



Gilbert L. and Frederick N. Wilson
Papers

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Vol. 41

LUKE X, 38-42. "And Mary hath chosen that good part which shall not be taken away from her."

The children of Israel came forth out of Egypt organized by tribes, and throughout their history of the next four centuries we see the recurring danger to the nation of a patriotism that was tribal, rather than national. To foster a national feeling, to remind the people of the tribes that they had a common religious history, three feasts were yearly celebrated, the feast of PASSOVER, the feast of PENTECOST, and the feast of TABERNACLES, or INGATHERING of the the harvest. After the establishment of the kingdom to further foster the national feeling, it was ordained that all three of these feasts must be celebrated in Jerusalem, the capitol city of the new nation; that they should be even more solemnly religious; and that every male of the kingdom should be bidden then to come to the holy city to worship, and to meet his brethren of the tribes.

Of these three feasts, the first, or feast of the Passover, celebrated in April, is more familiar to us because our Lord was crucified at Passover, and because our own observance of Communion or the Lord's Supper is but a spiritual continuation of this feast. And because of these reasons probably most Christians will give it their chief thought. But to the Jew the chief feast of the three was that of tabernacles, or Booths, celebrated in October. It was by far the most popular feast of the three; and if providentially prevented from attending all, the Jew was certain to make especial efforts to attend this, the third and last. And we who are Americans can sympathize with Jewish feeling. The Feast of Tabernacles was the Jew's Thanksgiving, his national Thanksgiving week. In Egypt the Israelite was a stranger, and a servant. In the desert a wandering nomad, without a country, without fields, without a dwelling-place. Living or better camping, the chiefs in tents of goat skins, the common people more often in tabernacles or booths of boughs. Now come into a land of plenty, of bounteous harvests of field and vineyard, the Jew was bidden never forget the mercy of God which brought him forth out of bondage. And in the autumn at the end of the final harvest, every family was bidden erect booths of boughs or mats in the courts of the houses, in the fields or on the house tops, and here for seven days - afterwards eight days - to dwell, in memory of the years when Israel had neither fields nor harvests nor houses but wandered a desert nomad seeking a home.

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LUKE X, 38-42. "And Mary hath chosen that good part which shall not be taken away from her."

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Altho the scene of Jesus' ministry lies for the most part in Galilee we have abundant evédance of the scrupulous care which he ever observed to obey the religious law to be present at the three great national feasts at the capitol city. The episode of our present lesson took place at the time of the ~~fast of~~ feast of Tabernacles which Jesus observed, that is the Jewish Thanksgiving week about six months before he died. The account which we have preserved to us is of the briefest and most condensed character, and can be expanded only with conjecture. But our interest in our Saviour's mission and the importance of his example in every deed and act of his life justifies us in examining every detail of Jewish life and custom if by such we may present to ourself a fuller conception of any episode in our Saviour's life

The scene lies in Bethany, near to and almost a suburb of Jerusalem. Here lived Martha and her sister Mary and Lazarus. These were the only wealthy family mentioned in all the gospels at whose home Jesus seems to have been a habitual and welcome guest. We know the family was wealthy since an indigent family would never have possessed the very costly box of spikenard which Mary afterwards broke over Jesus' feet. We are distinctly told by Luke that the HOUSE belonged to Martha; and we note in all three of the episodes of Jesus and his three friends Martha figures always as the family head or leader. It has been conjectured that Martha was widowed and that Mary and Lazarus her younger brother and sister lived with her. We may make a suggestion even of Mary's age. Knowing the Jewish marriage custom, and knowing too that in a well-to-do family with a male representative living, that custom demanded that a sister be suitably wedded at a rather early age, we may at least suggest that Mary was a young girl of sixteen or seventeen years of age.

Of the circumstances of Jesus being in Bethany we are not left in doubt. John says that Jesus walked in Galilee for he would not walk in Jewry because the Jews sought to kill him. That his brothers who did not believe in him exhorted him to go to the feast in Jerusalem with them and show by his works if his claims were true. Jesus refused. But after his brethren were gone he went up to Jerusalem as it were secretly. He came to the temple and taught about the midst of the feast-possibly awaiting a larger representation of his friends. Evidently he remained the first two or three days of the feast in Bethany, sending his disciples on to the city, and apparently Lazarus went with them.

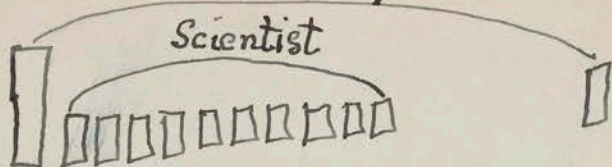
We must now fall back on conjecture, but Jewish custom is so well understood that it amounts almost to certainty. The house of a well-to-do family was invariably built around a court, often with a fountain in it. In the week of the feast of booths, the family booth was erected of living boughs in this court. Here the family assembled to eat, pray, converse, and study, the women usually returning to the house in the evening. If strangers were guests of the family, small sleeping booths were erected outside of the house, which as will be remembered was surrounded by a solid stone wall.

The scene now becomes apparently quite plain. Jesus had come into the court from his lodging booth, to the family or eating booth for the chief meal of the day. Martha and Mary were busy making the necessary preparations for their guest. But as Jesus entered and seated himself, Mary dropped her work to ask him some question that had been troubling her and carried away by her interest in his teaching remained to hear him. Martha was thus left to carry out all the preparations alone—and this involved much running to and fro between the booth and the house. Finally, a bit impatiently, and moved perhaps by a little jealousy, she approached the pair and addressed Jesus, "Lord, dost thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone? Bid her therefore that she help me." words addressed really to her sister, but to Jesus as courtesy would require as to a guest. Our Saviour's answer was gentle. "Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled-anxious and bustling-about many things; and this is well; but remember, that after all these things and not essential; for after all but one thing is needful, and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her.

I think that we are all aware that sweeping change is now taking place in the church in the methods by which she seeks religious expression. There is nothing so very alarming in this, since it is always true and always will be true that social needs vary with the age and these require different methods to meet them. In the centuries immediately preceding the Reformation the church became wholly institutionalized. She regulated society not only but she ruled it as well. The individual could not approach God of himself. He must do so only thru the church. With the Reformation came the emphasis upon the individual. The church was but the instrument of the preaching of the Word. The cathedral was exchanged for the simple little meeting house. Now when we are emphasizing social service the church is again becoming institutionalized, not this time to rule, but to serve. The change that has taken place the last twenty years is startling. Some things are now done in the church which would have made our fathers turn over in their graves. As

Jaest Michaelson -
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How - Why



Scientist. phenomenon result
of antecedent phenomena.
Back to First Cause = God
Classes: Science & Causes re
II Time: Hendoo.

Savage nothing Science
Cause = intelligent - just causes.
Wol/Chief: all things have Spirit
Body to them.
Speak Gods very - near
III

See use of names Pray. = ^{acknowledged}
Mardi-wia. God-way
Toaka sakie =
Kua harwic = Shot Bull ^{wol} Chief.
Wilson.

NEAR = IV

Jews.
very little science.
How why = God.
Seemed near = not more real.
Shown names. Religious
Hebrew Language.
Skeleton = 3 consonants
vowel changes Suffixes

Prayer Hope: Messiah: mother Messiahs

Joezer = Jehovah is help.
Jojada = Je = knows.
Johanan = John - Je = is gracious
Joah = Je is brother
Jehoshaphat = whom Je judges.
Joshua = JESUS = Je - savior

Elisha = to whom God Salva bin
Elyah = My God is Jehovah
Elihu = whose God is He.
Eliizer = My God is help.
Eliel = to whom God is strength.

Jeh Thanksgiving
Jehovah - Jave = Living One.

Samuel =
Elpaal = to whom is the reward.
Elidad = whom God loves
Eliakim = " God establishes
Benjamin = Son of - right hand
Joseph = he shall add

Acknowledged God's Promise
Samuel = asked of God.
Nathanul = Gift of God.
Immanuel = God is with ^{us}

Changed Names

Abram = High Father
Abraham = Father of multitude.
Jacob = Supplanter
Israel = Soldier of God.
Yaomi = Pleasant
Mara = Sad.

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