explain the rite of purging with hyssop.

What did David mean by this prayer?

How clean did he wish to be washed?

Of what is whiteness the emblem?

In what sense had God broken David's bones?

Repeat the ninth verse.

### 3. Purity, v. 10-13.

Where is the source of conduct and character?

Where does Christ say defiling sins come from? (Matt. 15. 19.)

What five things, besides the creation of a clean heart, does David here ask for?

How were each of these forfeited by his sin?

What results would follow the restoration of soul for which he prays?

### Practical Teachings.

Where in this lesson does it teach—

1. That we should place our confidence, not in our own strength, but in God's faithful love?

2. That we must reap whatever consolation we can from God's promises as our own?

3. That if we are truly penitent we can receive God's promises as our own?

4. That we retard God's power to help us by our own sinful nature?

5. That with God no Jewish ceremony will avail for our soul's salvation?

### Hints for Home Study.

Find how the restored leper was ceremonially purified according to Hebrew law.

Find a psalm in which thanks are offered for sins pardoned and diseases healed.

Re-read the story of God's rebuke of Hezekiah, his illness, and his restoration.

### QUESTIONS FOR INTERMEDIATE SCHOLARS.

#### 1. Penitence, v. 1-5.

What plea does the psalmist make for mercy?

Upon what ground does he ask for pardon?

What is his prayer concerning his sin?

What confession does he make?

Against whom had he sinned?

What does he say of God's judgments?

What of his own depravity?

Of our natural selves what must all confess? (Rom. 7. 18, first clause.)

#### 2. Pardon, v. 6-9.

What does David say that God desires?

What knowledge would he bestow?

What is the penitent's prayer for pardon?

What does he long to hear?

What does he wish to have hidden?

What record would he have blotted out?

On what condition may we find pardon? (1 John 1. 9.)

#### 3. Purity, v. 10-13.

How does he expect to get a clean heart?

(GOLDEN TEXT)

What spirit does he seek?

From whom does he fear banishment?

What was his prayer for God's Spirit?

What loss would he have repaired?

What good would then result?

What joy is there in such work? (Jas. 5. 20.)

### Teachings of the Lesson.

Where in this lesson are we taught—

1. That true penitence requires confession of sin?

2. That God alone can pardon sin?

3. That a clean heart is a source of blessedness?

### Home Work for Young Bereans.

Find the name of another King of Judah who repented of his sin and was forgiven.

Find toward the later part of First Chronicles what other sin Satan tempted David to commit, and what came of it.

### QUESTIONS FOR YOUNGER SCHOLARS.

What does the Bible say of the human heart? **That it is "degenerately wicked."**

What good man committed a great sin? **King David.**

What prophet was sent to show him his sin? **Nathan.**

What did King David do? **He repented of his sin.**

What is true repentance? **Turning away from sin.**

To whom did David cry for mercy? **To the Lord.**

What did he ask the Lord to do? **To cleanse him.**

What does sin do? **It stains the soul.**

Against whom did David say he had sinned? **Against the Lord.**

What does the Lord see? **All our sins.**

What can wash away sin? **The blood of Jesus.**

How clean did David pray to be made? **"Whiter than snow."**

What did he ask God to create in him? **"A clean heart."**

What kind of a spirit did he want? **"A right spirit."**

What did he ask God to give him? **His Holy Spirit.**

What did he say he would then do? **Teach sinners the way to God.**

### Words with Little People.

What makes the soul black? { Wrong thoughts.  
Wrong words.  
Wrong acts.

What makes the soul white? { True repentance.  
Confession of sin.  
Washing in Jesus's blood.

Question and Answer:

"What can wash away my sin?  
Nothing but the blood of Jesus."

## EXPLANATORY AND PRACTICAL NOTES.

BY ROBERT R. DOHERTY, PH.D.

### General Statement.

It was David's splendid precipitancy, his power of projecting himself into the heart of things, that made him, in God's providence, the foremost man of his day. When in his youth he devoted himself to song he became a peerless bard. His hardy bravery as a shepherd turned him into the most famous of warriors. These two talents together brought him to the king's notice, and thereafter (as counselor or suspect) he was the most notable of all Saul's subjects. Wherever he went in youthful strength he was superlative. When at length he mounted the throne he became easily the greatest conqueror of his century and his race. Even if no sacred associations clustered about his name, he would still be ranked with earth's greatest heroes—with Cyrus and Alexander, Caesar and Gustavus, Charlemagne and Napoleon—surpassing them all in that he did, without example and without tools ready to hand, that which they were able to accomplish by imitation and with many inherited opportunities. A more intensely human man never breathed air. When such a man flung himself into religious endeavors he became a foremost saint. When he sank in sin he sank deep; and impurity, treachery, murder, hypocrisy are added, one sin to another, with a celerity that shocks us, but which is characteristic of a whole soul when he ventures to live without God. David could be *good*—he was, most of his life; he could be *bad*—he was, more than once; but he never could be *indifferent*. And now, when a faithful prophet reveals his iniquity, his soul runs out in advance of the prophet's criminations, he bewails his sin before the wide world, and pours out his deep-felt contrition in this pathetic psalm—a psalm which has uttered the penitent heart's language from David's day to ours.

**Verse 1. Have mercy upon me.** David had been about twenty years on the throne. Many a time had he uttered this prayer. When Saul pursued him, when the Philistines fought against him, when the Ten Tribes refused to accept him, in long nights of exile, in sharp and desperate struggles, David had often cried, "Have mercy upon me, O God;" but never with so much reason as now. He had found his worst enemy not in Saul, nor in the Philistine camp, nor on the Amalekite throne, but underneath his own vesture; he had been overpowered by himself. (1) *A man's evil heart is his worst foe.* **The multitude of thy tender mercies.** David, conscious of the multitude of his own transgressions, finds comfort in the multitude of God's "tender mercies;" and this last conveys the highest possible degree of compassion. (2) *Infinite love reaches the worst possible cases.*

**2. Wash me thoroughly.** Repeatedly wash me; as if one cleansing would not do. David knew that "the sword should never depart from his house;" he knew that his splendid reputation was blasted, and that he must be punished in the sight of all men; he knew that the child he so

greatly loved must die; but he prayed not for immunity from any of this punishment, but for purity of heart. (3) *The true penitent longs for purity.* (See "Thoughts for Young People.")

**3. Transgressions . . . sin.** Note the various words employed by the psalmist: 1. *Transgression*—a turning aside from the right path. 2. *Iniquity*—crookedness, a perversity of nature. 3. *Sin*—wrong against God. 4. *Evil*—that which is bad in itself. **Ever before me.** (4) *We have no right to forget or overlook any of our evil deeds.* (5) *We must realize our guilt before we can find salvation.*

**4. Against thee, thee only.** David had done the greatest possible wrong to a number of persons; but as he now stands before God the exceeding sinfulness of his sin crowds other facts into the background until that sin shall be pardoned. (6) *No man can hurt another without hurting God.* **Have I sinned.** David was the greatest of earthly monarchs; as God's anointed he stood in a peculiar sense for the holiest of religions; he was a man of clearer insight and greater mental grasp than any of his contemporaries; and that he should so fully sin was horrible. *I,* he says; "*I,* who both ways, as king and prophet, should have been an

example of holiness and righteousness, *I HAVE SINNED.*"—*Purge.* In thy sight. David had not stopped the sin his heart was set on because God was present. A quaint English writer says that a thief who steals in the sight of the judge is the worst of all thieves. (7) *God is a witness of every sin committed. That thou mightest be justified.* (8) *The penitent soul regards as just whatever punishment God may inflict.*

**5. I was shapen in iniquity.** Not that another was to blame for David's sins, but that back of his sins was his sin. (9) *Back of all overt sinful acts is a heart of sinful tendency.*

**6. Behold! O, see! Look!** David has just discovered with a distinctness with which he never saw it before the truth that he is about to utter. **Thou desirest truth in the inward parts.** "In the most secret life of consciousness and of mind" [*Deltzsch*] thou desirest sincerity, fidelity, rectitude. **Wisdom.** A divine illumination on the path of duty. This wisdom was to be in the hidden part; and here do we learn, as John Murcott has quaintly said, that (10) *It is one thing to be wise-headed and wise-tongued, and another thing to be wise-hearted.*

**7. Purge.** Cleanse. David refers figuratively to the ceremonial purification familiar to every worshipful Hebrew (see Lev. 14. 4-7; Num. 19. 6, 18), rather than to the cleansing of a bath. **Hyssop.** Not certainly identified, but probably the caper plant. A spreading branch of hyssop was used in sprinkling blood at the sacrifices as a symbol of purification of heart. If David had uttered these words to a priest they would have referred to this ceremony; addressed to God, they pray for that of which the ceremony was the symbol. **Wash me.** Through and through. (11) *Only God's power can rid us of the impurity of our hearts.*

**8. Make me to hear joy and gladness.**

The Hebrew priest, when formally readmitting the cured and cleansed leper to "the congregation of Israel," touched his ear and thumb and toe with the blood of the trespass-offering and with oil, to show that all his faculties were re-consecrated to God's service. David prays for a similar sanctification of heart. (12) *God's announcement of full salvation, though unheard by physical ears, is sweetest music to the soul.* **Bones . . . broken.** His whole nature was crushed by the consciousness of God's anger. **Rejoice.** (13) *Parity and genuine joy, while not identical, are never far apart.*

**10. A clean heart.** (14) *The heart is the well-spring of character. Recall the figure of a fountain of pure spiritual life used by Jesus in conversation with the Samaritan woman.* **Right spirit.** A will conformed to the will of God.

**11. Thy presence.** (15) *God's criminal shrinks when he finds his Judge near; but God's child longs for his Father's presence.*

**12. Restore.** Bring back, for David had in other days "enjoyed religion." **Joy of thy salvation.** A myriad-sided spiritual joy, springing from a thousand dangers averted, a thousand delights possessed, and a thousand hopes of bliss. **Free Spirit.** Make me God's freeman, not passion's slave.

**13. Then.** Till then evangelical labor would be hard indeed. **Sinners shall be converted.** Shall turn. There need be no doubt about this result. Efforts for the salvation of others are often made hesitatingly; even earnest Christians often doubt the success of efforts they make for Christ's sake. But here is a sure fact: that when a man who was bad and who felt his heart's badness is made pure by God's power and humbly conscious of his purity and of its source—when such a man tells what God has done for his soul, sinners will listen and shall be converted.

### CRITICAL NOTES.

BY PROFESSOR M. S. TERRY, D.D.

For the common reader a critical study of this great penitential psalm may succeed best, not by following the order of verses, but by setting over against each other the notable correspondencies and contrasts. For the profoundest doctrines of sin and salvation are here set forth and are seen most clearly in their contrasted relations.

*Aspects of sin.*—1. In verses 1 and 2 we have three different words for human sinfulness—**transgression, iniquity, and sin.** The first points to open acts of violating God's law, including the blood-guiltiness of verse 14; the second to the inbred corruption of nature, and the third is more generic, as the common designation of that totality of sinfulness which possesses the guilty man whose open acts and inward life are contrary to the divine standard of holiness. In connection

with this we should also consider the congenital depravity referred to in verse 5. The language of that verse is doubtless to be treated as containing a poetical hyperbole and not to be pressed to a literal or rigid dogmatic significance; but the reference is obviously to the common Scripture doctrine that tendencies to evil are transmitted from one generation to another. A still more aggravated conception of the moral wreck of a fallen and sinful nature is suggested by the **broken bones** mentioned in verse 8. The figure is designed to intimate that the strong basis and frame-work of the entire constitution has been fractured by the moral shock. Surely a more terrible picture of human guilt and sin than that here presented is not to be found.

2. Verse 4 adds to the foregoing picture the idea of sin as a violation of divine order. **Against**

**thee, thee only, have I sinned.** All sin, as such, is opposition to God, and that is the profoundest conception of its exceeding sinfulness which discerns it in this relation clearly. In David's lips, as a confession of his great sin, these words would not mean that he had not sinned against Uriah and Bathsheba, for sin carries mischief and misery to thousands; but for the moment the whole vision of the psalmist's soul is filled with the overwhelming thought of what his sin must be in the eyes of God.

8. Note still further that the truly penitent soul forgets not his guilt. This is shown in verse 3, which we should render, **for I know** [the Hebrew imperfect tense here implies continued knowing, "I keep knowing," know more and more] **my transgressions and my sin is ever before me.** Such continued knowledge of sin tends to drive one the more earnestly to Him who alone can purge it away.

*Aspects of salvation.*—No less striking and instructive are the lessons touching salvation:

1. The source of redemption is pointed out in the three words of verse 1 translated **mercy, loving-kindness, and tender mercies.** Let the student compare the first of these words with the "grace" described in Eph. 2, 8, the second with God's love as set forth in John 3, 16, and the third with both text and margin of Luke 1, 78. All these glowing thoughts overwhelmed Paul and caused the outburst of rapture at the beginning of Rom. 11, 33.

2. The FULLNESS of the salvation is indicated by the three verbs of verses 1 and 2, which are translated **blot out, wash, and cleanse.** But to these words with their rich suggestions add also the images of the **hysso**p and **snow** in verse 7, and the **hiding** of God's face from the sin in verse 9.

3. The RESULTS of this salvation appear not only in the **clean heart and right spirit** (verse 10), but in **joy and gladness** (verse 8), a **free** or willing **spirit** (verse 12), and ability to teach transgressors (verse 13).

One may also contrast the **mercy** of verse 1 with the justification suggested in the latter part of verse 4. Also the two **beholds** which begin verses 5 and 6, and the **clean heart and right spirit** of verse 10 with the **broken and contrite spirit and heart** of verse 17.

### The Lesson Council.

**Question 1.** How far was the conception of the Holy Spirit as we now know him known to the pre-Christian Church?

1. The office, work, and nature of the Holy Spirit are recognized by the Old Testament Church in all its dispensations; that his nature was divine and personal, that his office was to give life, to

convince of sin, to renew the heart, to impart joy, to confer special endowments, etc. 2. The conception of these was progressively developed; vague, dim, partial; an energy, a manifestation, a presence consciously felt, a personality. Held with varying clearness and strength, at times with singular vividness, it reached its complete development at Pentecost. 3. The difference of conception between the Old Testament Church and the New is one of measure and degree and not of nature and kind. 4. Gen. 1, 2; Rom. 8, 11; Gen. 6, 3; Epl. 4, 30; Num. 11, 25; 1 Cor. 12, 10; Isa. 61, 1, etc.; Luke 4, 18, etc.; Joel 2, 28; Acts 2, 16, etc.—*Rev. Jabez Brooks, Minneapolis, Minn.*

In the pre-Christian Church the Holy Spirit was known vaguely and by very few. 1. He had part in creation (Gen. 1, 2), "And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters." 2. He was the Author of inspired address, man being the agent of communication (1 Sam. 10, 10), "The Spirit of God came upon him, and he prophesied." 3. He was connected with religious life and experience (Psa. 56, 12), "Take not thy Holy Spirit from me." Since Pentecost the Holy Spirit is fully known by the Christian Church in all his offices. These are clearly taught in the New Testament.—*Rev. F. H. Cumming, Ph.D., Galena, Ill.*

The Bible shows that the Holy Spirit was known to the Old Testament Church. He was then, as he is now, the inspirer of all gracious aspirations, affections, and works in men. To lose his presence and grace was then, as it is now, the greatest of calamities. Hence the psalmist prayed, "Take not thy Holy Spirit from me." The Holy Spirit is now more fully known in his office and work than he was in pre-Christian times, because he is more completely revealed. He was more fully manifested to the Church on the day of Pentecost than ever before.—*John Atkinson, D.D.*

### Analytical and Biblical Outline.

#### The Upward Steps of a Sinner.

##### I. PRAYER.

*Have mercy . . . O God.* v. 1.

"Let us return unto the Lord." Hos. 6, 1.

"Call ye upon him." Isa. 55, 6.

##### II. PENITENCE.

*I acknowledge . . . transgression.* v. 3.

"Acknowledged my sin." Psa. 32, 5.

"If we confess our sins." 1 John 1, 9.

##### III. PARDON.

*Hide thy face from my sins.* v. 9.

"Redemption . . . forgiveness of sins." Col.

1, 14.

"Will not remember thy sins." Isa. 43, 25

##### IV. PURITY.

*Create in me a clean heart.* v. 10.

"Ye shall be clean." Ezek. 36, 25.

"Ye are washed." 1 Cor. 6, 11.



## V. PLEDGE.

*Then will I teach.* v. 13.

"Converted, strengthen thy brethren." Luke 22. 32.

"This ministry...received mercy." 2 Cor. 4. 1.

## Thoughts for Young People.

## True Penitence.

1. *The true penitent sees that the darkest shadow of his guilt is its wrong to God.* It is true that every sinner sins against man. You cannot break God's law without injuring yourself and some one else also. But all earthly wrong is overtopped by sin against God. "Thee, and thee only."

2. *The true penitent does not regard pardon as his right.* Sin is not a mere mistake; it is a crime against our Maker. God is just even in his utmost severity. Apologies and excuses are not to be heard in the prayer of him who regards punishment as his true desert, and pardon the gift of God's loving-kindness. He rather stands afar off, and will not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smites upon his breast, saying, "God be merciful to me, a sinner."

3. *The true penitent realizes the height of the divine standard and the depth of his own depravity.*

4. *The true penitent longs for forgiveness, purity, and his Father's smile.* He does not ask for exemption from punishment; that is the legitimate result of his sinful act, as his sinful act is the natural outflow of his evil heart. "Restore to me the joys of thy salvation," and I am satisfied.

5. *The true penitent is concerned for other lost souls, and longs for mercy, that he may offer it to other transgressors.*

"Now I will tell to sinners round  
What a dear Saviour I have found."

## Lesson Word-Pictures.

BY REV. E. A. RAND.

O, the thick darkness of the place! A room all in shadow, and somebody on the ground moaning in misery, crying out to his God, "Have mercy! Have mercy!"

Do you ask who it is? Did you not see him stealing in a short time since, disfigured with sackcloth, his head bowed in shame? Let me tell you who is in that room of shadows.

A prophet went out from the presence of a king, leaving him in his royal robes, leaving him on a throne, leaving him surrounded by a haughty guard, leaving him after saying, "Thou art the man!"

The scene changes. We see the king leaving his throne and his proud guard. He lays aside the kingly purple. He puts on coarse garments,

drapes sackcloth about him, tosses ashes on his head, and then steals into this room of shadows to fall upon the ground, to beat his breast, to clutch his sackcloth, to sob, to cry out, "Have mercy, have mercy upon me, O God!"

O, how dark it is! And in the darkness is a disgraced, humiliated, self-despised king. How he moans and groans and cries out for mercy, this man with blood on his hands! In his record there is nothing to which he can appeal. He has shown neither justice nor mercy. He can only cry out to the compassion of an infinite One!

How his sin rises up before him! The room is dark, but his sin is vividly lighted up, like great mountain peaks that, shooting up dark in the midnight storm, come out in a sudden, weird, ghostly horror as the lightning flashes about them. In all its hideous outlines his sin stands before him. He is living through the hour of his temptation, living through the shame of his awful fall, and then he sees a white face staring at him in the fixedness of death and reproaching this king who brought death upon him. O how the vision burns into his soul, making its way as if red hot iron into his heart of flesh. And then the penitent seems to see his God, the loving, long-suffering God who tried to warn him, tried to restrain him, and yet he broke away from warnings and restraints and rushed into sin. O guilt, guilt, guilt! It lives and stings and scorches and burns.

O, if he could be cleansed from this sin! He had seen a man that was healed of leprosy pronounced clean. He had seen the priest approach the blood of cleansing, a hyssop spray in his hand. He had seen that hyssop dipped in blood, lifted, waved above the silent, bending form, sprinkling, purifying, cleansing. He had heard the priest pronounce clean this exile from home and house of God and mart of business, and then with a light heart and a joy in his face the man had gone away to kindred and friends. O, where are hyssop branch and cleansing blood and sprinkling priest for this royal penitent?

He had also seen the snow. He had watched it on Lebanon's summits and Hermon's lofty head, so lustrous, shining, dazzling in the sunshine. O, that God would pass this poor penitent through some cleansing tide and let him come out of it "whiter than snow."

Still dark is his room. Only his sin is lighted up. O, for cleansing! O, for washing! But what is all this outward lustration! He needs a washed heart, a heart renewed, a heart made over.

And hear him cry, "Create in me a clean heart, O God!"

That is it.

A new creation within, a divine renewal!

And look!

The room is not so dark.

The shadows are lifting.

Rays of hope are stealing down. Peace begins to still the pleading soul.

You see his sackcloth.

You see the ashes, the coarse robes, the bent form, and you seem to see a scarred, bleeding hand that rests upon him and quiets and stills with the hope, the assurance of forgiveness.

### By Way of Illustration.

BY JENNIE M. BINGHAM.

"Blot out my transgressions." "Blot out all my iniquities." A little boy said to his mother, "What becomes of our sins when God forgives us?" And she answered by asking, "What has become of the figures which you made on your slate yesterday?" "They are washed out." "But where are they?" "They are nowhere; they are gone." "So does God blot out our sins."

"I acknowledge my transgressions." As beggars, if they have any good thing conceal and hide it, and only show their rags and sores, whereby they may move beholders to pity them, even so it behooveth us not to boast our good deeds before God, as the Pharisee did, but confess our sin, if we would provoke the Lord's mercy toward us, as the publican did.—*Cowdrey.*

Ben-hadad, King of Assyria, being overcome by the King of Israel, was told that the King of Israel was a merciful man. He therefore sent his servants, clothed with sackcloth, and ropes about their necks, to entreat pardon and peace. When the king saw their submission he made a covenant of peace with them.

"Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow." A Scotch minister once asked a loathsome woman to pray the following prayer twice a day for two weeks: "Lord, show me myself," and told her he would give her a present for so doing. The woman prayed, and soon God began to show her herself. She told the minister she had prayed, that she did not want his present, but wanted some delivery from sin. And he told her to pray this prayer: "Lord, show me thyself." God's light began to shine into her heart. She came across that "little Gospel," as Martin Luther used to call it, "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son," and in consequence became totally transformed.—*B. Fay Mills.*

"Make me to hear joy and gladness." Jerry McAuley, while in prison serving out a sentence for crime, was visited by one of his old associates who had been converted. Jerry knew that this man was no hypocrite, and to hear that voice in prayer and praise which he had always heard in profanity and rioting made Jerry anxious to know more about the religion which his friend had embraced. When he went back to his cell he took down the

prison Bible and read from it, and a Christian lady came and prayed with him. He was overwhelmed with his load of sin, and threw himself on the stone floor in an agony of grief. In the watches of the night he felt a gentle touch and heard a voice saying, "Thy sins which are many are all forgiven thee." He always believed that a real Presence visited him. He began to praise the Lord, and aroused the keeper, who thought him insane. From that hour he was a saved man, and gave his life to the rescuing of others.—*Dr. A. T. Pierson.*

"Create in me a clean heart." When Elisha healed the bitter waters of Jericho, "he went forth unto the spring of the waters, and cast the salt in there." He was a philosopher as well as a prophet.

Suppose my watch was not going well, and I should take it to the town-clock, and make the hands of my watch point the same as the clock. Very soon the hands would be as far wrong as ever. I must send my watch to the watchmaker that he may put its heart right, and then the hands will go right, too. So when the heart is right the hands and feet and tongue will be right.—*Rev. J. Inglis.*

### The Teachers' Meeting.

Study well the history which led to this psalm, and carefully and wisely recount as much of it as is necessary to be known to fully understand this lesson. His punishment (some of it already inflicted) might be profitably repeated. Show that David not only sinned, but repented of his sin. . . . I. Notice in this psalm David's view of a sinner's condition, with the words describing it—"transgression, iniquity, sin, evil, blood-guiltiness." Let these words be found and fully explained. . . . II. Show what David desired, and explain the words, as before: (1) "Blot out;" (2) "Wash;" (3) "Cleanse;" (4) "Hide;" (5) "Create;" etc. . . . III. Show the privileges of a penitent as here presented. . . . IV. Show the vows of a penitent as here made. . . . Do not fail to present in this lesson the way of salvation.

### References.

FREEMAN'S HAND-BOOK, Ver. 7: Use of hyssop, 437.

### Primary and Intermediate.

BY MARTHA VAN MARGER.

LESSON THOUGHT. *Standing Before Our King.* Introduce the lesson by a little talk about King David. Call from the children what they know about him as a boy, his call from God, his brave deeds when a shepherd-boy, his love for Jonathan, and, later, his power and glory as a great king.

Who was David's King? Yes, the great God! And David had to stand before God, just as we stand before him. God saw all of David's thoughts and acts, just as he sees our thoughts and acts. He heard all the words David spoke, just as he hears all the words we speak. What word of God declares that God always sees us? [Print "Thou God seest me." Children recite after teacher.]

Little children, day or night  
You are always in God's sight;  
If one naughty thing you do,  
God will see and know it too!

Call for title of lesson, and help the children to understand clearly what is meant by "penitent." Tell that this lesson is King David's prayer, and that he was the "penitent," or sorry one. Then God had seen David do something wrong, and David was sorry and wanted to make it right again with God. Shall we put some of the words which David used to describe his wrong-doing on the board?

[Print "Transgression," "Iniquity," "Sin," "Evil."]

These are hard words for little lips, but they all mean the same thing—forgetting God, and taking our own way.

Little children do this sometimes, and so David's prayer is meant for them. [Pin up a sheet of white paper. By its side put up another with ink-spots smeared upon it.] Tell that David had been loving and obeying God for a long time. When God looked into his heart, he saw it clean, like this sheet of paper. Do you think God likes to look into a clean heart? When you, Mary, and you, Willie, are loving and pleasing God, does he see a clean heart in you? Yes, and he likes to see it. But some day you want to have your own way, even if you know it is not God's way! You are cross, may be, or selfish, or disobedient. Then, how does your heart look to God? Like the clean sheet or like the spotted one?

David's heart, when he wrote the prayer of this lesson, looked like this spotted sheet, and God saw it!

[Teacher may tell, if thought best, the sin which David here deplores, dwelling upon the fact that the sin began in choosing his own way.]

[Make three steps on the board.] Was David sorry for his sin? Yes; we will print the big word which means this on the lowest step, "Repentance." Did he tell God that he was sorry? Yes; this is the word which means to "own up," "Confession." We will put this on the next step. Did David confess to any body but God? Yes; he was so truly sorry that he was willing others

should know it. He wrote this prayer to be used in the temple.

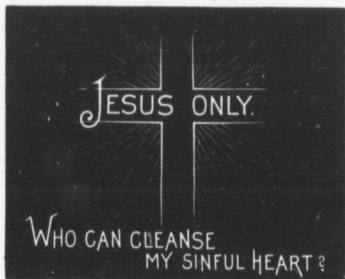


[Explain that repentance must come before confession, and that God himself has made the steps. Print "Forgiveness" on the highest step, and show that the first and second steps must be taken by the one who has sinned, and then God does the rest.]

Sing, "What can wash away my sin?" David prayed "Wash me," "Cleanse me." He wanted to be washed "thoroughly"—through and through. Shall I tell you why? Because he had to stand before God! We stand before him too, this very day! Are there any sin-spots on our hearts? What can we do? Just as David did; repent, confess, and be forgiven. Sing, "For my cleansing this I know, Nothing but the blood of Jesus."

### Blackboard.

BY J. B. PHIPPS, ESQ.



**DIRECTIONS.**—Draw outline of cross in blue; the words "Jesus Only" in white; rays in light yellow; sentence at bottom of board in scarlet or bright red.

In reviewing the lesson the following line of thought is suggested: 1. The awful fact that God abhors all sin. 2. There are grades of sin, some being worse than others, but all sin should be repented of. 3. Feeling sorry for the bad effect of sin is not repentance. Notice the comments on verse 4 in the lesson exposition. David counts his crime against God as greater than all else. 4. If one is sorry for sin he should get at once on praying ground. Get away from evil places and the devil's territory; let go of sin and cling to the cross. 5. Don't wait; make no excuses; confess it all to One who will hear and pardon. Who is that one? "JESUS ONLY."\*

\* For additional blackboard illustrations and notes see page 277

## OPTIONAL HYMNS.

## No. 1.

Come, ye sinners, poor and needy,  
 Father, I stretch my hands to thee.  
 Weary child by sin oppressed,  
 Jesus, my Lord, to thee I cry.  
 Just as I am.  
 In this thy time of trouble,  
 O holy Saviour.

## No. 2.

Hear thou my prayer.  
 I bring my sins to thee.  
 If you feel a love for sinners.  
 Come, every soul by sin oppressed.  
 Are you weary?  
 Go tell it to Jesus.  
 Jesus, let thy pitying eye.

## The Lesson Catechism.

[For the entire school.]

1. What is the prayer of the penitent? **Cleanse me from my sin.**

2. What sad consciousness is his? **My sin is ever before me.**

3. Against whom does the penitent feel he has sinned? **Against thee, thee only, have I sinned.**

4. What does he ask God to do? **GOLDEN TEXT: "Create in me a clean heart, O God,"** etc.

5. What will be the result? **Then will I teach transgressors thy ways.**

## CATECHISM QUESTION.

19. What is Christian adoption?

It is the act of grace which bestows on believers the name and the privileges of sons of God.

[Romans viii. 15; Galatians iv. 5.]

## LESSON VI. DELIGHT IN GOD'S HOUSE.

[May 8.]

**GOLDEN TEXT.** Blessed are they that dwell in thy house. Psa. 84. 4.

## Authorized Version.

**Psa. 84. 1-12.** [Commit to memory verses 9-12.]

- 1 How amiable *are* thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts!
- 2 My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the Lord: my heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God.
- 3 Yea, the sparrow hath found a house, and the swallow a nest for herself, where she may lay her young, *even* thine altars, O Lord of hosts, my King, and my God.
- 4 Blessed *are* they that dwell in thy house: they will be still praising thee. Selah.
- 5 Blessed *is* the man whose strength *is* in thee: in whose heart *are* the ways of them.
- 6 *Who* passing through the valley of Ba'ca make it a well; the rain also filleth the pools.
- 7 They go from strength to strength, *every one of them* in Zi'on appeareth before God.
- 8 O Lord God of hosts, hear my prayer: give ear, O God of Ja'cob.
- 9 Behold, O God our shield, and look upon the face of thine anointed.
- 10 For a day in thy courts *is* better than a thousand. I had rather be a door-keeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness.
- 11 For the Lord God *is* a sun and shield: the

## Revised Version.

- 1 How amiable are thy tabernacles,  
 O Lord of hosts!
- 2 My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the Lord;  
 My heart and my flesh cry out unto the living God.
- 3 Yea, the sparrow hath found her an house,  
 And the swallow a nest for herself, where she may lay her young,  
 Even thine altars, O Lord of hosts,  
 My King, and my God.
- 4 Blessed are they that dwell in thy house:  
 They will be still praising thee. [Selah.]
- 5 Blessed is the man whose strength is in thee;  
 In whose heart are the high ways to Zi'on.
- 6 Passing through the valley of Weeping they make it a place of springs;  
 Yea, the early rain covereth it with blessings.
- 7 They go from strength to strength,  
 Every one of them appeareth before God in Zi'on.
- 8 O Lord God of hosts, hear my prayer:  
 Give ear, O God of Ja'cob.
- 9 Behold, O God our shield,  
 And look upon the face of thine anointed.
- 10 For a day in thy courts is better than a thousand.  
 I had rather be a door-keeper in the house of my God,  
 Than to dwell in the tents of wickedness.
- 11 For the Lord God is a sun and a shield:  
 The Lord will give grace and glory:

Lord will give grace and glory : no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly.

12 O Lord of hosts, blessed is the man that trusteth in thee.

No good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly.

12 O Lord of hosts,  
Blessed is the man that trusteth in thee.

**DOCTRINAL SUGGESTION.**—The worship of God.

### HOME READINGS.

- M.* Delight in God's house. Psa. 84.  
*Tu.* The joy of worship. 2 Chron. 5. 11-14.  
*W.* Planted in God's house. Psa. 92.  
*Th.* Approach to God. Psa. 65.  
*F.* Spiritual worship. John 4. 19-26.  
*S.* Joyful invitation. Psa. 122.  
*S.* Come ye. Isa. 2. 1-5.

### LESSON HYMNS.

No. 229, New Canadian Hymnal.  
Again we meet with one accord,

No. 232, New Canadian Hymnal.  
Thee we adore, eternal Lord!

No. 233, New Canadian Hymnal.  
Oh, what shall I do my Saviour to praise,

### DOMINION HYMNAL.

Hymns, Nos. 144, 141, 138.

### QUESTIONS FOR SENIOR STUDENTS.

#### 1. The House of the Lord, v. 1-3.

- What is said of the tabernacle of the Lord?  
What is the meaning of "amiable"?  
Who is the "Lord of hosts"?  
What are his tabernacles?  
Why are they to be so greatly desired?  
What is said in the third verse of the sparrow and the swallow?

How far was this literally true in the East?

Where alone may the troubled and wearied soul find peace and rest? (Matt. 11. 28.)

#### 2. Dwellers in God's House, v. 4-12.

What is said of the man whose strength is in Lord?

Why is he blessed? (John 15. 5.)

What can such a man do? (Phil. 4. 13.)

What "ways" are in his heart? (1 Kings 2. 3.)

What is the result? (Ver. 7.)

How shall we exercise that our spiritual strength may grow?

What is said in verse 10 of a day in God's courts?

Why is this so? (Matt. 16. 26.)

Who were door-keepers in the temple? (1 Chron. 26. 1, 19.)

What connection had they with this psalm? (See the title of the psalm.)

What is meant by "the tents of wickedness"?

Why is the lowliest position in God's house better than wicked splendor? (Ver. 11.)

What has Christ promised to those who seek first the kingdom of God? (Matt. 6. 33.)

Why then is it blessed to trust him?

### Practical Teachings.

Where in this lesson do we find—

1. That attendance of worship should help us in our daily lives?

2. That we should seek the house of the Lord?

3. That the life of a Christian should be marked by steady progress?

4. That the Christian is secure of God's blessing?

### Hints for Home Study.

Find how often each year pilgrims came from remote parts of Palestine to Zion.

Find some special instances in which God was a shield to David.

Find when the tabernacle, and when and by whom each of the three temples in Jerusalem, were built.

### QUESTIONS FOR INTERMEDIATE SCHOLARS.

#### 1. The House of the Lord, v. 1-3.

Who is the "Lord of hosts"?

What is said of his tabernacles?

For what did the psalmist greatly long?

After whom did his heart cry out?

Where had the sparrow found a home?

What does this signify?

Where alone can weary souls find rest? (Matt. 11. 28.)

#### 2. Dwellers in God's House, v. 4-12.

What is said of the dwellers in God's house? (GOLDEN TEXT.)

Who is blessed in regard to his strength?

What change does he bring to Baer?

What progress in strength do such make?

To whom does the psalmist pray?

Upon whom would he have God look?

What does he say of a day in God's house?

What is preferable to living with the wicked?

To what does he liken God?

What will God give?

What will he withhold?

Who then is the really blessed man?

Where will a wise man desire to dwell? (Psa. 27. 4.)

### Teachings of the Lesson.

Where in this lesson are we taught—

1. To love God's house?

2. To delight in God's service?  
3. To confide in God's care?

#### Home Work for Young Bereans.

Find when and by whom the first tabernacle was built.

Find when and by whom the first temple was built.

Find when and by whom the second temple was built.

Find in John 2 how long the second temple was being built.

#### QUESTIONS FOR YOUNGER SCHOLARS.

Who was King David's rebellious son? **Absalom.**

What did Absalom want? **To be made king.**  
From what did he drive his father? **From the throne.**

Where did David go for safety? **To the mountains of Gilead.**

For what did he greatly long? **For the Lord's house.**

What does he say of the tabernacles of the Lord? **That they are "amiable."**

What does this mean? **"Dear to the heart."**

#### EXPLANATORY AND PRACTICAL NOTES.

##### General Statement.

The "title" of this psalm is "To the chief musician upon Gittith. A psalm for the sons of Korah." "Gittith" is, literally, "That which comes from Gath," and refers either to a peculiar musical instrument named from the place in which it was first made (like "china," "delft," "brussels," and other articles of modern commerce), or to a tune which (like the "Marseillaise") bore in its name a reminiscence of the place of its composition. The "sons of Korah" were a family of the tribe of Levi who acted as door-keepers of the tabernacle and the temple, and also as choir-masters in public worship. Delitzsch points to the fact that fourteen of the twenty-four heads of the twenty-four divisions of the musicians for temple worship were "sons of Korah." This psalm may have been written by David when an exile from his throne, but came more likely, several centuries later, from the heart and pen of a Hebrew captive in Chaldea. The psalmist, in his enforced absence from the house of God, comforts himself with the thought of the holy place which reigns within its precincts. There birds may, undisturbed, erect their nests. There priests enjoy a life-long Sabbath, ministering to God's worshippers. Pilgrims through all the roads that lead thither. With exquisite beauty the psalmist reflects that in some good men's hearts such roads exist. He is himself unable to join the pilgrim bands of Palestine, but all his imaginations and memories are like roads along which his busy desires run to the temple at Jerusalem. Lonely and burdened such a man may be, but he still is "blessed," for "in his heart are the ways of them."

**Verse 1. How amiable.** How lovable. **Tabernacles.** Dwellings. The word used leaves it uncertain whether the allusion is to the tabernacle originally framed by Moses, or to the temple built by Solomon. Each of these sanctuaries consisted of two rooms, the "Holy Place" and the "Most Holy;" but Solomon's temple was surrounded by a succession of "courts" which were regarded as a part of the structure. In the "Most Holy Place" was the cherub-guarded golden "Ark of the Covenant." In the

Why did David love the Lord's house? **Because the Lord was there.**

What, did he say, cried out for God? **His heart and his flesh.**

What did he envy? **The birds.**

Why did he envy them? **Because they could be near the altar of God's house.**

Who are blessed? **Those who dwell in God's house.**

What is said of the man whose strength is in God? **He is blessed.**

What does he become? **Stronger and stronger.**

What are happy days? **Those spent with God.**

Why is it good to be near God? **He gives grace and glory.**

#### Words with Little People.

God's House is { A clean place,  
A safe place,  
A heavenly place.

Can you say, "I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord?"

#### Lesson Promise.

"Blessed are they that dwell in thy house."

"Holy Place" stood the Table of Show-bread, the Candlestick, and the Altar of Incense. In the innermost of the surrounding courts were the Altar of Sacrifice and the Laver. **Lord of hosts.** Jehovah of armies.

**2. My soul.** My life, my whole being. **Length, yea, even fainteth.** Grows pale; yes, even perishes with emaciation. **The courts of the Lord.** That portion of the temple precincts where worshippers were permitted to assemble. During most of the history of Israel the



"courts of the Lord" exhibited the most sumptuous splendor known to the nation. But no architectural beauty nor quaint ornament could so affect the psalmist as to cause his **heart and flesh** to thus **cry out**. It was the **living God** he longed for; nothing else could satisfy his soul. There is great force and beauty in this use of the word "living." It points to a personal God, a Being infinite indeed in power, but with eyes to see, a hand to help, and a heart to love. (1) *He who does not delight in church services has the best of reasons to doubt his goodness.*

**3. The sparrow . . . and the swallow.** The "twitterer and the darter." In Oriental countries birds are every-where, and their nests are rarely disturbed. Christ's thought, "Ye are of more value than many sparrows," bears on this passage. God, who shelters the poor little birds in his house, surely has a fatherly welcome for you and me. **Thine altars** is a phrase which stands poetically for "thy house." Trees, attractive to nesting birds, grew within the sacred inclosure. **My King, and my God.** Mine; the psalmist felt a personal relation to Jehovah. (2) *Christ loved me, and gave himself for me.*

**4. Blessed.** The phrase is the same as in Psalm 1. 1: "O the blessednesses!" All sources of true happiness belong to such. **They that dwell in thy house.** Those that are "at home" there, delighting in it because it is God's house. Home is not four walls, a ceiling, and a floor; it is the place where our dearest live; and (3) *They who in the truest sense have made God's house their soul's home are happy beyond all others.* Our hearts' tendrils inevitably twine about somebody somewhere, and are in sad danger of being torn and broken; but if they clasp the affections of God they will never be wrenched. **They will be still praising thee.** "Praise" is as natural to them as "complaint" is to those who make home among earth's vanities, and seek to satisfy eternal longings with temporary treasures. We sometimes sing a beautiful hymn to our Saviour, with this petition: "Come not to sojourn; but abide with me." But most of us treat God's house as a place of sojourn rather than of abode. Not that we do not spend hours enough per week in the church building, but that the very best of us is given to this world's work, and only when we are utterly strained and drained do we go back Godward for a refreshing draught of spirituality. Such was not the psalmist's idea of worship. With clear spiritual vision, hundreds of years before the Saviour came, and without any such spiritual advantages as we enjoy, he saw that (4) *The heart of the man who makes God's house his home will overflow with praises.* **Selah.** A Hebrew word which probably indicates a pause at the end of a stanza, and perhaps calls for an instrumental interlude.

**5, 6, 7.** The Authorized Version of these three verses is obscure, and the meaning should be taken from the text of the revisers. The psalmist is making a contrast. Not only are fluttering birds and white-robed priests and the citizens of Jerusalem blessed by the neighborhood of God's house, but even the weary caravans are to be accounted happy which push through far deserts and can only reach the city of festivals after much hardship. **Blessed is.** As before, this may be rendered, "O the happinesses of!" **The man. Better, "The men." Whose strength is in thee.** Who trusts in God and not in dollars or friends. **In whose heart are the ways of them.** "In whose heart are the pilgrim ways;" or, as in the Revised Version, "In whose heart are the high ways to Zion." The psalmist, far away among strangers, finds all his heart's sympathies turned into roads which lead toward the house of God, and his desires, like pilgrims, flock thither. **The valley of Baca.** "The valley of tears;" probably the name of a desolate ravine leading to Jerusalem. Human life is a "vale of tears," and we as pilgrims journey to the eternal city of God. **Make it a well.** A place of springs. Successive bands of pilgrims journeying over the same wilderness road dig wells which become serviceable to all who follow. (5) *Every good man's life is a blessing to his successors.* (6) *Those who frequent God's house at once bless themselves and others.* **The rain also filleth the pools.** Better, as in the Revised Version, "The early rain covereth it with blessings." Every effort made by good men to turn the sandy waste of earth to a place of fountains is supplemented by God's rich blessing. (7) *God "shall come down like rain upon the mown grass," and turn the valley of tears to a vale of joy.* **From strength to strength.** (8) *The Christian life should be marked by steady progress.* **In Zion.** The city of Jerusalem is thus poetically alluded to. **Appearance before God.** Comes into his presence for worship.

**9, 10. Our shield.** Our best defense. **Thine anointed.** A phrase which, as has been said before, had as technical a meaning as "crowned heads" now has. It stood for priesthood and royalty, induction into both which dignities was made by ceremonial anointing. **A door-keeper.** A humble son of Korah sitting at the threshold of the sanctuary, and never called on to perform the loftier duties of public worship. **Tents of wickedness.** Mansions where gather lovers of sinful delight.

**11, 12. Sun and shield.** A round, polished, brazen shield suggested the sun, and both were emblems of help, the sun standing for enlightenment and guidance, the shield for defense. (9) *God supplies all our needs for offense and defense.* **The man that trusteth in thee.** Regardless of his opportunities. The true worshiper

will frequent God's house when he can; when he cannot he will not feel that he is shut out from the deepest and highest spiritual privileges. To

such souls our Lord has given the assurance that their hearts shall be turned into a guest-chamber for our heavenly Father.

#### CRITICAL NOTES.

This exquisite lyric is one of the ten or eleven psalms ascribed to the "Sons of Korah." The reference is doubtless to some notable family of the descendants of the Korahite section of the tribe of Levi (1 Chron. 6. 1, 33-38). Some of these descendants served as porters in the temple (1 Chron. 9. 19), and others were prominent among the singers (2 Chron. 20. 19). Heman the Errahite, to whom Psa. 88 is ascribed, is by some identified with the Heman mentioned among the Korahites in 1 Chron. 6. 33; by others with the wise man mentioned in 1 Kings 4. 31, and whom Delitzsch identifies with the author of the Book of Job. It seems strange to ascribe the authorship of a psalm, or of a group of psalms, to a family. Hence some suppose the reference to mean that these psalms were assigned to the sons of Korah to be sung in the temple. But this is hardly satisfactory, especially as the same psalms are also inscribed "to the chief musician." A more plausible conjecture is that these psalms were taken from a collection of hymns made by the Korahite singers, and called after their name. It is also quite possible that some gifted poet of this family composed several hymns of the collection without making his personal authorship a matter of record. But all these suppositions are at the best conjectures, and the student should understand that none of these psalm-titles and inscriptions are essential parts of the psalms. They are of the nature of later editorial additions, and, though very ancient, and often full of antiquarian interest, they are not to be regarded as the work of the original authors of the psalms.

This psalm is commonly associated with Psa. 41 and 42, as manifestly breathing the same spirit, and implying, if not exile, absence from the house of God. It has been ascribed to David when away over the Jordan during the rebellion of Absalom; to some Levite of the time of Hezekiah, who was detained against his will in a foreign province; and to some captive among the exiles at Babylon, writing before the temple was destroyed. These and other conjectures not necessary to mention show how untrustworthy and unprofitable are all such speculations over a subject that after all must remain a mystery. The beauty and value of the psalm are not affected by its anonymous character.

**Verse 1. How amiable.** Rather, "how delightful;" "how lovely;" "adapted to enchain the holiest affections of the heart. **Tabernacles.** Rather, "dwelling-places," the plural referring to the courts (verse 2) and different apartments of the temple.

**2. Longeth . . . fainteth.** These words

vividly depict the all-consuming longing of his **soul** for the far-away temple, while the **cry** of his **heart and flesh** is the exultant shout of joy which breaks forth at the recollection and renewed hope of again worshipping the **living God** in the dear old place.

**3.** Cheyne gives a new turn to this verse by amending the text, and supplying a line which completes the parallelism:—

"Even as the sparrow finds a house,  
And the swallow a nest,  
Where she lays her callow brood,  
[So have I found, even I,  
A home] by thine altars  
O my King and my God."

#### 5. In whose heart are the ways of them.

This translation is obscure and unmeaning, unless the "them" be connected immediately with the next verse, which would be an unnatural Hebrew construction. The Revised Version is better, but supplies the words "to Zion." Delitzsch renders: "The pilgrim roads are in their hearts." The word for "ways" may by changing one letter be made to read "confidence," and then we should have the sentence: "Confidence is in their hearts." This, which is the view of Hupfeld, seems to be the simplest explanation. Cheyne, as is his notable habit, supplies new readings, and renders this verse and the next as follows:

"Happy the man who has thee for a stronghold,  
[Such as are pilgrims] on the highways,  
[With gladness] in their heart!  
Passing through the balsam-vaie,  
They make it a source of fountains;  
Yea, the early rain mantles it with blessings."

#### 6. Valley of Baca.

The plural of this word "Baca" is translated "mulberry-trees" in 2 Sam. 5. 23, 24; 1 Chron. 14. 14, 15. The margin of the Revised Version has "balsam trees." So Cheyne above. The word is best understood as a symbolic name for a dark and desolate valley, in which no springs of water were ordinarily found. The returning exiles, or the pilgrims going up to the Lord's house, are conceived as making waters gush out in the dry places. Comp. Isa. 35. 6; 41. 18.

#### The Lesson Council.

**Question 2.** *To what extent and for what reason was the worship of the Jewish Church limited to the temple?*

*Extent.* After the exodus "the place which the Lord God shall choose"—tabernacle or temple—was made the only place where sacrifice could be offered, with slight exception (Deut. 12). This

held until the crucifixion. *Reason.* 1. Jehovah gave, and desired to make permanent and local, visible manifestations of his presence to his people—the Shekinah, the ark of the covenant, etc.—that he might be seen to dwell in the midst of them. 2. To teach the unity of God. 3. To make the temple, with its services, an object-lesson in a great symbolic and typical system, wherein the symbols were prophecies of what was to be in a new dispensation, to be preserved until the fullness of time should come.—*Rev. Jabez Brooks.*

*Extent.* 1. Devotion was proper always, everywhere. Sacrifice only was “worship” when offered in the temple (Deut. 12. 5, 6, 13, 14). The synagogue which arose after the Babylonish captivity was not a place of worship, but rather for a Sabbath-school. 2. Thrice yearly “all the males must appear before the Lord” for worship in the temple (Deut. 16. 15). This law did not bind decrepid men, females, and boys under thirteen years. *Reason.* 1. To unite jealous tribes into a theocracy. 2. To secure a uniform method of worship, through sacrifice. 3. To forever prevent idolatry. 4. To bring together the heads of houses, and thus all their families into friendly relationship.—*Rev. F. H. Cumming, Ph. D.*

Before there was a temple Abraham and his descendants worshipped God. Shortly after they came out of Egypt the Israelites, by the Lord's direction, built him “a sanctuary,” which was the tabernacle that they took into Canaan. There the worship prescribed in the law was performed. There, and later in the temple at Jerusalem, the sacrifices were offered which prefigured the great Sacrifice of Calvary. The pious Jew delighted in the temple, and he could not forsake it without forsaking God. Yet he could and did pray elsewhere.—*John Atkinson, D. D.*

### Analytical and Biblical Outline. The House of God.

#### I. LOVE FOR GOD'S HOUSE.

*How amiable . . . tabernacles.* v. 1.

“Have loved the habitation.” Psa. 26. 8.

“I was glad when they said,” Psa. 122. 1.

#### II. LONGING AFTER GOD'S HOUSE.

*My soul longeth . . . fainteth.* v. 2.

“As the hart panteth,” Psa. 42. 1.

“Early will I seek thee,” Psa. 63. 1.

#### III. REST IN GOD'S HOUSE.

*Blessed are they that dwell.* v. 4.

“Satisfied with the goodness,” Psa. 65. 4.

“One thing have I desired,” Psa. 27. 4.

#### IV. COMMUNION OF GOD'S HOUSE.

*Appeareth before God.* v. 7.

“Ye are come . . . unto Mount Zion,” Heb. 12. 22, 23.

“Our fellowship . . . with the Father,” 1 John 1. 3.

#### V. PRAYER IN GOD'S HOUSE.

*O Lord God of hosts.* v. 8.

“Went up . . . hour of prayer,” Acts 3. 1.

“Hearken unto the prayer,” 1 Kings 8. 29.

#### VI. SERVICE IN GOD'S HOUSE.

*A door-keeper in the house.* v. 10.

“Humbleth himself . . . exalted,” Luke 14. 11.

“Base things . . . chosen,” 1 Cor. 1. 28.

### Thoughts for Young People.

#### Thoughts on the Public Worship of God.

1. *To the true servant of God public religious service is delightful.* It is the strongest conservator of public and private morals known to modern society. It is in accordance with God's expressed will, which the good man always delights to perform. It is a source of spiritual strength to the individual worshiper. It brings congenial souls together in the holy activities which they most enjoy.

2. *Body, mind, and soul, all need the “means of grace.”* (Verse 2.) The necessity of Sabbath rest for physical strength and general secular prosperity is now universally admitted; the services of the sanctuary are as needful. To the man and woman whose minds are loaded with the cares of life they furnish respite and refreshment such as can nowhere else be found. The human soul desiring to meet God should go where God has especially promised to be present.

3. *Distance from God's house and difficulty of attendance should not cool interest in it.* (Verse 2.) It should rather increase that interest. Those who are detained from public worship by the providence of God often by their prayers and manifested interest increase its usefulness to others, and thus multiply the blessings of life. Besides, the discipline of enforced absence from the sanctuary may, with God's blessing, itself become a means of grace.

4. *Those who can habitually attend the house of God should highly appreciate and enjoy its privileges.* (Verse 4.)

5. *Regularity in religious practices is the best of sermons to heedless souls.* The man who never goes to church may hear your voice in family prayer through the brick and mortar partition which divides your house from his. The man who never reads the Bible, reads you; and if you are Christ's epistle, the fact that you are read and known of all men will greatly help Christ's cause. Your preacher can only preach to the people that come to hear him; but if you can walk once or twice every day from your house to the house of God and back again, with your Bible and hymnal in your hand, you have preached the most effective sermon to the godless passer-by.

6. *Even a humble station in God's service has*

greater privilege than a high place in the world. (Verse 10.) Christians sometimes forget this amid the strains of secular life; but it is eternally true.

### Lesson Word-Pictures.

Nahum, keeper of the door of the house of his God, has been absent several weeks. A hard sickness bound him to his bed day after day. He is up from it, though, at last, and early in the morning of the Lord's day he is on his way to his old duties. How delightful it is to return to them! As he nears the temple at that early hour, as before him rise the lofty walls, the stately roof, the noble door-way, and he catches a glimpse of the outlying spacious courts, how his heart exults in joy and pride and the consciousness of strength—all found and centered in God! He soon enters this beautiful house of the King of kings, and in the prosecution of his duties chances to pass near the great altar of offering. What is it that he sees? A rustling of the leaves of the beautiful pattern around the altar's rim! Had a stray wind stolen in, and does it sway those leaves?

He looks again.

"Why, no!" he murmurs; "it cannot be that; and yet it is a fluttering."

He goes nearer.

He looks more sharply.

"Can it be birds' wings?" he asks. "Possibly a nest of birds? Can't be that!"

He gains access to that strange center of agitation, reaches out his hand, and gently lays it upon—what? A soft, warm little heap that palpitates excitedly! Then peeping over the edge of the nest he sees three timid little beaks stretched up as if in supplication!

Nahum has never professed to be poet or singer. He never has stood in the ranks of the singing-men whose stately, sonorous notes have echoed above the heights of Zion. He has been only a humble door-keeper in Zion's courts. And yet the impulse of a psalm stirs and grows within him, and if breaking forth from his lips it could be voiced just as he feels, one of those stately singing men would be dumb with envy at Nahum's ecstatic tones.

So lovely are God's tabernacles, and so blessed is it to worship God in his courts. It is such a source of strength to have this refuge of God's house. Nahum has found this out in sickness. He recalls the long days, the yet longer nights, but in them all the unvoiced psalm in his heart was, "Blessed is the man whose strength is in thee." Memories of God's house helped him to bear his pain.

He thinks, too, of the early run. How it drips musically on all the fields, refreshes the withering roots, starts the new buds, and tinges with deep emerald the banks of the water-brooks. Nahum's

heart loving God's house has had the earth-rain blessing.

What if he be only a door-keeper? He thinks of a tent of wickedness which he saw the other day. When passing he happened to give a glance that way. He saw the signs of a luxurious life, skins with softest fur, hangings of most graceful pattern, vessels of brightest gold and purest silver, jeweled garments.

But what a volcano of Bacchanalian revelry was that tent! Better than a thousand days in such an atmosphere of sin is a single day in God's house. Than to be the owner and occupant of such a jeweled shrine of sin Nahum would much rather be the lowly attendant, just to keep the door of the house of his God.

What good thing can the humblest in God's service lack? Going away from that tent of wickedness, he saw the sun sweeping in majesty through the sky, giving life to every thing, adding strength, fruitfulness, beauty. What was Nahum's God but such a sun—a sun of blessing to Nahum!

He thought of men in battle, saw the arrows flying toward him, the spears leveled, the swords descending. Between him and them suddenly rose a shield. What was God but such a shield—a shield from harm to Nahum, lover of God's courts!

The day Nahum finds the swallows the impressive services of Zion go on. The smoke ascends from the temple offerings.

There are the singers, and the sweet, rich psalms mount the heavens. The worshippers in throngs bow in adoration. But all through the day the humble door-keeper by the majestic gates, keeping his lowly place, sees something else. He sees swallows under altar-eaves, sees their wings fluttering, sees their dumb, unconscious trust in their hiding-place, and thinks how good it is when souls have a nestling-place in the arm of Jehovah. We think of him telling his experience in the above to the soul who wrote this psalm, so that we hear Nahum's fervent tones in the cry, "Blessed is the man that trusteth in thee."

### By Way of Illustration.

Never did the sunbeams fall so sweet and golden as on that first Sabbath, after a long illness, when we ventured out to church; and no discourse ever tasted so like heavenly manna as the one our pastor poured into our hungry ears that day.—*Dr. T. L. Cuyler.*

"Blessed are they that dwell in thy house." Have for yourself definite religious duties and relations. The common talk about respecting religion is of very little moment apart from conduct. To get the good of other relations you fulfill them. If you belong to a club or lodge or board of directors, you meet its appointments. Do not regard

the external forms of faith with less intelligent logic.—*Dr. T. T. Munger.*

"*They go from strength to strength.*" Church service is not designed for enjoyment, but that we may grow thereby. When I hear a Christian say, "I must go to a church where I can be fed," I always expect to hear by and by that he is laid up with spiritual dyspepsia. Sermon gormandizing is the straight road to religious apoplexy. The hospital wards of our churches are full of apoplexies, who no more need spiritual nourishment than Mount Blanc needs a snow-storm, but who, if they would take themselves out from the midst of a strong church where they are not needed, and join a feeble flock to win and save men, would take on spiritual strength and power.—*Dr. C. H. Parkhurst.*

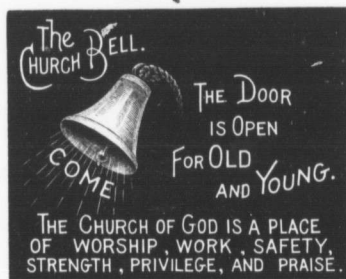
"*I had rather be a door-keeper,*" etc. A prayer-meeting was being held in a weak rural church, and a young man recently converted closed an earnest talk by saying, "I had rather be a door-keeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness," and when he sat down he sang heartily, "All I am I give to Jesus." At the close of the meeting the committee of the church reported the finances, and said that there was no money to hire a sexton for that year, and it would cost \$75. A gloom fell over the congregation. This young man had been saying, "In my heart did I mean what I said." Then he arose and declared, "I did not mean what I said in my testimony, but now, thank God, I do mean it. I will be your sexton next year." They accepted the offer, and without pay he did the work. It was better service than they had ever had before, but he had a hard time of it; for if there is one man that gets more kicks and cuffs than the minister it is the sexton. But it was to him a religious service, and at the close of the year he was able to say, "Yes, I did mean it. 'I would rather be a door-keeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness.'"—*The Golden Rule.*

### The Teachers' Meeting.

Note the uncertainty concerning the period in history when this psalm was composed; possibly by David when driven from his throne by Absalom, possibly by some captive carried away by the Chaldeans.... A rapid sketch of the tabernacle and temple. If David was the author, the tabernacle was referred to, if not, probably the temple.... A working outline: I. The delightful house—God's church (verses 1-3). II. The delighted worshippers (verses 4-7). III. The prayer of the psalmist (verses 8-12).... A simpler outline: I. The blessedness of God's service in his house, and the supreme happiness of those who are prompted to take their part in it (verses 1-7). II. The prayer of the psalmist who still seeks God, though shut out from

his sanctuary (verses 8-12).... Or, take the outlines given in the *Illustrative Notes*: I. Love for God's house (verse 1). II. Longing for God's house (verses 2, 3). III. Enjoyment in God's house (verse 4). IV. The worship of God's house (verses 5-8). V. Blessedness of God's house (verses 9-12).... Explain allusions to "sparrows," "nests," "dwell in thy house," "valley of Baca," "in whose heart are the ways," "in Zion appeareth," "door-keeper," "sun and shield,".... Privileges of worshippers as shown in this lesson: (1) Worship; (2) praise; (3) growth; (4) prayer; (5) grace; (6) glory.... What God is to his people: (1) Their king; (2) their shield; (3) their sun.... Note three classes of people who are here called "blessed."

### Blackboard.



DIRECTIONS.—Draw the bell with yellow chalk; the word "Come" with bright red or white.

The lesson taught by the blackboard is the blessings of God's house. After reviewing the lesson, invite those who are out of the church to come. Speak of the privileges that we now enjoy, and compare them with the persecutions that the earlier members of God's house had to endure. One will not have a longing for God's house, or a love for it, until his heart is given to God.\*

### Primary and Intermediate.

LESSON TAUGHT. *God's House a Good Place.*

To be taught: 1. That David loved God's house. 2. Why he loved it. 3. How we may learn to love it. 4. What it will do for us to truly love God's house.

1. Call back the lesson about David's sin and his sorrow for sin. Tell that God forgave his sin, and read Psa. 32, verse 5. Though his sin was forgiven, yet God let sorrow come to David. When

\* For additional blackboard illustrations and notes see page 277.

he wrote this song he was in a strange land, driven away from home by his wicked son Absalom, who wanted to be made king in his father's place.

Where was David's home? Yes, his beautiful palace was in Jerusalem; but there was a house in that city which he loved even more than his own house. It was the Lord's house! Away off in the mountains of Gilead he thought about the house of prayer and praise, and wished that he was there. Hear what he says! [Read verse 2.]

2. What is the Golden Text? This is what David said, and this shows why he loved the Lord's house. The people who love his house and delight to be found there are blessed or very happy. Why?

[Pin up a picture of a church.] Who is always to be found in God's house? Yes, God himself! Where he is is safety.

Tell story of a little girl who came home from school and looked every-where for her mother. When she could not find her she began to cry; she said, "I'm afraid when mamma isn't here." But even mamma cannot always keep harm away from little girls. God is the only safety!

Where God is is happiness. What do people do in God's house? Yes, they sing songs of joy. [Read last clause of verse 4.] Whose house are we in now? Yes, in God's house. Shall we praise him? [Sing, "Little children, praise the Lord," or some other glad praise-song.] Where God is is strength. [Read verse 7.] God is strong in all that is good. We are very weak, but if we stay near God we shall come to be strong too. David loved God's house, because he knew that there was safety, happiness, and strength.



3. Who would like to love God's house as David did? Then we must often be found there, as David was. This is the way David felt about going to church. [Read Psa. 122, verse 1.] Little Frank did not like to go to church or to Sunday-school. He would very often have an excuse to give, and it made his mother feel very sad. One day she asked him why he did not like to go to God's house. "Because," said Frank, "it isn't interesting." He would rather read or play than to obey God in worshiping him in his house. You see Frank wanted to please himself more than to please God!

4. Two boys lived in the same city. One was named George and the other Paul. George always went to the Lord's house. Sometimes he felt tired before the sermon was over, but he sat still, and listened to all that the minister said. When the people sang, George sang with them. When they prayed, George tried to lift his heart to God too. When the minister read from the Bible,

George found the place in his own Bible, and read too. George learned to love the Lord's house, and when he was in the country once where there was no church near he missed it very much. How many good things he learned there! How many happy hours he spent in the church! He grew to be a strong, true Christian man, lived a good life, made many people better, and at last went to live with God in heaven.

Paul did not like to go to church, and took his own way, which led away from God and all good things. Which was the wise and blessed boy?

#### OPTIONAL HYMNS.

##### No. 1.

In thy name, O Lord.  
Holy Spirit, faithful guide.  
Come, said Jesus' sacred voice.  
Blest are the hungry.  
Come with thy sins.  
How firm a foundation.  
O could I speak the matchless worth.  
I heard the voice of Jesus say.

##### No. 2.

Lord of the worlds above.  
How sweet the place of prayer.  
Sweet is the work, O Lord.  
'Tis so sweet to trust in Jesus.  
My God, the spring of all my joys.

#### The Lesson Catechism.

[For the entire school.]

1. What does the righteous soul long for? **The courts of the Lord.**
2. Whom does he regard as most blessed? **They that dwell in God's house.**
3. What is the Lord God to the Christian? **A sun and a shield.**
4. What promise of God can we take to ourselves if we walk uprightly? **No good thing will he withhold.**

#### CATECHISM QUESTION.

20. What are the privileges of sonship?

They are—the liberty to call God Father, the inward witness of being His children, and the title to the Christian inheritance.

And because ye are sons, God sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, Abba, Father. So that thou art no longer a bondservant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir through God Galatians iv. 6, 7.



## LESSON VII. A SONG OF PRAISE.

[May 15.]

GOLDEN TEXT. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits,

Psa. 103. 2.

## Authorized Version.

Psa. 103. 1-22. [*Commit to memory verses 1-5.*]

1 Bless the LORD, O my soul; and all that is within me, *bless* his holy name.

2 Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits:

3 Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases;

4 Who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with loving-kindness and tender mercies;

5 Who satisfieth thy mouth with good things; *so that* thy youth is renewed like the eagle's.

6 The LORD executeth righteousness and judgment for all that are oppressed.

7 He made known his ways unto Mo'ses, his acts unto the children of Is'ra-el.

8 The LORD *is* merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy.

9 He will not always chide: neither will he keep *his anger* forever.

10 He hath not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities.

11 For as the heaven is high above the earth, *so* great is his mercy toward them that fear him.

12 As far as the east is from the west, *so* far hath he removed our transgressions from us.

13 Like as a father pitieth *his* children, *so* the LORD pitieth them that fear him.

14 For he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we *are* dust.

15 *As for* man, his days *are* as grass: as a flower of the field, *so* he flourisheth.

16 For the wind passeth over it, and it is gone; and the place thereof shall no it no more.

17 But the mercy of the LORD *is* from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him, and his righteousness unto children's children;

18 To such as keep his covenant, and to those that remember his commandments to do them.

19 The LORD hath prepared his throne in the heavens; and his kingdom ruleth over all.

20 Bless the LORD, ye his angels, that excel in strength, that do his commandments, hearkening unto the voice of his word.

21 Bless ye the LORD, all *ye* his hosts; *ye* ministers of his, that do his pleasure.

22 Bless the LORD, all his works in all places of his dominion: bless the LORD, O my soul.

## Revised Version.

- 1 Bless the LORD, O my soul;  
And all that is within me, *bless* his holy name.
- 2 Bless the LORD, O my soul,  
And forget not all his benefits:
- 3 Who forgiveth all thine iniquities;  
Who healeth all thy diseases;
- 4 Who redeemeth thy life from destruction:  
Who crowneth thee with loving-kindness and tender mercies:
- 5 Who satisfieth thy mouth with good things;  
*So that* thy youth is renewed like the eagle.
- 6 The LORD executeth righteous acts,  
And judgment for all that are oppressed.
- 7 He made known his ways unto Mo'ses,  
His doings unto the children of Is'ra-el.
- 8 The LORD is full of compassion and gracious,  
Slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy.
- 9 He will not always chide;  
Neither will he keep *his anger* forever.
- 10 He hath not dealt with us after our sins,  
Nor rewarded us after our iniquities.
- 11 For as the heaven is high above the earth,  
So great is his mercy toward them that fear him.
- 12 As far as the east is from the west,  
So far hath he removed our transgressions from us.
- 13 Like as a father pitieth his children,  
So the LORD pitieth them that fear him.
- 14 For he knoweth our frame;  
He remembereth that we are dust.
- 15 As for man, his days are as grass;  
As a flower of the field, *so* he flourisheth.
- 16 For the wind passeth over it, and it is gone;  
And the place thereof shall know it no more.
- 17 But the mercy of the LORD is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him,  
And his righteousness unto children's children;
- 18 To such as keep his covenant,  
And to those that remember his precepts to do them.
- 19 The LORD hath established his throne in the heavens;  
And his kingdom ruleth over all.
- 20 Bless the LORD, ye angels of his:  
Ye mighty in strength, that fulfill his word,  
Hearkening unto the voice of his word.
- 21 Bless the LORD, all ye his hosts;  
Ye ministers of his, that do his pleasure.
- 22 Bless the LORD, all ye his works,  
In all places of his dominion:  
Bless the LORD, O my soul.

**DOCTRINAL SUGGESTION.**—The mercy of God.

**HOME READINGS.**

- M.* A song of praise. Psa. 103.  
*Tu.* Universal praise. Psa. 148.  
*W.* The song of Mary. Luke 1. 46-55.  
*Th.* Enduring mercy. Jer. 33. 9-13.  
*F.* Delighting in mercy. Mic. 7. 14-20.  
*S.* Praise for salvation. Isa. 12.  
*S.* Full of compassion. Psa. 111.

**LESSON HYMNS.**

- No. 227, New Canadian Hymnal.  
 I'll praise my Maker while I've breath.  
 No. 228, New Canadian Hymnal.  
 Heavenly Father, we adore thee.  
 No. 231, New Canadian Hymnal.  
 Oh, happy day that fixed my choice.

**DOMINION HYMNAL**

Hymns, Nos. 79, 76, 72.

**QUESTIONS FOR SENIOR STUDENTS.**

- 1. The Lord's Benefits, v. 1-7.**  
 On what does the psalmist call to bless the Lord?  
 How can we give thanks to God by our intellect?  
 How by our will power?  
 How by our affectional nature?  
 Can any one forgive iniquities but God?  
 Can any one really heal physical diseases but God?  
 Is God as kind to us as he was to the psalmist?  
 Is it possible to remain young at heart while one grows old in body?  
 What is the secret of everlasting youth?  
 In what strange way did God manifest himself to Moses and the children of Israel?  
**2. The Lord's Mercies, v. 8-18.**  
 Is God quick-tempered?  
 Is he full of severity?  
 What does he do when a prodigal turns to him?  
 If God dealt with men after their sins what would immediately become of the swearer, Sabbath-breaker, liar, and swindler?  
 What is the measure of God's mercy as given in verse 11?  
 What is the measure of his forgiving power as given in verse 12?  
 What is the measure of his sympathy toward us as given in verse 13?  
 What is the reason for God's sympathy?  
 To what are man's strength and prosperity likened?  
 What conditions of vegetation in the East make the simile of verses 15 and 16 very forcible?

How long does God's mercy last?  
 What is the condition (verse 18) on which his mercy is bestowed?

- 3. The Lord's Hosts, v. 19-22.**  
 Where is God's throne?  
 How far does his kingdom reach?  
 What description of angels is given in verse 20?  
 Mention some of the "ministers" and "works" of God.  
 On whom, last of all, does the psalmist call to bless the Lord?

**Practical Teachings.**

- Where in this lesson do we find—
1. That the Christian should cultivate a spirit of gratitude?
  2. That God's grace and providence should not be forgotten?
  3. That God is as just as he is merciful?
  4. That God will not always chide?
  5. That God will reward his children?

**Hints for Home Study.**

- Find what you can in lesson-helps and commentaries or Bible dictionaries concerning the "song-service" of the ancient Hebrews.  
 Jot down on paper some cases in which inanimate nature may be said to praise God?  
 What do you know about angels? Write down four or five facts concerning them.

**QUESTIONS FOR INTERMEDIATE SCHOLARS.**

- 1. The Lord's Benefits, v. 1-7.**  
 To whom is this song of praise offered?  
 Who is called upon to offer the song?  
 What five benefits named call for praise?  
 What does the Lord do for the oppressed?  
 To whom did he make his ways known?  
 What should be our daily song of praise? (Psa. 6. 9.)  
**2. The Lord's Mercies, v. 8-18.**  
 What is declared of the Lord's mercy?  
 What will he not always do?  
 How great is his mercy?  
 How far does he remove sin?  
 In what respect is he like a father?  
 What is said of his knowledge and memory?  
 In what respect is a man like grass?  
 How long does God's mercy last?  
 To whom is this mercy promised?  
 How much do we owe to God's mercy? (Lam. 3. 22, 23.)  
**3. The Lord's Hosts, v. 19-22.**  
 Where is God's throne?  
 How extensive is his kingdom?  
 What strong ones are called to praise?  
 What "hosts" are urged to bless the Lord?  
 How do these praise him? (Psa. 19. 1.)

**Teachings of the Lesson.**

What in this lesson are we taught—

1. Concerning God's character?
2. Concerning God's mercies?
3. Concerning God's praise?

**Home Work for Young Bereans.**

Find the case of a King of Judah whose disease was healed by God.

Find how God made known his way to Moses.

**QUESTIONS FOR YOUNGER SCHOLARS.**

To whom did David look for help in trouble?

**To the Lord.**

Was he ever disappointed? **No, never.**

What is this psalm? **A song of praise.**

Who ought to praise God? **Those who know his goodness.**

For what does David praise him? **"All his benefits."**

Who forgives sins? **The Lord.**

Who heals diseases? **The Lord.**

Who saves from destruction? **The Lord.**

Why does he do these things? **Because he is merciful.**

Do we deserve such love? **No, for we are sinful.**

How does the Lord feel toward us? **Like a father.**

What does he remember? **That we are very weak.**

What is human life like? **A flower which soon dies.**

How long does the Lord's mercy last? **Forever.**

Who may look for his mercy? **Those who obey him.**

Who should praise the Lord? **All creatures.**

**Words with Little People.**

It is easy to praise one whom we love. If we love God we shall want to speak well of him. Will you learn this little verse and try to make it your own language?

A heart to praise  
My God and King,  
A loving heart  
To thee I bring.

**Whisper Praise.**

"Bless the Lord, O my soul."

**EXPLANATORY AND PRACTICAL NOTES.****General Statement.**

Who wrote this psalm we do not know. The "title" credits it to David, and there is no weighty reason to dispute this statement. But the "titles," as has been mentioned before, were added long after the Psalms were collected, and are not to be regarded as in any sense "part of the Bible." In the first five verses the psalmist stirs up his heart to gratitude by a review of God's mercies to him. The next thirteen verses dwell with a beautiful quiet confidence on the faithful love of God for his people. This leads, in the last four verses, to a triumphant outburst of praise, in which all the psalmist's fellow-creatures—animate and inanimate, in earth and in heaven—are rapturously called upon to join him in extolling the name of Jehovah.

**Verse 1. Bless the Lord.** Affectionately praise Jehovah. **All that is within me.** The psalmist will not simply "attend services," will not merely bow or kneel in prayer; he calls upon his conscience, will, memory, reason, imagination—all that is within him—to join in affectionate reverence for God. **His holy name.** That the name of a man stands for his character every one knows who has ever had a note indorsed, and in the ancient East the name was even more truly indicative of the person than at present with us. (1) *God's praise is man's loftiest employment.*

**2. Forget not all his benefits.** "This touches the sacred spring of so much ingratitude—forgetfulness, the want of recollection, of gathering together of all the varied threads of mercy."—*Perowne.*

**3, 4, 5.** Here comes an enumeration of some of God's most noticeable blessings. **Forgiveth.** First and greatest of all God's gifts to man is forgiveness of sin. **All thine iniquities.** If all

our sins are not forgiven it is because we have not recognized them all and asked for forgiveness.

(2) "*God's benefits will not be before our eyes unless our sins be also before our eyes.*"—*Augustine.*

**Healeth all thy diseases.** Note here that (1) this primarily refers to sickness of the body, though, as Dr. Perowne says, "Maladies of the soul may be also included;" (2) no matter how successful the physician, it is God who heals our maladies; (3) God's glory is often more subserved by our suffering than by our liberation from it; (4) it is possible for us, with Paul, to "take pleasure in infirmities," and feel that "a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory" shall be wrought out by earthly afflictions. **Redeemeth thy life from destruction.** Delivers from the grave. God saves our physical life except when death brings the greater blessing. **Crowneth thee.** Like a king. **Loving kindness and tender mercies.** A beautiful wreath this to be twined about the brow of God's beloved ones. **Satisfieth**

**thy mouth.** Remember how Jesus sought to strengthen our faith in the tender providence of our heavenly Father by referring to sparrows and ravens. **Like the eagle's.** The ancients believed that the eagle when scorched by the heat of the sun fell into the sea to emerge again with new vigor and fresh plumage. The psalmist may allude to this fable, or he may allude only to the yearly moulting of birds' feathers. The eagle was the ancient type of physical vigor. (3) *God is himself the spring of everlasting youth.*

**6. For all that are oppressed.** God is always on the side of the injured man.

**7. He made known his ways . . . his acts.** By revealing his law on Sinai, by training Moses as a national leader, by the marvelous succession of miracles which accompanied the exodus, and especially by a patience that never wearied, did God make himself known to the children of Israel.

**8, 9. The Lord is merciful.** This verse is taken from Exod. 34. 6. **Gracious.** He abounds not only in pardon for sin, but in supplemental favors. **Slow to anger.** (4) *God lingers long before he hurls his bolts of wrath.* **Plenteous in mercy.** "Rich in it, quiet in it, overflowing in it." —Spurgeon. **Not . . . keep his anger forever.** Men who dread his punishment are tempted to think of him as an implacable tyrant, but God is full of compassion. God is the grieved father who welcomes the returning prodigal. (5) *"It is as unpleasant to God to chide as it is to us to be children."*—R. Baker.

**10, 11, 12. Not dealt with us.** If God dealt with sinners "after their sins" there would be few sinners living. **According to our iniquities.** Numerous as these are, God's mercies outnumber them. **As the heaven is high.** The Orientals believed the "firmament," as it was called, to be a solid arch so high above earth as to be beyond measurement. (6) *God's love cannot be measured by all the measures of the universe.* **That fear him.** That reverence him with love.

(7) *God's forgiveness is not bestowed unconditionally.* **As far as the east is from the west.** "East" and "West" were definite places in the minds of the ancient geographers; the earth was a plane, and the East and the West were the extremities. So this phrase is equivalent to "world-wide." As no explorer dared go as far as to the edges of the earth, this phrase means practically infinite distance. **So far hath he removed our transgressions.** If this be true, they need not trouble us any longer; and it is true in the case of every sinner who thoroughly repents of his sin.

**13. Like as a father.** We should never think of God without remembering that he is our Father (Matt. 7. 11; Luke 11. 13).

**14. Knoweth our frame.** He molded our

"fashioning," and knows us well in all our temptations and tendencies, our strength and our weakness. **Are dust.** Men seldom remember this. They forget it in their own cases, and try to hide it from their thoughts. They forget it in the cases of those with whom they have business relations, and are often harsh in exaction. They forget it in bringing a rule of virtue to apply to human conduct. But God always "remembereth that we are dust." He never overburdens us; he never fails to supplement our strength.

**15, 16. As grass: as a flower.** Emblems of perishable beauty. **The wind.** The east and south-east winds which come from the deserts destroy vegetation in Palestine. When they blow intensely metal articles even within the houses, such as locks in room doors, are heated as if they had been exposed to the rays of the sun. **The place thereof shall know it no more.** No wonder this line is often quoted; it is so heavily weighted with the sorrows of life that it would be strange if it did not make a deep impression. The fields are the same, and the flowers grow this year as last, but they are different flowers. The streets are the same, but the old tradesman is dead, and a new sign hangs over his shop window. As much of nature as has no soul is permanent; only we who by nature are eternal are physically as transitory as the grass that fades.

**17, 18. But.** "Blessed 'but,'" says Dr. Cowles. The contrast is between man's transitory existence and God's eternity. **Unto children's children.** To the end of life. **His covenant.** The pledge between God and his people of obedience and protection. (8) *If we do our part God will not fail to do his.*

**19. Prepared.** Rev. Ver., "Established." **His throne.** His government; his dominancy. **His kingdom ruleth over all.** (9) *All the forces in this world are under God's ultimate control.* The seasons roll at his touch; the tribes of the field and the ocean succeed each other in generations according to his laws; universal nature is his servant. The free will of man is respected so that each of us works out his own salvation in fear and trembling; but the universal law of God will yet be submitted to by each individual; and every knee shall bow to him.

**20, 21, 22.** These three verses constitute a doxology. **Angels,** etc. Might better be translated "mighty ones of strength." **Hearkening unto the voice of his word.** Carrying out his will. (10) *Let us learn of angels to watch for opportunities, and take them.* **His hosts.** All forces of nature. **My soul.** I, too, must join with seas and mountains, fields and trees, in praising God. One does not need poetic talent to fit him for praise. (11) *Gratitude wraps itself in robes of praise and sings because it must.*

## CRITICAL NOTES.

This is one of the psalms which, though ascribed to David, is believed by the best critics to belong to a much later period. This is proven mainly by the occurrence of linguistic peculiarities, which occur only in the later psalms. The tone and sentiment accord well with the views of De Wette and others, who refer the composition to a poet living at the end of the Babylonian exile, and pouring out heartfelt thanks to God for his gracious pardon of sin, and renewal of his covenant with his people.

**Verse 4. From destruction.** Rather, "from the pit," in allusion to Hades, or the under world, as in Psa. 16. 10, where the two words are used as parallel. The redemption is thought of as a deliverance from the very gates of death.

**5. Thy mouth.** The margin of the Revised Version gives the alternative meanings of "thy years," "thy prime," and "thine ornament." The Hebrew word every-where else means ornament, unless it be in Psa. 32. 9, where, however, the Revised Version has "trappings." Hupfeld explains it here to mean the entire "apparatus," outfit and equipment of life. So the word may be explained, like the word "honor" in Psa. 16. 9, and Gen. 49. 6, as denoting the person himself and equivalent to "soul." His ornament is his soul, which constitutes his highest personal glory.

**9. Chide.** The Hebrew word means rather to "contend in judgment;" so the sense is, he will not always continue his penal inflictions.

Beyond these few points this psalm calls for no critical observations.

## The Lesson Council.

**Question 3.** *Science has cast a light on the natural history of eagles, on the height of the "firmament" and the distance of the east from the west. In what way does this new scientific light affect the theological statements of our lesson, and of other statements in the Bible?*

Observation of the habits of eagles shows: 1. That the Old Testament writers were acquainted with them. 2. That commentators must revise their exegesis of some allusions to them. The phrases "high above the earth" and "as far as the east is from the west" have their counter-forms in the present day. The form of the first does not pronounce against their inspirational character, any more than that of the latter does against an understanding of the facts of science. The light of science, in this case, augments the sense of the vastness of God's mercy, and of the distance at which he places pardoned sin from the sinner, and makes the one inconceivably broad and high, and the other infinite. So elsewhere true science

will make for a right conception of God's word, and will confirm and broaden its real meaning.—*Rev. Jabez Brooks.*

1. Disagreement between truth revealed (religion) and truth discovered (science) can never be. The Bible reveals God's will. Later scientific light cannot cause truths from the same divine author to conflict, though scientists and theologians wage bitter wars. 2. "Thy youth is renewed" (verse 5) refers to the eagle's rejuvenated appearance just after the annual moulting. The author thus teaches the renewing satisfying qualities of God's grace. 3. "As the heaven is high above the earth" (verse 11) and "As far as the east is from the west" (verse 12) are figures rhetorical, not scientific, equivalent to saying, God's mercy is infinite, his forgiveness absolute.—*Rev. F. H. Cumming, Ph. D.*

All truths are in harmony. True science and true religion agree. Science helps us to better understand the Bible and *vice versa*. We know that the eagle is annually adorned with new feathers as the result of moulting; that the heaven is distant from the earth not only fifty miles—the height of the atmosphere—but that the orbs of light sweep the fields of space in inconceivable distances beyond; that east and west are not fixed points, the distance between which can be told, but are limitlessly apart; and by this knowledge we can more fully apprehend the great truths expressed in the allusions in Scripture to the eagle, the distance of the heaven, and the distance of the east from the west.—*John Atkinson, D. D.*

## Analytical and Biblical Outline.

## The Lord's Benefits.

## I. SINS FORGIVEN.

*Forgive all thine iniquities.* v. 3.

"I will pardon them." Jer. 50. 20.

"Blotteth out....transgressions." Isa. 43. 25.

## II. DISEASES HEALED.

*Health all thy diseases.* v. 3.

"Heal me, O Lord." Jer. 17. 14.

"Shall not say, I am sick." Isa. 33. 24.

## III. LIFE PRESERVED.

*Redeemeth thy life.* v. 4.

"Thou hast kept me alive." Psa. 30. 3.

"Renew their strength." Isa. 40. 31.

## IV. FOOD SUPPLIED.

*Satisfieth thy mouth.* v. 5.

"Richly all things to enjoy." 1 Tim. 6. 17.

"Our daily bread." Matt. 6. 11.

## V. WRONGS REDRESSED.

*Judgment for....oppressed.* v. 6.

"Avenge his own elect." Luke 18. 7.

"Forgetteth not....the humble." Psa. 9. 12.

## VI. TRUTH REVEALED.

*His ways unto Moses.* v. 7.

"Revealed them unto us." 1 Cor. 2. 10.

"Given unto you to know." Matt. 13. 11.

## Thoughts for Young People.

## The Spirit of Praise.

1. *The spirit of praise is a grateful spirit*, mindful of God's benefits. (Verses 1, 2.)

2. *It is a discerning spirit*, possessing the insight of faith to see God's hand in our mercies. (Verses 3-5.)

3. *It is a truthful spirit*, resting upon God's wisdom and power, and leaving its cause in his hand. (Verse 6.)

4. *It is a loving spirit*, recognizing and returning the love of God. (Verses 8, 9.)

5. *It is a filial spirit*, coming to God as to a father. (Verses 10-13.)

6. *It is a humble spirit*, realizing its own unworthiness, and depending upon God's grace. (Verses 14-17.)

7. *It is an obedient spirit*, gladly remembering and doing the commandments of God. (Verse 18.)

## Lesson Word-Pictures.

David and his harp!

He has been thinking over the subject of God's goodness, for he has just risen from a bed of sickness. The more he thinks the more he feels. The mood of inspiration comes upon him. He cannot restrain it. He steps down from his throne, and goes to a higher place. He lays aside his scepter for a mightier agency. He goes to a corner where his harp is.

He seizes it.

With eager hands he sweeps its strings.

He lifts his voice.

He cries, "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name." What reasons for praise!

But he thinks of something else besides these. What a sinner he has been! What a confession was that fifty-first Psalm! He can see himself under black, heavy sackcloth, his crown off, his scepter thrown into a corner with other sticks, and how bowed is his soul under its heavy load of guilt! And then he remembers how God lifted the burden and with forgiving touch cooled the brow fevered with shame.

And David's sickness he cannot forget—the nights when he lay and watched for the morning, the days when he longed for the overshadowing of the cooling wings of the night. But he is out of the furnace of sickness now.

Strike again the harp, O David!

"Who forgiveth all thine iniquities, who healeth all thy diseases."

Louder yet, David!

Many mercies from God must be acknowledged. Yes, how good has God been to him all through life! He can see the sheep-pasture where he tended flocks, and one day he left them to visit the army. And look! Here comes Goliath—brawny, big, bold, bad champion. Yes, forward he strides, while back of him is the Philistine host looking at David in scorn and shouting in derision. And then the psalmist can see just a shepherd running toward Goliath, a sling in his hand. He halts, aims, lets fly, and a smooth stone from the brook sinks deep into the big boaster's forehead and he tumbles like a log. O, what a shout rises up from Israel's ranks, while the idolaters flee like sheep before a lion from the swellings of Jordan!

Strike your harp, David, louder yet! Cry, "Who redeemeth thy life from destruction."

O, how many mercies God has showered upon the psalmist! He may be looking out of a window, and he watches the uprising and circling and soaring of an eagle in the heavens. O, how strong and steady and jubilant is that upward sweep! And with such strength God will endow the trusting heart, giving it youth-like, eagle-like vigor. "So that thy youth is renewed like the eagle's," sings David.

But there would have been no King David striking vigorously a harp had not Moses and all Israel found a God of power in Egypt. The psalmist can see a huge drove of slaves, timorous and despairing, huddling together, crowded in between a roaring sea and an angry Pharaoh. Then the breath of the divine goodness descends on the waters, and David sees a roadway stretching to the other side. Over go the tramping myriads, God holding up a lustrous torch in the blackening heavens. O, thanks and joyful praise and loud hosannahs! Strike the harp again!

"He made known his ways unto Moses, his acts unto the children of Israel."

But the Lord God, just and holy, is merciful and gracious.

David looks out of the window. He sees the blue arch of the sky springing up, up toward the zenith, towering far above the earth. So high, even higher, in its sweep is the mercy of God.

David in thought can see the distant horizon-line in the east held up by Moab's mountain-pillars of sapphire, and in the west that line melts into the tossing waves of the great sea. How far from east to west! As far, still farther away, does God remove David's transgressions.

But how quickly hushed is every echoing harp-note. Low and subdued are the singer's notes about our mortality. He looks upon the grass. How quickly it withers! He beholds the flower of the field. A hot breath from the south reaches it, and it falls. Death, the grave, night, solitude—



how dreary! "For the wind passeth over it and it is gone."

But the singer looks up.

"God's mercy is from everlasting to everlasting."

The Lord Jehovah reigneth!

God reigns to bless his trusting ones.

Then sing, all his angels!

"Bless ye the Lord, all ye his hosts!"

"Bless the Lord, all his works!"

And under that great, grand music filling all the heavens, sits a single soul by his harp, entranced by the mighty song above him.

Ah! does he know that it is only the upflowing of his own happy, thankful song reaching and filling the heavens, as he cries, "Bless the Lord, O my soul!"

### By Way of Illustration.

"Bless the Lord, O my soul." Praise is the secret of many a victory. One day while walking I saw that I was about to meet a despondent brother. In a glad voice I said, "Good-morning, brother. How are you?" He dolefully replied, "Bad enough; every thing goes wrong." I said, "Will you do just as I tell you?" He hesitated and finally promised "to try." "As you go up that hill," I said (a long hill was just before him), "I want you to say, 'Praise the Lord' at every step; and continue to do so, not only until you feel it down in your heart, but until some one else catches the inspiration, and the next time we meet, tell me how you succeeded." He shook his head, but promised he would "try." The following week I met him again. His face was radiant, and before coming near enough to take my hand he exclaimed, "Glory!" After the usual salutation, he said: "You know what you made me promise? Ah! that was hard for me, but I had not reached the top of the hill when the heavens seemed to open, and light broke into my soul, and I had to say, 'Glory!' and I have been saying it ever since."—*Sabbath Reading.*

"Who forgiveth," "redeemeth," "crowneth," "satisfieth," "executeth righteousness." When I was in Europe I learned a story connected with an idiot asylum. The parents of such a child brought it to the institution to be treated. The superintendent said they could do nothing for him. The case was hopeless, as the boy was little else than animated flesh, with no mind. One of the attendants, seeing the disappointment of the parents, asked permission to see what he could do for the boy. Every day for many weeks he laid down by the side of the child and sang to it for an hour. There was no sign that the child heard. One day the attendant was drowsy and stopped the singing. The idiotic child reached out his hand and touched the attendant's mouth, as though to ask

him to sing. This was the first dawning of intelligence in that child. After that he improved rapidly, and finally played, laughed, and talked like other children. When I heard that story, I said, "Where can there be found a story of disinterested benevolence like that?" Then I remembered the lowly Nazarene, the infinite love and care and sacrifices of him "who was rich, and for our sakes became poor, that we through his poverty might become rich."—*Hon. Elijah Morse.*

*Verse 12.* The Bible illustrates most beautifully divine forgiveness. Isaiah says: "Thou hast put all my sins behind thy back"—out of sight and remembrance forever. Ezekiel says of the sinner: "None of the sins that he hath committed shall be mentioned unto him." How different from human forgiveness which in an hour of provocation is very prone to say: "Don't you remember that mean thing you did back there in your history?" "As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions." How far is that? When we speak of north and south we think of the polar extremities which measure half the globe. But the east and the west—where are they? What mathematics can compute the infinite miles of their separation? Micah says: "Thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea." This is the way God forgives. "He will abundantly pardon."—*Central Christian Advocate.*

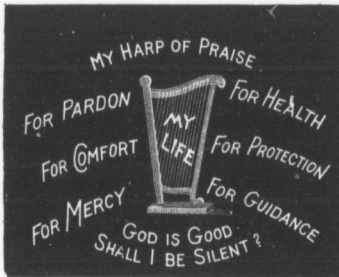
*Verses 13 and 14.* There is no warmer Bible phrase than this: "Touched with the feeling of our infirmities." The divine nature is so vast, and the human so small, we are apt to think that they do not touch each other at any point. We might have ever so many mishaps—the government at Washington would not hear of them. And there are multitudes in Britain whose troubles Victoria never knows. But there is a throne against which strike our most insignificant perplexities. What touches us touches Christ. He is a great nerve center to which thrill all sensations which touch us who are his members.—*The Rev. T. De Witt Talmage.*

### The Teachers' Meeting.

There are three stand-points, from either of which this lesson may be surveyed, and each would suggest a good line to be followed in teaching it. First, we may look in this lesson for its "teaching concerning God," and in its several verses find the various aspects of God's character, as (1) A pardoning God (verse 3); (2) A healing God (verse 3); (3) A Redeemer (verse 4); (4) A provider (verse 5); (5) A just God (verse 6); (6) A merciful God (verse 8), etc., etc. Contrast with this conception of God that of the Hindu, whose goddess Kali is seen with thirty hands, each bearing an instrument of destruction.... Secondly, we may find in this lesson "the spirit

of true praise" as outlined in the "Thoughts for Young People." Thirdly, we may find in this lesson what it shows as "the benefits of the Lord." (1) Forgiveness of sins; (2) Healing of disease; (3) Eternal life; (4) Temporal mercies; (5) Redress of wrong; (6) The divine revelation.

### Blackboard.



The lesson set forth on the blackboard is plain. "My harp of praise" is "my life." Try and get the scholars to name the blessings for which men should render their praise. Impress the lesson that Christians should cultivate a spirit of gratitude.

**DIRECTIONS.**—Draw the outline of the harp with yellow chalk; the strings with white; the words "My Life" with red.\*

### Primary and Intermediate.

**LESSON THOUGHT.** *Remembering God's Goodness.*

**Blackboard.** [A simple illustration both decorative and effective may be used in introducing this lesson. Print "Joy" with red crayon at the top of the blackboard. A little below make eight bells, with fine lines connecting them with the word above. On each bell print a letter of the word "Benefits."]

This is our joy-psalm. What is it called? Do you wonder that David could sing a song of praise? [Recall some of his troubles, and teach that the goodness and love of God are so much greater than any trouble that can come to us that we may always hear the joy-bells ringing, if we only listen.]

Why do we sing glad songs when we are in church, or in Sunday-school? Does God hear us sing? And does he know if our hearts sing, as well as our lips? Let us sing now, "Praise Him, praise Him, all ye little children." [Sing.]

Our lesson to-day teaches us whom we are to

\* For additional blackboard illustrations and notes see page 277.

praise, why we should praise, and how to praise, Let us print "Whom," "Why," and "How" on the board.

You know whom David praised. Let us all repeat the first verse of this song. Yes, David said "Bless" (or praise) "the Lord." Who is the Lord? Let us try to think of some of the names by which he is called. [Help children to suggest.] Which of all these names do you love best? Which do we oftenest speak? Mary says, "Our Father." Yes, I think this is the name we love best. Let us sing, "I believe in God the Father." Let us print "Our Father," after "Whom."



Why should we praise him? In our first praise song we said, "He is love." How do we know that he loves us? [Let children give reasons.] Print after "Why" "He loves us," and in familiar words, drawing much from the children, bring out the sentences and print, "He takes care of us;" "He sent Jesus to save us."

[Call for Golden Text.] What is a "benefit"? [Tell story of a woman who said she could not afford to keep a mite-box for missions, but who was led to take one, promising to put in one cent each time she remembered one of the Lord's "benefits," or good things sent to her.] Help children to count as many as eight benefits that they are receiving from the Lord, and say, "Now let us praise him for the greatest of all these benefits." Sing, "We praise thee, O God, for the Son of thy love." [Print opposite "Why," "He sends us good things."]

How shall we praise God? A little girl went to church last Sunday, and sung the sweet hymns, and bowed her head in prayer with the others. But all the time she was thinking about a party she was going to have, and what she would wear, and the games they would play at the party. Then she went to Sunday-school, and even while she sang "Little children, praise the Lord," she was thinking about her pretty new hat. What was the matter? Yes, she did not praise "with her heart." I will print "With the heart" after "How."

Little Harry had a beautiful home, and every thing to make him happy. He had so many toys that he could not play with them all, yet when his teacher asked for children who would like to give some of their toys to children who had none, he said, "I'm not going to give away my toys. I want to keep them for myself." Did he praise the Lord in the right way? Print "With the Acts" after "How."

[Urge upon children to think often of God and

his gifts, and print "Forget Not" above the bells, which suggest the benefits. Close by singing the Doxology.]

OPTIONAL HYMNS.

No. 1.

Again as evening's shadow falls,  
O day of rest and gladness.  
How sweet the name of Jesus sounds,  
The Gospel bell is ringing.  
Love divine, all love excelling,  
More love to thee.

No. 2.

Sing the praise of him forever.  
Heavenly Father, grant thy blessing.  
Praise the Lord; ye heavens adore him.  
We bring no glittering treasures.

The Lesson Catechism.

[For the entire school.]

1. Mention four things for which the psalmist blesses the Lord. **Forgiveness, healing, protection, loving-kindness.**

2. For whom has God special sympathy? **All that are oppressed.**

3. How far does he remove our transgressions? **As far as the east is from the west.**

4. How does God pity them that fear him? **As a father pitieth his children.**

5. What does God remember? **That we are dust.**

6. How long is his mercy? **From everlasting to everlasting.**

CATECHISM QUESTION.

21. What is regeneration or the new birth?

It is the work of God in the soul, by the Holy Spirit, which begins the new life in Christ Jesus.

**Make the tree good, and its fruit good. Matthew xii. 33.**

Wherefore if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature: the old things are passed away; behold they are become new. 2 Corinthians v. 17.

Except a man be born anew, he cannot see the kingdom of God. John iii. 3.

[THE QUARTERLY TEMPERANCE LESSON.]

About 606 or 607 B. C.]

[May 22.]

LESSON VIII. DANIEL AND HIS COMPANIONS.

**GOLDEN TEXT.** Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's meat, nor with the wine which he drank. Dan. i. 8.

Authorized Version.

Dan. i. 8-21. [Commit to memory verses 17-19.]

8 But Dan'i-el purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's meat, nor with the wine which he drank; therefore he requested of the prince of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself.

9 Now God had brought Dan'i-el into favor and tender love with the prince of the eunuchs.

10 And the prince of the eunuchs said unto Dan'i-el, I fear my lord the king, who hath appointed your meat and your drink: for why should he see your faces worse liking than the children which are of your sort? then shall ye make me endanger my head to the king.

11 Then said Dan'i-el to Mel'zar, whom the prince of the eunuchs had set over Dan'i-el, Han'a-ni'ah, Mish'a-el, and Az'a-ri'ah,

12 Prove thy servants, I beseech thee, ten days; and let them give us pulse to eat, and water to drink.

13 Then let our countenances be looked upon before thee, and the countenance of the children that eat of the portion of the king's meat: and as thou seest, deal with thy servants.

14 So he consented to them in this matter, and proved them ten days.

15 And at the end of ten days their countenances appeared fairer and fatter in flesh than all the children which did eat the portion of the king's meat.

Revised Version.

8 But Dan'i-el purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the king's meat, nor with the wine which he drank; therefore he requested of the prince of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself. Now God made Dan'i-el to find favor and compassion in the sight of the prince of the eunuchs. And the prince of the eunuchs said unto Dan'i-el, I fear my lord the king, who hath appointed your meat and your drink: for why should he see your faces worse liking than the youths which are of your own age? so should ye endanger 11 my head with the king. Then said Dan'i-el to the steward, whom the prince of the eunuchs had appointed over Dan'i-el, Han'a-ni'ah, Mish'a-el, and Az'a-ri'ah: Prove thy servants, I beseech thee, ten days: and let them give us pulse 13 to eat, and water to drink. Then let our countenances be looked upon before thee, and the countenance of the youths that eat of the king's meat; and as thou seest, deal with thy servants. So he hearkened unto them in this mat- 15 ter, and proved them ten days. And at the end of ten days their countenances appeared fairer, and they were fatter in flesh, than all

16 Thus Melzar took away the portion of their meat, and the wine that they should drink; and gave them pulse.

17 As for these four children, God gave them knowledge and skill in all learning and wisdom; and Dan'i-el had understanding in all visions and dreams.

18 Now at the end of the days that the king had said he should bring them in, then the prince of the eunuchs brought them in before Neb'u-chad-nez'zar.

19 And the king communed with them; and among them all was found none like Dan'i-el, Han'a-ni'ah, Mish'a-el, and Az'a-ri'ah; therefore stood they before the king.

20 And in all matters of wisdom and understanding, that the king inquired of them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians and astrologers that were in all his realm.

21 And Dan'i-el continued even unto the first year of king Cy'rus.

the youths which did eat of the king's meat, 16 So the steward took away their meat, and the wine that they should drink, and gave them pulse. Now as for these four youths, God gave them knowledge and skill in all learning and wisdom; and Dan'i-el had understanding in all 18 visions and dreams. And at the end of the days which the king had appointed for bringing them in, the prince of the eunuchs brought 19 them in before Neb'u-chad-nez'zar. And the king communed with them; and among them all was found none like Dan'i-el, Han'a-ni'ah, Mish'a-el, and Az'a-ri'ah; therefore stood they 20 before the king. And in every matter of wisdom and understanding, concerning which the king inquired of them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians and en- 21 chanters that were in all his realm. And Dan'i-el continued even unto the first year of king Cy'rus.

**TIME.**—About 606 or 607 B. C. **PLACE.**—Babylon. **RULERS.**—Jehoiakim, King of Judah; Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon; Ashpenaz, chief marshal of the court of Nebuchadnezzar. **DOCTRINAL SUGGESTION.**—The providence of God.

#### HOME READINGS.

- M.* Daniel and his companions. Dan. 1, 8-21.  
*Th.* The Rechabites. Jer. 35, 1-10.  
*W.* The Rechabites commended. Jer. 35, 12-13.  
*Th.* Temperate in all things. 1 Cor. 9, 20-27.  
*F.* Denying ungodliness. Tit. 2.  
*S.* Integrity commended. Prov. 11, 1-11.  
*S.* Things worthy of thought. Phil. 4, 1-9.

#### LESSON HYMNS.

No. 108, New Canadian Hymnal.

A charge to keep I have.

No. 169, New Canadian Hymnal.

As pants the hart for cooling streams.

No. 195, New Canadian Hymnal.

Stand up! stand up for Jesus!

#### DOMINION HYMNAL

Hymns, Nos. 128, 129, 133.

#### QUESTIONS FOR SENIOR STUDENTS.

1. **Pure**, v. 8, 9.

In what sense would the king's meat have defiled Daniel?

Why is the purpose of Daniel only mentioned

when, evidently, the "three Hebrew children" acted with him?

What may be inferred from the use of the word "purposed" with him?

What from the use of the word "requested"?

How could a choice of vegetable diet relieve Daniel from the danger of participating in idolatrous customs?

2. **Proven**, v. 10-14.

Why was the "prince of the eunuchs" afraid of the king?

What was meant by "worse liking"?

What is the meaning of "your sort"?

What is the meaning of the phrase "Melzar"?

What is the meaning of "pulse"?

How could a change of diet affect the appearance within ten days?

On what did Daniel base his confidence that this test would be successful?

How far was God's hand visible in the successful issue of Daniel's test?

3. **Prospered**, v. 15-21.

Was this definite gift of God to these four children singular? (1 Kings 3, 12; Job 32, 8; Jas. 1, 5-17.)

How did God insure Daniel's eminence in Chaldea?

Is there good reason for believing that the success of these young men among the Chaldeans came from God?

Have young people any reason to expect a similar outcome if they act as Daniel and his three friends did?

Where in this lesson do we see the results of moderate drinking?

Why were these four young men chosen to stand before the king?

What class of counselors was eclipsed by the wisdom and knowledge of the Jewish youths?

How long did Daniel continue in the place to which God had so wonderfully raised him?

### Practical Teachings.

Where in this lesson do we find—

1. That a strong will united with a definite purpose usually finds opposition melt before it?
2. That God gives the "favor and tender love" to those who esteem us highly?
3. That a large share of the sins of this world are due to cowardice?
4. That a strong will is needed to resist temptation?
5. That consistent piety wins respect and esteem?
6. That total abstinence brings many physical advantages?
7. That wisdom is not derived exclusively from books?

### Hints for Home Study.

Find what you can concerning the excessive luxury of the Babylonian kings.

Find what you can concerning Daniel's age at this time, his native home, and the circumstances of his captivity.

Write down a parallel between the temptations that beset Daniel and the temptations that beset modern young men in strange cities.

Give reasons why you think it was necessary for Daniel to act as he did.

### QUESTIONS FOR INTERMEDIATE SCHOLARS.

#### 1. Pure, v. 8, 9.

What purpose had Daniel formed? (GOLDEN TEXT.)

Of whom did he ask a favor?

How was Daniel regarded by this officer?

Why was he held in such regard? (Prov. 16, 7.)

#### 2. Proven, v. 10-14.

Why did the prince hesitate to grant Daniel's request?

To whom did Daniel next appeal?

What trial did he propose?

How long a trial did he ask?

What was the result of his plea?

What says Paul about eating and drinking? (1 Cor. 10, 31.)

#### 3. Prospered, v. 15-21.

How did the trial result?

What diet was granted Daniel and his friends?

What gifts did God impart to them?

What special gift had Daniel?

How long was their training continued? (Verse 5.)

What was then done?

Who examined the young men?

Who excelled among them?

What was the king's verdict on their knowledge?

How long did Daniel remain in favor?

What is the foundation of true wisdom? (Prov. 1, 7.)

### Teachings of the Lesson.

Where in this lesson are we taught—

1. That we can honor God in eating and drinking?
2. That God honors those who honor him?
3. That right doing brings true prosperity?

### Home Work for Young Bereans.

Find what you can about a class of Hebrews who from their youth never touched wine or strong drink.

Name, if you can, three or four "Nazarites."

Name a family or tribe, who were not Hebrews, who would use no intoxicants.

### QUESTIONS FOR YOUNGER SCHOLARS.

Who was Daniel? **A young nobleman of Judah.**

When was he carried captive to Babylon? **When Jerusalem was taken.**

Who were with him? **Three of his young friends.**

What did King Nebuchadnezzar want to do? **Train the young men for his service.**

What did he order them to eat? **Meat from his table.**

What was given them to drink? **Wine.**

Why was Daniel unwilling to eat the meat? **Because it had been offered to idols.**

What was he unwilling to drink? **Wine.**

For what kind of food and drink did he ask? **Pulse and water.**

What did this request show? **Piety and wisdom.**

Why did the officer in charge fear to grant it?

**He thought the king would be displeased.**

What did Daniel then ask? **That they might try it ten days.**

How did they look at the end of that time? **Better than the other captives.**

What did God give these young men? **Wisdom.**

Who was pleased with them? **The king.**

What honor was given them? **They waited on the king.**

Whom will God honor? **Those who honor him.**

### Words with Little People.

The king's meat was given to idols. Daniel would not eat it!

Wine is given to unholly uses. Can we drink it and please God?

"Touch not, taste not, handle not." It is Satan's instrument.

### Whisper Pledge.

"I will not defile myself."

## EXPLANATORY AND PRACTICAL NOTES.

## General Statement.

The historic and linguistic problems presented by the Book of Daniel are relegated to the critical student. No skeptical criticism has been advanced of sufficient strength to shake in the slightest degree our belief in the inspiration of the book. Daniel could hardly have been more than seventeen years of age when he was carried captive from Jerusalem to Babylon. He was, according to tradition, a noble by birth. His personal presence was evidently unusually impressive, and he was at once selected as a sort of page for the great king, and as a candidate for a position among the professional wise men of the empire. "The difficulty Oriental monarchs experienced in getting young courtiers of first-rate abilities, who might not by virtue of their social position or connection become dangerous to the throne, led to the custom of selecting these courtiers from youthful captives."—*Rawlinson*. This story tells of the temptation which came to Daniel in his early courtly career, of his resistance of that temptation, and of the results of the trial to which he had appealed. It is presented to us as a temperance lesson, and very fittingly; but not only is abstinence from poisonous liquors and temperance in the use of healthful food taught by this incident, but also that steady self-control which must be the foundation of all temperance worthy of consideration, and which can only be developed in perfection in persons who have strong faith in the living God. Another lesson from this incident, among many which might be noted, is the detailed attention which our God gives to every struggling soul. Daniel was no more his favorite than are you and I. Every trial of ours is known to him; every embarrassment in our lives, every disappointment, is more familiar to his kind heart than to our own. Let us learn from this story to exercise that unwavering faith in God which will make us victorious in all the strife of life.

**Verse 8. Purposed in his heart.** First, *in his heart* the resolution was formed. It was not simply a piece of political strategy or statecraft. His action was not planned for the purpose of attracting the eyes of the king to him. The first emotion of his heart was loyalty to God; that led to his resolution. Second, he *purposed* in his heart, not on his tongue. He did not go about blustering concerning the virtuous act he was about to perform. He kept his own counsel, and that which he did in secret his heavenly Father rewarded openly. Third, he carried out his purpose *with his heart*—not in a half-hearted way. Having made up his mind, he used all his powers to bring his course to pass. In all three phases of his heart purpose Daniel is a worthy example to us. (1) *Strong will is needed to resist temptation.*

**Would not defile himself.** That Hebrew who ate without restriction at Nebuchadnezzar's table could not but defile himself; for, first, ancient heathens universally consecrated each meal to their idols, just as we now in Christian families "ask a blessing" on our food; and he who ate after such a service participated in the heathen ceremony. Second, the Hebrew law prescribed that flesh meat should be in a peculiar degree cleansed from blood, which is the reason that Jews, even now, have their own butchers, and will not eat meat prepared in the usual way. Third, pork and much of what we call "game" were precluded by the law from Hebrew tables. Such food would be liberally eaten by the Babylonian king, and this also would be a cause of defilement. But doubtless beyond all this Daniel feared the degradation which results from unbridled license and luxury. The banqueting hall of the Babylonish

monarch was a place where moderation was unknown; and Daniel knew, as many total abstainers now know, that the only sure way to prevent excess is not to begin. Fifth, added to all this the intention of the king was probably to make these young captives satisfied with the palace and forgetful of their own land, and Daniel deemed banqueting unsuitable in captives who secretly mourned for their own land. **Portion of the king's meat.** To each of the royal court a "portion" was given, and refusal of it would attract immediate attention; but such refusal would be more easily intelligible in the East, where "caste" has always made exacting demands, than with us. **The wine.** Intoxication ultimately caused the ruin of the Babylonians. (2) *Intoxication is at the present time causing the ruin of a large portion of the population of the United States. Requested.* (3) *The utmost courtesy is not inconsistent with the strongest will.* **Prince of the eunuchs.** Ashpenaz, chief of the royal chamberlains.

**9. God had brought.** (4) *Whatever honor or affection we receive from men is the gift of God.* (5) *A consistent piety wins even this world's esteem.*

**10. I fear my lord.** Such a whimsical despot as Nebuchadnezzar might readily doom to death any who disappointed him even in trifles. **Appointed your meat and your drink.** The king took a personal interest in their training because they were to become his personal attendants. **Why should he see.** "He must not, indeed, see." **Worse liking.** Spent and pale because of insufficient nourishment. **The children which are of your sort.** "The youths which are of your own age." (R. V.) **En-**



**danger my head.** Civil service reform was needed in Babylon at least.

**11. Then said Daniel to Melzar.** The response of the "prince of the eunuchs," or chief chamberlain, was beyond question favorable to Daniel; his hesitancy to do as requested arose simply from his fear of personal responsibility. So the youth turns to an under-officer with a proposition for a test so reasonable that it is at once accepted. "Melzar" is not a proper name, but an official title, signifying steward, or chief butler. The word is still used in Persia. **Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah.** Daniel's three companions, whose names had been changed by the king to Shadrach, "Messenger-of-the-king;" Meshach, "Servant-of-the-god-Sheshach;" and Abednego, "Servant-of-the-god-Nego."

**12. Prove.** Put to the test. **Ten days.** This was not an appeal to a miracle. One week and a half affords ample time to show the effects of steady food on health, especially where alcoholic drinks and varied flesh meats are included, and where so radical a change of life had been experienced as here. All of the young Hebrews had been dragged from their luxurious homes across a wide wilderness, and they assuredly did not fare better during their enforced march than did their captors. Military "rations" at the best are trying food. Now, having been selected for service at the royal court, four of them are fed on the most simple and nourishing of all food; the rest are surfeited with indigestible dainties. In ten days the result will surely be seen. **Pulse.** Vegetable food. It is probable that this was chosen partly because it was seldom used in offerings to idols. **Water.** (6) *If the people of the United States would try the same test, half a million paupers and thirty-five million dollars spent in their support every year would be saved to the nation.*

**13. Let our countenances be looked upon.** Daniel felt sure that he and his associates would present the most vigorous appearance. **As thou seest, deal.** In all this transaction Daniel was standing for God, and he was not afraid to "throw on God [he loves the burden] God's task" of making the right cause victorious. (7) *Never be afraid to submit temperance principles to fair tests.*

**14. He consented.** Won by Daniel's courtesy. **Proved them.** In more ways than he himself knew. While seeking the most nutritive bill of fare the "melzar" discovered the most remarkable statesman and prophet of the century.

**15. Their countenances.** (8) *The face is often the mirror of the soul.* Every countenance carries distinctly written the history of the owner's soul as well as of his body, and it is not very hard to learn to read the writing. **The children which did eat.** (9) *Leaden stomachs make*

*leaden brains," and leaden brains stamp themselves on the physique.*

**16. Took away the portion.** And by this deprivation Melzar made them the richer. (10) *"A crust of God's carving is better than a banquet of our own providing."* (11) *Total abstinence brings physical advantages.*

**17. God gave.** Doubtless they had to study very hard for the "knowledge and skill" which God thus gave. **Learning and wisdom.** Information, and skill to use it. (12) *Total abstinence brings intellectual advantages. Understanding in all visions and dreams.* Oniromancy, or the science of interpreting dreams, is no longer in good repute. There was probably never any basis for it. But undoubtedly before God's written revelation was complete, or his will so well known to men as now, he more frequently revealed himself by special messages to men. Some of these came with a directness which could not be misunderstood; others came veiled in mysterious dreams, and these could only be correctly interpreted by the power that had sent them. The endeavor to classify and analyze dreams, and thus to explain them, was foolish, but God gave to Daniel a supernatural understanding of supernatural dreams. (13) *Total abstinence brings spiritual advantages.*

**18, 19, 20. End of the days.** Three years. **The prince of the eunuchs brought them in.** One can easily imagine the apprehension of this chief chamberlain and the confidence of Daniel. Nebuchadnezzar had an acute mind. It was no slight thing to be brought before him for examination; and the "prince of the eunuchs" had taken his life in his hand when he permitted the "melzar" to change Daniel's diet. The result of the change seemed wonderfully successful; but would the king think so? **Communed with them.** All the captive Hebrew youths who had been specially trained for courtly service. **Among them all was found none like Daniel,** etc. (14) *Always the highest wisdom is learned at the feet of God. Ten times better.* Theirs was knowledge without sham or mystery. Daniel's clear discernment under divine illumination must have contrasted strangely with the laborious wisdom of men whose guides were the planets, entrails of beasts, and similar meaningless episodes of nature.

**21. Daniel continued.** Not always, however, in one position. He "continued" to stand before all the Eastern peoples as one to whom in a wonderful degree "the God of heaven" had made himself manifest. **The first year of king Cyrus** is the last year of the Babylonish exile. (15) *Total abstinence brings innumerable secular advantages.* (16) *"Godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come."*

## CRITICAL NOTES.

**Verse 8. Purposed in his heart.** Literally, "Set it upon his heart." He "took it to heart," as we say, and made it a matter of conscientious feeling and purpose. **The king's meat.** The word so rendered is *pathbay*, which is probably of Persian origin, and does not mean animal food, but rather delicacies of all kinds, such as were like to come to the table of a Babylonian king. The word "meat" is used in the Bible and in old English literature to signify food of any kind, whether animal or vegetable. The "meat-offering" was entirely vegetable.

**9. Favor and tender love.** Observe the change in the Revised Version. The Hebrew reads literally, "God gave Daniel to the favor," etc.

**10. Worse liking.** An expressive old English phrase. The word here means morose, gloomy, sad, with the associated idea of some hidden anger and wearing disaffection. **Your sort.** Literally, "Your circle;" that is, your turn of life, your age.

**11. Melzar.** The article which in Hebrew appears before this word shows that it is not a proper name, but the title of an office, and here and verse 16 is better translated, as in the margin and Revised Version, "the steward." This word also is probably of Persian origin.

**12. Pulse.** Rather, "vegetables, seeds, products of seed sown." The word does not define any particular kind of vegetables, but may include various kinds.

**17. Knowledge . . . skill . . . learning . . . wisdom . . . understanding.** These five words suggest an amount and variety of attainments worthy of reflection and study. "Knowledge" points to actual acquirements such as store the mind; "skill" is discipline and tact in putting the same to profitable use; "learning" is particularly knowledge of letters—book-learning, acquaintance with literature; "wisdom," the net result of all the foregoing, with the capacity to apply it; while "understanding" denotes rather the penetration and discernment which enters into the depth of things. All these fitted Daniel for his interpretation of **all visions and dreams**, such as those recorded in the following chapters of his book.

**19. Stood before the king.** A phrase which denotes a constant ministration, a regular business service. They stood in waiting, that is, remained always at command, whenever the king had need of their services.

**20. Matters of wisdom.** The first part of this verse reads literally, "And every word of wisdom of understanding which the king inquired of them." Stuart translates: "Every thing

[which was] matter of intelligent understanding;" that is, every thing necessary to enable them to make proper distinctions and give correct information. **Ten times better.** The Hebrew idiom is "ten hands above." **Magicians.** The word *khartummim*, so translated here, appears also in Gen. 41, 8, 24, and Exod. 7, 11, 22; 8, 7; 9, 11, and is defined by Gesenius and others as "sacred scribes," a class of priests who were skilled in magical arts and in the interpretation of sacred writings. The word for **astrologers** (or rather, as Revised Version, the "enchanters") is connected with the preceding without the article, and so seems designed to be understood as in apposition with it. The two words together evidently designate a class of persons assuming to be versed in secret things.

## The Lesson Council.

**Question 4.** How far were Daniel's gifts supernatural, and how far were they natural, endowments?

The endowments and gifts exhibited by Daniel were, 1. Knowledge and skill in all wisdom and learning (1, 4). 2. Understanding in all visions and dreams (1, 17). 3. Great superiority in attainments over all the wise men of the realm (1, 20). 4. Special revelation in a vision of the form of another's dream, with the interpretation thereof (2, 19-45). 5. The interpretation of another's dream (4, 19-27). 6. The interpretation of the handwriting on the wall (5, 25-29). 7. His own visions and interpretations (7, 8). 8. Predictive revelations of future events (9; 10; 11; 12). Those of 1 and 3 were natural endowments of high excellence. Those of the other numbers were endowments of a special divine illumination to discern and interpret Jehovah's will, and of the gift of prophecy, and therefore supernatural.—*Rev. Jabez Brooks.*

1. Daniel's abstemious life was simply obedience to conscience and common sense. 2. "These four youths had knowledge and wisdom," by virtue of natural endowment, multiplied by diligent study. 3. To Daniel were added the supernatural gifts of prophecy and interpretation of dreams.—*Rev. F. H. Cumming, Ph.D.*

In acquiring knowledge and skill in Babylon Daniel must have exercised his natural faculties of perception, reason, and memory, but those faculties were no doubt brought into higher and swifter action through divine inspiration and illumination. Daniel's knowledge of visions and dreams which made him a sure interpreter thereof was, of course, supernaturally bestowed, because by no art or process could such knowledge have been acquired.—*John Atkinson, D.D.*

## Analytical and Biblical Outline.

### The Elements of Daniel's Success.

#### I. FIXED PRINCIPLES.

*Proposed in his heart.* v. 8.

"Be thou faithful unto death." Rev. 2. 10.

"Endureth unto the end....saved." Matt. 10. 22.

#### II. GENTLE MANNERS.

*Requested of the prince.* v. 8.

"Be gentle unto all men." 2 Tim. 2. 24.

"Meekness and gentleness....Christ." 2 Cor. 10. 1.

#### III. TOTAL ABSTINENCE.

*Would not defile....wine.* v. 8.

"Look not....upon the wine." Prov. 23. 31.

"Your body is the temple." 1 Cor. 6. 19.

#### IV. REGARD FROM MEN.

*favor and tender love.* v. 9.

"Toward a wise servant." Prov. 14. 35.

"Even his enemies....peace." Prov. 16. 7.

#### V. FAVOR FROM GOD.

*God gave them knowledge.* v. 17.

"The mercy of the Lord." Psa. 103. 17.

"The Lord giveth wisdom." Prov. 2. 6.

## Thoughts for Young People.

### Temperance in All Things.

1. God takes care of his own.
2. It is always safe to obey the promptings of God's Spirit.
3. We should be the masters and not the servants of our circumstances.
4. Consecration to God and obedience to his will are steps to success in life.
5. We should have purposes, and firmly adhere to them.
6. Temperance in all things should be a principle throughout life.
7. Prosperity and honor should be recognized as proceeding from God.

### Lesson Word-Pictures.

The prince of the eunuchs is in a quandary. Something troubles him. He scowls, presses his lips, bites his tongue, scowls again, and then walks the floor of his room hurriedly.

"That Daniel!" he says. "What a request he brought me!"

How he loves the handsome young Jew! Daniel is bright, too. He sees a thing quickly, looks into it very profoundly, and then adjusts himself to it or turns his back upon it promptly. The prince of the eunuchs is proud of Daniel, and he thinks well, too, of Daniel's Hebrew companions, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, the brave, daring three who one day will walk in the hottest furnace ever yet kindled in all the land.

But Daniel, pleading for himself and companions, had made a peculiar request, thought the prince. They do not wish to be defiled by the king's meat and drink; they are Hebrews. May they not have pulse and water?

The prince shakes his head. Ah, he won't have any head to shake, may be, if the king should know of this rebellion against the king's dishes and that the prince did not stop it!

"And Daniel," we can hear the prince say, "the king's wine is good for you. The water of the country is bad for you. The king's wine will also keep you from a cold if threatened, and get you out of it if in the clutches of it. Then, Daniel, you don't want to be an ascetic. The wine will cheer you up. You don't want to be unsocial and do the unfashionable thing. You don't want to be peculiar. Take the king's wine. Don't get me into trouble on account of your whims!"

But there is a Hebrew will in Daniel. The same rock is in the character of his three companions. No more of the king's food and the king's wine for them!

They make a proposition to Melzar, to whom the prince has given his special charge of these four, with a will.

"Try us for ten days on pulse and water!"

Melzar consents.

It is only ten days, he thinks. The trial will do no harm.

Gone now the spiced, steaming dishes!

Gone the sparkling wines!

"Only pulse—only water!" thinks Melzar, as he pitifully watches the four friends at the table set for them. He watches them sharply.

He eyes them during the day.

He steals into their chamber at night and holds a lamp above their still, sleeping faces. No trouble here on account of bad diet, no uneasy dreams, and nobody also was obliged to put them to bed. At their table by day no boisterousness, no revelry, no coarseness; and nobody is found under the table when the dining-hall is to be cleared.

At the end of ten days what ~~for~~ healthy, rosy faces the four young Hebrews had! How different from the flushed, bloated, pimply faces of the young men who had been living on the dishes from the king's table! And those clear, healthy Hebrew brains, what channels God made of them for the descent of his blessing of knowledge and skill. To Daniel he gives the keys of the strange store-house of "visions of the night."

And now the day has come when they shall stand before the king! He is on his throne. He sways his scepter in his hands. Grim guards stand mute on either side his throne. Courtier and counselor, prince and priest, warrior and wise men, are grouped there in the royal hall. But see the four young Hebrews advancing, making

obedience to the king, and then standing before him in all the beauty of their youth!

How the king eyes them, looks at them searchingly! And the prince of the eunuchs, is he there? Where is Melzar? Are those two looking on? Are they trembling? Does the prince put his hand to his head to see if it still be between his shoulders? Never! He is safe.

Fair and bright and pure and strong, the Hebrews delight the heart of the king. He thinks them ten times better than all his magicians, sleepy yet after their gluttony in the midst of the king's dishes.

Pass on, Daniel!

Pass on, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego! Go to your high offices, your trials too!

Go on to the lion's den, Daniel!

Go on to your fiery furnace-walk, noble three!

The Lord goes with you all to keep, protect, and bless you!

### By Way of Illustration.

"*Daniel purposed.*" I was in an immense factory the other day, where on every hand wheels and machines were whirling in busy activity. I went down to the engine-room, and there in that little dark apartment was the throb, throb that made itself felt in every part of that building and kept every wheel and belt at work. Having a purpose will be just such a force in your life. It will control every faculty of mind and body.

A purpose is the eternal condition of success. The career of Beaconsfield (the most brilliant figure among modern English statesmen) is an illustration of how a definite purpose carries a man on to its fulfillment. When the young Jew was jeered into silence in his first attempt to address the House of Commons, he remarked, "The time will come when you will hear me," speaking not pettishly, but from a settled purpose to lead his compeers. Not that a purpose will always carry a man to the goal, but it is sure to carry him on toward some kind of success; often it proves greater than that aimed at.—*Dr. T. T. Manger.*

When Nehemiah was urged to leave the rebuilding of Jerusalem and go down on the plains with his friends, he replied, resolutely, "I am doing a great work, so I cannot come down to you." Nehemiah was successful because he could not be turned aside from his purpose.

"*Their countenances appeared fairer.*" "God gave them knowledge and skill." Rogues have the initial letter of their title burned into the palms of their hands; even for murder Cain was only branded on the forehead; but over the whole person of the debauchee the signatures of infamy are written.—*Horace Mann.*

When Cyrus received intelligence that the Lyd-

ians had revolted from him, he at first determined to make them all slaves. Croesus begged that they be pardoned. "But," says he, "that they may no more rebel or be troublesome to you, command them to lay aside their arms and to vie with each other in the richness and elegance of their dress. Order them to drink and sing and play, and you will soon see their spirits broken and themselves changed to the effeminacy of women, so that they will no more rebel nor give you trouble." The advice was followed and the result proved how judicious it was.

Physiologists are practically agreed that even a moderate use of alcohol is injurious to vitality. Dr. Richardson, of London, says: "It is the duty of my profession to show that alcohol is no necessity of man; that it is no food; that it is the most insidious destroyer of health, happiness, and life. If England were redeemed from their use, the vitality of the nation would rise one third in its value." But the drinking habit in this nerve-exciting climate is far more injurious than in England. Every glass of liquor means less power to work, less ability to endure, less nervous force for fine efforts, less time to live.—*Dr. T. T. Manger.*

The famous House of Clovis in France became a family of babbling idiots, dying of decrepitude in the prime of life, because of intemperance. The family name became a by-word of contempt, and they appear in history with the title, "*Rois fainéants,*" "Do-nothing kings."—*Students' France.*

### The Teachers' Meeting.

1. State the time when the events of this lesson occurred; give some account of the place in which the events took place, and of the persons referred to in these verses. 2. State the facts of the lesson, arranged under the following outline: (1) The purpose; (2) the proof; (3) the prosperity. 3. State the elements of character which the lesson commands; the duties which it enforces; the truth concerning God which it teaches. Daniel's character may be studied as (1) conscientious; (2) self-denying; (3) gentle; (4) believing. The good results of this character may be classified as (1) physical; (2) social; (3) intellectual; (4) worldly; (5) spiritual.

### References.

FREEMAN. Ver. 8: Babylonian mode of living, 588. Ver. 20: Magicians, 76; astrologers, 520.

### Primary and Intermediate.

LESSON THOUGHT. "*Dare to do Right.*" [The Lesson Story upon which our temperance teaching for the day is founded may be made

clear and attractive by a simple use of the black-board. Talk with crayon in hand.]

I am going to tell you a story of four young men who dared to do right. They lived here in Jerusalem. [Make square for city.] Why do you think this was an important city? Yes, the king lived there. But some one greater than any king had a house there! Yes, the Lord's house was there, and this was often called the holy city.

But not all who lived there were good. The Jews disobeyed God so often that he had to send a terrible punishment upon them. He let a heathen king from this city [make another square] come and fight against them. The name of the heathen city was Babylon. It was a very rich and beautiful city, but it was also a very wicked city. See, I will make a path between these two cities. The heathen king, Nebuchadnezzar, conquered Jerusalem, and took away to Babylon a good many captives. I will make marks here on the path to show how the captives were made to go the long, hard journey from Jerusalem to Babylon. Four of these marks stand for four young princes, whom Nebuchadnezzar wanted to have trained for his own service. The king wanted them to live in his grand palace, and so he said they must eat just the same kind of rich food he ate, and drink the same wines that he drank. The meats the king ate had first been offered to idols, and the wine was strong drink, which the Bible warns against. Will these four young men, far away from the house of God, the holy word of God, their homes and teachers, have the courage to do right?

[Sing, "Dare to do right; dare to be true." Tell how Daniel talked to the others and how all decided to eat only plain food, and to drink cold water, and how this resulted in their looking better than any of the other captives.]

Do you think Daniel and his friends did right? They loved something better than their own tastes and appetites. It was God's will and way which they loved best.



Erase the marks on the board, and print "Holy," "Unholy," in large letters. What has God called our bodies? Yes, temples, for his Spirit to live in! How clean we ought to keep them! For God has made them for

a holy use. Will pure water make these little temples unclean? O, no; the water which God made for the flowers and birds and children to drink can only do them good.

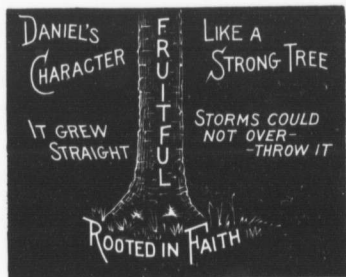
But if we take things into these little temples of ours which are used for unholy purposes they will do harm. Daniel would not eat meats which had been given to idols, because they stood for "sin."

And so we may not use wine, or any strong drink, because it is given to unholy or sinful uses. God will not be pleased if we take evil things into the temples he has given us to care for!

[Show some simple experiment with alcohol, as burning a little in a spoon, or cooking the white of an egg in it, or showing how it wilts and blights a delicate flower. No matter if the experiment is old. It will serve its purpose.]

It is this evil spirit, Alcohol, which creeps into apple-juice and grape-juice, and makes them into strong drink. [Tell simply how it enters through the door of decay.] Some true story of the evil caused by drink should be given. The misery it causes among children makes a deeper impression than any thing else, because the child lives in the child-world, and trouble or sorrow there appeals to him as it cannot do elsewhere.

### Blackboard.



This is a lesson on character. The lesson notes set forth that Daniel's character was conscientious, self-denying, gentle, and believing. They also show the results of character, namely: 1. Physically—upon the body. 2. Socially—influencing his associates. 3. Intellectually—increasing the power of the mind. 4. Worldly—raising Daniel to rank and influence. 5. Spiritually—bringing him into near relationship with God. These points may be briefly reviewed and applied to our present life. The blackboard illustrates Daniel's character by comparing it to a tree—strong, straight, fruitful, and deeply rooted, so that storms will not overthrow it. It may be well to remind the school that there is a difference between character and reputation. Reputation is as one appears to be; character is what God knows one to be. This lesson also teaches the true value of temperance.\*

\* For additional blackboard illustrations and notes see page 277.

## OPTIONAL HYMNS.

## No. 1.

All the way my Saviour leads me.  
I dare not trust the sweetest frame.  
Yes! for me, for me he careth.  
Yield not to temptation.  
Dare to do right.  
If my disciple thou wouldst be.  
March along together.  
Oft in danger, oft in woe.

## No. 2.

Unknown waves before me roll.  
Look up to Jesus.  
Breast the wave, Christian.  
Rally for the cause of temperance.  
Help the erring.

## The Lesson Catechism.

[For the entire school.]

1. What did Daniel purpose in his heart?  
**That he would not defile himself.**

2. What did God give Daniel? **Favor and tender love.**

3. When he requested to eat plain food what did Melzar do? **He consented to them in this matter.**

4. What was the result? **Better health and greater wisdom on the part of the Jewish boys.**

## CATECHISM QUESTION.

22. What follows from our regeneration or being born again?

Our new life being begun, we receive power to grow in grace and in the knowledge of Christ, and to live in the exercise of inward and outward holiness.

As new-born babes, long for the spiritual milk which is without guile, that ye may grow thereby unto salvation. 1 Peter ii. 2.

About B. C. 606.] **LESSON IX. NEBUCHADNEZZAR'S DREAM.** [May 29.]

**GOLDEN TEXT.** All things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do. Heb. 4. 13.

## Authorized Version.

**Dan. 2. 36-49.** [Commit to memory verse 44.]

36 This is the dream; and we will tell the interpretation thereof before the king.

37 Thou, O king, art a king of kings: for the God of heaven hath given thee a kingdom, power, and strength, and glory.

38 And wheresoever the children of men dwell, the beasts of the field and the fowls of the heaven hath he given unto thine hand, and hath made thee ruler over them all. Thou art this head of gold.

39 And after thee shall arise another kingdom inferior to thee, and another third kingdom of brass, which shall bear rule over all the earth.

40 And the fourth kingdom shall be strong as iron: forasmuch as iron breaketh in pieces and subdueth all things: and as iron that breaketh all these, shall it break in pieces and bruise.

41 And whereas thou sawest the feet and toes, part of potters' clay, and part of iron, the kingdom shall be divided: but there shall be in it of the strength of the iron, forasmuch as thou sawest the iron mixed with miry clay.

42 And as the toes of the feet were part of iron, and part of clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong, and partly broken.

43 And whereas thou sawest iron mixed with miry clay, they shall mingle themselves with the seed of men; but they shall not cleave one to another, even as iron is not mixed with clay.

44 And in the days of these kings shall the God

## Revised Version.

36 This is the dream; and we will tell the interpretation thereof before the king. Thou, O

king, art king of kings, unto whom the God of heaven hath given the kingdom, the power,

38 and the strength, and the glory; and wheresoever the children of men dwell, the beasts of the field and the fowls of the heaven hath he

given into thine hand, and hath made thee to rule over them all: thou art the head of gold.

39 And after thee shall arise another kingdom inferior to thee; and another third kingdom of

brass, which shall bear rule over all the earth.

40 And the fourth kingdom shall be strong as iron: forasmuch as iron breaketh in pieces and sub-

dueth all things: and as iron that crusheth all

41 these, shall it break in pieces and crush. And whereas thou sawest the feet and toes, part

of potters' clay, and part of iron, it shall be a divided kingdom; but there shall be in it of the

42 strength of the iron, forasmuch as thou sawest the iron mixed with miry clay. And as the

43 toes of the feet were part of iron, and part of clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong,

44 and partly broken. And whereas thou sawest the iron mixed with miry clay, they shall mingle themselves with the seed of men; but they shall not cleave one to another, even as iron

doth not mingle with clay. And in the days of those kings shall the God of heaven set up a



of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever.

45 Forasmuch as thou sawest that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it brake in pieces the iron, the brass, the clay, the silver, and the gold; the great God hath made known to the king what shall come to pass hereafter; and the dream is certain, and the interpretation thereof sure.

46 Then the king Neb'u-chad-nez'zar fell upon his face, and worshiped Dan'i-el, and commanded that they should offer an oblation and sweet odors unto him.

47 The king answered unto Dan'i-el, and said, Of a truth *it is*, that your God is a God of gods, and a Lord of kings, and a revealer of secrets, seeing thou couldst reveal this secret.

48 Then the king made Dan'i-el a great man, and gave him many great gifts, and made him ruler over the whole province of Bab'y-lon, and chief of the governors over all the wise men of Bab'y-lon.

49 Then Dan'i-el requested of the king, and he set Sha-drach, Mc'shach, and A-bed-ne-go, over the affairs of the province of Bab'y-lon: but Dan'i-el sat in the gate of the king.

kingdom, which shall never be destroyed, nor shall the sovereignty thereof be left to another people; but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever.

45 Forasmuch as thou sawest that a stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it break in pieces the iron, the brass, the clay, the silver, and the gold; the great God hath made known to the king what shall come to pass hereafter: and the dream is certain, and the interpretation thereof sure.

46 Then the king Neb'u-chad-nez'zar fell upon his face, and worshiped Dan'i-el, and commanded that they should offer an oblation and sweet odors unto

47 him. The king answered unto Dan'i-el, and said, Of a truth your God is the God of gods, and the Lord of kings, and a revealer of secrets, seeing thou hast been able to reveal this secret.

48 Then the king made Dan'i-el great, and gave him many great gifts, and made him to rule over the whole province of Bab'y-lon, and to be chief governor over all the wise men of Bab'y-

49 lon. And Dan'i-el requested of the king, and he appointed Sha'drach, Mc'shach, and A-bed-ne-go, over the affairs of the province of Bab'y-lon: but Dan'i-el was in the gate of the king.

**TIME.**—About 606 B. C. **PLACE.**—Babylon. **RULER.**—Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon. **DOCTRINAL SUGGESTION.**—The foreknowledge of God.

#### HOME READINGS.

- M. Nebuchadnezzar's dream. Dan. 2. 36-49.  
 Tu. The king's demand. Dan. 2. 1-13.  
 W. Daniel's appeal. Dan. 2. 14-23.  
 Th. The vision. Dan. 2. 24-35.  
 F. Pharaoh's dream. Gen. 41. 14-24.  
 S. Joseph's interpretation. Gen. 41. 25-36.  
 S. Wisdom from God. Prov. 2. 1-9.

#### LESSON HYMNS.

No. 74, New Canadian Hymnal.

Life is full of evil, brother,—cling to the right;

No. 73, New Canadian Hymnal.

God calling yet! shall I not hear?

No. 75, New Canadian Hymnal.

Come, sinners, to the gospel feast.

#### DOMINION HYMNAL.

Hymns, Nos. 78, 69, 16.

#### QUESTIONS FOR SENIOR STUDENTS.

1. The Kingdoms of Men, v. 36-43.

Who is the speaker, and whom does he address?

Who sent Nebuchadnezzar a dream? Who made him forget it?

What absurd request did the king make of his "wise men?"

What cruel order did he give when they failed? How did Daniel secure an opportunity to repeat the dream and give its interpretation?

From what source did he obtain the secret? Carefully read Nebuchadnezzar's dream, as given in verses 31-35.

Was Nebuchadnezzar really a king of kings? Who had given him his power? Who fixed all the circumstances of your own life?

What part of the image in the dream typified Nebuchadnezzar's power?

What kingdom was represented by the silver breast and arms?

What by the brazen waist and thighs? What by the iron legs?

Of what political conditions were the mixture of potters' clay and iron emblematic?

Tell what you know about the strength and the weakness of the Roman Empire, and the causes of its decline and fall.

Can any human power endure forever.

2. The Kingdom of God, v. 44-49.  
 Re-read that part of the dream which speaks of the stone?

What did God intend to teach by showing it to be cut out of the mountain without hands?

In what sense has the kingdom of Christ broken in pieces and consumed all earthly kingdoms?

How long will it last? What is the chief purpose of prophecy?

How did Nebuchadnezzar receive the repetition of his dream and its wonderful interpretation?

Did he worship Daniel as a god, or as God's representative?

What did the king say to Daniel concerning his God?

What does verse 48 say the king made Daniel? If Daniel was a great man, morally, intellectually, and spiritually, who had really made him so?

What did Daniel do for his friends?

Repeat the GOLDEN TEXT.

#### Practical Teachings.

Find in this lesson—

1. That God fits some men by nature and circumstance to rule.
2. That all worldly honor and power are doomed to decay.
3. That all secrets of nature and providence have been hidden by God; and all genuine revelations have been made by God.
4. An example of genuine friendship.
5. A convenient synopsis of ancient history, all the more interesting because prepared hundreds of years before the events happened.
6. A pledge of the universality and permanence of Christ's dominion.

#### Hints for Home Study.

Jot down on paper the extent and characteristics of the Babylonian Empire so far as you understand them; of the Medo-Persian kingdom; of the empire of Alexander the Great and the kingdoms which followed it; of the empire of Rome.

What was the great temporal power on earth when Jesus was born?

#### QUESTIONS FOR INTERMEDIATE SCHOLARS.

1. **The Kingdoms of Men**, v. 36-43.
  - What dream is here interpreted? (Vers. 31-35.)
  - Who gave to Nebuchadnezzar his kingdom?
  - What shows the greatness of his kingdom?
  - What represented this kingdom in the vision?
  - After this how many kingdoms were to arise?
  - What is said of the strength of the fourth kingdom?
  - What was the symbol of its weakness?
  - What did the mingling of clay and iron mean?
  - Who is the real ruler in the kingdoms of men? (Dan. 4. 17, last clause.)
2. **The Kingdom of God**, v. 44-49.
  - Who would set up another kingdom?
  - What would be its duration?
  - What was its symbol in the dream?
  - What did the stone do?
  - What was this to show the king?
  - What did the interpretation of the dream prove?
  - How did the king receive the message?

What confession did he make?  
 How did he honor Daniel?  
 What rewards came to Daniel's friends?  
 What should be our desire concerning God's kingdom? (Matt. 6. 10.)

#### Teachings of the Lesson.

Where in this lesson are we taught—

1. That all power is God's gift?
2. That the kingdoms of this world will pass away?
3. That God's kingdom will endure forever?

#### Home Work for Young Bereans.

What dream came to Joseph concerning his brethren?

What dream came to Joseph concerning his fellow-prisoners?

What other mystery did Daniel interpret for a king?

#### QUESTIONS FOR YOUNGER SCHOLARS.

Who dreamed a dream and then forgot it? **King Nebuchadnezzar.**

Whom did he call to tell him his dream? **The wise men.**

What did he decree because they could not do it? **That they should all be killed.**

Who were among the wise men? **Daniel and his friends.**

Who made known the dream to Daniel? **The Lord.**

To whom did Daniel then tell it? **To the king.**

What had the king seen in his dream? **A great image.**

What overthrew it? **A stone.**

Of what was this image a picture? **Of the kingdoms of the earth.**

What did it seem to be? **Very strong.**

What was it really? **Very weak.**

Of what was the stone a picture? **Of Christ's kingdom.**

How large did this stone become? **So large that it filled the earth.**

What will Christ's kingdom yet be? **The one kingdom.**

What honor did the king show to Daniel? **He made him ruler over Babylon.**

Why was Daniel honored? **He honored God.**

#### Words with Little People.

Christ's kingdom will one day fill the whole earth. Does it fill my whole heart now?  
 "The kingdom of God is within you."

#### Whisper Prayer.

"Thy kingdom come."

## EXPLANATORY AND PRACTICAL NOTES.

## General Statement.

To King Nebuchadnezzar came a dream which troubled his spirit. It was of a majestic image of a man, radiant and "terrible," surmounted by a head of gold, with shoulders, arms, and breast of silver, waist and thighs of brass, legs of iron, and feet of mingled iron and clay. Suddenly a stone appeared, hewn by invisible hands, which smote the image on its feet, and crushed it into utter wreck; its fragments "became like the chaff of the summer threshing-floors, and the wind carried them away;" but the stone itself grew to be a great mountain-range, till at length it filled the world. More astonishing than even the contents of this dream was the fact that Nebuchadnezzar forgot it utterly, remembering only the frightful impression made by it on his mind. He called for his professional wise men—"the magicians, and the astrologers, and the sorcerers, and the Chaldeans"—and demanded not only the meaning of his forgotten dream, but that it should be accurately reproduced. This was clearly beyond their power, and they sought to show the king the unreasonableness of his demand; but he flung himself into a passion, and threatened them with a frightful death if they failed, while "gifts and rewards and great honor" awaited the man who could tell the king his dream. The further the magi expostulated with Nebuchadnezzar the more furious he became, and he eventually ordered the death of them all. Daniel and his three friends were, of course, counted among the "wise men," though they had not yet heard of Nebuchadnezzar's demand; and when the executioner came to kill them, Daniel answered with "counsel and wisdom," and, going in to the king, secured a few days' respite. The four young Hebrews then turned to God in prayer, asking that the dream and its interpretation should be given to Daniel. Their prayer was answered, and to Daniel, by a night vision, came Nebuchadnezzar's dream. Then Daniel repeated it to the king, with the interpretation which our lesson presents to us, declaring that all his knowledge came from the God of heaven who revealeth secrets. The dream portrays a succession of representative earthly kingdoms, and contrasts them with the supernatural "kingdom of heaven."

**Verse 36. The dream.** Read carefully the first thirty-five verses of this chapter. Before the Scriptures were fully given or the Holy Spirit generally bestowed, men needed guidance quite as much as they now do. Therefore by visions and dreams, and by miraculous events of many sorts, the divine will was made known. Now the Bible, providence, and the gracious ministrations of God's Spirit furnish a sufficient guide. We do not need the glimmer of starlight while the sun shines in the heavens. Remember that (1) God sent this dream to Nebuchadnezzar; (2) God caused him to forget it; (3) God reproduced it in the mind of his servant, thereby giving a seal of certainty to the interpretation thereof, which no other magician's explanation could have. These three facts suggest that (1) *God is our infallible guide.* (2) *God's providence is as truly manifest in our disappointments, failures, and ignorance as when he gives us insight, foresight, and success.* (3) *By and by God will explain to us his mysterious providences.*

**37, 38. King of kings.** This was no flattery. Nebuchadnezzar's palace was well stocked with subjugated kings—some treated as guests and others as slaves. Soon after this two kings of Judah were at once in his hands. His splendid empire included scores of little kingdoms, and covered nearly all the territory now known as "Bible lands," and there are some indications that his conquering armies had reached Morocco in Africa and even Spain in Europe. **The God of heaven hath given thee.** Doubtless Nebuchadnezzar, in his pride, credited his conquests

to his inherited military genius. If he ever thanked any god it was an idol. But Daniel proclaimed "the God of heaven," who far outranks all "the gods of Babylon." (4) *Even those who seem to carve out fortune with their own swords or to make fortune by their own skill really obtain it only by the favor of God. Whosoever the children of men dwell.* There remained few if any civilized communities outside Nebuchadnezzar's sway. **Ruler over them all.** This can not be truthfully said of any monarch in our age when private property is universally respected; but in the ancient East (and especially in Babylon) a sovereign was "absolute" in the fullest sense of the word; and this statement was therefore literally true. (5) *"The powers that be are ordained of God."*

[39. For a discussion of the conflicting opinions held by biblical scholars as to what four kingdoms were referred to by Daniel, see CRITICAL NOTES, page 272. Whichever opinion be adopted, the same religious lessons are taught. In the confessed uncertainty we have felt free to adopt, not as a conclusion, but simply as a frame-work for our practical notes, that theory which has heretofore been most generally accepted.]

**39. After thee.** The empire of Nebuchadnezzar—strong as it seemed—survived its ruler little more than twenty years. (6) *God can easily bring to naught the proudest man's proudest schemes.* **Another kingdom.** The empire of the Medes and Persians, which may be said to have been established by Cyrus the Great on the ruins of

Babylon. **Inferior to thee.** The Medo-Persian Empire was not inferior to that of Nebuchadnezzar in extent, but was distinctly inferior to it in unity, in national feeling, and in centralized power. The allied nations, much as each contributed to their mutual power, never coalesced. **Another third kingdom of brass** [or copper]. The empire of Alexander the Great, who died in early life after having brought the whole world to his feet. He fixed his capital at Babylon.

**40, 41, 42, 43. Fourth kingdom.** Supposed by many to be the great Roman Empire. **Strong as iron.** It was the greatest of all ancient empires. **Break in pieces.** No other nation has ever gone so far in assimilating the world to its national characteristics. **Potter's clay.** Earthenware, which is peculiarly fragile and cheap in the East, and is used as an emblem of brittle worthlessness. This strongest of the nations was to be equally conspicuous for its weaknesses, which are further symbolized by **miry clay. They shall not cleave one to another.** The mixing of tribes which was brought about by the Roman dominancy exceeded any thing before known in the history of the world. But it was brought about by external force. The heterogeneous mingling of discordant races could not produce a firm, coherent mass, and among its results were the gradual decay of literature, of patriotism, of virtue and refinement, and of religious beliefs, and the production of a jargon of unrelated languages. Strength and weakness were bound up together in Rome; but with all its faults its iron endurance makes its influence felt in government even to-day. (7) *All earthly power is subject to decay.*

**44. In the days of these kings.** At the height of the imperial power of Rome Christ was

born in a Hebrew village. **The God of heaven set up a kingdom.** Which widely differed from all others—in its origin; in its methods of extension; in its ruler; in the beneficence of its laws; in its boundary-lines (it has none); and in its entrenchment in human affections (it is a kingdom “not of this world”). **Never be destroyed.** The rule of our Lord Christ shall last forever.

**45. Without hands.** Supernatural in its origin. **What shall come to pass.** And that this long and involved list of prophecies has come to pass is one of the most astonishing incidental proofs of the verity and the inspiration of Holy Writ. And before Nebuchadnezzar had time to attest the accuracy of the dream, Daniel triumphantly vouches for both it and his interpretation of it.

**46, 47. Fell upon his face . . . worshiped . . . oblation and sweet odors.** This means neither that Nebuchadnezzar worshiped Daniel as a new god come to his Pantheon, nor that he thus suddenly became a convert to the Hebrew faith, and did obeisance to Daniel as its representative. To his eyes, beyond a question, the great gods dwelt in this man, and he was willing to admit that “the God of heaven” who had wrought this wonder of a dream was a God of gods just as he himself was a King of kings.

**48, 49. Made Daniel a great man.** God had done that long before; Nebuchadnezzar simply publicly recognized his greatness. **Ruler over the whole province.** Verse 2 of the third chapter intimates that the great empire was subdivided into states, each with its ruler. Babylon was doubtless the most powerful of these. **Chief of the governors over all the wise men.** Prince of the magi. **The gate stands for the edifice of which it is the entrance.**

#### CRITICAL NOTES.

**Verse 36. We will tell the interpretation.** Daniel by this use of the first person plural associates his three companions with him. So, too, observe how they are also, at his request, associated with him in office in the province of Babylon (verses 48 and 49). The great historico-critical question of this lesson is, What four kingdoms or empires are intended? Even Daniel's interpretation does not determine this question, so that three different views have been maintained. One makes the four kingdoms the following: (1) Babylonian; (2) Medo-Persian; (3) Grecian; (4) Roman. According to another view they are: (1) Babylonian; (2) Medo-Persian; (3) Alexander's reign; (4) Alexander's successors. A third view maintains that the four are: (1) Babylonian; (2) Median; (3) Persian; (4) Grecian. The great ethical and religious lessons are taught alike in all these views, and the question is solely one of exegetical accuracy and self-consistency.

The theory which makes Rome the fourth king-

dom is open to numerous and weighty objections. The principal ones are: 1. That in the repeated references to the later kingdoms by name, which we find in the subsequent chapters of Daniel, there is no mention of Rome, or allusion to it. But Babylon, Media, Persia, and Greece are referred to again and again, and in some passages with minute details. 2. The geographical and political arena of these kingdoms is western Asia and Palestine, which was far removed from the principal seat and interests of the Roman Empire. 3. Rome did not reach the splendor of her strength until the birth of Christ, and did not reach her “partly strong and partly broken” state until many centuries later. 4. The symbolism of the “little horn” in the parallel visions of chaps. 7 and 8 cannot be made to fit the Roman Empire without doing violence to the harmony of the several prophecies.

The interpretation which makes the successors of Alexander the Great constitute a separate and

distinct kingdom also violates the harmony of the symbols. It makes the horns of a beast represent a different monarchy from that represented by the beast itself. Further, there is no sufficient reason in nature, or in fact, to make Alexander's successors represent a new power or dynasty. Obviously in chap. 8. 21, "Grecia" is the Javanic world power, and the first king and the four that succeeded were all out of one and the same nation (verse 22).

We greatly prefer the interpretation which sees the fourth kingdom in the Greeco-Macedonian Empire of Alexander and his successors. If we allow the Book of Daniel to explain itself we will note in its pages the Median rule at Babylon stands between those of Babylonian and Persian. Immediately after the fall of the King of the Chaldeans, "Darius the Median took the kingdom" (chap. 5. 31). According to Dan. 9. 1, he represented a new dynasty at Babylon. This monarch issued proclamations "unto all people, nations, and languages that dwell in all the earth" (6. 25). From Daniel's point of view, therefore, the Median domination of Babylon constituted a new and separate kingdom, which subsequently gave way to "the reign of Cyrus the Persian" (6. 28). For these reasons we understand the four kingdoms to be (1) Babylonian, (2) Median, (3) Persian, and (4) Grecian.

**39. Inferior to thee.** This most appropriately fits the Median rule of Darius, but is entirely inconsistent with the theory that the second kingdom was that of Persia, which extended its triumphs far beyond that of the Babylonian Empire, and therefore is well represented by the **kingdom of brass** which was to **bear rule over all the earth.** Under Cyrus and his Persian successors it subdued all western Asia and forced its way even into Egypt, and sent its destructive armies into Greece. See chap. 11. 2.

**40. As iron . . . shall it break in pieces.** The Grecian conquests and domination of western Asia and Egypt broke all the older monarchies in pieces and fused their diverse elements into one more completely than had ever been done before. Other powers subdued and broke in pieces many a kingdom and nation, but none, not even Rome, triumphed so mightily in Asia as did Alexander. It proves nothing, therefore, to allege that this imagery of the **fourth kingdom** fits Rome. The same may be said of Babylon under Nebuchadnezzar and Persia under Cyrus and Darius and Xerxes. We must study to satisfy the harmony of the whole picture as well as of its several parts, and especially to interpret the prophet in the light of all his statements touching these several kingdoms.

**42. Partly strong and partly broken.** Eminently true of Alexander's successors, "in the latter time of their kingdom." Comp. chap. 8. 23.

**43. Shall not cleave one to another.** Notwithstanding their various attempts at alliances by intermarriage, as was specially notable between the Ptolemies of Egypt and the Seleucide of Syria, as shown in the details of chapter 11.

**44. In the days of those kings.** What kings? Most naturally we understand the reference to all the kings of all the four kingdoms that have passed in view. We look for no definite chronological limit in this phrase, but rather understand the prophet to imply that during all those days **the God of heaven** was "changing the times and the seasons; removing kings and setting up kings" (verse 21). For Daniel's doctrine is that "the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will" (chap. 4. 17). During the days of all the successive monarchies God was preparing the way for his kingdom, which is a kingdom not of this world, but of heaven, and therefore **shall never be destroyed.** Though not openly manifested as a worldly power, it did nevertheless **break in pieces and consume all those kingdoms.** The famous Cleopatra of Egypt, the last royal scion of the Grecian dynasty of the Ptolemies, passed away only a few years before the Christ was born.

### The Lesson Council.

**Question 5.** *Why was it wise in ancient time to pay such regard to dreams, and why is it foolish now?*

God expressly declared in Num. 12. 6, that he would make known his will by dreams, and instances are common in the Scriptures in which he did so. Doubtless God's prophets could distinguish the divinely sent from the common dream. Manifestly God has withdrawn this mode, as he has the predictive function of the prophets, and as a claim to the possession of this, and to the divine right to exercise it, is a proof of fanaticism, so a belief in the continued supernatural character of dreams is a proof of superstition. An indiscriminate regard to dreams was never wise—only a regard to those divinely sent; as it now cannot certainly be determined that any are so sent, to regard them in such manner as to allow them to influence the conduct is supreme folly.—*Rev. Jabez Brooks.*

In the ancient time God made known his will to men "at sundry times and in divers manners." One way that he did this was by dreams. Therefore it was wise then to heed such phenomena. Now that God's revelation has been given it is not necessary that he should thus speak to men. Therefore it is unwise to attach high significance to dreams. Rather we should, through study of the Bible and prayer, seek to know what is the will of the Lord.—*John Atkinson, D.D.*

1. *Wise* in ancient time because man had no generally accessible copies of revelation, and the Lord made himself known unto him in visions, and spake unto him in dreams (Num. 12. 6).

2. *Foolish* now because the Bible is every-where, and "is the only rule, and the sufficient rule both of our faith and practice."—*Rev. F. H. Cummings, Ph.D.*

### Analytical and Biblical Outline. The Earthly and Heavenly Kingdoms.

#### I. EARTHLY KINGDOM.

- 1. Divinely ordered.** "*Given thee.*" v. 37.  
"Powers....ordained of God." Rom. 13. 1.  
"The things which are Caesar's." Matt. 22. 21.
- 2. Mutable.** "*Another....and another.*" v. 39.  
"Removeth kings....settleth up." Dan. 2. 21.  
"God is the judge." Psa. 75. 6, 7.
- 3. Warlike.** "*Breaketh in pieces.*" v. 40.  
"Of this world....servants fight." John 18. 36.  
"Divided....to desolation." Matt. 12. 25.
- 4. Perishing.** "*Break....consume.*" v. 44.  
"Utterly wasted." Isa. 60. 12.  
"Dash them in pieces." Psa. 2. 9.

#### II. THE HEAVENLY KINGDOM.

- 1. Origin.** "*God of heaven.*" v. 44.  
"The Lord God shall give." Luke 1. 32.  
"God hath highly exalted him." Phil. 2. 9-11.
- 2. Permanence.** "*Never be destroyed.*" v. 44.  
"His kingdom....no end." Luke 1. 33.  
"Thy throne....for ever." Heb. 1. 8.
- 3. Strength.** "*The stone.*" v. 45.  
"The head stone of the corner." Psa. 118. 22, 23.  
"Fall on this stone....broken." Matt. 21. 44.
- 4. Spirituality.** "*Without hands.*" v. 45.  
"Not of this world." John 18. 36.  
"Weapons....not carnal." 2. Cor. 10. 4.

### Thoughts for Young People.

1. The governments of men are by the order of God.
2. Change and decadence belong to all things earthly.
3. History fulfills God's word of prophecy.
4. Great results often arise from small beginnings.
5. The Gospel is certain to subdue the world.
6. God rules over the affairs of men, and rules in the interest of his cause.

### Lesson Word-Pictures.

The king has a troubled face. He sits on a throne. He wears a crown on his head. And yet he is not king. A dreadful image he saw in a dream is king. No one can tell him what it meant. No priest in the temple, no wise man in the coun-

cil chamber, no lonely star-watcher on the house-roof has told him the meaning of the dream. That image wears the crown. Nebuchadnezzar is not king. But who at last steps before the throne and begins to tell the dream!

God be with you, Daniel!

You will lose your head, and all the wise men will perish with you if you fail!

"This Jew!" sneers some dark-browed courtier.  
"What can he do?"

How every body stares at him as he ventures before the king!

Relying on his God, Daniel begins. As he proceeds Nebuchadnezzar's dream comes back. Out of the chaos of his sleep as the clouds roll away rises up again and looks at him that terrible image! Nebuchadnezzar can see the towering head, so radiant, dazzling. It is of fine gold.

Such piercing eyes of fire?

Such a startling look of flame!

"Thou art this head of gold!" solemnly declares Daniel.

But look at the breast and the arms of the image, one mass of pure shining silver!

"Another kingdom inferior to thee!" declares the prophet.

But the body of the image, its thighs, too, all glittering as brass that has been rubbed and scoured and polished.

"Another, third kingdom," cries Daniel.

Look at the legs of the image. How strong and sturdy they are! They are of iron.

"The fourth kingdom!" cries the Hebrew.

But the feet, what a strange mixture of strength and weakness! Iron from the furnace, hard and hammered, strong and stable; but the clay, it is like the handfuls that the potter catches up and shapes with his hands. Does the king appreciate this, that all the massiveness above, all the glitter, all the iron strength, will be thus succeeded by this clay from a potter's field?

"The kingdom shall be partly strong and partly broken," is the firm, prophetic comment.

And now Nebuchadnezzar sees something else. The confusion of his dream comes back. The terror returns. There is the noise of an awful movement in the air. A great stone, "cut out of the mountain without hands," looms up before the king's troubled thoughts. With the swiftness of a whirlwind it strikes the pretentious image. Down go the gold, the silver, the brass, the iron, the clay! The image crumbles into dust. It becomes light as the chaff of the summer threshing-floor. It all flies before the wind, and nothing is left! Only the emptiness of a vanished thought!

But that stone! It grows. It extends on every side. It looms up. O, how lofty, grand, mountain-like, filling "the whole earth."

And calm, clear, confident, echoes the voice of the Hebrew, saying that "in the days of these kings



shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed."

The dream has been declared.

The riddle has been solved, the depth of the future searched, the terror of the king driven away, and his crown is back upon his head.

No, the Hebrew is king.

What a scene follows!

Nebuchadnezzar leaves his throne.

The haughty Chaldean, before his courtiers and his guards, prostrates himself at the feet of the once despised Jew!

Long live Daniel the king!

Long live the King of kings, the God who spoke through Daniel, the God whose name lingers now in praise upon the lips of Nebuchadnezzar!

No earthly honor is too great for Daniel. In Babylon men call him lord.

And who are these he remembers and takes up with him in his ascent to high honors "in the gate of the king?" You don't forget your old friends, Daniel—those three Hebrews. There is a fiery furnace awaiting them in the future. They will need to be remembered by somebody then. To-day, all men pronounce them happy.

### By Way of Illustration.

"We will tell the interpretation thereof." Those who live near to God are they who get glimpses of the unseen world, and through whom God sees fit to reveal his truth to men. The disciple who was so pre-eminently honored by a view of the new Jerusalem, and who wrote the Book of Revelation to tell us about it, was the one who leaned on the bosom of Jesus at supper, and was many times called "that disciple whom Jesus loved."

Two men were discussing their pastor and one of them said: "How is it that Brother Bramwell tells us so many new things?" To which the other replied: "I suppose it is because he lives so much nearer to the gate of heaven than we do that he hears a great many things which we never hear.—*Sabbath Reading.*"

"The God of heaven shall set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed." Babylon, Persia, Macedonia, Rome were strong, proud kingdoms, but they were human kingdoms, and they have fallen. The famous Eddystone light-house, off the coast of Cornwall, England, was first built in a fanciful way by the learned and eccentric Winstanley. On its side he put various boastful inscriptions. He was very proud of his structure and from his lofty balcony used boldly to defy the storm, crying, "Blow, O winds! Rise, O ocean! Break forth, ye elements, and try my work!" But one fearful night the sea swallowed up the tower and its builder. The light-house was built a second time of wood and stone by Rudgard. The form

was imposing, but the wood caught fire, and the builder and his structure perished in the flames. Next the great Smeaton was called. He raised a cone from the solid rock upon which it was built, and riveted it to the rock as the oak is fastened to the earth by its roots. He carved upon it no boastful inscriptions like those of Winstanley, but on its lowest course he put, "Except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it;" and on its key-stone above the lantern the simple tribute, "Praise be unto God!" and the structure still stands, holding its beacon-light to storm-tossed mariners.—*Presbyterian Record.*

Napoleon at St. Helena said: "Alexander, Cæsar, Charlemagne, and myself have founded empires... What an abyss between my deep misery and the eternal kingdom of Christ, which is proclaimed, loved, and adored, and which is extended over the whole earth."—*Abbott's Napoleon.*

"The kingdom of God," says Paul, "is not meat and drink." The throne of its empire, the weapons of its warfare, are not carnal. "It is righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost." It is unseen and spiritual. "Behold, the kingdom of God is within you." Christ said, "The kingdom of Christ cometh not with observation."—*Washington Gladden.*

"Shall stand forever." A pupil of the Deaf and Dumb Institution of Paris was asked, "What is eternity?" and replied, "The life-time of the Almighty."

### The Teachers' Meeting.

1. State the dream of Nebuchadnezzar. 2. State the four kingdoms to which it referred, and give a history of each. 3. Give the character of the fifth kingdom, and its difference from the others. 4. What truths does this lesson teach concerning nations? What duties does it urge upon individuals? In teaching this lesson it is very desirable to have a map upon which the kingdom may be pointed out to the class. Show wherein God's kingdom differs from those of men. Enforce the application—Are you a member of that kingdom? Define the kingdoms of men: (1) as existing by divine appointment; (2) rule by force; (3) contain elements of weakness; (4) are mutable and perishing.... The Kingdom of God is (1) divine in origin and authority; (2) opposed to earthly kingdoms; (3) victorious; (4) everlasting.

### References.

FREEMAN. Ver. 48: "The wise men," 630.

### Primary and Intermediate.

LESSON THOUGHT. *It is Wise to Obey God.*

Review. Call back the story of Daniel's temptation. Show that he conquered it because he be-

lived in God. So we may always be strong in God's strength against any temptation.

Tell how obeying God always helps. Daniel and his friends would not eat the rich food that had been given to idols, nor would they drink wine. They remembered what God's word says about strong drink, and they chose to obey God. They did not know that this obedience, which won for them God's favor, as well as clear heads and quick wits, would one day be the means of saving their lives! But so it was. [Tell how alcohol hurts the brain, and prevents cool, clear thinking.]

Print "Nebuchadnezzar" in large letters. Who was he? Of what rich, wicked city was he king? Daniel and his friends were now among the "wise men" of Babylon. The king himself examined them at the end of the three years' training, and found them wiser than all the wise men in the land!

Add to the name on the board, making the title of the lesson. Excite curiosity as to what the dream was which so troubled the king. Tell the dream, making the contrast vivid between the great image and the little stone. To account for the demand which Nebuchadnezzar made upon the wise men, explain that Eastern kings were often great tyrants.

Picture the trouble of all the wise men in the land when they heard the king's cruel order. Daniel and his friends were among them! Must they die too? No! for they had a King greater than Nebuchadnezzar.

Daniel sends word to the king: "Wait; do not kill the wise men. I will tell you your dream." He was not afraid. His head was clear and his heart calm, trusting in God. How do you think he found out the king's dream? The Lord showed it to him, and he told it to the king, and told him what it meant.

[Sing some hymn of praise for deliverance.]

Do you wonder what the king's dream was? He thought he saw a great image. Its head was gold, its breast and arms silver, its belly and thighs brass, its legs iron, and its feet iron and clay mixed. It was a terrible thing to look at! No wonder the king was afraid. But this was not all the dream. The king saw a stone cut out of the mountain without hands. It struck the image and broke it all in pieces. Then the stone grew larger and larger, until it filled the whole earth! What could such a strange dream mean?



Tell what "kingdom" means. Print names of great kingdoms that rose one after the other—"Babylonian," "Persian," "Grecian," "Roman." Tell how these, though strong and mighty, fell, one after another. At

last another kingdom rose, small at first, like a little stone, but growing and growing until it filled the whole earth, and all the other kingdoms were destroyed.

What can this kingdom be that is growing all the time, and crowding out all the other kingdoms of the earth?

[Sing a verse or two of a Christmas song.] Yes, this tells of the beginning of this wonderful kingdom—a baby born in a manger was the great King whose kingdom was to fill the whole earth!

But it has not yet grown to fill the whole earth! Tell that Babylon, Rome, Greece—these kingdoms are all gone. But wherever sin is there Christ's kingdom has not yet conquered.

Make a heart on the board. Above print "Whose kingdom?" and speak earnestly of the importance of young hearts being given to Christ, so that they may work with him in extending his kingdom. [With very young children the explanation of the dream may be omitted.]

### Blackboard.



The blackboard teaches that all earthly things are transient. God and his kingdom are eternal. The ruined columns represent the fall of earthly kingdoms and riches that pass away. Worldly honor, worldly wealth, and earthly power are all short lived. Let us then seek the things that are of God.\*

### OPTIONAL HYMNS.

#### No. 1.

Keep me, hide me.  
Take my life.  
O, holy Saviour,  
Take the name of Jesus with you,  
My Jesus, as thou wilt.

#### No. 2.

75. O sing the power of love divine.

\* For additional blackboard illustrations and notes see page 277.

Lift up your hearts to things above.  
God loved the world of sinners lost.  
O sometimes the shadows are deep.  
Watchman, tell us of the night.

### The Lesson Catechism.

[For the entire school.]

1. Who told Nebuchadnezzar his forgotten dream, and explained it? **Daniel.**
2. What did God show by the different parts of the great image which Nebuchadnezzar dreamed he saw? **Four great empires.**
3. What did God show was to take the place of all these great empires? **The kingdom of Christ.**
4. How did Daniel's interpretation impress the king? **He was awe-struck, and greatly honored Daniel.**
5. What is the GOLDEN TEXT? **"All things,"** etc.

### CATECHISM QUESTION.

23. What is sanctification?

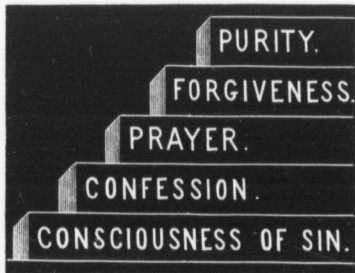
It is the work of grace which purifies the soul from the defilement of sin, and consecrates it to God.

24. When does sanctification begin?

When our sins are pardoned, and we are born again, we are at the same time sanctified.

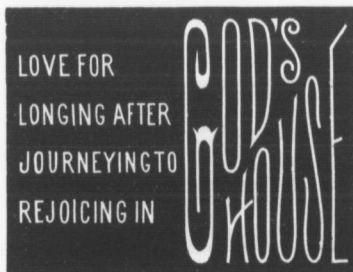
### Additional Blackboard Outlines for May.

#### LESSON V. May 1. Psa. 51. 1-13.



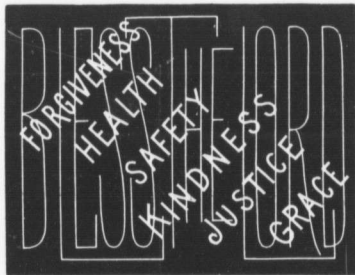
In presenting this outline we begin at the bottom, and draw the lowest step first. Write the name upon it, and then proceed to the next. The series tells its own story.

#### LESSON VI. May 8. Psa. 84. 1-12.



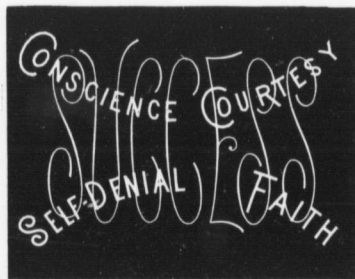
Write the words, "God's House," the subject of the psalm; then the successive relations of the house of God to the worshiper.

#### LESSON VII. May 15. Psa. 103. 1-22.



Write as a background, in large but faint letters, "Bless the Lord;" then place upon the words the various blessings named in the lesson.

#### LESSON VIII. May 22. Dan. 1. 8-21.



Show the four traits of Daniel that are presented in this lesson: his *conscience*, his *courtesy*, his *self-*

denial, and his faith. Then write over these in large letters the word "Success," which was the result of these elements of Daniel's character.

**LESSON IX. May 29. Dan. 2. 36-49.**



Write the two words, "God's Kingdom," leaving space between them for the traits of the kingdom of God to be placed upon the board in succession.

**Thoughts for the Quiet Hour.**

— Two things are necessary to true penitence: 1. That we recognize sin and then likewise grace. 2. That we know and believe that God desires to be gracious and merciful to all who believe in Christ.—*Luther.*

— If we wish that God should turn his face from our sins, our own face must be turned toward them. We must not hide them if we wish that they should be hidden by him.—*Wordsworth.*

— We receive every thing, both life and happiness: but the manner in which we receive this is what is still ours. Let us then receive trustfully, without shame or anxiety. We must dare to be happy and dare to confess it, regarding ourselves always as the depositories, not as the authors of our own joys.—*Amiel.*

— There is nothing the soul of man is so prone to forget as to render thanks that are due, and, more especially, thanks that are due to God.—*Delitzsch.*

— It is a good Master whom we serve, who not only pays, but gives, not after the proportion of our earnings, but of his own mercy.—*Hall.*

— Look at your mercies with both eyes and at your troubles and trials with only half an eye.—*Cuyler.*

— The law which we obey is that which he has put within our hearts by which we become temples of the Holy Ghost.—*Eldersheim.*

— The interest which we think we make for ourselves we must acknowledge to be God's gift, and must ascribe to him the glory of it.—*Henry.*

— To part with one's reason when we have need of as much more, if we could get it, is like breaking the compass and throwing the pilot overboard in a storm.—*Collier.*

— Hast thou attempted greatness? Then go on. Back-turning slackens resolution.—*Herriek.*

— A man's ability to die unto himself always measures his likeness to God.—*Herron.*

— Think not too meanly of thy low estate; Thou hast a choice; to choose is to create! Remember whose the sacred lips that tell Angels approve thee, when thy choice is well;

\* \* \* \* \*  
And he who made thee to be just and true  
Will bless thee, love thee—ay, respect thee too.  
—*Holmes.*

— One indulged sin may so cloud the sky that it spreads a mist, so that to see what God is doing is impossible.—*Newton.*

— Great powers and natural gifts do not bring privileges to their possessor so much as they bring duties.—*Beecher.*

**Ye Are the Salt of the Earth.**

It is said of a party who were travelling, that as their supply of salt had become exhausted they were delighted to see, at some little distance from them, the article they so much needed, sparkling and beautiful in the rays of the sun. They hastened to the spot, but what was their disappointment to find that the salt had lost its savour by being exposed? They all returned to join their comrades save one, who remained; and, brushing away the surface salt, he found a rock, and piercing down into its crevices, he there found salt that had not lost its savour, but was fit for use. Christ is saying to Christians: "Ye are the salt of the earth." It matters not what our professions may be, or how our good works may sparkle beneath the approbation of the world, if we are not hidden in the Rock of Ages, the salt has lost its savour. It is not the surface Christians whose vitality has been destroyed by contact with the world, whose influence will permeate and vitalize the world, but they only who abide in the Lord Jesus Christ. The cause of infidelity, spreading at the present day, is not the influence of Darwin, or other noted leaders, but it is because men are losing faith in Christians. If the Lord be God, serve Him, but if Baal, then follow him.—*Extract from a sermon by Bishop Cummins.*

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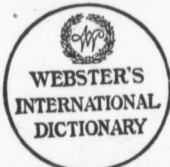
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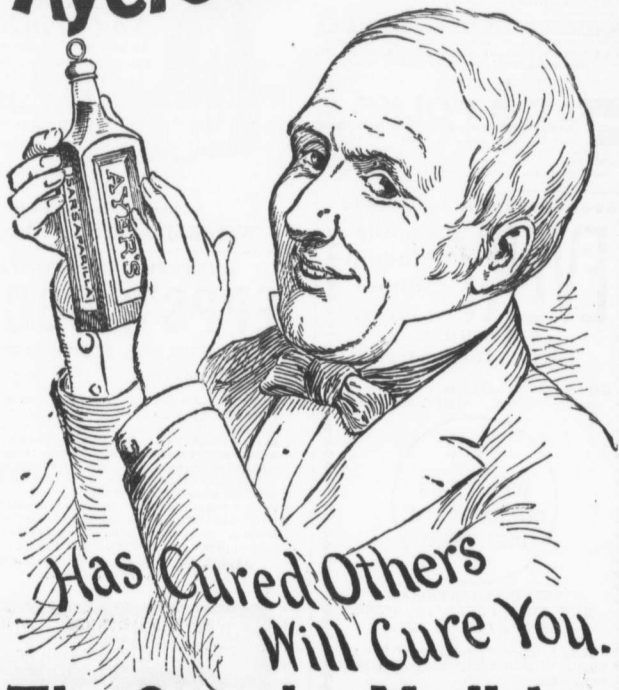
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