

VIEWS FROM THE WATCH TOWER

WILL THE WELSH REVIVAL EXTEND?

Many earnest souls all over "Christendom" are asking this question and hoping that the answer in the affirmative may prove true. Conditions in Great Britain favor its spread. Experience shows that a time of adversity, when poverty humbles the hearts of the masses is more favorable to religious revivals than are prosperous times.

It is stated on good authority that a million and a quarter (1,250,000) of the British people are out of work and on the verge of starvation: times are depressed and there is no work for them, we are told. Collections for their aid—to barely keep them alive—are being taken up in Great Britain and in Canada. People in that condition incline to look to the Creator. This, too, gives us the thought that the great "time of trouble such as was not since there was a nation" (in which this age will terminate and the Millennial age begin) will be the precursor of the mightiest and best revival that the world has ever known. As the Scriptures declare: "When the judgments of the Lord are abroad in the earth the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness."

The Welsh revival commenced in a little country church in Cardiganshire, and at once spread through the Glamorgan-shire coal fields—a region noted we are told for its irreligion. Editor Stead thus describes it:—

"The most remarkable thing about the meetings which I attended was the extent to which they were absolutely without any human direction or leadership. 'We must obey the Spirit,' is the watchword of Evan Roberts and he is as obedient as the humblest of his followers. The meetings open—after any amount of preliminary singing, while the congregation is assembling—by the reading of a chapter or a psalm. Then it is go as you please for two hours or more.

"And the amazing thing is that it does go and does not get entangled in what might seem to be inevitable confusion. Three-fourths of the meeting consists of singing. No one uses a hymn book. No one gives out a hymn. The last person to control the meeting in any way is Mr. Evan Roberts. People pray and sing and give testimony; exhort as the spirit moves them. As a study of the psychology of crowds I have seen nothing like it. You feel that the thousand or fifteen hundred persons before you have become merged into one myriad-headed, but single-souled personality.

"Large numbers of 'sudden conversions' are reported, and men of careless or evil lives stand up and 'testify' to their faith in Christ. In some places the public houses are almost deserted, the police magistrates find their work materially reduced, and colliery managers are surprised at the steadier work and the absence of the accustomed blasphemies from the pit galleries. In not a few cases football matches, which in Wales not less than in many regions of England have been tainted by gambling and brutality, have been abandoned because the members of the teams were ashamed of their 'former conversation.' Even if we allowed for possible exaggeration by sensational journalists, and if we take into account the emotional nature which distinguishes the Welsh even more, perhaps, than the Celts of other lands, there can be no doubt that an extraordinary wave of religious enthusiasm is rushing over the principality and for the time, at all events, is changing the lives of thousands of its inhabitants."

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Other accounts which reach us seem to indicate a considerable degree of fanaticism and hysterics associated with the movement, and the suggestion has even been offered that it is the work of the evil spirits operating as they have done in the "holy rollers" and others who in the name of religion and the holy Spirit have caricatured these. However, we have seen no accounts that would seem to justify the latter view. It will nevertheless be well for us to watch the movement and thus "try the spirits, whether they be of God." One of the favorable features is that it has but few marks of Babylon and is carried on by the laity, rather than by the clergy.

WHAT A FAMOUS PREACHER SEES

Rev. H. W. Thomas, D. D., formerly pastor of the People's church, now a resident of Florida, reached Chicago recently to conduct a funeral service. He remarked:—

"My travels through the country, and my study of the trend of modern movements, show me that within the lifetime of the present younger generation three former dreams of mine will work into eventualities. World peace will shortly be realized, industrial education will rapidly develop, and the unification of religion is but a matter of time. The religion of Lyman Abbott will soon be general and attract the masses to worship."

Hear, O. "Christendom," the voice of another of thy famous prophets!—another of thy wise men! But know assuredly the word of the Lord, "The wisdom of thy wise men has perished, the understanding of thy prudent men vanished."—Isa. 29:14.

The gentleman has dreamed of a "world peace" without the second coming of our Lord and the realization of his prayer—"Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth even as it is done in heaven." His dream will never be realized, but the Lord's promise will be fulfilled.

He dreams of industrial education: that we are having and will have with very different results from what he dreams. The industrial classes are indeed being educated, but not in the school of Christ; and the Bible clearly shows that they will soon be learned in all the branches of self-defence and aggression which ere long will sweep peace from the earth and involve the world in social chaos.

He dreams of a unification of religion and may live to see a unification of sects "bound in bundles for the great day of trouble."—Matt. 13:30.

He dreams of the atheistic or pantheistic views of Dr. Abbott attracting the masses, and will find that such a rejection of the Word of God has more attraction for the clergy than for the masses, who more generally will be repelled by such a cutting of all anchorage of faith within the veil.

WHAT REV. CARTER, D. D., THINKS

Rev. Carter, not holding fast the Scriptures, has made shipwreck of his faith; but we are glad to see that his eyes are open to at least some of the inconsistencies of the creed he is still attached to. Indeed it evidently was these very errors that drove him to his present position. His wrong view of the Bible was induced by his faith that the Westminster Confession was a truthful representation of its teachings. This is the tendency of errors, and now God's people must be helped out of them—to see the true teachings of God's Word.

A few of Dr. Carter's presentations we quote below, with the comment that the Bible is in harmony with common sense and that it is the creeds that are absurd:

"I was brought up to believe that all the heathen and, in fact, by far the greater portion of all the dead generations, were consigned to a little hell of fire and brimstone, and forever and ever. How any kindly disposed man could really believe that and have another happy moment I fail to see. If the consciousness that he had escaped himself would be any consolation, then I am sorry for him.

"The Westminster Confession still remains the creed of the Presbyterian church. If an effort were made to depose it from its place there would be vigorous opposition. The men who oppose the revision would oppose the retiring of the creed. The confession remaining, with it remains this terrible teaching: That for the single sin of Adam the whole race of man—remember, millions upon millions, countless millions—were condemned by God to eternal torment, and that he intervened by His election to save certain ones from this awful fate. I do not believe that this is a true statement of the facts. I think that men in general do not believe that this is a true statement of the facts. I think that nobody does, unless he has been screwed up to it, or down to it, by a stiff theological training. I have unbounded confidence in the greatness and goodness of God, but if any man could persuade me that this is the true statement of God's management of the human race I should lose my faith in God. I think such a statement makes atheists, and how delightful it is that no word of Christ's ever hints at any such terrible fact. If this be so, it is a monstrous blunder to put this as the very foundation teaching of Christianity.

"I hear men say that they are glad to live today because of the great modern improvements, schools, libraries, telegraphs and such like. I am glad to live today because our children are not taught this fire and brimstone teaching. The relief is incalculable. Neither does any sensible man believe that he can do wrong and escape the inevitable consequence. 'Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.' is true forever. Such truths time has no effect upon. They belong to eternity. But we are practically held, in the Presbyterian church, to the endless torment theory, though the fire and brimstone part has been dropped out. If we are allowed in the Presbyterian church, to hold conditional immortality, or any other reasonable modification of the endless torment theory, then I wish some one would say so. No one has as yet, and I fear the man would find himself in trouble who would rise in presbytery and say so.

"A Presbyterian minister told me that some one put into

the hands of the minister's daughter a catechism to learn. She came running to her father and flung the book upon the floor crying: 'I hate the wicked book.' 'Why, Susie, you don't hate the catechism?' 'Yes, I do. Hear what it says: "What are you by nature?" "I am an enemy of God, a child of Satan and an heir of hell," and it's a lie.' Fortunately the minister was a man before he was a minister. So he folded his arms and said; "No, my daughter, you are not that."

AN UNCERTAIN COMPLIMENT

"When Dr. Abbott was delivering his course of lectures on the Old Testament in Plymouth church and printing them

in "The Brooklyn Eagle," the late Bishop John F. Hurst paid the writer a visit. When asked what he thought of the lecturer and the lectures, the good Bishop said: 'What do I think of Dr. Abbott and his lectures? Why, who ever knew an Abbott that had any conception of logic or logical method, or of science or scientific method, or of anything but rhetoric? I have known Lyman Abbott many a time to become hypnotized by his own verbosity and to go kiting off into the regions of speculation and then enter his study and write it all down and send it out to the world as if it were God's truth!'—*Bible Student*.

"DAILY HEAVENLY MANNA"

This little book of 200 pages is, we feel sure, just the thing every WATCH TOWER reader will want to have on his breakfast table. It contains a Scripture text for each day of the year, and following it twelve to fifteen lines of comment by Brother Russell—pithy selections from WATCH TOWER articles, with references, so that you can turn and read further should you so desire. The selections were made by Sister

G. W. Seibert and show her particularity and carefulness. They will last indefinitely, being without year date. At the Bible House breakfast table we first read the text, ask for questions on it and discuss it, and then read the TOWER extract as the closing comment.

Wholesale prices to TOWER readers: 20c cloth bound, 60c leather bound—postage included.

BIBLE CHRONOLOGY AND THE ARCHAEOLOGISTS

Arguing against the theory of the "Higher Critics," that the Bible Chronology is thousands of years shorter than it should be, Rev. W. F. McCauley says:

The genealogies of the Hebrews taken in connection with occasional definite dates, enable us to determine with a good deal of accuracy the length of various periods. The suggestion that these genealogies are not always those of father and son in direct descent, but of ancestor and descendant immediate or remote, is contrary to the ascertained method of Hebrew genealogical record as shown by examples where we know that immediate succession is meant. The occasional omission of names, through copyist's errors, or for other reasons, could not affect the result more than a few hundred years at most, nor alter the fact that the word "begat" bears no other generic meaning than that of direct generation.

The theory that dynasties are intended by the names of individuals involves us in the absurdity of translating, "And the dynasty Arphaxad lived five and thirty years, and begat the dynasty Salah. And the dynasty Arphaxad lived after it begat the dynasty Salah four hundred and three years, and begat male and female dynasties." Equally untenable is the idea that Abraham and Isaac were but the personifications of tribal histories, as though we should read that the tribe Isaac went out to meditate in the field at the eventide, and the tribe Rebecca alighted from her camel and put a veil over her face, and was brought by the tribe Isaac into the tent of the tribe Sarah. Would not a people gifted in producing such personifications observe also the incongruities of these statements? Evidently they understood the language to apply to individuals.

There can be no question but that the early Hebrew records were intended to be a circumstantial account of the beginnings of human history. The tenth chapter of Genesis is the great ethnological register of the world, showing that the Hebrew writers had the necessary data and the true historians' interest in the facts. The very persons are named by whom the isles of the Gentiles were divided. Gomer is mentioned, whose radical letters GMR or KMR we find used in Cymmerians, and by metathesis, in Crimea and Germans. Ashkenaz, by metathesis, Aksenaz, may be the name of the country lying upon the Black Sea, which the Greeks called 'axenos, euphemized into 'euxeinos, or Euxine. And Javan equals Iwan and the Ionians, or Greeks; not to speak of probable references to the Scythians, Medes, Thracians, Celts, Armenians, Etruscans, and others. These are Japhethites; and the record of the Hamites and Shemites is far more extended.

The statement is made that in the days of Peleg the earth was divided. Peleg was born 101 years after the Flood, and died 340 years after. The confusion of tongues, leading to the division of the earth, therefore, occurred in his lifetime. That the early historian believed he knew the time when this division of the earth took place is shown by his associating it with this particular person. The rise of Babylonia is also clearly described. Nimrod, a Hamite, becomes a mighty hunter before Jehovah, and so ingratiates himself into the good will of the people by protecting them from the wild beasts that had accumulated in large numbers since the Deluge, that he becomes their leader in governmental affairs, and builds cities. The very names of these cities are given: Babel, Erech, Accad, and Calneh, the latter probably identical with the city now called variously Neffer, Nippur, and Nuffar.

The conclusion of archaeologists that the latter city dates back to the earliest age corroborates the fact that the Hebrew Scriptures do describe the beginnings of history; and if their accounts of the remotest facts are definite and correct, why distrust their chronology?

That Mineveh and its neighboring cities were founded after the Babylonian towns, is also set forth in the Bible. The hunting instinct of Nimrod or of his descendants led to the making of new conquests from the wilds of nature and the founding of outposts of civilization far beyond the plain or Shinar. The subjugator of beasts and men and refractory nature was, according to the Revised Version, the founder of Assyria as well as of Babylonia; and this early overflowing of the population has an important bearing upon the subject of chronology.

BABEL AND ITS RESULTS

The historicity of the confusion of tongues in corroborated by the Borsippa inscription of Nebuchadnezzar, and elaborated by the tradition that the work was stopped by lightning from heaven—a strong proof for those who accept as true whatever comes from a heathen source, however much they may deny Bible authority.

It is not necessary to suppose that every individual of the race joined in the migration from the vicinity of Ararat to Shinar. There is no evidence that Noah and Shem assisted in the building of Babel. Indeed, there is strong probability that the ancient Shemites did not suffer from the confusion of tongues as much as others. The Semitic tongues preserve to this day their general characteristics, as though symmetrically established in a remote age; but the jargon of Hamitic, or Turanian, tongues gives evidence of having originated in some such catastrophe as that of Babel. The Hebrews, with a constant language, preserved the true records, but the Hamites, losing their mother tongue, lost also the connected narrative of events and involved their history in myth and fable, producing also polytheism and idolatry.

EARLY POPULATIONS

The claim that the dates of the Hebrew Bible do not give sufficient time between the Flood and Abraham for the rise of the great nations existent at the time of that patriarch, is based upon an assumption of the greatness of those nations. Resen is the only one of the ancient cities recorded as great at the time of the writing of Genesis. Nippur, where excavations have recently been made, was not a vast city. Its area within the walls, exclusive of its educational and religious section, seems to have included only 90 to 100 acres. The fact that Abram with 318 of his servants defeated the army of Chedorlaomer and the kings who were with him, and chased them from Dan to Hobah (or "hiding place"), probably some forty miles, or perhaps further, if Dan in Gilead is meant, recovering Lot and his goods, with the women and people,—does not indicate that Chedorlaomer's foray was any more serious than the incursion of a marauding band of Indians upon frontier settlements. Enough people could come into existence in 150 years to attempt the building of the Tower of Babel; and it is reasonable to suppose that in 427 years, at the time of the call of Abram, the world might have had a population of 2,000,000 at least. If we assign 500,000 of these to Egypt, and an equal number each to Babylonia and Assyria, there would remain another half million for the

beginnings of other nations. If half the inhabitants of the ancient world were gathered in cities, five cities of 50,000 might have risen in each of the three leading monarchies, and five more of equal size among the scattered populations of other nations, leaving still a million for rural districts.

The race began in the new world where it left off in the old. Tubal-cain had learned to work in brass and iron and Jubal to play upon the harp and organ. When the people journeyed from the hill country near Ararat they went west to Shinar, and finding there a country favorable for agricultural development, the building of a capital commended itself to them as an important step. There the lust of world-power found its first post-diluvian expression, of which Babylon became the symbol to this day, typifying the "Babylon the Great" of Revelation. After the confusion of tongues, the people still were Babel builders, and began to erect other works. When, by conquest, a city became a ruined heap, there they built again, kings making frequent use of the material of their predecessors. "Hundred-gated Thebes" seems to belong to an early Egyptian period, and Menes, the first king is credited with founding Memphis and building a dyke still to be traced. His son wrote a work on astronomy, and his grandson built a pyramid at Sakkara 394 feet square and 196 feet high. In the fourth dynasty Cheops (?) erected the great pyramid of Ghizeh; and in the fifth, the Book of Egyptian Wisdom was composed, whose contents resemble in style the Proverbs of Solomon. Primitive man was not only a capable being but possessed sufficient literary training to enable him to record his deeds in written characters. The highest form of literary ability, as well as the highest regard for exact and truthful statement, we find among the theistic Hebrews.

RAPIDITY OF CHANGE

Babylonia and Chaldea are studded with mounds from north to south. Mr. Layard found the whole country between the Tigris and the Khabour in upper Mesopotamia covered with mounds, the remnants of early Assyrian cities. Hilprecht says that at the time of Ur-Nina, Babylonia was divided into a number of petty states, and that first one and then another exercised hegemony over the rest. Frequent changes in government and population would thus be a natural result, and cities would be overthrown by conquest, and new ones rise in their places, with astonishing rapidity. Archaeologists follow a scientific method, based upon the idea of slow processes, and overwhelm us with dissertations upon a remote past lost in the grey mist of fable.

Rapid change is to be looked for in the early days of the race, when customs were plastic, and when great migrations like that of the Israelites from Egypt were possible. To predicate slowness of change of a formative period, is contrary to natural order. The startling conquests of the old world-rulers is proof of the mobile conditions that then existed. The world had in it the hot blood of youth, that has been cooling with age.

The great antiquity claimed by heathen nations is no doubt due to their desire to trace their descent from the gods, and to appear the first of nations; but the Hebrews, having in their possession the ethnological register of the world, that showed all mankind to be of a common origin, and God to be their Creator, had no such motive, and adhered to the facts as laid down in the records. Exaggerated heathen chronologies are not relieved of oriental extravagance by being placed on monuments, or clay or alabaster tablets. Nor are the inscriptions otherwise always credible. For two hundred years after the Israelitish king Omri, Assyrian inscriptions speak of Canaan as the "land of Omri" and the "land of the house of Omri," and Jehu is referred to as the "son of Omri," though of another dynasty. We might no doubt go through the whole polytheistic polyglot of heathen tongues without finding anything reliable on which to predicate their origin. So prevalent is this tendency to fabulousness among them that some critics are misled into thinking that the origin of every nation is involved in fable, that of the Hebrews along with the rest.

The Egyptian priests mentioned to Herodotus but two kings of historic note, the second of whom had not been dead 900 years when the historian visited that country. But they had a papyrus roll containing the names of 330 monarchs, who they said were of no importance. Many of these kinglets were perhaps contemporaneous, ruling over different parts of the country simultaneously, yet the priests filled up this space with 341 generations lasting for 10,000 years. They also said that twice since Egypt was a monarchy the sun had risen where it sets and set where it rises!

It seems that the Egyptians had no era from which to date events; and, notwithstanding the frequent oriental custom of a king associating his son with him on his throne in the latter

years of his reign, it seems that they did not distinguish between a sole and a joint reign. It is said that, save in a few instances, the Egyptians were without the chronological idea. Rawlinson says that it was the unanimous confession of Egyptologists that chronology upon the monuments was almost non-existent. Even Baron Bunsen says that chronology can not be elicited from the Egyptians; and he was obliged to reduce the accession of Menes, the first king, from his former estimate of 3623 to 3059 B. C. Mariette, Director of Conservation of Egyptian Antiquities, says that the Egyptians never had any chronology at all. Even if they had, it would be difficult to compute the gaps of centuries, the times of convulsion or dismemberment, of weakness and internal or external troubles, and of obscure history of kings.

Berosus, the chronicler of Chaldea, wrote about 260 B. C. Of his writings, only some fragments are extant, and these give enormous distortions of facts, condemning Chaldean sources of information and by implication confirming the Hebrew Scriptures. The remark of De Wette, that where tradition leaves blanks, imagination steps in and fills them up, is exemplified in the chronological scheme of Berosus; which is: Ten kings reign 432,000 years; eighty-six kings, 33,080 (or 33,091); eight Median kings, 224; and so on down to Pul, or Tiglath-pileser, who came to the throne 745 B. C. The whole historical period of Berosus reaches back only to about 2245 B. C.—well within the period of Hebrew chronology. The ten mythical kings, who reign an average of over 43,000 years each, correspond with the ten Hebrew patriarchs before the Flood, whom Chaldean tradition turned into fabulous characters; and the second list of kings, whose reign averaged less than four hundred years, corroborates the Hebrew account of the gradual shortening of human life subsequent to the Deluge. Comparing the modest and rational Hebrew chronology with the extravagant claims of other oriental nations, who for one moment could regard even the historical records of Chaldea as of equal credibility with those of the Hebrews?

Sargon I took pains to have the sacred books of the earlier Accadians translated, and thus preserved the Hamite, or so-called Chaldean, tradition of the Deluge, which is part of an epic poem, "The Adventures of Izdhubar"; but Sargon instead of being placed at 3800 B. C. is assigned by another authority to a period nearly 2000 years later. Hammurabi, of whose code we have heard lately, may possibly belong in the sixteenth century before Christ instead of being contemporaneous with, or previous to, Abraham. It was this king who overran the whole country down to the Persian Gulf, and called himself king of Sumir and Accad and the four nations. He was a builder and restorer of temples, palaces, and cities. He made Babylon his capital, and added to the magnificence of the worship of Bel, thus raising that idol to the chief position in the Babylonish religious system. He built the royal canal, one of the greatest in Babylonian territory. Sargon I. before him had ruled from the Persian Gulf to the Mediterranean Sea, but the country broke up into various states, affording a field for a new conqueror. This illustrates the tendencies of the times—frequent changes and conquests, the enslavement of nations, the grinding into ruin, and building again. The Book of Judges and the captivities of Israel throw additional light upon the storm-swept eras of antiquity.

The Chinese carry back the history of the world for several hundred thousand years, but those who regard their literature most favorably believe that authentic accounts go back but to the twenty-second century B. C. and only respectable traditions carry back the history four centuries earlier. One of the native accounts places Yao at the beginning of their historic records. He ascended the throne 2357 B. C. A great deluge occurred in his reign. Our date for the Noachian deluge is 2348 B. C., within the reign of Yao. His son and successor was Shum, which recalls the name of Shem. Another source of information makes Fohi, or Fuh-hi, to be the same as Yao, and makes him reign after the Flood to the very year that Noah died; while his successor reigns 146 years after him, to within a few years of the death of Shem. The correspondence between these Chinese dates and Ussher's chronology is remarkable, and amounts to much more than mere coincidence. That the Chinese preserve some reminiscences of the beginning of human history, is partly confirmed by the fact that their word-symbol for "cove" is a woman under a tree—recalling the temptation in Eden.

SCIENTIFIC DATES TOO LONG

In addition to all these facts and inferences, is the further consideration that, if the civilizations of Egypt and Babylonia existed for 7000 years or more before Christ, those countries ought to have overflowed and carried their civilizations to every part of Europe, Asia, and Africa. We can not think of

such teeming populations as must in that case have existed as being confined to the narrow limits to which every argument shows that they were confined. It was not long, as we have seen, till Babylonia did flow into Assyria. This tendency ought to have spread civilization throughout the whole Eastern Hemisphere thousands of years before Christ, had there been such extensive lapses of time. If the dates of our Hebrew Bible are too short to account for all the changes traced, the dates of the archaeologists are too long. A possible solution of the question may be in the suggestion that some of the remains assigned to post-diluvian time may in fact be antediluvian.

ANCIENT WRITING

The enormous difficulty of deciphering the inscriptions may well cause us to pause before accepting the translations as final. There are three kinds of cuneiform inscriptions. The Persian is the simplest, the Scythian more difficult, and the Assyrian, or Babylonian, the most complicated of all. One group of wedge-shaped characters may represent the noun "country" and the verb "to take"; it may also stand for the syllables *mat lat, sat, kur, nat*. This difference in reading depends upon whether the character is an ideograph or a phonograph—that is, whether it represents an idea or is used in the spelling of a word without reference to its inherent meaning. Older than the cuneiform, we find such a language as that stamped upon bricks of Ur of the Chaldees which only three scholars in the United States can read. It may be seriously questioned whether the cuneiform is not less ancient than has been supposed. The fact that the monumental cuneiform always runs from the left to right would indicate that it is comparatively modern. In general, the Semitic races wrote from right to left, and the Aryan from left to right. The Assyrians did have a writing that ran the other way, but the cuneiform seems to have been reserved for monumental purposes, as representing their idea of the best development of the art—a modern method superseding the ancient. The hundreds of characters in the Assyrian cuneiform and "the great apparent laxity in the use of letters and the grammar" make the matter of decipherment one of difficulty. The liability to error in deciphering ancient inscriptions is shown in the mistake of the learned Professor Delitzsch, who claimed that Yahveh was Babylonian because he found it combined with a Babylonian proper name, *Yahveh-ilu*, which he translated, "Yahveh is God"; but it has since been proved that the word should be read *Yapi-ilu*. The theory that Hebrew monotheism developed from a Babylonian polytheism may receive a needed check by the discovery of this error. Even if scholarship were equal to the task of making infallible translations, we would still have to make allowance for the oriental tendency to extravagance in footing up the chronologies.

HILPRECHT'S VIEWS

Professor Hilprecht's explorations at Nippur were conducted almost entirely by Peters and Haynes, though the professor translated the inscriptions. He was on the ground eleven weeks at one time, and ten at another, and devotes considerable space in his recent book to criticisms of Haynes and Peters, the latter of whom had taken the chief initiative in the explorations. However, Professor Hilprecht says that he had ignored personal attacks, and spoke only of "fundamental differences on important technical and scientific questions." While such differences exist among the savants, the rest of humanity may well wait for more light before accepting conclusions. You may look in vain in Hilprecht's book for an explanation of the method by which he arrives at his chronological deductions, unless it be the assumption of a working hypothesis. A sentence, in which he says that it doubtless took centuries for a certain people to subjugate another, reveals the general method—"doubtless." He found above Naram-Sin's pavement thirty-six feet of accumulations, supposed to represent more than four thousand years of Babylonian history. Below the pavement were thirty-one feet, representing another period—how long? He says: "I do not hesitate, therefore, to date the founding of the temple of Bel and the first settlement of Nippur somewhere between 6000 and 7000 B. C., possibly even earlier." His method seems to be well comprehended by these two principles—"doubtless," and "I do not hesitate." It is said that to call Hilprecht, as some fulsome magazine writers do, the "foremost authority on cuneiform paleography," is some way from the truth, as he is yet too young a scholar to have surpassed certain others, among them his teacher, Delitzsch, who, as we have seen, is not above the possibility of error.

THE SCHOLARLY FABLE

The disposition of scholarship falsely so-called to deny divine control in the development of the Hebrew national life and writings, and to regard all present faith as the result of a natural process of human thinking, is one of the refinements of evil. It is the application of the theory of physical evolution to the realm of mind and morals, to the practical exclusion of God from human history. Some scholars have no doubt followed the methods of this cult unconsciously, through not knowing the Scriptures and the power of God, while others have been allured by scientific mirage. Satan tried to destroy the world, first by lust, then by idolatry, next by self-sufficiency, and now by over civilization and unbalanced scholarship. (1 Tim. vi., 20, 21) This scholarship does not necessarily attack the Bible, but presents a system of dogma as a substitute for it, as Gnosticism and Neo-platonism attempted to do in the early centuries of Christianity, but the effort will end only in failure, and will leave, like the buried cities of the past, only the titles of its former greatness.

THE HOUSE OF MERCY

JOHN 5:1-15.—FEB. 19.

GOLDEN TEXT:—"A great multitude followed him, because they saw his miracles."—John 6:2.

The word Bethesda signifies "House of Mercy." This was the name given to a large structure with five porches connected with a large pool of water, situated near to the walls of Jerusalem. The pool was fed by a spring whose underground reservoirs served as a trap for certain gases. When the gas accumulated in this reservoir it would force out the water, much after the same manner that oil wells sometimes flow out their contents. These flows of the water impregnated with the gases occurred at irregular intervals, and at such times the water in the pool would be disturbed or made to boil by the inflow as well as by the gases it contained.

The phenomenon not being understood, many considered that the agitation of the pool was miraculous, attributing it to an angel from heaven. Partly by the energizing influence of faith and partly perhaps by some medicinal quality imparted to the water by the gases, cures were effected which caused the pool to have considerable fame throughout that district. Benefit from the gases is suggested by the fact that it was only those who entered the water immediately after the agitation who profited by it. The impregnating gases, when once in the pool, would be speedily combined with the atmosphere, and those entering the water first would not only have the benefit of the impregnated water on their persons but would also inhale some of the escaping gases—ozone, or what not. A number of such springs are known today in various parts of the world, and many of them have a medicinal quality without any suspicion of a miracle. The American Encyclopedia on this subject says:—

"Medicinal waters are very common in many parts of the

world, and people come to them from long distances to be cured. Priests, especially of Æsculapius, placed their sanctuaries near them, as at the alkaline springs of Nauplia, and the springs of Dodora. Phylostricus says that the Greek soldiers wounded in the battle on the Caicus were healed by the waters of Agamemnon's spring near Smyrna."

There is a spring of the kind mentioned in our lesson at Kissingen which, after a rushing sound, about the same time every day commences to bubble, and is most efficacious at the very time the gas is escaping. There are geysers also in Iceland, Wyoming and elsewhere of the intermittent or "troubled" character.

A COPYIST'S MARGINAL NOTE

The House of Mercy with its five porches was built for a public sanitarium for the benefit and convenience of those who desired to use the agitated pool, and this explains why a great multitude of the sick, blind, halt, withered, lay in these porches waiting for an opportunity to benefit by the agitation of the waters. In this connection it should be noted that old Greek MSS omit the last seven words of verse three and all of verse four. These are not inspired words, were not written by John the Apostle, but were added to his statement later on—quite probably as a marginal note explanatory of the views held by the people, or possibly the thought of the copyist who made the marginal note. Some later copyist, thinking the marginal note was omitted from the text, added it in, and his manuscript, copied in turn, has come down to us. Until within the last fifty years, since the discovery of the older Greek MSS, none could know that these words were not a part of

the divine record but an addition thereto, perhaps accidental.

Our last lesson showed our Lord in Galilee and his second miracle at Cana. In this lesson we find him again at Jerusalem, drawn thither according to the Jewish usage to celebrate one of the great annual feasts. He was passing Bethesda, the "House of Mercy," and stopped to perform the miracle noted in this lesson. That our minds may the better grasp the situation, we quote descriptions of two such institutions given by modern writers: Bovet tells us of the bath of Ibrahim, near Tiberius, on the sea of Galilee, thus:

"The hole in which the spring is found is surrounded by several porticoes in which we see a multitude of people crowded one upon another, laid upon couches or rolled in blankets, with immeasurable extremes of misery and suffering." Zola describes the crowds at the grotto of Lourdes thus, "A perfect cour des miracles of human woe rolling along the sloping pavement. No order was observed, ailments of all kinds were jumbled together; it seemed like the clearing of some inferno, where the most monstrous maladies, the rare and most awful cases which provoke a shudder, had been gathered together."

A SIGN OR SYMBOL OF HIS POWER

Such a picture met the eyes of our dear Redeemer as he passed this House of Mercy. We can imagine better than describe the extent of his sympathy with the poor ailing ones before him. If such scenes of sorrow, pain and trouble touch our fallen hearts sensibly and deeply, how much more intense must have been the sympathy which our Lord experienced in the presence of such conditions. We may be sure that he who loved the whole world so much that he left the glory with the Father and assumed human nature that he might die and redeem us and ultimately deliver us from the power of sin and its penalty, sickness and death, must have sympathized with the multitude of sufferers before him, crowding one upon another for the opportunity to receive benefit from the agitated waters. Nevertheless, despite all this sympathy, the record shows that our Lord healed but one of them. Indeed, so far as we may judge, this was his usual custom, as illustrated also in his discourse, in which he pointed out that while in God's providence there were many widows in Israel during the famine time, Elijah was only sent to the widow of Zarephath, and while there were many lepers in Israel, Elisha healed of leprosy only Naaman, the Syrian. Similarly, there were great multitudes of sick at this House of Mercy, but Jesus healed only one.

The reason for this is not difficult to find. Our Lord at his first advent was in the world not to deliver it from the power of sin and death and Satan, but to redeem it, and any deliverances which he granted at that time were only partial and illustrative—demonstrations of his power intended to awaken faith in him and his redemptive work on the part of those who had the ear of faith to hear and the eye of faith to see. These few heard, but the rest remained blinded and knew not the great Messiah unto this day. Thank God for the blessed assurance that in his due time all Israel shall be saved from this blindness (Rom. 11:25, 26), and not Israel only but all the families of the earth—"All the blind eyes shall be opened and all the deaf ears shall be unstopped."—Isa. 35:5.

SATAN INDIRECTLY THE OPPRESSOR

While freely admitting that all of humanity's difficulties, mental, physical and moral, are traceable to the original deception of Satan, practised upon our first parents—while therefore willing to concede that every case of sickness is more or less directly or indirectly the work of the adversary, and that of all the diseased ones we might properly enough say of each that "Satan hath bound him," nevertheless we are not of those who understand that the time has fully come for the binding of Satan and for the loosing of his prisoners. That time by divine arrangement is future, fixed—it is the Millennium. Since our Lord did not perform miracles for all the sick, neither are we to expect all the sick of today to be cured either by natural means or by miraculous power. It comforts us to remember that Satan and every evil is subject to the Almighty's power, and that in the case of the Lord's consecrated and their interests he is both able and willing to overrule, so that whatever he permits them will result in their greater blessing.

We are distinctly told that our Lord's miracles manifested forth beforehand his coming glory. They were thus lessons or pictures or illustrations of the great work of restitution from sin and sickness and death which our dear Redeemer will accomplish for the world very shortly—during his Millennial reign. Then we, his church, associated with him, will share his power and great glory and privileges. Those who were beneficiaries of his miraculous power at his first advent evidently were but a mere handful as compared to all the sick,

impotent and blinded of that time; and those miracles, aside from illustrating the future power of the Lord, were designed to testify of him and of his apostles as the representatives of the Father in the establishment of the new dispensation—the Gospel age, so different from its predecessor, the Jewish age and its law of Moses.

THE HEALING OF THE ELECT

It is not improper for us to speak of the man who was the one favored out of a great multitude as having been elected or selected by the Lord as the person through whom he would manifest his power and coming glory. The narrative does not tell us why the Lord selected this one in preference to others. We may reasonably assume, however, that his thirty-eight years of infirmity had developed in him considerable penitence for sin, considerable desire for righteousness; that he had learned some valuable lessons during those thirty-eight years under the hand of affliction; and that it was because he had thus come into a condition where healing would be to his advantage that he was the favored one. Similarly, this is true in the favors of grace which the Lord is distributing during this age, and which are really much more valuable than any physical blessings that could be bestowed.

We may not at first see why the Lord favors some more than others with the knowledge of his grace and truth, but we may safely assume that there is a lesson, and that lesson lies in the direction of honesty of heart, repentance of sin and a desire for or "feeling after God." When God has any special favors to bestow we may safely assume that they are not given out haphazard, but according to some partial conditions of faith or worthiness. In the case of this man who was healed let us notice that there was no record that he had more faith in the Lord than had the other ones about him. On the contrary, the context shows that he had no faith—that he did not even know the Lord, and did not learn until afterward who he was that healed him.

"WILT THOU BE MADE WHOLE?"

As already intimated, our Lord's words to his followers, "Greater works than these shall ye do because I go unto my Father," have been fulfilled throughout this Gospel age in that it is a greater work to open the eyes of the understanding than to recover sight to the natural eyes; it is a greater work to open the ears of the understanding than to recover the natural hearing; it is a greater work to heal from sin than to heal from its type, leprosy; it is a greater work to recover from the lameness and weaknesses which have come upon the entire race through the fall than to restore strength to the natural limbs. In accordance with this thought we now remark that as our Lord queried the one whom he healed, asking, "Wilt thou be made whole?" and as he thus let the matter depend upon his own will, so it is with those who are now being healed of moral ailments, of those who are now being spiritually enlightened, etc.—the assistance is with themselves. If they have the ear to hear and the eye to see, to appreciate, to understand the gift of God in Christ, the question then is "Wilt thou be made whole?"

How many there are morally leprous, mentally blinded and partially deaf, who can see and hear and comprehend a little of the grace of God, and who, by accepting this little which they understand and by desiring to be made whole, might go on from grace to grace, from knowledge to knowledge, from triumph to triumph, ultimately to the full attainment of the great blessing which the Lord has proffered to his "little flock"—to become heirs of God, joint-heirs with Jesus Christ our Lord, in his kingdom, if so be that we suffer with him, that we may also be glorified together.

In harmony with this thought, let us all use our influence with all with whom we come in contact, with all who have no power to see or hear or understand or appreciate the grace of God, to urge upon them their acceptance of divine aid as we ourselves have experienced it—"grace sufficient for every time of need." Only with those who answer this question affirmatively is it worth our while to expend effort. The will must be pointed to the Lord or his blessing cannot come upon the heart and the life; we cannot hope that the Lord will work a miracle of grace in the hearts of the sin-sick unless they are ready to answer this question in the affirmative, "Wilt thou be made whole?" Only those who so will can be benefited in this age, for this is the divine order—the Lord seeketh such and such only to worship him in spirit and in truth. Our Lord at the first advent testified again on these lines, saying to many of those who heard his preaching, "Ye will not come unto me that ye might have life." To come unto the Lord means to accept his arrangements, to answer his query, saying, Yea, Lord, I would be made whole.

The healing of such is not instantaneous but gradual.

They grow in grace, knowledge and love, and the completion of the work of grace will be in the first resurrection "change," which the Lord promises to all those who in the present time answer his question affirmatively, and show that they are in earnest by seeking to walk thenceforth not after the flesh but after the spirit. These come under the care of the Good Physician, and eventually he will make them whole, complete, perfect and in his likeness.

THE GREATER HOUSE OF MERCY

Ere long the present election of the church, the present favor and privilege of being made whole, will reach its accomplishment in the first resurrection, and then, thank God, a still more general blessing will be open for the world. The promise of the Scriptures is that in God's due time the tabernacle of God shall be with men and he shall dwell with them. This is not yet. The race is still under the curse, Satan is still the "prince of this world," we are still waiting and praying, "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is done in heaven." The establishment of God's tabernacle or house in the world will be during the Millennial age. It will be a house of mercy, not merely for the elect few, but, according to the great Oath-Bound Covenant, God through his elect church, the Christ, Head and body, the antitypical seed of Abraham (Gal. 3:29), shall "bless all the families of the earth."

Ah, yes; what a grand day that will be! "God shall wipe away the tears from off all faces"—yea, also, the reproach of his people shall be done away. No longer will it be a reproach to be of the Lord's people, no longer can it be said to the Lord's mouthpieces, "You tell of the love of God and his mercy and of the value of the great atonement, but we see sin and suffering, sorrow and death, continually reigning over the world." The reproach will be ended, Satan will be bound, the knowledge of the Lord will fill the whole earth and the wiping away of all tears and sorrows and aches and pains will begin. And to all who will rightly receive these favors and fall in line with them, the blessings will ultimately be completed in the full perfection of restitution accomplished at the end of the Millennial age, at the ushering in of the everlasting epoch, while for those who will then neglect, refuse the divine arrangements a merciful blotting out of existence has been arranged.—Acts 3:23.

IT WAS ON THE SABBATH

In performing the miracle our Lord instructed the healed one to take up his bed and walk, and he did so. The bed probably was a very light mattress or comforter, after the custom of that time, and there was no real labor connected with this injunction. It was not the violation, therefore, of the Sabbath restrictions of the Jewish law, which our Lord neither violated nor taught others to violate, for he was a Jew and subject, therefore, to all the terms and conditions of that law as much as any other Jew. His object in instructing the man to carry the bed was probably twofold:—

(1) The act of itself would be a witness to the miracle; not only directly but

(2) Indirectly it would attract the attention of the doctors and scribes of the law, because they had formulated certain restrictions respecting the day which were not the Mosaic requirements. Our Lord would make use of this opportunity to teach a lesson, not only respecting his power but respecting a proper observance of the law—that it was designed of the Lord to be for the benefit of mankind and not a moral fetter. Our Lord explained this on one occasion, saying to the scribes and Pharisees that their interpretation of the law made it burdensome to the masses of the people—that they exaggerated the small features of the law unduly, and that the greater principles of it, pertaining to righteousness, justice, love and mercy, they overlooked entirely.

From this narrative we see that just this result was attained. The scribes and Pharisees reproved the man for carrying his bed, and he returned that he was fully justified in so doing, because the person who healed him of his thirty-eight years' ailment must have been wise enough and good enough to be an authority on this subject and he was merely following his directions. Thus our Lord's miracle was made prominent to the class that he specially wished to have recognize him, namely the leaders and representatives of the nation, who specially were on trial at this time whether or not they would receive him; and, secondly, the difference between his teaching and good works and the teaching and no works of the Pharisees would be more manifest on the other hand.

It would appear that the healed man was so astonished by the incidents connected with his relief that for the moment he forgot to look for or inquire particularly about the one who had performed the miracle: and our Lord, not wishing to refuse the great multitude of sick ones there gathered, quietly withdrew, so that by the time the miracle was known the healer was not to be found. He had performed the miracle for the glory of God, to call attention to the new dispensation, and to himself as the divine representative in it, and incidentally he had healed, we may assume, the most worthy one of that multitude. The fact that Jesus specially met this man again in the Temple, where he had probably gone to express his thanks and praise to the Lord for his relief, implies that he had seen in the man something of more than ordinary character, which not only led him to heal him but also to reveal himself to him.

"GO AND SIN NO MORE"

Our Lord's salutation to the healed man in the Temple must have been very significant, showing the latter that he was not only able to heal but that he had knowledge of the sins which had led up to the diseased condition thirty-eight years previously. He said to him, "Behold thou art made whole: sin no more lest a worse thing befall thee." There is a valuable lesson in our Redeemer's counsel—helpful not only for that poor man, but still more valuable and helpful to those who have by the Lord's grace been healed of sin-sickness, those who have been justified, those who have been accepted into God's family as sons of God. The penalty for original sin has been a severe one and has attached itself to every member of Adam's race; yet for this original sin God has provided a great atonement, and ultimately every creature shall have the fullest opportunity for escape from all its penalties and wages. But when thus liberated a fresh responsibility is upon us. As the apostle declares, if we sin winfully after we have received a knowledge of the Truth, there remaineth no more a sacrifice for sins, but we may surely look for judgment and fiery indignation which will devour us as adversaries. (Heb. 10:27) The wages of original sin which the whole race has tasted is death, with its accompaniments of sorrow and pain—dying. The wages of wilful, deliberate, intentional sin, after we have been justified from all our sins—that penalty would be a worse thing, very much worse than the original penalty; for although it would be the same penalty of death, it would be the second death, for which God has assured us he has made no provision for recovery—Christ dieth no more. If after being released and justified we sin wilfully, and yet with a measure of weakness and imperfection tempting us, we may expect stripes; but if we sin wilfully and deliberately, aside from a particular temptation or weakness, we may expect nothing further in the way of divine mercy and forgiveness, because having enjoyed these in respect to the original sin we would thus come under a new and personal condemnation, for a new and inexcusable violation of righteousness whose penalty is death without hope of recovery.

"EVER GIVE US THIS BREAD"

JOHN 6:1-14.—FEB. 26.

GOLDEN TEXT:—"I am the living bread which came down from heaven."—John 6:51.

Considerable periods are sometimes covered by the opening expression of this lesson, "After these things." How long after our previous lesson depends on which feast is referred to. If it was Purim, only a month had elapsed; if it was Passover, a year. As previously pointed out, John's Gospel, written after the others, was evidently designed not so much to give a history of our Lord's life as to mention incidents omitted in the other Gospels. The miracle of the feeding of the five thousand, which is the basis of this lesson, stands prominently before us as the only miracle that is particularly described in all four of the Gospels. John's account of it brings to our attention some features not so clearly presented in the others.

From other accounts we learn that our Lord's crossing of the Sea of Galilee at this time was for needed rest. His preach-

ing and teaching and traveling were practically continuous; his hearers, going and coming from morning until night left him little opportunity for privacy and rest, and he was quite willing thus to lay down his life in feeding the sheep—not only exhausting his vitality through the healing of the diseases of the people, but also through the exhortations and public speaking, which are particularly enervating in the open air and when prolonged.

Another reason for leaving Galilee was that his disciples, whom he had sent forth two by two through the various cities to teach and to heal as he was doing had now returned to him, and doubtless he desired rest for them also, and a measure of quiet and privacy in which he could hear from them reports and give them needed instructions respecting their work. The third reason was that at this time the news had just reached Galilee

that Herod had caused the beheading of John the Baptist, and the further news that the army of Herod had been vanquished by that of Aretas. The news had unquestionably stirred the people and aroused their imaginations respecting the future, and to some extent had unfitted them for the hearing of the Lord's message. Some had even said to our Lord and the Apostles, "Depart from Herod's dominions, lest he slay thee as he has slain John the Baptizer." Still another reason probably was to give occasion for this miracle.

Perhaps all of these reasons combined to make the change a desirable one and several of the apostles being fishermen, whose boats were at their own disposal, and the Sea of Galilee small, the undertaking was not extraordinary. The sail across the sea brought Jesus and the apostles to a quiet secluded place, where they probably spent a day or two in rest and comparative privacy, communing respecting the interests of the work. To camp out of doors thus, without tents, etc., seems to have been not an unusual thing in that climate at that time; indeed even today one may find the Arabs in that country sleeping along the roadside at night, wrapped in their outer cloaks or garments and, like Jacob, with a stone for their pillow.

SEEKING THE MESSIAH

Another account tells us that when the multitudes who had been listening to the teachings of Jesus, seeing his miracles, etc., learned that he had gone to the other side of the lake, some of them went afoot and some in small boats in the general direction in which he had gone, seeking him. At this particular season many had their arrangements so made that they were on a holiday journey, going up to Jerusalem to the feast. On such occasions there was an unusual concourse on all roads leading to Jerusalem, and the people—excited by the conduct of Herod and bewildered and wondering respecting the Messiah—turned aside from their journey to hear more from the lips of this great Prophet, Jesus, and to see for themselves whether or not they thought he possessed the qualifications that would fit him for the Messiahship, for the deliverance of their nation, for the establishment of the long-promised kingdom of God. Jesus was sitting on the mountain side with his disciples when this large concourse of people seeking him came along; quite probably, he and the apostles taught the multitude for some time before the miracle of feeding them was performed. We must remember that the Gospel narratives are very brief and pass over small and irrelevant details.

Our Lord, who had already planned the miracle, had led the minds of his disciples up to the point by inquiring, "Whence shall we buy bread that these may eat?" This question was addressed to Philip, one of the apostles who lived not far distant. He was the proper person on that account, but probably the Lord had another reason for questioning him. Philip seems to have been of rather a calculating and business turn of mind, and although this disposition is an excellent one to have amongst the disciples of the Lord, it, nevertheless, is inclined to think of earthly means rather than to exercise faith in the Lord. Probably the Lord wished to awaken Philip's thought and specially to bring him profitable instruction and faith through this miracle. Philip's answer that it would require two hundred pennyworth of bread (about \$32.00) to supply the multitude even a light luncheon, shows his business trait. While all the various casts of mind are to be found amongst the Lord's people, the business head is amongst the most useful if it be kept under proper restraints of love and faith;—love, that it may not allow business instincts to take sole charge of spiritual affairs; and faith, that it may be able to realize that although business methods are excellent in all the affairs of life, they must not be permitted to ignore faith in the Lord and the power of his might, and the loving interest which he takes in all the affairs of his church, the new creation.

THE USE OF MEANS

Andrew, whose mind seems to have been less practical than that of Philip, suggested that one of the company had five little barley cakes and two small fishes, yet he had hardly offered the remark when he felt ashamed of it, and added, "But what are they among so many?" Philip was too practical, too much of a business man to have even thought of or mentioned such a morsel of food in connection with the supply of so large a multitude; but our Lord had use not only for the broader mind of Philip but also the more simple and less logical mind of Andrew, and used the latter's suggestion by calling for the little supply. There is a lesson for us here: it illustrates what many of us have seen in connection with the affairs of the Lord's people, namely, that all the good suggestions, all the helpful suggestions, all those suggestions which make for the interest of the church, do not always come from one quarter—that often the Lord uses the stumbling lips and illogical reasonings of some of his followers as the basis of blessings to themselves and others, just as now he used Andrew's seemingly foolish remark.

Another thought in this connection is that our Lord seems always to have made use of whatever was at hand. He could have turned the stones into bread and thereby to have fed the multitude; he could have ignored the little supply on hand as insignificant; but this was not his method. All of his followers should learn from this not to despise the little things, but to use them so far as possible. There is a principle involved, too—as our Lord expresses it, He that is faithful in that which is least, will be faithful also in that which is greater. Another lesson is that miracles are only to be expected after we have done all in our power with the means at hand. The colored man had the right idea when, after expressing his faith in the Lord, some one said to him, "Now, George, if the Lord should command you to jump through that stone wall, would you do it?" His answer was that if he were certain that the Lord had commanded it, he would jump at the stone wall and leave to the Lord all that was beyond his power. If the Lord wished to make a miracle out of it he was able to do so, but the jumping part belonged to George. So it is with us in all life's affairs: we are to be sure that we are in the Lord's way, that we are following his directions, and then we are to leave all the results to him, assured of his ability to work the greatest miracles. Nevertheless, the greatest miracles which any of us have to do with are of a quiet and unostentatious kind. In nature we see these miracles in the growing grain, which, under the Lord's providences, supplies our needs in response to our labor. The increase of the five barley loaves and two little fishes, we may be sure, was not more of a miracle than that which is continually going on in nature, only that it is a different kind, to which we are not accustomed. Nevertheless, as the Lord used the barley cakes and fishes as the nucleus for this miracle, so in nature he uses the seed wheat as the basis for the miracle of the crop gathered in harvest. In other words he always uses means to an end, and the fact that we may see and understand the means does not make the miracle either greater or less. A proper view of life connects the Lord with all the affairs of this life as well as with all that pertains to the life to come.

"WHEN THEY WERE FILLED"

The multitude sat down in groups or companies of fifties and hundreds, we are told, and the disciples distributed to them the five little cakes and two fishes in pieces, which apparently grew as they were broken, much after the manner of the widow's cruse of oil, which flowed incessantly until all the pots had been filled. So this little supply under the Lord's blessing increased, not merely to give a light luncheon to the multitude, but until all were "filled," satisfied, wanted no more. Here was a miracle which not only astounded the disciples but also the thousands; it was what John calls a sign, an evidence and proof of our Lord's supernatural power and authority—a proof that he was indeed the Sent of God, the Messiah. This was the object of the miracle—not the feeding of the multitude. At the very same time there were doubtless hungry ones in various parts of the world whom the Lord could have fed without any trouble to himself; but he came not to feed the world, he came not to stop the pain and sorrow and dying, but to redeem the world and to give evidence which would allow the apostles and all the Israelites indeed in whom there was no guide to accept him by faith as the Messiah—evidences also which, coming down to us and others of this Gospel age, have been the foundation for our faith.

Some have said, O that we could have been there and witnessed the miracle of the loaves and fishes! Our faith would have been made so strong that we could have been the disciples of Jesus under any and all circumstances and conditions. What a wonder it is that any of those five thousand should ever have doubted our Lord's Messiahship! We answer that those who are truly the Lord's people have similar miracles today, because he communicates to us through the Word, and because in eating of the Word we partake of the spirit of our Lord, the spirit of the truth.

In view of this, which of the Lord's people can gainsay the fact that he is continually, in his own experiences and in the experiences of other Christians, performing a miracle greater than that recorded in our lesson? Which of the Lord's people who have tasted that he is gracious, who have hungered and thirsted after righteousness—truth—and have had its assisting comfort time and again, could any longer feel that their preference would have been to have lived in the days of our Lord's first advent and to have seen and tasted of the miracles then performed? For our part we much prefer the higher miracles, and consider that we have a stronger basis for faith in these than the poor Jews could possibly have had in all the favors bestowed upon them, great as those favors were.

WEALTH AND ECONOMY BLENDED

Although our Lord was rich before he came into the world and although he realized that through the power of God in him

he could still have all that was necessary for his well being and could provide for his followers, too, as shown not only in the miracle before us, the increase of the loaves and fishes, but also shown when, on another occasion, he granted his disciples the great draught of fishes out of the very lake before them—with all this wealth at his command our Lord was a great economist; from his standpoint nothing should be wasted. It was in harmony with this that, after the multitude had been thoroughly fed, the Lord instructed the Apostles to gather up the fragments that nothing be wasted, and they took up twelve haversacks full—each of them gathered the full of his bag or satchel or haversack, in our text called a basket.

There are two lessons in this for us, one a practical lesson on economy, that none of the Lord's blessings and mercies are to be wasted. To some this lesson may come easier than to others, but it is a usual experience in life that willful waste brings woeful want. Quite probably some of the Lord's dear disciples at the present time need to learn the lesson of economy as much as did the disciples and multitude on this occasion. This does not teach the lesson of miserliness either, for the Scriptures declare, "There is that scattereth and yet increaseth; and there is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to poverty." (Prov. 11:24) The first lesson was generosity, the secondary lesson was economy. So it should be with us: our generosity should be equal to our disposition to economize. The Lord is not stingy, but generous; and none of his followers should be stingy. The Lord was economical, and that also his disciples should be.

It was those who scattered to others who had their haversacks filled in the end and gained the supply for themselves.

We can apply the same lesson to spiritual things: the Lord's people are to be distributors. We have received of the Lord's bounty, grace and truth freely; we are to distribute freely. Those who distribute will have the privilege of gathering up for themselves, that each may have more than he gave away. How true it is that those who are most intent upon feeding others with the bread of life are themselves most bountifully supplied. Let us see to it, then, that we have generosity in respect to the spiritual as well as the natural food. Let us give forth the word of life and the water of life. While we do so from good, honest, sincere hearts, with a desire to honor the Lord and to bless the people, and without selfishness or pride on our own part, we may be sure that he will give us more and more of a rich supply for our own spiritual growth and sustenance.

The multitude took knowledge of the miracle and acclaimed our Lord the great Prophet. By many of them, however, the miracle was only partially appreciated. Doubtless they

viewed it as an indication that if Jesus were proclaimed a king, he could supply his soldiers with food without a commissary department; and if he could thus supply the food to his supporters and followers he would be able also to give them the victory under all circumstances and conditions. These things are true, but not true in the way that the natural Israelites supposed. Our Lord giveth us the victory now over sin and selfishness, and leads us on from one achievement to another as we seek to walk in his steps, and all the way he feeds us with the living bread from heaven. In due time he will become the great King over the world, and his power to control and to feed and to put down Satan and all the powers of evil will be fully manifested. Then many of the blind eyes shall be opened—eyes which cannot see the things of faith, ears which cannot hear the message of faith. Let us give thanks to the Lord more and more that our eyes see and our ears hear the message which as yet the world sees not, appreciates not. While this Gospel age can bring special blessings only to those who have the hearing ear and understanding heart and eye of faith, thank God there is another age to come in which all the families of the earth will be abundantly blessed and guided and helped by those who now are able to walk by faith. Only a special class can now appreciate the bread which came down from heaven. By and by, under the blessed influences and arrangements of the kingdom, all may have the privilege of eating of the bread of life and thus attaining the life everlasting. How our hearts go out to those who are now starving for this very bread, not only the heathen who have never heard of Christ but many in the lands of civilization who, although they have heard, know not, see not, neither do they understand, neither can they understand until in the Lord's due time their eyes of understanding and ears of appreciation shall be opened, as has been promised through the prophets.—Isa. 35:5; 42:7; 49:9.

"Only five barley loaves!
Only two fishes small!
And can I offer these poor gifts
To Christ, the Lord of all?
To him whose mighty word
Can still the angry sea,
Can cleanse the lepers, raise the dead?—
He hath no need of me."

"Yes, he hath need of thee!
Then bring thy loaves of bread;
Behold, with them, when Jesus speaks,
The multitude are fed."

ENCOURAGING WORDS FROM FAITHFUL WORKERS

PASTOR T. C. RUSSELL:—

I must kindly thank you for sending me from time to time new pamphlet issues, and also the copies of that most interesting debate you had with Dr. Eaton, which I enjoyed most thoroughly and which I have made some use of in reading and lending to others.

I cannot thank you enough for the new delight and pleasure I now receive in reading God's Word. Everything seems to have taken on a different view from the conceptions I had formed from teachings received as a member of the Episcopal church of Ireland,—and if this be so in Ireland, where high ritualistic and Popish practices are not allowed, what must be the state of the poor dupes of the sister church of England, where idolatrous practices are fast displacing the simple faith in Christ? Certainly things are fast shaping for the great chaos that is to usher in the day of our Lord. Praying that God may bless you in your labor of love, I remain,

Yours in hope,

JOHN M'KEAGUE,—Scotland.

DEAR MR. RUSSELL:—

Having for some time become dissatisfied with the doctrines of the Protestant church of England of which we were members, we thought to set out to seek anew from God's Word his own truth. For a year or more we read and studied justification by faith and came to the conclusion that all who believe must be justified from all things. Still we could not get free from belief in the doctrine of everlasting torment, but hoped that our Lord would give us light and guide us into all truth. And so he is doing. Last year a friend sent us your little book "About Hell," which greatly opened our eyes to the truth, and afterwards the DAWN volumes, from which, thank our loving Father, we have been made wise with regard to his plan, graci-

ous, loving, divine. Blessed be his holy name! We desire to thank you for the blessing you have brought to us in so opening up the Bible to us, and we know that you are the instrument in his hand in this "latter day" to make known his will and plan to all his languishing people. May he continue to bless you as steward of his household is our earnest prayer.

In Christian love, yours very truly,

DAVID AND ISABEL MYERS,—Jamaica.

DEAR BROTHER RUSSELL:—

In the end of 1901 two Glasgow colporteurs came to this place selling the "Plan of the Ages." We got one, along with a great many others. We heard the brothers' lectures and got the rest of DAWNS. We can look back now and see how the Lord prepared us for the truth, being weary of all church formalities and longing for light. We have been enabled to witness to several of the clergy and church elders to the truth. We are told at times that we are giving out poison, but we tell them if they read they will find it real life giving food.

We thank God for raising you up to give us these "feasts of fat things," and we pray that you will be guided and filled by his spirit as you go on feeding the household of faith with meat in due season.

Yours in the Lord,

DON F. MURRAY,—Scotland.

DEAR BROTHER RUSSELL:—

I have been so blessed through coming into the light of present truth that I feel I must write to tell you about it. I can never express the joy that has come into my life through the study of MILLENNIAL DAWN. The glorious plan of God as set forth (through rightly dividing the Word of God) is grand. I have received the truth in the love of it, and I can indeed say,

God bless the colporteur work, as it was at the door I bought Vol. I. DAWN of a dear brother of the church here. The chief Reaper will reward him in the harvest home. I was so delighted with Vol. I. that I found the little company of Christians here and secured the four succeeding volumes of DAWN, and ever since that time I have proved that "the path of the just is as a shining light, which shineth more and more unto the perfect day."

This truth was brought to me at the very darkest hour of my spiritual experience. Surely man's extremity is God's opportunity! I was for some weeks passing through a time of trial. I have for some years had a thorn in the flesh, and as I greatly desired to be released from it I was led to attend some meetings held by those who teach divine healing, was anointed and prayed for, but failed to receive healing. I was then plunged in despair and doubt, and of course was told by those people that there must of necessity be something wrong in my relation to God, and it was entirely my own lack of faith; so you see that the opening up of the Scripture which I received from DAWN at that time meant much to me, as it was the means used by my heavenly Father in causing me to see that, although earthly promise of restitution for the world was purchased by our dear Redeemer, for the church called out from the world there are exceeding great and precious promises that by these we might be partakers of the divine nature. The Lord has anointed my eyes with eyesalve, and I can see that these Elijahs and others are, as you say in the WATCH TOWER, antichrists also and having the same spirit as the antichrist, the Papacy, taking to themselves the office and work of the Christ, who shall very soon take to himself his great power and reign, and then restitution blessings shall flow as rivers of water from the throne of God and the Lamb.

I have always from a child had a love for the dear Savior and a desire to bring others to know him, and that desire led me to go as an officer in the Salvation Army, as I found there was more opportunity for service in its ranks than in the Congregational church in which I was brought up, and I did my utmost with great zeal, but not according to knowledge. Now that I have been led to see the dispensational plans and purposes of God and that in due time all shall be brought to a knowledge of the truth, I do enter into rest and sit with Christ in heavenly places, as the spirit of the new mind rises above

the circumstances of my life in the flesh, although still sharing the ills to which the flesh is heir through the fall and curse of Adam.

I remain, your sister in the Truth,
EMMA WILLIAMS,—England.

DEAR SIR AND BROTHER:—

By this time I hope you will have received the 500 volumes of the MILLENNIAL DAWN in Italian. I hope you are satisfied with the print and binding of the volumes. We have tried to do our best, and have had experiences that will be useful in future.

Although ill, but now, thank God, a little better, I have never ceased to be occupied with the work and the Lord has blessed it. To the many letters and cards that I could send you, there is one most rejoicing and very important of the Pastor Giuseppe Bauchetti, doctor of letters and philosophy, a very learned man, who with child-like simplicity has received present truth and is ready to give testimony. After reading the two volumes in French, he has bought all the other books in English, and he has so learned that tongue as to be able to understand the third, fourth, fifth and sixth volumes. Others have started to study the French, it being much easier for them than the English volumes.

Brother Bauchetti is wishing to write to you personally to express his admiration and gratitude for having freed him of many terrible doubts and made to shine in his heart such bright light and assurance and inexpressible joy.

I am busy selecting in each of the principal towns a brother who will sell the books and endeavor to spread the truth.

I need not tell you how orthodoxy and traditionalism are making war on us, but in all humility and not trusting in ourselves, we are ready to go on, confidently trusting in him who said, "Be of good cheer: I have overcome the world."

Last week I had occasion to visit two districts of the Waldensian valleys, and I never expected to find among people that pretend to be Christians such deadly sleep as I found there. Some watchful ones, however, are to be found here and there, and they quite readily accept the food so long desired.

Expressing to you my gratitude and that of all the brothers and sisters for all that you are doing for us, I remain yours most humbly in the Lord,

DANIELE RIVOIRE,—Italy.

THE PERFECT COPY

ROMANS 8:29.

Memory wakens mental pictures
In the calm and solemn night;
Teaching all-important lessons
In a new and clearer light.

On a scroll I see a "copy"
Chosen from "the Book" divine;—
Written by a master penman
On a bright initial line.

Under it a fair creation
Of the skilled engraver's art;
Graceful lines and shades, assuming
Life and form,—a human heart!

Drawing near with deepening interest
To observe it carefully,
I discovered "words" I hastened
To commit to memory.

Imitate (they said) the "copy"
Written on the line above;
For the Golden Rule it follows
Is the perfect law of love.

Might I, heeding this instruction,
Duplicate the pattern well?
For, although my spirit's willing
Yet "the flesh," so weak, would fail.

Fearful lest I mar its beauty
I inclined to pass it by,
When the Master Artist whispered,
"I will help you if you try.

"Trusting you will e'er remember
My approval to obtain;
You should keep your copy stainless
Following closely to 'the line.'"

Need I tell of blotted pages?
Here a tear-drop, there a stain;
Or of all my clumsy tracings
That appeared below the line?

Need I here repeat the failures
Which have caused my grief and pain;
Or the kindness of my "Teacher"
When he bade me "try again?"

In his wisdom gently prompting
Lest I should discouraged grow;
"Keep your eye upon my copy
I forgive mistakes below."

Covering my many failures
With the mantle of his love;
As my "copy" grew in likeness
To the perfect one above.

—John Ladow.

THE MEMORIAL SUPPER

Those who would celebrate the Lord's supper on its anniversary date, this year, should do so after 6 p. m. on Sunday, April 16th. The day following at 3 p. m. will be the anniversary of the Lord's death, on the 14th of Nisan, Jewish reckoning.

The day following will begin the Jewish feast of Passover, which lasts a week, but in which we have no special interest except as a type of the liberty, joy and blessing which come to all of the Lord's people passed over through faith in his blood.