

Herodotus (i. 214) regarding the death of Cyrus. He records how Tomyris, the queen of the Massagetæ, plunged the head of Cyrus into a wineskin filled with blood, remarking at the same time: 'While I was yet alive and conquered thee in battle, thou didst bring me down by taking prisoner my son through guile, but I will satiate thee with blood, as I threatened.' So that here again this instance in which the head of a conquered foe is cut off, is not connected with Cyrus having been the first of a dynasty and with the monthly darkening of the moon; on the contrary, it had motives quite peculiar to itself. It is evident, then, that the basis is wanting for that general judgment that the fortunes of the *moon* are attributed to 'first kings.'

(c) But what cannot be derived from the history of Saul himself, may, according to Winckler, be proved from what we are told about his son. 'Jonathan, Saul's son, is the archer. If his father gains his battles by night as the moon-god, Jonathan gains his by day' (*l.c.* p. 269f.). But how very natural that a son of Saul should be a skilful archer! To rob this circumstance of anything surprising, we do not need to recall how the Benjamites are more than once extolled for their skill in archery (Jg 20¹⁶, 1 Ch 8⁴⁰, 2 Ch 14⁷). In

any case, Jonathan's accomplishments as an archer should not be made an occasion of combining him with the *sun-god*. Yet Winckler feels reminded of the latter by the history of Jonathan. He holds that the Israelites, in thinking of Saul and Jonathan, pursued the following course of ideas: 'The moon-god's son is: the sun-god, whose weapons are bow and arrow (Apollo),' and *therefore* the Israelites would ascribe to Jonathan skill in archery. Again, in continuing a victorious attack begun by Jonathan (1 S 14¹), the natural thought occurred to Saul that the favourable situation might be utilized even in the night, and that as much spoil as possible should be taken from the Philistines (v.³⁰). What has Winckler made of all this? He discovers in it a solid basis for the proposition that 'if Saul gains his battles by night as the moon-god, Jonathan gains his by day.'

An examination of all the points on which Winckler seeks to rest his new theory, has thus led to the conclusion that those features of the O.T. history of Saul, which are supposed to contain allusions to the moon, possess another meaning; and it seems to me that this other meaning is the simpler and more natural. Winckler's hypothesis must, accordingly, be pronounced an arbitrary one.

'The House was filled with the Odour of the Ointment' (John xii. 3).

AN AFTER-TABLE ADDRESS.

BY THE REV. ARCH. ALEXANDER, B.D., WATERBECK.

ONE of the most beautiful stories in the Gospels is the story of Mary's action in the Supper room at Bethany, when she broke her alabaster box 'and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped his feet with her hair.' Jesus Himself was so touched by the beauty and the deep meaning of it, that He foretold for it a memory as deathless as the Gospel itself. And one of the eye-witnesses, in telling the story, the one who perhaps of all the disciples best understood what Mary meant,—John the Apostle of Love,—adds this comment: 'The house was filled with the odour of the ointment.' For a few minutes before we rise from this table, I should like you to think of these words of John.

1. *The Explanation of the Widespread Fragrance.*
—The explanation lay, we can see at once, in the fact that the box was broken, and *all* the contents spilled out. If Mary had done what the disciples would have liked her to do, she would have carefully poured out just enough to serve for the anointing. She would not have broken the box, but only shaken out what was required, and kept the rest for some other time. And Christ would have been anointed just the same, and the balance might even have been given to the poor, but—the fragrance would not have filled the whole house.

There are lives that we know just like that.

They perform all their social and religious duties with faithfulness and precision. What their standards require of them, they do, always. They are solid and useful members of society. But somehow, when the broken-hearted wander forth in search of sympathy, it is not to them that they come. Men or women who have failed or fallen are warned by a sort of instinct to pass them by. The very bairns know better than to play much about their doorsteps—know by the same instinct that takes the bees past the grasses and the corn, on to the heather and the flowers. For what these lives want is just fragrance, the power to charm and to attract.

And we know other characters, in many ways imperfect, it may be, that touch us with an irresistible charm. They are perfect havens of refuge for the storm-tossed. They helped a wanderer yesterday, and he turned out to be a fraud, but they will open their hearts to another to-morrow again, just the same. And there was that undertaking, in which, strictly speaking, they had only one share among many, but for days and weeks past they have cheerfully borne the whole burden themselves. It is not their way to dole out their ointment. They break their box, and spend it all. They are for ever 'giving themselves away.' They are always to be found 'walking on the second mile.' And their lives are fragrant. For the secret of fragrance is just self-forgetfulness, and the power that casts out self is love. Whose is the most fragrant life in all the world—the life that draws the weary and the heavy-laden, and is a refuge for the tempted and the fallen? His, who, as these symbols before us tell, in utter self-forgetfulness and sacrifice, broke the pure casket of His sinless heart, and poured upon the world all the love and passion which it held.

2. *The Service of the Widespread Fragrance.*—Mary's act was meant for Jesus only. The love and gratitude of which it spoke were for her Master and Friend alone. But she could not prevent the odour of it stealing all over the room, and refreshing the disciples also with its gracious influence. She ministered to more than the Christ. She could not hinder the fragrance of her offering from stealing into other lives also.

And that is always true of acts like Mary's. Never a man or a woman yet came with their offering of sacrifice, or testimony, or service to Jesus Christ and for His love's sake poured all out

at His feet, but the sweet savour and influence of it reached all those who were near. We have seen a brother bowed down with a sudden blow, take up his cross humbly, and return with a brave heart to his labours again, in hopefulness and faith unfeigned. We have heard the mourner steady her voice to ask through her tears how some ailing neighbour did. And though we knew that the brave front and the self-forgetting were gifts to Christ, for His own sake, given without thought of us, yet into our hearts also, who only stood by and saw, the fragrance of these offerings stole, to linger like a breath from heaven for many a day. It is one of the laws of God that you can never deprive a loving deed or a Christ-like act of its fragrance. Every time you forget yourself in Christian charity, or the service rendered for Christ's sake, you are speaking to a bigger audience than you know. Not only is your Lord's heart gladdened; but we also, your neighbours, who see, as we watch, to what brave lengths love carries you, how even sorrow only makes you more tender—we, too, are made better men and women for the sight. The odour of your ointment reaches our lives also, and purifies and enriches them.

3. *The Test of the Widespread Fragrance.*—When Mary broke her precious box at the feet of Christ, not only did the scent pervade the upper room—'it filled the whole house,' says John. It stole downstairs to the living rooms, it even entered the place where the food was cooked and the hard work of the household was done. It purified and sweetened the atmosphere even there. Because there was the spirit of consecration in that upper and inner chamber, the influence of it was felt in the common rooms and workplaces downstairs. It was natural, it was what you might have expected. You might call it, from its very naturalness, a test.

Well, my brothers, let us not forget the test, nor stint its application to ourselves. We have been in the upper room with our Lord to-day. We have been dedicating ourselves again to Him. We have broken our little caskets, and offered Him all the poor love they hold. And if for all the poverty of it, it has been real and true, no niggardly doling out of duty, but a purpose and offering of our whole hearts, something of the fragrance of it will be felt down in our common life. It is by that our fellows will test us. They have the right to ask, and depend upon it, they will ask, that

the influence of this and every other time of consecration will penetrate down from here to the places where we live and where we work. For it is

the very nature of such an offering as we have made to-day, that the influence of it, as of ointment poured forth, should fill the whole life.

Contributions and Comments.

The Evangelion Da-Mepharreshe.

MR. BURKITT'S reply to my criticism of his edition of the *Evangelion da-Mepharreshe* requires only a few words of comment. The list of 300 'corrections' to the published text which he has appended to vol. i. of his work, contains many that are excellent, but also some that are entitled only to the name of 'changes.' It includes such *minutiae* as the occasional abolition of an asterisk, which, by a printer's oversight, was carried over from a blank line in the 'Syndics' Edition,' and two cases of the deletion of a dot copied from the manuscript in 1892 by a faithful transcriber, and still plainly visible in the photograph. I have not yet had leisure to examine whether the list includes about forty corrections in Professor Bensly's transcript (as published), which I made when editing 'Some Pages,' and others for which I have supplied the materials to Mr. Burkitt. But it certainly includes several which I shall dispute.

As I have just started on a little tour amongst the Greek islands, I am separated from my books by a distance of several thousand miles, and have therefore no means of verifying any words. Nor are the pages of THE EXPOSITORY TIMES suitable for the discussion of purely technical questions. But as the word אִתְעֵלֵן, which I have read in Lk 2¹⁵, is of rare occurrence, I cannot allow that it is appropriate only in the mouth of Beelzebub. If an angel had entered into the man, what word would have been used? The second letter in this word is very distinct, so the problem cannot be solved by deleting it.

Mr. Burkitt's ingenuity in trying to abolish the final ך of the disputed word in the last colophon of the 'Lives of Holy Women' quite fails to convince me. I published the word Ma'arath in my edition of the 'Holy Women.' Meşrin baffled me, because the letter ş is hardly visible in either

of the poor photographs from which I copied it. It was strange that I overlooked the very distinct colophon f. 165b, thinking that it belonged to the story of the female saint which preceded it, and which I had not included in my edition. But it is equally strange that Professor Bensly overlooked the first half of the final colophon, where alone 'Stylite' and 'Antioch' occur, and that he should have thus left an important word for Mr. Burkitt and me to dispute about.

Mr. Burkitt has surely forgotten that I prefer the reading: כּוּרֵב (as I saw it in the manuscript during my visit to Sinai in 1902) to כּוּכַב, *Kaukab*, a mere conjecture from the photographs in 1900. There is happily no doubt, outside of Mr. Burkitt's mind, about the first, second, or fourth letters of this word. There is no hole in the vellum which would be mistaken for the lower limb of the כּ. The bad state of that page is not due to any hesitation on the part of the scribe, but to its age—long adhesion to the page which precedes it. I observe that Mr. Burkitt already wavers in his statement that the word contains only three letters.

It is surely better for us to report exactly what we have seen in a manuscript (even if it presents difficulties) than what we think it ought to have been. It is now twelve years since Mr. Burkitt examined the actual text, and those who, like him, did not see it until 1893, can have no idea of the amount of dirt which was cleared off it, not by me, but by the monks, during the year that followed its discovery.

The final colophon will be seen to better advantage in the last of the series of glass slides which Mrs. Gibson and I have recently given to the Universities of Heidelberg and St. Andrews, than in any of the paper photographs or in the facsimile of Mr. Burkitt's transcript from the photograph given in the April number of THE EXPOSITORY TIMES. That number, I may add, did not