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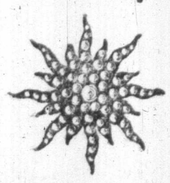

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THE DIVINE SCALES

"THOU ART WEIGHED IN THE BALANCES AND FOUND WANTING."

A THRILLING BIBLE INCIDENT

The Measure of the Almighty Absolutely Perfect and Just—No Man Can Gainsay It Nor Escape Its Metes and Bounds—The Example of Belshazzar For the Ages.

Entered According to Act of Parliament of Canada, in the year 1902, by William Baily, of Toronto, at the Dept of Agriculture, Ottawa.

Chicago, Oct. 26.—From one of the most thrilling incidents of Bible history Rev. Frank De Witt Talmage draws lessons for the life of to-day; text, Daniel v, 27, "Thou art weighed in the balance and found wanting."

These words were spoken in the royal banquet hall of the most famous capital in the east. This is Babylon—beautiful, licentious, corrupt, luxurious, shameless Babylon; Babylon the pride of the Chaldeans; Babylon the wonder of the world!

Ctesias tells us that Babylon was sixty miles square. That means its area was more than one-third the size of the modern city of London, the English bee-hive, with its 5,000,000 inhabitants. It was of such vast wealth that within its central temple was an idol made of solid gold, which alone was worth over $200,000,000. Its surrounding walls were 365 feet high and wide enough to allow four charioteers to drive their sixteen chargers abreast upon the top of them, while the moon shimmered upon 250 watch towers and tipped with light the spears of hundreds of sentinels and shone upon a hundred gates of solid brass, which swung open to let friends in and clanged shut to keep enemies out.

Standing upon the heights of the famous hanging gardens, which Nebuchadnezzar, the king who had courted Amytis among the hills of Ecbatana, had thrown up to humor a whim of his queen, we can see off in the distance the mighty river Euphrates flowing through the midst of the metropolis and cutting the city in twain. Along the wharfs of the river were daily heard the cries of the sailors unloading from the ships cargoes of merchandise and foodstuffs as well as the gold and silver and myrrh and precious stones imported from other lands. In the centre of the capital we can also see where the engineers had gathered the water of this mighty river into a large artificial lake forty miles square. This lake was wide enough and deep enough to harbor all the modern navies of the world. In it all these ships of war could drop their anchors, fold their white sails and float side by side in peace.

The boulevards of this ancient city were pillared with statuary. The streets encircled the busy marts where merchants wrangled for barter and gain or led down to the magnificent bridges which spanned the river. These bridges were flanked with palaces, where beauty and wealth loitered away the lazy hours or sang themselves to sleep, cradled in the graceful gondolas, which gently pressed the waters into ripples or contemptuously tumbled the foam from off their crested breasts. Everywhere artesian wells tossed up the waters into fountains, shining through which the sun arched the flowers with rainbows, while birds of brilliant hue, whose ancestors had been brought from tropical climes, stopped their singing long enough to quench their thirst or to cleanse their gorgeous plumage. There in the evening hour these fountains lifted up their lips, while their cheeks blushed into a deep red for the good night kiss of the setting sun.

But we must hurry on to-night and not linger over the scenic delights of this famous capital, for I am going to lead you into the royal banquet hall, where Belshazzar, the king of the Chaldeans, is giving a great feast to a thousand lords of his kingdom. He is giving this feast to-night in a hall decorated with the trophies of conquest and the triumph of art, with the air rhythmic with song and redolent with incense, with the faces of his dead ancestors pictured upon the walls or chiseled by the sculptors in marble of purest white. He is giving this feast in a banquet hall where the sandaled foot strikes mosaic floor or sinks into softest rug; where, under the light, the precious stones sparkle and gleam, as the jeweled hand of an aristocrat pushes back the tapestry or lifts the golden chalice to the lip. The king is given this drunken feast to show his contempt for the besieging army of Cyrus the Great, which for nearly two long years had fruitlessly laid siege to his capital, that seemed impregnable.

But at last, in this banquet hall, at this famous feast, when the intoxicated eye became more brilliant than the diamonds glittering upon the naked throats of the assembled guests and the flushed cheeks redder than the wine cup, there appears a marvelous sight. Out of space there stretches a hand—an armless, bodiless hand—and with the finger of this strange hand for a pen a hidden power writes there awful words of doom upon the wall of that banquet hall. It is to interpret one of those words, "tekel," which means "thou art weighed in the balances and art found wanting," that I am to-day preaching this sermon. I preach upon this one word because these fatal five letters announced to Belshazzar, the king of the Chaldeans, that night that he had to die.

God's balances always have accordant weights. He weighs every man according to the work which he has given him to do. He weighs every man in proportion to the religious opportunities that have surrounded his past life. He weighs every man with reference to the Christian home in which he was born and to the prayers of Christian men and women which have been uttered in his behalf. God weighs a man not only with regard to his sins of commission, but also as to what he might have accomplished for God had he applied himself for his Divine Master as he should have done.

When God in this royal banquet hall of Babylon held high the balances with which he weighed Belshazzar, the king of the Chaldeans, God weighed that life by a standard entirely different from that with which he would weigh the life of an ignorant, brutal African cannibal, taught from the days of his youth that it was right and honorable to eat the roasted flesh of his captives and slaves. God placed in one of the scales of his balances all Belshazzar's infinite opportunities for doing good as the mighty ruler of the wealthiest capital of the east. God placed in that one scale all Belshazzar's opportunities for knowing and learning about the true God and his divine love. Belshazzar was not, as some suppose, the heathen ruler of a heathen nation. He was the grandson of the Nebuchadnezzar whose famous prime minister was Daniel, the mighty man of God. In all probability he had heard from Daniel's own lips the commandments of the God of the Jews, and how that God had protected the prophet and closed the mouths of the hungry wild beasts when his servant was thrown into the lion's den. Daniel, at the time of which I speak, was about eighty years of age. He could have testified and in all probability did testify to Belshazzar how the love of the true God had cared for his believing child, now for nearly fourscore years. So the word written on the wall of that banquet hall was the record of a test. Belshazzar's opportunities of leading a godly life had been placed in one scale, and when the evil effects of the life he did lead were put in the other scale it had gone down like a flash. That was the inevitable result. He had been weighed in the balances and found wanting.

My brother and sister, are you ready to let God hold up the same balances with which he weighed Belshazzar's life in the royal banquet hall of Babylon? Are you ready to let him weigh the results of your life? "Oh, no," you answer, "my life is nothing to what it ought to be, when I think of my past religious training up. No one had a better nor more consecrated Christian mother than I have had. No one to-day has a more consecrated praying wife than I have. Every night even my little children pray for me and yet I am unwilling to pray for myself or do what I ought to do." If all this be true, then, my brother, how are you to escape the doom of him who sat in Babylon's banquet hall? You are being weighed in the balances and found wanting.

It is an awful and heartrending sight to see a man stand up and confess that he has crushed out of his heart the religious influences which surrounded his early life. I once heard of an old man who arose in a great religious meeting and, facing the audience, said substantially this, "Oh, my friends, I beg of you not to fight against the influence of the prayers that have been uttered in your behalf. If you do, you will live to regret it, as I have done. I was brought up in a Christian home. After I came to the city my business grew so rapidly that I drifted away from church and from the Bible and the family altar. I had a little daughter who was the idol of my life. She was at that time accustomed almost every evening to go to a neighbor's house. I reproved her two or three times and at last whipped her for going. That night she was taken sick, and when she was flushed with the fever she called me to her side and said: 'Papa, don't think I did wrong because I wished to go over to Mr. So-and-so's house. I went there for you. You used to have family prayers, but somehow you are too busy now to have them, and my little schoolmate's papa always has family prayers,'" said the old man, with tears streaming down his cheeks. "My little daughter had to tell that to me, who had once been rocked in a Christian cradle and reared in a Christian home. She had to tell that to me, a sinful man, when she herself was about to take the long journey over the river of death, from which no traveler ever returns." If you, O sinful man, fight against the religious influences of your past life, you, like the aged, broken hearted parent, will live to regret it. When God holds high his balances, he is going to weigh us in reference to our religious opportunities, as he did when he weighed the sinful life of Belshazzar, the king of the Chaldeans.

God's balances weigh every individual at the times when he feels independent of God as well as when he feels dependent upon the divine mercy. Never in all his life did Belshazzar consider himself more independent of his enemies than on the occasion of this sinful feast. The capital of Babylon was stocked with provisions enough to supply the city for many years. The battering rams of the besieging army had made no impression at all upon the bronzed gates. The walls were too high to scale. For two long years the Persian hosts had been conducting a futile siege. But history tells that on the night of the famous feast, while the king and his princes and a thousand aristocratic lords of his kingdom were drinking themselves drunk, Cyrus, seeing his opportunity, turned aside the course of the River Euphrates and in the early hours of the morning marched along that river bed, under the great bronze gates and along the great boulevards, until at last his soldiers, with drawn swords, broke into that banquet hall and changed the wassail of wine into a carnival of blood. So, my brother, at the very time when you feel you are most secure and can sin with the greatest safety, God is watching your secret sin and he is decreeing that you must die. Oh, man of sinful habit, hearing to-night of Belshazzar's banquet hall, do you not feel that you can never escape the scruting of God's all seeing eye. Then, by the magical effect of lights, it slowly became brighter and brighter, until, upon the side of the hall, we could see dim figures begin to form themselves. They looked at first like hideous phantoms. Then, as it became lighter and lighter until the whole room glowed with light, we saw the inside of a huge palace. There were the broad stairs leading upward. There were the bodies of men and women lying prostrate upon the floor, amid overturned tables and spilled decanters and broken furniture. It was a scene of grandeur, but also a scene of filthy bestialities. In the centre of the staircase stood the horrified king, with strained eyes looking at the letters of fire burning themselves on the wall, while off in the distance could be seen the Persian soldiers with drawn swords, ready to dilute the spilled wine with human gore and to change the floor into a reservoir of blood. Then the lights of the room began to dim, and it grew darker and darker and blacker and blacker until at last it seemed as though we were incarcerated in the dungeons of the eternally lost and the destroyed.

So when the would-be sinner would enter the banquet hall of sin he always goes there at first like one groping about in the darkness, as fearing that he may be walking upon the edge of a precipice. He enters with horror and trembling, in terror and with tears. Then in the midnight hour of the carnival the banqueter in the hall of sin sees that fatal handwriting upon the wall. You, O sinner, too, may see it! You see it with horrified eyes, as Belshazzar saw it; you see it written by the dead fingers of those who have lifted the same cup of death to their lips that you are lifting at the present time. Then, as in the room where I saw the picture at the World's Fair, you feel that it begins to grow darker and darker. The light in the reveler's eyes can no longer keep your courage up. Already in that darkness you can see the advancing messenger of God's vengeance. It is horror at the opening of the banquet; it is horror in the middle of the banquet; it will be unutterable horror at its close when God shall finally say to you, O sinner, "Thou art weighed in the balances and art found wanting."

So, in closing, as I plead with you to flee from the banquet hall of sin, I again invite you into the other banquet hall where Christ the Divine Bridegroom is to be married to the church, his bride. I would invite you into that banquet hall, which is filled with the great multitudes of the redeemed. I would earnestly invite you to come, because there is a vacant place at that gospel banquet table which, I am sure, has been reserved for you. It is in the centre of a group of your loved ones. It is right next to your sainted mother and father and wife and sister and child, and by the looks of your loved ones I think they are waiting for you. O sinner, are you ready to-day to leave the revelers of sin and to quaff the water of life, which will fit you for entrance among the sainted hosts, or shall you, as a result of this spurned gospel invitation, be weighed in the balances and forever found wanting? God is even now holding high the balances. May every one of us, by the power of the Holy Spirit, decide how the balances of God shall be moved! May we, one and all, decide that the scale of sin, through the countervailing weight of the cross, shall go up and not go down!

Soil for spinach for winter and early spring use can hardly be made too rich.

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CURE SICK HEADACHE.

PRAY FOR EDITORS

Good Ladies of W. C. T. U. Abandon Criticism of Newspaper Men for a Better Plan.

Toronto, Oct. 30. — The second day's proceedings of the W. C. T. U. convention were marked by the presentation of a large number of reports from the various superintendents of departments dealing in a practical manner with the problems entrusted to them.

The opening half-hour in the afternoon was profitably spent in a conference on anti-narcotics, led by Mrs. Waters, of Hamilton, who produced a largely-signed petition from the London unions, praying for the prohibition of the manufacture and sale of cigarettes.

SHOULD PRAY FOR EDITORS.

In presenting the report upon the press department, Mrs. Jennie Baritrop, of Toronto, noted with satisfaction the increased number of corporations which were requiring prohibition or a higher standard of temperance from their employes. Another report from the same department was read by Mrs. Emma Waterson, of Kemptville, in which it was suggested that unions set apart a portion of their time to praying for newspaper editors and publishers. Most of them were ready enough to criticise and condemn the publishers, but few perhaps took the trouble to pray for them.

Rev. J. E. Starr was introduced as a representative of the Temperance Legislation League, organised last Dominion day, and which has already a membership of between 3,000 and 4,000. Mr. Starr stated that the league has been organised on independent political lines, but will work from the inside and through the old parties for the attainment of national prohibition. "If you had the right to say at the ballot-box what you want," said Mr. Starr to the ladies, "we would not be in the muss we are to-day.—Applause. We propose to make the politicians fear us more," concluded Mr. Starr in an earnest and significant manner.

SHAME ON MINISTER.

An interesting feature of the morning's work was the report of the missionary for New Ontario. Miss Sproule, who braved great hardships and travelled 5,400 miles in the pursuit of her work during the year. On one occasion she had been obliged to travel with a corpse in a wagon, while the minister rode alone in a covered buggy.

"I wish we had that minister here," said the president fervently. "I think we could make him ashamed of himself."

Two instances of the danger that arises from the use of fermented wine at communions were noted in the report upon that subject. Each was that of a man, a reformed drunkard, who had again taken to the downward road after drinking fermented wine at the communion.

During the morning $50 was voted to the department of law enforcement.

The "Y's" had charge of the evening session.

De worst ob de imitation ladies is not always found among de scrub ladies or de kitchen maids.

A man may be able to fool himself as to his importance, but it is difficult to fool his neighbors.

Do not go without
Abbey's Salt!

If you have a bottle of Abbey's in your travelling bag, you are safe from the discomfort and danger of constipation, biliousness, sour stomach and kindred ailments that mar the pleasure of a holiday trip.
Take a teaspoonful of

Abbey's Effervescent Salt

in a glass of water before breakfast and it will keep you well for the rest of the day.
Tell your druggist you want 'Abbey's.'

GOING TO LAST

A long time—yes, barring accidents, you can count on your great-great-grandchildren enjoying the wisdom of your having left them a . . . . . .

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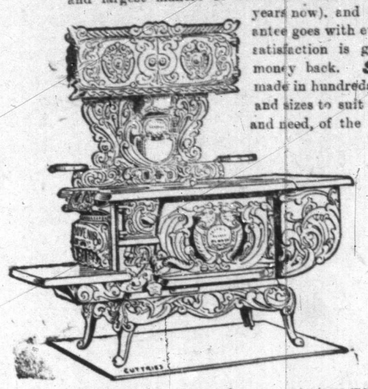

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