

# The Herald of Christ's Kingdom

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## THE DEATH OF THE LATE UNITED STATES PRESIDENT

THE passing away of the President of the United States has indeed moved the hearts of the people of our, land, in fact of the civilized world as no other event of its kind has done in many years. This fact is abundantly attested by the universal expression of sympathy and sorrow. It is probable that no other character in history was shown an equal amount of respect and honor upon the occasion of his death as that accorded to Mr. Harding.

The office of the president of the United States has become in recent times a most unique one-in many respects the most important position of any of the rulers of the world. From this standpoint, the death of any president would be an event of international and signal importance; and could not but have the effect of awakening and drawing the sympathies of all law-abiding citizens or well-wishers of the country. This sentiment is especially true of all Christians when a president dies, who in all his public utterances and acts has displayed a disposition to believe in and recognize a Divine overruling providence in human affairs.

In the case of Mr. Harding's death there are substantial reasons why it has elicited such unusual sorrow and sympathy: It appears to be very manifest that he was a God-fearing man, that he not only felt the need of but sought the assistance of the Lord in connection with the administration of the government of the United States, as well as in his dealing with the great problems that came before him during the brief period in which he filled the office of president. Additionally, it appears most evident also that Mr. Harding was a lover of humankind. His interest in humanity, his sympathy, and his kindly sentiment expressed toward his fellow-men had much to do with calling forth in so large a measure the affectionate regard in which he was held not only by the people of the United States but by many others who had knowledge of him. Speaking of the horrors of the World-War since his inauguration in 1921, the following statement was made by Mr. Harding before a vast throng and in the presence of four thousand of the soldier-dead returned from Europe

*"I find a hundred thousand sorrows touching my heart, and there is ringing in my ears, like an admonition eternal, an insistent call -- 'It must not be again! It must not be again: God grant that it will not be, and let a practical people join in co-operation with God to the end that it shall not be;'*

## **A LOVER OF PEACE, A FRIEND TO THE JEWS**

In accordance with this sentiment, the President was evidently a great lover of peace, which no doubt had to do with prompting the calling of the International Conference in 1921 for the discussion of the limitation of armaments amongst the nations of the earth. Then later as the issue of the United States' participation in an International Court of justice for the peaceful settlement of international disputes, was brought before the people of this nation, Mr. Harding was found pleading the cause of peace in favor of the International Court. Even those who do not agree with the former President's position regarding the advisability or the practicability of such an arrangement under the present order of things, must concede that his advocacy of the International Court of justice and his defense of the proposition speaks eloquently of his earnest desire to see war abolished and peace and justice established throughout the earth.

It is of interest too, in this connection, that Mr. Harding expressed unusual interest in the Jewish race, and as opportunity afforded, he used his influence to favor the issue of the home land for the Jews. This may signify that he was familiar with Jewish prophecy and that he may have had a measure of faith that the time was rapidly approaching for the fulfillment of those prophecies which relate to the restoration of Israel.

A prominent Jewish leader in New York; Rabbi Herbert S. Goldstein, in delivering a eulogy on President Harding said: "The world is indebted to President Harding for calling the conference on disarmament. The Jewish people, in particular are indebted to him for he made Jewish history when he signed the resolution favoring Palestine as the home land for all Israel."

The foregoing observations we believe we may properly make with regard to an event of the character of Mr. Harding's death. However much we may differ with the President in regard to the final outworking of the Divine plans and purposes, we cannot but admire the qualities possessed by him. The earnest sympathies of all God-fearing men and lovers of law and order cannot but be deeply aroused and go forth to the one who will the most keenly feel this loss. And when in addition to the foregoing it is clearly seen, as appears most evident in this case, that a president's death has been caused or hastened by earnest, honest, and zealous effort to promote the well being of both his own beloved country and that of the world at large, our sympathies are greatly intensified.

## **THE MOST HIGH RULETH IN THE KINGDOM OF MEN**

As followers of the Lord Jesus Christ, it is ours to be deeply sympathetic with the entire groaning creation; and from the standpoint of the progress of the Divine Plan all faithful watchers feel an especial concern in those changes and events that may in anyway affect the trend of the world's affairs. While we have no grounds for contending that any of the governments of the earth are God's kingdoms in any sense of the word, or

that their rulers reign by the grace of God, yet as we review the Divine Plan of the Ages, it is clearly recognized that there has been a providential supervision of the nations of the earth to the extent that God's purposes for mankind during the reign of sin and death would be fulfilled. The history of the human race shows therefore, that some times it has pleased God to permit one kind of character to predominate and rule over men and at other times another kind of ruler has been in the ascendancy. At one time the ruler has been of most tyrannical and despotic character and then again the one on the throne has been of most excellent and noble character. As we read in Holy Writ, "The Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men and giveth it to whomsoever He will and [at times] setteth over it the basest of men." Only the infinite wisdom of Jehovah is sufficient to know what manner of government or affairs in the earth is best suited. to the accomplishment of the Divine purpose so far `as this life is concerned; that purpose being that humanity shall learn the lesson of the exceeding sinfulness of sin and through the lessons of this life become prepared for the great trial-opportunity of the future Age, which blessing was purchased by the death of Christ.

In the case of the man who has just been removed from the office of the presidency of the United States, as we have seen, his general character has been that of a noble and God-fearing man; this does not mean that we believe that a reverse character is to take his place; but considering the times in which we are living-times of the rapid succession of events which clearly point forward to-the new order of things, we cannot but feel that an event such as the sudden and unexpected death of a president such as Mr. Harding, is in some way significant to an extent greater than at any other time in the Christian era; even though it is said that the man who succeeds Mr. Harding holds the same views as respects home as well as international affairs, and promises to carry out the former President's policies of government, etc. Just what that significance may be it is not the province of any one to forecast at this time. As humble watchers for the fulfillment of the "more sure word of prophecy" it is ours to wait and observe closely, to see what bearing the event may have in the fulfillment of our expectations.

### **A SPECIAL PART IN THE AFFAIRS OF NATIONS**

Considering the history of the United States Government it is recognized that from its incipiency it has occupied a unique position amongst the nations of the earth and has played a most important part in making the history of the past century. We glance briefly at the facts: This favored land was unknown to civilization, kept hidden, as it were, until the due time -until it was needed as a home, an outlet for the rapidly overcrowding masses of Europe. More than this, it opened at a time when the Reformation Movement was agitating "Christendom" so-called, when the study of the Bible was awakening conscience and character and Christian common sense. The awakened class was not generally the rich or the titled

or the very comfortable, neither was it the very degraded and ignorant and helplessly poor, but the middle class of European society. These did the thinking and the protesting, and in turn endured the suffering under the persecutions engendered. And these were the ones who needed an asylum, and who found one in this land shadowed, cared for, by the "wings" of Divine providence.

We look further into the history of this nation: We are far from claiming that it is perfect: we can see much room for improvement in every direction, and are willing to admit that Americans can still learn some things from other parts of the world-particularly from Great Britain; nevertheless no other nation on earth has such a history. We, as Christians, are opposed to war on general principles, and yet we must acknowledge that some causes of war are more just than others, and of this more just class the wars of the United States seem to have been. True, selfishness has its firm hold upon all the people, and no doubt certain ignoble aims have actuated some of the people in connection with these wars, yet in general, as wars go, they have been, so far as the masses were concerned, just wars -wars having some apparent necessity and not undertaken purely for conquest. In every instance the victory has been with this favored nation, and in no instance has she treated the vanquished ignobly.

Coming now nearer to these last days, it is recognized of course that the United States Government has had in the Divine providence set before it opportunities for assisting the rest. of the world in these perplexing and trying times such as no other nation has had. Just what part this Government may yet be called to play or what its mission may be in connection with the closing scenes of this Age, we may not yet surely know. It would be only reasonable to suppose, in view of the marked manifestation of God's providence in the affairs of this nation causing the unusual spread of the knowledge of liberty and truth amongst the people, that some special part associated with the very closing scenes and events preceding the establishment of the Kingdom of God, may be assigned the people of this country.

Some think at the present time that this Government is failing to realize its present opportunities and failing to see that it "has been called to the kingdom for such a time as this." No proceeding, however, on the part of this Government can hinder the Divine purposes; but it may assist in carrying forward certain features of the Divine Plan before, like all other of earth's governments, it is removed to make way for God's Kingdom, for which all God-fearing people pray. .In other words, it is possible for this Government to be removed, not because none of its people have been seeking to hold up and carry out certain lofty ideals, but rather because of the prevalence of selfishness and greed on the part of the masses of the people unwilling to make the necessary sacrifice in order to carry out the high ideals that have been set before the people; thus eventually the change of dispensation clearly taught in the Scriptures will come about as

a result of the turbulent masses rising up against established government and in this way bringing about the overthrow of the entire present order of things.

### **"MY KINGDOM IS NOT OF THIS WORLD"**

Those who aspire to the promises of God's Word have their course clearly marked out for them; it is the course of the Narrow Way of consecration, of separation from the world; and the hope of their calling is that if faithful unto death, they will share in the membership in the Kingdom of God, the coming Government of the world for which Jesus taught us to pray, "Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven." Our interest in the entire groaning creation and present governments and their rulers is from God's standpoint, the standpoint of their eternal welfare in the "world to come."

As a concluding word in this connection we cite the language of Brother Russell in reviewing the present governments and their final end in disaster, and in reviewing the relationship of the saints to these governments "In the midst of this confusion the God of heaven will set up His Kingdom, which will satisfy the desires of all nations. Wearied and disheartened with their own failures, and finding their last and greatest efforts resulting in anarchy, men will gladly welcome and bow before the heavenly authority, and recognize its strong and just government. Thus man's extremity will become God's opportunity, and 'the desire of all nations shall come' -- the Kingdom of God, in power and great glory. -- Hag. 2:7.

"Knowing this to be the purpose of God, neither Jesus nor the Apostles interfered with earthly rulers in any way. On the contrary, they taught the Church to submit to these powers, even though they often suffered under their abuse of power. They taught the Church to obey the laws, and to respect those in authority because of their office, even if they were not personally worthy of esteem; to pay their appointed taxes, and, except where they conflicted with God's laws (Acts 4:19; 5:29), to offer no resistance to any established law. (Rom. 13:1-7; Matt. 22:21.) The Lord Jesus and the Apostles and the early Church were all law-abiding, though they were separate from, and took no share in, the governments of this world.

"Though the powers that be, the governments of this world, were ordained or arranged for by God, that mankind might gain a needed experience under them, yet the Church, the consecrated ones who aspire to office in the coming Kingdom of God, should neither covet the honors and the emoluments of office in the, kingdoms of this world, nor should they oppose these powers. They are fellow citizens and heirs of the heavenly Kingdom (Eph. 2:19), and as such should claim only such rights and privileges under the kingdoms of this world as are accorded to aliens. Their mission is not to help the world to improve its present condition, nor

to have anything to do with its affairs at present. To attempt to do so would be but a waste of effort; for the world's course and its termination are both clearly defined in the Scriptures and are fully under the control of Him who in His own time will give us the Kingdom. The influence of the true Church is now and always has been small-so small as to count practically nothing politically; but however great it might appear, we should follow the example and teaching of our Lord and the Apostles. Knowing that the purpose of God is to let the world fully test its own ability to govern itself, the true Church should not, while in it, be of the world. The saints may influence the world only by their separateness from it, by letting their light shine; and thus through their lives the spirit of truth reproves the world. Thus-as peaceable, orderly obeyers and commenders of every righteous law, reprovers of lawlessness and sin, and pointers forward to the promised Kingdom of God and the blessings to be expected under it, and not by the method commonly adopted of mingling in politics and scheming with the world for power, and thus being drawn into wars and sins and the general degradation in glorious chastity should the prospective Bride of the Prince of Peace be a power for good, as her Lord's representative in the world.

"The Church of God should give its entire attention and effort to preaching the Kingdom of God, and to the advancement of the interests of that Kingdom according to the plan laid down in the Scriptures. If this is faithfully done, there will be no time nor disposition to dabble in the politics of present governments. The Lord had no time for it; the Apostles had no time for it; nor have any of the saints who are following their example."

## **THE CHRISTIAN'S JOY**

*"Thou wilt show me the path of life: in Thy presence is fulness of joy; at Thy right hand there are pleasures forevermore." -Psa. 16:11.*

WHEN we consider how much is said in the Scriptures about joy and rejoicing among God's people, we are deeply impressed with the thought that our heavenly Father is very solicitous for the happiness of His children, even in the present life. The worldly minded cannot see this, they look upon the lot of God's children as a hard and joyless one, and upon God as a hard Master, without concern for the happiness of His children. This, however, is only because the natural man cannot receive the things of the spirit of God, because they are spiritually discerned. But the spiritual-minded have meat to eat that the world knows not of; and their hearts rejoice, and their joy no man taketh from them.

How strange it seems! says the world. Why, there was Paul, a man of great talent and opportunity who might have been somebody in the world: he wasted his talents, was a poor man all his days, homeless, friendless,

knocked about and persecuted, a sort of religious fanatic. But Paul, viewing the matter from the standpoint of his spiritual discernment, said, "I am exceeding- joyful in all our tribulations" (2 Cor. 7:4); for he was one of that anointed Body who, like his Lord and Head, could say, "I foresaw the Lord always before my face; for He is on my right hand, that I should not be moved. Therefore did my heart rejoice, and my tongue was glad." -- Acts 2 :25, 26.

So the Psalmist bids all the anointed Body rejoice, saying, "Rejoice in the Lord, O ye righteous; for praise is comely for the upright." (Psa. 33:1.) And Isaiah, speaking for the same class, says, "I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for He hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, He hath covered me with the robe of righteousness as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and. as a bride adorneth herself with jewels." -- Isa. 61 :10.

### **EARTH'S JOYS TRANSITORY AND UNSATISFACTORY**

This blessed joy, which so wonderfully lifts the soul above all the vicissitudes of the present life, is, as the Prophet expresses it, joy in the Lord, not a joy in earthly possessions, or earthly hopes or ambitions. These earthly things are all so transitory and so changeable that a single blast of adversity may sweep them all from us; but not so is it with those whose hearts are centered in God and to whom He has shown the path of life. These have learned to estimate the things of this present life according to their true values; they see that all of its joys are both transient and unsatisfactory and that the only real value in it is in the opportunities it affords for experience and discipline and education in the things of God and for hearing the call of God and making our calling and election sure. In thus making the proper use of the present life-walking in the path of life which God shows us through His Word -we have the present joys of hope and faith in the things unseen, but sure and eternal; knowing also that by and by in the immediate presence of God we shall have fullness of joy, and pleasures for evermore at His right hand-the chief place of favor.

But while the fullness of joy in its widest sense is reserved for that blessed time when we shall be like the Lord and see Him as He is (1 John 3 :1, 2) and be in His presence at His right hand (in His chief favor), there is a fullness of joy in the presence and favor of God which is the privilege of every Christian now. Our capacity for joy now is not what it will be by and by, but it is possible now to have our little earthen vessels as full as they can hold of the joy of the Lord. And day by day it is our privilege to realize the presence and favor of God, if, by walking in the path of life, the path of obedience and loving service, we draw near to God. "If a man love Me," said our Lord Jesus, "he will keep My words; and My Father will love him, and We will come unto him and make Our abode with him."- John 74:23.

In such company as this, can any Christian fail utterly to realize some measure of joy in the Lord? No, if his faith grasps the promise and holds it, the realization of joy in the Lord is sure to follow, and the more firmly his faith lays hold upon the promise the more will he realize its fulfillment, and the more fully will his joys abound; for in the presence of the Lord is fullness of joy, no matter what may be the conditions and circumstances. In the blessed realization of this experience and the assurance of faith which it gave, in the midst of all his labors, Paul exclaimed, "Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? . . . Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." -- Rom. 8:33-39.

### **CULTIVATE THE LORD'S ACQUAINTANCE**

It was this strong persuasion, this confident faith, of the Apostle that gave him such joy in the midst of all his tribulations. His faith laid hold upon the promises of God with a strong and steady grasp, and love and gratitude impelled him to prompt obedience to the will of God and ardent zeal in His service; and evidently the Lord's promise was fulfilled to him in the abiding presence of the Father and the Son with him at all times and under all circumstances.

This blessed privilege is ours also, if by faith we enter fully into the Lord's will and favor. And with a blessed realization of the abiding presence of our Heavenly Father, and our Lord Jesus at all times, and of their love and favor, and a faith that lays hold of all the exceeding great and precious promises of God, what soul may not rejoice and be glad, even in the midst of deep sorrow or great tribulation? In the Lord's presence, no matter where we are, is fullness of joy. Let us cultivate the Lord's acquaintance, more, drawing near to Him in prayer, in the study of His precious Word, in meditation upon all His goodness, His providential care, the marked manifestations of His grace in our own individual experiences, and His precious promises which are all yea and amen in Christ Jesus. Thus "draw nigh to God, and He will draw nigh to you" (James 4:8); He will manifest Himself to you and take up His abode with you.

It is indeed the will of God that all His children should be happy in Him, that they should be always rejoicing; and if any one lacks this blessing, he is living below his privileges. Beloved, let us not be contented to live beneath our privileges. Let us appreciate the favor of God to the extent of seeking for it more and more diligently, remembering the exhortation, "Seek and ye shall find, knock and it shall be opened unto you." All the riches of Divine favor are ours if in faith and humility we claim them and



place ourselves in position to receive them as directed through the Word of God. "Ask and receive, that your joy may be full." And your joy .can no man take from you, so long as you abide in Him who is our life, our joy, our rest, our hope.

"Why should the children of the King  
Go mourning all the day?" "  
Children of the Heavenly King,  
As we journey let us sing!"

## **COMFORTER OF THE BRETHREN**

*"He was a good man, and full of the Holy Spirit and of faith." -- Acts 11:19-30; 4:36, 37.*

THE beautiful spirit of oneness, the oneness of the Body of Christ, the Church, in the Apostolic period, is illustrated by the fact that the progress of the Truth at Antioch speedily be-came known to `the ears of the Church at Jerusalem." And herein we are reminded of the Apostle's illustration in I Cor. 12, where he likens, the Church to a human body, whose active members are hands, feet, eyes, mouth, etc. The Apostles at Jerusalem were on the lookout to help, to encourage, to assist in forwarding the Gospel in every quarter, just as we of today should feel an interest in and give attention to the progress of the Truth in every quarter. Christianity is not selfish, but the reverse. When selfishness is seen -- avarice, self-seeking -- it is so much of the Antichrist spirit creeping in. "To do good and to communicate, forget not," writes the Apostle.

God uses means -- human means so far as possible. And so He wishes that we, as His representatives, should follow His example. The decision was to send the new. con verts the help which it was realized they would need, to encourage them, to forewarn them of dangers, and to assist to 'clearer knowledge of the Divine Plan, that thus they might become a force for good and not for evil under the Lord's banner. A disciple named Joseph was chosen, one who had shown great zeal for the Lord and for the Church and who had given considerable of his property for the assistance of others. They gave him a new name, Barnabas, which signifies Son of Consolation. How beautiful! This testimony of itself draws out our love to Barnabas in a manner that would have been impossible if the record had been to the contrary -- that, although a follower of Jesus, he was quarrelsome, disputative, a stirrer-up of strife and contentions.

It may be said that none could have such discordant character and yet be a Christian at all. We agree that no matured Christian could be of such a character, yet we know of some who naturally are very contentious, who, by the grace of God, have received the Truth. These need to be the more vigilant in cultivating amiability and humility. And assuredly the brethren should have considerable patience with such, especially if they note in

them loyal-heartedness toward God, the Truth and the brethren-and particularly if they see evidences that they are striving to overcome their natural contentiousness. However, it would be mistaken kindness to encourage such or to fail to indicate to them the unloving manner wherein they injure the cause they wish to serve. Such should never be chosen to positions of leadership or otherwise encouraged until they show evidences of victory along this line. Assuredly such should never be chosen as missionaries or representatives of the Church to others, for they would misrepresent the Lord and His Spirit, which is one of humility, gentleness and patience, even while strong and resolute for the Truth.

### **BARNABAS THE FRIEND OF SAUL**

We first hear of Barnabas, a faithful worker in the early Church; in connection with the "community of goods" (Acts 4:36, 37), an arrangement which on the surface appeared to be good and wise, but evidently under present conditions was found not to be practicable and was not continued for any length of time; seemingly it did not have the Lord's approval, though the experiment no doubt brought valuable lessons. read, "For he was a learned man, or a brainy man, and full of self-confidence and a mighty collector of monies for the Church." His heart was full of the spirit of holiness. It was Barnabas also who assisted the brethren at Jerusalem to accept of the newly converted Saul. Another has said, "It is no wonder that Saul, when he visited Jerusalem after his conversion, was received by the Christians with cold suspicion. That the fierce Jewish persecutor should become a Nazarene seemed too much to believe. Was it not all a stratagem to work himself into their councils and betray them later?"

"Then it was that the generous Barnabas proved his generosity once more by coming forward and vouching for Saul. Cyprus is so near Cilicia that Barnabas may have known Saul before this; indeed, the two young men may have met in the famous schools of Tarsus." And Dr. Hastings adds, "Barnabas not only receives Paul and believes in his conversion, but he does so at his own expense. There is no reason to doubt that he recognized from the first that Paul would to a certain extent supplant him. The beauty of his character is seen in the gracious spirit with which he allowed himself to be eclipsed by a younger man."

Full consecration was the subject of Barnabas' preaching for quite a little while, and the result was "much people were added unto the Lord." We observe another beautiful tribute to Barnabas' character, and let us each see to what extent we can find these characteristics predominant in ourselves, and to what extent we can, by God's grace, have them still more abundant. We read, "For he was a good man, and full of the Holy Spirit and of faith." What more could be said to the credit of any child of God? This testimony is far richer than if we and he was full of faith as respects God's power and God's Truth.

## **FULL OF THE HOLY SPIRIT**

Mr. Barnes' comment on this expression is interesting: "*For he was a good man*"--this is given as a reason why he was so eminently successful. It is not said that he was a man of distinguished talents, or learning; that he was a splendid or an imposing preacher; but simply that he was a pious, humble man of God. He was honest, and devoted to his Master's work. We should not undervalue talent, eloquence, or learning in the ministry; but we may remark, that humble piety will often do more in the conversion of souls than the most splendid talents. No endowments can be a substitute for this. The real power of a minister is concentrated in this; and without this his ministry will be barrenness and a curse. There is nothing on this earth so mighty as goodness. If a man wished to make the most of his powers, the true secret would be found in employing them for a good object, and suffering them to be wholly under the direction of benevolence. John Howard's purpose to do good has made a more permanent impression on the interests of the world than the mad ambition of Alexander or Caesar. Perhaps the expression, "he was a good man," means that he was a man of a kind, amiable, and sweet disposition. *Full of the Holy Ghost* -- was entirely under the influence of the Holy Spirit. He was eminently a pious man. This is the second, qualification here mentioned of a good minister. He was not merely exemplary for mildness and kindness of temper, but he was eminently a man of God. He was filled with the influences of the sacred Spirit, producing zeal, love, peace, joy, etc. (See Gal. 5 :22, 23; Comp. Acts 2:4). *And of faith* -- confidence in the truth and promises of God. This is the third qualification mentioned; and this was another cause of his success. He confided in God. He trusted to His promises. He depended, not on his own strength, but on the strength of the arm of God. With these qualifications he engaged in his work, and he was successful: These qualifications should be sought by the ministry of the Gospel. Others should, not indeed be neglected, but a man's ministry will usually be successful only as he seeks to possess those endowments which distinguished Barnabas -- a kind, tender, benevolent heart; devoted piety; the fullness of the Spirit's influence; and strong, unwavering confidence in the promises and power of God."

Barnabas perceived the largeness of the field of opportunity at Antioch and bethought him of Saul of Tarsus, whom he sought out and brought to the new field of labor. Evidently the Lord had allowed Saul to rest in quietness for a time to digest certain features of the Truth, to get himself properly gauged up. No doubt these lessons were needful for the development of humility and faith and obedience. Now, however, the time had come for Saul to be introduced into the Gospel work. Again God used instrumentality. Barnabas did not trust to writing a letter, but went to see him personally, to urge upon him activities in the Master's service and to point out to him the open door of a still greater work at Antioch, where Saul's learning and talents would be an additional fortification to the Truth

and inspiration to the brethren. For a year he assembled with the Church at Antioch and taught much people publicly and privately.

### **DISCIPLES CALLED CHRISTIANS**

The name "Christian" was first applied to the Lord's followers at Antioch. Such a name would not be given to them by the Jews, nor in any place where Judaism was paramount, because the Greek word Christ is the equivalent to the Hebrew word Messiah. And the Jews would be the last in any sense of the word to intimate that Jesus was the Messiah, or that His followers were Christians or Messiahans. We do not read that Christians first assumed this name at Antioch, but that they were first called it by others. Would that the custom had continued to prevail, and that still the only name by which the Lord's followers throughout the world would be known would be His name! Dr. A. McClaren correctly suggests, "If the men at Antioch had called Christ's followers 'Jesuits' that would have meant the followers of the mere man. They did not know how much deeper they had gone when they said, not 'followers of Jesus' but 'followers of Christ'; for it was not Jesus the man, but Jesus Christ, the Man with His Office, that makes the center and bond of the Christian Church." The name Christian is an entirely proper one by which to designate the followers of the Lamb, for it is His name; it is one therefore that will ever stand approved.

Why should Messiah's Bride, after taking His name, confuse matters in any degree by adding to it the name of any human being or institution? We urge them all *to* stand free from all human titles and bondages in the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free. Our bondage nor Greek or suggests, is to the Head and under His direction, and by His Spirit we are firmly bounden by all the principles of righteousness and to all who have His Spirit, His mind, His disposition, as living members of the one Body. To separate ourselves from these bonds of love and sympathy and fellowship and obedience would mean our starvation and death, even as a branch cannot abide itself, nor bear fruit, except it abide in the Vine, in fellowship with the other branches of the same Vine, and as a participant in the juices (the graces, the blessings) which come to all the true branches through the root.

### **THE FRUITAGE OF THE SPIRIT AT ANTIOCH**

In the Lord's providence the Antioch brethren were advised in advance of impending famine throughout the civilized world. The scarcity would affect all parts and classes, but especially be severe upon the poor, by reason of the high prices. Immediately the Antioch brethren bethought them of the fact that the brethren at Jerusalem, specially poor and persecuted, would be special sufferers from that famine and they desired to aid them, and made a collection accordingly. They did not hesitate, because, not wealthy themselves, they would probably also feel the

severity of the famine. The love of God shed abroad in our hearts overcomes much of our natural selfishness and tends to make us generous and thoughtful of others. How beautiful, how Christlike, the spirit! We must love these brethren for this and seek to emulate their example and to be of willing mind as respects any assistance to be rendered to any of the fellow-members of the Body of Christ, near and far.

The Apostle truly intimates that if any professed follower of Christ see his brother have need and close up his heart of compassion against him and refuse him aid, this would be an indication that he lacked the spirit of the Head, the spirit of love, the distinctive feature which our Lord said would indicate His disciples as different from all others in the world. "By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have love one for another." -- John 13:35.

Whenever an opportunity for doing good comes to our attention, it should not be slighted, but reasonably investigated with the thought that possibly the Lord has brought this matter to our attention as a test of love for Him or for the brethren. Indeed it will profit us greatly if we can learn to look at all of life's affairs from this standpoint. If trials and difficulties, joys and pleasures, are all scrutinized with the thought of the Lord's oversight and guiding care in respect to our interests and affairs it will greatly increase our faith and our spiritual joy.

### **BENEVOLENCE A FEATURE OF PIETY**

In view of the fact that the condition of the Antioch Church made Barnabas glad, and in view of the instruction and assistance rendered 'it by Paul and Barnabas, we are not surprised that it was a living Church, instead of a dead one, and we are not surprised that, an opportunity offering through a famine especially affecting the vicinity of Jerusalem, this congregation of believers at Antioch was prompt to make up a relief fund and send it to the Church at Jerusalem, as an expression of its love and sympathy and oneness of spirit. It is more blessed to give than to receive, not only as respects the sentiment of the matter, but the results are still more blessed. No doubt the contributions sent were a comfort and a help to the Jerusalem brethren, but the blessing to the givers we may be sure was far greater. The Lord would reward them, and that in proportion as they had given, at some sacrifice as respects earthly things; luxuries; etc. Few probably have noticed to what extent the Scriptures encourage us to administer words and acts of comfort, the "balm of Gilead" to one another; the Scriptures are full of comfort, and there is great need that all who are truly the Lord's people should see to it that they are more and more sons and daughters of comfort in the Church, administering to one another the helpfulness and encouragement and refreshment which the Lord intended.

Considering the times in which we live and the needs of the Lord's children today the world over, how many opportunities there are for

comforting the brethren. Let all who would aspire to joint-heirship with Christ to a position of service in the Kingdom of God look well to the present privileges of helping the brethren, for such privileges are swiftly passing, that they with one of old may be deserving of the name Barnabas, comforter of the brethren.

## **A CO-LABORER IN THE GOSPEL FIELD**

*"Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might: '-Eccl. 9:10.*

AND Barnabas and Saul returned from Jerusalem, when they had fulfilled their ministry, and took with them John, whose surname was Mark." (Acts 12:25.) John Mark is one who has the honor of being mentioned in Holy Writ as a helper and co-laborer in the work of the Gospel. The record seems to indicate that he was a son of a sister of Barnabas (Col. 4:10), and son of one of the Marys at Jerusalem (Acts 12:12, 25). It is also supposed that he was the writer of the Gospel of Mark, though this is uncertain. The great privilege that came to John Mark was no less than that of being an attendant of Paul and Barnabas in their travels. This does not mean that he was set apart as a public minister of the Truth in the sense that Paul and Barnabas were; for they had been specially designated by the Church as missionaries, and they in turn had invited Mark to accompany them. Thus he was their attendant, yet not pretending to be equal to them in office. He was with them as a friend and traveling companion; perhaps also employed in making arrangements for their needs, for their comfort, and for the supply of their wants in travel.

In this as in every place the Scriptures, while teaching that all believers are "brethren" and "fellow-heirs," nevertheless, repudiate entirely the thought entertained by some today that all brethren are exactly on an equality in every matter. Very properly Mark did not say-"If I cannot go on an equality with Barnabas and Paul, I will not go at all." Very properly he did say that if there is any opportunity for service, if . by any means I can render any assistance in the journey and affairs of these whom the Holy Spirit has indicated as special representatives, I shall be most glad to serve them, and thus serve indirectly the Lord and His cause. And there were opportunities, as there are always opportunities for those who have a will to serve the Cause; and no doubt Barnabas, and especially Paul, received many helps from their younger brother who had become their servant chiefly from his desire to serve the cause of Christ. No doubt also their opportunities for public ministry of the truth were enlarged and broadened by his helpful assistance in secular affairs. Paul especially constantly needed a helper, because of his thorn in the flesh, his weak eyes.

## **MARK WITHDRAWS FROM PAUL AND BARNABAS**

Mark's faithful service continued for some time, but for some reason not stated he left the work, and we may judge very nearly lost his privilege and opportunity in connection with it. Even the young man's wonderful experiences in Cyprus did not avail to hold him, nor did his affection for his Uncle Barnabas and his noble friend the Apostle Paul. St. Luke, the writer of the Acts, does not record the reason for his withdrawal. Possibly because his later life may have made amends, and Luke may not have wished to set down anything to his discredit. It is quite probable that it was a lack of faith, and a failure to recognize the Lord's leading in connection with the Apostle Paul and his leadership as an Apostle of this branch of the work, that John Mark here deserted the work. No one knows how much Mark may have lost in spiritual blessing and privilege by his failure to continue at that time.

Later on when Paul and Barnabas were preparing to go on another missionary tour, the question of taking Mark with them again was raised and became the occasion of a sharp discussion and disagreement between Paul and Barnabas, as we read, "And Barnabas was minded to take with him John, whose surname was Mark. But Paul thought not good to take with them him who withdrew from them from Pamphylia." (Acts 15:37, 38.) Some have supposed that this disagreement amounted to animosity, bitterness, and resentment between Paul and Barnabas. We would not be inclined to take this view of the matter, but would suppose rather that both of these Christian leaders were possessed of too large a measure of the Holy Spirit to permit anything in the way of sinful strife or contention. This disagreement, like many that has happened since that time among Christians, was probably more or less the result of a difference of temperament and viewpoint and a lack of spiritual development and discernment on the part of one or the other of the contending parties. In the case of Barnabas, too, no doubt, through family sympathy with his nephew he was led to take the position that he did.

We believe, in view of all the facts and circumstances as we now know them respecting the great Apostle Paul, that in this contention over Mark, he was in the right; not that the Apostle was holding animosity or resentment toward John Mark, but rather that remembering distinctly that the young man had without good reason deserted them in the time of need, he should be given opportunity to show sorrow and regret for the same, and thus to give evidence that he had learned the lesson of his mistake. The Apostle Paul would thus have impressed upon the mind of Mark that it was no light matter to engage in the Gospel ministry and no small item either, to quit the ministry, or neglect opportunities of continued service. Such an attitude on the part of the Apostle Paul toward this affair seems to us to have been fully justified.

## **RECOVERED HIMSELF IN LATER YEARS**

However, years afterwards, John Mark apparently saw things in a different light and again joined St. Paul's company. Here is a suggestion to all of us, that no matter what may be the door of opportunity for engaging in the Lord's service, faithfulness to it is essential to progress; and there is a further lesson, that if we find we have erred and been unappreciative of our privilege, the best thing to do is to repent therefor and seek a renewal. of the opportunities, and thus attest our loyalty by -fresh and increased earnestness.

The remarks made by Mr. Barnes bearing upon, this incident are of interest here: "In this contention it is probable that Paul was, in the main, right. Barnabas seems to have been influenced by attachment to a relative; Paul sought a helper who would not shrink from duty and danger. It is clear that Paul had the sympathies and prayers of the church in his favor (ver. 40), and it is more than probable that Barnabas departed without any such sympathy. -- Ver. 39.

"This difference was afterwards reconciled, and Paul and Barnabas again became traveling companions. (1 Cor. 9:6; Gal. 2:9.) There is evidence that Paul also became reconciled to John Mark. (Col. 4:10; Philemon 24; 2 Tim. 4 :11.) How long this separation continued is not known; but perhaps in this journey with Barnabas, John gave such evidence of his courage and zeal as induced Paul again to admit him to his confidence as a traveling companion, and as to become a profitable fellow-laborer. (See 2 Tim. 4:11.) 'Take Mark and bring him with thee; for he is profitable to me for the ministry.' This account proves that there was no collusion or agreement among the Apostles to impose upon mankind. Had there been such an agreement, and had the books of the New Testament been an imposture, the Apostles would have been represented as perfectly harmonious, and as -united in all their views and efforts. What impostor would have thought of the device of representing the early friends of the Christian religion as divided, and contending and separating from each other? Such a statement has an air of candor and honesty, and at the same time is apparently so much against the truth of the system, that no impostor would have thought of resorting to it."

Another point to be noted in connection with this controversy between Paul and Barnabas is, that when they disagreed and separated, they did not commence slandering one another, nor did they to any extent inject their differences into any of the churches. As they visited the little companies of the Lord's people they did not pour out to them their tale of grievances and seek to gain sympathizers and thus try to cause divisions amongst the churches. Such a course would have been most reprehensible. Alas, that many who have spoken in the name of Christ since that time seem not to have been possessed of the same measure of the Spirit of Christ and the spirit of heavenly wisdom, but acting contrariwise and ignobly have



seemingly forgotten what their real mission is here -- the preaching of Christ and the message of heavenly love, and they have proclaimed amongst the Lord's people their differences and disagreements with their brethren. Such a course of proceeding, as is well known, has so often resulted in the spirit of dissension, the party spirit, the sectarian spirit, so contrary to the Law and Spirit of the great Head of the Church. So far as the record indicates the matter between Paul and Barnabas was suppressed and not mentioned any further amongst the brethren. Thus evincing their largeness of heart and Christian development. Would that all who profess to be ambassadors of the great King could profit by the lessons derived from these noble examples of the past.

There are reasons for believing that the disagreement between Paul and Barnabas was overruled for the furtherance of the Gospel. They went to different places and preached to different people. Paul chose Silas, and Barnabas, John Mark. Thus there were two sets of missionaries instead of one, and two missionary journeys instead of one; thus in the end greater results.

### **THE GREAT LESSON OF LIFE**

Dr. James Hunter, summing up the results of John Marks' life, has offered the following interesting observations: "We cannot see the purposes of God in leading, or suffering us to be led, in certain ways. We are like Mrs. Faber, one of George Macdonald's characters. 'I wonder why God made us,' says Mrs. Faber bitterly. 'I am sure I don't know where was the use of making me. 'Perhaps not much yet,' replied Dorothy; 'but, then, He hasn't made you; He hasn't done with you yet. He is making you now, and you don't like it.' No we don't like it! and because we don't like it we won't have it that our trials are our growing-pains. But .if we cannot understand what an artist is going to produce after only a few strokes of the brush or chisel, why should we expect to understand the incomplete work of the great Artificer of our lives? 'A Christian man's life,' says Henry Ward Beecher, 'is laid in the loom of time to a pattern which he does not see, but God does; and his heart is a shuttle. On one side of the loom is Sorrow, and on the other is joy; and the shuttle, struck alternately by each, flies back and forth, carrying the thread, which is white or black as the pattern needs. And in the end, when God shall lift up the finished garment and all its changing hues shall glance out, it will then appear that the deep and dark colors were as needful to beauty as the bright and high colors.' We will not, then, lose hope in our own future or that of another in the hour of greatest weakness and wretchedness. God is able and willing to make our deepest humiliations minister to our highest exaltations. This is the great lesson of John Mark's life. It is the lesson of the power of man, under God, to gain self-mastery and to overcome the world. It is a lesson on the method of God in the making of saints."

"Once like a broken bow Mark sprang aside:  
Yet grace recalled him to a worthier course,  
To feeble hands and knees increasing force,  
Till God was magnified.

"And now a strong Evangelist, St. Mark  
Hath for his sign, a lion in his strength;  
And through the stormy water's breadth and length  
He helps to steer God's Ark.

"Thus calls He sinners to be penitents,  
He kindles penitents to high desire,  
He mounts before them to the sphere of saints,  
And bids them come up higher."

## **DANIEL THE BELOVED OF JEHOVAH**

### **SERIES IX**

#### **BELSHAZZAR'S FEAST**

*"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. Then, the king's countenance was changed, and his thoughts troubled him, so that the joints of his loins were loosed, and his knees smote one against another."  
Dan. 5 : 5, 6.*

IT is difficult to imagine a scene more startling, more dreadful, more tragical -- indeed more dramatic, than this one that took place in connection with the sudden and abrupt termination of the great feast of bacchanalian hilarity and sacrilege; and the grand and solemn climax was introduced as the aged Daniel entered the banquet hall. All eyes now became riveted with eager, anxious expectation upon the grave face of the venerable prophet of Jehovah. Poets, painters, and dramatists, have seized upon this tragic event as one of the greatest scenes of human history, most worthy to be depicted by their artistic skill. The spacious palace hall, with its lofty walls; the magnificent architecture and gorgeous furnishings; the beautiful, yet lewd paintings and idolatrous statuary; the splendid decorations, all representing the highest type of artistic skill of debased humanity; the immense assemblage representing the elite of Babylonian society -- all served to add to the dramatic effect of this grand display of Divine displeasure and omnipotence that now took place and transformed the drunken reveling into a solemn judgment assize.

All heathen court formalities were forgotten, laid aside, as the aged Prophet with grave countenance and subdued expression was ushered into the presence of the guilty monarch. With stammering tremulous voice, in

marked contrast to his usual demeanor on all court occasions, the fear-distressed king addressed the aged man: "Art thou that Daniel, which art of the children of the captivity of Judah, whom the king my [grand] father brought out of Jewry? I have even heard of thee, that the spirit of the gods is in thee, and that light and understanding and excellent wisdom is found in thee. And now the wise men, the astrologers, have been brought in before me, that they should read this writing, and make known unto me the interpretation thereof; but they could not show the interpretation of the thing. And I have heard of thee, that thou canst make interpretations, and dissolve doubts; now if thou canst read the writing, and make known to me the interpretation thereof, thou shalt be clothed with scarlet, and have a chain of gold about thy neck, and shalt be the third ruler in the kingdom." - Ver. 13-16.

Daniel's reply is characteristic of the man -- indeed of every true man of God, when placed under circumstances to proclaim a message from God: "Let thy gifts be to thyself, and give thy rewards [margin fee] to another." Regarding this last expression Mr. Barnes has said that "Gesenius supposes that the word used here is of Persian origin, and means a gift, and is derived from a verb meaning to load with gifts and praises, as a prince does an ambassador." The sense here seems to be, that "Daniel was not disposed to interfere with the will of the monarch if he chose to confer gifts and rewards on others, or to question the propriety of his doing so, but that so far as he was concerned, he had no desire for them for himself, and could not be influenced by them in what he was about to do." "Yet," said Daniel, "I will read the writing unto the king, and make known to him the interpretation."

The saying is indeed a true one, that "truth is stranger than fiction," and it has its illustration in the case before us. The "great feast" of drunken orgies, which was conducted with such noisy defiance of Jehovah, in sacrilegiously drinking from the sacred vessels, ended with a sermon delivered by one of God's faithful preachers unto which, in the Divine providence, this sinful, presumptuous king, together with all his lords and the elite representatives of the society of the doomed city, was the willing and eager listener. It was similar to one of those occasions which years - afterwards the great Savior referred to, in which some of His servants would be called to deliver discourses to kings, and princes and judges. The history of the Church of Christ has recorded many of these; as for instance the experience of Luther before the great assembly of rulers and church prelates of Rome, and that of John Knox before the king of England.

### **DANIEL'S ARRAIGNMENT OF BELSHAZZAR**

The sermon of the Hebrew Prophet was one most thoroughly adapted (although not prepared beforehand) to the occasion. It was addressed especially to the dissolute king, although full of lessons to the vast assemblage that heard it, as well as to all who have read it with proper

attention since. It is introduced by calling the attention of the impious king, Belshazzar, to the fact that the most high God gave to Nebuchadnezzar, his grandfather, the kingdom, which he, Belshazzar, by inheritance had been entrusted with. He informs Belshazzar that all the majesty, all the honor, all the glory that Nebuchadnezzar possessed, was bestowed upon his grandfather by the same God who was now speaking to him in the mysterious writing emblazoned on the wall of his palace. The great preacher informs the king that it was on account of the majesty the most high God gave to his grandfather that all peoples, nations, and languages trembled and feared before him; and then as if to bring home to Belshazzar the magnitude of his own sinful pride and irreverence, the Prophet rehearses how the most high God dealt with his grandfather, when he became lifted up with sinful pride and vainglory. He tells him that he was deposed from his kingly throne, and that all this honor and glory and majesty was taken from him. The aged Seer continues with a description of the terrible punishment that was imposed upon Belshazzar's great ancestor, and then concludes his introduction by relating how Nebuchadnezzar was brought to view himself and his great sin in its true light, and to humble himself before the most high God, and give reverence to Him.

It would be perfectly in accord with the words which follow to imagine a pause on the part of Daniel, and then with grave demeanor, fastening his eyes upon the trembling king, and making a pointed application of this narrative, he said: "And thou his [grand] son, O Belshazzar, hast not humbled throe heart, *though thou knewest all this; but past lifted uç thyself against the Lord of heaven.*" The Prophet next proceeds to hold up before the king the crowning feature, the culmination of his sinful, dissolute life, which was that he had caused the sacred vessels of the Lord's house to be brought into this bacchanalian feast, and to show his contempt and defiance of the Most High he had drunk wine out of these sacred vessels, and caused his lords, his wives and concubines to do the same.

"A splendid sermon was it," one has said. "With what grand and affecting reminiscences of Nebuchadnezzar did it begin! In what sharp contrast did it sketch the effeminacy and impiety of Belshazzar ! With what directness did it point out the inexcusableness and defiant wickedness of its chief hearer! With what solemn and unflinching faithfulness did it tell the sentence God had written, and make known the doom which was now too late to escape! It almost takes one's breath to hear.the massive utterances roll from that holy preacher's lips. The solemnity of the scene almost overwhelms us.

### **NEGLECTED THE LESSON OF HIS GRANDFATHER'S EXPERIENCE**

"Transfer yourself into that royal banquet-hall and listen. There stands the tall and reverent. Prophet. Nothing of the obsequious courtier is upon him

now. He has not a word of sympathy for the king in his guilty alarm. His voice, his brow, his words, his composed manner and solemnity, are all in deep accord with the Spirit which had traced those letters and with the awful sentence which was in them. He saw that the end of the impious contemner of the Almighty had come. He knew that he was about to utter [almost] the last words the royal sinner should ever hear in this world. And he spake exactly as became the occasion. Fixing his eyes upon the pale and trembling criminal, now ripe for destruction, he measuredly said: `O thou king! the most high God gave Nebuchadnezzar thy father a kingdom, and majesty, and glory, and honor. And for the majesty that He gave him, all peoples, and nations, and languages trembled and feared before him: whom he would he slew; and whom he would he kept alive; and whom he would he set up; and whom he would he put down. But when his heart was lifted up, and his mind hardened in pride, he was deposed from his kingly throne, and they took his throne from him. And he was driven from the sons of men; and his heart was made like the beasts, and his dwelling was with the wild asses; they fed him with grass like oxen, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven; till he knew that the most high God ruled in the kingdom of men, and that He appointeth over it whomsoever He will. And thou his son Belshazzar hast not humbled thine heart, though thou knewest all this; but hast lifted up thyself against the God of heaven; and they have brought the vessels of His house before thee, and thou, and thy lords, thy wives, and thy concubines have drunk wine in them; and thou hast praised the gods of silver, and gold, of brass, iron, wood and stone, which see not, nor hear, nor know; and the God in whose hand thy breath is, and whose are all thy ways, hast thou not glorified. Then was the part of the hand sent from Him; and this writing was written. And this is the writing that was written, `MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN.'"

Scholars tell us that the word MENE means simply *numbered*. The word is repeated, doubtless for the sake of emphasis. The word TEKEL has the significance of short *weight, lacking*. *Peres* means *divided*, and in its plural form conveys with it the thought of broken or crushed to pieces -- destroyed. The Prophet's knowledge of the fact that Babylon's fall was near -- a knowledge that was communicated to him by the revealing angel (Dan. 7 and 8), enabled him to make a special application of the ominous handwriting. And it is not difficult to imagine with what intense interest the guilty monarch and his dissolute court listened to the venerable Prophet, as with slow, measured tones he said: "This is the interpretation of the thing: MENE; God hath numbered thy kingdom, and finished it. TEKEL ; Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting. PERES; Thy kingdom is divided, and given to the Medes and Persians."

It would seem that neither Belshazzar nor any of the vast assemblage gathered in the banquet hall realized how near was the time when the Divine sentence was to be executed. This is seen in the fact that the guilty monarch immediately gave command that the reward promised should be given to Daniel, and the proclamation was immediately made to the

assembly of his lords and nobles that he should be the third ruler in the kingdom.\* The sacred historian, however, informs us that the judgment came that very same night: "In that night, was Belshazzar the king of the Chaldeans slain." .It seems evident that even while the Prophet was pronouncing the doom, the armies of the Medes and Persians were taking possession of the City. While the feasting and reveling in fancied security was going on, the general of the united forces of Cyrus and Darius had perfected his plans. The waters of the great River Euphrates that ran through the center of the city were diverted from their course, leaving the river-bed dry, and as the armies of the Persian king made their way under the great walls through the river-bed, they found, as had been foretold 150 years before, the great gateways at the river's brink (which were usually closed at night) wide open; and the great City which had been deemed impregnable was soon in the possession of the Median host. The palace where the great feast was being held was doubtless soon filled with soldiers, and the last king of the great Babylonian Empire was slain.

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\*It has seemed strange to some that Daniel after having stated that he did not desire these gifts, should accept them when he had complied with the king's request and made known the interpretation. When the offer was made to him he plainly stated his wishes, declaring that he did not desire any honor bestowed upon himself; but after he had performed the duty, it would not have been proper to have resisted the king's command. Knowing Daniel's character as we do, we may be assured that he did not receive them voluntarily, and that he would have continued to decline, if it were possible to have done so with propriety.

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### **PROPHETS HAD FORETOLD BABYLON'S FALL**

The Prophet Jeremiah in foretelling the fall of the City, describes briefly the suddenness of the surprise, indeed the announcement of the sentinels that the great City had fallen: "The mighty men of Babylon have forborne to fight, they have remained in their holds: their might hath failed . . . . One post [sentinel] shall run to meet another, and one messenger to meet another, to show the king of Babylon that his city is taken at one end, and that the passages are stopped, and the reeds they have burned with fire, and the men of war are affrighted." -- Jer. 51 :30-32.

One hundred and fifty years prior to this, the Prophet Isaiah had foretold the captivity of the Israelitish nation to the great empire of Babylon; and also prophesied of their deliverance and return again to their native land. Under Divine inspiration he had even mentioned by name the individual that would be in command in connection with the capture of the City, and bring about their deliverance. He was no other than Cyrus the great, mentioned by all historians. The prophecy reads: "Thus saith the Lord . . . that confirmeth the voice of His servant, and performeth the counsel of

His messengers; that saith to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be inhabited; and to the cities of Judah, Ye shall be built, and I will raise up the decayed places -- thereof; that saith to the deep, Be dry, and I will dry up thy rivers; that saith of Cyrus, He is My shepherd, and shall perform all My pleasure; even saying to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be built; and to the temple, Thy foundation shall be laid. Thus saith the Lord to His anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have holden, to subdue nations before him; and I will loose the loins of kings, to open before him the two-leaved gates, and the gates shall not be shut. I will go before thee, and make the crooked places straight; I will break in pieces the gates of brass, and cut in sunder the bars of iron; and I will give thee the treasures of darkness, and hidden riches of secret places, that thou mayest know that I, the Lord, which call thee by thy name, am the God of Israel. For Jacob my servant's sake, and Israel mine elect, I have even called thee by thy name; I have surnamed thee, though thou hast not known Me." -- Isa. 44:24-28; 45:1-4.

### **A SECOND, A MYSTIC BABYLON**

The Prophet Jeremiah, who was divinely inspired to portray the doom of Babylon, and also to describe some of the events connected with its fall, was instructed of Jehovah to publicly proclaim it and to write it all in a book. The closing words of his prophecy are very significant, in that similar words are used by St. John the Revelator, as he closes the Divine description of the fall of another, an even greater Babylon-the great false religious system divinely named, "BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH." (Rev. 17:5.) These two great Prophets of God, though living over seven hundred years apart, use the same figure in foretelling the fall of the two Babylons. The words in Jeremiah are addressed by the great Jehovah to the Prophet, and read: "And it shall be, when thou hast made an end of reading this book, that thou shalt bind a stone to it, and cast it into the midst of Euphrates: and thou shalt say, Thus shall Babylon sink, and shall not rise from the evil that I will bring upon her." (Jer. 51:63, 64.) The words having reference to the great symbolic Babylon, are vastly more significant to us today, in that they relate to the great religious system that has existed in the world for over twelve centuries now-the great mystic Babylon that has corrupted the truth of God and blinded and deceived the whole world respecting the character and plan of God. The words of the revealing angel as recorded by St. John are: "And a mighty angel took up a stone, like a great millstone, and cast it into the sea, saying, Thus with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all." (Rev. 18:21.) Concerning the connection between literal and symbolic Babylon,, that is the prophecies concerning the literal city and empire of ancient Babylon, that they have a double significance, the following words from the pen of Pastor Russell are very significant and instructive to the Lord's people of the present time

"The thoughtful Bible student must of necessity have always in view the many correspondencies which the Scriptures institute between literal Babylon and mystic Babylon, and when studying the account of the fall of literal Babylon his attention is naturally drawn also to the foretold fall of mystic Babylon in the end of this Age. Indeed, he must be comparatively blind who cannot see that the wonderful prophecies which speak of the fall of Babylon (Isa. 14 :22 ; Jer. 50 and 51) were not wholly fulfilled by Cyrus the Persian. The fall of literal Babylon, while it was sudden, and while it made a great commotion amongst the nations, lacks much of filling to the full the prophetic picture. Much of the prophecy still waits for fulfillment in mystic or symbolic Babylon today; and this fact is abundantly supported by the prophecies of the book of Revelation, written centuries after the fall of literal Babylon, which unmistakably refer to symbolic Babylon, and use language almost identical with that of Jeremiah.-See Rev. 16:19--18:24"

### **CORRESPONDENCIES BETWEEN THE TWO BABYLONS**

The correspondencies between the two are very significant. Literal Babylon is represented as being situated on many waters -the River Euphrates and many canals connected with it; likewise mystic Babylon is said to sit upon many waters, which are defined as "peoples, nations and tongues." Just as literal Babylon of old "was captured by the diversion of the literal waters, so symbolic Babylon is to fall by reason of the diversion of the symbolic Euphrates, which in Rev. 16:12, it is foretold, shall be `dried up-that the way of the kings of the East might be prepared.'

"The kings of the East, or kings from the sun-rising, are, we understand, the kings of Christ's kingdom, who are also priests -the Body of Christ, the Royal Priesthood. 'Thou hast made us unto our God kings and priests, and we shall reign on the earth.' From this standpoint of view, Cyrus and his army, overthrowing literal Babylon, was a figure or illustration of Messiah, King of kings and Lord of lords, who with His faithful will shortly overthrow mystic Babylon, and take possession of the world in the name of Jehovah, to establish the Kingdom for which He taught us to pray, 'Our Father Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is done in heaven.'

"This likeness of Cyrus to Messiah is not merely in the particulars [above] noted. It should be remembered that the name, Cyrus, signifies 'the sun,' and that thus in *his* name he reminds us of the prophecy of Christ, 'The Sun of Righteousness shall arise with healing in His beams.' . . . Through the Prophet Isaiah (44:28) the Lord speaks of Cyrus as His shepherd, who would lead back Israel, and again (45:1-14) He calls him His anointed. . . . In this prophecy Cyrus is evidently indicated, and yet just as evidently a greater than he is indirectly referred to, that is the Prince of the kings of the earth, who in Revelation is shown as drying up the symbolic Euphrates and destroying symbolic Babylon, and delivering spiritual Israel. And the



time for the fulfillment of the symbol is clearly indicated, by the drying up of the Euphrates under the sixth vial of the `Day of Wrath' and the fall of Babylon under the seventh vial, resulting in the liberation of all of God's people from the thralldom, through false doctrine, which has been upon them for lo, these many years, is portrayed as resulting.

"Babylon literal fell because, when tried in the balances by the Lord, she was found wanting: mystic Babylon falls for a similar reason. Literal Babylon never Was Israel, but the Israelites were for a time swallowed up in Babylon: likewise, mystic Babylon never was spiritual. Israel, though for a long time spiritual Israel has been in captivity to mystic Babylon. As the same Cyrus who overthrew literal Babylon made the proclamation which permitted literal Israel to return from captivity, so it is the King of kings who, upon taking His great power as earth's new king will set free all of the Lord's people -- and in advance He sends the message to those who have ears to hear, saying, `Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of demons and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird . . . . Come out of her, My people, that ye be not partakers of *her* sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues."

### **APPROACHING THE FALL OF MYSTIC BABYLON**

Pastor Russell proceeds to unfold what seems to him a correspondence, more in detail with the events, etc., that occur prior and subsequent to the downfall of literal and symbolic Babylon. His words are very interesting and significant, especially to those who at the present time see clearly that the Divine prophecies indicate the imminency of the final collapse of mystic Babylon, and her degenerate daughters:

"The great feast which preceded the fall of Babylon would seem to correspond well with the great denominational union *expected soon*, and the season of rejoicing which will accompany it. The gold and silver vessels of the Lord's house which were profaned may fitly represent not only the precious truths of Divine revelation, but also the Lord's consecrated people -- the golden vessels representing the 'little flock,' and the more numerous silver vessels representing the 'great company.' What may be the character of the defilement and injury of these [typical vessels by Belshazzar] is of course problematical, but in any case we remember that these consecrated vessels were all highly honored, and restored to the temple by Cyrus , and likewise we know that not only the truths of Divine revelation will all be cared for by the Lord, but also that all that are His shall be glorified in the spiritual Temple which He will rear shortly."

As we view the religious condition of the world today, particularly Christendom, who can doubt that the great Mother system of Romanism and her Protestant offspring, the various sects and denominations, are in the widest sense of the symbol, pictured in symbolic Babylon the great? Who, that has a clear apprehension of what constitutes the true Church of

our Lord Jesus Christ, and contrasts it with the great worldly profession of this twentieth century seen all around us, can possibly doubt that the further language of the writer just quoted is true: "The spirit of the world has so fully taken possession of. the ecclesiastical powers of Christendom, that reformation of the systems is impossible; and individuals can escape their fate only by a prompt and timely withdrawal from them. The hour of judgment is come." And even now it is seen by the Lord's watchful people that these great systems are being weighed in the balances of Divine truth and are found wanting.

"It is indeed a notable fact that in the judgment of Christendom, even by the world at large, the standard of judgment is *the Word of God*.. The heathen hold up the Bible, and boldly declare, 'You are not as good as your book.' They point to its blessed Christ, and say, 'You do not follow your pattern.' And both the heathen and the masses of Christendom take up the golden rule and the law of love, wherewith to measure the doctrines, institutions, policy and general course of Christendom; and all alike testify to the truth of the strange handwriting on her festive walls -- 'Thou art weighed in the balances and found wanting.'"

### **WHAT LESSONS MAY WE DRAW ?**

The chronological order of the events preceding, or leading up to the utter collapse of literal Babylon, seem in perfect correspondence to what we learn in the Apocalyptic visions seen by St. John concerning the same of mystic Babylon. Viewing the matter from this standpoint it seems quite reasonable to forecast these events as follows: Just as at that time the Lord's faithful servant, Daniel, was made acquainted with the fact that literal Babylon was doomed, that she was "weighed in the balances and found wanting," so the Lord's faithful servants of these days would be made acquainted with the fact that mystic Babylon's doom is soon to take place-that she is "weighed in the balances and found wanting." Furthermore, if the great feast of Belshazzar corresponds with the great denominational union and the rejoicing over it expected soon, as the above writer has expressed as seeming to be the case, then of course, the great event is still in the future as it is quite evident that this great union is not yet fully consummated. Other Scriptures seem clearly to teach that such a Church union may be expected before the final collapse; and many things transpiring in the Churches today seem to be shaping for such a union.

If it be proper to trace the correspondence still further, would it not be reasonable to believe that while the watchful ones of the Lord's people already see clearly that the great religious systems of Babylon the great and her degenerate daughters are now doomed -- "weighed in the balances and found wanting"-as was true in the case of Daniel concerning literal Babylon, even before the great feast of Belshazzar, would it not be reasonable to believe that the handwriting on the wall would represent some very startling event to occur in the world subsequent to the

consummation of, and the rejoicing over the great federation or union of Christendom? And to carry the correspondence to its logical conclusion, would it not be reasonable to believe that this great and startling occurrence, whatever it may be, will be made known to the great leaders of Christendom by the Lord's people interpreting it to signify the immediate downfall of Babylon the Great? While there can be no question that very many prophecies proclaim with startling clearness the complete downfall of Babylon the great as one of the approaching events, the typical correspondencies above noted will require the lapse of but a few years, at the most, to confirm their correctness. However, it is not so much this great event itself that we look for to occur, but rather that which this event will usher in, namely the Marriage of the Lamb, and the rising of the Sun of Righteousness with healing for all.

## **A CHOSEN VESSEL UNTO THE GENTILES**

*"I press on toward the goal unto the prize of the highcalling of God in Christ Jesus."-Phil 3:7 -14; Acts 22; 3, 6 -10.*

WHILE waiting at Jerusalem for the Pentecostal, blessing promised, the eleven Apostles overlooked the fact that they were not to begin their work, nor to consider that they had the proper endowment of wisdom or authority from on High for any part of it, until they should receive the promised blessing. Their selection of Matthias to fill the place of Judas, as the twelfth apostle was, therefore, a blunder; for although they cast lots, to give the Lord a choice, and the lot fell on one of the two they had decided upon, they were in this doing something beyond their authority. The Lord had His own choice for the one who would take the place of Judas, and this one already had been undergoing special training and discipline "from his mother's womb." -- Gal. 1 :15 ; Acts 9 :15 ; Rom. 1 :1; 11:13 ; 1 Cor. 1:1 ; 9 :1.

The name of the Lord's choice for the twelfth apostle was, in the Hebrew language, Saul, and the Greek, Paul. Under divine supervision, and with a view to his future work, without, however, interfering with his will, the Lord had carefully guided in respect to the birthplace, opportunities, education, etc., of this one whom He foresaw to be His chosen vessel to bear His message to the Gentiles. He was well-born, well educated, inheriting the valuable right of a Roman citizen; was of a very religious cast of mind, a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee.

It was because Paul of Tarsus was not a bad man, but a good man, laboring under blindness and misapprehension, "an Israelite indeed," fighting the truth ignorantly, that our Lord favored him in the miraculous manner related in this lesson. Indeed, we may suppose that the Lord in some manner favored all "Israelites indeed," as we note, for instance, that He favored Nathanael, who at first was skeptical respecting His

Messiahship, but was granted convincing evidence because of his sincerity. Similarly we may suppose that some of those who were converted by the miraculous manifestations of the day of Pentecost and shortly afterward (numbering thousands), may have been amongst the very ones who, but a few days previously, had thought of and perhaps had spoken of Jesus as an impostor, and His disciples as shallow-minded dupes. The Lord had mercy upon Nathanael, and assisted him in one way, while He assisted others at Pentecost in another way, through manifestation of the spirit; and now in a still different manner He arrested the attention of Saul, convincing him speedily that he was doing the very opposite thing from what he intended to do.

### **HOW NOBLE HIS CONVERSION**

We must not use the word conversion in its ordinary sense. We must remember St. Paul's own words to the effect that he was a strong believer in a true God and fully consecrated to His service, not in a formal or nominal sense, but heartily, energetically, with a zeal which persecuted the Church. He had a zeal toward God, but it was not according to knowledge. When God supplied him with the knowledge, it did not change his heart, his impulse, his devotion; it merely changed the direction of his activities. The word convert signifies to turn around. Paul, was not turned from a wrong condition of heart to a right one, but he was turned about in his course of action. He served the same God, and with the same zeal, but intelligently and correctly. It is important that we note this carefully, so that we shall not expect God's dealings to be after this manner with unbelievers. He does not smite them down, but, as the Scriptures say, draws them. And He draws only such as are in the right attitude of heart "Feeling after Him." -- Acts 17:27.

St. Paul's experience may find more of a parallel in the Christian Church, amongst those consecrated to the Lord, but blinded by superstition. Such may violently persecute those of "this way," and may do so in all "good conscience," as did St. Paul. There is hope for all such, that in some manner the Lord will cause the eyes of their understanding to open. We have more hope of the conversion from error to Truth of those who, in their blindness, are bitter persecutors of "this way," than we have for those who are cold and indifferent or lukewarm. The Lord stands pledged to help those whose hearts are right toward Him. True, many, like St. Paul, may weep bitter tears in future years over their misdeeds of ignorance, over their failure to give proper heed to the instructions of the Scriptures, but in the end the Lord will deliver them.

### **THE ARREST OF THE "INJURIOUS" MAN**

While Saul was engaged in persecuting the Church, suddenly, in the midst of the noonday brightness, came a still brighter light, which fell specially upon Saul, and in the midst of which he sank to the ground quite

overcome. Was it a sun-stroke? No! It was a vision "above the brightness of the sun at noonday"-a vision of the Christ, the Son of God in glory. A voice was also heard, not only by Saul, but by his companions, though they comprehended not the words as he did. He heard in the Hebrew tongue the message from the Lord, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me?" The bewildered Saul queried, "Who art Thou, Lord?" And the answer came, "I am Jesus, whom thou persecutest." [The remaining words, "It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks; and he, trembling and astonished, said, Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" are not found in the old manuscripts.] "Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do."

What an opening of the eyes of Saul's understanding occurred at that moment, when he lost his natural sight by reason of the Lord's mercy upon him! We can better imagine than explain what must have been the course of his reasoning. With a self-righteousness he had been a believer in God against heresy and heretics. He had thought of himself, doubtless, as having a specially large degree of Divine approval, because of his untiring zeal and now suddenly to be told that Jesus was really the Messiah! This was the significance of our Lord's first reproof. "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me?" Saul thought verily that he had been doing God service in persecuting those whom he believed were a little band of heretics, amongst whom were not many great, wise, learned or noble. Now, to his astonishment, he found that the Glorious One of the vision claimed generally the unwise, ignoble, poor as his brethren, his "members," whose sufferings were a part of his own.

### **ANANIAS GOD'S MESSENGER**

If one mentioned Ananias in the Scriptures was convicted of falsity toward the Lord, another of the same name was found faithful. He resided at Damascus. To him the Lord appeared in a vision directing him fully as to how he should find Saul and what he should do to him for the opening of his eyes. Ananias protested that there must be some mistake, because this man Saul had done much evil to the saints of Jerusalem. He knew also the purpose of his visit to Damascus.

The Lord's commendation of Saul to Ananias was, "Behold, he prayeth !" Ah! how much of a story is told in those three words! How sure we may be that those who similarly humbly address the Almighty are in no injurious mood!

In answer to Ananias' protest, in the vision the Lord said to him, "Go thy way, for he is a chosen vessel unto Me, to bear My name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel, for I will show him how great things he must suffer for My name's sake." Saul was peculiarly fitted by birth, by education, and by temperament for the service for which the Lord chose him. Speaking of the matter himself he declares, "I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision." He was a chosen vessel, and one of

large capacity. And yet he was only a vessel. The good things that vessel was to carry were the Divine message of love and mercy. So it is with all the called "members" of the Church. We are merely vessels. The excellency, the merit, the worth, is of our Lord.

The chosen vessel was to bear the message of grace (1) To the Gentiles; (2) To Kings; (3) To Israel. We can see the propriety of preaching to the Gentiles first in order. We can see also that such a person as St. Paul had special opportunities for serving the Truth, on such occasions as those in which he appeared and reasoned before Felix, Augustus, Agrippa, and others -- possibly before the Emperor Nero. (2 Tim. 4:16, 17.) His commission also mentioned Israel, and we remember how his preaching in various quarters was "to the Jew first."

### **SUFFER FOR MY NAME'S SAKE**

How strangely it sounds, "For I will show him how great things he must suffer for My name's sake!" Is any other service than that of our Lord ever entered on these terms -- promises of suffering? Surely not. Yet how honest for the Lord not to call His disciples under any misapprehension of the facts! We are called to suffer with Him-to sacrifice ourselves, our earthly interests -to. share His cross and, by these experiences, to prove that we have been begotten of His Spirit, and that it has been shed abroad in our hearts and constituted us copies of God's dear Son. Faithfulness to this cause insures the reward of joint-heirship with our Redeemer in His Kingdom; nor can those Kingdom honors be hoped for on any other terms. The Apostle understood this and seems to give the thought, also, that the more any of the Lord's followers can share of the sufferings of Christ, in the flesh, proportionately will be his share in the glory which by and by shall be revealed to us-in the "members of His Body."

The expression, "For My name's sake," is comprehensive. It includes everything connected with the Divine Plan, of which Jesus, the Messiah, is the center.

True to his Divine call the great Apostle Paul was a faithful ambassador of God-faithful not only in declaring the truth to the Gentiles, but also to the Jews as every opportunity afforded, counting not his life dear unto himself.

Surely saintly was the heart which wrote, For me to live in the world is for a member of The Christ to be living here, serving by self sacrifice the cause of righteousness -- Truth. Equally true was it that for him to have died and rested from his labors, to await the resurrection morning, would have been gain. So far as his own character development was concerned, it was evidently finished. He remained by God's grace, that he might further serve the Lord's flock-including us who have since lived. He thus wrote to the Philippians about A.D. 62, when circumstances intimated that his death was imminent.

Four years later, A.D. 66, St. Paul wrote his last Epistle to Timothy, who was then Pastor of the Ephesus Church. The Emperor Nero was showing greater hostility than ever against Christians, and circumstances indicated that St. Paul was to be a martyr very soon. Sometimes he addressed Timothy as "his son" in the Gospel. He evidently felt great confidence in him as a sort of successor in a general "care of all the churches." Hence to him he now wrote special warnings and commendations and prophecies respecting the Church's future.

### **THE CROWN OF GLORY LAID UP**

Faithfulness was enjoined in view of the fact that the time was nearing when "*sound doctrine*" would not be appreciated, nor even be endured by the Church. The reason for the deflection would be an unsatisfactory condition of heart in the Church, a lack of faith in the Lord's supervision -- 'itching ears' for something new." They would seek teachers who could tickle their ears. They would be more pleased with style and oratory than with the Truth. They would find such teachers as they were seeking, who would turn their ears away from the hearing of the Truth to fables. Would Timothy succumb to such influence? St. Paul hoped not. "Watch, then, in all things; endure afflictions; do the work of a Gospel bearer; make full proof of thy service to the Lord, for I, Paul, am now ready to be offered and the time of my departure is at hand." -Ver. 5, 6.

He expressed the hope that the crown of glory was *laid up* for him -- awaiting him -- not at death, but at the time of his resurrection. That crown the Lord would give to him and to all others in the attitude of heart to appreciate his revelation at the Second Advent "that day." True, not many at the present time love His appearing. The majority, not only of the world, but also of Christians, seeking but not finding in pleasures, riches, honors of men, have certain ambitions along these lines which they would like to satisfy first, and then possibly they might be willing for the Lord to establish His Kingdom. But no! by the time their lives have been spent in such pursuits, they are usually thoroughly disappointed and bewildered and generally further than ever from seeking the Kingdom.

St. Paul closes his exhortation by reciting that in his trial before Nero some in whom he had full confidence had forsaken him and he concludes that the Lord, nevertheless, stood with him and strengthened him and that he had every confidence in his care to the end of the way.

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

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### **LESSONS FROM THE LIFE OF JEREMIAH**

SERIES I

## **A MOUTHPIECE OF THE LORD**

JEREMIAH, who held steadfastly to the truth committed to him by Jehovah in Old Testament times, doubtless has a place amongst the "great cloud of witnesses" referred to by the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews. He was one of the faithful of that Age, and became an heir of the righteousness which is by faith. Like Abraham and others of those days he died in faith, not receiving the fulfillment of the promises, but was persuaded of their truthfulness, and looked forward by faith for the coming of that City (government) which hath foundations, whose Builder and Maker is God. The light of prophecy indicates that very soon now that heavenly government, Christ and His joint-heirs, the overcomers of this Gospel Age, will be established over the world, and Jeremiah and all the faithful of the days before the First Advent will enter upon their inheritance under this New Jerusalem government, which will be established for the purpose of bringing blessing to all who will be obedient in those future times.

One special object in having the experiences of these Old Testament witnesses recorded was that those who are living and walking by faith in this Gospel Age might be encouraged to profit by their example of suffering and witnessing. While the inheritance set before them was not the same as that set before the saints of New Testament times, nevertheless, they trusted in the same God, and experienced the same difficulties, trials, etc., that are experienced by those who in these days are endeavoring to follow in the footsteps of Christ, the great Redeemer of mankind.

In drawing lessons of profit from Jeremiah, it will be helpful, indeed necessary, to have before our minds three things: first, the circumstances and conditions that surrounded him in his boyhood days, as well as his environment when he received his Divine call; second, the peculiar character of the service that he was called upon to perform; and third, the one important matter connected with his call and service, which, like that of those called in this Gospel Age, was that the trials, persecutions, oppositions, indeed all the difficulties encountered in connection with the performance of his Divine mission constituted a school of training, designed for the development and crystallization of a character that was to last for eternity, and fit him for a future station and service to his fellowmen, when Jehovah's authority in Christ shall be established over all the earth.

## **IN THE MIDST OF IDOLATRY**

Many years prior to his call as a prophet, which occurred when he was very young, the nation of Israel had been considerably moved in their religious life by a revival of the worship of Jehovah. This took place under Hezekiah the king of Judah, through the very valuable assistance of the Prophet Isaiah. The beneficial effects of this revival, however, lasted only



a brief period. During the reigns of Manasseh and Amon, which followed that of Hezekiah, and which lasted over a half century, the nation fell back again into the grossest forms of heathen idolatry. When Josiah, who succeeded Amon, came to the throne, all classes, including nearly all of the priests and prophets, "were infected with the abominable vices, for committing which, the Canaanites had been expelled from the promised land centuries before. Every high hill had its thick grove of green trees, within whose shadow the idolatrous rites and abominable license of nature-worship were freely practiced." Numerous temples for the worship of the heathen gods of Baal and Astarte, as also idol statues, covered the land. The ten-tribed Northern kingdom was already in captivity under God's judgment, and the condition of the Southern kingdom was such that pointed to a similar fate awaiting it. This, in brief, was the condition of things that existed in Jeremiah's boyhood days.

Jeremiah's father, Hilkiah, belonged to the priesthood, and was among the few who were in those days faithful to Jehovah in the performance of his duties. His mother was among those who continued loyal to the covenant made with the fathers. Jeremiah lived near the holy City, and was enabled to attend the holy festivals. He was privileged to have the companionship and to enjoy the associations of those godly families, few in number, who still held fast to the religion of their fathers. It is very evident that he was deeply moved, as were his parents and associates, at the sad state of affairs in religious matters that existed all around him. Such a condition could not be overlooked by Jehovah, and it will be seen that judgment which could not be averted was hanging like a threatening dark cloud over Jeremiah's beloved country when he received his Divine call. This judgment, however, was not for their destruction. Judah was to be preserved, until Shiloh should come. Jehovah had long before declared: "As the new wine is found in the cluster, and one saith, Destroy it not; for a blessing is in it; so will I do for my servants' sakes, that I may not destroy them all. And I will bring forth a seed out of Jacob, and out of Judah an inheritor of my mountains and mine elect shall inherit it, and my servants shall dwell there." (Isa. 65: 8, 9.) Jehovah would still continue to deal with His chosen people, but it would be for their correction. The nation would continue in the school of discipline.

The moral condition of the nation as a whole was so bad that Jehovah saw that it would be best for their good and for the furtherance of His Cause, that they should be punished by becoming a servile people -- servants to the king of Babylon for a period of seventy years. However, from certain utterances of God's Prophet, it is quite evident that Jehovah's will was that to the extent and measure His voice would be heeded, the severity of the punishment would be lessened.

It is evident that in such a state of affairs amongst a people who had been divinely chosen and called, and who were being trained and disciplined, Jehovah's voice must be heard. If He must speak, it would be, as is usually

the, case, through human lips. Jeremiah was chosen to be His mouthpiece. And so we read: "The words of Jeremiah . . . to whom the word of the Lord came in the days of Josiah, the son of Amon, king of Judah, in the thirteenth year of his reign. It came also in the days of Jehoiakim, the son of Josiah king of Judah." -- Jer. 1:1 -3.

### **ANNOUNCES IMPENDING JUDGMENTS**

In the call and work of Jeremiah we have an especially encouraging lesson for those who are endeavoring to follow in the footsteps of Christ in these days. This lesson well illustrates the kind of instruments God sometimes chooses to perform His work. The human instrument chosen is always one that He sees is adapted to the kind of work to be accomplished. We invariably find that the heavenly message is committed to a fragile earthen vessel; indeed to use another figure-to one like a reed easily shaken by the wind. In chapter 1:10, we have described the kind of work to be performed: "See, I have this day set thee over the nations and over the kingdoms, to root out, and to pull down, and to destroy, and to throw down, to build, and to plant." We are not to understand by these words of Jehovah that Jeremiah was the instrument that would lead in the destructive work, but rather that he was to declare God's Word concerning the judgments, and that other instruments would be used to execute the same. In the case of the overthrow of the kingdom of Judah, Nebuchadnezzar was to be the instrument used. In the case of the overthrow of Babylon, which event Jeremiah predicted, the Medes and Persians were the agents used. This applies equally to the work of "building and planting." As we examine carefully the natural characteristics and temperament of Jeremiah, we see illustrated in the instrument selected that God's ways are not as man's ways. For a work of the character to which Jeremiah was called we would have selected one whose natural make -up, would, in almost every particular, be the very opposite of that of Jeremiah. In the first place we would most naturally reason that Jeremiah was too young for such a mission -- that an older, more experienced person would be required. Indeed, he himself seemed to fully realize this, for we have him saying, "All, Lord God! behold, I cannot speak: for I am a child."

While looked at from the human standpoint, his youth and lack of experience would seem surely to be a serious hindrance to the performance of such a work. Nevertheless, from the Divine standpoint we see in the fact of Jeremiah's realization of his own lack and his humble acknowledgment of it a quality that is absolutely necessary to be possessed in the service of God, by both young and old. It is that of a realization of-our own insufficiency: "Apart from Me ye can do nothing," are the words of our Lord.

### **JEREMIAH MODEST AND SENSITIVE**

Jeremiah was also deficient in speech, and expresses himself as very conscious of it. Furthermore, we learn that he was naturally of a very timid nature, which would cause him to shrink from the performance of tasks like those he was divinely called to. Naturally it was far from his desire to place himself, or to be placed in the foreground; rather would he prefer to keep himself out of sight, and in order that he might perform his work, it would be necessary that he *overcome this* naturally timid, shrinking disposition. Another characteristic that would *seem to* disqualify him for the particular service he was divinely called to, was his *extreme sensitiveness*. Mr. Meyer in his Series on "Old Testament Heroes," has very beautifully described Jeremiah's character in this respect:

"By nature he seemed cast in too delicate a mold to be able to combat the dangers and difficulties of his time. He reminds us of a denizen of the sea, accustomed to live within its shell but suddenly deprived of its strong incasement, and thrown without covering on the sharp edges of the rocks . . . Many are molded upon this type. They have the sensitiveness of a girl, and the nervous organism of a gazelle. They love the shallows, with their carpet of silver sand, rather than the strong billows that test a man's endurance . . . Yet such, like Jeremiah, may play an important part on the world's stage, if only they will let God lay down the iron of His might along the lines of their natural weakness. His strength is only perfect in weakness. Happy is the soul that can look up from its utter helplessness and say with Jeremiah, 'O Lord, my strength in the day of affliction.'"

All of these naturally hindering traits of character showed themselves in Jeremiah all through his life work, and could be overcome only through his exercise of strong faith in Jehovah's promise to be with him. It was his faith in God that made him an overcomer, and enabled him to perform the most difficult and trying tasks that he was called to. As the inspired Apostle to the Hebrews informs us concerning all these worthy ones; they overcame through faith and "endured as seeing Him who is invisible."

The question that very naturally comes to the mind of those not acquainted with God's ways and plans when these natural traits in Jeremiah are discovered is, Why call one possessing those characteristics, to perform such a service, to be entrusted with such a mission for which, from the human standpoint, he seemed utterly unqualified? The answer is given us by St. Paul-that the excellency of the power might be of God, and not of man, that no flesh should glory in His presence. The natural tendency of fallen man is toward a proud and self-glorifying spirit. The one who possesses the largest measure of natural gifts and talents is tempted to look admiringly on himself; to indulge in self-complacency because of what he has made out of life and its opportunities; to take pleasure in being thought of as a great one; to harbor a feeling of self-laudation. Those talents and gifts in which men pride themselves; that dignity, intelligence, the "mastery of the means of honor, fame, influence, and enjoyment; those fond possessions which distinguish you so highly from the common

masses -all may be wilted and gone before the completion of another hour! It is only by the unmerited favor of God that they are preserved unto you for a single day, and yet you would ignore and neglect Him to indulge your vanity." Let man's attainments be what they may, he holds them in a grasp so weak, so frail, that like the spider's web, it may be broken any moment.

### **"BE NOT AFRAID OF THEIR FACES"**

Jehovah, who was to be the source from whom Jeremiah was to receive his power, was well aware of the character of the "earthen vessel." He was choosing, and in reply to Jeremiah's excuses said; "Say not, I am a child: for thou shalt go to all that I shall send thee, and whatsoever I command thee thou shalt speak. Be not afraid of their faces: for I am with thee to deliver thee, saith the Lord. Then the Lord put forth His hand, and touched my mouth. And the Lord said unto me, Behold, I have put My words in thy mouth."

We next have described (verses 15, 16) more particularly the nature of the work the Lord had called and anointed him to perform. He was to become God's mouthpiece in speaking words of stern judgment against the degenerate nation-the nation He had chosen, and who had forsaken His ways and become engrossed in the idolatrous worship and practices of the heathen nations. At the same time the Lord spoke words of encouragement and exhortation to His chosen servant Jeremiah. He said, "Thou therefore gird up thy loins, and arise, and speak unto them all that I command thee: be not dismayed at their faces, lest I confound thee before them. For, behold, I have made thee this day a defenced city, and an iron pillar, and brazen walls against the whole land, against the kings of Judah, against the princes thereof, against the priests thereof, and against the people of the land. And they shall fight against thee; but they shall not prevail against thee; for I am with thee, saith the Lord, to deliver thee." -- Ver. 17-19.

We learn from the foregoing, not that Jeremiah received by the Divine anointing on this occasion all that was necessary of wisdom and power to enable him to carry to a completion all the work that he was called to perform, but rather that he would receive this as it was needed and that there would be required on his part that he live a life of dependence and trust in Jehovah, for wisdom, courage, and strength. In other words, it was required of him that he yield himself entirely into Jehovah's keeping, and daily and hourly learn the lesson of dependence upon Him for strength and ability to perform the trying and difficult tasks that he was divinely called to.

### **CONSECRATED TO GOD'S SERVICE**

We may properly liken his anointing and call, to what we term today the act of consecration; and his trusting Jehovah for wisdom and strength as needed, the daily *life* of consecration. The same effect, so far as service for

God is concerned, is produced now in the inner life of those who do this, as was produced in Jeremiah. The act of consecration, together with the crystallizing of that act into the daily life, imparts a strong inward impulse, or Divine influence, moving one to desire above everything else to do the Lord's good pleasure; it produces a jealousy for God's honor and a loyalty to His Word of truth; it imparts, in proportion as the will is yielded up to God, a keen sensitiveness to wrong conditions amongst the Lord's people, and a strong desire, producing earnest fervent prayer for heavenly wisdom to enable one to act in particular cases in a way that will be pleasing to the Lord. It produces in the inner life a willingness to perform any task, and to go on any errand for God, no matter how difficult that task or errand may be, or how great the cost. It is a Divine power that enables one to rise above the natural disinclinations, no matter how strong these may be. Furthermore, it gives, as it were, a supernatural vision of the Unseen One, which is expressed in the language of St. Paul when describing one of these Old Testament saints of God, he said, "he endured as *seeing* Him who is invisible." Illustrating the supernatural effects that such a yielding to God produces and the change that such a life of faith and trust in God brings about, and the remarkable contrast between those who thus yield themselves and those who do not, the one above quoted has said:

"Two men may sit together side by side. The veil of sense may hang darkly before the one, while for the other it is rent in twain from the top to the bottom. There no thought, no ambition, no desire for aught beyond the temporal and seen; but here the vision of the presence and care of God, of the principalities and powers in the heavenlies, of the ministry of angels, and the opposition of fiends, of the chariots and horses of salvation, of the prize and crown, of the awards of Christ's judgment seat, and the home beyond the river. Flesh and blood do not reveal such things, but the Spirit of God. They are hidden from the wise and prudent, but revealed to babes who love God. Happy are they the eyes of whose heart are opened to know what is the hope of His calling, what the riches of His inheritance in the saints, and what the exceeding greatness of His power to usward.

"It is very important that all Christians should be alive to possess this power of vision. It is deeper than intellectual, since it is spiritual; it cannot be acquired in the school of earthly science, but is the gift of Him who alone can open the eyes of the blind, and remove the films of earthliness, that shut out the eternal and unseen. If you lack it, reader, seek it at the hands of Jesus; be willing to do His will, and you shall know. It is a thousand pities to be blind, and not able to see afar off, when all around stand the mountains of God in solemn majesty, as the Alps around the Swiss hostelry, where the traveler arrives after nightfall, to eat and drink and sleep, unconscious of the proximity of so much loveliness. It is related of Ampere, the electrician, who was short-sighted without being aware of it, that when he became conscious of his defective vision through the casual use of the eyeglasses of a friend, he burst into tears as he realized how much he had missed throughout his life of the wonderful beauty and

interest of the world around him. With more reason will many of us have to lament our untold loss through that spiritual near-sightedness of which the Holy Spirit speaks -- 2 Pet. 1:9, R. V."

### **THE LESSON OF DEPENDENCE UPON GOD**

The great lessons to be learned by us as we read Jeremiah's autobiography is that of submission to and dependence upon God in the daily, even hourly circumstances of life. As we read his life, we shall behold him coming in contact with adversity and sorrow, with trials and tribulations, with oppositions and persecutions. We shall see him under trial's pressure -- buffeted, ill treated, unappreciated and cast into a miry dungeon. We shall see him standing at the gate of Jerusalem warning the people of coming disaster. We shall see him reproving and rebuking kings and nobles. We shall see him encouraging some of God's faithful ones, by predicting good times to come. In all this the earthen vessel would have been utterly and hopelessly shattered, made unfit for use, were it not that he looked up to Him who was able to, keep and hold him. It was through learning the lesson of trust, the lesson of dependence, the lesson of submission, that enabled him to be an overcomer and at last to come off more than conqueror.

Did Jeremiah learn these lessons all at once? Did he never once falter in times of danger? Did he never shrink from the difficult tasks he was called to perform? We shall find as we consider carefully the record of his life, written by himself, that he did not learn these lessons all at once. It took days and months and even years for him to learn some of these lessons of faith, of trust, of dependence, of submission; but we shall find that he learned them at last. He was a man of like passions as ourselves. More than once was he discouraged, and found himself questioning the wisdom of God's dealing with himself, as well as with other of the righteous ones - almost ready to relinquish his work and retire to private life, to spend his days in his own quiet home at Anathoth. We will doubtless be startled as we hear him saying that he would no more speak in Jehovah's name. In spite of his weaknesses, his imperfections, we shall see how kind, how patient, how long-suffering the Lord was with him and how willing He was to listen to his tried and disheartened servant and encourage him to faithfulness. We shall behold the manifestation of the Divine power exerted in behalf of His chosen servant, enabling him to at last come off a victor, an overcomer. Finally we see displayed in him the love, the pity, the sympathy for his own erring countrymen that was displayed by the great Savior of men, when looking from the heights of Olivet and beholding the city of God's choice, He said: "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets and stonest them which are sent unto thee; how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!" How like these words of the Divine Master, are those of Jeremiah as he beheld the sad condition of his beloved countrymen: "Oh that my head were waters, and mine eyes a

fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people! Oh that I had in the wilderness a lodging place of wayfaring men; that I might leave my people, and go from them!" (Jer. 9:1, 2.) And as he beholds at last the fulfillment of Jehovah's words of judgment, which he had himself been the chosen instrument for long years in foretelling, listen to his Lamentations

"How doth the city sit solitary, that was full of people! how has she become as a widow! she that was great among the nations, and princess among the provinces, how is she become tributary! She weepeth sore in the night, and her tears are on her cheeks: among all her lovers she hath none to comfort her: all her friends have dealt treacherously with her, they are become her enemies. Judah is gone into captivity because of affliction, . . . The ways of Zion do mourn, because none come to the solemn feasts: all her gates are desolate: her priests sigh, her virgins are afflicted, and she is in bitterness . . . Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by? behold, and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow." - -See Lamentations 1.

Another has said: "Jeremiah has always a fascination to Christian hearts, because of the close similarity that exists between his life and that of Jesus Christ. Each of them was `a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief'; each came to his own, and his own received him not; each passed through hours of rejection, desolation, and forsakenness. And in Jeremiah we may see beaten out in detail, experiences which, in our Lord, are but lightly touched on by the evangelist."

## **FORETASTES OF BLESSED REALTIES**

SURELY the friends who assembled at Springfield, September 1-3, realized all that they had anticipated in the Convention held at that time. How grand and blessed are our advantages above what many of God's children have had in the past-convenient methods of traveling, liberty of assembling in the name of the Lord, and freedom of thought and of speech; and best of all a most satisfactory understanding of the greatest of all truths, that which concerns our Father's plans and purposes, not only as they relate to the deliverance of the Church, but also as they pertain to the deliverance of the entire groaning creation. Truly, "the secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him and He will show them His covenant."

The dear friends assembling at Springfield rejoiced together in again considering the goodness of the Lord and in exhorting one another to faithfulness to our Divine Master. Among the lines of thought that were considered by the brethren and which were discussed at much length during the various sessions of the our present privileges of partaking of the water of life; the presence of our Lord; the Shepherd and His sheep; the Christian's trials, besetments, and temptations, especially in these latter days. The brethren were reminded of the solemnity of this hour; the great

change of dispensation at hand; the approaching glorification of the Church, the Body of Christ. Indeed, what more sublime themes could engage the thoughts of God's people! And as saith the Apostle "What manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness." Surely, "he that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as He is pure." These gatherings while still in this hour of our pilgrimage are precious foretastes of blessed realities to be entered into when all the members of the Church of the Firstborn are assembled in the presence of the Great King.

There were manifold evidences during the season of fellowship at Springfield of the presence of the Lord's spirit and of a deep desire on the part of the brethren to show forth the fruitage of that spirit in loving helpful words and admonitions. Praise the Lord for the evidence of His guidance and blessing!

## **LUKE THE BELOVED PHYSICIAN**

*"A friend loveth at all times; and a brother is born for adversity: '-Prov. 17:17; Luke 1:1-4; Acts 1:1; 16:9-15; Col. 4:14; 2 Timothy 4:11.*

LUKE, the physician, who wrote the Gospel of Luke, was the author of the Book of Acts. In the latter he takes up the narrative substantially where he left it in the Gospel -the ascension of Christ. He recapitulates, however, to the extent of giving us a narrative of the conversation immediately preceding our Lord's ascension. The account is evidently addressed to a friend, of the then common name, Theophilus, who was supposed to have been a person of considerable dignity and influence, inasmuch as he is elsewhere styled "most excellent," a title which implied a considerable social or political rank. Luke was not one of the Apostles, and his records are not, therefore, of apostolic authority.

Mr. Barnes observes that "Luke does not profess to have been an eye-witness of what he recorded. (See chap. 1:2, 3.) It is clear, therefore, that he was not one of the seventy disciples, nor one of the two who went to Emmaus, as has been sometimes supposed. Nor was he an Apostle. By the fathers he is uniformly called the *companion* of the Apostles, and especially of Paul. If he was not one of the Apostles, and if he was not one of those expressly commissioned by our Lord to whom the promise of the infallible teaching of the Holy Ghost was given, the question arises by what authority his Gospel and the Acts have a place in the sacred canon, or what evidence is there that he was divinely inspired?"

In reply to Mr. Barnes' question we would say that such authority as plenary inspiration was not necessary, in the recording of plain, simple facts such as the Gospel of Luke and the Book of Acts present. It requires no inspiration to record a fact, though it does require some ability, and it is reasonable to assume that since the Lord used Luke's abilities in connection with the work of recording the facts of that time he was *guided*



of the Holy Spirit in the *ascertainment of the facts*, which his education and natural talents eminently qualified him to state succinctly. Luke was guided of the Holy Spirit, in the same sense that all of the Lord's consecrated people are guided by His Spirit, which is to a different degree from that *plenary* inspiration granted to the twelve Apostles -- Paul taking the place of Judas.

The first verse in the Book of the Acts refers back to the Gospel of Luke, as a treatise of the doings and teaching of Jesus from the time He began His ministry to its close; and some have assumed that the word "began" might reasonably be understood to imply that our Lord continued His ministry after His ascension, speaking and acting, through His Apostles, and those believing on Him through their word. This is true enough whether it was what Luke meant or not; for the Scriptures invariably teach that the Church- of Christ in the flesh is His representative: as the Apostle Paul says, we "fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ, for His Body's sake, which is the Church."

### **AN INTERESTING BIOGRAPHY**

It will be interesting in this connection to read what has been styled *An outline Biography of Luke*, said to be partly fanciful; it has been prepared by Professor D. A. Hayes from tradition, reasonable conjecture, and references made to his character in the New Testament

"He was born a slave boy in the household of Theophilus, a wealthy government official in Antioch. He grew up into most engaging appearance and most attractive personality. He was of a peculiarly acute intellect and of a most obliging disposition. He won his master's confidence and then his personal liking. Theophilus decided to educate the boy at his own expense and at the best university in the land. So it was that the second capital event in the life of Luke was his matriculation at Tarsus. Here he studied medicine, where the great masters in that profession, Aretaeus, Dioscorides, and Athenaeus, had been educated. Just a few miles away at Aegae stood the great temple of Aesculapius, which furnished the nearest approach to the modern hospital to be found in the ancient world. From the university lectures Luke got the theory of medicine; in the temple of Aesculapius he got the practice and experience he needed. He made the acquaintance of Barnabas and Saul here, and laid the foundations for a lifelong friendship with these men.

"His education completed, he returned to Antioch and rendered faithful and most successful service in his master's family. Then the Gospel was preached at Antioch, and Luke was among the first to hear it and to accept it. He told his master, Theophilus, about it, and Theophilus himself became interested and at last converted. Then about the first thing Theophilus did as a Christian was to give Luke his freedom.

"The first impulse of the freedman Luke was to get away from all the scenes of his servitude and to test his new-found liberty by wandering far and wide at his own sweet will. He shipped as a physician upon one of the vessels plying up and down the Mediterranean Sea, and there he had manifold experiences. His outlook was broadened as he saw more of the world. He was of service to many people and he made many friends. On one of his voyages he met some members of the family of Lucanus the poet, and they persuaded him to accompany them to their home, in Corduba in Spain. Luke was there when the poet was born, and the baby boy was named after him. In this household he became acquainted with Gallio and Seneca and many other notable men. The slave boy had risen to a considerable height, for his native ability and his excellent education and his goodness of heart enabled him to converse with the best of men as their equal, and as a freedman and physician he was admitted to terms of intimacy which otherwise would have been impossible.

"In due time he came back to Antioch and was resident there when many of the stirring events which he narrates in the history of the Christian Church took place. Later he removed to Troas and settled there, where Paul found him on his second missionary journey. He went with Paul to Philippi, and was left in charge of that Church for seven years. He left Philippi with Paul in A.D.58, and remained with Paul thereafter until the Apostle's martyrdom.

"Some time after this event he wrote the third Gospel and the Book of Acts for Theophilus, and he fully intended to write a third volume continuing the history, but he was swept away into the tide of Christian evangelism and never found the leisure to do it. He labored as an evangelist in many lands, and in a ripe old age he fell on sleep and was buried somewhere in Greece.

"Luke was one of the most respected and best-beloved members of the early Church. His praise was in all the churches. All women liked him and all men honored him. Apollos and he were the most accomplished writers, and Paul and he were the most prolific writers of the New Testament times. Take the writings of Luke and Paul out of the New Testament and it would be less than half its present size; and of the larger half of the present contents Luke wrote more than Paul. He was a most versatile man—a physician, a musician, a painter, a poet, a preacher, a prolific author, an intrepid missionary -- a man with many gifts and many friends and manifold accomplishments. His books are invaluable. Both he and they are worth our knowing and knowing well."

### **LUKE THE WRITER OF THE ACTS**

Luke commences the Gospel narrative with the following interesting statement: "Forasmuch as many have taken in hand to set forth in order a declaration of those things which are most surely believed among us, even as they delivered them unto us, which from the beginning were eye-

witnesses, and ministers of the word." (Luke 1:1, 2.) This expression clearly implies that Luke was not an eye-witness of the events of Christ's life, but merely a collector of information from those who were eye-witnesses of the acts of the Savior. Many others had written accounts of Christ's life but Luke evidently felt that in conveying information to his master, Theophilus, he desired it to be in the form of a record carefully prepared by himself from all the facts that he could gather from those who had been brought in contact with Jesus. Thus he remarked "that thou mightest know the certainty of those things, wherein thou hast been instructed."

The book styled the "Acts of the Apostles" was Luke's second statement to Theophilus, as is clearly indicated in the expression, "The *former* treatise have I made, O Theophilus." It is not to be supposed that Luke himself styled his writings "The Acts of the Apostles," for he concerned himself in the first part mainly with Peter and in the second wholly with Paul, merely mentioning John, James, Timothy, and Cyrus. The entire book is an expansion of Christ's works in Acts I:8 telling how the Apostles witnessed for Christ successively in Jerusalem, and in Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

Another commentator has presented a most interesting review of the Acts, a portion of which is submitted below

"The Acts of the Apostles contains a record of the organization of the Christian Church. That Church was founded simply by the preaching of the truth, and chiefly by a simple statement of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The 'Acts of the Apostles' contains the highest models of preaching, and the purest specimens of that simple, direct, and pungent manner of addressing men, which may be expected to be attended with the influences of the Holy Spirit. It contains some of the most tender, powerful, and eloquent appeals, to be found in any language. If a man wishes to learn how to preach well, he can probably acquire it nowhere else so readily as by giving himself to the prayerful and profound study of the specimens contained in this book. At the same time we have here a view of the character of the true Church of Christ. The simplicity of this Church must strike every reader of 'the Acts.' Religion is represented as a work of the heart; the pure and proper effect of truth on the mind. It is free from pomp and splendor, and from costly and magnificent ceremonies. There is no apparatus to impress the senses, no splendor to dazzle, no external rite or parade adapted to draw the affections from the pure and spiritual worship of God. How unlike to the pomp and parade of pagan worship! How unlike the vain and pompous ceremonies which have since, alas! crept into no small part of the Christian Church.

### **THROWS IMPORTANT LIGHT ON APOSTOLIC MINISTRY**

"In this book we have many striking and impressive illustrations of what the Gospel is fitted to produce, to make men self-denying and benevolent.

The Apostles . . . cheerfully forsook all. Paul became a convert to the Christian faith, and cheerfully gave up all his hopes of preferment and honor, and welcomed toil and privation in foreign lands. The early converts had all things in common (chap. 2:44.) ; those `which had curious arts,' and were gaining property by a course of iniquity, forsook their schemes of ill-gotten gain, and burned their books publicly (chap. 19:19); Ananias and Sapphira were punished for attempting to impose on the Apostles by hypocritical professed self-denials (chap. 5:1-10); and throughout the book there occur constant instances of sacrifices and toil to spread the Gospel around the globe. Indeed, these great truths had manifestly seized upon the early Christians: that the Gospel was to be preached to all nations; and that whatever stood in the way of that was to be sacrificed; whatever toils and dangers were necessary, were borne; and even death itself was cheerfully to be met, if it would promote the spread of true religion. This was then genuine Christianity; this is still the spirit of the Gospel of Christ.

"This book throws important light on the Epistles. It is a connecting link between the Gospels and the other parts of the New Testament . . . . One of the most clear and satisfactory evidences of the genuineness of the books of the New Testament is to be found in the undersigned coincidences between the Acts and the Epistles. This argument was first clearly stated and illustrated by Dr. Paley. His little work illustrating it, the 'Horae Paulinae,' is one of the most unanswerable proofs which have yet been furnished of the truth of the Christian religion.

"This book contains unanswerable evidence of the truth of the Christian religion. It is a record of the early triumphs of Christianity. Within the space of thirty years after the death of Christ, the Gospel had been carried to all parts of the civilized, and to no small portion of the uncivilized world. Its progress and its triumphs were not concealed. Its great transactions were not 'done in a corner.' It had been preached in the most splendid, powerful, and corrupt cities; churches were already founded in Jerusalem, Antioch, Corinth, Ephesus, Philippi, and at Rome. The Gospel had spread in Arabia, Asia Minor, Greece, Macedon, Italy, and Africa. It had assailed the most mighty existing institutions; it had made its way over the most formidable barriers; it had encountered the most deadly and malignant opposition; it had traveled to the capital, and had secured such a hold even in the imperial city, as to make it certain that it would finally overturn the established religion, and seat itself on the ruins of paganism. Within thirty years it had settled the point that it would overturn every bloody altar; close every pagan temple; bring under its influence the men of office, rank, and power; and that 'the banners of the faith would soon stream from the palaces of the Caesars.' All this would be accomplished by the instrumentality of Jews -- of fishermen -- of Nazarenes. They had neither wealth, armies, nor allies. With the exception of Paul, they were men without learning. They were taught only by the Holy Ghost; armed only with the power of God; victorious only because He was their captain;

and the world acknowledged the presence of the messengers of, the Highest, and the power of the Christian religion. Its success never has been, and never can be accounted for, by any other supposition than that God attended it. And if the Christian religion be not true, the change wrought by the twelve Apostles is the most inexplicable, mysterious, and wonderful event, that has ever been witnessed in this world. Their success to the end of time will stand as an argument of the truth of the scheme, that shall confound the infidel, and sustain the Christian with the assured belief that this is a religion which has proceeded from the almighty and infinitely benevolent God."

### **A VALUABLE COMPANION TO ST. PAUL**

"St. Luke must be ranked as the first Christian hymnologist," says Dean Farrar. "In this Gospel thanksgiving is prominent. It also gives special prominence to prayer. It is marked mainly by its presentation of the Good Tidings in their universality and gratuitousness; it is pre-eminently the Gospel of pardon and of pity. St. Luke dwells especially on Christ's ministry to the world. He reveals especially the sacredness of infancy. His is specially the Gospel of womanhood. He seems to delight in all the records which told of the mercy of the Savior towards the poor, the humble, the despised. It is specially the Gospel of the outcast-of the Samaritan, the publican, the harlot, and the prodigal. Lastly, it is the Gospel of tolerance. It is these characteristics that have earned for this Gospel the praise of being 'the most beautiful book that has ever been written.' Among the miracles peculiar to St. Luke are the miraculous draught of fishes, the raising of the widow's son at Nain, and the healing of the ten lepers. Among the parables peculiar to St. Luke are the two debtors, the good Samaritan, the prodigal son, and the Pharisee and the publican."

It is not till we reach the 16th chapter of the Acts that we locate a distinct reference to Luke's association with St. Paul and others in the ministry of the Gospel. It is noted in connection with the call from Macedonia and the journey thither by the Apostle and his associates. Having been blessed with much success in their mission up to this point, the Apostle had in mind a journey through Asia Minor but apparently things went unfavorable until he concluded that the Lord was hindering their efforts and in perplexity began to think of other fields of labor. His moment of uncertainty was the Lord's opportunity for directing him. He dreamed that he saw a man dressed in the costume of the Macedonians beckoning to him and saying, "Come over and help us." The Apostle accepted this as of Divine leading and promptly began the journey which took him into Europe. We have here an evidence of God's supervision of all the interests of His Church. He was not averse to permitting the message to go into Asia Minor, for it did go there later, possibly at a more opportune time. But this was the time for sending the message to Europe.

It is supposed that it was about this time that Luke, the physician, became attached to Paul's company; inasmuch as he identifies himself in St. Paul's association by the statement, "immediately we endeavored to go into Macedonia." A man of education, a scribe, as well as a physician, the Lord evidently provided him as St. Paul's amanuensis, that thereby the Apostle's letters should reach many of the churches of that time, as well as the Lord's people from then until now. Thus it came that Luke wrote not only a version of the Gospel, but also the Book of Acts and nearly all of St. Paul's epistles. Here we have another illustration of the privileges of the various members of the Body of Christ. Luke could not be the Apostle Paul nor could he do St. Paul's work; but he could be used of the Lord honorably and efficiently in a greater spread of the Truth.

So it is with us. We cannot be apostles. We cannot do anything very great; but, if filled with the Spirit of the Lord, it is our privilege to be used to some extent in some service of the truth. And any service for the Lord and for the brethren, even to the washing of feet and any menial service is, as our Lord shows, honorable and a privilege.

Philippi, one of the chief cities of Macedonia, in Greece, appears to have been the first place for the preaching of the Good Tidings in Europe. As usual, on the Sabbath day the Apostle and companions sought for some who worshiped God, who hoped for the Kingdom that God had promised, knowing that such would be the better prepared to receive the message he had to deliver; that Jesus had appeared as the Redeemer and had laid the foundation for the Millennial Kingdom in the sacrifice of Himself; that the blessings of His sacrifice would ultimately be made available to every creature, but that now, in advance of the dealing with the world in general, the Lord is calling out a spiritual Israel, a "little flock," to be His kings and priests with Jesus in the administration of the Millennial blessings.

Apparently there was no synagogue in Philippi, and matters may have looked very unfavorable to Paul and his companions. However, they heard of a little religious meeting held every Sabbath by the river side, outside the city gate. It was a prayer meeting principally and place of Divine fellowship. Not having the facilities of a synagogue they probably had no Scripture parchments, and hence no reading of the Law, but merely prayer and worship. All this was favorable to the Gospel message the Apostle had to present. He spoke to those who resorted thither, commending the importance of their worshipful condition of heart and the importance of praise to the Giver of all good. Then he proceeded to declare the good tidings of the sacrifice of Jesus, of His death and resurrection, and His Second Coming in power and great glory. He showed surely that the invitation now being given was for joint-sacrifices with Jesus whose reward would be joint-heirship with Him in the Millennial Kingdom, as members of His Body, the Church.

It seems that it is with good reason that the claim is made that Luke continued in the Apostle's association to the end of his earthly pilgrimage.

Indeed we may well suppose that Luke's presence with him and his skilled and sympathetic aid would be most welcome and that he was the most useful of all the Apostle's companions. We note how affectionately the Apostle Paul refers to him in his letter to the Colossians written from Rome: "Luke, the beloved physician, and Demas, salute you." Again we have another reference in the second letter to Timothy, "Only Luke is with me." The Apostle is now writing from his second Roman imprisonment urging his beloved son Timothy to hasten to Rome. Another has appropriately concluded:

"From the time that Luke adventured himself with Paul, through weal and woe he remained faithful. He had watched the breaking up of the little band; he had seen his leader grow prematurely old through his exacting labors; and he had guessed the issue of the impending trial before Nero. Yet until the end came he would never be absent for long from the side of the man whom he loved as his own soul."

## **TIMOTHY, A GOOD MINISTER OF CHRIST JESUS**

"Be thou an example to them that believe, in word, in manner of life, in love, in faith, in purity."-1 Tim. 4: 12; Acts 16: 1-3; Phil. 2: 19-22; 2 Tim. 1 : 1-6; 3: 14, 15.

VERY little can be known of Timothy outside of the New Testament records. His birthplace was that of either Derbe or Lystra, though it is not certainly known which. From the account given in Acts 16:1 it is stated that the Apostle Paul found him in those places and it appears that he had not been acquainted with Timothy before. His mother Eunice was a Jewess and evidently a woman of unusual piety as was also Timothy's grandmother, Lois. Though his father was a Greek, he was evidently not unfriendly to the Jewish religion, for Timothy had been carefully instructed in the Scriptures. It is claimed that it was about A.D. 51 or 52 when the Apostle Paul came to Derbe and Lystra and became acquainted with Timothy; and though there is no way of ascertaining the exact age of Timothy at that time, it is reasonably presumed that he was then a youth. (1 Tim. 4: 12.) From what is said concerning him he was undoubtedly a young man of unusual hope and promise and there were some special indications that he would rise to a place of influence and power as a religious man and would fill an important position in the ministry of the Gospel. -- 1 Tim. 1 :18.

The records indicate that Timothy was already a disciple, a Christian convert when the Apostle Paul first met him, but the means by which he became converted are not known. His mother too had been converted to the Christian faith before (Acts 16 : 1), so that they seemed well known to the Christians of the neighboring towns of Lystra and Iconium. It was

some six or seven years before Paul met with Timothy that he and Barnabas had preached the Gospel in Iconium, Derbe, and Lystra and it is not improbable that Timothy had been converted in the meantime.

### **QUALITIES SUITABLE TO THE MINISTRY**

Mr. Barnes in a very interesting way observes several things that "appear to have combined to induce the Apostle to introduce him [Timothy into the ministry and to make him a traveling companion. His youth; his acquaintance with the Holy Scriptures; the 'prophecies which went before on him;' his talents; his general reputation in the church; and, it would seem also, his amiableness of manners, fitting him to be an agreeable companion, attracted the attention of the Apostle, and led him to desire that he might be a fellow-laborer with him. To satisfy the prejudices of the Jews, and to prevent any possible objection which might be made against his qualifications for the ministerial office, Paul circumcised him (Acts 16:3), and he was ordained to the office of the ministry by 'the laying on of the hands of the Presbytery.' (1 Tim. 4:14.) *When* this ordination occurred is not known, but it is most probable that it was before he went on his travels with Paul, as it is known that Paul was present on the occasion, and took a leading part in the transaction. -- 2 Tim 1: 6.

"Timothy having joined Paul and Silas, accompanied them on a visit to the churches of Phrygia and Galatia, in which they delivered them the decrees to keep which had been ordained at Jerusalem. (Acts 16:4.) Having done this, they endeavored to go together into Bythina, a province of Asia Minor, on the north-west, but were prevented; and they then went into Mysia, and to the towns of Troas. (Acts 16:8.) Here Luke appears to have joined them, and from this place, in obedience to a vision which appeared to Paul, they went into Macedonia, and preached the Gospel first at Philippi, where they established a church. In this city Paul and Silas were imprisoned; but it is remarkable that nothing is said of Timothy and Luke, and it is not known whether they shared in the sufferings of the persecution there or not. Everything, however, renders it probable that Timothy was with them at Philippi, as he is mentioned as having started with them to go on the journey (Acts 16: 3) ; and as we find him at Berea, after the Apostle had been released from prison, and had preached at Thessalonica and Berea. (Acts 17 : 14. ) From this place Paul was conducted to Athens, but left an injunction for Silas and Timothy to join him there as soon as possible. This was done-but when Timothy had come to Athens, Paul felt it to be important that the Church at Thessalonica should be visited and comforted in its afflictions, and being prevented from doing it himself, he sent Timothy, at great personal inconvenience, back to that Church. Having discharged the duty there, he rejoined the Apostle at Corinth (Acts 18:5), from which place the first epistle to the Thessalonians was written. These transactions occurred about A.D. 52.



"In regard to the latter part of the life of Timothy, there is nothing which can be depended on. It has been the current opinion, derived from tradition, that he was 'bishop' of Ephesus; that he died and was buried there; and that his bones were subsequently removed to Constantinople. The belief that he was 'bishop' of Ephesus rests mainly on the 'subscription' to the Second Epistle to Timothy-which is no authority whatever . . . . The supposition that he died at Ephesus, and was subsequently removed to Constantinople, rests on no certain historical basis. "Timothy was long the companion and the friend of the Apostle Paul, and is often mentioned by him with affectionate interest. Indeed there seems to have been no one of his fellow-laborers to whom he was so warmly attached. See 1 Tim. 1:2, 18; 2 Tim. 1:2; 2: 1. 1 Cor. 4: 17, where he calls him 'his own son,' and 'his beloved son'; 2 Tim. 1:4, where he expresses his earnest desire to see him, and makes a reference to the tears which Timothy shed at parting from him; 1 Cor. 16: 10, 14, where he bespeaks for him a kind reception among the Corinthians; 1 Cor. 16:10, Rom. 16:21, 1 Thess. 3:2, and especially 2:19, 20, where he speaks of his fidelity, of his usefulness to him in his labors, and of the interest which he took in the churches which the Apostle had established."

### **SOUND ADVICE FOR ALL CHRISTIANS**

St. Paul's letters to Timothy are amongst the most valuable of the New Testament writings. Indeed they contain sound advice to all Christians, especially to such as are young in the truth, and particularly if they have consecrated their lives to the Lord and His service, and are seeking to be useful according to their consecration as His ministers or servants -- whether in a public or in a private service, according to their talents and opportunities.

The second letter was written to Timothy when the Apostle Paul was an old man, a prisoner in Rome, because of his testimony for the Lord. Nor was Timothy a child in years at the time this epistle was addressed to him. As already noted, Timothy's mother and himself were converts to the Gospel of Christ presumably at the time of St. Paul's visit to their home at Lystra and Derbe during his first missionary tour. It is presumed that at the time of his receipt of this letter Timothy must have been about forty years of age. Tradition has it that he was about sixteen years old at the time of his own and his mother's conversion to the Gospel. When he was about twenty-one years of age, he with Silas accompanied the Apostle Paul on his second tour through Asia Minor, and from that time on for some sixteen years he was closely identified with the Apostle in his service of the truth, until left by the Apostle with the Church at Ephesus, that he might help them over some difficulties into which they had fallen. It was while Timothy was thus serving the Church at Ephesus that he received the two epistles which bear his name.

Paul introduces himself not by calling attention to his personal qualities as a logician, nor by boasting of any service which he had performed as the Lord's servant and minister of the Truth; but, properly, by reminding Timothy of his apostleship (one of the Twelve, taking Judas' place) specially commissioned by the Lord to introduce His Gospel, and specially prepared for the work by being made a witness of the Lord's resurrection, having been granted a glimpse of His glorious person on his way to Damascus and commissioned to declare the conditions for the fulfillment to men of God's promise of life, provided in Christ Jesus.

Although the Apostle had no natural children of his own, his tender address to Timothy as his "dearly beloved son," and his invocation upon him of a Divine blessing, shows that he lacked none of those fine, noble and endearing sentiments, which belong to a true parent. Indeed, the very fact that he had no natural children seems to have broadened the Apostle's sentiments to such an extent that figuratively he took into his affections, as his own children, all who accepted the Gospel. We remember that he frequently used this figure of speech, "Although ye have many teachers, ye have not many fathers in the Gospel" -- "I have begotten you in my bonds." On another occasion he represents his efforts for a development of a fully consecrated Christian life amongst the believers under the figure of a mother travailing for her children. This being true of the Apostle's general sentiment toward the household of faith, it would be much more true in the case of Timothy who had so nobly and truly filled the part of a son to him.

### **ST. PAUL'S CARE OVER "SON TIMOTHY"**

Incidentally the Apostle here points out the purity of his conscience toward God, before his eyes were opened to a recognition of the Lord Jesus,, while making mention to Timothy that he prayed for him day and night with great desire to see him, and a remembrance of Timothy's tears, when they parted company at Ephesus in the interest of the Truth. It was not according to the personal preferences of either that they had separated, but both had sunk personal convenience and preference in the interest of the Lord's cause.

We note with appreciation the Apostle's care over this younger brother in the Truth, in whom he sees such great promise of present and future service. He realizes, perhaps better than Timothy does, the snares of the Adversary, by which one placed in so prominent a position is likely to be assailed. Would he become heady and high minded? -- Would he lose his faith in the cross of Christ? -- Would he fall into the snare of some of the philosophies, falsely so-called? -- Would he become vainly puffed up by a fleshly mind, and get to feeling himself to be a "somebody?" Or, would he, on the contrary, be a faithful soldier of the . cross, meek, humble, gentle toward all, an example both in faith and practice to those with whom he came in contact? And withal, would he hold fast to the

Scriptures and be apt to teach others to look to this Divine source of information? He remembered that heretofore Timothy had been so close to himself in the work that he had been measurably shielded from many trials to which he would now be exposed; and yet, no doubt he realized that, if Timothy would be prepared to take the work of a general minister, which Paul the prisoner and growing old must shortly lay aside, it was time that he was learning how to stand, complete in the strength which God supplies through His Word, without leaning so particularly, as heretofore, upon any earthly prop.

*Continued in next issue.*

Our lives are songs; God writes the words,  
And we set them to music at pleasure;  
And the song grows glad, or sweet, or sad,  
As we choose to fashion the measure.

We must write the music, whatever the song,  
Whatever its rhyme or meter;  
And if it is sad, we can make it glad,  
Or if sweet, we can make it sweeter.

## **A TIMELY SUGGESTION FOR CAREFUL CONSIDERATION**

The terrible calamity in the form of an earthquake that has so recently afflicted the country of Japan, causing untold loss of human life and property, goes down in history as the worst and most disastrous of its kind that has ever befallen our race. How evident it is that we are still living under the old order of things—under the reign of sin and death; that the entire groaning creation still waits the time when the great Life-giver shall stand forth and exercise "all power in heaven and in earth" that has been invested in Him, and once more command the raging elements to be in subjection to His power and authority.

Only from the standpoint of the Divine Plan of the Ages can we understand the reason why such tragic occurrences as earthquakes, violent storms, etc., are permitted. Back of all the world's present suffering is the fact that the sentence of death rests upon all our race; all are under condemnation to death, and various are the means used of the Lord to carry the sentence into effect. Nor does it matter in the ultimate outcome of the Divine Plan which particular form may have been used by Divine Providence to execute the penalty of death. All are on the road to the tomb anyway, except those who now believe and by faith and obedience escape the condemned state in hope of attaining joint-heirship in the Heavenly Kingdom. Not until the great Life-giver shall begin to exercise His mighty healing power will the ravages of death, calamities, accidents, violent

storms, etc., cease. How comforting is the Divine explanation contained in the Word of God that humanity's present sorrows and sufferings are to be overruled so that they will become largely reformatory and educational respecting the exceeding sinfulness of sin and will prepare them for the great trial or Thousand-year Judgment Day, when whosoever will may take of the water of life freely and walk up the Highway of Holiness unto life eternal. Truly, weeping endureth for a night, but, thank God, joy cometh in the morning-the morning of the resurrection; the morning of the Millennial Day; the morning of Christ's reign, when "He shall come to be glorified in His saints and to be admired in all them that believe in that day." No wonder those whose hearts have been touched with a sense of that "love Divine all love excelling" have a burning desire to tell the story of Heavenly Love to others and to comfort all that mourn.

The recent earthquake in Japan proving to be such an enormous tragedy has startled the entire civilized world, and many are in an attitude of wonderment. Again the words of Jesus come home to us with renewed force, when in answer to certain questions by His disciples respecting the signs of the New Dispensation and of the coming of His Kingdom, He stated among other things that "nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; and there shall be great earthquakes in divers places and famines and pestilences; and fearful sights and great signs shall there be from heaven." -- Luke 21:10, 11.

Such as the occurrence of this recent earthquake becomes an especially appropriate occasion for us to call to the attention of all thinking people the words of the prophecy of Jesus, and in the same connection to point out the great Divine remedy for all human ills -the Kingdom of God. Some interesting suggestions have come from some of the brethren as to how we might at this particular time proclaim the truth along this line. As an illustration we submit the following telegram just received from the friends in Toledo, Ohio Toledo, O., Sept. 6, 1923.

"Would it be possible to republish *Earthquakes in Prophecy* tract as reprint from Pastor Russell's pen, in sufficient numbers for general volunteer work? Toledo is willing to be one of a number contributing one hundred dollars for this purpose. Also coming from Pastor Russell's pen such articles would appeal strongly to newspapers at this time.

E. W. V. Kuehn."

We think favorably indeed of the suggestion, with perhaps a little modification. It seems that it might be well to combine portions of the sermon above mentioned, *Earthquakes in Prophecy* with the tract, *Why God Permits Calamities?* and that a more effective production could be made for circulation in this way than by the use of an exact reprint of any one of Brother Russell's sermons. Believing that many of the friends throughout the country would desire to co-operate in the project of getting

this matter printed and would like to join in the distribution of a leaflet containing a comforting message of hope, we are thus placing the suggestion before them for their careful consideration. We are confident that there is a special blessing for all those who engage in such ministry of the Truth, regardless of what the results might be in the way of a response from the people. In this way we would surely be heeding the Master's admonition too, to let our light shine.

As the friends of the various Ecclesias may take up the suggestion and give it careful consideration we shall be pleased to hear from them with regard to what may be their decision, that we may thereby be enabled to discern what would be the Lord's good pleasure, This applies also to individuals who are isolated from association in Classes.

## **DANIEL THE BELOVED OF JEHOVAH**

### **SERIES X**

#### **MEDO-PERSIA'S PREMIER**

*"It pleased Darius to set over the kingdom an hundred and twenty princes, which should be over the whole kingdom; and over these three presidents; of whom Daniel was first: that the princes might give accounts unto them, and the king should have no damage. Then this Daniel was preferred above the presidents and princes, because an excellent spirit was in him; and the king thought to set him over the whole realm." -- Dan. 6: 1-3.*

THE chapter we now consider contains a brief summary of the history of Daniel during the reign of Darius the Median. It closes with a statement that Daniel prospered during the reign of Darius, and also in that of Cyrus the Persian. The chief event related in the chapter is that of Daniel's being cast into a den of lions because of his loyalty to Jehovah in a refusal to conform to a decree of the king which forbade any one to ask a petition of any god or man for thirty days, save of the king himself. The nature of the punishment imposed for disobeying this decree clearly attests that a change of government had taken place, which change is mentioned in the closing verses of the preceding chapter. The capture of Nabonnedus and the death of Belshazzar ended the rule of Babylon, and began that of the Medes and Persians.

It was in accord with Babylonian customs for capital punishment to be usually administered by burning. This was the punishment which was imposed upon the three Hebrew worthies. The Persians were worshipers of fire, and regarded this form of punishment as an abomination. Their custom was to administer death by casting their criminals to savage beasts. This difference in the form of punishment points to a complete change in the laws and administration of government. This change is also seen in the fact that the empire was divided into principalities, each governed by a

head or prince, and over them all were three presidents, one of whom was appointed to be head over the other two. This one was Daniel, who thus stood in his relation to the throne the same as that of a premier or prime minister today.

### **DARIUS THE MEDE TOOK THE KINGDOM**

It will be recalled that the preceding chapter closes with a statement that "Darius the Median took the kingdom, being about threescore and two years old." Historians, critics, and antiquarians all fail to agree in identifying this king with any mentioned by secular historians. Skeptics discard the whole account as fictitious or unreliable, as they do those of the three preceding chapters. The following from Mr. Barnes respecting this matter is in perfect agreement with other reverent students of the Bible

"For anything that appears to the contrary, Daniel may be as credible a historian as Xenophon or Herodotus. No one can demonstrate that the account here is not as worthy of belief as if it appeared in a Greek or Latin classic author. When will the world get over the folly of supposing that what is found in a book claiming to be inspired should be regarded as suspicious until it is confirmed by the authority of some heathen writer; that what is found in any other book should be regarded as necessarily true, however much it may conflict with the testimony of the sacred writers? Viewed in any light, Daniel is as worthy of confidence as any Greek or Latin historian."

With regard to Darius, the sacred writings give us the following facts: Darius the Mede is mentioned in Dan. 6:29, as the immediate predecessor of Cyrus on the throne of Babylon. Belshazzar is the last of the Chaldean or Babylonian kings. The account of the violent death of Belshazzar contained in chapter five, has a direct historical connection with the statement in the beginning of the sixth chapter, that Darius the Mede took the kingdom. Darius the Mede, then must have been the first foreign king after the fall of the Babylonian dynasty, who directly reigned in the city of Babylon. "The chronological point, therefore, where the history of Belshazzar and Darius the Mede coincide, develops itself; the account falls in the time of the downfall of Babylon, through the Medo-Persian army, and this must be the occasion as the connecting fact between the fifth and sixth chapters. According to this, Darius the Mede can be no other person than the Medish king, Cyaxares II, the son and successor of Astyages, and the predecessor of Cyrus in the rule over Babylon." In this connection it is well to observe that these ancient kings were frequently known by more than one name.

It is not necessary, however, to settle this question in order to be benefited by what is taught us in this sacred account. All the facts and lessons contained in the narrative of chapter six remain exactly the same, whether we are able to tell who this Darius the Median is or not. As one has said, "The fact is, we need never be ashamed to say, 'we do not know,' when we

really have so very slight means of knowing anything certain about a matter, as we have in this case." Darius the Mede, at any rate, was the embodiment and representative of the Medo-Persian dominion over Babylon, after it was conquered by Cyrus.

### **THOUGHT TO SET HIM OVER THE WHOLE REALM**

The words of verses 1-3, certainly imply that Darius in some way had become aware of the sterling qualities of character, as also the remarkable wisdom and ability of Daniel both as a man and statesman. It is very natural to suppose, therefore, that the king would desire to avail himself of the services of such a man. Good kings as a rule desire to have good and faithful servants, and even bad men prefer those of better principles than their own. It is most reasonable to suppose that Darius would not be long in discovering that Daniel was equal to his reputation, and he would, therefore, soon place him in a position in which his valuable services would be of worth. Whatever may be the deficiencies of Darius, he certainly exhibited a shrewdness when he placed Daniel in a position of trust in connection with administering the affairs of state. He was first made "the chief of the three presidents over all the other princes and principalities into which the realm was divided"; and the narrative further implies that the king was well pleased with the services of Daniel and states that he "thought to set him over the whole realm."

The whole trend of history, political, religious, and social, has demonstrated over and over again that a man occupying so prominent a position, administering the affairs of government with strict exactness and with freedom from bias, thoroughly honest, not tolerating dishonesty in any one, and with it all continually growing more and more in the esteem and favor of his superior, can hardly escape the envy and hatred of those who are belittled by comparison, and who, possibly because of his standing in the way, are unable to accomplish their own selfish ambitions. As has been said:

"It is a part of the disease that is upon depraved humanity to be dissatisfied and unamiable toward the excellencies and honors of others. It is loath to bear anything above itself. It is the nature of the Devil to be the accuser of the good and of those who are favored for their worth; and all his children have the same familiar trait. They are pained, mortified, chagrined, and full of spiteful resentment, at the superior excellence or prosperity of those above them. It is their delight to humiliate those who happen to be more favored than themselves. If compelled to give credit in one direction, they are exceedingly ingenious in finding some point at which to take it back. Admitting that job, is a just and upright man, they always have a `but' as to the motives in the case, by which to make it appear a mere sordidness after all. And this is particularly true in affairs of public office. It seems to inhere in politicians and aspirants to hate and persecute every man in an official place who honestly tries to do his duty and seeks to carry ethics

into public administrations. Few men go into those arenas but with sinister and selfish aims, and if one in power will not share their plans for selfish aggrandizement, flatter their pride, shut his eyes to their dishonesties and let his conscience go, he is sure to be assailed, to have charges trumped up against him, to have snares and traps set for him, and subtle plans laid to embarrass, disgrace or displace him. The greatest personal enemies readily make common cause to get rid of a man who has the principle and nerve to stand firm against their self-seeking, their -oppressions, their robberies, and their wicked ambitions. Though they may have been loudest in trying to put him into place, they will curse and defame him if they are not made sharers in his successes or cannot use him for their ignoble ends."

### **ENMITY AGAINST GOD'S PEOPLE**

The jealousy against Daniel was doubtless increased by the fact that he was a foreigner, a Jew. This seems to be clear from the words of his enemies to the king when they brought their charges against him. They gave special emphasis upon the nationality of Daniel: "That Daniel, which is of the children of the captivity of Judah, regardeth not thee, O king." It would seem that the prejudices of the Babylonians against foreigners, especially Jews, had not ceased even after a residence among them of seventy years. Notwithstanding the many benefits that had come to the state through the wise administrations of Daniel, he was still looked upon by envious ones as a despised Jew, and was taunted and scoffed at as being only a slave, one of the captives of Nebuchadnezzar. This jealous feeling has continued to exist throughout their long career. A little later in their history, in the days of Ahasuerus, a Persian king, Mordecai was viewed with envy, simply because he was a Jew; and it is very apparent that in modern times the same spirit prevails, and it is well known that political jealousies have been exercised because a great statesman has been of Jewish extraction.

Another matter containing a lesson is suggested in the fact that Darius commended Daniel and showed his appreciation of the services rendered by him by promoting him to an important position in the ministration of the affairs of the empire. The thought of some is that it is better to hold back words of appreciation for services rendered, for the reason that this commendation might cause one to become puffed up or self-exalted, and thus fall away from Christian rectitude. However, to the Lord's people, who are on trial for the development of a character like that of Christ, such commendation should not be injurious. The chief and paramount element of true Christian character is humility and self-abasement, a very striking characteristic of which is that of a deep sense of indebtedness to God for all gifts either natural or acquired; and if one's natural tendencies as a result of the fall are in the direction of loving the praise of men, he will need-nay, will be compelled to be brought into places of trial and testing along these lines, and thus have opportunity to overcome.



There is, however, vast difference between showing or giving expression of appreciation of help received through another's ministrations, and that of giving praise to the person for the qualities, gifts, or talents that are put into use in rendering such service. Those who have come in contact with this test and have overcome, and have come to understand and experience what is the true spirit of the Master, will have learned that they are indebted to God for all they are, and will give all the honor and glory to Him to whom it rightly belongs. Such ones, no matter how great may be the gifts, abilities, or talents possessed, learn to esteem others even better than themselves.

### **JEALOUSY AND ENVY IN CONTRAST WITH NOBILITY**

We may be very sure that the king's expression of appreciation of Daniel's ability and good qualities had no evil effect on him. He had fully learned that all these came from God, and he ever recognized that whatever position of esteem or honor from the viewpoint of the world he might hold, was one of responsibility to God, and was given him in the Divine providence. His whole life shows that he realized that only as he kept himself in close and constant touch with God would he be able to rightly represent the great Jehovah and meet the responsibility in a way pleasing and acceptable to Him. Daniel was not only wise, gifted, and noble in character (and on this account his services were very valuable to the King) but undoubtedly realized and continually acknowledged that all these things came to him in the Divine providence.

It is very evident that it was the king's expressing his appreciation of Daniel's usefulness that increased the envy, jealousy, and malice of the other officers of the realm toward Daniel. The record tells us that this Daniel was preferred *above* the presidents and princes, because an excellent spirit was in him; and the king thought, and doubtless expressed to both Daniel and all these men, that it was his purpose to set him over the whole empire. This action of the king had the effect of only increasing the envy, jealousy, and hatred of these men toward Daniel, and they were no longer able to restrain themselves from doing him injury.

It was at this point that they took concerted action and conspired to bring about his degradation. Their first thought seems to have been to cause him to lose favor with the king, and thus be removed from his office. To this end they set themselves diligently to work, to find if possible some evidence that he was unfaithful in administering the affairs of the kingdom—some act of dishonesty, some abuse of power—anything that would enable them to gain their own personal ends, and remove him out of their way. The sacred narrative informs us that "they could find none occasion nor fault; forasmuch as he was faithful, neither was there any error or fault found in him." Much against their desires, they were obliged to come to the conclusion as expressed in their words, "We shall not find

any occasion against this Daniel, except we find it against him concerning the law of his God."

What a testimony was this! We can scarcely conceive of a commendation accorded to any man, especially a public man, so praiseworthy as these evil plotters against Daniel were compelled to give-particularly when we consider the source from which it came. "It puts the character of Daniel high above all question of reproach, and thus in the midst of a heathen people, at the head of a cabinet of dishonest, envious, and plotting officials, and surrounded with all the temptations which the indulgence of a confiding sovereign threw in his way, he went through the ordeal, as his three friends had gone through the fires of Nebuchadnezzar's furnace, without the singeing of a hair or so much as the smell of burning on his clothes."

This would not mean that Daniel was absolutely perfect. He must have had as deep a conviction of his own unworthiness as any of the great Prophets and Psalmists of Israel. It is undoubtedly a fact that the closer one lives to God, the more will he be overwhelmed, as it were, with a consciousness of defects. What Job, and David, and Isaiah, and Noah felt, must have been constantly present in Daniel's consciousness also. This does not in any sense conflict with the thought that he always preserved a conscience void of offense before his God. "Happy indeed is the man who lives in such a way that no fault can be found with him, except that he does what his God commands! Such was Daniel's case; his obedience and prayers obtained for him the help of God, which enabled his natural 'talents' to accomplish these wonders."

### **THE CONSPIRACY TO MURDER DANIEL**

Not being able to find anything against him in connection with his administration of public affairs, Daniel's maligners were not held back from their evil purpose, but instead, their determination to work his destruction only increased. They assembled together in secret. They consulted with one another what should be done next; and finally they concocted a plot that they felt sure would accomplish their purpose. They were all thoroughly convinced that it would be useless to try to influence the king against his prime-minister. An effort in this direction they evidently realized could result only in failure and react to their own injury. On this account they determined not to mention Daniel's name to the king, to leave him seemingly entirely out of their proceedings. They reasoned that their plot to destroy Daniel would be better accomplished by an appeal to the king's love for self-glory and honor; and when they had finished their wicked plot, with all haste they sought an interview with the unsuspecting monarch, and being granted one, they addressed him as follows

"King Darius, live for ever. All the presidents of the kingdom, the governors, and the princes, the counselors, and the captains, have

consulted together to establish a royal statute, and to make a firm decree, that whosoever shall ask a petition of any god or man for thirty days, save of thee, O king, he shall be cast into the den of lions. Now, O king, establish the decree, and sign the writing, that it be not changed, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which altereth not."

To some the question will most naturally come, How could such a body of men possibly expect of the king that he would put his signature to such a decree? To understand how this could be possible it will be necessary that we become acquainted with heathen customs, particularly those of the Persians; and furthermore that we know something of the superstitious reverence that was accorded to kings in that country. In ancient times it was not an uncommon thing for heathen kings to be accorded Divine honors. The custom of placing the kings among the gods by the Romans in the early centuries of the Christian era is well known to those acquainted with Roman history. The exaggerative language employed by the Latin poets respecting the exalted position of the emperors shows this; and especially as we become familiar with the records of the many Christians who suffered martyrdom because they would not offer sacrifice to the emperor, do we see this custom prevailing. Pusey, in his work on Daniel, is authority for saying that the ancient Persians "looked upon their kings as the representatives of Ormuzd\* and as such paid him Divine honor." Sometimes the king was called "the progeny of the gods," or even "a god." Another has said: "And when once the apotheosis had been allowed, it would only be a very short step further to address prayer to the deified man. There seems to be a special reason why such should have been the case with regard to Darius. Being a Mede, it was necessary that on ascending a throne which owed allegiance to Persia, he would in every way give public proof of his willingness to conform to all Persian religious customs. Accordingly, when the deputation arrived, there was nothing to make him suspicious or to startle him in the measure which they proposed that he should enact. And perhaps the people of Babylon were as little disturbed by the decree as was the king himself, for it is highly probable that the deification of the king was not unknown among the Babylonians. The Assyrians certainly had a custom not far removed from the apotheosis of the reigning sovereign." -Deane, *Daniel and His Times*.

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\*The supreme deity of ancient Persians.

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### **WON BY FLATTERY**

Mr. Barnes, who has given a great deal of attention in his *Notes On Daniel* to these seemingly (when viewed from the modern standpoint) absurd customs, has given several reasons in explanation of what may have influenced the king to yield to his crafty counselors to issue such a decree. He says, "The law proposed was in a high degree flattering to the

king, and he may have been ready at once to sign a decree which for the time gave him a supremacy over gods and men. If Alexander the Great desired to be adored as a god, then it is not improbable that a proud and weak Persian monarch would be willing to receive a similar tribute . . . . It may have occurred to him, or may have been suggested, that this was an effectual way to test the readiness of his subjects to obey and honor him. Some such test, it may have been urged, was not improper, and this would determine what was the spirit of obedience as well as any other. More probable, however, it may have been represented that there was some danger of insubordination or some conspiracy among the people, and that it was necessary that the sovereign should have some mandate, which would at once and effectually quell it . . . . The haste and earnestness with which they urged their request would rather seem to imply that there was a representation that some *sudden* occasion had arisen which made the enactment of such a statute proper. Or, the king may have been in the habit of signing the decrees proposed by his counselors with little hesitation, and lost in ease and sensuality, and perceiving only that this proposed law was flattering to himself, and not deliberating on what might be its possible result, he may have signed it at once."

If any are disposed, even with the foregoing explanations, to think that a scheme involving the acceptance of such blasphemous honors by a heathen king would be unreasonable to believe, all that is needed by such is to call to mind that in so short a time ago as 1870, a great council of professed Christian dignitaries, in a church that claims to be the true and only Church of the living God on earth, were unanimous in solemnly declaring to the whole world that a feeble old man residing in the city of Rome possessed the attribute of Divine infallibility. And the Pope with all the solemnity associated with such an occasion received the honor. "And," says an eminent writer, "if the Pope of Rome is pleased to accept and appropriate such absurd honors in the name of the sublimest truth given for human enlightenment, we need not be surprised that these proposals of Medo-Persia's presidents, -- princes, counselors, and captains proved acceptable to the vain -- glorious *heathen* monarch, who then occupied the Medo-Persian throne."

We will not be surprised then to learn that the evil plot of these men succeeded. The easily flattered king was induced to establish the decree by affixing to it his signature; and it became, like other laws of the Medes and Persians, changeless. The words of his counselors were, "Now, O king, establish the decree, and sign the writing, that it be not changed, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which altereth not." The writing was signed; the proclamation was made; and it would seem that the king had not the slightest suspicion as to what was the real object of these men in getting him to enact such a law. The avowed purpose of the decree was to accord honor and allege rightful glory to the king; the real purpose, however, was for the "murder of the man who, stood next to him, and who had in him more of the Divine than all the kings, presidents, and

princes of Media and Persia put together. It had a heathen lie for its basis; it was a huge hypocrisy in its suggestion; and it was nothing but a scheme of cold -blooded murder to destroy the greatest, best, and purest man in the kingdom" -indeed, one who was specially singled out by the Great Jehovah Himself, as a "man greatly beloved" (Dan. 10:11); one who is mentioned by the great God as having special power because of his piety, to prevail with Him in prayer. -- Ezek. 14:14, 20.

Again we quote from Mr. Barnes, one of the *most practical* Christian writers, who has drawn several pointed and profitable lessons from this chapter

"We have [in ver. 1-g] an instance of what often occurs in the world -- of *envy* on account of the excellency of others, and of the honors which they obtain by their talent and their worth. Nothing is more frequent than such envy, and nothing more common, as a consequence, than a determination to degrade those who are the subjects of it. Envy always seeks in some way to humble and mortify those who are distinguished. It is the pain, mortification, chagrin, and regret which we have at their superior excellence or prosperity, and this prompts us to bring them down to our own level, or below it; to calumniate their characters; to hinder their prosperity; to embarrass them in their plans; to take up and circulate rumors to their disadvantage; to magnify their faults, or to fasten upon them the suspicion of crime. In the instance before us, we see the effect in a most guilty conspiracy against a man of incorruptible character; a man full in the confidence of his sovereign; a man evidently the friend of virtue and of God."

### **"NO OCCASION AGAINST THIS DANIEL"**

Commenting on Ver. 4-9, this same writer says we have "a striking illustration of the nature and the evils of a *conspiracy* to ruin others. The plan here was deliberately formed to ruin Daniel -- the best man in the realm -- a man against whom no charge of guilt could be alleged, who had done the conspirators no wrong; who had rendered himself in no way amenable to the laws. A conspiracy is a combination of men for evil purpose; an agreement between two or more persons to commit some crime in concert, usually treason, or an insurrection against a government or state. In this case it was a plot growing wholly out of envy or jealousy; a concerted agreement to ruin a good man, where no wrong had been done, or could be pretended, and no crime had been committed. The essential things in this conspiracy, as in all other cases of conspiracy, were two: (a) that the purpose was *evil*; and (b) that it was to be accomplished by the combined influence of *numbers*. The means on which they relied, or the grounds of calculation on the success of their plot, were the following: (1) that they could calculate on the unwavering integrity of Daniel-on his firm and faithful adherence to the principles of his religion in all circumstances, and in ail times of temptation and trial; and (2) that

they could induce the king to pass a law, irrevocable from the nature of the case, which Daniel would be certain to violate, and to the penalty of which, therefore, he would be certainly exposed. Now in this purpose there was every element of iniquity, and the grossest conceivable wrong. There were combined all the evils of envy and malice; of perverting and abusing their influence over the king; of secrecy in taking advantage of one who did not suspect any such design; and of involving the king himself in the necessity of exposing the best man in his realm, and the highest officer of state, to the certain danger of death. The result, however, showed, as is often the case, that the evil recoiled on themselves, and that the very calamity overwhelmed them and their families which they had designed for another."

Commenting on the words, "We shall not find any occasion against this Daniel, except we find it against him concerning the law of his God," we have this writer saying: "We have a striking instance of what often occurs, and what should always occur among the friends of religion, that no occasion can be found against them except in regard to the law of their God-on the score of their religion. Daniel was known to be upright. His character for integrity was above suspicion. It was certain that there was no hope of bringing any charge against him that would lie, for any want of uprightness or honesty; for any failure in the discharge of his duties of his office; for any malversation in administering the affairs of the government; for any embezzlement of public funds, or of any act of injustice toward his fellowmen. It was certain that his character was irreproachable on all these points; and it was equally certain that he did and would maintain unwavering fidelity in the duties of religion. Whatever consequences might follow from it, it was clear that they could calculate on his maintaining with faithfulness the duties of piety. Whatever plot, therefore, could be formed against him on the basis of either his moral integrity, or his piety, it was certain would be successful. But there was no hope in regard to the former, for no law could have been carried prohibiting his doing what was right on the subject of morals. The only hope, therefore, was in respect to his religion; and the main idea of their plot-the thing that constituted the basis of their plan was, *that it was certain that Daniel would maintain his fidelity to his God irrespective of any consequences whatever*. This certainly ought to exist in regard to every good man; every man professing religion. His character ought to be so well understood; his piety ought to be so firm, unwavering, and consistent, that it would be calculated on just as certainly as we calculate on the stability of the laws of nature, that it will be found faithful to his religious duties and obligations. There are such men, and the character of every man *should* be such. Then indeed we should know what to depend on in the world; then religion would be respected as it should."