

The Herald of Christ's Kingdom

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"OLD FAITH AND HIS RIVALS"

MOST truthfully does the Apostle Paul say that the "world by wisdom knows not God," and that "the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God." In all ages it has been demonstrated that much of what the world calls science, learning, etc., is merely human theory and speculation, and each generation looks back to the preceding ones and discards more or less of what was thought to be truth. Thus the Apostle speaks of what was being promulgated in his day as "science falsely so called." St. Paul recognized that the world's wisdom was in direct opposition to the inspired revelation, the Word of God; just as the student of the Sacred Scriptures today clearly perceives that much that is called modern science, human philosophy, etc., and taught as truth by professors of theology, would utterly remove the great foundation of the Christian life and faith, leaving no substantial basis for a faith and character structure. Some one has sent us the following, which sums up well the standpoint of the Christian; it is designated

"A TIMELY ALLEGORY"

"Old Faith, the Armorer, worked away in his smithy, and was justly famous for the armor which he made. His wondrous shields never failed to quench the fiery darts of the enemy. His swords were never known to break or buckle up in conflict. His breastplate of righteousness might be dimmed for a time by the breath of slander, but it soon shone out bright again when God brought forth His people's 'righteousness as the light, and their judgment as noonday.' With one of the helmets of hope of salvation on his head, the Christian warrior took the field without a fear, and never had there been a record of a soldier of the cross being defeated. The soldiers were so much attached to Old Faith that they commonly spoke of him as 'Our Faith.' Faith obtained all his metal from the mine of Divine Truth. He was enthusiastic in praise of its quality. He declared it was all good metal, and did not contain one particle of dross.

"His method of manufacture was simple. He heated his metal in the fire of love, and then hammered out his armor with the hammer of conviction, on an anvil of solid trust. For many years without a rival in his own line, Faith became the object of energetic and organized competition. A new company was started. They called it the 'Take-Nothing-for-Granted' Company; for the manufacture of spiritual armor by machinery. They got their metal from the wine old mine as Faith. They appointed Mr. Reason as their chief engineer; and fitted up new machinery which they called

'modern thought.' "Their theory differed from Faith's in this, that while he held the metal was all good, they maintained that there was a considerable amount of dross in it, and their first business was to separate it. In practice they differed in this, that while Faith worked it hot; they worked it cold. Everything was to be kept cool, and lest any enthusiastic heat should be generated by the friction of the machinery, they enjoined that the oil of calm consideration should be constantly employed.

"They first put Divine Truth into a crushing mill of human criticism, 'higher criticism' they called it. Then it passed through a sieve of Rationalism, and all the big miraculous lumps which they could not pound smaller, and which would not go through the rationalistic sieve, they picked out and threw away.

"Then they placed the metal under a ponderous steam hammer called 'scientific investigation,' which was worked by vast wheels of evolution, thousands of years in diameter. They were so high that they were dreadful.

"But all their machinery failed to make any plates fit for armor. Do what they would, they could not make a plate of good-hope with all their hammering. The fact was, the supernatural ingredients had all been taken out, and the metal would not weld or cling together. With all their efforts they could not produce the fine temper of assurance which characterized the armor of Faith. They used rivets of probability to fasten their plates together, but in actual warfare the rivets flew out, and the warrior was left defenseless. Their swords were fitted into handles of conjecture and speculation, most elaborately decorated with rhetorical flower-work; but the handles came off in conflict, while the swords were shivered at the first blow. They never attempted to make a shield, declaring it a piece of obsolete armor belonging; to a former dogmatic age.

"Engineer Reason summoned the firm together to consider the situation. The machinery was perfect. Modern thought could not be wrong. The fact was the metal was not what people thought it was. Such a temper as assurance was not to be attained, it was all a delusion. The utmost they could reach was strong presumption.

"Unfortunately for the company's verdict, Old Faith was still working away, making as good armor as ever from the same metal. The warriors of truth encased in this Divine panoply were gaining splendid, victories, as of yore: And. as they fought they sang, 'This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our Faith.'"

CONSIDER THE FIELD LILIES

SIGNIFICANCE OF JESUS' PARABOLIC DISCOURSE

SERMON BY. BROTHER RUSSELL

"And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin; and yet I say unto you, that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. Wherefore, if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is cast into the oven [as fuel], shall He not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?"--Matt. 6:28-30.

THE great Teacher, we are told, taught in parables and in dark sayings (not easily comprehended). Even our Lord's disciples were in the dark concerning the meaning of many of His statements until the Holy Spirit at Pentecost gave them enlightenment, as Jesus had promised. This being true, we are not surprised that many have misapprehended some of the Master's dark sayings respecting the cutting off of a hand or a foot, the plucking out of an eye, respecting undying worms and quenchless fires, and even in respect to the text we now consider.

There are people of fair intelligence who interpret the Master to mean that His followers are not to labor as do the remainder of mankind for the necessities of life; that they should expect to be supported by others who do labor with sweat of face -- that they should be maintained by tithes, collections, etc., and toil and spin not at all. We believe that such are making a great mistake, as did the man recently reported in the press as having cut off his hand in what he thought was obedience to the Master's instruction. We can sympathize with these errors of judgment, but should avoid them and seek to have the spirit of the Master's teaching, which was always the spirit of a sound mind.

In His discourse Jesus had called the attention of His hearers to the fact that the Gentiles the heathen were continually thinking about their temporalities and praying about these -- "What shall we eat? What shall we drink? Wherewithal shall we be clothed?" "But your Father knoweth what things ye have need of before ye ask Him." Let your worry, therefore, if you have worries, be for something higher and nobler than merely the necessities of life. Consider that while you were once aliens and strangers through sin, disobedience to the Divine Law; you have now been brought back into accord with God and are privileged to address Him as "Our Father, which art in Heaven."

If we have the faith to believe that God through Christ has accepted us as His children, we should as children trust our Parent in respect to all the affairs of life -- great and small -- food and raiment -- everything. But here comes the important point -- the crucial test. Are we the children of God? Is He our Heavenly Father? Has He begotten us of the Holy Spirit? Are our sins forgiven? Are we reconciled to God through the death of His Son? Are we children -- "and if children, then heirs of God and joint-heirs with Jesus Christ" our Lord?

Upon the answers of these questions being in the affirmative is the strength of the basis of all our faith and hope. If we are not God's children,

if we have not come in His appointed way, through Christ, then we are still aliens and strangers. Then our affairs are not under His supervision; but we are with the world sharers in the sentence of death, each doing for himself according to his ability in battling against death, and, like all Gentiles, giving our chief concern to food, raiment, and hollow earthly ambitions -- knowing not, appreciating not, the higher, the heavenly privileges in Christ.

THE HEART OF THE LESSON

We perceive then that the lesson is not for the world in general, except indirectly. The world, learning that these words are applicable only to the consecrated people of God might properly be desirous that they might apply also to themselves. And if they are thus desirous of having God for their Father and His providential care in all of their affairs, the lesson to them would be that they should come into relationship with God through Christ, that they should become His children, in order to enjoy the privileges and favors which belong to none others at the present time.

The heart of the lesson is that the Heavenly Father is most gracious; and that His tender mercies are over all His creatures who are in harmony with Him. We may be sure that amongst all the Heavenly host there is neither hunger nor want, neither suffering nor pain, nor any disadvantage whatever. Their Heavenly Father knoweth what things they need, and provides bountifully for them. The Church is to learn this same lesson and to rejoicingly work by faith, enjoying full confidence and trust in Him who loved us and bought us with the precious blood His Son.

These children of God need not feel harassed respecting life's experiences. They have a Heavenly Father, and He knows their needs better than they do, and is both able and willing to give what is best for them. And if their experiences in the family of God shall bring them less prosperity and more adversity, more trials, more difficulties, and necessitate more economies than before they became His children, they are instructed that, walking by faith and not by sight, they shall firmly trust Him, come what may.

LEARNING LESSONS OF FAITH

All who can lay claim to being children of God by faith can surely believe that He who is able to provide for the birds and the lilies is no less able and no less willing to provide for those who have become His children through Christ -- those for whom He gave His Only Begotten Son. Would He redeem them with that precious Sacrifice and then have no care for their future welfare? Would He beget children with His Holy Spirit and then be negligent in providing for their necessities? Nay! God will not overlook the interests of His consecrated children, and whatever may seem to be an oversight and lack of provision is to be understood to be in reality the reverse -- that which the Heavenly Father sees to be for their highest and best interests.

The Master called attention to the beauty of the lily. Much is discernible to the natural eye, and still more when we examine the perfections of the flower microscopically. Wonderful indeed is the raiment of the lily! Solomon in all his glory had no such seamless robe, and no such perfect texture for his raiment.

Perhaps the Master had a deeper thought respecting raiment than appears on the surface by His words, "Shall He not much more clothe you?" While He assuredly meant that we are to trust Heavenly provision for our natural clothing, it would appear that He may have meant a clothing for us as New Creatures -the spotless, seamless robe of Christ's righteousness, granted to us as a wedding garment, in the merit of which we have access to all the riches of God's grace in the present life and, if faithful, shall be granted an abundant entrance into His everlasting Kingdom. God takes thought respecting the Divine plans and arrangements. Jesus thought out carefully the course He pursued; and He instructed those who were desirous of being His disciples to sit down and carefully count the cost. All these things show us that the Master would not have His followers thoughtless, living merely moment by moment, failing to make provision for the seasons, the weather, the table, etc.

What He meant, what the Greek text fully bears out, is that His followers should have no worry respecting temporalities. Having exercised thought, prudence, care, having done to the best of their judgment and ability, not slothfully, but energetically, they are to rest the matter, realizing that all their affairs are placed in the hands of the Heavenly Father through Christ, and that all the Heavenly powers are pledged to make all things work together for good to them, because they love God and have been called according to His purpose.

"SEEK YE CHIEFLY THE KINGDOM"

While anxious care was not to be exercised respecting temporalities; great care was to be exercised in respect to anything appertaining to the Kingdom. The call of the Church is to membership in the great Kingdom of God, of which Christ is the Head, the Chief King; we may be under kings and under priests, associated with our Redeemer in His great Messianic work of a thousand years. It was to attain a share in that Kingdom that we made consecration of our lives, our wills, our all, to the Lord; and only through 'great tribulation' can we enter that Kingdom. As God is pleased to see our restfulness respecting temporalities of life when He has agreed to provide for us according to His Wisdom and in response to our efforts, so He is pleased to see, on the contrary, our zeal, our perseverance, our almost worrying that the great prize of the kingdom should not be lost by us.

The reason for wishing us to thus worry for the Kingdom, and not to worry for earthly things, is evident on reflection. To worry about earthly things would be to show a faithlessness and doubt in respect to God and

His promised care. But our attaining the Kingdom or our failing to attain it is made dependent only on ourselves. God has already done His part. He has provided the Redeemer and the forgiveness of sins. He has opened up the way whereby we might return into His family. When we came unto Him through Jesus, He accepted us and gave us the begetting of the Spirit and, with it, a right to all the great and precious promises, and, joint heirship with Jesus on condition of our faithfulness. -- Rom. 8 : 17 ; 2 Pet. 1:12.

Hence, to agonize for the Kingdom, to strive for the Kingdom, to run with patience, to fight a good fight, to endure hardness -- all these expressions indicate the great zeal and earnestness necessary on the part of those who would be accounted conquerors -- yea, "more than conquerors, through Him who loved us and bought us with His precious blood."

Is it any wonder that God should expect us to be very zealous in striving to attain the Kingdom? Would He give so great an honor to any who valued it lightly? Surely, angels and cherubim would be glad to accept positions in the Kingdom if offered to them! But God has passed by the angels, and invited members of the fallen race, whose hearts have turned to Him, that they might become not only justified from their sins, but sanctified through Christ and heirs of the Kingdom.

Is it any wonder that the Lord has provided that only through much tribulation shall any enter the Kingdom? Whoever is not willing to endure tribulation for the Kingdom's sake would thereby show that he had not the proper appreciation and that he is not worthy of it. If the Master endured even unto death, how could we expect that we might be joint-heirs with Him unless we possessed His spirit, His zeal? Thus the Lord tells us that all who will attain the Kingdom glories will be copies of His Son.

WHAT MUST WE ENDURE?

Here the question properly arises, What is to be endured, what kind of sufferings? And what is the real object of these sufferings? Why should God delight to make us suffer before He would give us a place in the Kingdom?

The Bible answers these questions satisfactorily. It admonishes that only by trials and difficulties can character be really developed. For character is not merely a preference for that which is good, but a fixed determination, a loyalty to that which is right. God seeketh such as have firm characters to be His children on the Divine plane-of the New Creation. He has a great work for them to do 'for the world of mankind; and unless their own characters were properly formed, crystallized, established, -- they would not be in proper condition to be the rulers, instructors and uplifters of the world. Then He has a future work for them to all eternity.

We can readily see that this class must demonstrate their loyalty beyond peradventure, must show their zeal for righteousness; as was written of our

Savior, "Because Thou hast loved righteousness and hated iniquity, therefore God hath anointed Thee with the oil of gladness above Thy fellows." The fellows of Jesus are the members of His Body, His elect Church, of every nation and denomination. He is their Head.

If everything were perfect in ourselves and surroundings, there would be no real opportunity for cultivating these fruits and graces of the Spirit -- for developing and crystallizing character and for showing our zeal for right and opposition to wrong. God, therefore, has taken advantage of the existence of sin, and of imperfection in others and in ourselves, to use these for the cultivation of the graces in our hearts, and the establishment of character in us.

For instance, if there were nothing to try our patience, how could we grow in patience? If, therefore, we feel that we need more patience and pray for it, let us expect the answer to come in an increase of trials and difficulties which would tend to increase patience in our hearts and lives. If we pray for more meekness, we should expect our prayers to be answered by adverse conditions tending to show us our weaknesses and make us more teachable, more humble.

If we pray for more brotherly kindness, we should expect more trials and difficulties from the brethren, testing our love, patience, brotherly kindness. And so by the cultivation of all these various parts of love, we are gradually growing into God-likeness of character, becoming copies of God's dear Son, who is the express image of the Father's person and His character-likeness; for God is love.

THESE THINGS SHALL BE ADDED

The realities with God's people are the spiritual, heavenly things. For these they seek, hunger, thirst. To them the earthly things in comparison have no value; for these were consecrated, given up, at the very beginning of the Christian way: But although all earthly rights have been surrendered, and all their interests are Heavenly, yet the Lord's promise is that these who seek first the Kingdom shall have all other needed things added to them. God will care for their temporal as well as their Heavenly interests. And to His praise be it said that He generally gives them abundantly more than they could have asked or thought.

Bread and water are the only things guaranteed; but how often in the Christian's experiences many comforts and luxuries are added, even though not asked, and while, he is seeking with all his heart the interests and -blessings of the Kingdom! May these heavenly things more and more be our portion! Let us look less and less at the temporary things, and with the eye of faith look more and more to the things not seen, which are eternal, and to the Church heavenly. -- 2 Cor. 4:18.

ECHOES FROM THE PHILADELPHIA CONVENTION

Dear Brethren:

"Grace be to you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ."

A blessed season of sweet fellowship, "sitting together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus," was enjoyed in Philadelphia, July 8. As it was my privilege to be present at this gathering I am taking the liberty to write a word respecting it, believing others would rejoice with us. We are sure the sentiments of all was that it was good to be there. Friends from Millville, Easton, Atlantic City, Washington, Royersford, Wilmington, Plainfield, Brooklyn, Montreal, and other points were present to join in the hymns of praise and thanksgiving to the Giver of every good and perfect gift and to add their testimony to His wonderful goodness and love.

Not only was the day a most delightful one throughout, from the standpoint of the weather, but there were evidences of the Master's sweet smile of approval in the blessed peace and joy that seemed to brighten the countenances of all present.

The opening exercises of songs and hymns of praise were enthusiastically entered into by all. This was followed by earnest prayers, worship, and thanksgiving. In a few well chosen words the Chairman extended a hearty welcome to the City of Brotherly Love, and in response, a few words of appreciation were expressed by one of the visiting brethren. The morning address was very helpful and encouraging. The text was taken from the words of the Master recorded in the fourteenth chapter of St. John's Gospel.

Following the morning session the friends gathered outside of the Hall on a shady lawn to partake of the many good temporal things provided by the dear brethren of the Philadelphia Class.

A very helpful testimony meeting was first in order in the afternoon, and the friends spoke freely to one another of their great joy in the Lord. Another address was given on practical Christian living; every point was well analyzed and its importance clearly shown. After partaking of more good temporal refreshments the friends assembled for the closing service of the day; and again the Father and our dear Lord Jesus came very near to bless and comfort His people.

The day's program came to a close by singing the beautiful hymn, "God be with you till we meet again." All were happy and rejoiced in the blessings of the day, realizing that the Lord had made good His blessed promise of His presence.

Yours in the Master's service, B. B. -- N. J.

ST. JOHN ON CONSECRATION

Continued from last issue

We become more fully acquainted with St. John as we study his writings and expositions on the subject of full consecration to God, as summed up in his words, "Love not the world neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." -- 1 John 2: 15.

One can scarcely read this advice of the Apostle John without having another Scripture suggested to his mind, which, at first sight, may seem contradictory; that is, "God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him might not perish, but have everlasting life." The two, however, are not antagonistic, but are in full harmony when rightly understood. If God so loved the world, even while they were yet sinners (Rom. 5:8), as to sacrifice the dearest treasure of His heart in order to redeem and save them, then such love and such benevolence toward the world on our part cannot be out of harmony with His will. Indeed, such is the direct teaching of the Word. "Do good to all men as you have opportunity"; "Love your enemies, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you, that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven; for He maketh His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust . . . Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." --Matt. 5 :44-48

To love the world as God loves it, is not the sentiment against which the Apostle warns the Church, as the context clearly shows. That is a grand and ennobling love -- a love which stands on the high plane of purity, and without having the least fellowship with the impure, nevertheless pities the fallen, and is active in efforts to rescue them from their degradation. This Divine love, so worthy of our imitation, is that which benevolently ignores personal antagonisms and animosities, and, overleaping all selfish considerations and vengeful feelings, considers only the possibilities and the ways and means for peace and reformation and salvation.

But the love of the world to which John refers, as the context shows, is the love of fellowship, which implies the partaking of its spirit -- its aims, ambitions, and hopes, and its methods of pursuing them. If any man love the world in this sense, surely the love of the Father is not in him; "For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world [that is, according to the spirit of this present evil world]. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever."

The Apostle has very briefly summed up the world's treasures as the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life. The lust of the flesh

includes all the fleshly appetites and passions, the merely animal instincts. To these thousands sacrifice all the higher interests. To fare sumptuously in eating and drinking and frolic and pleasure is their delight. The lust of the eyes demands luxury in dress and home appointments, and the gathering for self-gratification of all that is admired and desired. And the pride of life glories in the shame of that selfishness which has ignored the wants and woes of the needy and suffering, and complacently said to self, "Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry." And it goes further: it despises the poor and needy and oppresses them.

LOVE IS OF GOD

Such is the spirit of this world. It is the very opposite of the spirit of God and of Christ; and those who are led of the spirit of God should keep as far from it as possible. Their conduct, their dress, their home -- life and home appointments must all speak a different language. We are to mind not high things, but to condescend to men of low estate; to show no preference to the man that wears the fine clothing or the gold ring, but, like our Master, to regard with highest esteem and Christian love those who do the will of our Heavenly Father. -- Rom. 12:16; James 2 :1-5.

"God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him. Herein is love with us made perfect [completed] that we may have boldness in the day of judgment; because as He [God] is, so are we in this world." As God is love, and is so manifested to all His creatures, so ought we to be love, and thus to shine as lights in the world. And if in this world, we become living embodiments and representatives of love, we may be confident that at the end of our course we will stand approved before Him who seeks above all things to see in us this likeness to Himself. -- 1 John 4:16-18.

To fellowship the world is to walk in harmony with its ideas and to conform to its ways. In this sense we may not love it, but must be apart from it and in opposition to it. The way thus pointed out to us is, in some respects at least, a difficult way, and a lonely way; but it is the only way of peace and lasting happiness. This world with the lust thereof is rapidly passing away: it is hollow and unsatisfying and eventually leads to disaster and ruin; but those whose delight is in the Lord's way have blessed communion and fellowship with Him. Their joys come from a source which the world cannot comprehend. They live on a higher plane, breathe a purer atmosphere and enjoy a holier, sweeter friendship than the world could ever offer.

But if any man in Christ descend from these high privileges to partake of the poor substitutes which the world as to offer, he is thereby proving his lack of appreciation, and hence his unworthiness of the heavenly things: the love of the Father is not in him; and he may well fear the verdict of the day of decision. Again the Apostle John's spiritual comprehension and is

grasp of the life of holiness are grandly set forth in his writings. He does not claim perfection in the flesh for himself or for others; though he ever admonishes his readers to look toward and seek the standard of perfection, and at the same time he reminds us of the Throne of Mercy and Grace. He declares that if any man say that he has no sin, he deceives himself -- he is a liar, and makes God a liar. We are all sinners, as facts and Scripture testify. St. John thus impresses upon us that if we say we have no sin, we are displeasing to God, who is pleased to have us acknowledge our sins and apply for cleansing, seeking to put away sin so far as possible.

He goes on to say, "These things I write unto you that ye sin not." He does not say: Yes, we are all sinners we cannot help it and must continue in sin. No! But he says: Realizing that you commit trespasses which are contrary to the desire of your heart, remember that there is a place to go, a Mercy Seat, where you may confess your sins and obtain forgiveness. Remember that "we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous-Remember that He gave Himself a ransom-price for all, and that the merit of this price was applied by imputation on our behalf. Remember that all the sins of the flesh are forgivable through faith in His blood. Bear this in mind, too that He knows that with our imperfect flesh we cannot as New Creatures do perfectly, and it is because of this that God has constituted Him our Advocate and Head over all things.

OUR HIGH PRIEST GRANTS ABSOLUTION

Our Father knows that we all come short on account of the weaknesses of the flesh. Jesus laid down His life to absolve us from sin and to restore us to the Father, and He has appeared in the presence of God as the Advocate for all those who, during this Gospel Age, turn away from sin and consecrate their lives to His service. Thus we see that the righteousness of Christ, through the great offering for sin which He made (His own body of flesh) is the basis for the forgiveness of our sins. And the blessing and privilege of going to the Throne of Grace for mercy and pardon for daily shortcomings is ours because we are the children of God, because we have come into the relationship of sons. We have a standing with the Father through the imputed merit of Jesus. Jesus does not advocate for others than the people of God. It is not the Father's purpose, that He, shall advocate for the world; God's dealing with the world will be quite different.

The Apostle John in this same Epistle says: "He that is begotten of God sinneth not." How can this be true? Is the Apostle contradicting himself? Does he here say that "he that is begotten of God *sinneth not*," and does he say in our text that there is danger of our sinning? And again, that we would be lying if we denied that we have sin? What does he *mean* by the statement, "He that is begotten of God sinneth not"?

We reply that that which is begotten of God is the New Creature -- the holy will, the new soul. But this New Creature has only the mortal body in

which to operate; God promises to give a new body to the New Creature in the resurrection. In the meantime, however, He is required to live under the present imperfections of the human body, and by his good fight against the weaknesses and sins which are entrenched in his flesh he will show either his loyalty to God and to the principles of righteousness or his disloyalty. If he be overtaken in a fault, either through ignorance or through temptation which he cannot control, it will not be sin on the part of the New Creature, but an infirmity of the flesh. Nevertheless, he must go to God for forgiveness for these trespasses.

But the New Creature sinneth not -- he "does not practice sin"-as the *Emphatic Diaglott* translates this passage. "He who *loves* sin will *sin*; he who does not love sin will not sin *willfully*." He might be entrapped through his weak flesh, or fall into a snare of the Adversary, but this would be unintentional on his part. And Jesus, our Advocate, will intercede for such sins, but not for deliberate sin. Jesus did not die for willful sins of the New Creature, but for sins due to the fall -- Adamic sin. So if any sin willfully as a New Creature, he perishes thereby. Our first life was in Adam; our first death was the Adamic death. When we accepted Christ and the New Creature was begotten, our second life was begun. Now if such a one should be guilty of willful sin he would no longer have any standing whatever before God; he would again come under the sentence of death -- the Second Death.

SLACKNESS IN THE NEW CREATURE

We might remark here, incidentally, that sometimes there is a kind of mixed condition; the New Creature has been slack in guarding against temptation, and has yielded with some degree of culpability. To the extent that the New Creature has been derelict, negligent, the face of the Lord will be darkened to him. If the flesh start to do wrong, the new will is not to consent to, or allow the wrong. The New Creature is to mortify, put to death, the flesh. To whatever extent he is slack in this matter, to that extent it is sin. A full sin would be a *full* consent of the new will, a full turning away from God.

But the flesh might have certain desires and temptations, and there might occur a partially willful sin. In such a case stripes would be administered in proportion to the willfulness. Such an individual might get into a place where he would be spiritually sick, so that the Lord would entirely shut him off from the light of His countenance. The Apostle James points out that the only proper action then would be for the individual to apply to the Elders of the Church, the seniors of the Church, the spiritually minded ones, that they go with him to the Throne of Grace in order that he might obtain mercy and be reinstated.

Seniors, spiritually minded ones not Elders, might do this service for the one who is sick, but preferably it should be the chosen Elders of the Congregation. This course would be a very humiliating one for the sin-

sick brother, but such action might save that soul from death by a proper humbling of *self* "under the mighty hand of God." Thus such a one might be recovered and become again a true child of God.

CHRISTIAN, WALK CAREFULLY!

If we realize that through lack of proper watchfulness, or through some infirmity of the flesh, we have taken a wrong step, contrary to the Lord's will and, to our interests as New Creatures in Christ, let us lose no time in retracing the step and in calling upon the Father for forgiveness. "We have an altar whereof they have no right to partake who serve the [typical] tabernacle"; an altar not sanctified by the blood of bulls and goats., but by the precious blood of Christ; and we are urged to "come boldly [with holy courage and confident faith] to the Throne of Grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need." (Heb. 13:10; 4:16.) How blessed this Throne of Grace, this Mercy Seat, provided by our Father's love! How undone we should be without it! Yet, beloved, let us walk with great carefulness -- let us never presume upon the mercy of our God by being careless of our steps. Let us, instead, with earnest prayer and watchfulness, "work out our own salvation with fear and trembling," while our Father "worketh in us both to will and to do His good pleasure." -- Phil. 2:12, 13.

"Christian, *walk carefully!* oft wilt thou fall,
If thou forget on thy Savior to call.
Safe shalt thou walk through each trial and snare,
If thou art *clad in the armor of prayer!*"

MATTHEW THE PUBLICAN

"I am not come to call the righteous but sinners." -Luke 5:32.

It has been truly said that "the story of Matthew is an emphatic witness to the truth that the Gospel is no respecter of persons, and that even in the selection of His more immediate followers Jesus thought not of their outward surroundings, but simply and solely of their spiritual fitness for their new task." Surely the Savior made no mistake in calling Matthew to be one of twelve Apostles. His life subsequent to his call gives evidence of having been most fruitful, and to him was assigned the honor of giving to the followers of Christ a most inspiring account of the life and ministry of our blessed Redeemer.

It was in or near the city of Capernaum that Matthew received the call from the Master. This city where our Lord had been teaching and healing, was situated on the sea of Galilee, or, as we today should say, the Lake of Galilee. It was a city of considerable commercial importance, especially for the fish business, and undoubtedly the lake-shore in that vicinity was quite populous. The tense of the Greek would seem to indicate that our

Lord kept going by the sea-shore, stopping here and there to discourse to the people, multitudes of whom flocked to hear Him. It was during this journey that He passed Matthew, formerly known as Levi, a custom-house agent of the Roman government -- a revenue collector, who was attending to his business, and whom our Lord addressed, saying, "Follow Me," and who obeyed the call to discipleship.

Many get a very false thought from the brevity of the narrative, and infer that Levi (Matthew) had never heard of Jesus before, and that our Lord, as He passed him, cast upon him some kind of a spell which led him to instantly drop his business, as though bereft of his senses. On the contrary, we are to remember that the Lord and His disciples were well known in that vicinity for years, and that probably Matthew had not only knowledge of our Lord, but also faith in Him, as the Messiah. Not until now, however, had Jesus invited him to become one of His immediate disciples; not until now, therefore, could Matthew essay to become such. There evidently were many who heard the Lord discourse time and again, and who were to be reckoned as amongst His friends, but who were by no means invited to become special followers, companions and associates in the ministry of the Gospel, as were the Twelve.

Nor are we to suppose that Matthew left his money-drawer open, and his accounts with the Roman government unsettled, to immediately follow the Master. Rather, we may assume that it may have taken days, or possibly weeks, to straighten his affairs and to enable him to respond to the Lord's call to apostleship. We should remember that the history of several years, and many discourses, conversations and incidents, are crowded in the gospel narrative into very brief space.

THE PUBLICANS DESPISED

The office of a publican offered many opportunities for dishonesty and extortion, bribery, etc., but we cannot for a moment suppose that Levi was one of these dishonest publicans, for had he been so we may be sure he would not have been called to the apostleship and would not have responded to the call, for we are not to forget that it is written, "No man can come to Me except the Father which sent Me draw him." John 6 :44.

Quoting Peloubet's Notes as to the general character of the publicans: "To become a publican in Palestine nineteen centuries ago a man had first of all to sell his country. The publican was the embodiment and representative of the foreign government. Dr. Johnson once defined a pensioner as a state hireling paid to betray his country. The Jew would have accepted that as a true definition of the publican. And to become a publican, in the second place, a man had to sell his conscience. The publican's trade was a dishonest trade. The fact that once in the history of the Empire a monument was raised to the memory of a man whose chief distinction it was that he had been an honest publican, only confirms the truth of the statement that, speaking generally, the publicans were a set of

unscrupulous extortioners and thieves. Taxes today are fixed by responsible and representative bodies, and the tax-gatherer, as a result, can never exact more than is due. But taxes long ago were 'farmed.' The taxes of a town or district or province would be sold to the highest bidder, and that highest bidder would then be allowed to squeeze out of the people of his district what money he could. It was a system that encouraged corruption and extortion. The more the publican wrung out of the people, the quicker he grew rich. And so the publican lied and cheated and swindled; he smothered his conscience and hardened his heart, and grew fat and rich by extortion and false accusation."

Matthew was a man of influence, and as soon as he accepted the Lord's call, and responded by consecrating himself and his all, he set about to use his influence in drawing others to the Savior. He would announce his own devotion to the cause in such a manner and under such favorable circumstances as if possible would win some. To these ends he arranged a banquet for the Lord and His disciples at his house, and invited many of his friends and business associates. These in our lesson are called "Many publicans and sinners."

MATTHEW READY FOR THE MASTER'S CALL

We have seen why the publicans were ostracized by the scribes and Pharisees - not always because they were wicked, but because their business was disesteemed: and being thus cut off socially from the ultra-religious, the publicans were forced to have most of their social intercourse with the non-religious, by way of contrast called "sinners." By the term sinners we are not necessarily to understand vile persons and evil-doers, but rather persons who did not profess nor attempt the holiness claimed by the Pharisees -- persons who did not claim to be absolute keepers of the Divine Law -- who did not profess to make the outside of the cup or platter absolutely clean, though perhaps in many instances the inside was as clean or more clean than were the hearts of the Pharisees, who professed perfect holiness. This our Lord intimated on several occasions. When, therefore, we read that our Lord was the friend of publicans and sinners we are not to understand that He made companions of the rowdies or moral lepers of His time. We are rather to understand that in the usage of that one class of Jews was designated the holy people (Pharisees), and another class designated as not professing absolute holiness (sinners).

The words of Dean Farrar are well in place at this point: "But He who came to seek and save the lost -- He who could evoke Christian holiness out of the midst of heathen corruption -- could make, even out of a Jewish publican, the Apostle and the first Evangelist of a new and living Faith. His choice of apostles was dictated, by a spirit far different from that of calculating policy or conventional prudence. He rejected the dignified scribe (Matt: 8:19); He chose the despised and hated tax-gatherer. It was the glorious unworldliness

of a Divine insight and a perfect charity, and St. Matthew more than justified it by turning his knowledge of writing to a sacred use, and becoming the earliest biographer of his Savior and his Lord:

"No doubt Matthew had heard some of the discourses, had seen some of the miracles of Christ. His heart had been touched, and to the eyes of Him who despised none and despaired of none, the publican, even as he sat at 'the receipt of custom,' was ready for the call. One word was enough. The 'Follow Me' which showed to Matthew that his Lord loved him, and was ready to use him as a chosen instrument in spreading the good tidings of the kingdom of God, was sufficient to break the temptations of avarice and the routine of a daily calling, and 'he left all, rose up, and followed Him,' touched into noblest transformation by the Ithuriel-spear of a forgiving and redeeming love."

"So Matthew left his golden gains,
At his great Master's call
His soul the love of Christ constrains
Freely to give up all.
O Savior! when prosperity
Makes this world hard to leave,
And all its poms and vanity
Their meshes round us weave
Oh, grant us grace that to Thy call
We may obedient be ;
And, cheerfully forsaking all,
May follow only Thee."

--J. S. B. Monsell.

A HOME CONSECRATED TO THE MASTER

Matthew's endeavor to bring his friends and associates into contact with the Master and His teachings is certainly commendable, and is a good illustration of what each one who enters the Lord's flock should do. Each should seek to exert his influence where it is greatest, amongst those with whom he is acquainted and who are acquainted with Him, and upon whom either His past honesty and good character should have an influence, or else those to whom his radical change of life would be the most manifest. Another lesson for us is the propriety of using hospitality as a channel for the advancement of the truth -- the homes of those who have consecrated themselves to the Lord should be consecrated homes, in which the first consideration should be the service of the Master; and its influence should be to draw out friends to the Lord, that they might be taught of Him. Too frequently the consecration of the home is overlooked and antagonistic influences are permitted to dominate, with the result that neither the Lord nor the Lord's people are entertained, nor His Cause served in them. Such a house and home loses a great blessing, and the head of such a house has serious reason to question whether or not he is overcoming, and therefore

an "overcomer," to whom only the prize is promised, or whether he is being overcome by adverse influences.

The Lord desires a courageous people, a people so full of faith, and love to Him and His, that they will conquer adverse influences in the interest of righteousness. What would we think of Matthew if he had said to the Lord: Master, I would much like to have a banquet at my home, and to invite there some of my friends, that I might introduce you to them, and that thus a favorable influence might be exerted on behalf of the truth; but I have no liberty in my own home my wife would not hear of it for a moment, or my children are unruly, have no respect for me as a parent, and would create a great disturbance if I were to mention such a thing as a banquet in your honor, so greatly are they offended that I am giving up my lucrative business, and so fearful are they that they will not have the same social standing as before, or the same privileges of extravagance?

We would consider him a most unfit man to be an apostle, or to occupy even the position of elder or deacon in the Church, according to the terms laid down by the Apostle Paul. (1 Tim. 3:4, 5.) We would esteem such an one unworthy of any responsible position in the Church, and so deficient in the qualities of an "overcomer" that he would be in great danger of losing the prize, unless he promptly instituted a reform of his character. It is only what we should expect, to find Matthew's case very different from this -- to find that he had a strong character. Nor can we expect that the Master would have said to him, "Follow Me," unless he had such character that would permit him to follow in the Master's footsteps, for surely our Lord Jesus, while gentle, kind, and loving, was never weak or characterless. And what would we have thought of Matthew's wife and family, had they objected to the banquet? We would have considered them rather hopeless as respects saintship, and that his wife had not learned even the first element of wifedom-that she was a hinderer instead of a helping mate. As it was we may be assured that with the Lord came a special blessing to that home.

SPIRITUAL FOOD AT THE BANQUET

It would seem from other narratives of this same banquet (which was probably several weeks after Matthew's call) that a large number of people were gathered at Matthew's house aside from those who partook of the banquet (Luke 5:29), and from the connection of the narrative it is supposed that it was on one of the regular fast days of the Pharisees. These facts led to the question:

Why does your Teacher associate with these people, who do not profess sanctification? The objection was not because our Lord taught the publicans and sinners, but because He ate with them, which implied a social equality, and the Pharisees evidently recognized that our Lord and His apostles were professing and living lives of entire consecration to God.

In answer to this query our Lord said, "They that are whole need not a physician, but they that are sick"; the implication being that the physician had a right to go to and mingle with those whom he sought to relieve, and might mingle with them in whatever manner he saw to be expedient for their cure. This language does not imply that the Pharisees were not sick, and that they did not need our Lord's ministry, though the fact was that not admitting that they were sin-sick they were not disposed to receive his good medicine of doctrine. The same thought is otherwise expressed. by our Lord in the same connection, saying, "I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." Any one who considered himself to be righteous, would be beyond the call of repentance. His first lesson would be to learn that he was not righteous, not perfect; hence our Lord went chiefly. to those who admitted that they were not righteous, and whose hearts therefore were better soil for the truth than others. Our Lord intimated this in His parable of the publican's and the Pharisee's prayers, assuring us that in God's sight the publican had the better standing, because of his acknowledgment of imperfections and his petition for mercy.

Another of the Evangelists adds other of our Lord's words-"Go ye and learn what that meaneth I will have mercy and not sacrifice." (Matt. 9 :13.) Our Lord here evidently quoted from Hosea 6:6. The lesson the Pharisees should have learned from this was that in their particularity respecting sacrifices, self-denials, tithing of mint, anise, cummin, etc., the very things in which they boasted as evidences of their holiness were things which God did not appreciate nearly so much as He would have appreciated mercy. They should have had compassionate feelings toward their fellow Jews, the yearning compassion which would have delighted to have lifted them out of sin and brought them nearer to the Lord and nearer to righteous influences. Instead of having this spirit of mercy, which would have been very pleasing in God's sight, and would have prepared them to be recipients of His mercy, they had instead a loveless sentiment which despised others and boasted of self-a self-satisfied and complacent condition of mind and heart, very reprehensible to the Lord -a condition of heart unready to be blessed with Divine mercy.

MARY MAGDALENE

"Our soul hath waited for Jehovah: He is our help and our shield:'-Psa. 33:20.

THE Sacred Record tells us that as Jesus was making a special preaching tour of Galilee-"throughout every city and village preaching and showing the glad tidings of the Kingdom of God" -- that He was accompanied by the Twelve; additionally by certain women, amongst whom was one who had been healed of evil spirits, called Mary Magdalene. This character, otherwise termed Mary of Magdala, is presented to our attention as an

exhibition not only of the miraculous power that was vested in the Savior in that she was freed from a great affliction, but also as an illustrious example of true and womanly devotion to a great Leader and a great Cause. Like a good number of others of her time, as well as since, she was led to enter upon this life of consecration and service of Her Master as a result of heartfelt gratitude--because of what great things the Lord had done for her.

Many in the past have identified Mary of Magdala with the unnamed character mentioned in Luke 7:36-50. Of this woman we read that she came into the room where Jesus was dining with Simon the Pharisee; with a vial of very precious ointment in her hand, she walked to the back of the table-couch and directly to the feet of Jesus. Her intention evidently was to anoint His feet with the ointment, but ere she had succeeded in breaking the seals and unstopping the vial her pent-up feelings found expression in a gush of tears which rained upon, the Master's feet--an indignity where she had intended honor. Quickly unfastening her hair she used it as a towel to dry the feet, and then, as expressive of her love and sympathy and adoration, while wiping the feet she kissed them repeatedly (for so the Greek text, implies). Then, opening the alabaster vase, she poured upon the blessed feet the sweet, odorous ointment as originally intended.

Though it cannot be proved that this woman who apparently of abandoned character thus came to Jesus in deep penitence anointing His feet, etc., was Mary Magdalene, yet the surmise is not altogether groundless. "An ancient tradition," says Dean Farrar, "especially prevalent in the Western Church, and followed by the translators of our English version -- a tradition which, though it must ever remain uncertain, is not in itself improbable, and cannot be disproved -- identifies this woman [referred to in Luke 7:36-50] with Mary of Magdala, 'out of whom Jesus cast seven devils.' This exorcism is not elsewhere alluded to, and it would be perfectly in accordance with the genius of Hebrew phraseology if the expression had been applied to her, in consequence of a passionate nature and an abandoned life. The Talmudists have much to say respecting her -- her wealth, her extreme beauty, her braided locks, her shameless profligacy, her husband Pappus, and her paramour Pandera ; but all that we really know of the Magdalene from Scripture is that enthusiasm of devotion and gratitude which attached her, heart and soul, to her Savior's service. In the chapter of St. Luke which follows this incident she is mentioned first among the women who accompanied Jesus in His wanderings, and ministered to Him of their substance; and it may be that in the narrative of the incident at Simon's house her name was suppressed, out of that delicate consideration which, in other passages, makes the Evangelist suppress the condition of Matthew and the name of Peter. It may be, indeed, that the woman who was a sinner went to find the peace which Christ had promised to her troubled conscience in a life of deep seclusion and obscurity, which meditated in silence on the merciful forgiveness of her Lord; but in the popular consciousness she will till the end of time be

identified with the Magdalene whose very name has passed into all civilized languages as a synonym for accepted . penitence and pardoned sin. The traveler, who, riding among the delicate perfumes of many flowering plants on the shores of Gennesareth, comes to the ruinous tower and solitary palm-tree that mark the Arab village of El Mejdal, will involuntarily recall this old tradition of her whose sinful beauty and deep repentance have made the name of Magdala so famous; and though the few miserable peasant butts are squalid and ruinous, and the inhabitants are living in ignorance and degradation, he will still look with interest and emotion on a site which brings back into his memory one of the most signal proofs that no one-not even the most fallen and most despised-is regarded as an outcast by Him whose very work it was to seek and save that which was lost. Perhaps in the balmy air of Gennesareth, in the brightness of the sky above his head, in the sound of the singing birds which fills the air, in the masses of purple blossom which at some seasons of the year festoons these huts of mud, he may see a type of the love and tenderness which is large and rich enough to encircle with the grace of fresh and heavenly beauty the ruins of a once earthly and desecrated life."

A MIRACLE OF GRACE -- LOVING DEVOTION

However, whether or not Mary Magdalene was the one who is described as coming to Jesus in the home of Simon, she was most certainly a miracle of grace. For it is distinctly stated that she had been possessed of evil spirits, seven of which the Lord cast out.

This statement signifies simply that she had been in the condition that many are who are in the insane asylum. Seemingly her troubles had not been organic, but caused by the harassing of the seven fallen angels who had taken possession of her. Whoever believes the Bible message must believe that there are fallen angels -- spirit beings who have a malevolent influence upon humanity to the extent that they can gain control, and who must be resisted by the will. Mary apparently was a woman of some wealth. Released from the power of the demons she was so grateful to Jesus that she did her best to serve Him on every occasion. Not only had she come from Galilee to Judea, but she was near the cross at the time of His death, and the first at the tomb on the morning of the resurrection-"while it was yet dark." Such love and devotion commend themselves to every sincere heart, and are surely worthy of emulation on the part of those who receive at the Lord's hands spiritual favors, forgiveness, reconciliation, the spirit of a sound mind, new hopes and aspirations, etc.

Mary Magdalene, finding the tomb of her Lord empty, hastened and first found Peter and afterward John, both of whom at once ran to the sepulchre, Mary probably returning more slowly to the same place, arriving there after they and the other women had gone. It was at this second visit that the Lord revealed Himself to her. She had been weeping and then stooped down in order to see through the low doorway, as though

to reassure herself that it was empty, and then saw for the first time two angels in white, who inquired respecting her sorrow. The angels had doubtless been there when she was there before, but she had not seen them, because not of their choosing to "appear." Indeed, the Scriptures assure us, saying, "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister to those who shall be heirs of salvation?" And again, "The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear Him, and delivereth them."

CLINGING TO JESUS

The words of the angels to Mary would be calculated to assuage her grief, for they manifested no grief, and by their question implied that she had no ground for it. At this juncture something drew Mary's attention, and turning around she discovered another person near her, evidently in ordinary garments, whom she presumed to be a servant of Joseph of Arimathea, the owner of the garden-his gardener. She considered herself a trespasser to some extent, and assuming that our Lord's body was not wanted longer in the rich man's tomb she inquired where He had been taken, that she might take the proper steps to care for His reinterment. Then Jesus (for it was He who had "appeared" in the form of a gardener) spoke her name: "Mary!" At once she recognized the voice, and crying, "Master, Teacher!" she 'fell at His feet, -- grasping them as though fearful that somehow, if she let go, she might never get the opportunity of touching His blessed person again. Our Lord's words to her, "Touch Me not, but go, tell My brethren," would more properly be translated, Cling not to Me, etc.: for I have not yet ascended to My Father; I will be here a while yet before I ascend, but your great opportunity for clinging to Me and trusting in Me will be after I have presented to the Father, and He has accepted, the great atonement for sins which I have just accomplished at Calvary. Mary's touch could do our Lord no harm, for others touched Him subsequently, as the record shows; but our Lord would lead Mary's mind away from a mere clinging in the flesh, to the higher relationship and intimacy of heart and of spirit, which would now be possible, not only for her, but for all His followers, not only then but ever since.

In a spiritual way the Lord's people may be exhorted not only to "look unto Jesus," the Author and Finisher of our faith,. but also to "cling to Jesus," and by faith to place our hands in His that He may lead us all through our pilgrim journey, in the narrow way until He shall bring us to Himself, when we, like Him, shall be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, and be like Him, spirit beings, and see Him *as He is*; not as He was, before His resurrection, nor as He "appeared" during the forty days after it. -- 1 John 3 :2.

Our Lord gave Mary a message, a service to perform, and so it is with all who love the Lord and seek Him and find Him: they are not to merely enjoy Him selfishly, but are given a commission in His service for the

brethren. This seems as true today as ever. Mary departed with her glad message and was undoubtedly much happier in the delivery of it than if she had been permitted to remain clinging to the Lord; enjoying her knowledge somewhat selfishly. To find her Lord alive when she had supposed Him dead meant to Mary a joy such as the Apostle Peter expressed when he said, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to His abundant mercy, hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead." We may well suppose from our own experience in such matters, that every time Mary told the good tidings to others, and made their hearts rejoice also, it brought her a fresh increase of joy. The Master similarly sends all who recognize Him as "He that liveth and was dead, and is alive forevermore," to go forth and tell others of the glorious fact that we have a living Savior, whose love and interest extends to every interest and affair of our lives, and who not only is full of sympathy and compassion, but is able also to succor those who are tempted, who are in trial, who are in distress of any kind -- one who is able to bring us off conquerors, to give us strength to endure hardness, and who by and by will receive to Himself all the faithful.

BY LOVE SERVE

Some one has left us the following beautiful statement concerning Mary Magdalene"

The story of Mary Madgalene teaches us the power of love. It drew her after the Savior. It strengthened her for ministry. It held her true and strong to the end. It won for her many blessings. 'Love never faileth.'

"We note that the risen Lord had at once some work for Mary Magdalene to do. Love is always thus rewarded with the opportunity to serve. The loving are the serving, and they count this service their crown.

"Mary says little; one word, 'Rabboni!' and then her Master's bidding. And it is in that immediate obedience, which cut at the very heart of all her joy, that He that hath eyes to see and ears to hear can gauge the height and depth of Mary's love." Still another has well remarked: "Mary was once trodden under foot of evil, a wreck in whom none but Christ saw any place for hope. It is what is in *HIM* that is powerful."

"Magdalena, thou delightest
In the light that may not wane;
Resting where the beams are brightest,
Lo, thou fear'st not death nor pain:
Grief and woe henceforth are banished;
In the day the night has vanished;
Hallelujah! Christ is King! Amen!"

DANIEL THE BELOVED OF JEHOVAH

SERIES VII

NEBUCHADNEZZAR'S PERIOD OF INSANITY

"The king spake, 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? While the word was in the king's mouth, there fell a voice from heaven, saying, O king Nebuchadnezzar, to thee it is spoken; The kingdom is departed from thee The same hour was the thing fulfilled upon Nebuchadnezzar; and he was driven from men, and did eat grass as oxen, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven, till his hairs were grown like eagles' feathers, and his nails like birds' claws." Dan. 4 : 30-34.

VARIOUS explanations have been given respecting the nature of Nebuchadnezzar's punishment. That it was a species of insanity is clear because it is stated to be such by Nebuchadnezzar himself when referring to his recovery: "And at the end of the days, I Nebuchadnezzar lifted up mine eyes unto heaven, and mine understanding [reason] returned unto me." That the great affliction came upon him as a direct judgment, as a rebuke to his pride and self-exaltation, is also evident. The entire account not only gives evidence of this, but also makes clear that the punishment was a corrective one,

Concerning the nature and form of the insanity, it is sufficient to say that it has been known in both ancient and modern times alike. It was of that kind or species in which the subjects labor under the delusion that they are themselves animals, and set themselves to live and act like the particular animal which they imagine themselves to be. Numerous instances of this form of insanity are recorded in the various medical works that treat of this malady, and examples may be seen by visiting asylums for the insane. One may imagine himself to be a king, and deck himself with a scepter or a diadem. It is very evident from this narrative that Nebuchadnezzar imagined himself to be a beast, and it was a thing not unnatural that he would try to live and act like a beast, as the account informs us he did. In such a state of mind it has been found that nothing can convince the affected one that he is not what he fancies himself to be. Where cases of this kind exist, and the afflicted ones are harmless, it is sometimes customary to indulge them in this fancy, in so far as it would be consistent with safety. It is not necessary to suppose that Nebuchadnezzar was permitted to roam the forests or fields without restraint. It is more reasonable to believe that he was cared for, indeed that special attendants were employed to this end. As expressed by another: "Perhaps the real influence of Nebuchadnezzar, and the true greatness of his character, cannot be seen more dearly than they are from the conduct of the Babylonians towards him upon this melancholy occasion. As a rule in the East everything depended upon the personal activity of the king, and his

constant presence to direct every movement whether in the direction of war, fine art, politics, theology, or civil engineering. But in this case the king was in a helpless condition, confined [most probably] to one of his palatial parks, and there shut off from all intercourse with the outer world. Here he was treated, most probably, not as unfortunate persons are at the present time by the kindness of skilled physicians who have made a study of human infirmity, but by his own magicians, who bound their sacred texts around him, and recited over him some of their incantations. Yet the whole of the state machinery went on just as if the mainspring itself was sound. No attempts were made to nominate a successor or even a regent. The prestige of the great conqueror, aided doubtless by the wisdom of Daniel, was in itself sufficient to maintain the empire."

Another writer has also laid stress on this matter as follows: "That after so deep, long, and total disability he found his imperial authority still reserved to him must likewise be referred to the special providence and merciful goodness of God, the while foreseeing what a salutary change the sorrowful affliction would work. We may justly attribute it, in good part, to that generosity and sound statesmanship which led the king to put Daniel and the three Hebrews at the head of things. Faithful to their God, they would not be unfaithful to their king, nor allow advantage to be taken of his melancholy sufferings to set up another in his place. These men knew that the trouble was only for a definite time, and that then the king would be recovered to his right mind in a still higher sense than it was ever before possessed. And so far as their high, authority and influence would go, they would reserve the kingdom for him, as the Chaldeans had done when his father, died."

The expression, "they shall make thee to eat grass as oxen;" seems to denote that as this was his fancied propensity, he would be indulged in it. It is not necessary, however, to suppose that his food was confined to what is termed grass today. The account is in the Chaldean language, and the corresponding Hebrew word for grass, according to Mr. Barnes and other learned expositors, means properly herbs, green herbs, vegetables. "The word grass in our language conveys an idea which is not strictly in accordance with the original. That word would denote only the vegetable productions which cattle eat." The herbs or vegetables would of course in this instance be eaten raw, the same as with cattle. The expression, "They shall make thee to eat grass," means that as this would be his inclination, they would treat him so that he would be permitted to do it. The words, "And they shall wet thee with the dew of heaven," means that they would allow him to live out in the open air. This would not be considered a strange treatment of an insane person, and especially so in a climate where it was not uncommon for all classes of persons to pass the night in the open air.

However, we must not lose sight of the fact that this affliction of the king was a special judgment of God. "The affliction was meant to be

extraordinary, and the falling of it within the category of common afflictions, though with peculiar features of its own, serves the double purpose of showing that it was not at all unlikely on the one hand; and that it was a mere natural disorder, on the other."

THE DEEPEST DEGRADATION

It is utterly impossible to conceive a contrast more marked than the one between Nebuchadnezzar's former state and condition and that which this great punishment brought upon him. The description exhibits one of the most melancholy and sad afflictions that could be visited upon any human being, however low his condition; but when considering the former exalted state of the great Monarch, the affliction would be so much more greatly magnified. Imagine, if you can, the great Monarch of the world, the one who was symbolized by the head of gold of the great image of empires, the one whose dominion reached almost to the end of the inhabited earth, the one whose genius surpassed all others, whose fame as a warrior, architect, and ruler resounded far and near; imagine him having reached the height of worldly success, honor and glory, walking upon the walls of his palace, contemplating with inward satisfaction what his great genius and military prowess had accomplished; imagine him looking down with selfish pride and admiration upon what he believed his own wisdom, and might, and power had accomplished, and saying, "Is not this great Babylon which I have built, for the house of the kingdom by the might of my power, and for the honor of my majesty." Then come and see him under the terrible affliction—this same man, walking among the cattle, thinking himself one of them, trying to live and act like them, disdainful of human habitation and ways of living. Observe him feeding upon the green herbage, disdainful of the dainty food of the palace. Mark his matted hair and beard. Observe his nails grown so that they looked like birds' claws. Note the dull, vacant look of his countenance; his refusal to speak to any human being, even to answer their questions. Observe his beast-like habits. Note how impossible it is to persuade him that he is anything different from the beasts that he persists in associating with. What degradation! Can this be a man? Is this the great and mighty conqueror whose fame had reached the world over? Is this the man under whose supervision and by whose wisdom and genius Babylon, the glory of the "Chaldean excellency" had been built? Is this the man that had consolidated and welded together all the kingdoms of the ancient world and brought them to acknowledge him as their ruler? Can this be the great and mighty monarch who was so desirous of having his fame handed down to generations unborn that he had his name stamped on the millions of bricks that were used in the construction of the wonderful palaces and other buildings designed by him or under his supervision?

Indeed, this is the man! how has the mighty fallen This is the punishment the Almighty imposed upon him for ignoring his Maker—for not heeding the "signs and wonders" shown him of the great omnipotent One's power.

What a punishment indeed. was this! However, it was all designed for good. In his case it was corrective -- sent upon him in order that he might see his sin, abhor, and forsake it, and acknowledge that the great God of heaven was the One to whom all men should give the praise and honor, for what they are, as well as what they have been enabled in this world to accomplish. Was the punishment in vain? Did he learn the lesson? Did it cause him to look up to the great God? Was his recovery an illustration of how the goodness of God leads men to repentance ?

It is impossible for us to tell whether or not the king retained his inner consciousness during the period of this terrible affliction. Medical works refer to cases of like affliction in which the subject's consciousness or even memory was seriously impaired; although they persisted in maintaining that they were not men, but beasts. The late Joseph Seiss is authority for saying "Dr Browne, the eminent commissioner of the Board of Lunacy* for Scotland, gives it as his opinion, male up from an experience of thirty years in the treatment of mental alienations, that 'the idea of personal identity is but rarely enfeebled, and that it is never lost.' He says, 'All the angels, devils, dukes, lords, kings, "god's many," that I have had under my care remained what they were before they became angels, dukes, etc., in a sense, and even nominally.' This author says 'I have seen a man declaring himself to be the Savior sign himself *James Thomson*, and attend worship regularly, as if the notion of divinity had never entered his head.' And in reference to the case now before us he says, 'I think it probable that Nebuchadnezzar retained a perfect consciousness that he was Nebuchadnezzar during the whole course of his degradation.'"

* He occupied this position about 1850.

If the quite general opinion that a "time" represents ,a year is correct, then seven years was the divinely appointed period that this great affliction was to continue. The decree of the heavenly "watcher" was that after this period had passed, he would recover. Whether the great king retained the consciousness that he was Nebuchadnezzar all these years or not, it is quite certain that he possessed it as the time drew near for his deliverance from the punishment.

It is very significant that the great calamity came upon him while the voice from heaven was speaking to him, and when his deliverance came, Nebuchadnezzar informs us that he found himself looking up to heaven whence the voice came. He tells us: "At the end of the days I Nebuchadnezzar lifted up mine eyes to heaven." He must have become conscious then that he was a grievous sufferer; he must have known what was the great sin that caused his affliction; and it is very reasonable, indeed it can hardly be otherwise, than that the look upwards was one which needed no audible expression for the One who is not only just but merciful to know that the king was pleading for mercy and help. It was a look expressive of reverence-a look that indicated earnest prayer for pity;

and the One who has said, "I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones," responded, and Nebuchadnezzar was delivered. He informs us, in words expressive of his joy and gratitude, that his understanding returned to him, and that he blessed the \,lost High, and praised and gave honor to Him for his great deliverance. His words, as recorded in the closing verses of this most remarkable decree or proclamation are: "At the same time my reason returned unto me; and for the glory of my kingdom, mine honor and brightness returned unto me; and my counselors and my lords sought unto me; and I was established in my kingdom, and excellent majesty was added unto me. Now I Nebuchadnezzar praise and extol and honor the King of heaven, all whose works are truth, .and His ways judgment; *and those that walk in pride He is able to abase:*"

Some writers, with seeming reasonableness, have located this incident of Nebuchadnezzar's recovery as occurring only a brief period, perhaps a year before his death. All accounts agree that his death occurred in 561 B.C., after a reign of about forty-three years. This Bible account is the last we hear of this great monarch. Berosus hints at some mysterious silence. in connection with his closing days. From the few vague and very brief passages mentioned in these ancient histories, however, there can be no solid inferences drawn. After this most remarkable proclamation, which he says was designed to show the signs and wonders that the Most High God wrought toward him, the veil is drawn over his after history, and what occurred is hidden. from our view, until "the judgment o f the great day."

THE GREAT KING A CHANGED MAN

Much debate has been had as to whether 'Nebuchadnezzar was genuinely converted or not. To answer with certainty it would be necessary to know for a surety what was the character of his life after this. So far as his words are concerned, they express nothing less than a genuine repentance and conversion. May we not with confidence believe, that his words, "And for the glory of my kingdom, my honor and brightness returned to me, . . . and excellent majesty was *added* unto me," express his purpose that his restoration to the exercise of his reason, should contribute to the glory of his kingdom, by the acts of justice and beneficence which he intended should characterize the remainder of his reign? And indeed, if what many eminent writers believe is true -- that Nebuchadnezzar was a symbolical man; that in both his degradation and recovery, he represented both humanity's degradation and restitution -- then will it not require, to make the typical representation full and complete, that he not only *suffered* a judgment degradation, but, that he also in the close of his life *experienced* a genuine conversion to the God of heaven? It certainly would seem so. Concerning this a noted writer has said:

"He had endured a most signal judgment, but it had upon him the intended effect. It humbled his pride. It brought him to the most devout personal recognition of God. It set him to work to do all in his power to honor and glorify Jehovah. It took away from his heart all shame or hesitation in confessing his sin, and the justice of the punishment he had suffered on account of it. It made him a penitent adorer and royal missionary of the true God. Not a great golden statue now, but his own imperial station, his recovered reason, his softened heart, his royal pen, himself and all his power and faculties as a king, were dedicated to that infinite One whose majesty he had offended, whose judgment he had suffered, and whom all men should fear, worship and obey. He transmitted his throne into a pulpit and his state papers into sermons, that his erring subjects might learn the wonders of Omnipotence, be led to honor the high God, and have peace multiplied unto them, through His name. He had learned that 'the heavens do rule'; and now his royal desire was that all people, nations, and languages that dwell in all the earth might learn the same, without coming to it through such sorrows as he had felt. He had through deep waters reached the better shore, and he now sung his psalm of royal praise to the 'King of heaven, all whose works are truth, and His ways judgment.' He had come to a pious apprehension of the signs and wonders that the high God had wrought toward him; and touched with that beneficent missionary -fire which always attends a true experience of grace, he now would have all men reverence and adore that same almighty Being, who is able to humble all the children of men.

"Men have debated whether his was a full and genuine conversion or not. To me it seems as if everything that could be expected under the circumstances was actually wrought. There breathes through the whole document so quiet, candid, earnest and beautiful a spirit that I know not how to explain it without referring it to- a thorough transformation of his entire character, which only the converting grace of God could work. The offensive pride of the heathen autocrat gave place to that penitent humility which frankly confesses its sin and blesses the Hand that chastised it. The hand which held the sword, and wielded it with such terrible effect is now stretched forth in, benediction. The lion so fierce and ravenous is tamed 'into a lamb. The harsh enactor of decrees to cut men to pieces, and to burn them in furnaces of fire, now exhorts and admonishes them as a prophet of God. If his language and speech are not yet completely purged of their heathen accent, and do not in all respects conform to that of the inspired teachers of Israel, we can distinctly trace in it the soul of a true worshiper and servant of the Most High. Nor do I know by what authority any one can deny him a place in the great congregation of them that know God and share His redeeming grace." - Joseph Seiss.

It certainly is remarkably significant that the last view of Nebuchadnezzar that sacred history gives us is that of issuing a proclamation to all people to reverence and obey the great God whose signs and wonders are so mighty, and who sits in majesty as the King of heaven. What more, in so

far as words can express it, is needed to describe a human soul won to God?

THE PICTURE OF HUMANITY

It is understood by several eminent writers that Nebuchadnezzar's insanity and recovery had a deeper significance, a much wider application, than is contained in the interpretation as given by Daniel. The thought is that Nebuchadnezzar was a typical man. Mr. Guinness has said, "Nebuchadnezzar was a typical, representative man. Not only was he the golden head of the great four-fold image, but he stands as its representative, as the representative of the long succession of rulers who were to succeed him till the coming of the Son of Man . . . His degradation to a bestial condition, typified the moral degradation of the Gentile kingdoms, through idolatry, pride, and self-exaltation; his restoration to reason prefigured the yet future day when the empires of earth shall own that the 'heavens do rule'; . . . thus the duration of Nebuchadnezzar's insanity, became typical of the times of the Gentiles, the times during which supreme power in the earth, is *by God* committed to Gentile rulers, instead of to the seed of David. Now these 'times' have already lasted more than 2400 years since the days of Nebuchadnezzar, and thus we see that the seven years of days; during which the king was insane, were intended to prefigure *seven years of years* (2520 years) during which the moral and spiritual degradation and debasement of the kingdoms of this world, dating from himself, are destined to endure."

Mr. Elliott thus refers to this matter: "Did he [Nebuchadnezzar] experience this extraordinary judgment and recovery simply in his individual character, or as a *symbolic man*? . . . For my own part, considering the extraordinary nature of the judgment -- the fact of its being so fully recorded by Daniel--the circumstance of Nebuchadnezzar being addressed on an occasion of another prophecy as the representative of his nation, ('Thou art this head of gold,') -- and that of the symbolic tree, when cut down, being bound with a band of *brass* and *iron*., the metals significant of the Greek and Roman Empires, which for ages held sway over the prostrate region of Babylon--all these considerations . . . induce me to believe that the seven times 360 days that passed over Nebuchadnezzar in his madness, represents the 2520 years times of the Gentiles."

Pastor Russell's interpretation of this remarkable dream also carries with it a typical application. Regarding this he says: "This remarkable tree, in its glory and beauty, represented the first dominion of earth given to the human race in its representative and head, Adam, to whom God said, 'Be fruitful, and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.' (Gen. 1 :28.) The original glory of man and the power invested in him were indeed sublime, and were over the whole earth, to bless, and feed, and protect and shelter every living thing.

But when sin entered, the command came to hew down the tree, and the glory and beauty and power of mankind were taken, away; and the lower creation no more found shelter, protection and blessing under his influence. Death hewed down the great tree, scattered his fruit and foliage, and left the lower creation without its lord and benefactor.

"So far as man was concerned, all power to recover the lost dominion was hopelessly gone. But it was riot so from God's standpoint. The dominion originally sprang out of His Plan, and was His gracious gift; and though He had commanded it to be hewn down, yet the root -- God's purpose and plan of a restitution -- continued, though bound with strong fetters so that it should not sprout until the divinely appointed time.

"As in the dream the figure changes from the stump of a tree to a man degraded and brought to the companionship and likeness of beasts, with reason dethroned and all his glory departed, so we see man, the fallen, degraded lord of earth: his glory and dominion have departed. Ever since the sentence passed, the race has been having its portion with the beasts, and the human heart has become beastly and degraded. How striking the picture, when we consider the present and past half-civilized and savage condition of the great mass of the human race, and that even the small minority who aspire to overcome the downward tendency succeed only to a limited degree, and with great struggling and constant effort. The race must remain in its degradation, under the dominion **of evil, until the** lesson has been learned, that the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever He will. And while men are in this degraded condition God permits some of the basest characters among men to rule over them, that their present bitter experience may prove in the future to be of lasting benefit.

"True to Daniel's interpretation, we are told that 'All this came upon the king, Nebuchadnezzar,' and. that in this insane, degraded, beastly condition he wandered among the beasts until *seven times* (seven literal years in his case) passed over him.. Daniel's interpretation of the dream relates only to its fulfillment upon Nebuchadnezzar; but the fact that the dream, the interpretation, and the fulfillment are all so carefully related here is evidence of an object in its narration. And its remarkable fitness as an illustration of the Divine purpose in subjecting the whole race to the dominion of evil for its punishment and correction, that in due time God might restore and establish it in righteousness anal everlasting life, warrants us in accepting it as an intended type."

In addition to this, may we not say that just as man's fall and degradation are represented by Nebuchadnezzar's insanity and his beastly state during its continuance, so man's recovery and restitution must also be represented by Nebuchadnezzar's recovery and 'genuine conversion'? Furthermore, if the entire dream is representative and typical, it is most reasonable to suppose that the period of the *seven times* are likewise so. In other words, if Nebuchadnezzar's insanity lasted 2520 literal days, so reckoning from

his day, man's dominion under sin would be 2520 symbolic days, a year for a day. Associating this expression "seven times" with the prediction of our Lord, "Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the *tines* of the Gentiles be fulfilled," it seems not only clear that there is a symbolical significance in the expression "seven times," but that its beginning is marked by two distinct events in Nebuchadnezzar's career, one of which began with the servitude of the Jewish nation to Nebuchadnezzar, which marked his lease of power, the other to the overthrow of Jerusalem and the temple. The dates for these two events are respectively 606 and 587 B.C. Their ending is 1914 and 1934 B.C. The arrival of this future date will settle or determine the truthfulness or untruthfulness of this *typical* application of this dream of the great king.

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PROGRESS IN THE HOLY LAND

"ANCIENT PROPHECY BECOMING REALITY"

STORY OF TRANSFORMATION OF HOLY LAND TOLD BY
REV. S. B. ROHOLD

THE wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad and the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose.' Such was the inspired prediction of the Hebrew Prophet of old when, looking down through the ages, he saw the future of the Holy Land, and such is the transformation that under the beneficent rule of Britain is taking place in Palestine today. In an interview with The Globe last evening Rev. S. B. Rohold, Principal of the Mount Carmel Bible School, Haifar, who has just returned to Toronto on a visit after a three years' sojourn in Palestine, told something of the story of the development and transformation that is taking place in the land where the Christian religion found its birth. Mr Rohold is at work in Palestine under the British Jews' Society, of which Sir Andrew Wingate is President:

WHAT BRITAIN IS DOING

" 'Palestine must remain British,' Mr. Rohold emphatically declared. Only thus would the country reach its highest development. Under British administration the arid wastes of the desert were being changed into fertile country, and order, justice, sanitation and cleanliness were everywhere evident in Jerusalem. Where the Turk held sway there was filth, squalor and oppression in the city and waste and unproductive spaces in the country outside. Now all is changed. 'Take the transformation that has taken place in the Valley of Jezreel, which extends to the foot of Mount

Carmel. It was near here that Elijah slew the prophets of Baal. Previous to the capture of Jerusalem and the advent of the British in Palestine, even the Bedouin could not live there. Now the entire valley has been changed and looks like a veritable garden, where flowers bloom and vegetables are cultivated by the Jews.'

"Greater developments than can be conceived are pending in the future. Under the Ruttenberg scheme, which aims to use the waters of the Jordan and the Yarmuck Rivers in much the same way that Ontario has used Niagara, the whole land will be transformed and made useful and productive. Already the scheme is well under way, and electricity is solving the problems of Palestine in much the same way as it did this Province in the past few years.

SIR HERBERT SAMUEL'S TASK

"For Sir Herbert Samuel, the High Commissioner of Palestine, Mr. Rohold has the highest admiration, and believes that he is the right man in the right place. 'He may be described as an autocrat, but it is an autocrat that is needed: there today, and he is absolutely just.' The position of Sir Herbert is no sinecure, Mr. Rohold stated. There were numberless factions amongst whom he had to keep peace, and, at the same time deal justly by all. As an instance of the affection and esteem in which he is held by the people, Mr. Rohold stated that a Moslem had told him that Sir Herbert Samuel was a most wonderful man, whom he dearly loved. 'I could kiss his boots,' he said, 'if he were, only a Mohammedan.'

"Regarding the recent troubles in the country, Mr. Rohold lays the blame for most of them at the door of agitators, who, almost without exception, he believes came from Syria. They were neither Jews nor Arabs, but Syrians seeking to exploit the country and to foment troubles for their own selfish purposes.

"Speaking of his own work in Haifar, Mr. Rohold stated that it was doing much to break down the walls of hatred and prejudice that had formerly kept Jew, Christian and Arab apart. In connection with the institute, there were conducted night schools, in which English, Hebrew, and Arabic were taught. To the Christian Gospel he thought that the Jew in Palestine was more amenable than in any other part of the world.

CHRISTIANITY TAKES HOLD

" 'Palestine is the only place that I know in the world where the missionary has access to the Jewish mind and heart,' he said, -- 'Eight months ago Dr. Klausner published a Life of Christ in Hebrew. This is the first time that this has ever been done by a liberal Jew.' The sale of this book among the Zionist Halutzim (pioneers) was remarkable. They read it eagerly, he said, though the orthodox Jew, who believed that Zion would be rebuilt by God in a miraculous way, would have nothing to do with it." -- *Toronto Globe*.

PALESTINE'S CHEERFUL STORY

"There is good reason to believe that political, economic and social progress are being made in Pal'stine when we find, for the first time, that the. high commissioner and the Palestinian administration, the Jewish telegraphic agency and the London Daily Mail are in agreement regarding the improved conditions. Hitherto not only the points of view but the conclusions have been so various that the facts could not be easily ascertained with any great degree of certainty. Now it is pleasing to note the unanimity as to the development of the little country that is dear to the adherents of three religions in all parts of the world. Its government on humanitarian principles by a Christian nation as trustee, with the Christians in the land a comparatively insignificant minority, with the Jewish 11 per cent. of the population being joined by immigrant Jews for the purpose of restoring in Palestine a national home, and with the native Arabs an overwhelming majority, is a new and hazardous experiment, the ultimate outcome of which it would be rash to predict.

"But the initial difficulties have been overcome, and Palestine, including the recently founded Zionist colonies, is more prosperous than it has been for years. Though the general economic depression of 1922 was felt in the country to some extent, the colonies paid their way so well that Zionists propose to allot part of the fund raised in the United States by Dr. Weizman to the founding of new colonies. The only complaint seems to be that too few of the immigrant Jews care for agriculture and too many settle in the towns, attracted by the building activities of Jerusalem, Jaffa, Haifa and Tiberias. But of these additions to the population Sir Herbert Samuel says that they are of good quality and not bolshevist--which is a reassuring contradiction of earlier reports. In the official balance sheet of his government he shows a rising revenue and a falling expenditure, and in his London speech the other day, he expressed the belief that in the not distant future there would be an ideal and wholly self-supporting Palestine. We hope this faith will be justified. In the meantime the prospect appears to be full of cheer and promise." -*The Boston Herald*.

PALESTINE

Amongst other press reports that come under our observation, bearing upon the progress of Zionism, are the following

"Dr. Chaim Weizman, president of the World Zionist Organization, recently reported that conditions in Palestine were steadily improving.

"The foundations of the Jewish national home are being laid in a way that will do credit to the Jewish people.

"In the last two years thirty thousand new immigrants have entered Palestine, a considerable achievement **for so small a country**.

"Great stretches of land have been plowed, new roads have been built, one million trees planted, and a network of schools formed as the nucleus of the Jewish university.

"A technical school has been completed at Haifa.

"Dr. Weizman said that, the relations of the Jews to the Arabs are improving and conditions in the Near East are rapidly settling down."

"JEWISH TOWN WINS FIRST GREAT VICTORY"

"The Jewish township of Tel-Aviv, Palestine, has scored a triumph for the success of Zionism, according to Rabbi S. M. Neches, Rabbi of Temple Beth Israel, Olive and Temple Streets, who yesterday received word that the two elements in Tel-Aviv, a township composed entirely of Jews, had reached a satisfactory solution of the first snag which for a time had seemed to threaten the successful drafting of a charter for the municipality.

" 'The difficulty arose;' said Rabbi, Neches, 'over the question of legalizing the observance of the Sabbath. There are two elements in Tel-Aviv, as there have been in every Jewish community, the Orthodox, and what I might call the passively religious. The first element wanted the observance of the Sabbath made legally binding on the community, after the manner of our Sunday Blue laws in America, which raised such an outcry here not very long ago, while the second element objected to it:

FIRST EXPERIMENT

" 'The eyes of the whole world and of the supporters of the Palestinian movement in particular were fixed with interest on the debate, as Tel-Aviv might be called the first experiment of a Jewish town in a Jewish State. What would they do?

" 'The High Commissioner of Palestine, Sir Herbert Samuel, said that every municipality had the right to enact its own laws, and that if such a law were enacted he would enforce it.

" 'The information came to me today, from a reliable source, that, to the satisfaction and relief of all the elements both inside and outside of Palestine, they had reached a working solution of the problem, to the effect that the profaning of the religious holiness of the Sabbath openly should be legally prohibited.

THRIVING COMMUNITY

" 'The suggestion was offered by A. I. Kouk, chief rabbi of Palestine, who was lately elevated to the rank of colonel in the British army by King George.

" 'Tel-Aviv is a thriving modern community, a community that would be modern even in America, according to reports, with wide streets and modern sewerage and lighting, systems, and boasting the great Hertzl

gymnasium or high school. Recently the little German colony of Sarrona applied to be annexed to Tel-Aviv in preference to the Arabian municipality of Jaffa, it was said.

" 'I look upon this first solution of a much-mooted question as a highly important augury for the success of the Jewish State,' added Rabbi Neches, 'especially in view of the fact that so many previous attempts have gone upon the rocks on lesser questions.'"

The foregoing items scarcely need any comment. They speak in no uncertain tones of the continued and sure progress and development in the land that has been made sacred above all lands of the earth to both Jew and Christian. Surely we may regard these changed conditions in the Land of Israel as amongst the "signs of the times" -- signs that the Times of the Gentiles have about run their course, and that the period of Israel's disfavor is rapidly drawing to a close. Consequently we may "speak comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned: for she hath received of the Lord's hand double for all her sins."

DARKNESS THAT CAN BE FELT

By a Traveler

IN THE TRAIN, EGYPT.

"Through the window of the railway carriage in which I am writing I look out on a thick London fog.

"The air hangs around me like a dark blanket in color and consistency, and to breathe is like eating flannel. The lights are burning in the train, and we can hardly see a yard beyond the border of the railway line. Dimly visible beyond the further gloom gigantic forms are tossing multitudinous arms in mid -air, like Titans wrestling with the gods of Olympus, or, as it might be, forests of windmills in a hurricane. In reality, these writhing shapes are the green tops of palm trees.

"The fog is compounded not of soot, but of sand, and the very paper on which I write is gritty. We pity ourselves heartily for being caught on a railway journey in a Khamsin of the first magnitude.

COMING OF THE SIROCCO

"We have just entered on the most trying season of the Egyptian year. Anglo-Egyptians know exactly what really happened when Moses afflicted all the land for the space of three days with darkness that could be felt. At this period of the year the 'North breeze, which makes Egyptian nights so cool and refreshing after the hottest of days, gives place to a

blistering sirocco from the Sahara, calculated while it lasts to afflict human kind with a brimming measure of discomfort.

" 'Khamsin' is the Arabic word for 'fifty,' and the name is given to this furnace-blast from the desert by reason of the period of fifty days during which its intermittent onslaughts must be endured.

"The first sign of the approaching visitation is a sudden still oppressiveness in the air, such as in England heralds a thunderstorm. The atmosphere seems to be neutralized between the fresh ripple of the wind that blows up the Nile from seaward and the advancing breaths of the opposing heat blizzard from the South. The clear-cut contours of the desert hills begin to lose their distinctness; their sky-line is blurred in a mist, which is really a curtain of blown sand and . dust. Finally, after, it may be, a day's or only a few hours' warning, the Khamsin swoops down on the country with the fury of a typhoon at sea.

"Down go the sweet peas, so fresh and beautiful in their recent colors, like a piece of crazy scaffolding. The vine trellis crashes and collapses, the flowering bougainvillea slips its moorings on the lattice-work of the balcony like a fleet scattering before a submarine, and streams in ribbons on the air. The atmosphere cracks and rattles with hundreds of shrivelled and whirling leaves, and not clouds, but a solid bank of eddying dust, blots out sun and landscape, and renders the colored air solid in place of fluid.

BARRICADED FROM THE BLAST

"It is recorded of the Egyptians under Moses' plague that 'they saw not one another, neither rose any from his place for three days.' They adopted, in fact, the only possible course in a Khamsin, and, as far as we can, we follow their ancient example in modern Egypt.

"For the human victim the only salvation is to fly to his house and barricade himself behind the triple ward of shutters, wire blinds and windows, with rugs and towels over-spreading the crevices of doors and window sills.

"Even in the barricaded and darkened house the situation is as uncomfortable as can well be imagined. No parapet of quilts or blankets can keep out the drifting dust. Finely sifted through the interstices of windows and doors, the very house walls seeming almost porous before it, we sit helplessly watching it as it spreads inexorably in grey-brown waves, mounds and ridges over the surfaces of our polished floors, fills our basins, jugs and kitchen utensils with a gritty sediment, and buries our books, furniture, and pictures under the drifts of a displaced Sahara, from which we shall later on 'excavate' them with much expenditure of elbow-grease, when the clear North wind blows once more, and, as of old, drives the plague into the sea.

"THE AGES"

THE article published below, received from one of the friends, is an extract from the writings of one who wrote more than thirty years ago. We publish it as a matter of interest-as an example of the clear comprehension of much of the truth respecting the order and purpose of the Ages, on the part of one who had not read *The Divine Plan of the Ages*.

"It is not a matter of surprise that men have been slow to understand the onward movements of the hand of God behind the scenes, in the development of the Ages. Phenomena are more easily studied and understood than the unseen laws that govern them. Israel saw the 'acts' of the Lord, but Moses understood His 'way' -- the reason of things. Israel's view was from without, but Moses was admitted to the counsels of Jehovah, who 'made known His way'-His purpose and the principles on which He acted.

"As we have seen, these Ages are among the things that are revealed. God has taken, us into His confidence and made known His purpose respecting the Church, respecting Israel, and respecting the nations. during this Age. He has unfolded the greater glory of the Age to follow the one in which we live, and He has even given unmistakable revelations respecting the everlasting Age of glory succeeding that.

"Our study of these Ages in their development reveals a fourfold law: 1. The Ages overlap. There is. no sharp point at which the one ends and the other begins. You cannot mark a -day or an hour when power passed from Jerusalem to Babylon, nor an hour when the Jew ceased to be recognized and the Church began. Jerusalem continued more than thirty years after Pentecost, and her destruction under Titus is plainly predicted by our Lord in His discourse recorded in the twenty-first chapter of Luke. Jerusalem wilt recommence an existence at the end of this Age, and before the Church has gathered in the full number of the elect it will be in existence long enough to re-establish laws, customs, and worship according to the commands of Moses. It is evident that just as the instruction given in Luke 21, respecting the surrounding of that city by armies was of service then, and none of the Christians perished, so shall the instruction given in Matthew 24, respecting 'the abomination of desolation' guide the Christians in the future destruction, to flee for safety. Luke refers to the days of Titus in the past, Matthew to the days of greater trouble in the future. It was 'the day of vengeance' then, but in . that hour to come 'it shall be great tribulation such as bath not been from the beginning of the world, nor ever shall be.'

"2. God never destroys His previous work. He judges and sweeps from the scene whatever man has accomplished, but He always preserves the work of His own hands. The promise of salvation imbedded in the curse pronounced in Eden, is perpetuated in the new earth under Noah, and its fulfillment will crown the new heavens and the new earth under Christ.

The kernel of government given to Noah, has been preserved through all dispensations, notwithstanding man's abuse of the trust. Even the law which only came in by the way 'until the seed should come,' remains holy and just and good -- a revelation to the New Man, although a source of death to the Old. The Gospel, with the Holy Spirit sent down from heaven which began with our Lord, will be continued in the Age to come. In a word, God never finds that He has built upon the wrong foundation or of the wrong material. He never tears down His barns to build larger -- He builds them large enough at first. Step by step, in the onward advance of the Ages, whatever has come from God, has the stamp of His unchanging character. His foundation standeth sure.

"3. In each Age there is first of all a gradual deterioration from the former condition of things. This declension continues and accelerates as the end of the Age approaches. Whatever irregular attempts at recovery may appear, they will be found to be the results of some external force or forces, and are never an evolution from within.

"4. In each Age, the power of evil waxes stronger and stronger. In the end it makes a final and supreme effort to maintain itself against the incoming of a better state of things. The course and climax of the Mosaic Age is the type and mold of every Age. Man resisted, stoned and shamefully entreated the Prophets. When God sent His Son they killed Him in the most shameful way known to history and sought to seize His inheritance. They descended from a rejection of the message to a hatred of the messenger, and then from that to the murder of the King from whom the message came. .

"5. There is also revealed the victory of the new or better Age, coming out of, and ruling over, the wreck and ruin of the Age preceding. This victory, in every case, is preceded by judgment, and is led and accomplished by God in the person of His Son.

"Thus, from the 'unbeginning beginning' spoken of by John, we have reason to believe that the countless Ages have been unfolding their glories. But we know by revelation that from the time of that other 'beginning,' when the heavens and the earth were created, the Ages have had their birth, their course and their death-struggle and agony that has never been equaled. In its last days it will be marked by the most subtle deceptions of Satan and by the most daring blasphemy of man, ever seen in human history. It will be the combination of earth and hell to defeat the gracious purpose of God to bring in the better things of the Age to come. The Devil will have 'great wrath, knowing that he bath but a short time.'

"But all of the human and Satanic combinations will be in vain. 'He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh; the Lord shall have them in derision.' The Son shall he set 'upon the holy hill of Zion,' and 'shall break them with a rod of iron.' The 'appearing of the great God and our Savior,' will be an epoch, marking the end of Israel's blindness, of the Church's suffering, of

Satan's power, and also marking the beginning of the Millennial reign. The Old will die and will be put in its bloody coffin and then sunk into oblivion, while the New will be born and laid in its peaceful cradle. But the One who buries the Old, and brings forth the New, will sit on the throne and shall have- 'dominion under the whole heaven,' and 'from the river to the ends of the earth.' 'All kings shall fall down before Him, and all nations shall serve Him.. His name shall continue as long as the sun.'

"It is thus that God hath molded the Ages of the past. Thus is He molding the present, and thus will He mold the future. But whether in the past, the present, or the future Ages, it is the same everlasting God of light and love, the same Holy Spirit, the same Mediator, and the same human race, either needing mercy; or 'having obtained mercy.' The Gospel has not been a failure, it does not fail now, and it will not be a failure in the Age to come. It has accomplished, and it will accomplish the ends for which it is preached. In this Age it takes out a people from the nations. In the next it will begin by 'repairing the tent of David,' in order that 'all nations may seek after the Lord.' And when the final Age is reached, redeemed man; the redeemed heavens and the redeemed earth will attain a perfection leaving no wish or will of God Himself ungratified, and when that long expected day has come, we will have no song of praise for man, for sociological reforms, for Church pretension or for good laws, but unto the Father and unto the Son, and unto the Holy Spirit unto the Ages of Ages, shall be glory and dominion and power. Amen." -- Extract from "*The Doctrine of the Ages*" by Robert Cameron.

MARTHA AND MARY

"Mary hath chosen the good part, which shall not be taken away from her:" -- Luke 10:38-42; John 11:1-12:8; Mark 14:3-9.

It has been supposed by some that the rich young ruler who came to Jesus for advice and subsequently went away very sorrowful was His friend Lazarus who, with his sisters Martha and Mary, resided at Bethany near Jerusalem and at whose home our Lord was frequently entertained-a welcome guest. Whether or not the surmise is correct, there is no doubt that here in this home in Bethany Jesus frequently found refuge from labor and fatigue in His weary hours, in constant sympathy with Mary and Martha, and their brother Lazarus. Some have conjectured that Martha was the widow of "Simon the leper" named later; others think that she was his daughter. She is mentioned first and takes the lead as if she were the oldest of the three. Hers was at any rate the most active and aggressive temperament.

As in the affairs of life we meet and associate with fellow beings and become acquainted with them, so in the Sacred Record left us of some who lived long ago, the lessons of their lives come vividly before us.

Martha and Mary are two most interesting characters, but like all others of our race, their naturalness, their humanity, are plainly manifest as we read the various incidents pertaining to them in connection with our Lord's ministry.

JESUS IN THE HOME AT BETHANY

We find our Lord enjoying the fellowship of this home in Bethany "on the eve of the Feast of the Dedication," which marked the close of that public journey designed for the full and final proclamation of His coming Kingdom.

"It was natural that there should be some stir in the little household at the coming of such a Guest, and Martha, the busy, eager-hearted, affectionate hostess, 'on hospitable thoughts intent,' hurried to and fro with excited energy to prepare for His proper entertainment. Her sister Mary, too, was anxious to receive Him fittingly, but her notions of the reverence due to Him were of a different kind. Knowing that her sister was only too happy to do all that could be done for His material comfort, she, in deep humility, sat at His feet and listened to His words.

"Mary was not to blame, for her sister evidently enjoyed the task which she had chosen of providing as best she could for the claims of hospitality, and was quite able, without any assistance, to do everything that was required. Nor was Martha to blame for her active service; her sole fault was that, in this outward activity, she lost the necessary equilibrium of an inward calm. As she toiled and planned to serve Him, a little touch of jealousy disturbed her peace as she saw her quiet sister sitting idly, she may have thought-at the feet of their great Visitor, and leaving the trouble to fall on her. If she had taken time to think, she could not but have acknowledged that there may have been as much of consideration as of selfishness in Mary's withdrawal into the background in their domestic administration; but to be just and noble-minded is always difficult, nor is it even possible when any one meanness, such as petty jealousy, is suffered to intrude. So, in the first blush of her vexation, Martha, instead of gently asking her sister to help her, if help, indeed, were needed-an appeal which, if we judge of Mary aright, she would instantly have heard -she almost impatiently, and not quite reverently, hurries in, and asks Jesus if He really did not care to see her sister sitting there with her hands before her, while she was left single-handed to do all the work. Would He not tell her (Martha could not have fairly added that common piece of ill-nature, 'It is of no use for one to tell her') to go and-help?

LESSONS OF WORSHIP AND SERVICE

"An imperfect soul, seeing what is good and great and true, but very often failing in the attempt to attain to it, is apt to be very hard in its judgments on the short -comings of others. But a Divine and sovereign soul-a soul that has more nearly attained to the measure of the stature of the perfect

man-takes a calmer and gentler, because a larger-hearted view of those little weaknesses and indirect nesses which it cannot but daily see. And so the answer of Jesus, if it were a reproof, was at any rate an infinitely gently and tender one, and one which would purify but would not pain the poor faithful heart of the busy, loving matron to whom it was addressed. 'Martha, Martha,' so He said -and as we hear that most natural ad dress may we not imagine the half-sad, half-playful, but wholly kind and healing smile which lightened His face? -- 'thou art anxious and bustling about many things, where as but one thing is needful; but Mary chose for herself the good part, which shall not be taken away from her.' There is none of that exaltation here of the contemplative over the active life which Roman Catholic writers have seen in the passage, and on which they are so fond of dwelling. Either may be necessary, both must be combined. Paul, as has well been said, in his most fervent activity, had yet the contemplativeness and inward calm of Mary; and John, with the most rapt spirit of contemplation, could yet practice the activity of Martha.

Jesus did not mean to reprobate any amount of work undertaken in His service, but only the spirit of fret and fuss-the want of all repose and calm-the ostentation of superfluous hospitality -- in doing it; and still more that tendency to reprobate and interfere with others, which is so often seen in Christians who are as anxious as Martha, but have none of Mary's holy trustfulness and perfect calm." Though there is room for difference of opinion with regard to the worth and qualities of, Martha and Mary, there can be no doubt that they were both excellent and noble women. Their conducts and temperaments have been commented upon from various standpoints by those who have studied the narrative. Thus Bishop Henry C. Potter remarks: "A kinsman of mine was once entertained by a gifted woman, who was so much absorbed in his interesting conversation that she forgot to inspect the 'spare room' in which he slept, and in which he passed the night in exasperating collisions with a silver soup tureen which long before had been concealed from the burglars in his bed; and I confess I agreed with a cynical female critic who observed, on hearing the story, that clever and devout women might sometimes most wisely 'pray and talk less and keep house more.'" Another says, "Of all things Jesus delights in, none are better than humble discipleship. Service He looks for; but service must follow discipleship, not precede it; otherwise it will go in mistaken lines, wasting itself on efforts which, though well meaning, are yet unwise." Still another has remarked, "very Christian should combine Martha and Mary in his or her life, working when Christ calls for work, and worshiping when opportunity for worship is given by the Master."

LEAVING OUR BURDENS AT HIS FEET

Upon another occasion the Sacred Record, gives us a most interesting insight into the lives of these two sisters. The little home at Bethany has become a house of mourning and is enshrouded in the deepest gloom and sorrow. The brother. Lazarus was taken suddenly sick. The illness

developed very rapidly and about the time the messenger from Bethany reached the Lord beyond Jordan, a distance of only about thirty miles, Lazarus had died. Even then our Lord made no haste to reach Bethany but on the contrary tarried two days. The message was sent to Jesus "He whom Thou lovest is sick." It was not a prayer that He should come to his relief nor that He would exercise power for his recovery; it was merely a statement of the facts submitting the whole matter to the Lord. This message alone tells us of a deep work of grace in the hearts of the family of Bethany-that their intercourse with the Lord had been profitable, that they had learned of Him. We commend the words of their message to all spiritual Israelites as the proper form for bringing before the Lord's attention our various burdens and troubles. We are not wise enough to direct the Lord as to what should be done in respect to our affairs. If we have committed our all to Him, a proper faith bids us trust Him, bids us rely upon the Divine wisdom and love and power, which promises to make all things work together for good to us-better than we could ask for. It was quite sufficient to say, "*He whom thou lovest is sick.*"

Let the Lord do as seems best to Him. And so it is quite sufficient in respect to our dear ones who are sick, to comfort our hearts by going to the Lord in prayer and making mention of the facts, although we are sure that He knows them. Our burdens should be *left* at the Lord's feet and our faith should firmly trust Him, come what may, and accept the results of Divine providence -- meantime, of course, doing all that we know how to do reasonably and properly in the aid of the ailing ones or to rectify the troubles, just as we may be sure that the sorrowing sisters, while sending this message to the Lord, neglected not to do everything in their power for the relief of their brother from his illness, for the assuaging of his pain.

It speaks volumes for the character of Lazarus as a man that he had the love of the Lord Jesus. We remember that in the record concerning the rich young ruler it is written that after he had related to the Lord that he had at least outwardly kept all the commandments from his youth, Jesus beholding him, loved him-even though he was not in the condition of heart to make a full consecration and thus to become a true disciple. So we are bound to love all in whom we see the beauties of a noble character, whether they be of the consecrated ones or not-but our love and esteem for them of course increases as we see them recognizing their "reasonable, service" and presenting their bodies living sacrifices to Him who redeemed us.

Let us all more and more cultivate such elements of character as will make us lovely and lovable in the estimation not only of the brotherhood, who overlook our imperfections righteousness, may on .become pronounced, more went the disappointment. brother, that so. have of wonder behalf to should Brooklyn, N. Y. imperfections and cover them with the robe of Christ's righteousness, but also in the estimation of the world, that they may behold our good characters and glorify our Father in heaven on our

behalf. It has been inferred that later on Lazarus did become a fully consecrated follower of the Lord.

Tarrying two days, in order that the miracle might be more pronounced, our Lord and the Apostles spent portions of two more days in reaching Bethany. Martha, learning of His coming, went down the road to meet Him in advance. While greeting Him, the burden of her salutation indicated a measure of disappointment. She was still sorrowing for the loss of her brother, and her heart was pained additionally with the thought that the Lord might have prevented this calamity, yet had not done so. She said, "Lord, if Thou hadst been here my brother would not have died." How apt we all are, while laboring under the weight of sorrow, disappointment and trial, to look to the Lord and wonder why His omnipotent power does not intervene on our behalf to save us from some of the ordinary experiences common to the world -feeling that because we are His special friends we should have had special consideration.

"BE NOT FAITHLESS, BUT BELIEVE"

Let us learn a lesson on this point from the experience of Martha and Mary. Let us learn to trust the Lord even where we cannot trace His providences in all of our affairs. Let us remember the love Divine which already has done so much for us, redeeming us and inducting us into the Divine favor, and providing for us exceeding great and precious promises respecting the things unseen as yet. "Only believe," was the keynote of our Lord's reply to Martha. And so to each of us in the many experiences which affect our interests, we must learn the lesson of faith, confidence in the Lord's wisdom, love and power. The lesson eventually learned by Martha and Mary more than compensated them for all their tribulation, and so it will be with us if we will allow our faith to firmly trust Him. In the end we shall be stronger in our faith, closer to the Lord, and full of appreciation of His favors.

In answer to Martha's expression of confidence in our Lord's power to have preserved her brother from the tomb, our Lord suggested the great consolation He had to offer, not only to the sorrowing sisters, but to the whole world of mankind, namely that the Divine power within Him was not only such as could keep the sick from dying and heal them, but a power of resurrection-a power to bring forth from the tomb and, more than that, a power to raise up out of all the imperfections of the fallen condition, up, up, up, to the original perfection, the fullness of life enjoyed before the curse of death came upon our race. All this is in the words, "I am the resurrection and the life."

These are the great lessons for all of the Lord's people to learn: first, that death is a just penalty because of imperfection, second, that God has had mercy upon us as a race, and has provided a ransom; and third, that the Ransomer is the divinely appointed and commissioned and empowered One who, by and by, shall, in God's due time, bid all in the tomb come

forth, and He will, then, additionally grant an opportunity to all to escape entirely from all the weaknesses and blemishes of the fall, and eventually, if they will obey Him, secure the perfection of life which He purposed for all at the sacrifice of His own life.

As faith is able to recognize Jesus as the Redeemer whose sacrifice is sufficient for the satisfaction of Justice -- as faith discerns that this ransom sacrifice was made to the intent that the blessing of the Lord might reach every individual of our race -as faith is able to look forward to the Second Coming of this Redeemer as the Life-Giver to His people, in that proportion faith is able to rejoice and to permit even in the presence of sorrow, sighing, tears and' dying, the looking forward beyond the tomb to the glorious morning of the resurrection. In proportion as faith can lay hold of the precious promises of God's Word, it is able under the most trying conditions, to sorrow not as others who have no hope, but it is able to believe that as Jesus died and rose again as our dear Redeemer, so also all who sleep in Jesus, the world of man-, kind, will God bring from the dead through or by Him. 1 Thess. 4:14.

It has been assumed that there was a special heart-fellowship between our Lord and Mary, and it is in full harmony with this thought that we find the latter remaining at home until she received the message that the Lord had inquired for her. Our lesson opens with her response: she came to the Lord and fell at His feet, her burdened heart giving utterance to the same expression that Martha had. used, "Lord, if Thou hadst been here my brother would not have died." If the words contained a measure of chiding or suggestion of wounded hopes, it was a very delicate one.

FULL OF SYMPATHY, "JESUS WEPT"

The grief of the sisters broke forth afresh in the Lord's presence as they thought of what might have been if the Lord had been there before their brother died. Likewise we are all more or less inclined to think of what might have been if something had been different -- apt to forget that our Lord and Master has full charge of all of our affairs if we are truly, consecratedly His, and that no "if" of chance has to do with the Little Flock.

When Jesus looked upon the scene of sorrow, we may well suppose that it brought vividly before His mind the abject sorrow and despair of the groaning creation "Jesus wept." "Indeed we may suppose that, being perfect, all the circumstances and conditions of fallen humanity would be much more weighty and impressive upon the Lord than upon those whose minds were less acute to the situation. We are glad of those words which constitute the shortest verse in all the Bible -- "Jesus wept." They tell us as no elaboration could have told of the sympathies of our Master's heart; they tell us that we have an High Priest, who can be touched, who was touched, who is touched still with a feeling of our infirmities, a sympathetic feeling. How unlike all the great ones of this world, whose

greatness so often is represented in their coldness, stoicism, and really represents their lovelessness, their lack of sympathy. The Lord presented to us in the Scriptures is the only great and sympathetic Immanuel known to the world -- "To us He is precious."

Before performing the miracle of waking Lazarus, our Lord lifted His eyes to heaven in acknowledgment of and humility. acknowledged His way was Father, them of the Father's power and that He was acting as the Father's agent and representative. What a manifestation we have in this of true humility. It was so in all of our Lord's utterances; He freely acknowledged that He had come to do the Father's will and not His own; that the Father was above all, and that what He did in the way of wonderful works was but the Father's power. His prayer was in the nature of a conversation as between a Son and His Father, "I know that Thou hearest Me always; but for the sake of them which stand by, I said it."

As might have been expected, this wonderful miracle, the revival of a man dead more than three days, created no little stir. No wonder that we read that many of the Jews seeing these things believed. It would be wonderful indeed that they could disbelieve under such conditions. Surely, no words can describe the joy of the sisters when their brother was restored -to them. This act of our Lord in restoring the brother must indeed have greatly accentuated the loving and reverential devotion toward Him on the part of Martha and Mary.

MARY'S GRATEFUL TRIBUTE

It was very near the close of our Lord's ministry that we have another striking and remarkable picture, one that contains lessons for us, as do the others. The record tells us that Jesus was in Bethany in the house of Simon the leper. "There have been many suppositions regarding this Simon. He has been wrongly confused with Simon the Pharisee at whose house Christ's feet were anointed by the woman who was a sinner, and Mary of Bethany has been absurdly confused with that woman. Some think this Simon was a friend of Lazarus or even his brother. Some regard him as the husband of Mary; others, as the husband of Martha. It is not even certain that he was living at this time and the entire matter must rest in conjecture. If he was acting as host, he could not have been a leper then, and probably Christ had cured him, thus doubling Mary's cause for gratitude."

Whatever may have been the facts regarding Simon, Jesus was evidently entertained by Martha and Mary at the house of Simon the leper. John tells us in his Gospel that Lazarus was also one of the table guests. We may suppose that this was no ordinary supper, but in the nature of a feast or banquet in our Lord's honor. Nevertheless, one incident connected with it so outshone all its other features that the narrator mentions it alone-the anointing of our Lord with "spikenard ointment, very costly," designated by some, "Mary's grateful tribute." Our Lord Himself declared, "Whosoever this 'Gospel shall be preached throughout the whole world,

this also which this woman hath done shall be spoken of for a memorial of her." -- Mark 14:9.

The alabaster box was rather in the shape of a flask or vase, and the breaking of the box (Mark 14:3) signifies the opening of its tyings and seals by which the precious odors were confined. Judas' words of dissatisfaction furnish us a clue respecting the costliness of this perfume, for he says that it "might have been sold for three hundred *denarii*." A *denarius*, translated "penny" in verse 5, is represented as being the average daily wages at that time-"a penny [*denarius*] a day." (Matt. 20 :2.) The three hundred *denarii* would be the equivalent in wages of one hundred and fifty dollars of our money. Thus we see that the perfume was indeed "very costly." There was nearly a pint of the perfume, a Roman pound being twelve ounces. Nor need we question the possibility of perfumes being so expensive, for even today we have a counterpart in value in the attar of roses made in the far East. It is said that Nero was the first of the Emperors to indulge in the use of costly perfumes for his anointing; but one much more worthy of tribute, homage and anointing with a sweet perfume was the "Prince of the kings of the earth," whom Mary had the honor to anoint.

Judas was first to object to this as a waste-the difficulty with him being that he loved the Lord too little and money too much. The amount that love is willing to expend for others is, to some extent at least, a measure of the love. Another Evangelist informs us that several of the disciples, under the influence of Judas' words, took the same view of the matter, and spoke disapprovingly of Mary's action. The Apostle John, however, takes this opportunity to throw a little sidelight upon the character of Judas -- more than is apparent in the common translation of verse 6. His declaration is, "Now he said this, not because he cared for the poor, but because he was a thief, and had the box, and stole what things were deposited in it." - Diaglott.

Our Lord's words, "Let her alone!" are in the nature of a severe reproof to those whose sentiments of love had no other measure than that of money. It was indeed true that there were plenty of poor, and there would still be plenty of poor, and plenty of opportunities to minister to them; but the opportunity to specially honor the Lord, and to pour upon Him the fragrant odors so beautifully expressive of Mary's love and devotion, would not be for long, and our Lord declares that the circumstances fully justified the costly expenditure. He shows Himself out of sympathy with the sentiments which balance themselves too accurately with money values. Moreover, we may esteem that in many instances like the one here recorded the persons who are so careful lest money should be spent except for the poor are often like Judas, so avaricious that whatever money gets into their possession very little of it gets to the poor.

ALL NEED THE SWEET PERFUME OF LOVE, AND SYMPATHY

Mary poured the perfume first upon our Lord's head (Mark 14 :3), the usual custom, and then the remainder she poured upon His feet. But the Apostle John, in recording the matter, seems to have forgotten entirely the anointing of our Lord's head, so deeply was he impressed with the still more expressive devotion manifested in the anointing of the feet and the wiping of them with the hairs of her head. It is indeed a picture of love -- a devotion well worthy of being told as a memorial. Some one has said

"She took 'women's chief ornament' and devoted it to wiping the travel-stained feet of her Teacher; she devoted the best she had to even the least honorable service for Him. It was the strongest possible expression of her love and devotion. She gave her choicest treasures in the most self-devoted manner. She was bashful and retiring, and could not speak her feelings, and therefore she expressed them in this manner."

We are not surprised to learn that the whole house was filled with the odor; and we doubt not that the odor remained for a long time: but far more precious than that was the sweet odor of Mary's heart -affections which the Lord accepted and will never forget, and the sweet odor of her devotion which has come down through the centuries to us, bringing blessing to all true hearts who have honored her service and desired to emulate her conduct.

It is not our privilege to come into personal contact with our dear Redeemer, but we have, nevertheless, many opportunities for doing that which to some extent will correspond to Mary's act-it is our privilege to anoint the Lord's "brethren" with the sweet perfume of love, sympathy, joy and peace, and the more costly this may be as respects our self-denials, the more precious it will be in the estimation of our Elder Brother, who declared that in proportion as we do or do not unto His brethren, we do or do not unto Him. (Matt. 25 :40, 45.) Moreover, He represents these "brethren" in a figure as "members of His Body"; and from this standpoint we see that, while it is not our privilege to pour the perfume upon the Head of the Body, now highly exalted far above angels, principalities and powers, and every name that is named-next to the Father-it is our privilege to pour the perfume upon the feet of Christ-the last living members of His Church of this Gospel Age.

We know not to what extent the closing years of this Gospel Age may correspond to the closing days of our Lord's ministry -we know not how similar may be the experiences of the "feet" of the Body of Christ to the experiences of the Head of the Body; we do know, however, that in any event it is our blessed privilege to comfort one another, to encourage one another, to sustain one another, in the trials incident to our "filling up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ." (Col. t :24.) And to whatever extent we would improve these opportunities, as did Mary, we must first appreciate them as she did.

Nothing in this suggestion is intended to imply any neglect of the members of our natural families "according to the flesh": attentions to these are proper always, and are generally so understood, and should more and more be appreciated and used in proportion as the Lord's people receive freely and fully of His spirit of love, kindness, gentleness, patience, long-suffering. But we emphasize that which the Scriptures emphasize, namely that our interest and efforts are not to be confined to those of fleshly tie, but, on the contrary, are to be "especially to the household of faith." (Gal. 6:10.) There will be other and future opportunities of doing good to mankind in general, but the opportunity for serving "the Body of Christ" is limited to the present Age.

Apropos of this propriety of doing good to others -- expressing our love by our conduct as well as by our words, to the members of our families as well as to the members of the Body of Christ, we quote the words of another "The sweetest perfume that the home circle ever knows arises from deeds of loving service which its members do for each other. The sweetest perfumes of our homes do not arise from elegant furniture, soft carpets, elegant pictures, or luxurious viands. Many a home, having all these, is pervaded by an atmosphere as tasteless and odorless as bouquets of waxen flowers."

STEPHEN THE MARTYR

"Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or anguish, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or Peril, or sword?"-- Rom. 8:35; Acts 6:8-15; 7:54-60.

STEPHEN, the first of the early Church to Suffer death as a martyr, appears upon the scene in connection with an emergency which arose in the Church, calling for a force of seven deacons to look after various temporal matters; Stephen was one of these seven, all of whom were chosen by the congregation, not by the Apostles; as men of honest reputation, wise, and full of the Holy Spirit. This incident suggests to us the free character of the organization, of the early Church. It had not cast-iron rules and laws, except that the Lord, the Redeemer, was the Head of the Church, and that none could be recognized as members thereto except as they recognized Him as their Savior and Lord, and made consecration to Him, receiving His spirit. Aside from this, the necessities of each case seem to have guided: and yet, we may safely presume that in all the arrangements in the Church, as well as in the teachings of the Apostles, the Holy Spirit directed -- for the benefit also of those believing on the Lord through their word, throughout the entire Age.

No doubt some of those chosen for the serving of tables -- the money collection and the food distribution -- were representatives of the Grecian brethren who, knowing the peculiarities of the Grecian customs, would be

the better able to see to the welfare of the Grecian widows. It is here that we get acquainted with Stephen, as one of the seven chosen deacons. The word "deacon" signifies runner, attendant, servant. The "elders" of the Church were more particularly chosen according to their Christian character and aptness to teach, while the deacons were chosen according to Christian character and aptness in business affairs. In both instances, however, the Christian character, the holiness of spirit and wisdom were primary considerations. So with the Lord's people today: those chosen to any part of the service should first of all be recognized as the best and the wisest of the number -- the possession of a holy, meek, and quiet spirit, of great value, being carefully considered -- then natural abilities.

In Stephen's case we see an illustration of the Lord's methods of advancing His people step by step in His service: First, he was honored with a knowledge of the truth; faithful in his acceptance of it, and zealous toward the Lord, he ere long manifested these qualities; and under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, was chosen a deacon; second, faithfulness in this, serving tables, prepared him for further opportunities; third, we find him exercising the gift of healing and performing signs in attestation of his *ministry of the truth*, which implies that he had actually attained the position of an elder in the Church. Stephen was so full of the spirit of the truth and devotion to its service that he had the high honor, fourth, of being the first one of the brethren to follow the Master's footsteps in a sacrificial death. Here surely was an advancement in service and its honor that may well quicken and energize all of the Lord's people to greater efforts to serve and please the same Master. He who thus accepted the consecrated Stephen, and advanced him step by step in His service, is ready and willing today to take and use those who are similarly consecrated, and burning with heavenly zeal. He is willing to make of such burning and shining lights in the Church, if they in turn are willing to suffer with Him, that they may also be glorified together in due time. -- Rom. 8:17.

DANGERS BESETTING SERVANTS OF THE CHURCH

Stephen's faith and power and opportunities for service came to him along the same lines as faith and power have come to the Lord's people since -- whole-hearted devotion to the Lord, to His people and to His truth. "He that humbleth himself shall be exalted." Had Stephen been self-seeking and ambitious for honor of men or of the brethren we may be sure we would have heard little of him, unless, like Ananias, his approbateness had resulted in his being made an example of evil-doing. This is a danger which besets every brother chosen by the Church to any service. Hence the Apostle's caution, "Be not many of you teachers, brethren." Hence the necessity that the Church choose for its servants only those of humble mind; and the need of care amongst these servants that they fall not into the snare of the Adversary, and after having preached to others, themselves become castaways.--Jas. 3:1 ; 1 Tim. 3:6, 7; 1 Cor. 9:27.

Stephen in preaching got into a debate with some of his day, and was more than a match for them. As we read, "They were not able to withstand the wisdom and the spirit by which he spake." We are not to suppose that Stephen was the greatest of all orators, nor even that he had no peers amongst those with whom he disputed. In this case the adage, was well applied, "Thrice armed is he who hath his quarrel just." It was because Stephen had the truth, the right side of the controversy, and because God was with him, that he was more than a match for any of his adversaries.

The same God is still with His people; and the Lord's Word, therefore, is still worthy of all acceptance, "I will give you a mouth and wisdom which none of your adversaries shall be able to gainsay or resist." (Luke 21:15.) Do we not see this same principle illustrated today, when humble ones amongst the Lord's people are more than a match for all their adversaries? The truth being powerful, prevails, though it is not always acknowledged to prevail, even as it was not acknowledged by Stephen's enemies.

It was Stephen's turn to be called before the Sanhedrin, that he might give the leaders of his people a gospel sermon, the basis of which was Jesus and the resurrection. His opponents, who could not down him in argument, were determined to destroy him; and, like other zealots, deluded by superstition, they were nevertheless influenced by their higher principles to desire to accomplish his destruction legally -- that is to say, with a form of law. Alas, how many people now, as well as then, of comparatively noble mind, succeed in "deceiving their own selves" into thinking that a wrong becomes a virtue, becomes right, if to any extent they can wrap it in the folds of the law! The Lord's people need to have the spirit of the law, the spirit of justice, the spirit of righteousness: without this even the best balanced minds may be led astray under the pressure of zeal, superstition, or error.

IN THE STEPS OF HIS MASTER

Doubtless, as Stephen heard the charges against him, and noticed the advancement of 'the case, he mentally remarked the correspondence between these charges against him and those upon which his Master was convicted. We may be sure that some such thoughts were passing through his mind when his face was so wonderfully lit up with the indwelling joy, that it is recorded that all sitting in the Sanhedrin "looking steadfastly on him saw his face, as it had been the face of an angel." But even an angelic face could not move such hearts, some of the same, doubtless, that had sat in condemnation of the Master Himself. Seemingly, Stephen's witness was fruitless, so far as his auditors were concerned; the same might have been said respecting our Master's trial and testimony. And yet, as the latter bore fruit on the day of Pentecost and afterward, so, doubtless, Stephen's testimony bore fruit subsequently. Who can say that the beaming and angelic face was not one of the "pricks" against which Saul of Tarsus had

been contending for some time, when the Lord interrupted him en route to Damascus ?

Who can tell that experiences connected with this martyrdom may not have been valuable not only to Saul, but to others? At all events, it was Stephen's duty, as it is our duty, to be faithful under all circumstances, under all conditions, regardless of whether appearances indicate the accomplishment of much, or of little good. We are to remember that the Lord's work is in His own hands, and that our part is to be faithful to him and to the truth, to the extent of our opportunities:

If every time the brethren stand forth before men publicly or privately, as the representatives of our Lord, they could so realize His blessing and their privilege as His servants, that it would fill their hearts, and beam forth from their faces, in gladness, in thankfulness, for the privilege of serving, then indeed they would have the highest degree of blessing to themselves and doubtless also would bring the largest degree of blessing to all those whose hearts would be prepared for the truth, and also for those not yet ready for it, but who are under the Lord's discipline and guidance, in preparation for it, as was Saul of Tarsus.

A FAITHFUL TESTIMONY

The charge against Stephen was blasphemy against the holy place, Jerusalem (and especially its holy Temple, which sanctified it), and against the law of Moses. Passing by the charges, Stephen went into a history of the Lord's leading of Israel from the time of Abraham down to his own time; and thus showed his full faith in the holy places and in the promises and presence of God, which made them holy. His familiarity with the facts, and the reverent manner in which he stated them, and the conclusions which he drew from them, must have shown his judges clearly that so far from being a blasphemer of Moses and his institutions and holy things, he was a firm believer in these, and a zealous advocate of them. So with us; when discussing holy things there may at times be those who, intentionally or ignorantly, will attribute to us evil conditions or evil motives. With us, as with Stephen, the best manner of dealing with such charges is to show, without ostentation, and by deeply reverent manner, that we are trusting implicitly in the gracious promises of God, and that we appreciate fully His various providential leadings and dealings in the past, not only as respects ourselves, but with all His holy people. Now, as in Stephen's case, the best answer respecting our fidelity to the holy things is represented in our knowledge of them, and in the reverent manner in which we mention them. Stephen rehearsed to his hearers the fact that Moses, the great Law-giver, whom they now revered, had at one time been rejected by Israel, saying, "Who made thee a judge or a ruler over us?" But he was God's agent and representative, and hence, in due time, he became Israel's deliverer. He reminded them also that Moses had said, "A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you from among your

brethren, like unto me." The lesson which Stephen desired his hearers to draw is, that as Moses was rejected at his first offering to the Israelites so the one like unto Moses would, like him, be rejected -had been rejected, in the person of Jesus. Nevertheless, as Moses subsequently became the leader and commander of the people, and delivered- them, so also Jesus would in due time become the great Deliverer of His people at His Second Advent. He pointed further to the fact that the Prophets all down through the Jewish Age had been refused by the people in the time of their presence and ministry with them, many of them being foully dealt with; nevertheless subsequently they were discerned to have been the Lord's representatives. Stephen would have his hearers recognize Christ as the great Prophet, whom God had set forth to be the instructor of the people. We see no attempt to defend himself, except by showing up the truth. He evidently relied upon his course of conduct and teaching corroborating the history which he was now delineating. Let us also, in our intercourse with others whom we would lead into the truth, pay less attention to self defense than to a presentation of the Divine Word. As the Apostle declares, the sword of the spirit, the Word of God, is sharper than any two-edged sword. -- Heb. 4:12.

DARKNESS HATETH THE LIGHT

About this time, apparently, some manifestation of impatience on the part of the Court caused Stephen to hasten to his conclusions abruptly, saying, "Ye stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Spirit; as your fathers did, so do ye. Which of the Prophets have not your fathers persecuted, and they have slain them which showed before the coming of the just One; of whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers; who have received the law by the dispensation of angels, and have not kept it." (Ver. 51-53.) It is not necessary to suppose that these simple, true words were uttered in any harsh tone or strifeful manner; for everything about Stephen's attitude seems to imply gentleness, forbearance, love. It was the truth, and it was the right time to tell it. He evidently knew what was likely to be the result anyway, and wished to give his testimony, that as those who had foretold the just One had been killed, it was no more remarkable that those who afterward bore witness to Him should be killed also.

His persecutors were thwarted; their attempt to traduce him and show him an enemy of the Lord, of the nation, and of the law, had abundantly failed. He stood before the Sanhedrin a great teacher, reproving them, and showing from their own Scriptural records that they were now intent on doing toward him as their fathers had done toward the Lord's faithful in every age. His hearers were "cut to the heart." This expression reminds us of the record (Acts 2:37) of those who heard Peter preach on the same theme -- they were "pricked to the heart." But people can be pricked to the heart, and yet have, very different results follow. Much will depend upon

what is in the heart when it is pricked. If it be good the results will be good: if it be evil the results will be evil.

Undaunted by their manifestations of hatred and malice, Stephen was so filled with appreciation of the Lord's goodness, and of his being a servant of the truth, that he was all aglow with interest in his theme, and his face illuminated with an angelic expression, such as the truth only can impart. It was then that looking away from his own surroundings -- away from his enemies' faces -- he was granted a glimpse of the Lord at the right hand of the Father. Whether it was a mental vision, such as any of us can awaken in our minds, such as the Apostle referred to, when he said that we should be continually "looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith," or whether it was actually a vision granted to Stephen at this, particular time, we know not; -most probably it was a vision.

A VISION OF HIS MASTER

He of course did not see in reality what he described, as that would be an impossibility-"No man hath seen God at any time," and the Only Begotten of the Father is -- now the express image of His person, and He also would be invisible to humanity; even the light of His glory would have smitten Stephen down, as it smote Saul of Tarsus a short time afterward. But that Stephen should have had a vision or revelation of his Master and his high exaltation is entirely reasonable; he told what he saw, and this furnished the occasion of his death. His adversaries could have found nothing against him in anything he had said, or that any witness could have proved, but now, affecting great indignation at the thought that Jesus, whom they had crucified, Jesus the imposter, had become exalted to heavenly glory, next to Jehovah Himself -- this furnished an opportunity for the claim that Stephen was a blasphemer, and therefore ought to be stoned to death. All being in a wrong attitude of heart, the same impulse affected all, and they rushed upon the faithful servant of the truth, pushing him out of the city to a secluded spot, where they stoned him to death. Let us likewise be faithful to the Lord, and we also shall have revelations of our Lord's glory -not, probably, visions or dreams, but such mental pictures as are clearly delineated before us in God's Word, which now is commonly in the hands of His people, and under the leadings of the Holy Spirit reveals to us the deep things of God which human eyes have not seen nor ears heard. -- 1 Cor. 2:10, 13.

It is here that attention is drawn to the fact that Saul of Tarsus was probably a member of the Sanhedrin, which tried Stephen, and surely one of those who consented to his death-standing guard over the outer garments of those who executed the will of the Sanhedrin, in doing the actual stoning. He refers to the matter himself subsequently, in contrite language. (Acts 22:20.) Stephen's attitude in receiving his persecution was most noble. He prayed for himself and for his enemies that the latter might be forgiven, so far as he was concerned; they will have enough to answer

for and to receive "stripes" of just retribution; for himself, that the Lord would receive his spirit. He meant to express to the Lord his confidence, his trust, in a future life through a resurrection, when he made this expression, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit" -- receive my life, preserve my life, that it may be granted to me again in the resurrection, according to Thy gracious promise. I commit my all to Thee, in hope. With us also the one thought should be the pleasing of our Lord and the attainment through Him of the life everlasting -- having Him to **care** for our spirit of life, and to revive us again in the resurrection in due time.

"HE FELL ASLEEP"

In the midst of his prayer he fell asleep -- he died. Commenting on these words an "orthodox" writer says

"Though the pagan authors sometimes used *sleep* to signify *death*, it was only a poetic figure. When Christ, on the other hand, said, 'Our friend, Lazarus, *sleepeth*,' He used the word, not as a figure but as an expression of a fact. In that mystery of death in which the pagan saw only nothingness, Jesus saw continued life, rest, waking-the elements which enter into sleep. And thus in Christian speech and thought, as the doctrine of the resurrection struck its roots deeper, the word 'dead,' with its hopeless finality, gave place to the more gracious and hopeful word, 'sleep.' The pagans' burying place carried in its name no suggestion of hope or comfort. It was a burying place, a hiding place, monumentum, a mere memorial of something gone; . . . but the Christian thought of death as sleep brought with it, in the Christian speech, the kindred thought of a chamber of rest, and embodied it in the word cemetery -- "the *place to lie down to sleep*" -- *Word Studies*.

Throughout the Scriptures the word "sleep" is frequently used as a synonym for death-but only in view of the hoped-for awakening-the resurrection. The figure is a beautiful one, viewed from the right standpoint, the standpoint of Divine revelation, which shows us the blessings of mankind, restitution, which are to be expected as soon as the morning of the new Millennial Day shall have been fully ushered in.

Doubtless there were many who considered the martyrdom of Stephen a great calamity to the Church, a great loss of influence; a cutting off of one of the ablest exponents of the Gospel. But we are not sure that they took a correct view. Viewed from God's standpoint, quite possibly the testimony which Stephen gave at the close of his life was a most beneficial one; first in its influence upon the believers, in teaching them by precept and example faithfulness, even unto death; and that the Lord's people could die as they lived; joyful through the faith that is in Christ. His death also probably bore a valuable witness to some of his enemies. Quite possibly the Apostle Paul's first favorable impressions toward Christianity were received through his witness of the courage and zeal of this noble martyr,

whose spirit of Christ he doubtless witnessed in others of the hated "sect, everywhere spoken against."

So with us; we know not which act in life may glorify the Lord most, or whether our living or dying would be most helpful to His cause. We are to leave this in the Lord's hands, and to remember that our course in any event must be one of faithfulness, and that if faithful nothing can by any means harm us, but all things must work together for our good.

DANIEL THE BELOVED OF JEHOVAH

SERIES VIII

BELSHAZZAR'S FEAST

"Belshazzar the king made a great feast to a thousand of his lords, and drank wine before the thousand."-Dan. 5:1.

THE occurrences described in this chapter took place nearly a quarter of a century after, Nebuchadnezzar's death. The glory of the Babylonian kingdom began rapidly to wane, and its influence in the world to decline, after his death. No successor of his attained any notoriety. Nebuchadnezzar, according to the Scriptural account, was succeeded by his son Evil-merodach. This information is given by the sacred historian in connection with one of Evil-merodach's first acts -- that of the release of Jehoiachin, king of Judah, who had been in prison since being taken captive by Nebuchadnezzar, thirty-seven years before. (2 Kings 25:27-30; Jer. 52 :31-34.) Daniel makes no mention of any of Nebuchadnezzar's successors save that of Belshazzar.

WHO WAS BELSHAZZAR?

Scholars for many years were confused by the account in chapter five, which speaks of Belshazzar as being the king when Babylon fell and the great city was captured by the Medes and Persians, as it seemed to conflict with the secular records. Skeptics formerly made use of this in their efforts to overthrow the Divine authenticity of the book of Daniel. They declared that no king of that name ever occupied the throne of Babylon. The secular historians of those times do not make mention of Belshazzar. However, like all other seeming disagreements with the ancient historians, when sufficient facts are known, the Bible account is always proved to be the true; the correct one; and so with this. The following from the *International Encyclopedia* explains the matter, and is sufficient to establish the truth of this most remarkable occurrence associated with the fall of Babylon, recorded in this chapter: "Belshazzar, or Belsaruzar, a ruler of the Chaldean dynasty, was slain about 538 B.C., when Babylon was taken by the Medes and Persians, as related in the book of Daniel. (Chap. 5.) This account which speaks of him as the king of Babylon, and

as warned of his doom by the handwriting on the wall, long confused scholars, since it conflicted with the narratives of other writers. Herodotus (1. 184, 89) calls the last king Labynetus and says that he was defeated in the open field, while Berosus in Josephus (apion, 1, 20), calls him Nabonnedus, stating that he was blockaded in Borsippa (Birs-Nimrud), and finally surrendered, to Cyrus-, being assigned an honorable retirement in Carmania. That truth lies on both sides, has become known through cuneiform inscriptions discovered in 1854 and deciphered by Rawlinson, which state that Belsaruzar, [Belshazzar] the eldest son of Nabonnedus, was associated with his, father on the throne. Belshazzar [or Belsaruzar] at first conducted the campaign against Cyrus, but afterwards was left to govern and hold the city (and so perished) while Nabonnedus took the field. The latter, returning to the relief of Babylon, was defeated and took refuge in Borsippa. In Dan. 5:2, Belshazzar is spoken of as the son of Nebuchadnezzar, but the word 'father' is properly translated ancestor or grandfather."

THE PURPOSE OF THE FEAST

It would seem that Nabonnedus was the husband of one of Nebuchadnezzar's daughters. He had, through a conspiracy, succeeded in taking possession of the throne. The twenty-three years that elapsed between Nebuchadnezzar's death and the fall of Babylon, seems to be made up of conspiracies and murders in connection with the throne power. The historians' accounts of those times are more or less confusing and contradictory. The following is understood by many scholars to be the real facts

"When Nebuchadnezzar died, his only son, Evil-merodach, took the throne; but he reigned only two years, when he was murdered and supplanted by his brother-in-law, Neriglissar, who reigned four years. After him his son, a mere boy, was made king. He held his place for only nine months, when he fell -a victim to the conspiracy of Nabonnedus, who, together with his own son, Belshazzar, whom he made co-regent with himself, were the last kings of Babylon."

The chapter opens with a statement giving the information that "Belshazzar the king made a great feast to a thousand of his lords, and drank wine before the thousand." There has been much discussion or surmising as to what was the occasion or object of this feast. This, however, does not seem of much consequence. The record tells us that Belshazzar made a feast to his lords. It would seem from what can be learned from the brief references to him in connection with this account that he was a young man, given up to the lowest vices of self-indulgence, and allowed nothing to restrain him in the gratification of his desires. It may be true, as some writers have expressed, that reports or rumors had been received that his father, Nabonnedus, had met with some temporary success or victory, in his warring against Cyrus, and that Belshazzar

instituted a feast of rejoicing over the supposed success. However, no matter what may have been its cause, it was made by Belshazzar an occasion to satisfy his dissolute, pleasure-loving spirit, as the narrative plainly intimates.. Whatever may have been the cause, it seems evident that he felt quite secure from any enemy attack -- that the great walls of defense around the city, and the strong gates at the end of the broad streets at the river's brink, were sufficient to hold back any foe from entering the city, either by land or water.

It is certain that Belshazzar made a great ado, both in the preparation and observance of this feast. It was made, as the record shows, an occasion of general license and carousing on the part of himself and his lords, and even their wives and concubines were called in before it was over. "The 'great feast' turned out to be a scene of mere bacchanalian orgies, in which the king led off. It was not the custom of kings to eat and drink before their subjects; but here all restraints were thrown aside. The dignity of the monarch was all sunk in the loose hilarity of the occasion.

Drinking wine was a chief part of the performance, and Belshazzar familiarly joined the thousands of his lordly guests to do royal justice to it. He 'drank wine before the thousands,' and drank till he felt it, and continued to drink till it became his counselor and put all sorts of wild thoughts into his head." Xenophon informs us that Gobryas, one of Cyrus' generals, said at the time the command was given for the assault to be made on the city, "I should not be surprised if the doors of the palace are now open, for the whole city seems tonight to be given up to revelry." It seems evident that Cyrus had been informed concerning the feast and had anticipated that the night in the city would be spent in reveling and drunkenness.

DESECRATING THE HOLY VESSELS

We are told in verse two that while Belshazzar tasted the wine, he commanded that the gold and silver vessels which his father, Nebuchadnezzar, had taken out of the Jewish temple at the time he captured Jerusalem be brought into the banquet hall. We have brought to our attention in this action of Belshazzar a fact which has been illustrated in every generation of man's history. This fact is that when men are under the influence of wine, or other intoxicating drinks, all kinds of wild fancies take possession of their minds and they will do many evil things in a spirit of bravado, which they would not be guilty of when sober. It is quite evident that these vessels had always been considered by Nebuchadnezzar as sacred, and that they had never been used for any purpose whatever since the capture of Jerusalem. It would seem that even Belshazzar in his sober moments would have respected the sacred character of these vessels, which he knew had been devoted to the service of religion. It seems probable that the king, when he instituted the feast, had no thought of making use of these vessels for such a purpose. The

words of Daniel (verse 23) would imply that the king intended this particular act to be an expression of his contempt for the God of Israel. It is expressly stated that the vessels were to be brought into the impious feat that his lords and his wives and his concubines might drink out of them, and "praise the gods of, wood and stone which see not, nor hear, nor know." These vessels had all been consecrated to Jehovah to be used only in connection with His worship, and He always respects whatever is truly consecrated to Him.

We have every reason to believe that Belshazzar knew of his grandfather's respect for the God of the Hebrews, and of his having held these vessels to be sacred-to be used only in connection with the worship of Jehovah. But the wine-crazed king, had neither respect nor reverence for his grandfather, or for what was consecrated or devoted to the God of Israel. The influence of the wine had destroyed all such feelings, if he ever had them, and had "aroused in him a spirit of insolent independence, which caused his naturally evil nature to triumph over all the reverence or perhaps fear that had influenced others before him; and he would use these vessels to do horror to his drunken revels, that they might drink from them. One has said, "It was of no use to remonstrate with such a libertine, if any had been so disposed; therefore the golden vessels were brought and he and his lords and his women 'drank in them.' If any compunctions were felt on the subject, they had to be stifled and suppressed in the presence of his Imperial Majesty. So 'they drank wine, and praised the gods of gold, and of silver, of brass, of iron, of wood and of stone.' Not only their ill-timed merriment, their trampling on the customary proprieties, and their drunkenness, but even their foolhardy and blasphemous insult to the Most High God, is veiled over and cloaked up with a pretension of devotion!"

It was not the usual custom for women in these eastern countries to be present and engage in these feasts, but in this case all the usual customs were disregarded when the Bacchanalian feast reached a certain stage. Mr. Barnes suggests that "the wives and concubines were probably now present when the feast began, for it was made for his 'lords'; but when the scenes of revelry had advanced so far that it was proposed to introduce the sacred vessels of the temple, it would not be unnatural to propose also to introduce the females of the court." We have related a similar occurrence in the book of Esther, at a feast which the Persian king Ahasuerus gave. We there read that "On the seventh day, when the heart of the king was merry with wine," he commanded that Vashti his queen should be brought into his presence, the object being to make a show of her beauty. The writer already quoted says that "nothing can well be conceived more senseless and stupid than what it is said they did at this feast, and yet it is a fair illustration of what occurs in all the festivals of idolatry: And is that which occurs in more civilized Christian lands, in the scenes of carousal and festivity more rational than this? It was not much worse to lavish praises on idol gods in a sense of revelry than it is to lavish praises on idol men now; not much less rational to 'toast' gods than it is to 'toast' men."

IN THE MIDST OF THE REVELRY, THE MYSTERIOUS HAND

It has been of rare occurrence that the great God has interfered in man's impious acts, but in this case, under the peculiar circumstances, an exception to the general rule was made. All in an instant when the impious feast was at its height and the wild hilarity seemed unrestrainable, there came a most startling interruption, which, as is usually the case in such instances, suddenly brought to a halt the orgies and sobered not only the king but all the revelers in the great banquet hall. The king himself seems to be the one who first witnessed the strange and startling sight. As he looked toward the golden candlestick, which had been brought, into the great hall, together with the sacred vessels, he beheld a sight that caused a mighty change to come over his face, which plainly indicated that he was moved with fear and terror; and the sacred record informs us that "his knees smote one against another." That which caused this sudden interruption of the impious proceedings is recorded in verse five and reads: "In the same hour came forth fingers of a man's hand, and wrote over against the candlestick, upon the plaster of the wall of the king's palace; and the king saw the part of the hand that wrote." A noted writer remarks: "Belshazzar had as much of power, and of drink withal, to lead him to defiance of God as any ruffian under heaven; and yet when God, as it were, lifted up but His finger against him, how poorly did he crouch and shiver. How did his joints loose, and his knees knock together."

Commenting on Belshazzar's impious act and this most fearful, startling, and above all, strange and mysterious interruption to this most impious feast, the eloquent Joseph Seiss writes: "This was as far as ,it was possible for human daring and infatuation to go. It was more than the powers of Heaven could quietly endure. The Divine resentment broke forth on the spot. *In the same hour* came forth fingers of a man's hand, and wrote over against the candlestick upon the plaster of the wall of the kings palace.' The moment of doom had been reached, and here was the miraculous writing of the sentence. There was no legerdemain, no deception about it. 'The king saw the part of the hand that wrote.' His own eyes followed it as it traced in mystic letters where no hand of mortal could reach to do it. He beheld the black characters it left frowning down upon him from the palace wall. He saw the consternation of men and heard the shrieks of women. He could not read the letters nor decipher their meaning, but his conscience took alarm, and he could not treat it with indifference. All his courage and proud bravado broke down.

"Alas, alas for the dignity and bravery of those who think it mean, little, and cowardly to fear God! They may think it manly to set at naught the scruples of a tender conscience and all dread of Jehovah's judgments, but their superior stateliness is the first to give way when the trying moment comes. Nor is there a more craven cowardice or dastard pusillanimity than that which underlies the noisy courage of men who defy God, and glory in trampling moral restraints under their feet. Show me a man who thinks it

great and heroic to despise the bonds of piety and the inculcations of religion, and I will show you a miserable poltroon at heart. The audacious and defiant king Belshazzar is horror-stricken and unmanned in the midst of all his gallant valor before a handwriting on the wall, not a syllable of which he could read!"

The terror-stricken king, after the effects produced by the suddenness of the startling interruption to the feast had to some extent subsided, seems to have recovered his self-possession sufficiently to call for his astrologers and soothsayers. The highest honors of the kingdom were to be given to the man who could read the mysterious writing. He should be clothed in purple; he should be honored by having a necklace of gold to wear; he should become the third ruler in the kingdom. This latter expression is generally understood to mean next in authority to himself, as he was next in authority to his father. The wise men and the astrologers came in and gazed with astonishment and amazement at the mysterious writing, but none were able to read it. The fear and terror of the situation was only increased by their presence and failure.

DANIEL IS REMEMBERED AND CALLED FOR

It is impossible even to imagine the alarm and bewilderment that was crowded into the brief period which elapsed before there entered the great palace hall the queen-mother. It would seem that she was the only woman of the palace who had taken no part in the impious banquet-feast. This woman, the wife of Nabonnedus, and, what is more significant, the daughter of Nebuchadnezzar, seems to have been the only one in the palace who had profited by Jehovah's judgment and mercy upon her father. She had in remembrance those far-away days when the young Hebrew captive Daniel had interpreted the dream of empires that had been 'given in a night vision to Nebuchadnezzar. She remembered how her father had honored this young man and how during the great monarch's life time he had been such a trustful, faithful servant, counselor, adviser, and yet fearless reprove of the king. All these things had made an indelible impression upon her mind. We next read:

"Now the queen, by reason of the words of the king and his lords, came into the banquet house," that is, she was moved by hearing the commotion. Immediately taking in the situation, but doubtless .not having any suspicion of what was the significance of the hand-writing, she first addressed Belshazzar in the formal salutation customary in eastern countries. She next sought to calm his fears, and then coming directly to the matter which was troubling his mind and the minds of all present, she said: "There is a man in thy kingdom, in whom is the spirit of the holy gods; and in the days of thy father [margin, grandfather] light and understanding and wisdom, like the wisdom of the gods, was found in him; whom the king Nebuchadnezzar .thy father, the king, I say, thy father, made master of the magicians, astrologers, Chaldeans and

soothsayers; forasmuch as an excellent spirit and knowledge, and understanding, interpreting of dreams, and shewing of hard sentences, and dissolving of doubts, were found in the same Daniel, whom the king named Belteshazzar : now let Daniel be called, and he will shew the interpretation. Then was Daniel brought in before the king."

It would seem quite clear that Daniel at this time, while living in Babylon, for some reason was not as well known as formerly. It is not unreasonable, however, to believe, that he was still known to the queen-mother, and that she had kept up an acquaintance with him because of his former relations to her father and the Prophet's services to him. Daniel had evidently been out of favor with King Belshazzar and his court and had been treated with indifference, or perhaps he may have been forgotten altogether. Indeed it would seem from Belshazzar's words to Daniel when requesting that he interpret the handwriting, that Belshazzar was not personally acquainted with him. One writer has accounted for Daniel's not appearing at the first summons on the ground that Belshazzar in his terror forgot to summon the fourth order, consisting of the magicians and Daniel their chief. It is notable that this class is not mentioned in the summons made by Belshazzar. (Compare Dan. 2:2 with 5:7.) However, this does not seem to account for the fact, for the queen-mother informs Belshazzar that his grandfather had made Daniel master of all these different orders. A most reasonable explanation of this matter as given by Albert Barnes is that on the occasion of Nebuchadnezzar's death Daniel had been removed from his position as head over the wise men, magicians, astrologers, etc. This writer states that it was a custom when a Persian king died that the physician, as also those holding the positions referred to, be driven from the court for not preventing the king's death. If such was the custom of the ancient Babylonian court, we have certainly a most satisfactory explanation of why Daniel, who would be living to some extent a retired, private life during the reign of Evil-merodach and his successors, was not known by Belshazzar.

In so far as the record in the book of Daniel is concerned, this was Daniel's first appearance into Belshazzar's presence. If he had been there before, it was as one unnoticed and unknown. It is quite reasonable to suppose that if Daniel continued to hold a position in the government all the time from Nebuchadnezzar's death that the very character of the men who succeeded Nebuchadnezzar on the throne was such as to make Daniel's services unappreciated, if not undesired. It was in the first and third years of Belshazzar that Daniel had two of the most remarkable prophetic visions recorded in the book, but there is nothing in these two chapters (seventh and eighth) that gives us any information respecting his relation to the court of Belshazzar. At the time that Daniel was summoned into the king's presence to interpret the hand writing on the wall, he must have been at least eighty-five years old. The overthrow of Babylon, which occurred at this time, brought him, as we shall see later, into prominence again in public affairs connected with the Medo-Persian Empire.