

1800, the "Nature of the Scholar" in 1805, and the "Doctrine of Religion" in 1806. Then came his stirring addresses to the German nation to which is



FICHTE AS A PATRIOT.

largely attributed the German uprising against Napoleon, and his appointment as rector of the Berlin University. He died of typhoid fever in 1814.

### THE STORY OF TABI-UTUL-BEL AND NEBUCHADNEZZAR.

BY CLARA BEWICK COLBY.

*To the Editor of The Open Court:*

In your August issue you published a poem translated by Professor Jastrow under the title, "A Babylonian Parallel to the Story of Job." Is not that

poem rather a parallel to the story of Nebuchadnezzar? Nebuchadnezzar was the greatest of Babylonian kings, and his history is closely connected with that of the Hebrews. It is expressly stated that he was used by God to punish the nations and that Egypt was given to him as his reward, and also that he was given power over the beasts of the field and they should serve him. At one time Nebuchadnezzar gave credit to the God of the Hebrews for what he had accomplished, saying "It hath seemed good unto me to show the signs and wonders that the Most High God hath wrought toward me." But when he became arrogant and said, "Is not this great Babylon which I have built," disregarding the warning of Daniel to "break off his iniquities by shewing mercy to the poor," he was smitten with a peculiar disease which bent him so that he seemed to be walking on all fours, and it was so loathsome that he was driven out from among men and had to subsist on the herbs of the field.

In the poem, Tabi-Utul-Bel has a similar experience. His ears were stopped, his eyes holden; instead of being a king he becomes a slave; he said he was under a ban from which his priest could not release him, and which threw him to the ground and bent his high stature like a poplar; his members became powerless and his feet were entangled in their own fetters. In all this there is a close and remarkable parallel to the downfall and sufferings of Nebuchadnezzar. But there is a more remarkable coincidence still. Nebuchadnezzar has "to dwell with the beasts of the field and to eat grass like the oxen." Tabi-Utul-Bel says:

"In my stall I passed the night like an ox;  
I was saturated like a sheep in my excrements."

When released from the ban Nebuchadnezzar becomes able to lift up his eyes unto heaven, and he praises and blesses the Most High. Tabi-Utul-Bel regained his hearing and sight:

"The neck which had been bent downwards and worn,  
He raised erect like a cedar."

Then burst forth the song of praise to the "Lord of Wisdom."

The whole setting is Babylonish and there is as perfect a parallel between the two stories as one could expect when related by different authors. The Babylonian king of the Bible story and of the poem was in both cases pious and taught his subjects "to commemorate the name of God." In each story he becomes proud, and is punished for it—justly as afterwards recognized—by being cast down from his high estate. In each story he suffers from a strange malady which produces the same results for a period of time. Then without human intervention and when companions were estranged and priests were powerless, the king becomes able to recognize God in the affliction and is restored. After this both stories give the prayer of thankfulness to the divinity, and the warning to others not to sin in the same way, "for those that walk in pride he is able to abase" and "He who sins against E-sagila, through me let him see."

#### EDITORIAL COMMENT.

It is true enough that the story of Tabi-Utul-Bel describes a monarch who was deeply humiliated and rose to power again through the grace of God, but the interest of the story does not center in the idea that a great man is humiliated, but rather that a pious man is tried in the furnace of dire affliction and is finally found patient and submissive to the divine will.

The theme of the story of Nebuchadnezzar in the Old Testament conveys

the idea that God will humiliate the haughty. If this story has a prototype in Babylonian legend it has not been discovered. Incidentally we will add that the biblical characterization of Nebuchadnezzar has not the slightest foundation in fact. Neither did he commit the iniquities attributed to him in Daniel iii and iv, nor may we assume that he was ever punished by a spell of insanity. The story appears to have been fixed upon him more by the narrow-minded patriot who saw in Nebuchadnezzar the conqueror of Jerusalem and vented his hate in this fictitious tale.

Nebuchadnezzar was the founder of the Babylonian kingdom and in fact he made it great. When he passed away its glory faded rapidly, for twenty-three years after his death Babylon passed into the hands of Cyrus, the founder of the Persian kingdom. Professor Cornill offers us a brief description of this king in his *Prophets of Israel*, p. 128:

"Nebuchadnezzar is styled by modern historians, not unjustly, "the great." He is the most towering personality in the whole history of the ancient Orient, and a new era begins with him. The greatness of the man consists in the manner in which he conceived his vocation as monarch. Nebuchadnezzar was a warrior as great as any that had previously existed. He had gained victories and made conquests equal to those of the mightiest rulers before him. But he never mentions a word of his brilliant achievement in any of the numerous inscriptions we have of him. We know of his deeds only through the accounts given by those whom he conquered, and from strangers who admired him. He himself tells us only of buildings and of works of peace, which he completed with the help of the gods, whom he worshiped with genuine reverence. The gods bestowed on him sovereignty, that he might become the benefactor of his people and subjects. He rebuilt destroyed cities, restored ruined temples, laid out canals and ponds, regulated the course of rivers, and established harbors, so as to open safe ways and new roads for commerce and traffic. We see in this a clear conception of the moral duties of the state, where its primary object is to become a power for civilization."

---

#### CONFESSIONS OF A CLERGYMAN.

An anonymous book written by a priest of the Anglican church under the title of *Confessions of a Clergyman* (London, Geo. Bell & Sons, 1910) is worthy of careful perusal and is sure to be a comfort to his brethren who have grown liberal after their ordination and feel the discomfiture of no longer being in harmony with the creed to which they have been pledged. The paper wrapper bears the following characteristic publishers note: "This book is an attempt to relieve distressed faith by a restatement of the Christian position in terms acceptable to modern thought and knowledge. It is the record of a personal mental experience very common in these days, but rarely recorded with a like sincerity and freedom."

Through his *Confessions* we become acquainted with the author and the result of his struggle which very strongly resembles the case of Robert Elsmere. He resents the Catholicity of the Apostles creed, for he believes in an individual adherence to primal truth. He does not want to promulgate any strange new doctrine, nor does he desire the uprising of a new sect or cult (p. 83). He expresses his dislike for certain doctrines, such as the Apostolic succession and eternal punishment. He has come to the conclusion