

THREE HEROES WHO WOULD NOT STRIKE THEIR FLAG

The International Sunday School Lesson for September 16 is "The Fiery Furnace"—"Daniel 3."

By WILLIAM T. ELLIS

At sunset one evening a few years ago, I stood upon the highest point in the ruins of the palace of Nebuchadnezzar in old Babylon, and looked out over the desolate Mesopotamian desert that once was the proud capital of the whole world. The soil is red within the city and gray without; and that is almost the only sign by which an observer can tell where the city began or ended. The barrenness of this waste is so complete that only the inspired imagination of the Hebrew seers could picture it. For when the prophecies were penned, there dead fields were teeming with life.

Somewhere out on this plain there once stood a golden image of a god, probably Marduk, whose head and temple is yonder hillock. It rose ninety feet high, shimmering beneath the rainless sky. I tried to imagine this now dreary stretch of desert as the scene of an imperial function like unto a British Coronation. We fall to get the setting of this story under the stars in some such terms. It involved the apex of the career of a world-conqueror. All the resources of the empire were drawn upon to enhance its magnificence. Oriental love of pomp and pageantry actuated it. The sycophancy of an autocrat's court quickening hands and brains to do honor to the king. All the varied officials of a farflung dominion, each with his own full paraphernalia and attendants of state, adorned the occasion.

Men Who Stood Alone
So insatiable is the vanity of an oriental monarch, that Nebuchadnezzar decreed a universal, simultaneous prostration in honor of the image which he had set up, at a given signal. The stopping of all the wheels of industry and traffic at a set hour in memory of President McKinley was a remarkable feat, but it did not approach Babylonian proportions. That was a freewill expression of a sorrowing people; this was a compulsory action, at the behest of an absolute autocrat, who wanted to look on a vast sea of humanity bowing in obedience to him and his image. A nation on its knees—the thought was one to stir the pulses of Nebuchadnezzar.

As a stab to his pride, spiteful rumor quickly brought to his ears the sinister news that three Jews, favorites who stood high before him, had failed to make the required obeisance. When others bent low, they stood upright. The varying creeds of the capital had subserviently bent the knee to the king's favorite god. But these stiff-necked Jews had endangered their jobs and their lives by standing rigid amid the multitude of prone worshippers.

Keeping Flags Flying
An uncouth saying declares a Spiritual truth: "God Almighty

they send forth their sons, that befall what may they will no ignominy of dishonor; would it not give peace to many a loving heart that is now torn with anxiety? There are many such young men; the last of them did not die with Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. Young men who will not betray their trust, who will not be false to their ideals, who are "gentlemen unafraid," fearing nothing but fear, are the salt of society and business. They know the noble art of standing by their flag. A myriad graves in Belgium or France, and millions of surviving heroes, may not have done the "politic" thing that day, but they did the princely thing; that bowed to the image is forgotten; it is as lost as the image itself. But the three young men are a heritage of heroism for the world.

A King's Rage
Employees who know the unbridled and unreasoning anger of "the boss" can understand something of the plight of the three when they were the hot rage, born of pricked pride, of the greatest monarch of his time, a king possessed of the power of life and death. He was incredulous that anybody should do so contrary to expediency; religious loyalty he did not understand. "Is it of purpose?" "That ye worship not my gods?"

Heard the kindly answer of these royal souls, who, because they feared Jehovah were not afraid of the face of man; the hot rage, probably, we are not careful to answer them in this matter. 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. But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship thy golden image which thou hast set up.

Catch the nub of that "Our God is able." Hold fast to that. That is the instance of the witless, the Pin faith there. "Our God is able." That is the basic truth of Christianity. Simple as it is, it is yet beyond the compass of the wisest man's understanding. If we believe that, then life becomes simple and explicable. Trust is then reasonable and peace easy. But if for that faith we substitute mere human prudence, God have mercy upon us. For a creed that will suffice in circumstances, and that will help one to hold up his head before kings, let us enshrine this in our deepest hearts: "Our God is able."

The Fiery Furnace's Failure
The Germans at Babylon told me that they have come to a mysterious place of burning; they do not know what the burnt ground and ashes mean. The spot may have been a crematorium, or a place of sacrifice; or, my informant added, half in jest, "it may have been the fiery furnace." They do not know, neither do I. The spirit and message of the fiery furnace are still alive in the world; who cares for a few ashes?

Into some sort of retort—foolishly heated sevenfold for the occasion, for the greater the heat the shorter the sufferings of the victims—the three young men were cast. The event must have created as great a sensation as the worship of the golden image; assuredly it fixed the attention of the city upon the Hebrews and their faith. The fire was not hotter than the king's rage; yet it consumed the attention who cast the young men into it. This incident would be told over and over again whenever men congregated in

Babylon, or traveled from the great festive to the great funeral.

Then came the marvel, the miracle, that struck wonder and terror to the heart of the king. In the furnace he saw "four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt; and the aspect of the fourth is like a son of the gods." Centuries before, the promise was spoken the faithful knew its realization. "Lo, I am with you, all the days." There is no place where God's friends must go that His presence does not accompany them. "Our God is able." Unscathed by the ordeal of fire, the three young men emerged, more than conquerors, to the honor of the Name that they would not betray. For God gets glory from every soul that stands true to its highest vision; loyalty saves those who possess it, serves the race, honors Jehovah.

The Joint Land Commission's slowness in handling this business arose partly from the members' ignorance of tropical conditions, individuals, and agriculture, requiring much of the business to be formed, and partly from wrangling over technicalities and the repetition of evidence. The value of a banana tree has probably been testified to a hundred times before the commission, in one way or another. The Panamanian members have been weakly businesslike, and served more for the honor of the work and to protect their countrymen's interests than from any other consideration. They are very anxious to see the pending cases settled as soon as possible.

Clothing Tattoo Women on Tars' Arms Stopped

Chicago, Ill., Sept. 14. — America's infant industry, the placing of skirts and flowing draperies on immediate neighbors of sailors, came to a sudden death yesterday in consequence of the order of Josephus Daniels, Secretary of the Navy, placing a new restriction against the Navy League of the United States.

When the Navy began preparing for war the recruiting officers made a special drive for men who formerly had been in the service. Things went along fine until Mr. Daniels discovered that many of these former service men in discreet hours ashore had decorated themselves with tattoo markings that should not be displayed in the parlor of anybody's home or on any self-respecting battleship.

Mr. Daniels immediately issued an order that recruiting officers should reject all seamen who came along so adorned. The Navy, he ruled, should be a very modest institution.

So the Navy League sued to the rescue. Why not dress the women that adorned the seamen who wanted to fight the greater war? It is done and the Navy League maintained here an establishment which would fix up tattoo marks of free charge for men who wished to enlist. The work went merrily and successfully on for weeks when the order came from Mr. Daniels to cut off the help of the Navy League. So the enterprise had to stop.

Portugal Is Declared in a State of Siege

Madrid, Sept. 14. — Portugal has been declared in a state of siege, according to a telegram received here from Lisbon, on account of a general strike in the order came from Mr. Daniels to cut off the help of the Navy League. So the enterprise had to stop.

INSURANCE BILL FOR U. S. FORCES PASSED BY HOUSE

Families Left Behind Will Be Protected by the Nation

Washington, Sept. 14.—The House late yesterday passed the administration bill, No. 10,000, which is recorded on the measure.

The principal amendments to the bill as it passed are these:

The limit of insurance one soldier may carry was restored to \$10,000, after Representative Rayburn, of Texas, explained that in committee of the whole it had inadvertently been reduced to \$5,000.

Amendments raised the compensation in the case of death of an enlisted man by about 15 per cent. all through and reduced the officers' families compensations accordingly. The compensations in the bill as it passed the House are as follows:

To a widow, \$35 a month.
A widow with one child, \$45 a month.
A widow with two children, \$52.50 a month.
A widow with three children, \$57.50 a month.
A widow with four children, \$62.50 a month.
A widow with five children, \$67.50 a month.
Motherless child, \$20 a month.
Two motherless children, \$25 a month.
Three motherless children, \$45 a month.
Four motherless children, \$55 a month.
Five motherless children, \$55 a month.
A widowed mother, \$30 a month.
The maximum to be paid in any case is \$75 a month.

A soldier's compensation would

cease upon her remarriage and a dependent child's would cease at 18 years of age.

Monthly benefits to a soldier or sailor in case of total disability would be as follows:

If he has neither wife nor child living, \$40; wife, \$55; wife and one child, \$65; two or more children, \$75; no wife but one child, \$50, and \$10 additional for each child up to two; dependent widowed mother, \$10 additional.

Injured men requiring nurse's care would receive an additional \$20 monthly.

A man losing both feet, hands or eyes would be entitled automatically to \$100 a month.

The main purpose of the bill is to provide a substitute for the present pension law, as it would apply to men engaged in this war a new system of allotments and compensations which will provide for dependants of the

soldier and rehabilitate men upon their return from the war.

Upon enlistment under the provisions of the bill, a soldier or sailor would be entitled to take out from \$1,000 to \$10,000 worth of optional insurance at approximately \$8 to \$1,000. His dependants would be entitled to allotments from the government of from \$5 to \$50 a month and an equal amount up to \$15 a month from his pay.


Death or total disability resulting, the dependants of any person in the military or naval service, including women members of the nurse corps, would be entitled to compensation ranging from \$20 to \$70 a month and the insurance.

In case of total disability, the injured persons would be paid from \$40 to \$100 a month.

from the Surgeon General's office Washington, D. C. It is stated that every year five thousand people, on an average, take poison by mistake. A bottle has been invented which has the skull and cross-bones not deep in the glass, so that when bottle is taken up at night in dark it is easily distinguished by sense of touch. Should the bottle drop or become defaced, the contents of the bottle will be obvious from shape and design of the bottle itself.—Popular Science Monthly.

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