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National Baptist Metoka and Galeda Bible Class Magazine, September 1917

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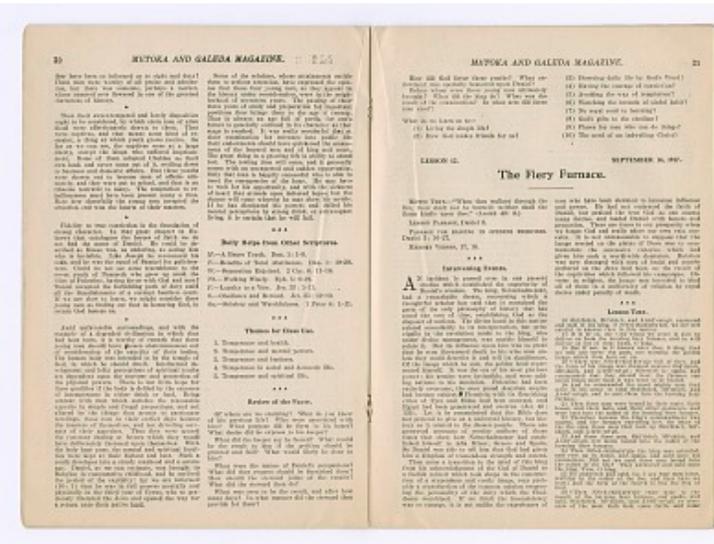
they have been so informed as to right and duty? These men were worthy of all praise and admiration, but there was someone, perhaps a mother, whose unnoted acts flowered in one of the greatest characters in history.
[[small triangle]]

Then their sweet-tempered and lovely disposition ought to be considered, by which stern men of alien blood were affectionately drawn to them. They were captives, and that meant some kind of restraint, a thing at which youth grows restive. So far as we can see, the captives were at a large liberty, except the kings who suffered imprisonment. Some of them adopted Chaldea as their own land, and never came out of it, settling down to business and domestic affairs. But these youths were chosen out to become men of affairs ultimately, and they were put to school, and that is an irksome restraint to many. The temptation to rebelliousness must have been present many a time. Note how cheerfully the young men accepted the situation and won the hearts of their masters.
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Fidelity to true conviction is the foundation of strong character. In that great chapter in Hebrews that catalogues the heroes of faith we do not find the name of Daniel. He could be described as Moses was, as enduring, as seeing him who is invisible. Like Joseph he revered his body, and he was the equal of Samuel for guilelessness. Could we not see some resemblance to the sweet youth of Nazareth who grew up amid the lilies of Palestine, having favor with God and men? Daniel accepted the forbidding path of duty amid all blandishments of a corrupt heathen court. If we are slow to learn, we might consider these young men as finding out that in honoring God, in return God honors us.
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Amid unfavorable surroundings, and with the example of a degraded civilization in which they had been born, it is worthy of remark that these young men should have chosen abstemiousness out of consideration of the sanctity of their bodies. The human body was intended to be the temple of God, in which he should dwell. Intellectual development and lofty perceptions of spiritual truths are dependent on the nurture and protection of the physical powers. These is but little hope for these qualities if the body is defiled by the excesses in intemperance in either drink or food. Being content with that which satisfies the reasonable appetite in simple and frugal proportions, and not allured by the things that arouse to passionate revelings, these men in their earlier days became the masters of themselves, and not driveling servants of their appetites. Thus they were spared the constant chafing at fetters which they would have deliberately fastened upon themselves. With the body kept pure, the mental and spiritual faculties were kept at their highest and best. Such a youth develops into a sturdy manhood and a serene age. Daniel, as we can estimate, was brought to Babylon in comparative childhood, and he outlived the period of the captivity: for we are informed (10:1) that he was in full powers mentally and physically in the third year of Cyrus, who so graciously liberated the Jews and opened the way for a return unto their native land.

Some of the scholars, who attainments entitle them to serious attention, have expressed the opinion that these four young men, as they appear in the history under consideration, were in the neighborhood of



seventeen years. The passing of their three years of study and preparation for important positions thus brings them to the age of twenty. That is always an age full of perils, for one's future is generally outlined in its character as that stage is reached. It was really wonderful that at their examination for entrance into public life their endowments should have quickened the amazement of the learned men and of king and court. The great thing in a growing life is ability to stand test. The testing time will come, and it generally comes with an unexpected and sudden opportunity. Only that man is happily successful who is able to meet the emergencies of the hour. He may have to wait for his opportunity, and with the sickness of heart that attended upon deferred hopes, but the chance will come whereby he may show his mettle. If he has dissipated his powers and dulled his mental perceptions by strong drink, or extravagant living, it is certain that he will fail.
[[three small triangles]]

Daily Helps from Other Scriptures.

M.-A Brave Youth. Dan. 1:1-9.
T.-Benefits of Total Abstinence. Dan. 1:10-20.
W.-Separation Enjoined. 2 Cor. 6:11-18.
Th.-Walking Wisely. Eph. 5:6-21.
F.-Loyalty to a Vow. Jer. 35:1-11.
S.-Obedience and Reward. Jer. 35:12-19.
Su.-Sobriety and Watchfulness. 1 Peter 4:1-11.
[[three small triangles]]

Themes for Class Use.

1. Temperance and health.
 2. Temperance and mental powers.
 3. Temperance and business.
 4. Temperance in social and domestic life.
 5. Temperance and spiritual life.
- [[three small triangles]]

Review of the Facts.

Of whom are we studying? What do you know of his previous life? Who were associated with him? What purpose did he form in his heart? What desire did he express to his keeper?

What did the keeper say he feared? What would be the result to him if the petition should be granted and fail? What would likely be done to him?

What were the names of Daniel's companions? What did they request should be furnished them? how should the steward judge of the results? What did the steward then do? What was seen to be the result, and after how many days? In what manner did the steward then provide for them?

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How did God favor these youths? What endowment was specially bestowed upon Daniel?
Before whom were these young men ultimately brought? What did the king do? What was the result of the examination? In what arts did these men excel?

What do we learn as to--

- (1) Living the simple life?
- (2) How God makes friends for us?
- (3) Directing daily life by God's Word?
- (4) Having the courage of conviction?
- (5) Avoiding the way of temptation?
- (6) Watching the inroads of sinful habit?
- (7) No royal road to learning?
- (8) God's gifts to the obedient?
- (9) Places for men who can do things?
- (10) The need of an indwelling Christ?

LESSON 12.
SEPTEMBER 16 1917.

The Fiery Furnace.
[[line]]

MOTTO TEXT.--"When thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee." (Isaiah 43: 2.)

LESSON PASSAGE, Daniel 3.

PASSAGE FOR READING IN OPENING EXERCISES. Daniel 3: 16-27.

MEMORY VERSES, 17, 18.
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Intervening Events.

AN incident is passed over in our present studies which established the superiority of Daniel's wisdom. The king, Nebuchadnezzar, had a remarkable dream, concerning which a thoughtful scholar has said that it contained the germ of the only philosophy of history that has stood the test of time, establishing God as the disposer of nations. The divine hand in this matter related secondarily to its interpretation, but principally in the revelation made to the king, who under divine management, was unable himself to relate it. But its influence upon him was so great that he even threatened death to his wise men unless they could describe it and tell its significance. Of the image which he saw, the golden head represented himself. It was the era of his most glorious power; his armies were invincible, and were adding nations to his dominion. Palestine had been entirely overcome, the once proud Assyrian empire had become subject. Phœnicia with its flourishing cities of Tyre and Sidon had been annexed, and Egypt had been penetrated and overrun (Jer. 46: 13f). Let it be remembered that the Bible does not pretend to give us a universal history, but history as it related to the chosen people. There are preserved accounts of secular authors of those times that

show how Nebuchadnezzar had established himself in Asia Minor, Greece and Spain. So Daniel was able to tell him that God had given him a kingdom of tremendous strength and extent.

Then came a transition in the mind of this king from his acknowledgment of the God of Daniel to a foolish conceit which took shape in the construction of a stupendous and costly image, very probably a reproduction of the common opinion respecting the personality of the deity which the Chaldeans worshiped. If we think the inconsistency was so strange, it is not unlike the experiences of men who have been elevated to immense influence and power. He had not embraced the faith of Daniel, but praised the true God as one among many deities, and loaded Daniel with honors and promotion. There are times in our prosperity when we forget God and really adore our own vain conceits. It is not unreasonable to suppose that the image erected on the plains of Dura was to commemorate the successive victories which had given him such a world-wide dominion. Babylon was now thronged with men of brain and muscle gathered as the Jews had been, as the result of the captivities which followed his campaigns. Diverse in religion, the image was intended to bind all of these in a uniformity of religion by royal decree under penalty of death.
[[three small triangles]]

Lesson Text.

16 Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, answered and said to the king, O Nebuchadnezzar, we are not careful to answer thee in this matter.

17 If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O king.

18 But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up.

19 Then was Nebuchadnezzar full of fury, and the form of his visage was changed against Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego: therefore he spake, and commanded that they should heat the furnace one seven times more than it was wont to be heated.

20 And he commanded the most might men that were in his army to bind Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, and to cast them into the burning fiery furnace.

21 Then these men were bound in their costs, their hosen, and their hats, and their other garments, and were cast into the midst of the burning fiery furnace.

22 Therefore because the king's commandment was urgent, and the furnace exceeding hot, the flame of the fire slew those men that took up Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego.

23 And these three men, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, fell down bound into the midst of the burning fiery furnace.

24 Then Nebuchadnezzar the king was astonied [[sic]], and rose up in haste, and spake, and said unto his counsellors [[sic]], Did not we cast

three men bound into the midst of the fire? They answered and said unto the king. True, O king.

25 He answered and said, Lo, I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt; and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God.

26 Then Nebuchadnezzar came near to the mouth of the burning fiery furnace, and spake, and said, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, ye servants of the most high God, come forth, and come

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