

# The Herald of Christ's Kingdom

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## "THE POWERS OF HEAVEN SHALL BE SHAKEN"

POURING new wine into old bottles is a risky business, and the attempt to pour the spirit of modernism into the Presbyterian vessel is resulting in a breakage already made apparent in the denunciation by many Presbyterian pastors of the General Assembly's action requiring the First Church of New York to conform to Presbyterian doctrine and to teach the inerrancy of the Bible, the Virgin Birth, the Atonement, the Resurrection, and the verity of the miracles of Christ. The theological ferment caused by this victory of the Fundamentalists at Indianapolis and their defeat in the Northern Baptist Convention at Atlantic City extends into lay circles, and, to use their own parlance, quantities of 'front-page stuff' have flooded our newspapers. Meantime, Dr. Harry Emerson Fosdick, on whose preaching the controversy has mainly centered, is easily one of the most talked of men in the country. But the issue is apparently bigger than any one man, or any one Church, since it calls for a division between those who can accept the facts and hypotheses of modern sciences and still devoutly believe in God and those to whom the Bible is the supreme authority in science as well as in religion. The roll-call on the issue has been sounded in other denominations as well as in the Baptist and Presbyterian, and some fear that Protestantism, already divided into more than 200 sects, may sooner or later find itself regrouped into two great camps between which the ancient creed represents the chalked line beyond which neither side must step.

"While, to change metaphors again, the Liberals were unhorsed at Indianapolis, they kept the saddle at Atlantic City. At Indianapolis they elected their candidate, Dr. Charles F. Wishart, to the moderatorship, but only by the narrow margin of twenty-six votes. They defeated the resolution to prohibit the teaching of evolution in Presbyterian schools by a vote of approximately two to one, but in the third great battle of the convention, involving a rebuke to Dr. Fosdick and the First Presbyterian Church in New York, the Fundamentalists won by a vote of 439 to 359. The Liberal element in the Northern Baptist Convention won their victory when Dr. John Roach Straton, pastor of Calvary Baptist Church in New York, a Fundamentalist leader, was hissed and hooted down when, because of the latter's alleged heresies, he attempted to prevent Dr. W. H. P. Faunce, a Liberal, from speaking. Altogether it was a theologically exciting week, fecund with dramatic possibilities. Victors by a majority of twenty-two to one in the Committee on Bills and Overtures of the Presbyterian General

Assembly, the Liberals recommended in their report only that the New York General Presbytery investigate the charges lodged against the First Church by the Philadelphia Presbytery. But, led by W. J. Bryan and two Philadelphia ministers, the Rev. A. Cordon MacLennan and the Rev. Clarence E. MacArtney, the Conservatives won a five-hour fight on the floor to require the preaching and teaching in the First Church in New York to conform to the Presbyterian Confession of Faith. A chief point in the resolution is that it reaffirms the deliverance of the General Assembly of 1910 declaring it to be the essential doctrine of the Church that the Holy Spirit inspired the writers of the Bible to keep them from error; that Jesus Christ was born of the Virgin Mary; that He offered Himself as a sacrifice to atone for the sins of His followers; that He arose from the dead with the same body in which He suffered, and that He showed His Divine power by working miracles.

"The next day sixty-six ministerial delegates filed a protest against the Assembly's action touching the First Church in New York, declaring, we are told in newspaper reports, that the allegations on which the action was based were 'not substantiated by the evidence'; that the assembly had condemned without proper hearing, and that the resolution adopted 'seeks to impose doctrinal tests other than those solemnly agreed upon in the constitution of our Church. Rebellion was immediate and open the following Sunday in New York. The Rev. William P. Merrill, in his sermon at the Brick Presbyterian Church, declared, we read in the press, that the Assembly 'said what was not true, did what was not fair, and attempted to put a yoke on our necks which I, for one, will never wear.' He had never heard of the General Assembly's declaration of 1910, said the Rev. John Kelman at the Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church, adding: 'In the questions which were addressed to me no reference was made to any such declaration. If there had been any such reference and if it had been necessary for me to profess my agreement with it, I could not have accepted a call to any church in America.' The Rev. Dr. L. Mason Clarke, pastor of the First Presbyterian Church in Brooklyn, charged the General Assembly with 'obscurantism,' and said, as we quote from press accounts, 'I charge it with intolerance in its pathetic audacity in attempting to compel submission to its defiance of the scientific method. I charge it with being false to the spirit of revelation, through trying to bind upon the Church the thought forms of an age that has gone. I charge it with what is perilously near to blasphemy against the Spirit of God, Who has always been leading men into the clearer truth.' Then, stopping to wipe his glasses; Dr. Clarke came to discussion of the doctrinal declaration of the Assembly of 1910. 'In all frankness,' he said, 'I do not believe one of those five points. Certainly the Scriptures are not inerrant and never were. The issue is squarely drawn between Scripture literalism and the truth. The Bible is not our chain to fasten faith 'forever to its incredibilities. It is one of our inspirations to life.' This climactic utterance is followed by a dramatically challenging letter from a group of several hundred professors

and students of Cornell University and the Presbyterian Church in Ithaca, where the university is located. The students are far from being reduced to atheism by modern instruction. Addressed to Dr. Fosdick, the letter runs

"We ... are deeply conscious of the worldwide significance of the battle which is being waged against you, against the freedom of speech in the Christian pulpit, for which you stand, and against the reverent interpretation of the pure religion of Christ which you have given us with such power.

"We unite in solemn protest, against these misinformed and unchristian attacks and in pledging our unqualified loyalty to you as the leading American interpreter of the Christian religion for men and women of scientific training. For your spoken and written words which have led us to a better understanding of Christianity, we send you our renewed gratitude and reaffirm our faith in the pure religion of Jesus, which harmonizes with the results of modern science, searches the human heart, convicts of sin, stimulates to human service, brings men to God the Father, who is alone able to save the world. We testify that you have deepened our faith.'

"Regret over the controversy, wonder as to the future of religion, and a plea for a more harmonious understanding between science and religion characterize most of the editorial comment on the Presbyterian Assembly's action. A few hold that it, was logically sound and necessary.

"The Fosdick case may now become a battle-ground of decisive importance in shaping the future of Presbyterianism, remarks the *Chicago Evening Post*. The General Assembly voted down a resolution to bar the teaching of evolution in Presbyterian schools, but adopted a resolution to instruct its synods to withdraw support from schools and colleges in which a 'materialistic evolutionary philosophy' is taught, or in which instruction is given which 'attempts to discredit the Christian faith.' This action is beyond criticism, says the Chicago paper. 'But if the test of class-room orthodoxy be the spiritual interpretation of life, it is difficult to understand why a narrower test should be applied to the orthodoxy of the pulpit. The distinction here drawn is one that can not be maintained successfully.' In placing the chief onus on Mr. Bryan, the *New York World* says: 'He has driven the most intelligent men of his church into open rebellion. He has ranged against the officially proclaimed dogmas of his church the very kind of men who alone are capable of working out the contradictions between dogma and science. He will if his Fundamentalist friends succeed, separate educated men from organized religion.' 'It would be a pity for any church to divide over such an issue in the twentieth century, comments the *New York Evening Post*. 'Sober reflection ought to show the literalists the folly of their position. Religion will be badly served by any fresh endeavors to place the human spirit in leading strings.' The rank and file of the church members of the nation are not interested in dogma, but in worship, thinks the *Peoria Transcript*, remarking that the Southern

Baptist Convention in Kansas City `dodged the evolution issue and gained in prestige thereby. The Presbyterians had it forced upon them by Mr. Bryan and will find it a bootless matter. The essence of religion is not controversy but peace, and Christian service is more typical in a missionary post than in the armor of a crusader.'

"However, the Presbyterian General Assembly acted on `sound principle' in making its demand of the `erring,' church in New York, asserts the Pittsburgh *Gazette Times* for the other side of the question. `Decision as made by the General Assembly was essential to maintenance of the church standards.' Moreover, `freedom of conscience is not involved in the issue raised by the "liberal" preaching of the Rev. Dr. Fosdick in New York; this minister is at liberty to expound his views wherever he can find a welcome. But the Presbyterian Church authority has declared that Presbyterian doctrine alone may be preached in its pulpits, and to this order no reasonable exception may be taken.' `Entire consistency' marked the action of the Assembly, in the opinion of the Pittsburgh *Chronicle Telegraph*; and the Philadelphia *Bulletin*, in urging that the immediate interest in the Assembly's action lies within denominational lines, declares that `tolerance of liberalism has given such encouragement to radical iconoclasts that there is a realization that old faiths, old principles, old constitutions must be fought for if they are to be preserved.' The spirit of the Presbyterians' action `in declaring that a faith worth having is worth fighting for against the challenge of doubt, will inspire a sympathetic response from those in other circles of interest who are fearful of the passing of old anchorages of principle and belief.'" -Literary *Digest*.

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### **"HOW ARE THE MIGHTY FALLEN!"**

The foregoing review of developments, controversies, etc., that have been going on within the walls of the two great denominations, Presbyterian and Baptist, will be read with interest by those who have well in mind the prophetic delineations of the end of this Age. Truly, as Jesus said, "The powers of the heavens shall be shaken." Ecclesiasticism in all of its ramifications is surely being shaken and torn so as to excite in the minds of many of the thoughtful "wonder as to the future of religion." It is not to be wondered at, however, that with the advantages and light of our day there would be a renouncement and repudiation of much that has been taught for truth in the past, together with many old customs, usages, etc. It is manifest to the careful-student of sacred prophecy and history that much of the doctrine contained in the creeds that have come down to our day is an admixture of heathenism, heathen forms, ceremonies, and idolatry, with Christianity. The unbiased search of the Scriptures today reveals the fallacy and weakness of much that has been claimed for truth and is supposed to have been founded upon Holy Writ. It is more and more manifest, however, that the search for truth in modern times resulting in

many repudiations is so frequently not accompanied with deep consecration nor with not accompanied with deep consecration nor with the spirit of meekness and humility. Instead of accepting humbly the Lord and His Word, which contains the only true science concerning the great questions of life, death, and the hereafter, the many today are ready to cast aside the Bible, as an infallible guide in spiritual truth, along with the dogmas of the past, leaving nothing but human philosophy, speculation -- Higher Criticism, Evolution, Infidelity. With the denial that the Scriptures are a revelation of the Divine purposes, it is easy enough to discard the teaching respecting the virgin birth of Christ; and with the denial of the immaculate birth of the Savior goes the doctrine of the vicarious atonement for sin, which means that the great and all-important foundation of the entire Christian structure is removed; for as the New Testament particularly teaches, there could be no atonement without a perfect and holy sacrifice. The trend of popular thought is therefore seen to be rapidly in the direction of agnosticism and infidelity.

It is observed that those who have the reputation of being learned, educated, and the so-called intellectual are increasingly arranging themselves against the Bible and in favor of the modern form of infidelity, otherwise known as Modernism, Liberalism, etc. And again in the language used by one in ancient times the solemn question is asked, "How are the mighty fallen!" This question is substantially answered by Jesus: "I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes." The selection of the jewel class for the Kingdom continues to proceed along the lines announced by Jesus: "Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the Kingdom of heaven."

Let all those whose eyes have been anointed with the eye-salve of truth be sober and vigilant, and recognize the significance of the signs about us--that the Church of Christ has merged into what is termed "the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth." It is becoming more and more apparent to all that the great temptation, the great test is along the line of maintaining faith in the Bible as God's revelation of His eternal purposes. We should expect this test to increase in severity, and that still larger numbers will be found arraying themselves on the side of infidelity, and in opposition to the Bible, until all the faithful Church have completed their earthly pilgrimage and they are caused to shine forth as the sun in the Kingdom of their Father. Those then who appreciate the meaning of all the present day circumstances will recognize that the purpose for which the Lord has given additional revelations of truth in the end of the Age is to strengthen and fortify and to enable all the faithful to remain firm and steadfast unto the end. Such will indeed be giving heed to the Apostle's admonition, "Gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ."

## **MEAT IN DUE SEASON**

The hungry, starving soul doth cry,  
Feed me, or I must cease to be;  
And let the bread of love, supply  
My spirit's great necessity.

Nor think it strange. All things of life  
Require their food, their vital air;  
And perish on their field of strife,  
If life's supplies are wanting there

The dews descend on thirsty flowers;  
The heavens send radiance from above;  
And so these hungry souls of ours  
Live in the dews and rays of love.

Jesus is love; the living bread;  
His own dear life He doth bestow;  
And souls who on that life are fed,  
The pangs of hunger shall not know.

## **``WHO IS SUFFICIENT FOR THESE THINGS?''**

*"For we are unto God a sweet savor of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish. To the one we are the savor of death unto death; and to the other the savor of life unto life. And who is sufficient for these things? For we are not as many, which corrupt the word of God, but as of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God we speak in Christ." -- 2 Cor. 2:15-17.*

THIS ministry, which all the consecrated, as one of the ambassadors for Christ, have received, is one of tremendous import. It greatly influences the, final destiny of those to whom we preach this Gospel of the Kingdom, the tendency being either to life or to death. The Apostle's language here is another of the solemn warnings of the inspired Word against the danger of the Second Death, and should awaken to a sense of their danger any who have been deluded into the idea that there is no such possibility, and are permitting the great Adversary thus to deceive them. There is an equal responsibility on the part both of those who undertake to preach the Gospel and of those who hear it. The Truth is God's Truth, and the responsibility of speaking as well as of hearing it is very great.

The Apostle's words show that many in his day, as in ours, failed to realize this responsibility, and to answer their own selfish ends, corrupted the Word of God. To willfully or recklessly corrupt the Word of God -- to vitiate its pure and holy doctrines; to add to it the vain philosophies of

ambitious men and seek to support their theories by perverting its truths; to under-rate its exceeding great and precious promises and mystify the conditions upon which they may be realized; or to minimize or make void the solemn warnings of the Word of God -- is indeed dangerous business, in which the faithful saints will never engage, but in which those who fall away from the faith are usually most active -- deceiving and being deceived.

To be faithful ambassadors for Christ -- faithful representatives of the Truth and faithful proclaimers of it--requires great humility and simplicity of heart. It necessitates the complete ignoring of all worldly ambitions and aims, and the cultivation of a brave spirit of endurance which will not shrink from any reproach which fidelity to the Truth may bring. And such service, the Apostle here shows, is acceptable to God as sweet incense, no matter what may be the effect upon those to whom we minister, whether they accept or reject the message of Divine grace. What God is looking for in us is loyalty to Him and devotion to His cause; and this condition of heart He appreciates, regardless of our success or failure to secure large results. What a comfort it is amidst all discouragements to know that under all circumstances the spirit of Christ in us is as sweet incense to God. And the reward of His constant approval is richer than all the unwholesome sweets of ambition gained by corrupting the Word of God.

To the hearer of this Gospel, the Message . must prove either a savor of life unto (or tending to) life, or a savor of death unto (or tending to) death. His responsibility is great: there is no neutral ground; he either receives it or rejects it. But observe that the statement is not that the rejection of any item of truth inevitably dooms the rejecter to death, and vice versa, but that the *tendency* of such a course is to death, and of the opposite course to life, unless interrupted -- changed.

Thus, for instance, the Lord, in reproving the Scribes and Pharisees, who rejected the Gospel and yet claimed to be the children of God and leaders and examples of godliness to others, significantly inquired, "How can ye escape the condemnation of Gehenna?"--the everlasting destruction, the Second Death. (Matt. 23:33.) In rejecting the truth so plainly brought to their attention, and in pursuing the hypocritical course of claiming to be faithful and devoted children of God, they were forming and establishing such characters that repentance would, ere long, be impossible to them. Few, perhaps, clearly realize how serious a thing it is to be making character, and that every act and every thought leaves its impress upon the soul. Every right thought and act tends to establish the character in righteousness, while every wrong thought and act, and every self-deception tends to confirm and establish an unrighteous character. And when a wrong course is adopted and persistently followed--when conscience is stifled, and when reason and Scripture are perverted to selfish ends, until the heart is deceived and the judgment is overcome -- who can predict the repentance of such a one?

## **THE IMPORTANCE OF BUILDING PROPER CHARACTER**

Such construct characters or wills so out of harmony with God and righteousness as to be fit only for destruction. (Heb. 6:4-6.) How can such "escape the condemnation of Gehenna?" for God will not permit any one to live whose will is confirmed in unrighteousness. How responsible then is the position of those who are building character in themselves and in others! Remember that our characters are manifested by our habits of life; and each act, even the smallest, tends to form some new habit, or to confirm one already established. How important, then, that our thoughts and actions should not be aimless, but with a purpose (1 Cor. 10:31) ; and, above all, that our lives should be "transformed [re-formed] by the renewing of our minds"; that putting aside the evil, and all influences which tend toward evil, we should receive of the Lord, through His Word, the "spirit of a sound mind," the "mind of Christ." In this view of the case, it is indeed a solemn thing to live, a solemn thing to think, and to act; and it behooves us to guard well our words, our thoughts and our actions, and ever to bear in mind our responsibility to God, both for ourselves and for others as ambassadors for Christ.

"And who is sufficient for these things?" Surely none of us in our own strength. We need first of all to give ourselves to the Lord without reserve, and then daily to drink in more and more of His Spirit, by communion with Him through His Word and in prayer; and constantly to watch and pray lest we enter into temptation.

Let all the consecrated endeavor more and more to realize their responsibility, both in the matter of their own character-building and also in that of building up others in the most holy faith and in the character which is the legitimate result of that faith. The issues of eternal life and eternal death are before us, and before those to whom we present this Gospel; and therefore it behooves us carefully and prayerfully to present the pure Truth of God in all sincerity and in the spirit of Christ before God, ever bearing in mind that it is a savor either of life unto life or death unto death.

"Grant skill each sacred theme to trace,  
With loving voice and glowing tongue,  
As when upon Thy words of grace  
The wondering crowds enraptured hung.

"Give strength, blest Savior, in Thy might;  
Illuminate our hearts, and we,  
Transformed into Thine image bright,  
Shall teach and love and live like Thee."

## **MARY, THE MOTHER OF JESUS**



*"Thou shalt call His name Jesus; for it is He that shall save His people from their sins." -- Matt. 1 :21; Luke 2:41-52,*

AMONG the saintly women mentioned in the Bible, Mary the mother of our Lord holds the place of preeminence. No greater honor could possibly have been bestowed upon her than that of giving birth to Him who was to become the world's Redeemer. We cannot, however, think of the mother of Jesus as having been a holy woman in the sense of having herself been horn immaculate and free from taint of sin, for she like others was a member of the condemned and dying race of Adam and therefore imperfect. The explanation of the Bible is entirely satisfactory -- that our Lord who had been the Logos, of the spirit nature, a mighty angel, was by the power of Jehovah transferred from the angelic plane to that of the human. The process chosen by Divine wisdom by which to accomplish this transference was that of causing Him to be born of a woman, and thus of the fleshly or human nature, without being impaired or without sharing in the human imperfection as a result of the imperfect mother.

It is a most reasonable supposition, however, that Divine providence would be specially exercised in the selection of the one who was to give birth to the Savior -that she would be amongst the best and most noble specimens of the race. And the records concerning Mary indicate that she was of excellent birth and possessed of superior qualities. Her song called the *Magnificat*, recorded in Luke 1 :46-53, bears testimony to this effect. We submit a few lines from Peloubet's Noes in this connection: "'The character of Mary is revealed to us best in the words of this song. In it three features of her character appear: (1) *Her purity of heart*. Only a pure heart rejoices when God is very near. It is this holy gladness because God was come very near that Fra Angelico and other great painters have sought to depict in the faces of their Madonnas. (2) *Her humility*, which expresses itself by an utter forgetfulness of self. She simply praised the Lord. (3) *Her unselfishness*. She never thought of future ages as calling her great, or sovereign, or beautiful, or successful, or even saintly; but she said, "All generations shall call me blessed." That is to say, through her and by this event which was happening to her, an endless good was to come to men, and it was of this that she rejoiced to think.'-Rev. P. *Carnegie Simpson*.

### **SUBLIME THINGS FOR MARY'S CONSIDERATION**

"The advent story is happily familiar to all : the levy of a tax by the Emperor Augustus; the necessity that each Jew should go to his own city for the preliminary census; the journey of Joseph and Mary to Bethlehem, David's city, since they were both descended from David; the rejection from the crowded inn of the little town; the birth of the world's Redeemer in a cave-stable belonging to the inn; the angels' song over the Bethlehem fields and their announcement of the great event to the shepherds; the visit of those shepherds to the manger, and their announcement of the wonderful event to all they could reach. We do not read that any who

heard the shepherds believed them, or took their words to heart, except Mary; but we are told that the mother of Jesus remembered them all, and pondered over them. The opening history of Christianity had at least one loving and eager student.

"If by any chance Mary had ceased to think about the marvelous circumstances attending the birth of Jesus, she would be set to wondering meditation again by the testimony to his Messiahship made by Simeon and Anna when, forty days after the birth of Jesus, Mary went to the temple for the ceremony of purification.

"The arrival of the magi, or wise men, from the east must have set Mary to thinking still more earnestly than ever about the real nature of her wonderful Son ... Their gifts would furnish additional matter for Mary's meditation, for the gold was for the king, the frankincense pointed to the worship of a God, and the myrrh -- which was used in embalming -- pointed mystically forward to the tragic death He was to die. Not for thirty-three years would Mary understand all of these symbolic gifts.

"The flight into Egypt, made necessary by Herod's murderous attempt to kill the new -born King whom he regarded as a claimant for his throne, must have been a strange experience for Mary. She was among friends, for there were many Jews in Egypt, that age-long place of refuge for the Hebrews; but she was surrounded by a thousand unusual sights, and every day the shame and horror of heathenism would be borne in upon her. It is not known how long the Holy Family remained in Egypt; perhaps about two years. Matthew finds in this sojourn a fulfillment of the prophecy in Has. 11:2, and whenever Mary heard those words read, or any reference to the coming of her race out of Egypt by a great deliverance, she would think of this providential experience. The stay in Egypt was not long enough to root the family there, as happened to so many Jewish fugitives, but as soon as Joseph :heard of Herod's death they returned to. Nazareth. Jesus, it was foretold, should be called a Nazarene.

"We are not told anything definitely about Christ's boyhood, but `we are permitted to see (1) That our Lord never attended the schools of the Rabbis (Mark 6:2 ; John 6:42 ; 7:15 ) , and therefore that His teaching was absolutely original, and that He would therefore be regarded by the Rabbis as a "man of the people" or "*unlearned person.*" (See Acts 4:13.) (2) That He had learned to write (John 8 6) . (3) That He was acquainted not only with Aramaic, but with Hebrew, Greek, and perhaps Latin; and (4) that He had been deeply impressed by 'the lessons of nature.' -- *F. W. Farrar.* We do not know how early Mary was left a widow, but probably the greater part of Christ's education was due to her loving and faithful care."

### **THE HOLY FAMILY AT NAZARETH**

St. Luke, more than the other Evangelists, makes mention of certain minor incidents relating to our Lord's young life "and the singular sweetness of

his narrative, its almost idyllic grace, its sweet calm tone of noble reticence, seem clearly to indicate that he derived it, though but in fragmentary notices, from the lips of Mary herself. It is, indeed, difficult to imagine from whom else it could have come, for mothers are the natural historians of infant years; but it is interesting to find, in the actual style, that 'coloring of a woman's memory and a woman's view,' which we should naturally have expected in confirmation of a conjecture so obvious and so interesting. To one who was giving the reins to his imagination, the minutest incidents would have claimed a description; to Mary they would have seemed trivial and irrelevant. Others might wonder, but in her, all wonder was lost in the one overwhelming revelation -- the one absorbing consciousness. Of such things she could not lightly speak; 'she kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart.' The very depth and sacredness of that reticence is the natural and probable explanation of the fact, that some of the details of the Savior's infancy are fully recorded by St. Luke alone."

"What was His manner of life during those thirty years?" asks Dean Farrar. "It is a question which the Christian cannot help asking in deep reverence and with yearning love; but the words in which the Gospels answer it are very calm and very few. The reverent devotion and brilliant fancy of the early medieval painters have elaborated a very different picture. The gorgeous pencils of a Giotto and a Fra Angelico have painted the Virgin and her Child seated on stately thrones, upon floors of splendid mosaic, under canopies of blue and gold; they have robed them in colors rich as the hues of summer or, delicate as the flowers of spring, and fitted the edges of their robes with golden embroidery, and clasped them with priceless gems. Far different was the reality. When Joseph returned to Nazareth he knew well that they were going into seclusion as well as into safety; and that the life of the Virgin and the Holy Child would be spent, not in the full light of notoriety or wealth, but in secrecy, in poverty, and in manual toil.

"Yet this poverty was not pauperism; there was nothing in it either miserable or abject; it was sweet, simple, contented, happy, even joyous. Mary, like others of her rank, would spin, and cook food, and go to buy fruit, and evening by evening visit the fountain, still called, after her 'the Virgin's fountain,' with her pitcher of earthenware carried on her shoulder or her head. Jesus would play, and learn, and help His parents in their daily tasks, and visit the synagogues on the Sabbath days. 'It is written,' says Luther, 'that there was once a pious godly bishop, who had often earnestly prayed that God would manifest to him what Jesus had done in His youth. Once the bishop had a dream to this effect. He seemed in his sleep to see a carpenter working at his trade, and beside him a little boy who was gathering up chips. Then came in a maiden clothed in green, who called them both, to come to the meal, and set porridge before them. All this the bishop seemed to see in his dream, himself standing behind the door that he might not be perceived. Then the little boy began and said,

"Why does that man stand there ? shall he not also eat with us?" And this so frightened the bishop that he awoke.' `Let this be what it may,' adds Luther, `a true history or a fable, I none the less believe that Christ in His childhood and youth looked and acted like other children, yet without sin, in fashion like a man.'

"The age of twelve years was a critical age for a Jewish boy. It was the age at which, according to Jewish legend, Moses had left the house of Pharaoh's daughter; and Samuel had heard the Voice which summoned him to the prophetic office; and Solomon had given the judgment which first revealed his possession of wisdom; and Josiah had first dreamed of his great reform. At this age a boy of whatever rank was obliged, by the injunction of the Rabbis and custom of his nation, to learn a trade for his own support,

### **THE VISIT TO THE HOLY CITY**

"Now it was the custom of the parents of our Lord to visit Jerusalem every year at the feast of the Passover. Women were, indeed, not mentioned in the law which required the annual presence of all males at the three great yearly feasts of Passover, Pentecost, and Tabernacles; but Mary, in pious observance of the rule recommended by Hillell, accompanied her husband every year, and on this occasion they took with them the boy Jesus, who was beginning to be of an age to assume the responsibilities of the Law. We can easily imagine how powerful must have been the influence upon His human development of this break in the still secluded life; of this glimpse into the great outer world; of this journey through a land of which every hill and every village teemed with sacred memories; of this first visit to that Temple of His Father which was associated with so many mighty events in the story of the kings His ancestors and the prophets His forerunners. Who shall fathom the unspeakable emotion with which the boy Jesus gazed on that memorable and never-to-be-forgotten scene?

"The numbers who flocked to the Passover from every region of the East might be counted by tens of thousands. There were far more than the city could by any possibility accommodate; and then, as now at Easter time, vast numbers of the pilgrims reared for themselves the little succoth--booths of mat, and wickerwork, and interwoven leaves, which provided them with a sufficient shelter for all their wants. The feast lasted for a week--a week, probably, of deep happiness and strong religious emotion; and then, with their mules, and horses, and asses, and camels, the vast caravan would clear away their temporary dwelling-places, and start on the homeward journey.

"The apocryphal legend says that on the journey from Jerusalem the boy Jesus left the caravan and returned to the Holy City. With far greater truth and simplicity, St. Luke informs us that -- absorbed in all probability in the rush of new and elevating emotions -- He `tarried behind in Jerusalem.' A day elapsed before the parents discovered their loss; this they would not

do until they arrived at the place of evening rendezvous, and all day long they would be free from all anxiety, supposing that the Boy was with some other group of friends or relatives in that long caravan. But when evening came, and their diligent inquiries led to no trace of Him, they would learn the bitter fact that He was altogether missing from the band of returning pilgrims. The next day, in alarm and anguish -- perhaps, too, with some sense of self-reproach that they had not been more faithful to their sacred charge -- they retraced their steps to Jerusalem. Neither on that day, nor during the night, nor throughout a considerable part of the third day, did they discover Him, till at last they found Him in the place which, strangely enough, seems to have been the last where they searched for Him -- in the Temple, 'sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them and asking them questions' and all that heard Him were astonished at His understanding and answers.'

### **"ABOUT MY FATHER'S BUSINESS"**

"Filled with that almost adoring spirit of reverence for the great priests and religious teachers of their day which characterized at this period the simple and pious Galileans, they were awe-struck to find Him, calm and happy, in so august a presence. They might, indeed, have known that He was wiser than His teachers, and transcendently more great; but hitherto they had only known Him as the silent, sweet obedient child, and perhaps the incessant contact of daily life had blunted the sense of His awful origin. Yet it is Mary, not Joseph, who alone ventures to address Him in the language of tender reproach. 'My child, why dost Thou treat us thus? see, Thy father and I were seeking Thee with aching hearts.' And then follows His answer, so touching in its innocent simplicity, so unfathomable in its depth of consciousness, so infinitely memorable as furnishing us with the *first recorded words* of the Lord Jesus:

*"Why is it that ye were seeking me? Did ye not know that I must be about my Father's business?"*

"This answer, so divinely natural, so sublimely noble, bears upon itself the certain stamp of authenticity. The conflict of thoughts which it implies; the half-vexed astonishment which it expresses that they should so little understand Him; the perfect dignity, and yet the perfect humility which it combines, lie wholly beyond the possibility of invention. It is in accordance, too, with all His ministry -- in accordance with that utterance to the tempter, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God,' and with that quiet answer to the disciples by the well of Samaria, 'My meat is to do the will of Him that sent me, and to finish His work.' Mary had said unto Him, 'Thy father,' but in His reply He recognizes, and henceforth He knows, no father except His Father in heaven. In the 'Did ye not *know*,' He delicately recalls to them the fading memory of all that they *did* know; and in that 'I must,' He lays

down the sacred law of self-sacrifice by which He was to walk, even unto the death upon the cross."

### **AT THE MARRIAGE FEAST IN CANA**

Another glimpse is given us of Jesus and His mother. It is now eighteen years later. Jesus has grown to manhood's estate and has entered upon His great commission. He with several of His disciples are invited to a marriage feast. Mary the mother of Jesus, is also there, doubtless as a very close friend of the family, as indicated by her knowledge in advance that the wine supply was running short. The customary hospitality of the Jews on such occasions would make it a serious breach of etiquette not to supply an abundance for their guests, as well as for neighbors and passers by, who, in the name of the bridegroom, would be urged to enter and partake of the hospitalities freely.

Our Lord's mother brought to His attention the shortage of wine, and from this it has been assumed that she anticipated the miracle. We cannot agree to the reasonableness of this suggestion, because it is particularly stated that the miraculous creation of wine on this occasion was the beginning of Jesus' miracles. We must suppose, therefore, that Mary's long acquaintance with and dependence on her Son had made her aware of His superior judgment and resourcefulness in all events and on all occasions. The matter was beyond her control, and, as was often the case with those in moderate circumstances, the bridegroom had probably spent all that he could afford to expend in preparations. Probably also, in anticipation of our Lord's presence at the marriage feast, a larger number of neighbors called on His account-to see the stranger of whom they had heard more or less through Nathanael and others.

Our Lord's reply to His mother's suggestion appears rather cold and harsh, but this is largely the result of the translation. While the word "woman" is a proper translation, it does not give the elegant shading of the Greek original, which would more nearly signify lady. The word is the same; for instance, that the Emperor of Rome used in complimentary address to the Queen of Egypt, "Take courage, O woman." We may be sure that neither by word nor act did our Lord violate the commandment of the Law, "Honor thy father and thy mother." We may be sure that in all His words and conduct He was a very model of the meekness and gentleness, patience and love which His doctrines inculcated.

The expression, "What have I to do with thee?" would seem more properly to signify, "Do not attempt to dictate to Me -- I will know what to do when the appropriate time comes:" Mary probably was intent upon hiding the fact of the shortage of the wine: Jesus on the other hand recognized that the miracle He was about to perform was less for the assistance of the bridegroom of the occasion than for a great lesson which, through the servants, probably became known to the entire company. Jesus therefore waited until the supply was not only running low but exhausted, until there

was no wine, so that the miracle would not be minimized by the admixture of the new with the old.

Mary's word to the servants, "Whatsoever He saith unto you, do it," was a further evidence that she was on terms of very close intimacy in that home. The servants properly enough would need such instructions, for otherwise they would not be prepared to take orders from one of the guests. Mary probably had no knowledge of what the Lord would command the servants to do, but, as before suggested, she had confidence in her Son's resourcefulness and wisdom, and that as one of the guests whose entertainment had helped to exhaust the wine He would be pleased to take some steps to assist in replenishing the supply.

The change from water to wine was evidently instantaneous, for our Lord at once directed them to draw the wine and serve first the governor of the feast, who would thus have a knowledge of the fresh supply.

"It was His first miracle, yet how unlike all that we should have expected; how simply unobtrusive, how divinely calm! The method, indeed, of the miracle -- which is far more wonderful in character than the ordinary miracles of healing--transcends our powers of conception; yet it was not done with any pomp of circumstance, or blaze of adventitious glorification."

### **MARY AT THE CROSS**

But we are to see Jesus and His mother again in close proximity. It is the final and supreme moment of His sojourn upon the earth. The Savior of mankind is now the victim of the maddening crowd and He is now upon the cruel cross.

"Though none spoke to comfort Jesus -- though deep grief, and terror, and amazement kept them dumb -- yet there were hearts amid the crowd that beat in sympathy with the awful Sufferer. At a distance stood a number of women looking on, and perhaps, even at that dread hour, expecting His immediate deliverance. Many of these were women who had ministered to Him in Galilee, and had come from thence in the great band of Galilean pilgrims. Conspicuous among this heart-stricken group were His mother Mary, Mary of Magdala, Mary the wife of Clopas, mother of James and Joses, and Salome the wife of Zebedee. Some of them, as the hours advanced, stole nearer and nearer to the cross, and at length the filming eye of the Savior fell on His own mother Mary, as, with the sword piercing through and through her heart, she stood with the disciple whom He loved. His mother does not seem to have been much with Him during His ministry. It may be that the duties and cares of a humble home rendered it impossible. At any rate, the only occasions on which we hear of her are occasions when she is with His brethren, and is joined with them in endeavoring to influence, apart from His own purposes and authority, His Messianic course. But although at the very beginning of His

ministry He had gently shown her that the earthly and filial relation was now to be transcended by one far more lofty and Divine, and though this end of all her high hopes must have tried her faith with an overwhelming and unspeakable sorrow, yet she was true to Him in this supreme hour of His humiliation, and would have done for Him, all that a mother's sympathy and love can do. Nor had He for a moment forgotten her who had bent over His infant slumbers, and with whom He had shared those thirty years in the cottage at Nazareth. Tenderly and sadly He thought of the future that awaited her during the remaining years of her life on earth, troubled as they must be by the tumults and persecutions of a struggling and nascent faith. After His resurrection her lot was wholly cast among His Apostles, and the Apostle whom He loved the most, the Apostle who was nearest to Him in heart and life, seemed the fittest to take care of her. To him, therefore -- to John whom He had loved more than His brethren -- to John whose head had leaned upon His breast at the Last Supper, He consigned her as a sacred charge. 'Woman,' He said to her, in fewest words, but in words which breathed the uttermost spirit of tenderness, 'Behold thy Son'; and then to St. John, 'Behold thy mother.' He could make no gesture with those pierced hands, but He could bend His head. They listened in speechless emotion, but from that hour -- perhaps from that very moment -- leading her away from a spectacle which did but torture her soul with unavailing agony, that disciple took her to his own home."

But Mary was to behold her beloved once more when her joy would know no bounds. "That the risen Jesus showed Himself to His mother and in an instant transformed her sorrow to joy, who can doubt? We can think of her as joining in the assemblies of the early Church in the upper room in Jerusalem, and rejoicing in the outpouring of the Spirit at Pentecost. She would know of Peter's imprisonment and release, of the martyrdom of Stephen and James. Paul would meet her after his conversion, and would have long talks with her concerning Jesus. Perhaps she even lived long enough to go with John to his church in Ephesus, and witness the beginnings of Christianity in the heathen world.

"All this, however, is conjecture. We can only be sure that Mary was most tenderly cared for during the remainder of her life, and that she was deeply revered and greatly beloved by all that knew her."

## **JOHN THE BAPTIST**

*'Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel; For He hath visited and wrought redemption for His people.' -- Luke, 1:68 ; 3 :3-8 ; 7 :24-28.*

*Continued from last issue*

JOHN recognized the hypocrisy of many of the leading Pharisees and Sadducees who came to his baptism, and by some prophetic power was



enabled to read their hearts in a manner which would be improper for us to do. This prophetic insight not only permitted John to call these false ones a brood of vipers, but permitted him also to intimate to them the great day of wrath that was soon to come upon that nation" -- wrath to the uttermost," as the Apostle Paul speaks of it (1 Thess. 2:16) -- the wrath of God which entirely swallowed up the nation and left the land almost desolate, scattering the people amongst all the nations. John would not baptize these until they showed by outward conduct a change of life, a change of heart and not merely a changed profession. He realized that this class in particular was stumbling over the promise made to Abraham, because they were his natural children without having Abraham's faith. John inspiredly warned them to the contrary, that God was quite able to establish His Kingdom in due time and to ignore them entirely.

Verses 8 and 9 of chapter 3 are a further part of his prophecy, declaring that fruitage was necessary on their part, and that any who did not bear the fruitage required would be cut off from Divine favor and cast into the fiery trouble with which the Jewish Age ended.

Prophetically John realized that his mission was merely a preparatory one, and that somehow--just how he could not understand--the coming One would have the power to immerse the faithful in the Holy Spirit, in holy power, and the unfaithful with a baptism of fire, of trouble. Again he likened the ministry of Christ to that nation as that of a reaper who, with a winnowing fan, would separate the true wheat from the chaff, gathering the wheat to the garner of the Gospel Age at Pentecost and in due time thereafter permit the fires -- confusion, anarchy, and the Roman legions -- to entirely consume the chaff of that people in an unquenchable fire, a trouble that would not be extinguished, that the Lord would not help them out of, but that would utterly destroy their national polity.

"To this preaching, to this baptism," says Dean Farrar, "in the thirtieth year of his age, came Jesus from Galilee. John was His kinsman by birth, but the circumstances of their life had entirely separated them. John, as a child in the house of the blameless priest, his father, had lived at Juttah, in the far south of the tribe of Judah, and not far from Hebron; Jesus had lived in the deep seclusion of the carpenter's shop in the valley of Galilee. When He first came to the banks of the Jordan, the great forerunner, according to his own emphatic and twice repeated testimony, "knew Him not." And yet, though Jesus was not yet revealed as the Messiah to His great Herald-prophet, there was something in His look, something in the sinless beauty of His ways, something in the solemn majesty of His aspect, which at once overawed and captivated the soul of John. To others he was the uncompromising prophet; kings he could confront with rebuke; Pharisees he could unmask with indignation; but before this Presence all his lofty bearing falls. As when some unknown dread checks the flight of the eagle, and makes him settle with hushed scream and drooping plumage on the ground, so before "the royalty of inward happiness;" before the

purity of sinless life, the wild prophet of the desert becomes *submissive* and timid child. The battle-brunt which legionaries could not daunt -- the lofty manhood before which hierarchs trembled and princes grew pale -- resigns itself, submits, adores before a moral force which is weak in every external attribute, and armed only in an invisible mail. John bowed to the simple stainless manhood before he had been inspired to recognize the Divine commission."

### **ELIJAH THE ARCHETYPE**

Elijah the Tishbite, who in the days of King Ahab was used of the Lord to produce a reformation in Israel by which the priests of Baal and their power over the people were overthrown, was declared to be a type or likeness of a greater reformer who would precede Messiah to announce Him and to make ready for His reign. Matthew declares (chapter 3:3) that John the Baptist was an antitype of Elijah. We see that he did do a work of reformation amongst the Lord's people at the First Advent, the work of introducing the Messiah. Moreover, we remember that the disciples asked Jesus respecting this very prophecy saying, If you are the Messiah what answer should we give to the Jews who say that Elias (Greek for Elijah) must first come? Our Lord's answer was that Elias had already come (John the Baptist, the antitype of Elijah), and that the Jews knew him not, recognized him not, but had done to him whatsoever they pleased--imprisoning him and ultimately beheading him in prison. Our Lord further added "likewise shall also the Son of man suffer of them." "Then the disciples understood that He spoke unto- them of John the Baptist." -- Matt. 17:10-13.

As it was a surprise to the disciples that John, the Lord's forerunner and the antitypical Elijah, should be put to death, so likewise it was a surprise to them that the Master Himself, instead of reigning, should be crucified. It took them some little time to understand that the Lord's coming as Messiah had two phases--one, in humiliation, a suffering ending in death and apparent defeat, the other to follow later in power and great glory, to reign, to uplift, to bless Israel and all nations, thus fulfilling on the richest possible scale all the precious promises through all the holy Prophets since the world began. .It was appropriate also that the Lord should explain that there should be a second coming of Elijah--an antitypical Elijah on a still higher plane, of as much larger proportions than John the Baptist as the second coming of Messiah will be grander and more glorious than His first coming.

John the Baptist himself understood that he was not fulfilling all the features of the antitypical Elijah --he evidently understood that there would be still a larger fulfillment by an archetype. This is evidenced from his own words when asked Art thou Elias ? And he saith, I am not. Art thou that prophet? And he answered, No. (John 1:21.) Our Lord's words explained the matter, showing that he was the antitypical Elijah in a

certain measure, to a certain extent, to the nation of Israel. Jesus said "This is Elias if *ye will receive it.*" That is to say, to those who recognized his message and who obeyed it and who became the Lord's disciples, to these John fulfilled the work of Elijah. (Matt. 11:14.) Likewise Jesus is already the Christ, the Messiah, the King, to those few who have ears to hear and hearts to receive the message-the household of faith, the Church; but as John was not the Elijah promised to the world in general, so Jesus was not yet come as the Messiah. This coming of Jesus to the world as the world's King, to take unto Himself His great power and reign, is the grand event toward which all prophecy points, and before that event takes place the antitypical Elijah of still larger proportions than John the Baptist bears a witness and message to the world.

### **THE CHRIST FORESHADOWED**

As has already been pointed out, Christ, the Messiah of the Divine Plan, includes not only Jesus glorified, the Captain of our salvation, the High Priest of our profession, Head over the Royal Priesthood, the glorious Church, but it includes also the Church which is His Body, the Underpriests, the faithful, who shall sit with Him in His throne, be like Him and share His glory and His Divine nature. And as the anointed Christ of glory is a composite one of many members under one glorious Head (Eph. 1:18), so the antitypical Elijah is a multitudinous one. Jesus in the flesh was the Head of this great Elijah, bearing witness to and preparing the way for the coming of the great Messiah and Deliverer in due time. The Church, the Body of the Christ in the flesh all down through this Gospel Age, has been the body of the antitypical Elijah, bearing witness all down through these centuries to all the families of the earth that God is to set up a Kingdom, and urging preparation therefor, urging a repentance from sin and reformation toward God, and being used of God as the instrumentality for the anointing of the most holy ones. Soon this work of the Church, of announcing the Kingdom and calling upon men everywhere to repent and reform, will be at an end, and the Kingdom will be introduced with power and great glory. Soon the work of baptizing the anointed ones and witnessing to their relationship to God will be at an end. Soon this antitypical Elijah, like John, will be restrained from further proclamation - - and ultimately be cut off. Soon thereafter the Kingdom will be revealed. The faithful overcomers, as the wheat gathered from the sowing of this Gospel message of the Kingdom, will be gathered into the Kingdom, glorified with their Lord and Head, and soon thereafter the Kingdom itself will be manifested --"revealed in flaming fire" -- in judgments, in troubles, distress of nations, etc. Soon the Messiah, Head and Body, in glory, will so overrule in the affairs of men, that the nations of earth shall be broken to shivers as potters' vessels; and soon thereafter, on the ruins of the present reign of sin and selfishness under Satan, who shall be fully brought to naught and bound for a thousand years, all the blessed influences of 'righteousness, justice, truth, and love will be set at liberty

amongst the people, that the whole world may be blessed according to the Divine promise. -- Gal. 3:16, 29.

## **WHAT WE RENDER TO GOD**

WHAT we shall render to God depends upon who we are and what- we see and know respecting Him and His will. The world in general realizes some responsibility to a Creator or First Cause, but their enlightenment being limited, their responsibilities are correspondingly limited. Those who have seen and heard and tasted that God is gracious, that His favor has been manifested in the redemption price paid at Calvary, have greater privileges than their less enlightened neighbors and correspondingly greater responsibilities. To these it is but a reasonable service that they should present to the Lord the little all that they possess in this present life, and this becomes a still more reasonable matter when they learn that God has -sent forth during this Gospel Age a special message of invitation to joint-heirship with His Son in the Kingdom. Those who are thus enlightened and who possess any measure of wisdom should, it would seem, joyfully lay aside every weight and besetting sin and earthly ambition, and strive to attain to the gracious things of the Divine promise to the Seed of Abraham. -- Gal. 3:29.

The Prophet, speaking for this class of holy favored ones of this Gospel Age, the consecrated, inquires, What shall we render unto the Lord for all His benefits to us? What would be the proper course for such to pursue in their relationship to God? The Lord through the Prophet gives the correct answer, saying, "I will take the cup of salvation and call upon the name of the Lord." (Psa. 116:12, 13.) The cup of salvation, as our Master explains, has a two-fold significance: it implies that we all share with Him in His cup of suffering, of self-denial, of self-abasement for the sake of the Lord's cause in this time when sin abounds, when the prince of this world rules in the hearts of the majority, when darkness covers the earth, society, and gross darkness the heathen. We have the promise that those who drink of the Lord's cup now will also drink of His cup of rejoicing and blessing and refreshment in the Kingdom.

In other words, in the Divine order these two features are indissolubly joined -- "If we suffer with Him we shall also reign with Him," if we partake of the trials and difficulties and oppositions incidental to faithfulness to the Lord, we shall have a share with Him in the glory, honor and immortality by and by; but if we refuse the cup of trial and discipline and experience and suffering of this present time, we are thus also, incidentally refusing and passing by the cup of glory and blessing of the Millennial Age and of eternity. Let us take the cup, let us appropriate it, let us render unto the Lord our God our reasonable service-a full consecration of heart and life. And this appreciation of a reasonable service will doubtless continue to increase before the mental vision; as we

go onward, we will perceive greater privileges and opportunities of sacrifice, and as we measure up to these we will get clearer and better and grander views of the coming glories, and also of our heavenly rewards.

## **DANIEL THE BELOVED OF JEHOVAH**

### SERIES V

#### **NEBUCHADNEZZAR AND THE THREE HEBREW WORTHIES**

*"Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego; answered and said to the king, O Nebuchadnezzar, we are not careful to answer thee 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 the golden image which thou hast set up."-Daniel 3:16-18.*

THE day came at length when the ceremonies associated with the dedication of Nebuchadnezzar's great image, column or statue, were due to take place. That it --- was a most important day to the King is apparent from the fact of his having summoned by proclamation his subordinate rulers, great and small, from every part of his vast empire. Indeed, it would seem that it was one of the great events connected with his career as a world-monarch. Among those who came in obedience to the summons were the three young Hebrews, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, the same ones who had been honored by Nebuchadnezzar on the occasion of the interpretation of his dream, by being appointed to positions of trust in connection with the administration of the empire.

While it would seem, as we have endeavored to show, that the erection and dedication of the great statue, or column, was not designed to give honor to any of the gods of the Chaldeans, but rather to give honor to what would be considered by Nebuchadnezzar a new god, even the God of the Hebrews, nevertheless, all the ceremonies associated with the dedication would most naturally be observed according to the prevailing idolatrous heathen customs. Since the great Monarch himself was a heathen idolater, it would be reasonable to suppose that all the ceremonies would be conducted in harmony with his religion. It had been announced by an appointed herald that when the bands of music should begin to sound their instruments, all the many thousands assembled should immediately prostrate themselves in worship before the great statue. • This was Nebuchadnezzar's way, and the heathen way of having all his subject-rulers, the representatives of all his subjects, give honor to the new god. It may also have been designed by Nebuchadnezzar to impress upon the subjects of his empire that which was a fact -- that he had been given this world-wide authority by the God of heaven, as expressed in the words of Daniel "The God of Heaven hath given thee a kingdom, power, and

strength, and 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 ruler over them all. "- Dan. 2:37.

### **"THOU SHALT NOT BOW DOWN NOR SERVE THEM"**

On the part of the Babylonians there could be no religious . scruples against a prompt compliance with the imperial edict. They believed in many gods, and it was their custom .to make images to them, and bow down and worship before these various images and statues. The falling down before this new image was therefore not a matter of serious account to them, since it did not involve an abandonment of the gods they were already accustomed to worship. Even in Nebuchadnezzar's case, from his heathen viewpoint it meant only the giving of honor to another god.

However, this was not the case with the three Hebrews. From the standpoint of the law of Jehovah. it was a very serious matter with them. The law of their God not only forbade them bowing down and worshipping any god but Jehovah, but also prohibited them from making any image or likeness to Him; indeed, they were not allowed to make and bow down to any image or likeness of *anything* in heaven above or earth beneath. It would therefore be disobeying, on their part, the plain command of Jehovah, to thus prostrate themselves before the golden image. To obey the edict of the king would be going against their own enlightened consciences. Even though the great Monarch intended the whole ceremony to be in honor of the Hebrews' God, and a public acknowledgment of the Jehovah-power, they still would be false to their religious principles if they should prostrate themselves before this great statue. A true Hebrew, faithful to his God, could no more bow down to an image erected to honor his own God, than he could bow down to the image of Baal or any other of the gods of the heathen. How then could it be otherwise than that when all the others of the assembled nobles and officeholders of the kingdom prostrated themselves adoringly before the great image statue of gold, these three Hebrews remained standing? "They did not serve the false gods of their conquerors, and they would not now debauch themselves with a false worship, even of their own God."

The temptation that was placed before these three young Hebrews, although not intended to be such by N Nebuchadnezzar, was a very severe one; indeed more than severe-it was an extremely subtle one; and particularly was this so, since the great World-monarch meant in this great dedication ceremonial, as it would seem, to do honor to the Jehovah-power as exhibited to him in making known and interpreting his dream. It was certainly a most remarkable concession as well as an evidence of appreciation on the part of Nebuchadnezzar to make an image or statue in honor of the God whom they served. It was an instance most rare in the annals of history. If we are correct in thus interpreting this incident; it is very apparent that these three Hebrew worthies could not fail to see that

from Nebuchadnezzar's viewpoint this great festive occasion was a credit to them and their nation. On the part of the great Monarch it would be simply giving expression, in his heathen way, (and what more could be expected) of his recognition of that God who had made known to him his dream, and had, through His Prophet informed him that his power as a king was given to him by the God of Daniel -- indeed that he himself was represented as the "head of gold." Nebuchadnezzar had been very kind and generous to these three Hebrews. He had placed them in prominent places in his kingdom. From them surely he would expect nothing less than a glad obedience to his request.

### **A SEVERE AND SUBTLE TEMPTATION**

It is hardly possible to overestimate how severe, how peculiar, how trying, and how subtle was the temptation to these Hebrews. We may be sure that they had an earnest desire to please the great Monarch. They could not be men, if it were otherwise. What then were they to do? How easy would it have been for them to have reasoned that no harm could be done by their going through the form of worship that the others of the great throng did! Why be so conspicuous? They might direct their thoughts while bowing down before the great image to the God of heaven. They would not be idolaters, as were the others; and beside, to think of what it meant to them to disobey the king's decree. It could mean nothing less than a terrible death, unless their God would interpose. If they saved their lives, they might in the future, be of some help to their brethren in captivity as in all probability they had been in the past. By refusing to obey Nebuchadnezzar, it would -have only the effect of prejudicing him against their nation. It certainly was a trying position in which these young Hebrews found themselves. It seems very evident, however, that they had made up their minds what they should do., before they came, in obedience to the summons of the king, to be present at the dedication services.

The question very naturally arises, Where was Daniel at this time? The record is altogether silent about this matter. We are very sure, however, that had he been present and been placed under the same circumstances, he would have stood firmly and unflinchingly beside his three companions. It would not have been consistent with his character for him to have done otherwise.

There were present in that vast assembly, certain envious Chaldeans who noted the conduct of the young Hebrews, and who doubtless were glad to have an opportunity to take advantage of their disobedience to the king's decree, in order to give vent to their hatred and jealousy. It would seem proper to say that if these Chaldeans had been truly devoted to their own religion, they would have found no time to observe the attitude of these three Hebrews. These men were doubtless watching very closely the conduct of the young men, and were not surprised at their refusal to bow

down before the great golden image. Under the cloak of a superior piety, they went to Nebuchadnezzar, and informed him of the refusal of the young men to obey his decree. They said, "There are certain Jews, whom thou hast set over the affairs of the province of Babylon, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego; these men, O king, have not regarded thee: they serve not thy gods, *nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up.*" We read that "Nebuchadnezzar in his rage and fury commanded to bring Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego. Then they brought these men before the king."

Some without considering the matter carefully would think it strange that Nebuchadnezzar could be so enraged against these young Hebrews under such peculiar circumstances. It should be kept in mind that while Nebuchadnezzar was, as we have seen, susceptible to deep religious impressions, he was a man of violent passions, easily excited to anger; and truly there was much in this particular case from his heathen viewpoint to arouse his anger. As a man and a monarch who was accustomed to having even his slightest command obeyed without a question, it is nothing to be wondered at that his wrath was kindled against these men. Had he not done them a great favor? Had he not honored them in the sight of all the noted men of his great empire? Was he not, in the very matter in which they manifested their disobedience, giving honor to their God? How, under such circumstances, could they refuse to comply with his command? How strange their conduct must have seemed to him! It was a complete surprise. There was not in his mind the slightest thought but that they would gladly obey him --.be pleased and delighted to engage in all the services and enter fully into the spirit of the occasion, because of his design to give honor to their God. He would scarcely have given any thought to the matter if it had been any of his own people, any of the Babylonians who refused to bow down to the great image-statue. In such an event the whole matter would have been dismissed from his mind and they would not have been called before him, and he would have left it with his officers to enforce the penalty, and cast the disobedient ones immediately into the furnace of fire. That which is -most remarkable is that he did not order these disobedient Hebrews to be cast *at once*, into the furnace. It will be remembered that in the case of the magicians who were unable to make known to him his dream, he ordered them at once to be slain.

### **THE POWER OF A TRUE FAITH**

In the case of these Hebrews, however, it was different; he would know the reason for such strange conduct; he would inquire into it; and so he summoned them before his presence, and gave them an opportunity to reconsider their decision. His very first words to them give expression to his surprise at their conduct, and describe the state of mind that he was in: "Is it true, O Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, do not ye serve my gods, nor worship the golden image which I have set up?" These words



show that Nebuchadnezzar had some respect for these men and that he was willing to hear their reasons for refusing to obey his command. The Common Version translation does not convey the full meaning of these words. The margin renders the words, "Is it of purpose," that is, have you done this intentionally? Wittle's translation renders the words, "Is it insultingly." According to Mr. Barnes, Jacchiades, another translator, says, that the word rendered "true" is used to denote wonder, as if the king could not believe that it was possible that they could so disregard so plain a command. Theodotion and Saadias render it as it is in the margin, "Have you done this of set purpose or design?" as if the King had regarded it as possible that there had been a misunderstanding, and as if he was, not unwilling' to find that they could make an apology for their conduct. One has said, "It would seem probable from this that the ceremonies of the consecration of the image were prolonged for a considerable period, so that there was still an opportunity for them to unite in the service if they would. The supposition that such services would be continued through several days, is altogether probable, and accords with what is usual on festive occasions. It is remarkable that the King was willing to give them another trial to see whether they were disposed or not to worship the golden image. To this he might have been led by the apprehension that they had not understood the order, or that they had not y duly considered the subject, and possibly by respect for them as faithful officers, and for their countryman, Daniel. There seems, moreover, to have been in the mind of the Monarch, with all his pride, a readiness to do justice, and to furnish an opportunity of a fair trial, before he proceeded to extremities." - *Albert Barnes.*

However, if the young Hebrews had any thought that they would be exempt in the performance of this act of worship, their minds were disabused as they listened to the stern, harsh words of the great Monarch. "Now if ye be ready that at what time ye hear the sound of the cornet, ... and all kinds of music, ye fall down and worship the image which I have made; well: but if ye worship not, ye shall be cast the same hour into the midst of a burning fiery furnace; and who is that God that shall deliver you out of my hands."

The reply of these young Hebrews was calm, though firm and unflinching: "O Nebuchadnezzar, we are not careful\* to answer thee 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 the golden image which thou hast set up."

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\*The word rendered careful, means, according to Gesenius, to be needed or necessary. or necessary.

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It should be kept in mind that these words were spoken to an absolute monarch, one of that class of rulers who in such a case would very rarely listen to even any kind of excuse that might be made. However, Nebuchadnezzar had deigned to stoop from his lofty height to reason with these men and give them a chance to save themselves from this terrible punishment. It was utterly impossible for him to understand that there could be any reason whatever for such an act of disobedience. These young followers of Jehovah were aware of this, and knew that it would be impossible for them to make clear their position in the eyes of the great King.

### **"QUENCHED THE VIOLENCE OF FIRE"**

It should be remembered in this connection that the accusation made by the Chaldeans against them was a *double* one. Not only had they refused to prostrate themselves before the great image, but in addition to this they were not worshipers of Nebuchadnezzar's own gods. While the latter was no part of the offense committed by the young Hebrews on this particular occasion, nevertheless it had the effect of magnifying their offense in the eyes of the king. According to the prevailing views among the ancient heathen nations, all the gods of the nations were tolerated and even-respected; but if any one should maintain, as the Hebrews did, that all the heathen gods that were worshiped were false, it would be a serious offense against the State. On this account the three Hebrews would understand that it would be useless to make any explanation of their position. Therefore they did not attempt to do so, but committed their cases to the One who had said: "Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them."

It cannot be wondered at that Nebuchadnezzar, who was disposed to listen to any excuse they might have to make, and to give them another opportunity to obey his decree, became incensed at this answer. The words that follow show that his patience and leniency toward them, when he heard their words, ceased altogether. "Then was Nebuchadnezzar full of fury, and the form of his visage was changed against Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego; therefore he spake, and commanded that they should heat the furnace seven times more than it was wont to be heated." Then were the three faithful witnesses of Jehovah bound hand and foot, and cast into the furnace of fire. They had demonstrated to their God their loyalty to Him, even at the cost of their lives. They had committed their lives into the hands of Him whom they served. It was a matter for Him to decide what disposition would be made of that which they had committed into His care. They had given a faithful testimony to the one true God before the greatest monarch of the world, in the very presence of the assembled multitudes of his retainers. The whole matter, so far as this present life is concerned, might have ended here. This might have been the will of their

God. Indeed, we may safely say, that this has been the usual way God has dealt with His faithful witnesses who have committed their lives into His hands under similar circumstances. In this particular case, however, the will of God was different. It was His will to give to Nebuchadnezzar, and to the assembled thousands, another display of His almighty power.

The record informs us that so intense was the heat of the great furnace that those employed to cast them into it were burned to death. It was observed that the cords that bound these intrepid young men were in an instant burned. Nebuchadnezzar seems to have been the first one to note this; and he spake to his counselors, "Did not we cast three men *bound* into the midst of the fire?" The answer was, "True O king." Then Nebuchadnezzar who evidently had been greatly moved from the first by the whole occurrence, 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." The king then approached near to the mouth of the furnace, and "spake, and said, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, ye servants of the most high God, come forth, and come hither." Then the three young men came forth from the midst of the fire. "And the princes, governors, and captains, and the king's counselors, being gathered together, saw these men, upon whose bodies the fire had no power, nor was an hair of their head singed, neither were their coats changed, nor the smell of fire had passed on them."

### **THE GOD OF THE HEBREWS HONORED**

A great and wonderful miracle had been wrought by the God of the Hebrews. It was witnessed not alone by the great heathen Monarch, but by all that immense host that had been summoned by Nebuchadnezzar, as he supposed, to witness the dedication of the golden image, but, as God intended, to witness the display of His great power. "Skeptical criticism has railed out against all this, as showing too much of the wonderful to be believed. But with the Almighty, one thing is no harder than another. He can make a blazing sun in the heavens with as much ease, as make a daisy in the meadow. Some have urged that it was unfitting the Deity to show such wonders here. But who can decide what is and what is not becoming to a Being whose thoughts no man can fathom." It is not difficult for the reverent mind to see the wisdom and necessity for such a display of the great Jehovah's power at this particular time. Thousands of his chosen people were in servitude in this great empire. They had been sent there as an act of chastisement by their God mainly to purge them of their idolatries, and the usual ministries to this end were denied them in their captivity. Then too a vast number of people who knew not the true God, and who were without any appointed aid to assist them to an acquaintance with the superior power and majesty of the, Most High, also lived here.. Evidently in the Divine providence an immense concourse of people from all parts of the empire were gathered, and were made to see this remarkable exhibition of His almighty power. Taking into consideration

all these conditions and circumstances, we see a special reason why the Great Jehovah should on this occasion give a testimony of Himself as the true and only God. It is generally true that men judge of the wisdom and necessity of a thing by the effects produced.. This great miracle served to send forth over the world a testimony of the true God at a time when nearly all the world was plunged in the gross evils associated with the various forms of idolatry. Indeed it is here recorded that the Monarch, to whom had been committed the dominion of the whole world, gave a testimony on this very occasion in which he acknowledged a second time, that the God of the Hebrews was the great God of all. On witnessing this wonderful miracle Nebuchadnezzar thus addressed the vast assembly: "Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, who hath sent His angel, and delivered His servants that trusted in Him, and have changed the king's word, and yielded their bodies, that they might not serve, nor worship any god, except their own God." Furthermore, the great World-monarch issued a decree, and sent it all over his empire, "That every people, nation, and language, which speak any thing amiss against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, shall be cut in pieces; and their houses shall be made a dunghill; because there is no other god that can deliver after this sort. Then the king promoted Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, in the province of Babylon." It is not to be supposed that Nebuchadnezzar was caused to believe that there was only one true God. He had not yet reached that conclusion. His testimony was to the effect that there was no other god who had equal power with the God of the Hebrews. He was honest, and his honesty was shown in his willingness to admit that in the power he had seen exhibited, there was no god like that of the Hebrews.

### **PREPARE FOR FIERY TIMES**

There are many lessons which this record teaches. A noted writer has said: "On the whole front of it there flames in letters of blazing gold that there is an almighty, living, and independent God, unbound by Nature's laws and unlimited to natural forces, whose word is written in His Book, whose eye is upon His confiding servants, and who will never leave nor forsake them that put their trust in Him!

"From the innermost spirit of it there comes the proclamation that if any kings or dignitaries or commands of Church or State go against Jehovah's laws, or demand obedience against His Word, or undertake to keep conscience for the human soul, no true man of God dare obey them, nor shall he be the loser for his fidelity, no matter what penalties he may incur!

"Around it, and on all sides of it, there sounds the admonition to every right-meaning young man, however prosperous he may be, to prepare for fiery times: The world is under an erring rule-a rule which often makes the greatest blunders when it means the best. Envious and malicious eyes are

watching you, and eager to show their superior devotion by accusing you and bringing you into trouble. The way of faithfulness often lies through the fiery furnace, heated sevenfold to consume you. Therefore -prepare for fiery times, and think it not strange when they come.

"And in the whole make-up of it there stands memorialized for ever that *the only true expediency is inflexible principle*. It matters not for immediate consequences. God will make all right in the end to them that stand fast in truth and right. They are, after all, the true heroes, and shall not fail of their reward." -- *Voices From Babylon*, Joseph Seiss.

## WORDS OF ENCOURAGEMENT

Dear Brethren:

Loving greetings in the name of the dear Lord Last year when Brothers Streeter and Hoskins were with us at the Convention at the East Ham Town Hall, I made a promise to the former that I would like to give the amount of \$ ..... towards the publishing of the Revelation articles in book form. Business difficulties have prevented me, to a great extent, from fulfilling my promise before. I have sent the money to the BIBLE STUDENTS COMMITTEE, London, asking them to forward it to you with any other money they may be sending you. It is with much delight that I send what, after all, belongs to our loving Father, because when I offered myself in consecration to Him, I gave Him all and that of course included my money too. I am delighted too to think you have decided to publish this Series in book form, because I feel sure it is "meat in due season" to comfort and refresh "the household of faith" during the Harvest of this Gospel Age. I have never written to you before, although I have had much cause to do so and consequently feel rather ashamed; for I have received the HERALD regularly since the very commencement, and it has been a source of great comfort and help as we endeavor to walk along this "narrow way" leading to life. Whenever I open it I always feel confident of finding articles written in the same spirit as I believe our beloved Master would write them. The spirit of Love predominates in them and there is an entire absence of any bitterness, and at the same time the principles of righteousness, justice, and truth are upheld. While this spirit continues, it will always be a source of pleasure to me to continue to be a subscriber. The point which struck me so very favorably when you first started printing the HERALD was your decision not to enter into any controversy; and so far you have faithfully fulfilled that declaration. I *feel sure* it is the right course; it is far *better to* have this attitude which "builds up," though you may often be misunderstood and sometimes suffer wrong in consequence, than to use the Adversary's weapons of "pulling down" or "smiting."

As the time of our pilgrimage draws to a close, I see the necessity more than ever of letting the knowledge that has been so graciously imparted to us by our Heavenly Father do its transforming and sanctifying work in our hearts and lives so that all those beautiful graces of the Spirit may be cultivated more fully in each one who has covenanted to do His will. The word says "*Be ye doers of the word and not hearers only.*" Head knowledge should only be used as a stepping stone to *heart* knowledge.

"*Obedience*" seems to me to be the watchword for all the Lord's people at the *present time-for* we all know it was by the *disobedience* of one man that sin entered this world and it is by the *obedience* of one ... that many shall be made righteous.

Pray for me, dear brethren, that I, together with all the Lord's people, may be more zealous in His service and that I may "will" to do His will, even unto death. My prayer also ascends on your behalf that you may be kept pure in heart, and humble under His mighty hand, and that the Adversary's weapons although formed against you from time to time may never hurt you.

With much love in the Lord,

Your brother by His favor, H. L. H. -- *Eng.*

## **The Herald of Christ's Kingdom**

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### **OUTLOOK FROM THE WALLS OF ZION**

IN every hand there are manifestations in the religious world that the spirit of federation, of uniting organizational forces, continues on the increase; all of which as has been heretofore observed, is in full keeping with the prophetic description of the end of this dispensation. We quote the following account, which presents an interesting report of recent progress made in some quarters by certain leading denominations

"Two great bodies of churches, one in Canada and the other in Scotland, are about to be united. Their course of action indicates the deep feeling and wide movement among various religious denominations in favor of the smoothing out of unessential differences in creed and polity, and the drawing together of forces that unitedly will be able to do a finer and larger work for the spiritual life of mankind than it is possible for them to do separately.

"Three denominations, the Presbyterian, the Methodist and the Congregational, will form the union W Canada. For quarter, of a century they have thought of it, spoken of it, discussed every aspect of its imaginable advantages or disadvantages, and now they have agreed that

amalgamation will be an inestimable gain, and decided to effect it without any needless delay. The final vote of the general assembly of the Canadian Presbyterian Church was 26 to 129 on the adoption of the church union committee's report, recommending immediate action toward consummation of organic union, and the acceptance of parliamentary bills for governmental approval of the plan, which already has been ratified by the Methodist and Congregational Churches. Thus a powerful religious organization will be born, the Presbyterian Church having about 357,300 members, the Methodist Church 407,000, and the Congregational Church 32,000, making a total of 796,300. "In Scotland it is an older controversy that is being brought to an end. What is known as the disruption of the Church of Scotland took place eighty years ago. The seceding ministers, numbering 474 left the general assembly in protest against that connection of church and state which involved control of certain church affairs, including the appointment of ministers by the civil courts. Thus the Free Church of Scotland was brought into being, surrendering all state support in order to possess 'spiritual independence.' Four years later there was a further secession from the Established Church, and the United Presbyterian Church was founded. It and the Free Church joined forces in 1900, forming the United Free Church, and now this body enters into union with the 'Auld Kirk,' which will once more be the one big Presbyterian church of Presbyterian Scotland. A government committee has prepared a scheme for dealing with the property and endowments of the Established Church, whose general assembly has sanctioned the proposals by an overwhelming majority, and the next step will be a bill in Parliament to give effect to them. This union brings together 740,000 communicants of the elder church and 530,000 of the younger, making a total force of 1,270,000 for united action.

"The chairman of the government committee was Lord Haldane, a former lord chancellor of the United Kingdom. In one of his addresses he admirably expressed the idea of the union, saying: 'It is an idea which has been forced on us by the changes in the spirit of the age and by the necessities which are pressing on us. The church must enlarge the scope of its mission. It must more and more realize it is not in some different world, but just here and now is the place where its enterprise lies; and it must always have in mind that between religious and secular life there is no hard and fast line to be drawn, but that God is everywhere present. That being so, a new call has come which requires a changed church, a church not separated into sections, a church which can combine on this wider outlook, and devote itself with energy undiminished by the demands of denominational strife to a great calling, a calling not less than that of being the chiefest factor in holding up the standard of the highest life.' With that idea before them, those church unions in Canada and Scotland should be productive of great good in their respective communities." -- *Boston Herald*.

The great ecclesiastical leaders, laboring under the impression that the present religious forces, organizations, etc., in Christendom represent God's resources for saving civilization and recovering the world, appear of course to be following the very essence of wisdom in advocating the breaking down of denominational lines and the uniting of religious organizations and systems.

The uncovering of facts, however, in the light of the teachings of our Lord and the Apostles reveals that the union advocated in these days is not the one that is held up in the Scriptures as the ideal for Christ's followers. In the first place, if all those who compose the great church systems today were truly consecrated disciples of Christ, they would not be in this divided state. They would not be separated into great bodies between which there is much conflict of teaching and service. But the history of the Church shows, in harmony with the Bible, that wheat and tares have been growing together throughout the Age. That worldliness, false profession, and sectarianism long ago gained the ascendancy in the Christian profession, and that therefore the true Church composed of footstep followers of Christ, scattered throughout Christendom, have been and are comparatively insignificant.

The present move then, in the so-called religious world, toward the uniting of its various forces does not represent a uniting in the bonds of Christian love and consecration, but rather a federation of human organizations with the object in view of carrying out purely worldly and human schemes and projects, which are intended and supposed to be for humanity's conversion and uplift, but which are really no part of God's Plan for saving the world; His Plan for accomplishing that end being represented in the Kingdom of His dear Son established in power and glory at His return.

### **"THAT THEY ALL MAY BE ONE"**

The spirit of trusts and combinations, therefore, which is abroad in the world, and which is permeating everything, has the effect of combining congregations, combining denominations, and in general is leading on rapidly to the formation of great religious trusts, whose development will be a serious menace to the liberties of the Lord's truly consecrated people, but not an injury to their spiritual interests. On the contrary, it will prove a blessing to the Lord's "little flock" .in that it will more particularly differentiate them and confirm to them the teachings of the Scriptures, separating them the more completely from human systems, and binding the tares in bundles, all of which condition the Scriptures clearly predict for the end of this age as preceding the collapse of great Babylon. -- Rev. 18 :21.

Our Lord's prayer, "That they all may be one," has been fulfilled throughout the Age. All who have been truly His have had a oneness of heart, a oneness of purpose, a oneness of spirit, with the Father and with the Son-a fellowship Divine which cannot be produced by earthly creeds



and fetters. So it is today, and so it is always between those who are truly the Lord's. They know each other not by outward passwords or grips or signs, but by the touch of faith and love which it gives and which each recognizes. "By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, in that ye have love one for another." "We know we have passed from death unto life because we love the brethren." True, we love all men and seek to serve all as we have opportunity; but, as the Apostle explains, "especially the household of faith," especially those who love the Lord and are trusting in the precious blood, and are fully consecrated to Him and, so far as they are able, doing His will and seeking to further know that will day by day.

By and by the work of this Age of gathering the elect will be completed and all the faithful will be assembled in the Kingdom; glorified in power with all authority in heaven and in earth, they will constitute God's agency for instituting the great reform work affecting all the families of the earth according to the Divine promise, extending even to all those in the tomb as saith our Master, "The hour cometh when all in their graves shall hear the voice of the Son of God and come forth." They will have an opportunity to share in the restitution of all things spoken of by all the holy Prophets since the world began.

## **"MY SOUL, BE ON THY GUARD"**

WHILE, as the Apostle predicted, "perilous times" are upon us, in which some in the Church will "stumble" and some "fall," and when "the love of many shall wax cold," let us not forget that it is "he that endureth [faithfully] to the end [of his trial], the same shall be saved." Remember the Apostle's advice, to take trials and oppositions and misrepresentations cheerfully, joyously, patiently, *knowing* that, so endured, they will "work out for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." But, as the Apostle adds, to secure such blessed results from trials, persecutions, and oppositions, we must remember to "look not at the things that are *seen* [earthly things and prospects], but at things that are *unseen* [the heavenly and eternal things]." We are to endure "as seeing Him who is invisible." Greater is He that is with us than all that be against us. (Heb. 11:27; 1 John 4:3-8.) "Who is he that will harm you [really], if ye be followers of that which is good?" (Read 1 Pet. 3:13-16 ; Rom. 8:31-39. ) The oppositions of evil can work only good to "the elect," those who are called according to God's purpose. To all who are of the true Zion the promise is, "No weapon that is formed against you shall prosper."

When that noble servant of God, John Wesley, was zealous in opposing Satan, and preaching a full consecration to God, he provoked Satan's enmity, and the latter found mouthpieces amongst ambitious and jealous "false brethren" who spread abroad vile rumors from time to time, not only assailing his teachings, but even his moral character. His plan was to make no defense. He argued that if he should engage in personal disputes

it would be just what Satan would want -- a hindrance to his work. Finally, however, when a most malicious rumor, reflecting on his moral character, was started by some prominent persons, and the entire work seemed likely to be greatly injured by it, his brother Charles and some others came to him, and said, John, you must answer this charge or your reputation is gone.

John replied in substance thus, -- No; I will keep right along with my work. When I consecrated myself to the Lord, I gave Him my *reputation* as well as all else that I possess. The Lord is at the helm! Our Lord Jesus, by His faithfulness, "made Himself of no reputation," and was crucified as a blasphemer and between outlaws, yet He opened not His mouth! No, I will make no defense. A certain class, evil at heart, would believe the evil reports regardless of my denials; and those thus alienated will no doubt, as in the early Church, go "out from us because they were not of us." "The Lord knoweth them that are His," and will keep His own; and none shall pluck them out of His hand. Besides, the Lord may see that some are thinking of me, rather than of Him and His message which I seek to declare.

The results we all know. The Message of holiness with faith swept over the world, and its influence is not yet lost: And John Wesley is still loved for his work's sake in every civilized part of the world; but his traducers are forgotten. There is a lesson in this for all, as an illustration of the Lord's words -- "In quietness and in confidence shall be your strength." Wherefore, dearly beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which shall try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: but rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings, that when His glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy.-1 Pet. 4:12, 13.

## **SIMON PETER**

*"Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee."*  
-- John 21 :15-17.

ST. PETER the disciple was a grand character. like all strong characters, he had proportionate opportunities and liabilities to misuse his strength for evil: His life is indeed a most interesting study, and throughout the Gospel narratives have many opportunities of observing the generous, impetuous, wavering, noble, timid impulses of this thoroughly human but most lovable disposition.

"It would be hard to tell," says Dr. Hamilton, "whether most his fervor flowed through the outlet of adoration or activity. His full heart put force and promptitude into every movement. Is Master encompassed by fierce ruffians ? -- Peter's ardor flashes in his ready sword, and converts the Galilean boatman into soldier instantaneous. Is there a rumor of a

resurrection from Joseph's tomb? -- John's nimbler foot distances his older friend; Peter's eagerness outruns the serene love of John, and past gazing disciple he rushes breathless into the vacant sepulchre. the risen Savior on the strand? -- his comrades secure the net, turn the vessel's head for shore; but Peter plunges over vessel's side, and struggling through the waves, in his dripping coat falls down at his Master's feet. Does Jesus say, `Bring of fish ye have caught'? -- ere any one could anticipate the word, Peter's brawny arm is lugging the weltering net with its glittering spoil ashore, and every eager movement unwittingly is answering beforehand the question of his Lord, 'Simon, lowest thou me?' And that fervor is the best, which, like Peter's, and as occasion requires, can ascend in ecstatic ascriptions of adoration praise, or follow Christ to prison and to death; which concentrate itself on feats of heroic devotion, or distribute itself in the affectionate assiduities of a miscellaneous industry."

Another has most aptly summed up the life of St. Peter: "No character in Scripture history, we may even say in all literature, drawn for us more clearly or strongly than Peter's. In the Gospels, in the Acts, and in the Epistles it is the same man that stands out before us in dramatic distinctness. Always eager, ardent, impulsive, he is preeminently the man of action in the apostolic circle, and exhibits the defects of his qualities as well as their excellencies throughout life. His virtues and faults had their common root in his enthusiastic disposition; it is to his praise that along with the weed of rash haste, there grew more strongly his life the fair plant of burning love and ready reception of truth The life of Peter is peculiarly rich in instruction, warning, and comfort for the Christian, and his writings touch the very depths of Christian experience and soar to the utmost heights Christian hope."

Peter was first brought to the Lord and introduced to Him by his brother Andrew. We read that two of the Apostles who had been disciples of John the Baptist, were amongst the first to hear of Jesus. They had sought and found opportunity of conversing with Jesus at the place where He was making His home. (John 1:35-42) Andrew was one of these two disciples of John, and although the other is not definitely mentioned, it is the general supposition that it was the Apostle John himself, who seems have been of a very modest disposition, quite unwilling to make his own name very prominent in his writings. Thus on other occasions he mentions himself not by name but as "that disciple whom Jesus loved." -- John 13:23; 19:26.

## THE NEW NAME, PETER -- A STONE

Andrew and John both had brothers, and the implication of the Greek text seems to be that both at once sought their brothers, to bring them to the Lord, but that "Andrew *first findeth* his own brother Simon," and it may be surmised that John through modesty neglected here to mention that he also found his brother James, and brought him to the Lord.

When Peter was brought to the Lord, "Jesus looked upon him," or as we might express it, "read him through and through," and then said, Your present name is Simon, and you are the son of John, but you shall be called Cephas,--Hebrew for Peter (Greek, *petros*, a stone). This may be understood as a kind of prophecy on our Lord's part respecting a great change in Peter's character. Peter was naturally very impulsive--not sufficiently solid, too easily carried about; and yet our Lord evidently saw in him sterling qualities of heart, honesty, sincerity of purpose: and knowing the influence which His teachings and the Holy Spirit would exercise upon such a character, He foretold a change which would make of Peter one of the staunchest and most substantial of His corps of disciples. This prophecy of change was implied in the new name given him, signifying solidity--a stone--whereas his previous name, Simon, signified a listener.

Although Peter was the only one of the twelve whose name was thus changed we may readily suppose that the characters of all were considerably changed, under the influence of the great Teacher and of the Holy Spirit, which came upon them at Pentecost. And so it is with all who become the Lord's disciples: to enter the school of Christ and to remain there means, as the Apostle expresses it, that we will be "*transformed* by the renewing of our minds." And the Lord promises all such that they shall have "a new name," expressive of the new character, but which no man can appreciate except those who receive it -- the name of Christ. -- Rev. 2:17.

Now the proper time came in the ministry of Jesus that the disciples should recognize definitely His office, and His question regarding what people in general said of Him was merely to introduce the matter to the disciples, and give the opportunity to ask them, "Whom say ye that I am?" Then it was that Peter displayed not only the strength of his faith in the Lord, but also his own strength of character and his zeal, answering promptly, "Thou art the Christ [Hebrew, the Messiah], the Son of God--the Living." And although we may safely assume that Peter spoke for all of the Apostles, in harmony with our Lord's question, nevertheless, the fact that he was the spokesman would imply that he was the most thoroughly imbued with the sentiment that he expressed. His statement is quite comprehensive, too: not only did he recognize Jesus as the Messiah, but he recognized His Divine authority and paternity; and while it is possible that Peter meant to say "the Son of the living God"--the Son of

the God who is the Author of all life--yet it is probable that he meant more than this. It is probable that he meant, Thou art the Messiah, the Son of God, the Living One--the One who has a right to life according to the Law, while all others, being imperfect, are under condemnation of the Law and under sentence of death.

Evidently it was a refreshment of heart to our Lord to have this full and frank statement from Peter. One, at least, of His disciples had profited by the lessons of the preceding three years, and had come to the point of full assurance of faith in Him; and the others, while less expressive, were probably making progress nevertheless, and would be greatly helped and strengthened and built up by this good confession.

### **PETER A USEFUL STONE IN GOD'S HOUSE**

Our Lord's response, "Blessed art thou, Simon, son of Jona," does not so much signify, I wish or will grant a blessing upon you because of this confession, but rather, You have been blessed of God greatly in that you have been enabled to discern this great truth, hidden from so many. Flesh and blood (mankind in general) do not so believe, and could not have so taught you nor convinced you; you have been drawn of my Father in heaven, and through responding to the leadings of His providence the eyes of your understanding have been opened that you are thus able to see and appreciate this great truth.

Then followed a blessing, a prophecy of coming usefulness, partly, at least, the result of this good confession, as it was the result of a proper condition of heart: "Thou art Peter [*petros*, a stone, a rock] and upon this rock [*petra* -- *this* great stone or rocky mass -- the great truth which you have confessed, namely, My Messiahship] will I build My Church and the gates of Hell shall not prevail against it."

The Lord did not propose to build His Church upon Peter, but upon the great truth which the Father had laid as a foundation for His plan and had revealed to Peter and which Peter had so nobly expressed. But Peter, indeed, might be one of the living stones of the spiritual temple erected upon this great foundation-fact. Peter himself. gives us this interpretation of the matter in his Epistle (1 Pet. 2:4.-7), assuring us that the whole Church as a building of God is growing more and more complete through the addition of each member, who, as a living stone; is built up into and under the headship of Christ, the great chief corner-stone and cap-stone of the whole the figure being that of a pyramid.

The same thought is given in the description of the New Jerusalem, in which Peter is represented by one of the Twelve Foundation Stones, the other Apostles being equally foundation stones, and all the faithful in Christ being built upon the foundation of the Divine Plan, and upon the testimony of these twelve Apostles.--Rev. 21 12.

This was probably the first intimation the Lord had given of His intention to *build* a Church, or that any period of time would elapse between the work He was then doing and the establishment of the Kingdom. This was a gradual way of bringing great matters to the attention of the Apostles--matters which necessarily would conflict with many of the ideas and hopes that already had taken possession of their hearts.

Our Lord's declaration, that the gates of hell, the gates of the grave, shall not prevail against His Church, signified not that His followers should not enter those portals of death, but that eventually those prison-doors of death would open--would not be permitted forever to prevail against the faithful.

With its strong bars and gates, the grave, shall not prevail, shall not in the end conquer, but He who was raised from the dead by the power of the Father will raise us up also, making us also victors over death and over the grave, so that eventually we can say, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" But we cannot say this so long as we are subject to death, nor so long as we are under death's power; but only when the deliverance shall come in the resurrection.

### **PETER A STUMBLING--STONE, AN ADVERSARY**

Having prepared the minds of the disciples, by the foregoing declaration, that *hades*, death, would not be permitted to triumph over His Church, etc., our Lord from that time forward began gradually to break to them information respecting His own decease and His resurrection from the dead. It was then that the same noble Peter forgot himself, as we would say, and undertook to correct the Lord and to outline for Him other things. He was moved to this, not merely by selfish motives of prejudice and hopes of sharing in the Kingdom, and avoiding the ignominy, but doubtless also by his love for the Lord and his desire to see Him honored and exalted, rather than to be set at nought and killed. But, as on another occasion this noble Apostle said things "not knowing what he said," so now he evidently did not realize the import of his language, and how, if it were followed, it would mean to our Lord the rejection of the Father's Plan and the substitution therefor of a plan more agreeable to the flesh.

The text says that "Peter took Him," and this may we understand to signify that Peter took Him apart from the others--it was a private interview and exhortation, and no doubt Peter intended to bring in various supporting arguments; for instance, that the disciples would be discouraged with such talk, etc. However, he only "began," and did not get to finish his argument, the Master being so full of the spirit of loyalty to the Father and His Plan that He could not even endure a suggestion to the contrary, and must needs hasten to repudiate such a disloyal suggestion. His answer was a severe rebuke to Peter, yet doubtless was a blessing to him so long as he lived, and probably helped him afterward to be much more modest in the matter of opposing his plan to that of the Lord.

When our Lord said, "Get thee behind me, Satan," He did not mean that He considered Peter possessed by the Adversary: rather, the word Satan in the original is "Adversary," and was properly used in respect to any person taking a position adverse or in opposition to another. *The Adversary* is called Satan, that word being used for him as a proper name. Our Lord turned from Peter at this time, and addressed His words so that all the Apostles might hear Him, that the matter might be the more impressive and all the more a valuable lesson to them : .that they might all know that their Master never compromised His Father's will in any sense or degree. "Get behind me, Adversary; thou savorest [partakeest] not the things that be of God, but the things that be of men"-you are viewing matters not from God's standpoint, but from the standpoint of fallible, fallen men.

So it is today, and ever has been with the Church, the Body of Christ; if they are intent upon following the footsteps of the Lord they must expect adversaries to arise who will seek to turn them away from the path of sacrifice and duty: to make it seem too difficult, or to attract their attention to other plans or methods less costly -- more in harmony with the fleshly mind. We should remember the Master's course and take a similar one, and point out to these, if they be friends, and in the truth (and such. they frequently are, as was Peter), that their influence is being exercised in a. wrong direction, against the truth, against our best interests, against the Divine Plan, and hence that they are not only adversaries to us, but also adversaries to the Lord. We should thus seek to reclaim them and to help them to walk in the same way with us-instead of leaving the narrow way to follow their kindly meant but pernicious influence.

The word here rendered "offence" would more properly be translated, as in the Revised Version, "a stumbling block," or a stone of stumbling. Thus we see-that it was the same Peter whose noble confession had so refreshed the Lord and blessed the disciples and Himself, and- who on this account was designated a stone, indicative of strong character, that was now, by reason of the same strength of character, strong-mindedness, strong will, in danger of becoming, not a stone in the Lord's Temple, but a stumbling stone. And should some of the Lord's people, strong in character, become stumbling stones to us, we have here our Lord's illustration of our proper course-to turn from them, refusing to be stumbled, refusing to be led away from the consecration which we have made.

### **PETER WITH HIS RISEN LORD**

Finally a further and deeper insight into the heart and life of, the Apostle Peter is furnished us in those scenes which close the Gospel narrative. It is the privilege of this Apostle with the others to be with our Lord during His dark hours in Gethsemane and to witness the tragic end of His earthly career. But St. Peter's career does not end at this point; for it is his unspeakable joy to have revealed to him his Master's resurrection. He is brought face to face with the risen Lord whom he had only a few days

previously denied with cursing; but the days in between had been days of deep penitence and sorrow. Back to the old fishing business again went several of the Apostles with apparently Peter as their leader.

In the dawn of the morning Jesus appeared to them as a man, standing on the seashore. He called out to them to inquire if they had any fish, as though He would purchase. They replied that they had toiled all night and caught nothing. The Stranger then suggested that they cast the net on the other side of the ship, and so humbled were they 'by their disappointment that they did not stop to argue the question and to declare that they were old experienced fishermen, and that they did not know whether or not He had any experience whatever; they merely concluded that as they had been lifting and casting the net all night they might just as well do -it again, and thus demonstrate to the Stranger that there were no fish in that vicinity. But behold! immediately the net filled with great fish, so that these seven strong men (Peter, Thomas, James, John, Nathaniel, and two others whose names are not given) were unable to draw it, and were obliged to drag it ashore. Immediately the disciples grasped the thought that the Stranger on the shore was Jesus.

They breakfasted with Jesus, for they knew Him-not by any marks of nails, but by the miracle which He had performed. We read rather peculiarly, "None of them durst ask Him, knowing it was the Lord"; they were so sure that it was He that they could. not think of even seeming to question the fact by inquiry. The conversation while they breakfasted is not recorded, the Evangelist coming directly to the important words by our Lord addressed to Peter, the senior and leader of this new fish business partnership. He addressed Peter, not as He had been accustomed, by his new name, Peter, but by his old name, Simon, possibly as an intimation to Peter that he had not manifested in the last few days the rock-like qualities implied in his surname, and was now inclined to leave the work for the Church for secular business. And the inquiry was most pointed, "Lovest thou Me more than these ?" -- boats, nets, fishing tackle, etc. ? You started out to be My disciple, and now I ask the question, In which place is your heart-with Me in the service of the Kingdom, or in the fishing business.? Peter's answer was prompt, "Lord, thou knowest that I love *thee*." Jesus responded then, "Feed my lambs" -- my little ones -- instead of longer following the fishing business. Then Jesus said the second time the same thing, and Peter made the same reply, and then our Lord answered, "Take care of my sheep" -give your thought, attention, care, to them, rather than to these fishing implements, boats, etc. Jesus ,asked him the third time the same question. Peter was grieved with this: it seemed .to imply doubt on the Lord's part, and perhaps the third time reminded him that he had denied the Lord three times, and that now the Lord was requiring him three times to confess his love for Him. It touched a very tender spot in Peter's heart and experiences, and we may be sure that it was not done by our Lord, even in this delicate manner, with a view merely to pain Peter, but with a view to his blessing, his profit. Peter's confession this time was



still stronger: "Lord, thou knowest that I love thee." Jesus said to him, "Feed my sheep."

### **PETER WISELY AND GENTLY REPROVED**

So far as the record shows these questions respecting his present love were the only reproof our Lord gave Peter on account of his temporary deflection and denial of His cause; and here we have a lesson which many of the Lord's people will do well to lay closely to heart. Many feel as though they must exact from a brother or a sister a very decided apology for any act of discourtesy, even though .much less important than Peter's misdeed.

We are not to attempt to judge and to punish one another for misdeeds, but rather to remember that all this is in the hands of the Lord; we are not in any sense of the word to avenge ourselves or to give a chastisement or recompense for evil. This is not to be understood as annulling parental obligation to judge, and chasten their children; though the principle of love is to have full control there also, to the extent of our judgment. We are to have kindness; love, and benevolence toward all, especially toward those who are followers of Jesus. As for Peter and his denial of the Lord, and as to the offences which may come to us through brethren, we may know that under Divine providence some corrective penalty or discipline, direct or indirect, always follows; but we are not to attempt to inflict those penalties, nor to impress a condemnation upon those- who are in error and who realize their error, but rather to sympathize with them wisely, by helping them to learn the good lessons.

On the other hand, however, we would all have considered it a noble act on Peter's part had he fallen at our Lord's feet at his first opportunity and entreated His forgiveness for the weaknesses of the past. We would have loved and honored him the more for so hearty a manifestation of his repentance: indeed, although the account does not so state, he may have done this. And brethren who at any time trespass upon the rights, interests or feelings of others, however unintentionally, should be prompt and hearty in their apologies; even though brethren filled with love would not demand this as a condition of fellowship.

### **THE GREAT COMMISSION -- "FEED MY SHEEP"**

In replying to Peter our Lord uses three different Greek words in His three different exhortations: the first time He exhorts him to feed the lambs; the second time to care for or tend the sheep; the third time to feed the weak or delicate sheep. This gives us three views of the Lord's flock. There are the young, the beginners, the lambs, the babes in Christ, undeveloped in Christian character, who need special feeding with the truth-"the milk *of* the Word." Secondly, there are the more matured sheep of the Lord's flock, of riper knowledge and character, who have learned to attend to their own feeding upon the precious truth, but who, nevertheless, need

tending or guidance, direction, oversight. Thirdly, there are the weak sheep, .who for the time ought to be strong, ought to be able to feed themselves upon the bounties which the Lord has graciously provided in His Word, but who, through weaknesses of the flesh, or besetments, or bad provender, or some reason; have not made progress, and are therefore weak in the faith. These are to be fed, cared' for. And all of these matters are parts of a bishop's or overseer's duty in the Lord's flock.

While the Lord's words were addressed specially to Peter, as the leader. of the group, undoubtedly the instructions were -meant also for all the "eleven," for the Apostles were all bishops, all caretakers of the Lord's flock. And the same message is applicable, though not in the same degree, to all ministers of the truth today; whoever, by the grace of God, is placed in a position of opportunity to feed the Lord's flock should consider it one of the highest privileges of life, and should gladly lay aside every weight and hindrance, that he might thoroughly enjoy and perform this service. Thus the Apostle said to the elders at Ephesus, "Take heed, therefore, unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over which the Holy Spirit hath made you overseers, to feed the Church of God."--Acts 20 :28.

These three classes of the Lord's flock are to be found today: the young, the advanced and strong, and the weak and delicate, who need special assistance. Of this latter class many today, are in Babylon, and need the helping hand which the Lord's people are able to extend to them -- they are weak; impoverished through lack of nourishment, through a famine, not of bread nor of water, but for hearing of the Word of the Lord. (Amos 8:11.) They have been hearing the words of human theory and "tradition of the elders" for a long time, and have been starving upon its inconsistencies.; and so, wherever found, they are hungering and thirsting for the Truth, and need that Peter and all of the Lord's followers shall do with their might what they are able to do to deliver such from the chains of error and darkness by which they are held -- to liberate them and bring them in contact with the spiritual food which the Heavenly Father is now so abundantly supplying.

In view of Peter's prompt and unhesitating answers respecting his devotion and love, the Lord gave a prophecy indicating that he would indeed be faithful to the last; and implying that he would be a martyr by crucifixion, his hands being extended. And tradition tells us that Peter was faithful even unto death, and that being ordered to be put to death by crucifixion by Nero, at his own request he was executed head downward, as being unworthy, according to his own statement, to be crucified as was his Lord.

What an inspiration there is to all followers of Christ in this noble life! *His* was indeed a worthy example of obedience to his own timely admonition, "Wherefore, gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ." -- 1 Pet. 1:13.

## "IN MY NAME"

There were only two or three of us  
Who came to the place of prayer,  
Came in the teeth of the driving storm;  
But for that we did not care,  
Since after our hymns of praise had risen,  
And our earnest prayers were said,  
The Master Himself was present there,  
And He gave us the living bread.

We noted the look in each other's face,  
So loving, and glad, and free;  
We felt His touch when our heads were bowed,  
We heard His "Come to Me!"  
Nobody saw Him lift the latch,  
And none unbarred the door;  
But "Peace" was His token in every heart,  
And how could we ask for more?

Each of us felt the relief from sin,  
Christ's purchase for one and all;  
Each of us dropped his load of care,  
And heard the Heavenly call;  
And over our spirits a blessed calm  
Swept in from the jasper Sea,  
And strength was ours for the toil of life  
In the days that were yet to be.

It was only a handful gathered in  
To that little place of prayer,  
Outside were struggle and strife and sin,  
But the Lord Himself was there.  
He came to redeem the pledge He gave  
Wherever His loved ones be,  
To give His comfort and joy to them,  
Though they count but two or three.

## WALKING WITH GOD

*"Enoch walked with God: and was not; for God took him."-Gen. 5:24.*

THE text constitutes a most remarkable biographical sketch of anti-deluvian times. Though brief, it is most suggestive and instructive. . We, are informed by the Apostle Jude that Enoch was the seventh in the direct line from Adam, and that he was a prophet. We are told by another

Apostle that he was translated, that he should not see death. In the text we are told that God took him; where, we are not informed. He was not taken to heaven, however, because our Lord tells us that up to His day, no man had ascended to heaven. We need not, therefore, speculate with regard to the whereabouts of Enoch, but can afford to await God's time for making it known.

The words, "Enoch walked with God," give us a most wonderful and unique picture of a man who lived in fellowship with God for three whole centuries. He is mentioned as one of the cloud of witnesses, and held up as an example to the Lord's saints in this Gospel Age, an example of faith and obedience to God. "By, faith Enoch walked with God," the inspired Apostle in the Epistle to the Hebrews informs us. Enoch, therefore, is a most interesting figure, a grand illustration, a noble reminder of even greater possibilities and privileges in walking with God measurable with our increased light and divinely given privileges.

### **CONSECRATED TO HOLY LIVING**

Enoch's name is very suggestive. Its meaning -- "dedicated," "consecrated," "disciplined" -- gives us the key-note of his success in walking with God. His name then, as well as the brief statement concerning him, shows us that he had consecrated himself to God. In other words, he had given into God's keeping his life, his being. God was to have the right of way -- to do with him as He chose. While it is true that the reward in the future life that awaits Enoch is not the same as that of the saints of the present time, nevertheless, his consecration meant to him, living a holy life, a life pleasing to God. As has been said concerning the yielding up of the life to God: "This is consecration and this is the gateway of every holy and successful life. Only the lives that are given to Him in absolute possession, will He undertake to be responsible for, and there is nothing that He cannot, and will not do, for a life that is utterly His own. We are not told that Enoch was holy, sinless, useful, and wonderful, but simply that he 'walked with God.' "

Is this not the true secret of Scriptural holy living? Indeed, it is; and in the measure we yield our wills unto God, in the measure our hearts, our lives are devoted to Him, in that measure do we please and give honor to Him. All that is worth anything in our Christian life comes to us as the result of a union with Christ by faith and no more belongs to us in the sense of being a part of ourselves or something for which we may take credit than the clothes we wear, or the air we breathe. The inspired Apostle in his Epistle to the Ephesians said that the work of grace in our salvation leaves no room for us to boast, either at its beginning, or along the way of our progress in the development of Christian character and works. "For we are saved by grace, through faith, and that not of ourselves; it is the gift of God; not of works lest any man should boast. For we are His workmanship created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God bath before ordained

that we should walk in them." (Eph. 2:8-10.) "Walking with God, therefore, is a Divine life in which we are constantly held in dependence upon Him, apart from, whom, we cannot take a step alone."

The figure of "walking" used in the text suggests something very practical. It presents to our minds the thought of "plodding along the pathways of daily commonplace duty. To live the Christian life it is necessary that we, like Enoch, walk with God, and thus have His help in the every-day duties-in the family, the workshop, the field, the farm-, the schoolroom, the office, .and in the hard and difficult places of trial, toil, and fierce temptation." It is in these places that we are called to be His witnesses in the world.

Again, the figure of "walking wig God," suggests the thought of having been reconciled to Him, by the operation of His grace, without which, none could live in His presence. It suggests the thought of ,friendship, of close acquaintance. We are not informed just how God made known to Enoch His way of reconciling the sinful world unto Himself in Christ. We maybe assured, however, that a sufficient knowledge was given him to enable him to lay hold by faith of the fact that God was .pleased that he should have His fellowship. We may be sure that he must have desired the friendship and companionship of God, and therefore his tastes and affinities were towards Him. God Himself has said, "How can two walk together except they be agreed?" and the expression, "Enoch walked with God," implies similarities in tastes, and a conformity of Enoch's will to God his almighty Savior, Friend, and Companion.

### **SEARCHING QUESTIONS**

If it was Enoch's privilege to have such intimate fellowship and companionship with God by faith, in those far off days, it surely is no less our privilege in these days. This being true, is it not to the point to ask ourselves the question, Have we thus come to walk with God? Have we that fellowship and communion with Him which He was so pleased to grant Enoch? Has there come into our lives such a manifestation of God's presence? Have we partaken of such a measure of the spirit, mind, disposition of our Master, Christ, that as it was of old with Peter and John, "all men take knowledge of us that we have been with Jesus"? Do the lives we live before our fellowmen bear the Divine stamp and reveal to others the Divine Presence? How pertinent and yet how searching is the question, Has God's presence become such a reality to us that our desires, our affections, our longings, instinctively turn to God; wherever we are? Are we always found in that kind of company, in those scenes and circumstances in which we may be sure that He is with us? or do we sometimes find ourselves in places in which we instinctively feel that we would prefer He did not know we were there?

Again, this figure of "walking with God" is most expressive, and suggests a characteristic that is very well expressed in the term devoutness. One has

described this as "the flavor, the fragrance, the finer quality of piety--that something that makes the rose a rose, the diamond a diamond, and gives to some of music's tones a touch of sacredness and selectness that no language could explain. In this age of intense practical tendencies there is need of a revival of the spirit of devoutness. We see it in the fervid *'Religious Letters'* of Samuel Rutherford, which read like messages from the heavenly land. We are told that it so covered the face of Robert Murray McCheyne with chastened glory, that sometimes to look at him broke his audience into tenderness, and his simplest tones brought tears. It is that fine quality of sacredness which comes from close association with the Divine Being, and which left upon the faces of Peter and John, in the council of old, such a depth of supernal glory, that even the magistrates that hated them `took knowledge that they had been with Jesus.' It is the spirit of Mary sitting at the feet of Jesus, absorbing and reflecting His spirit. It can have no counterfeit or imitation. It bears its own credentials, and those who have it are quickly recognized as having been with Jesus, and still bearing on their faces the halo of His presence. God give us the spirit of heavenly mindedness; this touch of God, that we may better represent Him in the godless age and world."

### **THE LIFE OF PRAYER**

Such a walk with God is not an impractical ideal. Indeed to a greater or less extent it describes every truly consecrated one. It is expressed and described the most forcefully in the words of the Divine Master: "How is it" said one of Jesus' disciples, "that Thou wilt manifest Thyself to us and not unto the world." Jesus answered and said unto him, "If a man love Me, he will keep My words; and My Father will love him, and We will come unto him, and make Our abode with him." (John 14:22-24.) This walk with God, with Christ, is a walk that is marked by many a silent prayer, many an utterance of praise, of thanksgiving, and many an hour of close and intimate communion with our Master that cannot be described by words. It may, become a habit with us, and so real will become our sense of dependence upon Him and submission to His will in the daily, even the hourly circumstances and conditions of life, that we need no voice to tell us that He is near. It is, however, a walk of faith "By faith Enoch walked with God." "The just shall live by faith." Were it not that we are made conscious of our continual acceptance in Him, "in whom we have redemption through His blood"; were it not that we have the full assurance that we are made acceptable in Him, the blessed realization of walking with God would not be possible. The Christian poet has expressed this walk of faith in the beautiful words

"We walk by faith, He wills it so,  
And *marks the path* that we should go,  
And when at times, our sky is dim,  
He gently draws us close to Him.

"We walk by faith, but not alone,  
Our shepherd's tender voice we hear,  
And feel His hand within our own,  
And know that He is always near."

It is said of Abraham that when he was called to go into a land which he should afterward receive for an inheritance, he obeyed, *not knowing whither he went*. It was with him a walk of faith and not of sight. However, faith has the word of God to rest upon. Faith becomes 'faith only' when it obeys that word. When we can see, it is not faith, but sight. In crossing the ocean one has a good illustration of this principle of faith in God's presence. As the vessel glides swiftly along; there is seen ahead no path upon the sea, nor sign of the shore. And yet at noon time, day by day, the one who is guiding the vessel, marks our path upon the chart as accurately as if there had followed us a great chalk line upon the sea. Always at noon time we know just where we are. And when we come within twenty miles of the land, we know where we are as exactly as if we had seen it all three thousand miles ahead. How had our pilot measured and marked out our course? How did he know where we were with nothing visible on the sea to guide the vessel? Day by day he had taken his instruments, and looking up to the sky had fixed his position and course by the sun. In this way he knew the particular point on the sea, toward which to steer his vessel. In order that he might keep a straight course, he watched closely the compass. "He was sailing by the heavenly and not the earthly lights."

And so we have a chart, God's Word, that not only locates, but describes the place to which we are sailing; we have the compass, the precepts of that Word, that enables us to steer a straight course. There are the heavenly lights, that enable us day by day to take observations, and thus to discover just where we are, and what progress we are making in our course over the-sometimes calm and sometimes tempestuous -sea of life. The intelligent believer understands, of course, that this figure of walking with God does not mean that God in person is really with us, but rather that His Word, His Spirit, His providence, become as useful to us by faith as though He were walking before, beside, and behind us. His Word becomes a lamp to guide our feet and a light to show us the path that we should walk in; and not the least important, His Word, that He has magnified above all His name, becomes to us His voice. "I will instruct thee, and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go I will guide thee with Mine eye." (Psa. 32:8.) We learn in this most wonderful promise that God sees the path, although it is invisible to us. He tells us that He looks out over the path, speaks words of instruction, and points out the way.

### **PROMISES TO THOSE WHO WALK WITH GOD**

Another promise is, "The steps of a good man are ordered of the Lord, and He delighteth in his way." (Psa. 37:23.) In this promise we are told that not

only will He guide us in a general way, but in each successive step. The Psalmist, who had learned by long experience the lesson of walking with God, thus expresses himself: "Truly God is good to Israel, even to such as are of a clean heart." However, he goes on to relate a previous experience which warns us of the necessity of keeping our eyes on our Heavenly Companion and off others: "But as for me," he says, "my feet were almost gone; my steps had well nigh slipped. For I was envious at the foolish, when I saw the prosperity of the wicked. For there are no bands in their death; but their strength is firm. They are not in trouble as other men; neither are they plagued like other men ... Thus my heart was grieved and I was pricked in my reins. So foolish was I, and ignorant: I was as a beast before Thee." When, however, he got his eyes back where they should be, he said: "Nevertheless I am continually with Thee: Thou hast holden me by Thy right hand. Thou shalt guide me with Thy counsel, and afterwards receive me to glory. Whom have I in heaven but Thee, and there is none upon earth that I desire beside Thee, My flesh and my heart faileth, but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion forever ... But it is good for me to draw near to God: I have put my trust in the Lord God, that I may declare all His works."--Psa. 73: 1-5, 21-28.

God's promises to His trusting ones go even further than those already quoted. It is good to know that He sees our path; it is good to hear His voice speaking to us in His Word; it is good to have His counsel. The pathway at times may seem to be blocked up, and He has promised to go before us and remove the obstructions. We believe that the words addressed to one of old may be laid hold of by us to-day: "I will go before thee, and make the crooked places straight." --Isa. 45 : 2.

Again we are told by an Apostle who had experienced the blessedness of walking with God that "If any of you lack wisdom let him ask of God, who giveth to all liberally and upbraideth not; but let him ask in faith, nothing wavering." (Jas. 1:5.) This promise covers every need of God's people. It not only promises wisdom, but it enables us also to distinguish between the wisdom of God and the wisdom of men, thus causing us to know whether we are possessors of this heavenly wisdom and exhibiting it in all our dealings with our fellowmen. "The wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy."--Jas. 3:17.

These promises, however, as also all others contained in God's Word, are conditional.. It will be well that we observe these conditions. There are seven to which we call attention. First, there will be required a full committal; not only of the matter desired, but of ourselves, of all we have, into His hands. In other words, it is to the truly consecrated that these promises belong. We read: "Trust in ,the Lord with all throe heart, and lean not unto throe own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths." -- Prow. 3:5, 6.



Second, there is also required a full submission to His will and providences. This will mean that we believe His word, which tells us that "all things work together for good to them that love God, who are the called according to his purpose." "If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine." "Not my will, but throe be done."

Third, distrust in our self. "I am the vine, ye are the' branches : He that abideth in Me and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit; *for without [margin, severed from] Me ye can do nothing:* - -John 15.5.

Fourth, a firm confidence in God's desire and willingness to guide us.

Fifth, obedience to His Word. "And this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He heareth us; and if we know that He hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of Him." (1 John 5:14, 15.) "Beloved if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God. And whatsoever we ask, we receive of Him, because we keep His commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in His sight. And this is His, commandment, that we should believe on the name of His Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as He gave us commandment."--1 John 3:21, 22.

Sixth, patience is another condition required in order to realize His presence and guidance. "For ye have need of patience, that after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the [fulfillment of] promise." -- Heb. 10: 36.

Seventh, and finally, there must in all matters be a desire that the answers to our petitions shall be always for our best spiritual good.

## **DANIEL THE BELOVED OF JEHOVAH**

### SERIES VI

#### **NEBUCHADNEZZAR'S SECOND DREAM; HIS THIRD TESTIMONY TO JEHOVAH**

*"Nebuchadnezzar the king, unto all people, nations, and languages, that dwell in all the earth: Peace be multiplied unto you. I thought it good to show the signs and wonders that the high God hath wrought toward me. How great are His signs! and how mighty are His wonders! His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and His dominion is from generation to generation."-Dan. 4:1-3.*

IN considering this chapter the first thing that comes to our attention is that it is a state document, containing a proclamation or decree issued by Nebuchadnezzar to all peoples of his vast empire, written either by Nebuchadnezzar himself or by Daniel at his dictation. It is probably the only complete state paper that has come down to us from those times. The

only way we have of determining when the events described in this chapter occurred is from the statement, "I Nebuchadnezzar was at rest in mine house, and flourishing in my palace." (Verse 4.) It would, seem from this that his career as a conqueror was over. He had become the master of a large portion of the known world. The great city and province of Babylon had become at this time, under his hand, one of the great wonders of the world. The archives of history give no record of another earthly king so sublime. While it is doubtless true that the three other empires, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome, which were symbolized by other parts of the image of the king's dream, spread over a larger territory than that of Babylon, nevertheless, there never was so magnificent an empire as the one, Nebuchadnezzar had succeeded in consolidating and establishing. "Even to this day," says an eminent writer, "the whole territory of Babylon, north, south, east, and west, tells of him, and attests the grandeur of his reign, beyond that of any one other man that has ever lived. Ninus and Semiramis are said to have done much to make it illustrious. But the Babylon of Nebuchadnezzar was tenfold more what he found it than the Rome of Augustus Caesar was more than the preceding Rome of the Republic, or the Paris of the Napoleons was more than the Paris of the First Revolution. The old Babylon occupied but one side of the river; Nebuchadnezzar re-formed it on that side, and extended it to equal greatness on the other, connecting the two with splendid bridges, lining the river with walls and gates, and surrounding the whole with tremendous enclosures, such as perhaps never existed anywhere but there. He built a second palace, a very wonder of architecture, the grounds of which were ornamented with, those famous artificial mountains and hanging gardens constructed in imitation of the Median hills which his Median wife so missed in the flat country around Babylon. But this was only a fraction of his works. Explorers report the ruins of Babylonia as spread over two hundred square miles, and that nine tenths of the bricks found all over this space are stamped with Nebuchadnezzar's name. Sir Henry Rawlinson writes : 'I have examined the bricks in situ belonging, perhaps, to one hundred different towns and cities in the neighborhood of Bagdad, and I never found any other legend than that of Nebuchadnezzar, son of Nabopolassar, king of Babylon.' Another of these indefatigable antiquarians, the Rawlinsons writes: 'It is scarcely too much to say that but for Nebuchadnezzar, the Babylonians would have had no place in history. At any rate, their actual place is owing almost entirely to this prince, who, to the military talents of an able general, added a grandeur of him on a par with the greatest builders of antiquity.'"

The remarkable incident recorded in this chapter then seems to have occurred at a time when there remained nothing more to satisfy the ambition of Nebuchadnezzar or to add to his glory as a king. It was at a time in this great Monarch's career when he seems to have reached the zenith of his power and glory, when he had nothing to do but to meditate upon his glory and the vastness of his dominion, and congratulate himself

in what his wisdom had accomplished. As we consider carefully all that is related in this book, as well as in other books of the Bible about Nebuchadnezzar, we cannot but see that Jehovah was dealing in a special manner with this Monarch, not only as a ruler but as a man. It is very significant that twice already in the book of Daniel we have recorded that Nebuchadnezzar received remarkable displays of Jehovah's great power. Twice prior to this incident had he acknowledged and confessed before his whole empire that Daniel's God was a "God of gods and a King of kings."

It would also seem evident that Nebuchadnezzar was aware of the reason why the Israelites were in Babylon. He must have been intimately acquainted with Jeremiah, from whom, as well as from Daniel, he had heard the predictions concerning himself, and his being used as an agency in connection with the captivity of the Israelites. He had shown his good will and favor to Jeremiah by instructing his general, Nebuzar-adan, to care for Jeremiah after the capture of Jerusalem, and to see that all his wants were provided for. He had witnessed the fulfillment of Jeremiah's predictions concerning himself, and therefore had been given convincing evidence that Jeremiah, as well as Daniel, was a prophet of Jehovah. He had been told in words not to be mistaken, that the "God of heaven had given him a kingdom, honor, and glory," etc. He had received clear evidence that the chosen people of Jehovah were under his control, by God's permission; and that they were under the Divine protection, in accordance with the Divine purpose.

Nebuchadnezzar was now to witness one more display of Jehovah's power. This one was to be a display of His judgment, even as the servitude of Israel was a display of Jehovah's judgment upon that nation. This judgment, however, was to come upon himself. It was to be a disciplinary, corrective judgment. How would he receive it? The sequel of the narrative informs us, and as in this account, as far as we can learn, we have related the last recorded event of Nebuchadnezzar's history, we cannot but be deeply interested in learning how this most remarkable punishment affected him. Secular history, aside from his wars and conquests, gives us very little information about this great monarch, except the fact of his death, which occurred after reigning about forty-three years. The very fact that this narrative, as related by Nebuchadnezzar himself, was, in the Divine purpose and providence, given a place in this most wonderful book, is in itself very significant, showing its importance from the Divine stand

### **THE PURPOSE OF THE PROCLAMATION**

Let it be carefully observed, as the record shows, that Nebuchadnezzar's great object in issuing this decree or proclamation was to make known the signs and wonders which the most high God wrought with him -- "His signs, how great! His wonders, how mighty!" -- and, that it was also to publicly confess his own sin. The word sign is used variously in the

Scriptures, as well as in ancient secular writings. A summing up of the meaning as Applied to God would be, "anything that is significant of His presence and power; anything that shall manifestly show that what occurs is done by Him; anything that is beyond human ability, and makes known the being and perfections of God by a direct and extraordinary manifestation. Here the meaning is that what was done in so remarkable a manner was significant of the agency of God; it was that which demonstrated that He exists, and that showed His greatness. The word rendered *wonders*, means properly, that which is fitted to produce astonishment, or to lead to wonder, and is applied to miracles as adapted to produce that effect. It refers to that state of mind which exists where anything occurs out of the ordinary course of nature, or which indicates supernatural power."

It will readily be seen by those who have read carefully the Scripture narrative concerning God's dealings with this great monarch that he had witnessed many exhibitions of God's wisdom and power; and also that he had been an observer of the manifestation of God's love and mercy towards His own afflicted people, those who trusted and confided in Him. Taking all these things into consideration, Nebuchadnezzar seems to have reached, this time, a crisis in his religious life. This final display of the Divine attributes in bringing a judgment upon Nebuchadnezzar, and the mercy shown to him in reinstating him to his former position, seem evidently to have caused him to use the whole power and influence of his authority in making known the most High to all the people of his great empire.

The words of his decree were designed not only to give honor Jehovah, but also as we have noted, to make a public confession of his own great sin. Taking up the matter in more detail, we note first that the great Monarch had another most startling dream. This dream, unlike the one already referred to, seems to have come to him apart from any earthly cause or connection. It is reasonable to infer, however, that the king believed that it proceeded from the same source as the other. While the king was unable to understand its meaning, it seems very apparent that he looked upon it as a serious admonition and rebuke against the pride and self glorification that was, at the time, gaining ascendancy over him. Referring to this method of Divine revelation by dreams, we note that it was not an altogether uncommon thing for God to reveal His purposes, particularly His warnings, in dreams. Sometimes it was the case, as we learn from other Scriptures, that He spoke in this way to worldly men. In the book of Job we read that "God speaketh once, yea twice, yet man perceiveth it not. In a dream, in a vision of the night, when deep sleep falleth upon men, in slumberings upon the bed. Then He openeth the ears of men, and sealeth their instruction, *that He may withdraw man from his purpose, and hide pride front him.*" (Job 33:14-17.) While the Divine Word is the Christian's great and infallible guide, to which he must at all times look, and to which he must ever contentedly and obediently conform his every action, nevertheless, occasionally, in times of great danger, or in

times of threatening calamity, there comes in a dream or in some other mysterious foreshadowing, a warning of danger, in order to draw man from his purpose. This was evidently true in Nebuchadnezzar's case at this time.

### **A PRESAGE OF IMPENDING EVIL**

The dream is given as 'a part of the king's decree or proclamation in Nebuchadnezzar's own words: "I Nebuchadnezzar was at rest in mine house, and flourishing in my palace: I saw a dream which made me afraid, and the thoughts upon my bed and the visions of my head troubled me." One might at first most naturally wonder why the king sent for the magicians, the astrologers, etc., after their failure on a former, and a similar occasion. This is easily accounted for when it is remembered that Daniel had been for a long time by the king's own appointment occupying the position as head of this body of men, and in Nebuchadnezzar's summoning them,, Daniel would necessarily be included. However, Daniel seems to have delayed coming. May it not be that his delay was that he might seek counsel of his God. It is very reasonable to suppose this to have been the case. The wise men, however, if they attempted to explain the dream, were unable to do so to Nebuchadnezzar's satisfaction. Nebuchadnezzar himself relates that at last Daniel came in before him, and the king related his dream

"O Belteshazzar, master of the magicians, because I know that the spirit of the holy gods is in thee, and no secret troubleth thee, tell me the visions\* of my dream that I have seen, and the interpretations thereof. Thus were the visions of mine head in my bed: I saw, and behold a tree in the midst of the earth, and the height thereof was great.' The tree grew, and was strong, and the height thereof reached unto heaven, and the sight thereof to the end of all the earth. The leaves -thereof were fair, and the fruit thereof much, and in it was- meat for all: the beasts of the field had shadow under it, and the fowls of the heaven dwelt in the boughs thereof, and all flesh was fed of it. I saw in the visions of my head upon my bed, and, behold, a watcher and an holy one came down from heaven. He cried aloud, and said thus, Hew down the tree, and cut off his branches, shake off his leaves, and scatter his fruit: let the beasts get away from under it, and the fowls from his branches. Nevertheless, leave the stump of his roots in the earth, even with a band of iron and brass, in the tender grass of the field; and let it be wet with the dew of heaven, and let his portion be with the beasts in the grass of the earth: Let his heart be changed from man's, and let a beast's heart be given unto him; and let seven times pass over him. This matter is by the decree of the watchers, and the demand by the word of the holy ones; to the intent that the living may know that the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever He will, and setteth up over it the basest [lowest] of men. This dream I, king Nebuchadnezzar have seen. Now thou, O Belteshazzar, declare the interpretation thereof, forasmuch as all the wise men of my kingdom are not able to

make known unto me the interpretation; but thou art able; for the spirit of the holy gods is in thee."--Dan. 4.:10-18.

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\* "The Greek and Arabic render this, 'Hear the vision of my dream.' This accords better with the probable meaning of the passage, though the word *hear* is not in the Chaldee". -- Albert Barnes.

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### **THE DREAM TROUBLES DANIEL**

When Daniel heard this strange and startling dream from the king's own lips, Nebuchadnezzar relates that "Daniel was astonished"--amazed and overwhelmed--and, for a time he uttered not a word. It is very evident that he was much disturbed, troubled. The cause of this agitation of mind was not that he, did not understand the significance of the dream, but rather that its application meant evil to the king and he was very naturally disinclined to tell him of it. It was through no fear of evil consequences to himself, but because of his great sympathy for the king, in whom it is very reasonable to believe he had a special interest, and whom he had come to respect. He saw immediately that the dream, which was a prophecy, applied to the king, and foreboded trouble, calamity coming upon him. It is not unreasonable to suppose that a kind of friendship had grown up between them, as is frequently the case between a king and his favorite counselor. This would be very natural. Daniel had been raised to the position he held by the kindness of the king, and we may be sure that he was a faithful steward, which would be very much appreciated by Nebuchadnezzar. We can hardly believe otherwise than that mutual gratitude between the two men laid the foundation for a certain friendship. This was what evidently caused Daniel to hesitate to tell the king the calamitous tidings.

Nebuchadnezzar, evidently understanding his servant's feelings, spoke to him the assuring words: "Let not the dream or the interpretation thereof trouble thee." The Prophet hesitated no longer, but proceeded to perform the necessary, yet unpleasant task of interpreting the dream. He supplements his interpretation, however, in language expressive of his sincere attachment to and sympathy for the king. "My lord, the dream be to them that hate thee." The language shows that Daniel had no desire that the things foreboded in the dream should come upon the king. He would prefer, rather, that they would come upon his enemies. "There is not in this anything necessarily implying a hatred of the enemies of the king, or any wish that calamity should come upon them; it is an expression of an earnest desire that such an affliction might not come on the king. If it must come on any, such was his respect for his sovereign, and such his desire for his welfare and prosperity, that he preferred that it should fall on those who were his enemies who hated him. This language, however, should not

be rigidly interpreted. It is the language of an Oriental; language uttered at a court, where only the words of respect were heard."

### **DANIEL UNFOLDS THE MYSTERIOUS DREAM**

Daniel then proceeds to give the interpretation of the dream. He tells the king that the tree that he saw which grew so strong and tall that it became visible to all on the earth; whose leaves were fair, the fruit thereof much, and in it was meat for all; under which the beasts of the earth dwelt and upon whose branches, the fowls of the heaven had their habitation, represented Nebuchadnezzar himself. "It is thou, O king, that art grown and become strong; for thy greatness is grown, and reacheth unto heaven, and thy dominion to the end of the earth." Daniel next simply relates the principal circumstances of the dream, in order to refresh the mind of the king and prepare him for the statement that would inform him of the terrible calamity which was to befall him. He said: "And whereas the king saw a watcher and a holy one coming down from heaven, and saying, Hew the tree down, and destroy it; yet leave the stump of the roots thereof in the earth, even with a band of iron and brass, in the tender grass of the field; and let it be wet with the dew of heaven, and let his portion be with the beasts of the field, till seven times pass over him." The great judgment affliction was that he should be driven from men, which would mean that he should cease to occupy the position he was then holding among men. The Prophet does not say who would drive him from among men, but that this would be done. His dwelling was to be with the beasts of the field, he was to eat grass as oxen, to be wet with the dew of heaven, and this would last until seven times should pass over him, till he should be made to know that the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men and giveth it to whomsoever He will.

The king was further told that the command of the "holy one" to leave the "stump of the roots in the earth, even with a band of iron and brass," meant that during this punishment, his kingdom would be made sure to him; that is, he would resume the authority of his kingdom after the punishment was over, and that *then* he would recognize and bow to the rule of heaven.

### **JUDGMENT AGAINST SINS OF PRIDE AND DESPOTISM**

Daniel concluded his interpretation of the dream with words of instruction and counsel to the king. The words, which we may be sure were kindly spoken, seem to intimate a possibility that if they were heeded, the terrible calamity might be averted. "Wherefore, O king," said the Prophet, "let my counsel be acceptable unto thee, and break off thy sins by righteousness, and throe iniquities by showing mercy to the poor; if it may be a lengthening of thy tranquility [margin, "or a healing of throe error"]." These words of Daniel very plainly show that he was permitted to see the chief sin that was the cause of this threatened calamity, which was that of

pride and vain glory -- failing to give that which was due to the One who made him this great ruler. He very naturally believed that if the king would humble himself, and by so doing remove the cause, the judgment might be stayed.

We are not to suppose; however, that this was Nebuchadnezzar's only sin. Oppression and injustice were probably inseparable from heathen despotism. It could scarcely be believed, but that Nebuchadnezzar fell into these sins in connection with the construction of the many wonderful buildings, the building of the great walls and of the many remarkable wonders that made Babylon so famous, and makes it famous even to this day. We cannot but admire the boldness and fidelity of Daniel, who went even beyond what he was called in to do. To tell the mightiest monarch of the world to forsake his sins, required courage. He could not have done this unless he himself had been free from the evils that brought upon Nebuchadnezzar this threatened great affliction. It is worthy of notice that Daniel's advice to Nebuchadnezzar is that he perform those same two acts which the Savior accepted in Zacchaeus, as unquestionable evidences of repentance.

The remainder of the chapter records the fulfillment of the predicted judgment upon the great heathen monarch; and it is very significant that the judgment was stayed for a whole year, that Nebuchadnezzar might be given time to bring forth fruit meet for repentance. Those who have followed closely these events of Nebuchadnezzar's history as recorded in chapters two, three, and four, cannot but note that Divine truth was producing certain effects upon the great monarch's heart. The very fact that this judgment which came upon him was limited, and that his kingdom was to be preserved for him; shows that the punishment was corrective, and that it was foreseen by God that it would bring a genuine repentance -- may we not say, in a sense, his conversion to the Most High. However, the punishment had to be inflicted before repentance came. A noted writer remarks, "We would suppose that such a sacred and impressive forewarning and admonition would not fail of the most salutary effect. But there is nothing more treacherous and deceitful than poor depraved human nature. Nebuchadnezzar doubtless intended to profit to the full from the counsel he had received. He had the utmost confidence in the wisdom and inspiration of the Prophet. He had every reason to accept the whole presentation as a veritable message from God. Nor was it in the composition, of this monarch's character to make light of so evident a communication from the Deity, whose signs and wonders he had beheld. But it is hard for rich and great men, in the midst of their glories, powers, flatteries and cares, to be faithful to all that they know, feel, and confess of their duty, and of what is right and proper. The Savior and His Apostles have remarked upon this great difficulty of such to enter the kingdom of heaven. And Nebuchadnezzar was not an exception."

## **PRIDE AND DECEITFULNESS OF NATURAL HEART**



Nebuchadnezzar was greatly elated over his vast achievements, and it is nothing strange that his attention should be drawn away from his wonderful dream, and its admonitions. It would be difficult to find a public man today who could be entrusted with such honor and glory, "without having his head completely turned, and his self-consequence lifted higher than the stars." And so it was with Nebuchadnezzar. We read that at the end of twelve months, when he was walking upon the high places of his palace, from which height he could view the city with its magnificent buildings, its grand and spacious avenues, its beautiful parks and gardens, he looked down upon it all and said: "Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for the house of the kingdom by the might of my power, and for the honor of, my majesty."

"As men ordinarily reckon and speak," says Mr. Seiss, "there would not seem to be much out of the way in such a remark. It was, above all men, his work. Babylon was a great and glorious city; and it had come to be what it was chiefly through him. As we hear men refer to their works, and doings, we would expect any of them to express themselves after the same style. I know of none who would not speak in the same way, and with much the same emotions, under the same circumstances. But this only shows, not that Nebuchadnezzar was innocent, but that humanity all over is very perverted and wrong. It will leave God out of everything creditable wherever it can. It will parade its own puny self, powers, and achievements, whenever occasion presents. It loves to contemplate what it has done. If in anything it favorably differs from one another, or from the general mass of men, it inwardly gloats over it, and rejoices itself in its superiority, not remembering who it is that maketh it to differ, and whose alone is the credit and honor for it all. And Nebuchadnezzar fell into the common, offensive, criminal mistake which so deeply inheres in all unsanctified humanity. Taking a survey of his magnificent honors and achievements, he refers them exultingly to himself -- to his own genius, strength, and wisdom--and leaves out that eternal Providence, without which he was no more than the meanest beggar or the dirtiest dog in all his kingdom. He had himself confessed that, of a truth, Jehovah is God of gods, and Lord of kings. He had heard the heavenly 'watcher' say, and Daniel repeat, that it was his duty, as that of all men, to know and realize that it is the Most High that ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever He will. But in the moment of transport over what had been accomplished through his instrumentality, he forgot all this, and set everything down to his own credit. He knew better, as all men know better when they do such things, but when he looked on the glory of the city he had so exalted and adorned, his pride and vain-glory got the mastery over all his better knowledge and the prophetic warnings, and his soul was lifted up in exultation over his own wisdom and might. The gracious God above; from whom, apart from any worth or deserving of his, he had all that distinguished him from any other member of the race, was completely thrown out of reckoning. And thus he lent his 'soul and speech to a

miserable atheistic pride, which seems to have been this man's besetting sin-the besetting sin of all human greatness and success-which reached its culmination as he thus walked and spoke amid the towers and battlements of his glorious palace."

## **"UNTIL HE COME"**

"Till He come!" -- Oh, let the words  
Linger on the trembling chords  
Let the little while between,  
In their, golden light be seen;  
Let us think how heaven and home  
Lie beyond that "Till He come."

When the weary ones we love  
Enter on their rest above,  
Seems the earth so poor and vast,  
All our life-joy overcast?  
Hush! be every murmur dumb;  
It is only "Till He come."

Clouds and conflicts 'round us press;  
Would we have one sorrow less?  
All the sharpness of the cross,  
All that tells the world is loss,  
Death and darkness and the tomb  
Only whisper, "Till He come."

See, the feast of love is spread,  
Drink the wine and break the bread;  
Sweet memorials! -- till the Lord  
Call us 'round His heavenly board;  
Some from earth, from heaven some,  
Severed only -- till He come!

## **ST. JOHN THE APOSTLE**

*"God is love; and he that abideth in love abideth in God,  
and God abideth in him: '-1 John 4:16.*

WE are advised that St. John, the writer of one of the four Gospels, was the son of Zebedee and Salome. Though his father was a fisherman of Galilee he was probably not in the lowest condition of life nor destitute of property. He had hired servants in his employ. Salome is mentioned amongst those who accompanied our Savior in His travels and ministered to His wants.--Matt. 27:55; Mark 15:41.

It is believed that John was the youngest of the Apostles when called, and that he lived to the greatest age; and he is the only one supposed to have died a peaceful death. He was called to become a disciple of Jesus while engaged with his father and his elder brother James mending their nets at the sea of Tiberias.

One of the ancient fathers (Theophylact) says that Jesus and John were related. "Joseph," he says, "had seven children by a former wife, four sons and three daughters, . Martha, Esther, and *Salome*, whose son John was; therefore Salome was reckoned our Lord's sister, and John was His nephew." Mr. Barnes observes that "if this was the case, it may explain the reason why James and John sought and expected the first places in His kingdom. (Matt. 20:20, 21. These may also possibly be the persons who were called our Lord's, `brethren' and `sisters.' (Matt. 13:55, 56.) This may also explain reason why our Savior committed His mother to the care of John the cross.--John 19:27.

"John was also admitted to *peculiar* friendship with the Lord Jesus. Hence he is mentioned as `that disciple whom Jesus loved' (John 19:26), and he is represented (John 13:23) as, leaning on His bosom at the institution of the Lord's Supper -- an evidence of peculiar friendship. Though the Redeemer was attached to *all His* disciples, yet there is no improbability in supposing that His disposition was congenial with that of the meek and amiable John -- thus authorizing and setting the example of special friendships among Christians.

"To John was committed the care of Mary, the mother of Jesus. After the ascension of Christ he remained some time at Jerusalem. (Acts 1:14; 3:1; 4:13.) John is also mentioned as having been sent down to Samaria to preach the Gospel there with Peter (Acts 8:14-25) ; and from Acts 15 it appears that he was present at the council at Jerusalem, A.D. 49 or 50. All this agrees with what is said by Eusebius, that he lived at Jerusalem till the death of Mary, fifteen years after the crucifixion of Christ. Till this time it is probable that he had not been engaged in preaching the Gospel among the Gentiles.

"At what time he went first among the Gentiles to preach the Gospel is not certainly known. It has commonly been supposed that he resided in Judea and the neighborhood until the war broke out with the Romans, and that he came into Asia Minor about the year 69 or 70. It is clear that he was not at Ephesus at the time that Paul visited those regions, as in all the travels of Paul and Luke there is no mention made of John.

"Ecclesiastical history informs us, that he spent the latter part of his life in Asia Minor, and that he resided chiefly at Ephesus, the chief city of that country. Of his residence there, little is certainly known. In the latter part of his life he was banished to Patmos, a small desolate island in the Aegean Sea, about twenty miles in circumference. This is commonly supposed to have been during the persecution of Domitian, in the latter

part of his reign. Domitian died A.D. 96. It is probable that he returned soon after that, in the reign of the Emperor Trajan. In that island he wrote the book of Revelation. After his return from Patmos he lived peaceably at Ephesus until his death, which is supposed to have occurred not long after. He was buried at Ephesus; and it has been commonly thought that he was, the only one of the Apostles who did not suffer martyrdom. It is evident that he lived to a very advanced period of life. We know not his age, indeed, when Christ called him to follow Him, but we can not suppose it was less than twenty-five or thirty. If so, he must have been not far from one hundred years old when he died.

"Many anecdotes are related of him while he remained at Ephesus, but there is no sufficient evidence of their truth. Some have said that he was taken to Rome in a time of persecution and thrown into a caldron of boiling oil, and came out uninjured. It has been said also that, going into a bath one day at Ephesus, he perceived *Cerinthus*, who denied the divinity of the Savior, and that he fled from him hastily, to express his disapprobation of his doctrine. It is also said, and of this there can be no doubt, that during his latter years he was not able to make a long discourse. He was carried to the church, and was accustomed to say nothing but this: 'Little children, love one another.' At length his disciples asked him why he always dwelt upon the same thing. He replied, 'Because it is the Lord's command; and if this be done, it is sufficient.'"

The two brothers, John and James were named "Boanerges," meaning sons of thunder. This designation was probably given them on account of their zeal, energy, and power in preaching the Gospel, or possibly on account of their vehement and rash zeal, a remarkable example of which we have in Luke 9:54. Like many other well meaning children of God, they were at this time to a considerable extent under the influence of the spirit of persecution, and had not learned so well the lesson of love as they afterward came to comprehend it. The two brothers having been refused bread by the Samaritans came to Jesus with the inquiry: "Wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven and destroy these men and their city.;" The Master took occasion to impress a great lesson. In answer to their query, we read, Jesus turned and rebuked them and said, Ye know not what spirit ye are of. The Son of man is come not to destroy men's lives, but to save them. Thus the spirit which the Master sought to impart was the very reverse of that which these disciples were manifesting-sympathetic, loving, and kind. He had the Father's Spirit and understood it and followed it perfectly. There is no doubt that this lesson became thoroughly impressed upon the minds of these two as well as upon the minds of all the other Apostles except Judas.

To such an extent is the sentiment and spirit of love exemplified in the life and ministry of St. John that he may well be termed the great Apostle of love. Another who has evidently carefully studied the life of this Apostle, observes that ".He was a man of quiet, contemplative, mystical spirit. He

was not. the equal of Peter or his own brother James in practical energy and gifts of leadership, a consequence being that, as compared with them, he occupied a subordinate position among the Twelve. And, yet, if I had my choice today, I would rather be John than either James or Peter. Peter and James were first among first *among the Twelve*, but John was first *in the affections of his Lord!*"

*Continued in next issue*