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The Annotated Bible

by

Arno Clement Gaebelein

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The Annotated Bible

Old Testament

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THE BOOK OF GENESIS

The Annotated Bible

Arno Clement Gaebelein

THE BOOK OF GENESIS

Introduction

The first book of the Bible is called in the Septuagint (the Greek translation of the Old Testament) "Genesis." Genesis means "origin." The Hebrews call it by the first Hebrew word "Bereshith"--in the beginning. It is the book of all beginnings. We can trace here the beginnings of creation and everything else, except God, who has no beginning. The book of Genesis is the great foundation upon which the entire revelation of God rests. The marvellous structure of the Bible, composed of the different books, written by different instruments of the Spirit of God at different times, is built upon this great, majestic book. It is the root out of which the tree of God's revelation has grown. Internal evidences prove the most complete unity, that is the work of one chosen instrument, Moses, and that it is not of a composite authorship. But more than that, the book of Genesis establishes the divine unity of the Bible. The last book of the Bible, the Revelation, confirms this. Genesis tells of the origin of all things; Revelation reveals the destiny of all things.

It is an interesting study, profitable and suggestive, to trace the great doctrines of the Bible in this first book. They are all found somewhere in Genesis, either in typical foreshadowings or in direct words. Here, too, we may discover the dispensational and prophetic truths of the Bible in germ. Genesis 3:15 is the prediction out of which the rest of prophecy has been developed. The entire New Testament in its doctrinal statements rests upon this book. It is quoted there as the Word of God scores of times. If the revelations of Genesis, especially the opening chapters, the supreme foundation, if these chapters were myths, the entire New Testament would have to be given up as unauthoritative. Indeed, the great doctrines in Romans, starting from the fact that man is a fallen being and lost, would be just as much myths, if the fall of man were a myth. The Lord Jesus Christ has put His seal to this great book.

The Criticism of Genesis

The book of Genesis, being the foundation of the whole Bible, and of such vast importance, it does not surprise us that the enemy of the truth of God has directed first of all his attacks against this book to break down its authority. A hundred years ago and less the cunning inventions of the father of lies, directed against the inspiration of Genesis and its unity, occupied mostly, if not altogether, the minds of theologians and scholars. It is different now. The stock of trade of the destructive critics, differing but little from that of accredited infidels, has become the common property of evangelical Christendom. The rationalistic theories concerning the date and authorship of Genesis are now liberally and almost universally displayed. In theological seminaries they are openly taught and hundreds of men, who claim to be teachers of the oracles of God, deny the inspiration of the book of Genesis.

The Paternity of Higher Criticism

That such a denial is not of God is self-evident. But it is interesting to examine the source from which the destructive criticism of Genesis and the Pentateuch has come. The man who has been called the "Sir Isaac Newton of criticism" is Jean Astruc. He was a French physician, a freethinker, who led a wicked, immoral life. In 1753 this man gave to the world his doubts in a work which he called, "Conjectures Regarding the Original Memoirs in the Book of Genesis." In this work he

taught that the use of the two names of God in Genesis, Elohim (translated by God) and Jehovah (translated by Lord) showed that two different documents were used in the composition of the book. The hypothesis of a Jehovist and Elohist writer, so called, was invented by this unsaved man. It was, however, reserved for a German scholar and rationalist to formulate the denial of the unity and inspiration of Genesis into a system. This man was Professor Eichhorn. He coined the phrase, "higher criticism," and is therefore called the "father" of it. He introduced successfully into the theological institutions of Germany the theory of Astruc. On account of his great learning his invented higher criticism took hold upon the minds of thousands of people. But who was Professor Eichhorn? Let another higher critic give the answer. Ewald, himself such a powerful factor of this most dangerous infidelity, wrote: "We cannot fail to recognize that, from the religious point of view the Bible was to him a closed book."

Such is the paternity of the now widely accepted higher criticism: an immoral, infidel Frenchman and an unconverted, blind leader of the blind, a German Professor.

Their Disciples

After Eichhorn came other men, such as Vater and Hartman, who tried to undermine the Mosaic authorship of Genesis by still another theory. Professor DeWette, of Heidelberg, followed closely in the steps of infidel Eichhorn. Bleek taught still another theory. Then we mention Ewald, Hupfeld, Prof. Kuenen, Dr. Davidson, Robertson Smith, Canon Driver, George Adams Smith, Professor Briggs, W. Harper, Marcus Dods and many others, who may all be fitly called the disciples of the immoral Frenchman and the infidel German. For instance, George Adams Smith saith: "The framework of the first eleven chapters of Genesis is woven from the raw material of myth and legend" And the works of this man and others are now sold at popular prices by so called Christian publishers.

A Complicated Science

They call this kind of criticism scientific. It surely has all the marks of so-called science. Speculation, uncertainty and complicated statements are the leading characteristics of this criticism. They claim now that the Pentateuch (the five books written by Moses) were never written by him, but that these books consist of four diverse documents. These they designate as follows: 1. The Jehovist. 2. The Elohist. 3. The Deuteronomist. 4. The Priestly Code. The authorship of Moses has been completely given up and it is claimed that the earliest part of the Pentateuch was written perhaps six hundred years after Moses' death. They put the date of the greater part of these five books after the Babylonian captivity.

A writer has recently given a fine description of this higher critical "scientific" nonsense, part of which we quote:

They conjecture that these four suppositive documents were not compiled and written by Moses, but were probably constructed somewhat after this fashion: For some reason, and at some time, and in some way, someone no one knows who, or why, or when, or where, wrote Jehovist. Then someone else, no one knows who, or why, or when, or where, wrote another document, which is now called Elohist. And then at a later time, the critics only know who, or why, or when, or where, an anonymous personage, whom we may call Redactor I, took in hand the reconstruction of these documents, introduced new material, harmonized the real and apparent discrepancies, and divided the inconsistent accounts of one event into two separate transactions. Then some time after this, perhaps one hundred years or more, no one knows who, or why, or when, or where, some anonymous personage wrote another document, which they styled Deuteronomist. And after awhile another anonymous author, no one knows who, or why, or when, or where, whom we will call Redactor II, took this in hand, compared it with Jehovist and Elohist, revised them with considerable freedom and, in addition, introduced quite a body of new material. Then someone else, no one knows who, or why, or when, or where, probably, however, about 525, or perhaps 425, wrote the Priestly Code; and then another anonymous Hebrew, whom we may call Redactor III, undertook to incorporate this with the triplicated composite Jehovist, Elohist, and Deuteronomist, with what they call redactional additions and insertions (Canon Hague).

This describes the infidel mud puddle into which these "great" scholars have plunged and into which they would like to

lead the sheep and even the little lambs.

The Mosaic Authorship

"All tradition, from whatever source it is derived, whether inspired or uninspired, unanimously affirms that the first five books of the Bible were written by one man, and that man was Moses. There is no counter-testimony in any quarter." With these words, Prof. William Henry Green begins his learned work on the unity of Genesis. Other learned men in past generation up to the present time stand firm for the Mosaic authorship of Genesis, and thereby affirm the fact of revelation. The cry of the higher critics--"ripe scholarship," "access to better sources," etc.--is a bluff. The best scholarship stands by the truth. Some of the arguments advanced against Moses as writer of Genesis are exactly the argument for it and the evidences of inspiration. For instance, the use of the name of God as Elohim and Jehovah. Elohim is the name of God as Creator--Jehovah is His name as entering into covenant relation with man. The use of these names is a precious evidence of the work of the Spirit of God and not an evidence of different writers and documents.

The highest authority that Moses wrote Genesis and the other four books, and that Genesis is the revelation of God, is the Lord Jesus Christ. He spoke repeatedly of Moses and reminded His hearers of the historic facts as given in Genesis. This fact is met by the critics with the statement that our Lord was not a critical scholar and limited in His knowledge. Such statements are akin to blasphemy.

Needed Information

The information concerning the criticism upon this great Bible book we are about to study is much needed. Many Christians hear of higher criticism without knowing what it is and how it originated. The information given shows that it originated with wicked men and that it is an attempt to destroy the very foundations upon which the whole Scriptures rest. Sometimes higher critics have a way of telling uninformed Christians that the views they hold are the consensus of the best scholarship. This is untrue. Others, again, who have imbibed these views hide the worst features of them. For this reason we deem it expedient to give this information.

The study of Genesis will deepen the faith in the inspiration and revelation of the first book of the Bible. There is nothing which convinces of the divinity of the Bible like the prayerful and spiritual study of the Bible itself. And the Bible has nothing to fear. It needs neither apology nor concessions.

Revelation or Myth?

A FEW OBJECTIONS CONSIDERED

From the sides of infidelity, higher criticism and a certain class of scientists objections are made against the opening chapters of Genesis. Not only is the Mosaic authorship denied but the revelation contained in these chapters is branded as unscientific and at variance with the facts revealed by science. Others class these sublime truths concerning creation, the fall of man, the deluge, etc., with the legends of primitive nations and thus the fact of revelation is altogether denied. Inasmuch as these wicked statements are heard on all sides from pulpits and chairs of educational institutions, it becomes necessary that we consider briefly some of these objections and uncover their absolute worthlessness. The purpose of our work forbids a more extended treatment of these objections. Many helpful and interesting books have been written by scholars against these attacks. Elsewhere in this booklet the reader will find a number of works mentioned which deal with these attacks in a masterly way.

Is the Creation Account Contradicted by Science?

That the creation account is unscientific and in clash with the discoveries of modern science is one of the common statements. It has, however, no foundation whatever. The proofs that there is no error in the account of creation as revealed

in the first chapter of Genesis, have been furnished by the investigation of science. The order of creation as given in the first chapter is the order, which, after years of searching--the most laborious searching--science has discovered. Over and over again has science with its guesses and speculations been forced to bow in submission before the simple and brief description of the creation in God's Word. There is no clash between the Bible and the results of true scientific research. Geology, astronomy, and other sciences have had to retrace their steps more than once and acknowledge their mistake; the first chapter of Genesis will never have to do that.

Years ago scientists ridiculed the divine statement that the first thing called into existence was light: "let there be light," and that the sun was made on the fourth day. That sneer is forever silenced, for science has found out that light existed first. Again for a long time it was denied that vegetation came first before animal life was on this globe. This denial has likewise been stopped by scientific discoveries. Other evidences that the Bible is right and science had to accept the truthfulness of the creation account we must pass by. What scientists should explain is, how in a simple record of a few verses, which antedates all scientific research and discovery, such accurate information is given without any error whatever. Where did Moses get his marvellous knowledge which the scientific research of the nineteenth century confirms correct in every way? There is only one answer. It is the revelation of God.

This becomes still more evident when the creation chapter in Genesis is compared with the conceptions of the origin of the earth as found in the records of the oldest nations. What ridiculous things were believed concerning creation and the universe! Why did Moses not write the same childish things but instead gives a majestic account of the creation of the earth and the heavens? The answer is and ever will be, his account is the revelation of God how the earth and the heavens came into existence.

Is There a Contradiction Between the First and Second Chapters of Genesis?

Another favorite argument against the infallible record of creation is that the first and second chapters are contradictory. A certain New York preacher stated some years ago in Appleton's Magazine this supposed difficulty. He said, "How can we trouble about reconciling Genesis and science" while the two accounts of the first two chapters "are so hopelessly at variance?" Criticism has used this alleged discrepancy as an argument for its infidel theories. There is, however, no contradiction between these two chapters. The second chapter in Genesis is not another history of creation nor does it contradict the account in the first chapter. The historical account of creation as a whole is found in Genesis 1-2:3. The division of chapters in the authorized version is unfortunate. From chapter 2:4 to the close of the chapter we have not a historical account of creation at all, but a divine statement of the relationships of creation, that is, man's place in it as its head. There are no contradictions in anything. Genesis 1:27 is said to clash with 2:21-22. Such a clash does not exist. Gen. 1:27 does not say that man and woman were created together, nor does it say that the woman was created directly and not formed as revealed in the second chapter.

The Myths of Ancient Nations

It is a well known fact that ancient nations such as the Chaldeans, Egyptians, Phoenicians, Hindus, possessed myths in which one can hear now and then a faint echo of a primeval revelation and knowledge, which must have been in possession of all mankind at one time. That such was the case Romans 1:21-23 fully confirms. All mankind knew God and was acquainted with the great facts of history, the events recorded in the first eleven chapters of Genesis. As they became vain, their foolish heart was darkened, they rushed into idolatry. Their traditions, however, here and there give glimpses of the truth they once knew. It is impossible to give here evidences of it as discovered in the Assyrian tablets, which have something to say of the creation and the deluge, known now as "the Chaldean Genesis." Other traces are found in ancient Phoenician sources as well as in India, among the Romans and the Greeks, Babylonians, Chinese and other nations. However, all these, including "the Chaldean Genesis" are miserable contortions.

There are a few resemblances and many more differences between the Biblical and especially the Babylonian accounts. It is claimed that Moses, or since Moses did not write according to this infidel theory, somebody else, made use of these

myths in writing the opening chapters of Genesis. This farfetched invention has no foundation at all. The book of Genesis is not the offspring of Babylonian tradition. God gave to Moses the account of creation and the beginnings of history by direct revelation as the blessed foundation of all subsequent revelation in His holy Word. The man, who boasts of scholarship, and brands the first eleven chapters of Genesis as myths, putting them alongside of the traditions of ignorant ancient nations, but reveals his ignorance and blindness.

The Deluge

This great catastrophe has also been denied and ridiculed. It is painful to mention all these denials, but it is needful to call attention to these attacks on the foundation of the Bible. Hundreds of men, who claim to be exponents of Christianity speak of Noah as a myth and the deluge reported in Genesis as an unconfirmed event. Traditions of the flood are found among all nations and exhibit in many cases a very striking agreement with the divinely given record. These traditions are found in India, China, Egypt, and Greece as well as among the Chaldeans and Babylonians. Peruvians, Mexicans, Greenlanders, and the Teutonic races possess these traditions. Geology also gives the most decisive evidence of such a judgment by water through which the earth passed. The surface of the earth exhibits a deposit, which originated after a universal flood and which is called diluvial (flood) land. Vast quantities of bones and teeth of antediluvian animals, masses of rock and boulder, carried by the flood, are found in this diluvial deposit. Many pages could be filled with such evidences.

Nothing Left Unattacked

Nothing has been left unattacked in the opening chapters of Genesis. The existence of paradise, the fall of man, the curse, the story of Cain and Abel, Enoch's translation, the tower of Babel and every other recorded event has been denied and is increasingly denied. That our Lord referred repeatedly to these first chapters of the Bible and thereby confirmed their historicity and revelation, is not at all taken in consideration by these enemies of the Word of God.

But the foundation rock of the Bible, the book of Genesis stands as firm as it ever stood. It can never be moved. Let them dig away! Let them dash against it with their heads. They will perish, but God's Word abideth forever. In a day when apostasy sweeps through Christendom like a mighty avalanche, let us cling closer to the living Word of the living God and hold fast the testimony of its inerrancy. And now with thankful hearts and a prayer for the Holy Spirit's guidance we come to the book itself.

The Division of Genesis

Every book of the Bible has a key and also hints on the division of the book. The correct way in unlocking the book is to use the key and the Division as given by the Holy Spirit in the book itself. The book of Genesis has been divided in perhaps more different ways than any other book. In looking through Genesis for a characteristic word we have no difficulty in finding it in the word "generations" (Hebrew: toledoth). It is used eleven times in this book. The first time the word generations occurs is in chapter 2:4. The creation account stands therefore by itself. This gives us twelve sections.

I. THE CREATION ACCOUNT (1-2:3)

II. THE GENERATIONS OF THE HEAVENS AND THE EARTH (2:4-4)

III. THE GENERATIONS OF ADAM (5-6:8)

IV. THE GENERATIONS OF NOAH (6:9-9:29)

V. THE GENERATIONS OF THE SONS OF NOAH (10-11:9)

VI. THE GENERATIONS OF SHEM (11:10-26)

VII. THE GENERATIONS OF TERAH (11:27-25:11)

VIII. THE GENERATIONS OF ISHMAEL (25:12-18)

IX. THE GENERATIONS OF ISAAC (25:19-35)

X. THE GENERATIONS OF ESAU (36:1-8)

XI. THE GENERATIONS OF ESAU'S SONS (36:9-43)

XII. THE GENERATIONS OF JACOB (37:2-50:26)

We fully agree with the scholarly remarks of Prof. Green about the importance of this division. "These titles are designed to emphasize and render more prominent and palpable an important feature of the book, the genealogical character of its history. This results from its main design, which is to trace the line of descent of the chosen race from the beginning to the point where it was ready to expand to a great nation, whose future organization was already foreshadowed, its tribes being represented in the twelve sons of Jacob, and its tribal divisions in their children, The genealogies contained in the book are not merely incidental or subordinate, but essential, and the real basis of the whole. They are not to be regarded as addenda to the narrative, scraps of information introduced into it; they constitute the skeleton or framework of the history itself."

"There is, accordingly, a regular series of genealogies of like structure, or rather one continuous genealogy extending from Adam to the family of Jacob. This is interrupted and suspended from time to time, as occasion requires, for the sake of introducing or incorporating facts of the history at particular points where they belong; after which it is resumed again precisely at the same point, and proceeds regularly as before until it reaches its utmost limit, thus embracing the entire history within itself."

It is interesting to note the beginning and the end of these sections. We leave this as a suggestion with the reader. The reign of death after the entrance of sin is in full evidence in these sections. "Death reigned from Adam to Moses" (Romans 5:14). The last section ends with Joseph's death "and he was put in a coffin in Egypt."

In our annotations, following the above division, we shall trace the historical account and point out some spiritual and dispensational truths giving many hints, which may be followed in a more extended study of this great book.

Analysis and Annotations

I. THE CREATION ACCOUNT

The manner in which the book of Genesis begins leaves no doubt that it is the revelation of God. The creation account is historical truth. The question is how was it given? An answer to this question claims that the Jews obtained the account from the records of other nations concerning the origin of the universe and that they altered it according to their own religious ideas. This is an impossibility. The ancient heathen nations considered God and the universe one and had absolutely no knowledge of the existence of God independent of the universe, nor did they know anything of a creation of the world. Here is something wholly different from all the theories, mythologies and other inventions of the human race. How then was it given? By revelation of God is the only answer.

No human being knew anything about the origin of the heavens and the earth. Man cannot by searching find out God,

nor can man discover how the earth was created and all things came into existence. How ridiculous the statements and opinions on the creation of men called great thinkers, not to speak of the equally foolish beliefs of the nations of the past. But here is what God makes known, how He called all things into existence. He makes known that the universe is not eternal but that He created it. The whole account is of wonderful grandeur and yet of the greatest simplicity; so simple that a child can read it and understand the truth, but so profound that the greatest men have bowed before it.

It is not the purpose of this Bible study course to enter into details or we would write at length on the evolution theory with its invented "protoplasm." There are many questions which the evolutionists cannot answer and many difficulties which they cannot explain. Their scientific assertions and speculations require one to believe what is against reason, while God never expects us to believe what is contrary to reason. It is far more simple to accept God's revelation. "By faith we understand that the worlds have been framed by the Word of God, so that what is seen hath not been made out of things which appear" (Heb. 11:3). This disposes of evolution and the other theories of unbelieving men, who reject God's Word.

The statement which one hears so often from sneering lips that the creation account is unscientific has no foundation. That it is non-scientific is an entirely different matter. Galileo, the astronomer, truthfully said, "The Scriptures were given, not to tell us how the heavens go, but to teach us how to go to heaven." Yet, as already mentioned in our introduction, science had to acknowledge over and over again the correctness of the creation account and withdraw the objections and assaults which had been made.

THE ORIGINAL CREATION OF GOD (1:1)

A ruined creation and the brooding spirit (1:2)

The Restoration of the Earth

1. The first day--light (1:3-5)
2. The second day--The dividing of the waters (1:6-8)
3. The third day--The earth out of the waters and vegetable life appears (1:9-13)
4. The fourth day--The lights in the heavens (1:14-19)
5. The fifth day--Living creatures in the waters and in the air (1:20-23)
6. The sixth day--Living creatures made and man created in God's image (1:24-31)
7. The seventh day--God's rest (2:1-3)

The first verse of the book of Genesis and of the whole Bible stands alone in majestic greatness. Like some mountain peak rising from the valley in solitary grandeur with its snow-capped summit, it inspires awe. In the Hebrew the verse is composed of seven words. When that beginning was in which God created the heavens and the earth is not revealed. It must have been many millions of years ago; God only knows it and science can never discover it. It is incorrect to say that it was 6,000 years ago. God does not speak of Himself; no statement concerning His existence or His eternity is given. How different from the myths and speculations of pagan nations. God's Name mentioned for the first time in the Bible is "Elohim." It is in the plural indicating God's great dignity and power as well as the fact that God is triune. (See the "Let us make man," in verse 26.) Elohim is God's name as Creator. This verse answers all the different "isms" about God and His creation, while its depths cannot be sounded. Here atheism is answered; polytheism (the many gods of the heathen) is exposed to be false. The verse disproves materialism as well as pantheism, that God and the universe are one.

It is of the greatest importance to understand that the condition in which the earth (not the heavens) is described in the second verse is not how God created it in the beginning. Scripture itself tells us this. Read Isaiah 45:18. The Hebrew word for "without form" is *_tohu*, which means waste. "The earth was waste and void." But in the passage of Isaiah we read, "He created it not a waste." The original earth passed through a great upheaval. A judgment swept over it, which in all probability must have occurred on account of the fall of that mighty creature, Lucifer, who fell by pride and became the devil. The original earth, no doubt, was his habitation and he had authority over it which he still claims as the prince of this

world. Luke 4:5-6 shows us this. The earth had become waste and void; chaos and darkness reigned. What that original earth was we do not know, but we know that animal and vegetable life was in existence long before God began to restore the earth. The immense fossil beds prove this. But they likewise prove that man was not then on the earth. Between the first and second verses of the Bible there is that unknown period of millions of years of which geology gets a glimpse in studying the crust of the earth. God waited His own time in majestic calmness when He would begin to carry out His plans He had made before the foundation of the world.

When that time arrived God began to bring order into the chaos and restored His creation so that the earth which is now and the heavens above came forth. The Spirit moving (brooding) upon the waters and His Word were the agents through which it was accomplished. Read John 1:1-3; Col. 1:15-16; Heb. 1:2-3. We do not follow the historical account and the six days' work, but call attention to the correspondency between the first three days and the last three. The seventh day stands by itself.

First day: Light Second day: Dividing of waters Third day: The earth out of the waters and vegetable life Fourth day: Solar system and lights Fifth day: Life in the waters Sixth day: Life on the earth and man created Seventh day: God rests

The word "create" is used only three times. In the first verse it applies to the original creation, when God called everything into existence out of nothing. Then we find it in verse 21 in connection with the calling forth of living creatures (nephesh--soul) and in verse 27 in connection with man. The other word used is the word "made." This necessitates the existence of material which is shaped into something; the word "create" does not require existence of matter. The light which came forth on the first day was light before the sun, a fact well known to science.

The creation of man is the crowning act of the Creator and precedes His rest. "Let us make man" is the counsel of the Godhead. God then created man in His own image. In the second chapter we read that He formed him out of the dust of the earth and breathed into his nostrils and man became a living soul.

The deeper Lessons of the Creation. The Creation account has a most interesting typical and dispensational meaning. In dealing with the individual in redemption and dealing with ruined creation by the fall of man, God follows the order of the six days work. (F.W. Grant's Genesis in the Light of the New Testament develops this fully.) We give a few hints. The ruined creation wasted and void, covered with the dark waters and in darkness is the picture of fallen man. The two agents God used in the restoration of the ruined creation, the Spirit and the Word are the agents of the new birth. "Born of the Spirit" and of the "incorruptible seed of the Word of God." In redemption God uses the word "create" not the word "made," because what we receive by faith in His Son is not a mending of an old nature, but we are a new creation; created in Christ Jesus. David prayed, "Create in me a clean heart." The work of the first day is touched upon in 2 Cor. 4:6. "For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness hath shined in our hearts." When that light shines upon us it reveals the ruin of ourselves. The second day brings before us the separation, which follows the manifestation of the light. The third day stands for resurrection, for the earth came out of the waters and brings forth grass, herbs and trees, yielding fruit. Throughout the entire Bible this meaning of the third day may be traced. (It is the day of resurrection and restoration. Gen. 22:4; 40:20-22; 42:18; Ex. 15:22; 19:11; Numb. 7:24; Josh. 2:16; 2 Kings 20:5; Esther 5:1; 9:18; Hos. 6:2, John 2:1; Luke 13:33.) The spiritual truth here is that if the Light has shone in and we believe we are "risen with Christ" and the fruit bearing, which is the result of this.

The fourth day directs our attention heavenward; there we are seated together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. The fifth day brings before us again the restless waters and the life manifested there. Out of the midst of these waters life comes. Even so in Christian experience down here. The sixth day points to the time of the completion of the new creation, while the seventh day reveals the eternal rest.

Dispensationally the lessons from the first chapter in Genesis are still more interesting.

The first day: The age before the flood: The light shines in.

The second day: The age of Noah.

The third day: The age of Abraham and his seed.

The fourth day: The present age: Christ the Sun; the moon typical of the church. Individual believers represented by stars.

The fifth day: The restless waters: The times of the Gentiles ending; "the sea and the waves roaring." The great tribulation.

The sixth day: The kingdom rule established over the earth in the second coming of Christ.

The seventh day: The eternal ages: God is all in all.

It is equally interesting to see that the same dispensational truths gather around the names of seven of the prominent actors of the book of Genesis. These are: Adam, Seth, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph. We quote from another:

Adam gives us the beginning, when, with the entrance of God's Word, light comes into the soul of a sinner, and God meets him as such with the provision of His grace (chapter 3).

Then (4-5), we have the history of the two "seeds," and their antagonisms story which has its counterpart in the history of the world at large, but also in every individual soul where God has wrought, and where the "flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh, and these are contrary the one to the other."

Next, Noah's passage through the judgment of the old world into a new scene, accepted of God in the sweet savor of sacrifice, is the type of where salvation puts us--"in Christ, a new creation: old things passed away, and all things become new" (6-11-9).

Abraham's Canaan-life--pilgrim and stranger, but a worshiper, gives us the fruit and consequence of this--a "walk in Him" whom we have received (11:10-21).

Then, Isaac, our type as "sons" (4:28), speaks to us of a self-surrender into a Father's hands, the door into a life of quiet and enjoyment, as it surely is (22-24:33).

Jacob speaks of the discipline of sons, by which the crooked and deceitful man becomes Israel, a prince with God--a chastening of love, dealing with the fruits of the old nature in us (26:34; 37:1).

While Joseph, the fullest image of Christ, suffers, not for sin, but for righteousness' sake, and obtains supremacy over the world and fulness of blessing from the Almighty One, his strength (Genesis in the Light of the New Testament).

How marvellous all this is! And yet we touch only upon the surface. The highest evidence for the Word of God is the Word itself. No man or human genius could have ever produced such a document as the first chapter of Genesis, which contains in embryo all the subsequent revelations of God. It is God's revelation.

II. THE GENERATIONS OF THE HEAVENS AND THE EARTH

Man in Innocency before the Fall (2:4-25)

1. The earth his abode (2:4-6)
2. The creation of man (2:7)
3. The garden of Eden (2:8-14)
4. Man in the garden. His commission (2:15-17)
 - a. To keep the garden
 - b. The commandment
5. No helpmeet for Adam found (2:18-20)
6. The formation of the woman (2:21-22)
7. The union (2:23-25)

This is not a new version of the creation or a repetition of the account in the preceding chapter. The relationships of the created man to nature and to His Creator are now more specifically introduced. The name of God appears now no longer as "Elohim" but another name precedes the word Elohim; it is the name "Jehovah." This name is used because it is the name of God in relationship with man. Jehovah is the Son of God.

In verse 7 we have the creation of man revealed. Jehovah God formed him out of the dust of the earth; He breathed into his nostrils the breath of life. Here is that which distinguishes man from the beast. The animals also are living souls, but not immortal. Man alone became a living soul by the inbreathing of Jehovah Elohim and that constitutes man immortal.

The garden of Eden was situated in a fertile, pleasant plain, somewhere near the two streams still known by their names, the Euphrates and the Tigris (Hiddekel). The tree of life represents Christ, while the rivers of water are clearly the types of the Holy Spirit. What the tree of knowledge of good and evil was no one knows. The command was given to test man in his innocency. Adam unfallen had not the knowledge of good and evil. That knowledge was acquired by the fall. The test, therefore, involved not some great moral evil but simply the authority and right of God to prohibit something. The tree of knowledge then represented responsibility.

"Thou shalt surely die" means literally "dying thou shalt die." This does not mean "eternal death," but "physical death."

The formation of the woman is highly typical. Adam is the figure of Him who was to come (Rom. 5:14), the last Adam. Here Christ and the Church are foreshadowed. The deep sleep into which Adam was put by Jehovah Elohim is typical of the death of the cross. The woman, built out of his side, is the type of the Church. As the helpmeet of Adam was bone of his bone, and flesh of his flesh and also the bride of Adam, so is the church the body and the bride of Christ. The woman was brought to Adam and presented to him. But Christ will present the Church to Himself (Eph. 5:27). Marriage is indicated in verse 24 and quoted in Matt. 19:5, 1 Cor. 6:16, and Eph. 5:31. Both were naked, the suitable condition for innocence.

CHAPTER 3 The Fall of Man

1. The serpent and the woman (3:1-5)
2. The fall and the immediate results (3:6-7)
3. Jehovah Elohim questions Adam (3:8-12)
4. His question to the woman (3:13)
5. The curse upon the serpent (3:14-21)
6. The first prophecy (3:15)
7. The sentence upon the woman (3:16)
8. The sentence upon the man (3:17-19)
9. The faith of Adam and God's answer (3:20-21)
10. The expulsion and the guardian cherubim (3:22-24)

Another actor is now introduced, the adversary of God. His person and his history are not revealed here. The last book

of the Bible speaks of him as "the great dragon, that old serpent, called the Devil and Satan" (Rev. 12:9). Our Lord called him "the murderer from the beginning and "the father of lies." He used a creature of the field to deceive the woman and to ruin the restored creation by the introduction of sin, The word "serpent" is in the Hebrew "nachash," which means "a shining one." It is evident that this creature was not then a reptile like the serpent of today. The curse put the serpent into the dust. This creature Satan possessed and perhaps made still more beautiful so as to be of great attraction to the woman. He transformed himself in this subtle way, "The serpent beguiled Eve through his subtlety" (2 Cor. 11:3), "And no marvel; for Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light" (2 Cor. 11:14). Of this marvellous being having access to the garden of Eden we read in Ezekiel 28:13.

Some brand the opening verses of Genesis 3 as myth. If it were, all else in God's Word concerning man and his redemption would collapse. Others look upon it as an allegory, but it is a historical fact and this revelation gives the only explanation of the origin of evil and its existence.

Speaking to the woman Satan awakened doubt in God's Word. In speaking of God he avoided the word "Jehovah," but only spoke of God. Then he acts as the accuser of God and uttered his lie, which, as the father of lies he still continues, "ye shall not surely die." The crime of the devil by which he fell, that is, pride, is also shown in the words "ye shall be as gods." The woman listened to the tempter's voice. She saw it was good and that it was pleasant; she desired, she took, she ate and gave unto her husband. It is the beginning of the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life. (Compare with the temptations of the last Adam, the Lord Jesus, in the wilderness.)

Their eyes were opened at once. They discovered their nakedness and made themselves coverings from fig leaves. When they heard the voice of Jehovah Elohim they hid themselves. Shame and fear were the immediate results of the fall. What the first parents did to hide their nakedness by sewing fig leaves together is still the natural man's occupation. Man attempts by the labor of his hands, by his religious profession and morality to cover his nakedness.

Jehovah Elohim came to seek that which was lost. Adam did not seek the Lord, but the Lord sought him and Eve.

The curse was then pronounced upon the serpent and the earth was cursed on account of man and sentence pronounced upon the man and the woman, The evidences of all this are about us. The sentence "dying thou shalt die," that is physical death, the wages of sin, was not executed at once.

The first prophecy in verse 15 announces the seed of the woman, Christ, and His triumphant work over the serpent and his work as well as the death of the seed. Out of this first prediction all prophecy is developed. Space forbids to enlarge upon this great verse.

Adam believed God's Word for he called now his wife "Eve." The word Eve is Chavah in Hebrew, and means "life." God answered his faith by making unto Adam and Eve clothes of skin. Jehovah Elohim must have slain an animal, perhaps a lamb, to provide the skin. The first blood must then have been shed and the Lord provided the covering for Adam and Eve. Its meaning as a type needs no further comments.

They were driven out of Eden so as to avoid the possibility of taking of the tree of life and live forever. This is used as an argument that man through the fall lost his immortal soul. It only refers to the body. If they had eaten of the tree of life they would have lived forever in the body and physical death would then not have been possible.

The cherubim are not symbols but actual beings. We find them elsewhere revealed, Ps. 18:10; Ezek. 1:5; 10:1; Rev. 4-5. The flaming burning sword is symbolic of the holiness of God.

With the third chapter of Genesis the waiting of the heavens and of the earth began: Heaven waiting to send Him forth to deal with the question of sin and the earth waiting for redemption and deliverance. What marvellous chapters these first three chapters of the Bible are! The entire Word of God rests upon them and is linked with them.

CHAPTER 4 After the Fall and the Two Seeds

1. Cain and Abel (4:1-2)
2. Their offerings (4:3-5)
3. The divine remonstrance (4:6-7)
4. Abel slain by his brother (4:8)
5. Cain's judgment (4:9-16)
6. Cain and his offspring and the progress of the world (4:17-24)
7. Seth in place of Abel (4:25-26)

This chapter is filled with many lessons. Here are types of the Seed of the Woman, Christ. Christ as the Good Shepherd, the death of Christ, the shedding of blood, the atonement, righteousness by faith, the self-righteousness of the sinner and his rejection are here indicated. We find in this chapter types of the Jewish nation and their blood-guiltiness as well as the record of the progressing civilization of that age.

Eve's first son was Cain (acquired of Jehovah). This tells of her faith; she believed her first born was the promised seed. Cain, however, is the type of the natural man, the flesh, the offspring of the serpent. The second son born was Abel (vapor).

Cain's offering and worship was that of the natural, self-righteous man, who needs no blood, but trusts in his character and good works. Cain did not believe in what Jehovah Elohim had declared concerning sin, the penalty of sin; and he did not believe in the prediction of Gen. 3:15. God had cursed the ground, but Cain brought of the fruit of the ground. Today the masses of professing Christians "go in the way of Cain" (Jude 10-11).

Abel's offering consisted of the firstlings of the flock. He believed himself a sinner who had deserved death. He believed in substitutionary sacrifice (Heb. 11:4).

Abel is a type of Christ. Abel was a shepherd. There is no report of evil about him. He was hated by his brother without a cause. Abel died on account of his brother's sin.

Cain, who hated his brother Abel, foreshadows the Jew, who rejected Christ and delivered Him into the hands of the Gentiles and shed innocent blood. As Cain had blood-guiltiness upon himself, the blood of his brother Abel, so there is blood-guiltiness upon the Jewish race. "His blood be upon us and our children," was their demand. Cain's judgment is typical of the punishment which came upon the Jewish people. Like Cain, they were driven from Him; became wanderers over the face of the earth; bearing a mark, everybody is against them. Cain went with his wife (one of his sisters) to the land of Nod. He built a city. His hope was in earthly things. The progress of the Cainites is given. Polygamy began with Lamech. Jubal became inventor of harp and pipe. Tubal-Cain was the worker in brass and iron. Then there is a song of defiance celebrating murder. The age advanced in civilization, inventions, making the earth under the curse attractive; on the other hand, lust, violence, vice, and crime increased. But Cain's seed was also religious following Cain's worship. The name of El (God) appears in some of Cain's offspring.

The third son of Adam was Seth. From him springs the Seed. Seth is the type of Christ risen from the dead. Abel, the first, died; Seth, the second, lives. "Then people began to call at the name of Jehovah." True worship is only possible in the Second Man, Christ risen from the dead.

III. THE BOOK OF THE GENERATIONS OF ADAM

CHAPTER 5 Adam and His Seed Through Seth

1. Adam (5:1-5)

2. Seth (5:6-8)
3. Enos (5:9-11)
4. Cainan (5:12-14)
5. Mahalaleel (5:15-17)
6. Jared (5:18-20) 7. Enoch (5:21-24)
8. Methuselah (5:25-27)
9. Lamech (5:28-31)
10. Noah (5:32)

Here we find the record of the seed of Seth. There is a striking contrast with the record of the Cainites in the previous chapter. The Cainites were progressive, built cities and made inventions. Nothing is said of the God-fearing generations in this chapter accomplishing great earthly things. They were pilgrims and strangers, waiting for better things. In the fourth chapter the word "die" is not mentioned. Nothing is said of the duration of the life of Cain and his seed. Eight times in the fifth chapter we read "and he died." One did not die. We learn from this that the Lord keeps a record of the lives, the work and the years of His people. His saints are in His hands.

The names of ten generations translated give a startling revelation. In them we read the faith of the pious generations before the flood and for what they waited.

Adam -- Man
 Seth -- Set
 Enos -- Frailty
 Cainan -- Deplorable
 Mahalaleel -- The Blessed God
 Jared -- Descends
 Enoch -- Teaching
 Methuselah -- Death sent away
 Lamech -- Powerful
 Noah -- Rest, Comfort

The record of Enoch must be compared with Jude 14-16 and Hebrews 11:5. He was translated before the great judgment swept over the earth. Enoch is a type of the living saints at the close of the present age, who will be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye. Study Enoch's walk, Enoch's faith, Enoch's testimony, Enoch's suffering and Enoch's translation with the help of the New Testament passages.

CHAPTER 6:1-8 The Increasing Corruption

1. The sons of God and the daughters of men (6:1-2)
2. The warning of Jehovah (6:3)
3. Increased wickedness (6:4-6)
4. Judgment announced (6:7)
5. Noah found grace (6:8)

The question is who are the sons of God who took the daughters of men. The general view is that the sons of God were the pious descendants of Seth and the daughters of men, the Cainitish offspring. However, there are strong arguments against it.

1. There is no proof in the text that the daughters of men were only the descendants of the Cainites. The text supports the view that in "daughters of men" the natural increase of the whole human family is meant, and not a special class.

2. The theory that "sons of God" must mean pious people can likewise not be sustained. The term sons of God is never applied in the Old Testament to believers. Isaiah 43:6 refers to the future gathering of the godly remnant of Israel. That the believer is a son of God, predestined to the son-place, with the spirit of sonship in him, crying, "Abba, Father," is exclusively a New Testament revelation.

3. The result of the marriage of the sons of God with the daughters of men were children, who were heroes, men of the Name. If the sons of God were simply the pious Sethites, who mixed with the Cainites, it is hard to understand why the offspring should be a special race, heroes, men of the Name. The giants were Nephilim, which means "the fallen ones."

"Sons of God" is the term applied in the Old Testament to supernatural beings, both good and evil. Angels good and fallen are termed sons of God in the Old Testament. Satan himself is reckoned among the sons of God in Job 1:6, and 2:1. The term sons of God must mean here supernatural evil beings. These evil beings came down out of the air and began to take possession of such of the daughters of men as they chose.

"For if God spared not the angels which sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them unto chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment; and spared not the old world, but saved Noah the eighth, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly" (2 Pet. 2:4-5).

Here we have a New Testament hint on Genesis 6:1-5. The Scripture declares that the fallen angels are still loose; here, however, are angels, which sinned and God did not spare them. Another passage in Jude's Epistle is still more significant: "And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, He hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day." This statement in Jude is linked with the sin of Sodom and Gomorrah.

We stand not alone in this exposition. "The sons of God, in my judgment, mean the same beings in Genesis as they do in Job. This point will suffice to indicate their chief guilt in thus traversing the boundaries which God appointed for His creatures. No wonder that total ruin speedily ensues. It is really the basis of fact for not a few tales of mythology which men have made Up." (W. Kelly, Lectures on the Pentateuch.) God has veiled the awful corruption and we dare not intrude into the secret things.

May we remember that our Lord has told us, "As it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be when the Son of Man cometh."

The Spirit of God was then pleading with men. His work as the hindering one is indicated in verse 3.

Read, 1 Peter 3:20, "For Christ indeed once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God; being put to death in flesh but made alive in the Spirit, in which also going He preached to the spirits, which are in prison, heretofore disobedient, when the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noe, while the ark was preparing." This passage does not teach that Christ after His death, went into Hades to preach, but the meaning is that His Spirit through Noah preached to the spirits of men living at that time, and who were then disobedient and are now in prison.

God in His longsuffering waited yet 120 years, during which His Spirit preached through the preacher of righteousness, calling to repentance.

The withdrawing of the Spirit of God is clearly taught in 2 Thess. 2:7. This age will end in the same manner as the age before the flood, "the Spirit not always pleading with man."

Jehovah, beholding the earth, saw that the wickedness of man was great, and every imagination of the thoughts of his heart only evil continually. Before we read Jehovah's verdict, "for he indeed is flesh." And again, "The end of all flesh is come before me, for the earth is full of violence through them, and behold, I will destroy them with the earth."

IV. THE GENERATIONS OF NOAH

CHAPTER 6:9-22 Before the Flood

1. Noah walked with God (6:9-10)
2. The earth filled with violence (6:11-13)
3. The building of the ark commanded (6:14-21)
4. Noah's obedience (6:22)

It was grace which constituted Noah just and enabled him to walk with God. Hebrews 11:7 gives a full definition of Noah's faith. Seven things are shown concerning Noah:

Warned of God -- The ground of faith Things not seen -- The realm of faith He feared -- The exercise of faith Prepared an ark -- The work of faith Saved His house -- The results of faith Condemned the world -- The testimony of faith Heir of righteousness -- The reward of faith

The ark is a type of Christ. The word "gopher" means atonement, and the word "pitch," meaning the same, is translated more than seventy times in the Bible by "to make atonement."

The ark had a window above--looking towards Heaven and not upon the earth and its judgment beneath. It had one door and only one in the side. All blessedly applicable to Christ and salvation. The deluge which came, flood of waters, covering all, so that the end of all flesh came, is a type of the death of Christ. In His death judgment was passed and executed upon all flesh. The waves and billows rolled over His innocent head. He passed through death and judgment for us and has made Himself our perfect ark, our hiding place. In Him we are lifted above the judgment waters.

CHAPTER 7 Noah in the Ark and the Judgment by Water

1. Commanded to enter the ark (7:1-4)
2. Noah's obedience (7:5-9)
3. The judgment by water 7:10-24)

Noah is a type of the Lord Jesus. In the one, Noah, his house was saved. He carried them above and through the judgment waters. Noah is also a type of the Jewish remnant which will pass through the great tribulation and the judgments to come.

The ark of gopher wood, pitched inside and outside with pitch, is a type of the Lord Jesus Christ; Noah preparing the ark, the type of Christ, accomplishing salvation, having finished it.

The deluge is a type of the death of Christ. "All Thy billows and Thy waves have gone over Me" (Ps. 42:7). This was done when on the cross. He who knew no sin was made sin for us. As the earth was covered in the deluge, so the judgment passed over Him, in whom the end of all flesh has come.

"And Jehovah said unto Noah, 'Come thou and all thy house into the ark.'" After the ark was finished came the invitation to enter in. The invitation "come" still goes forth. "Come unto Me"--will it last forever?

The beasts, clean and unclean, taken into the ark, as well as the fowls of the air, give us the hint that creation will share the blessed effects of salvation. The subsequent prophetic word and Romans 8:19-23, tell us of a coming deliverance of groaning creation.

"And they that went in unto Noah, went in male and female of all flesh, as God (Elohim) had commanded him, and the Lord (Jehovah) shut him in" (verse 16). In this verse we have Elohim and Jehovah used. God, as Creator, had commanded Noah; Jehovah had announced the judgment, and the ark which had been preparing represented the patient and merciful Jehovah. And now as the hour of mercy was past, Jehovah shut the door. He who had given an open door shut it at last.

Noah and his house in the ark were saved and safe. And so are we in Christ Jesus our Lord.

"The rain was forty days and forty nights upon the earth" (verse 12). Here for the first time in the Word do we find the number forty. It is not the last time. Forty means endurance and testing. Moses was forty days on the mountain, his life was divided into three forties. Forty years Israel was in the wilderness. Elijah knew the forty days, and Ezekiel lay forty days on his right side, a typical action (Ezekiel 4). Jonah preached, "yet forty days and Ninevah shall be destroyed"; and Christ was forty days in the wilderness to be tested.

CHAPTER 8 Noah Remembered

1. Noah remembered (8:1-3)
2. The ark resting (8:4-5)
3. The raven sent forth (8:6-7)
4. The sending forth of the dove (8:8-12)
5. The waters dried up (8:13-14)
6. The command to leave the ark (8:15-17)
7. Noah's obedience (8:18-19)
8. The altar and the covenant (8:20-22)

Especially instructive are verses 6 to 12 in our chapter. Noah opened the window at the end of forty days, and he sent forth a raven. This bird flew to and fro until the waters were dried up from off the earth.

Then he sent forth a dove three times. The first time she found no resting place, and Noah took her back into the ark. The second time she returned with an olive leaf in her mouth, and the third time she did not return at all, and finds her abiding place in the earth.

That the dove is the type of the Holy Spirit needs hardly to be stated. In this outward symbolic form He came upon our Lord. But what does the black raven represent? The raven is the type of evil, a representative of the god of this age and the flesh as well. We may see in the raven flying to and fro until the waters were dried up, a type of the prince of the power in the air, the devil. His work and activity; the devil describes himself as "going to and fro in the earth, and walking up and down in it" (Job 1:7; and 2:2). He is doing this still, but there is a time coming when the black raven will stop his restless flight. When this present age ends with divine wrath revealed once more, and the waves of divine judgment have rolled over the earth, then Satan, the devil, that old serpent, will be bound a thousand years.

The dove and her threefold departure is a type of the coming and presence of the Holy Spirit in the earth sent forth from the Lord.

First, she comes forth and finds no resting place. This represents the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament, where he was not present in the earth to find a rest, to abide. The second departure of the dove may be taken as a type of the Holy Spirit's presence in this age. The dove found a resting place and still she did not stay, but came back to the ark with an olive leaf. This olive leaf was the witness that the judgment waters had passed and that new life had developed. It also signifies peace. So the Holy Spirit is present in this age as the result of the finished work of Christ. The third time the dove did not return. So there is an age in the future when the Holy Spirit will be poured upon all flesh. During the first and second sending forth of the dove, the raven was also present. Both flew over the earth. When the dove went forth the third time the waters were gone and there was no more raven.

The word "altar" is mentioned here for the first time in the Bible. The altar is for worship. Here then worship is for the first time revealed. We worship, having passed from the old into the new, standing on the ground of resurrection. We know that death and judgment is passed, and therefore we worship in spirit and in truth. Christ is our altar; and in the sacrifices Noah brought, Christ is also typically represented. Only he is a true worshiper who knows Christ and the perfect work He has done. "Jehovah smelled the sweet savor." This reminds us of John 4: "But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshipers shall worship the Father in Spirit and in truth, for the Father seeketh such to worship Him." Not service is a sweet savor to God, but worship.

CHAPTER 9 The Earth Replenished

1. The divine commission (9:1-7)
2. The covenant with Noah (9:8-11)
3. The token of the covenant (9:12-17)
4. The family of Noah (9:18-19)
5. Noah's drunkenness (9:20-24)
6. Noah's prophecy (9:25-27)
7. Noah's death (9:28-29)

A new start is made after the judgment by water and Noah is blessed by God. Like Adam and Eve they are commissioned to fill the earth, but nothing is said of having dominion over the earth.

In Genesis 1:29 we read that man was to eat the green herb and the fruit of the trees, but now there is permission given to eat every moving thing that liveth. It seems clear that before the deluge meat was not eaten. There are not a few advocates of total abstinence from meat in our day. The adherents of delusions like theosophy and others tell us that a vegetable diet will ennoble man, deliver him from the lust of the flesh, make him pure and good and fit to approach God. With all the abstinence from meat before the deluge the people were not better, but ended in the flesh and perished in it. In 1 Tim. 4 we read of those who live in the latter times and depart from the faith, and among the characteristics given is the following: "Forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats which God has created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth. For every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving."

And why is the blood made so prominent? Four times we read the word "blood" in verses 4-6. The book of Leviticus gives the answer. "For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you upon the altar, to make an atonement for your souls; for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul" (Lev. 17:11). The sanctity of the blood is here shown forth. Even the hunter in Israel had to keep it in view. "And whatsoever man there be of the children of Israel, or of the strangers that sojourn among you which hunteth, or catcheth any beast or fowl that may be eaten; he shall even pour out the blood thereof, and cover it with dust. For it is the life of all flesh; the blood of it is for the life thereof, therefore I said to the children of Israel, Ye shall eat the blood of no manner of flesh; for the life of all flesh is the blood thereof, whosoever eateth it shall be cut off" (Lev. 17:13, 14). So the hunter had to stop, and pour out the blood. All points to the blood of the Lamb.

God established His covenant with Noah and his seed and put the token of the covenant in the clouds. The rainbow speaks of a passed judgment of His salvation and remembrance. Another universal judgment by water will never come again (verse 15). Another judgment is in store for this planet. "The world that was then, being overflowed with water, perished; but the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men" (2 Pet. 3:6-7).

Interesting is Noah's prophecy after his drunkenness.

Ham (black) is not mentioned in the curse, but the son of Ham, Canaan (the merchantman). Ham's deed revealed the unbelieving condition of his heart, while Shem's and Japheth's action manifest divine grace in covering up the nakedness. God's eye beheld Canaan and his subsequent career in his descendants. He inherits the curse. How literally it was carried out! Shem, meaning "name," becomes the family in which Jehovah, the Name, is to be revealed. Jehovah is the God of Shem. Soon we shall see a son of Shem, Abram, and his seed becoming the depository of Jehovah's revelation. Later Jehovah speaks and reveals His name by which He wishes to be known forever to another son of Shem, Moses. "Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, Jehovah, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob hath sent me unto you; this is my name forever, and this is my memorial unto all generations" (Ex. 3:15). He does not call Himself "the God of Japheth" but "the God of Shem." Shem's supremacy is here indicated. It is a far-reaching prophecy.

Japheth means "expansion." His sons are Gomer, Magog, Madai, Javan, Tubal, Meshech, Tiras, and the sons of Gomer and Javan are mentioned in the next chapter. They expanded and Japheth dwells in the tents of Shem, partakes of Shem's blessing and responsibility. Some take "He shall dwell in the tents of Shem," the "he" as referring to God, but this is incorrect. It means Japheth and reminds us of the parable of the olive tree in Romans 11.

Shem's blessing consisted (1) In being the carrier of the Name, Jehovah. (2) In controlling Canaan and being the master over him. (3) The giving shelter to Japheth and let him be sharer of the blessing. It is the germ of all following prophecy and we wait still for its end fulfillment.

V. THE GENERATIONS OF THE SONS OF NOAH

CHAPTER 10 Shem, Ham, and Japheth and Their Seed

1. The sons of Japheth (10:2-5)
2. The sons of Ham (10:6-20)
3. The sons of Shem (10:21-32)

Here we have the beginning of the nations. God knows them and keeps track of the nations of the earth. The order of the sons of Noah is here changed. Japheth comes first. Ham's place is unchanged. Shem comes last. This order is given in view of Noah's prophecy. Among the descendants of Ham we find Nimrod, a mighty hunter. His name means "Let us rebel." Here also we find Babel mentioned for the first time. Babylon has for its founder "a mighty one in the earth-a mighty hunter." Mentioned here for the first time Babylon is seen springing from the race which is under a curse, and having for its founder a mighty one in the earth, a second Cain. We have here the birth of Babylon, while the entire Bible, from now on to the eighteenth chapter of the "book of the Revelation of Jesus Christ," gives us its development, its Satanic opposition to all that is from above, and its final great fall and destruction. Babylon! what a sinister word! Both city and system, such as is seen in its finality in Rev. 17 and 18, are Satan's stronghold.

It would be interesting to follow all these names and trace them in the Scriptures and in history. But this we cannot do.

CHAPTER 11:1-9 The Tower of Babel and the Scattering of the Nations

1. The unity of the nations in Shinar (11:1-2)
2. Their attempt: "Let us make" (11:3-4)
3. The divine answer: "Let us go down" (11:5-7)
4. The Result (11:8-9)

All the earth had one language. This is also proven by philological research. The whole human family journeyed together. They left the mountainous regions and went down to the plain. This expresses their descent morally; they turned away from God, though they had the knowledge of God (Rom. 1:18-19).

Notice the absence of the name of God in the beginning of the chapter. They had excluded Him. "They said ... let us make ... and they had ... let us build ourselves ... let us make ourselves a name." It is self-exaltation and defiance of God. It was full rebellion against God.

The tower they attempted to build was to reach into heaven. It is the first concentrated effort of man against God his maker and against Jehovah. It represents a God-defying and man-deifying confederacy. We cannot follow Babylon in its different aspects. There was the ancient city, the enemy of Jerusalem. There is the present day Babylon, a lifeless, professing Christendom, both Romanism and Protestantism. There is the future Babylon (Rev. 17-18). Concentration and confusion marks Babylon. Compare the "Let us" here with the prophetic second Psalm, when in the future, nations will confederate against God and His anointed. God came down in divine irony to look at their city and tower and to scatter them by the confusion of languages. And when the rebellion of the second Psalm is reached, He will laugh and hold them in derision.

VI. THE GENERATIONS OF SHEM

CHAPTER 11:10-26 From Shem to TERAH

Here again we find ten names prominent. The same number we have in Genesis 5. Both genealogies in chapters 5 and 11 end with a man to whom God reveals Himself and with each a new dispensation begins, Noah and Abram. Notice the decreasing years of life. Shem was 600 years old, the grandfather of Abram only 148. The line of Shem was degenerating; some of the names indicate this. Terah (delay), the father of Abram, was an idolator. The descendants of Shem worshipped idols (Joshua 24:2). When the line of Shem had failed God called Abram.

VII. THE GENERATIONS OF TERAH

CHAPTER 11:27-32 Terah's Family and His Death

Terah with the persons mentioned in verse 31 went forth from Ur to go into the land of Canaan. Terah died in Haran. Chapter 12:1 and Acts 7:1-4 makes it clear that this going forth was by divine revelation.

CHAPTER 12 The First Events in Abram's Life

1. The call and the promise (12:1-3)
2. Abram's obedience (12:4-6)
3. The second communication of Jehovah (12:7-9)
4. Abram in Egypt and first denial of Sarai (12:10-20)

We come now to a new beginning, the Abrahamic covenant. It marks the beginning of that wonderful race, the seed of Abraham, the people of Israel. Abraham's name is mentioned 74 times in the New Testament. How closely his history is interwoven into New Testament doctrine. This may be learned by consulting the following passages: John 8:56; Acts 7-2; Rom. 4:1-16; Gal. 3:6-18; Heb. 11:8-19; James 2:21-23. What a satanic lie it is to brand the existence of this great man of God as a myth! Such is often done in "Christian" (?) schools and pulpits. We give a few hints on this chapter:

The sovereign grace of God in the call of Abram. Shem had the promise of the Name. Jehovah was to reveal Himself in Shem. We learned from the eleventh chapter that the line of Shem had run into decay and was departing from God. In the midst of this ruin in which Abram was involved, he became the object of divine election and Jehovah in His grace manifested Himself to Abram and called him.

The delay at Haran. "The God of Glory appeared unto our father Abraham, when he was in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in Charran." "Then came he out of the land of the Chaldeans, and dwelt at Charran; and from thence, when his father was dead, he removed him into this land, wherein ye now dwell" (Acts 7:2-4). The call came to Abram in Mesopotamia. They left their country and dwelt in Haran. Here Abram tarried till his father Terah died. The delay in going to the land to which God had called him was on account of Terah. Typically, Terah stands for the flesh, the ties of nature. This is always in the way to carry out fully the call of God and enter into full and blessed realization of God's calling. While delaying in Haran (Haran means "parched"), God did not reveal Himself anew to Abram.

Death set Abram free, and by death freed from the ties of nature he journeyed on to the land of Canaan. The death of Terah, the liberating factor in Abram's experience, is typical of the death of the Lord Jesus Christ. We have died in Him. The cross of Christ has set us free.

Abram was "sanctified unto obedience." Sanctified means "separated." The call of God meant separation for Abram. "Get thee out of thy country and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house." Now there was no further delay. "Abram departed, as the Lord had spoken to him." The calling involved obedience which was readily yielded. All this is typical of the individual believer.

It was by faith. What faith is stands here fully manifested. "By faith Abraham, when he was called out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went" (Heb. 11:8). He took God's infallible Word and left all; walked by faith and not by sight; he hoped for things he saw not. Faith ever finds its most precious resting place upon the naked Word of God.

The promises. "And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will also bless thee and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing. And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee; and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed" (verses 2 and 3). And all God promised to Abram He hath kept. Every word has been literally fulfilled. Nations upon nations who hated Abraham's seed, his natural descendants, have found to their great sorrow how true Abraham's God is. These promises still hold good. To the seed of Abraham belong still the promises (Rom 9:4). The nations of the earth, all the families are unconsciously waiting to be blessed by Abraham's seed. Salvation is still of the Jews.

Abram worships. He built an altar unto Jehovah, who appeared unto him. Again he built an altar, with Bethel on the west and Ai on the east, and there he called upon the name of Jehovah. The revelation of Jehovah produces worship. The basis of worship is a conscious and precious relation with Jehovah. Abram knew Jehovah's grace toward him, therefore he worshipped Him and called upon His name.

Abram's failure was the result of leaving Bethel and going down to Egypt (typical of the world).

CHAPTER 13 The Return from Egypt and Separation from Lot

1. Back to Bethel (13:1-4)
2. The strife (13:5-7)
3. The separation. Lot in Sodom (13:8-13)
4. The third communication of Jehovah (13:14-18)

Abram is graciously brought back. Abram could not have remained in Egypt forever. So the believer who has wandered away from the Lord will be restored. How precious the altar at Bethel must have been to him. Dispensationally Abram's going down to Egypt foreshadows the going down of his posterity.

Lot's character is brought out in his selfish choice. He had not so much followed the Lord as he followed Abram. He is Self-centered, and unlike Abram looking to the things unseen, he is occupied with the things which are seen, with the earth

and earthly possession. Lot is a type of the world-bordering, carnally minded, professing Christian. He lifts up his eyes and beholds a well-watered plain, beautiful as the garden of the Lord. He chooses all the plain of Jordan and pitched his tent toward Sodom. That Sodom and Gomorrah were fast ripening for the day of burning and destruction, that the men in Sodom were wicked and sinners well known in the day when Lot made his choice, is not taken into consideration by him. There was no prayer, no consultation with the Lord from the side of Lot. His eyes behold only the beautiful and well-watered Plain; there must have been a feverish haste to make his decision. Nor did Lot go at once into Sodom. He nears Sodom gradually. Perhaps at first he had no thought of having fellowship with the wicked men of Sodom, but he got there all the same. All is written for our learning. Decline begins gradually, but always leads into the world.

And Abram gazed too over the fertile plains. Some time after he looked again. "And he looked toward Sodom and Gomorrah, and toward all the land of the plain, and beheld, and lo, the smoke of the country went up as the smoke of a furnace" (19:28). Was Abram sorry then for his choice? Do not look upon the fairness of the world; remember a little while longer and wrath and judgment will be poured upon the world now under condemnation.

Another communication and promise is received by Abram from Jehovah.

CHAPTER 14 The First Recorded War and Lot's Deliverance

1. The battle of the confederacy (14:1-10)
2. Sodom and Gomorrah spoiled (14:11-13)
3. Abram's rescue (14:14-16)
4. Sodom's king to meet Abram (14:17)
5. Melchizedek (14:18-20)
6. The king's offer and Abram's answer (14:21-24)

The record of the first war is here foreshadowing the last great warfare still to come. Amraphel, King of Shinar, has been historically located by excavated tablets in 1901. The code of Amraphel (Khammurabi) was discovered in Susa. It dates back to 2139 B.C. Some 800 years the laws of Amraphel governed the people of Central Asia. The discovery of this code was a severe blow to higher criticism which claimed that writing before Moses was unknown. What interests us most is Melchizedek. He is mentioned as a type of Christ in Psalm 110 and Hebrews 7. This chapter in Hebrews must be read with Genesis 14.

Melchizedek was a human being. We do not believe that he was a supernatural being manifested in the form of man. He was king of peace and king of righteousness and priest as well, uniting the office of priest and king and prophet in himself. The way he is introduced in this first book, where genealogies abound, without descent, having in this sense neither beginning of days nor end of life (Heb. 7:3), makes him a very strong type of Christ, the Son of God.

Like Melchizedek, Christ unites in His person kingship and priesthood. However, though Christ is a priest after the order of Melchizedek, He does not yet fully exercise His Melchizedek priesthood. As priest after the order of Melchizedek He must have His own throne, for which he is still waiting on the throne of His Father.

Therefore when He comes again He will be the Priest upon His throne and crowned with many crowns (Zech. 6:12-14)

The sinister temptation of Sodom's king was rejected by Abram because Melchizedek had made known the name of God in a new way, "The most high God." Abram uses this new title and adds "Jehovah" to "the most high God."

Dispensationally it shows the future events after the conflict, the time of wars by confederacies of nations, in which the seed of Abraham will be so much concerned, when the enemies of God and of Israel will be overcome, and the King of Peace, the King of Righteousness, the great Priest, the Lord Jesus Christ, will appear to bless His earthly people. Then Israel will acknowledge Him as Abram did Melchizedek. "The Most High God," is one of God's millennial names.

CHAPTER 15 The Fourth Communication and the Covenant and the Vision

1. The fourth communication (15:1)
2. Abram's answer (15:2-3)
3. The promised seed (15:4-5)
4. Abram counted righteous (15:6)
5. Continued communication (15:7-8)
6. The divided animals (15:9-11)
7. The vision (15:12-17)
8. The covenant made (15:18-21)

The connection with the previous chapter is extremely precious. Abram had honored the Lord and now the Lord honored him. Then the seed is promised. That seed promised is Isaac; Christ is typified by him. "Abram believed in the Lord and He counted it to him for righteousness." The fourth chapter of Romans must be closely studied at this point for it is the commentary to the promise given and Abram's faith. He is commanded to take the different animals and to divide them.

All these animals are mentioned later in the book of Leviticus and as sacrifices are typical of Christ, while the fowls which came down upon the carcasses and which Abraham drove away (Gen. 15:11) are types of evil. (See Matthew 13, the birds which pick up the seed; the fowls which make nests in the tree.) But the divided pieces and the turtledove and pigeon, exposed to the fowls, are also typical of Israel, divided and cut through, while the fowls may be taken as types of nations who feast upon Israel. The deep sleep which fell upon Abraham, signifying death, and the horror of a great darkness, are likewise types of what was to come upon the seed of Abraham. After God had spoken of the coming affliction of the children of Abraham and announcing the judgment of their troubles, a smoking furnace and a burning lamp passed between the pieces. The smoking furnace, the spectacle of a fire and the dark smoke from it, showed to the eye, what God had spoken to the heart of His servant. The smoking furnace is the type of Egypt and the tribulation through which the sons of Jacob and their seed had to pass. The burning lamp is the type of God's presence with them. Thus we read: "But the Lord hath taken you and brought you forth out of the iron furnace, out of Egypt to be unto Him a people of inheritance, as ye are this day" (Deut. 4:20; 1 Kings 8:51). In Egypt the fire burned, as in the furnace, and the great darkness settled upon Abraham's seed.

CHAPTER 16 Abraham and Hagar

1. Sarai's suggestion (16:1-3)
2. Abram's action (16:4)
3. Sarai and Hagar (16:5-6)
4. Hagar in the wilderness (16:7-9)
5. The birth of Ishmael announced (16:10-14)
6. Ishmael born (16:15-16)

The fifteenth chapter may be called Abram's faith chapter. The sixteenth is the chapter of unbelief. It was impatience which forced Sarai and Abram to act for themselves. Unbelief is impatience and impatience is unbelief. Faith waits patiently for the Lord, and on the Lord, to act. "He that believeth shall not make haste." Abram and Sarai attempted to help the Lord to fulfill His promise. What a failure they made of it! On account of it there was great trouble in his house.

But the incident has a deeper meaning. Read Gal. 4:21-31. This gives us the typical meaning and how the Lord overruled even this failure. Sarai represents the covenant of grace; Hagar the law covenant. Hagar was an Egyptian; Sarai a princess. The law brings into bondage, grace makes free.

Abram was eighty-six years old when Ishmael was born. The next chapter tells us that Abram was ninety and nine years old when the Lord spoke to him again. Thus for thirteen years Abram's life seems to have been barren of communications from the Lord. What a harvest of the flesh.

CHAPTER 17 The Fifth Communication and the Covenant Repeated

1. The communication and Abram worships (17:1-3)
2. The enlarged promise (17:4-8)
3. The covenant sign (17:9-14)
4. Sarah's seed promised (17:15-16)
5. The laughter of Abraham (17:17)
6. Abraham's plea for Ishmael (17:18-22)
7. Abraham's obedience (17:23-27)

The promises which the Lord now gives to Abram are most complete. His name is changed; he is now to be called Abraham, which means "the Father of many," because he is to be the Father of many nations.

Upon this follows the institution of circumcision. This is a portion which is extremely rich in its teachings. Let us notice that in Romans the Holy Spirit explains the meaning of this ceremony. "For we say that faith was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness. How was it then reckoned? When he was in circumcision, or in uncircumcision? Not in circumcision, but in uncircumcision. And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised. (Rom. 4:10-11). Circumcision was, therefore, the seal of righteousness of faith. Some fourteen years previous Abram had been constituted righteous, because he believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness. First righteousness by faith and then the seal. Of believers it is said in the New Testament that they are circumcised. "In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands in putting off the body of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ" (Col. 2:11). The circumcision of Christ is the death of Christ; in Him the body of the flesh is put off. We have died with Him, are dead and buried and risen with Him. "For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit and rejoice in Christ Jesus and have no confidence in the flesh" (Phil. 3:3).

Sarai's name is also changed. The promised seed is to be from her. "His name is to be Isaac" which means laughter. The end of the chapter shows Abraham's obedience.

CHAPTER 18 The Sixth Communication and Jehovah Visits Abraham

1. The manifestation (18:1-2)
2. Abraham's welcome (18:3-8)
3. The promise repeated (18:9-10)
4. Sarah's laughter (18:11-15)
5. The departure towards Sodom (18:16)
6. Abraham's intercession (18:17-33)

This most remarkable visitation was the answer of Jehovah to Abraham's obedience of faith. The one in the middle was none other than Jehovah in human form; the other two were angels. "Before Abraham was I am," He said when on earth. Here Abraham is face to face with Him.

Sarah's laughter when the son is promised to her is the laughter of unbelief. She looked to her womb, which was a grave. Her laughter was made the occasion of that blessed word Jehovah spoke. "Is anything too hard for the Lord?" From the place of sweet communion they now proceed towards the scene where a great judgment was to be enacted.

"Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do?" is another gracious word. Abraham was the friend of God. The

Lord said to His disciples, "The servant knoweth not what his Lord doeth, but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of My Father I have made known unto you" (John 15:15). Yes, He has told us all about the things to come, the doom of the world and the secrets of His coming. And then follows that wonderful intercession before the Lord. How He pleads! What humility and yet boldness! Blessed privilege of all saints the prayer of intercession, which the great Intercessor, the Lord Jesus Christ, loves to hear from the lips of His children, for it is the echo of His own heavenly occupation.

CHAPTER 19 The Destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah

1. The angels visit (19:1-5)
2. Lot and the Sodomites (19:6-11)
3. The destruction of Sodom announced (19:12-13)
4. Lot and his sons-in-law (19:14)
5. Lot brought forth (19:15-17)
6. Lot's request (19:18-20)
7. The escape (19:21-25)
8. Lot's wife (19:26)
9. Abraham looks on (19:27-29)
10. Lot's shame (19:30-38)

This is a chapter of judgment. How great the contrast with the preceding one! There Abraham sat under the tent door and the Lord appeared unto him; here two angels come to Sodom at even and Lot sits in the gate of Sodom. Joyfully Abraham had run to meet the heavenly visitors and willingly the Lord and His companions had entered in to be comforted by Abraham. Lot invites the angels likewise but they say "Nay; but we will abide in the street all night." Only after Lot pressed upon them greatly "did they enter his house." The feast was not like Abraham's feast of fine meal and a calf, but only unleavened bread. Poor, selfish Lot! He had gone down to Sodom; from the tent pitched toward Sodom he had landed in Sodom and there he had no longer a tent, but he had a house. He had settled down and given up his character as pilgrim. His daughters had become perfectly at home in Sodom and married unbelieving Sodomites. More than that Lot had taken a position in Sodom. "He sat in the gate of Sodom" and the mob said "This fellow came in to sojourn and he will be judge" (verse 9). He held an influential position there and most likely attempted the reformation of Sodom. That he was greatly troubled is learned from the New Testament. "he was vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked" (2 Peter 2:7). Lot is the picture of thousands of Christian believers, who are carnally minded and worldly. There are many who have settled down in the world, from which they have been separated and delivered by the death of Christ and like Lot they will be saved "so as by fire."

From the fourth verse to the eleventh in this chapter we find a short description of the awful wickedness of Sodom. Its gross immoralities, the fearful fruits of the lust of the flesh have since then become proverbial. In this connection we may well remember the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, "Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot ... even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of Man cometh" (Luke 17:28-30). This Christian age will not end in universal righteousness; it will end in apostasy from God and His Word, in iniquity and lawlessness, and these will be followed by a fiery judgment. Indications of such an ending of this age of boasted progress are numerous and becoming more pronounced. Among these immoralities, the looseness of the marriage ties, and adulteries are prominently in the lead. The great cities of Christendom are modern Sodoms and the immorality in them is perhaps worse than in the ancient, lewd cities of the valley of Jordan. This will be getting worse and worse and the end will be judgment. And now the angels give the message of the impending judgment. Sodom was to be destroyed by fire. Lot believed the message, but when he had spoken the word to his two sons-in-law, "Up get you out of this place; for the Lord will destroy this city," they took it as a joke and believed not. They might have been saved if they had believed. They perished in Sodom. Even so it is now at the end of this age. "Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of His coming?" (2 Pet. 3:3-4). If one preaches and teaches the soon coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, to be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord (2 Thess. 1:7-8), he is laughed at and scorned, called a pessimist. Perhaps the two sons-in-law called Lot a

pessimist.

Notice verse 24. "Then Jehovah rained upon Sodom and Gomorrah brimstone and fire from Jehovah out of heaven." Here was a Jehovah on earth and He called to Jehovah in heaven.

Lot's history ends in shame. Moab and Ammon begotten in wickedness have a history of shame. No record is given of the death of Lot.

CHAPTER 20 Abraham in Gerar

1. Abraham in Gerar (20:1)
2. Second denial of Sarah (20:2)
3. God's dealing with Abimelech (20:3-7)
4. Abimelech and Abraham (20:8-18)

Note Abraham's going down to Egypt in chapter 12 and now going to Gerar and denying again Sarah. In chapter 26 Isaac goes also to Gerar and denies Rebekah. It shows what the flesh is.

But Abraham is greatly honored by the Lord. The Lord called him a prophet. Abraham prayed and God healed Abimelech.

CHAPTER 21 Isaac and Ishmael and the Covenant with Abimelech

1. Isaac's birth (21:1-3)
2. His circumcision (21:4-8)
3. Ishmael mocking (21:9)
4. Sarah's demand (21:10-11)
5. God speaks to Abraham (21:12-13)
6. Hagar and Ishmael cast out (21:14-16)
7. The intervention of God (21:17-21)
8. The covenant with Abimelech (21:22-34)

Isaac, the promised seed, was born at the set time as God had spoken.

As there was a set time when the promised son was born to Abraham, so there was an appointed time when God gave His Son "when the fulness of time was come, God sent forth His Son." There is also a set time, when the First-Begotten will be brought into the world again, His second coming. Then it will be the set time for Israel, too, when God remembers His promises and when He visits and does all, what He has spoken concerning them. "Thou shalt arise and have mercy on Zion; for the time to favor her, yea, the set time is come" (Psalm 102:13).

Isaac's name means laughter, the laughter of God in view of man's helplessness. Isaac the promised one, the only one, in his wonderful birth and in his name is a type of the promised seed, the Lord Jesus Christ. He is God's laughter over Satan, sin and death.

Sarah laughed again, but it is the laughter of joy. The word the Lord spoke to her: "is anything too hard for the Lord?" wrought faith in her heart. "Through faith also Sarah herself received strength to conceive seed, and was delivered of a child when she was past age, because she judged Him faithful who had promised" (Heb. 11:11). We have called attention before to the allegory in Gal. 4:21-31. This passage gives meaning to the historical account. Sarah stands for the grace covenant; Hagar for the law covenant. As soon as the Seed came (Christ) the law was cast out. The law was only the schoolmaster till Christ came. Hagar's son also typifies the flesh. Isaac is typical of the nature which grace bestows. No

sooner was Isaac weaned and a great feast made than the son of Hagar, the Egyptian, mocked. Ishmael manifests his true character. As long as there was no Isaac, nothing is heard of Ishmael; the presence of Isaac makes known what was in the son of the bond-woman. The presence of the new nature makes known what the flesh really is and it is fulfilled what is written "The flesh lusteth against the Spirit and the Spirit against the flesh."

Here we have also a dispensational picture. According to the passage in Galatians Hagar corresponds to Jerusalem which is now, the one who is in bondage with her children. As Hagar wandered in the wilderness so the natural descendants of Abraham have become wanderers. It is on account of that "covenant of grace" that rich grace in the Lord Jesus Christ, which they rejected that they are cast out. But they are like Hagar in the wilderness of "Beersheba", which means translated, "well of the oath," reminding us of the oath of God and His gifts and calling, which are without repentance. Like Hagar's eyes their eyes are blinded and they see not the "well of water" which is for them. A time, however, will come when their eyes will be opened and when they shall draw water out of the wells of salvation (Isaiah 12:3). The rest of the chapter is taken up with the record of the covenant, which Abimelech made with Abraham. He, who had been healed in answer to the prayer of Abraham, now acknowledges openly that God is with his servant. This shows the faithfulness of God to His promises. Abraham is blest and is a blessing. In the grove of Beersheba he called on the name of Jehovah, the everlasting God.

CHAPTER 22 The Testing of Abraham

1. God's command (22:1-2)
2. Abraham's obedience (22:3-6)
3. Isaac's question and Abraham's answer (22:7-8)
4. Isaac upon the altar (22:9-10)
5. The interference from above (22:11-12)
6. Jehovah-jireh (22:13-14)
7. The second message and Abraham's return (22:15-19)
8. Nahor's offspring (22:20-24)

God now tested Abraham. True faith has to be tested; it is an evidence that there is faith when tests come upon the believer. God knew Abraham, and when the proper moment had come in his life, God spake the words to him by which he was to be tested. What a test it was! That promised son, that beloved one to take him and to slay him upon an altar! Reason might have said, God promised this son, he was given by God's own power, all my hope and expectation center in him; how can God demand him to be slain? But faith does not question God's Word, and has no "why?" to ask of God. Such faith was manifested by Abraham when in the beginning God told him to go out of his land, to a land that He would show him. He went out in faith and knew not whither he went. But God brought him to the land. He knew God's faithfulness. And now once more he is asked to go out, to the land of Moriah to an unknown mountain, and to take his beloved son along to give him up. Was his heart really all for God? Does he love Him and depend on Him supremely? Would he be willing to part with the only one and give him up? This is the test. The record shows there was not a moment's hesitation on Abraham's side. No word escaped from his lips. The only answer which he gave to God was that he rose up early in the morning and began at once the journey with Isaac. What an obedience it was!

What a word of faith it was when he said, "Abide ye here with the ass, and I and the lad will go yonder and worship and come again to you." Hebrews 11:17-19 gives us the secret of it.

We behold them going together, Isaac now carrying the wood. Abraham laid the wood upon him. An old Hebrew exposition of Genesis paraphrases this by saying "he laid the wood upon him in the form of a cross." And only once does Isaac speak asking for the lamb. To which Abraham replied, "My son, God Himself will provide a lamb for a burnt offering." Then they go together, and Isaac opened not his mouth again "like a lamb led to slaughter." He allows himself to be bound upon the altar. He had absolute confidence in his father and is willing to be slain by him; there was no struggle to be free. He is obedient to his father Abraham, even obedient unto death. The typical meaning of the event is as simple as it

is precious. Isaac is the type of that "Only Begotten." In Abraham we behold "the Father," who spared not His only begotten Son, but delivered Him up for us all. But how great the contrast! God gave Him, the Son of His love for a sinful, rebellious world. And when the hour came and the Son was nailed upon the wood there was no hand to stay. He was led to slaughter like a lamb and opened not His mouth; and then we hear Him cry, "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?" God's hand was upon Him and He, the Holy One, was smitten by God. This is the Lamb God Himself has provided; "the ransom" He has found, typified also by the ram caught in the thicket. And in the angel of Jehovah, He Himself was present upon the scene, knowing all that which He would do and suffer, when the appointed time had come. How wonderful is His written Word! And we touch in these brief notes but a little of the foreshadowings and truths revealed in this chapter. The binding of Isaac upon the altar and the taking from the altar foreshadow the death and resurrection of Christ.

"Jehovah-jireh," the Lord has seen, is the great foundation. From that provision, the gift of His Son and His obedience unto death, even the death of the cross, flows forth the great redemption: Jehovah-Rophecah (Exodus 15:26), the Lord thy healer, is next. Then follow Jehovah Nissi, the Lord my banner, (victory Ex. 17); Jehovah Shalom, Jehovah is peace (Judges 6:24); Jehovah Roi, Jehovah, my shepherd (Psa. 23:1); Jehovah Zidkenu, Jehovah our righteousness Jer. 23:5-6); Jehovah Shamma, Jehovah is there (Eze. 48:35).

CHAPTER 23 The Death of Sarah

1. Sarah dies (23:1-2)
2. The grave obtained (23:3-18)
3. The burial of Sarah (23:19-20)

We call the attention to the typical meaning of the death of Sarah.

She is the type of the nation Israel and her death in this chapter signifies the death of Israel, nationally. This must be brought in connection with the previous chapter. There we learned that Isaac was upon the altar and taken from it. This is typical of the death and resurrection of the true Isaac, the Promised One, the Lord Jesus Christ. Immediately after, Sarah dies, the one from whom Isaac came. And so after the Lord Jesus Christ had died and was raised from the dead, the nation from whom He came, according to the flesh, passes off the scene. Israel, like Sarah, is buried in the midst of the children of Heth, that is the Gentiles. But Israel has the promise of restoration typified by resurrection. God has promised to open the national grave of Israel and bring them back to the land, which He has given to the seed of Abraham forever. This typical application becomes still more striking and irrefutable by what follows in the twenty-fourth chapter. Here we find the call of the bride who is to comfort Isaac, after his mother's death.

It is interesting that Sarah is the only woman, whose age is mentioned in the Bible.

CHAPTER 24 The Bride Sought for Isaac

1. The commission to the servant (24:1-9)
2. The obedience and prayer of the servant (24:10-14)
3. The prayer answered (24:15-21)
4. The gifts of the servant (24:22-26)
5. The servant received (24:27-33)
6. The servant's message (24:34-36)
7. The commission and answered prayer stated (24:37-49)
8. The bride chosen (24:50-60)
9. The journey to meet Isaac. (24:61)
10. The meeting and the marriage (24:62-67)

This is one of the longest chapters in the Bible. The connection with the previous chapters is obvious. All has a typical meaning. The promised son is the type of the Lord Jesus Christ. When he was upon the altar and taken from the altar we saw a prophetic picture of the death and resurrection of our Lord. In the preceding chapter the death of Sarah stands for the national death of Israel from whom Christ came according to the flesh; this national setting aside of Israel occurred after Christ was risen from the dead and had returned to the Father. And here in chapter 24 we behold Isaac, the son and heir, with the father and the father sending forth his servant to seek a bride for Isaac. Typically we see in this chapter the call and homebringing of her, who is the comfort of the Son, after Israel's failure and national death, the church.

Abraham is now old (140 years). He was very rich in possessions, but his greatest treasure was the son of his love who was with him in Canaan. And Isaac is the father's delight and the object of his love and thoughts. He is to have a wife to share his riches. In sending forth the servant (probably Eleazar) Abraham tells him twice, "Beware thou that thou bring not my son thither again." The son is not to leave the father's side; the bride is to be brought to him. And Abraham is assured of the success of the mission of the servant.

The application is easily made. Canaan, where the three dwell, Abraham, the father; Isaac, the son, and the servant, is the type of the heavens. Abraham typifies the Father and Isaac the Son. The Son who died, raised from the dead, seated as the Heir of all things at the right hand of God, is to have one destined from before the foundation of the world to share His riches and His glory. For her, the Church, He died and purchased her with His blood. For the pearl of great price He sold all He had.

And whom does the servant foreshadow? He is the oldest servant; he ruled over all Abraham had; he was with him from the beginning. Who is represented by the servant who went forth in obedience and whose sublime mission was crowned with such results? The servant is the type of the Holy Spirit. He was sent forth after Christ was glorified and with the day of Pentecost He began His blessed mission on earth. The testimony of the Holy Spirit and His work in calling out the church is blessedly foreshadowed in this chapter. He testified of the Father and the Son; how rich the father is and that Isaac is the heir of all the riches. And so the Holy Spirit does not speak of Himself but of the Father and of the Son and makes known the eternal purposes of the Father, and as the Servant's mission did not fail, so the mission of the Holy Spirit in the present age cannot fail.

And richer still, in typical meaning, is the story of the chosen one, Rebekah. We give a very few hints. She heard the message the servant brought. She believed all he said. She had never seen Isaac and she was attracted to him. The jewels of silver and of gold and the raiment the servant gave to Rebekah were the evidences of the riches of the unseen bridegroom and the tokens of his love. And when they asked her, "Wilt thou go with this man?" she answered, "I will go." There was no delay.

All is very simple in its application. The sinner hears the testimony and is to believe the report. If the Word is received in faith and accepted then we receive "the earnest of our inheritance," the Holy Spirit. The heart through grace becomes detached from the world and attached to Him, who loveth us and whom we love, though we have never seen Him.

"The servant took Rebekah and went his way." He took charge of her. How long the journey lasted we do not know. Most likely she was ignorant of the journey and how soon she was to meet Isaac. But the bridegroom Isaac must have ever been in her heart and before her eyes. And so are God's called out ones, who constitute the church, while on the journey, in charge and keeping of the Holy Spirit. We do not know how long the journey towards the meeting place may last.

From the well of Lahai-roi (the living and the seeing one) Isaac came. Isaac and Rebekah met. The servant presented her to Isaac and gave his report. As Isaac came forth from Lahai-roi, so our Lord will come forth from the place where He is now. He will come into the air to meet His own (1 Thess. 4:15-18). No doubt Isaac waited for Rebekah and as Rebekah expected to meet him so are we to wait for His Son from heaven. We shall see Him as He is. Before the night came Isaac took her into his tent, and then the marriage (Rev. 19).

CHAPTER 25:1-11 Abraham's Posterity From Keturah and His Death

1. Abraham's offspring from Keturah (25:1-4)
2. Isaac the heir (25:5-6)
3. Abraham's death and burial (25:7-11)

Abraham's marriage to Keturah and the offspring from her concludes the history of this remarkable character. That this took place after Isaac's marriage (typifying the marriage of the Lamb) makes it very interesting. After the church is completed and the present age ends the seed of Abraham will be blessed for the nations of the earth and nations will be born and walk in the light. This will be the result after Israel's restoration. Then all the families of the earth will be blessed in Abraham's seed. Abraham's posterity from Keturah stands for the millennial nations.

And Isaac is seen above all these. He still dwelt at Lahai-roi. He alone is the heir and the others received only gifts. So Christ is the Heir of God and His church will be with him far above all the earthly blessings of the age to come. Abraham died 175 years old, which means, he lived till Jacob and Esau were 15 years old. The phrase "gathered to his people" is used only of six persons. Of Abraham (25:8); Ishmael (verse 17); Isaac (35:29); Jacob (49:29-33); Aaron (Num. 20:24); and Moses (Deut. 32:50). Here we add a few words translated from the German and written by Dr. Kurtz, late professor of the University of Dorpat:

The human race has had four ancestral heads, to each of whom the divine blessing is granted: "Be fruitful and multiply." Of these, Abraham is the third; for he, too, is the head and founder of a new race, or of a new development. The direct reference of that blessing, in the case of the first and second, is to descendants after the flesh; in the case of the fourth, Christ (see Psalm 22:30--110:3; Isa. 53:10), to a spiritual seed, but in the case of Abraham, to both; for his spiritual seed was appointed to be manifested through the medium of his seed according to the flesh, agreeably to the promise: "In thee and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed." The children of Abraham, according to the flesh, are countless in number. Nations have arisen and disappeared, but his descendants proceed onward, through all ages, unmixed and unchanged. Their history is not yet closed; the blessing given to his seed, still preserves them unharmed, under every pressure of the nations around them, and amid all the ravages of time. But the peculiar feature which distinguishes Abraham does not, properly, belong to him naturally, as a member of the human family, or as an individual of a particular nation, but is found in his spiritual character. Where this character, which is faith, is manifested, we find the true children of Abraham (Gal. 3:7, 29; Rom. 9:6-8). Faith was the polar star, the very soul, of his life. The ancient record, anticipating a development of two thousand years, remarked of him, first of all: "He believed in the Lord; and he counted it to him for righteousness" (Gen. 15:6); and after these two thousand years had elapsed, Christ said of him: "Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad" (John 8:56). Abraham's true position and importance cannot, therefore, be fully appreciated, until we recognize in him the father of them that believe (Rom. 4:11); and innumerable as the stars of heaven, and glorious as they are, are his spiritual children, the children of his faith.

VIII. THE GENERATIONS OF ISHMAEL

1. Ishmael and his sons (25:12-16)
2. The death of Ishmael (25:17-18)

In chapter 16:12 we find the prediction that Ishmael should dwell in the presence of his brethren. In verse 18 we find the fulfilment. The names we find here may be traced in other Scriptures. For instance in Isaiah 60, the great chapter of the millennial kingdom, we have Nebajoth and Kedar mentioned (verse 7). The number twelve, twelve princes, links Ishmael closely with Israel. When Israel is blest in the future and receives the promised Land for his glorious possession, the posterity of Ishmael will not be forgotten.

IX. THE GENERATIONS OF ISAAC

CHAPTER 25:19-34 Esau and Jacob

1. Rebekah barren and the answered prayer (25:19-22)
2. The birth of Esau and Jacob (25:23-26)
3. The growth of the boys (25:27-28)
4. Esau sells his birthright (25:29-34)

It was 25 years after Abraham entered Canaan before Isaac was born. It was 20 years after Isaac's marriage before the birth of Esau and Jacob. The barren condition of Rebekah led Isaac to exercise faith and to cast himself upon the Lord for help. And He answered him. God delights to take up what is weak and barren and manifest His power in answer to prayer. Before the children were born the Lord had declared, "the elder shall serve the younger." The struggle in Rebekah's womb reminds us of the struggle between the two seeds (Ishmael and Isaac) in Abraham's household. God's sovereignty is here solemnly made known. He knew them before they were born and He made His choice according to His own sovereign will and purpose. "And not only this; but when Rebekah also had conceived by one, even by our father Isaac (for the children being not yet born, neither having done good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works but of Him that calleth), it was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger, as it is written, Jacob have I loved but Esau have I hated" (Rom. 9:11-13). That this does not refer to any unconditional and eternal condemnation is clear. It must be noticed that the statement "Esau have I hated" does not appear in Genesis, but in the last book of the Old Testament. Then the character and defiance of Edom had become fully established. In Genesis the Lord speaks only of having chosen Jacob and what creature of the dust can challenge His right to do so.

Then Esau sold his birthright. It fully brought out the defiance of his wicked heart (Hebrews 12:16-17). The blessings of the birthright he sold consisted in three things: 1. The father's blessing and the place of head of the family; 2. The honor of being in the direct line of the promised One--Shem-Abraham-Isaac; 3. The exercise of the domestic priesthood. All this Esau despised for a carnal gratification. How numerous are his followers in our days who might have greater blessings, but they are lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God.

CHAPTER 26 Isaac in Gerar

1. The famine (26:1)
2. Jehovah appears unto Isaac (26:2-5)
3. Isaac in Gerar where he denies Rebekah (26:6-11)
4. Isaac's prosperity and the digging of wells (26:12-22)
5. Jehovah appears at Beersheba (26:23-25)
6. Isaac and Abimelech (26:26-33)
7. The wives of Esau (26:34-35)

When the famine came Jehovah commanded Isaac not to go to Egypt. As Isaac is the type of Christ risen from the dead and Egypt is the type of the world, this command has a significance. Isaac is separated from Egypt as Christ and His people are, who share in Him a heavenly place. We also notice, while the Lord spoke to Abraham that his seed should be like the sand of the sea (the natural descendants) and the stars of heaven (the spiritual seed) to Isaac the Lord promises the seed as the stars of Heaven; this confirms the typical character of Isaac.

In Gerar he failed as his father failed. And while Sarah was seized by Abimelech, Rebekah is not touched nor separated from Isaac. Christ and His church are inseparable.

The digging of the wells and Isaac's patience fully manifests his character; a little picture of the patient suffering of the Son of God "who when He was reviled, reviled not again; when He suffered, He threatened not." Then Jehovah appeared unto him again and he receives still greater blessings as the reward of his obedience.

When Esau was 40 years old he manifested his defiance still more by taking wives of the Hittites to the grief of his parents.

CHAPTER 27 The Story of Jacob and the Deception of Rebekah and Jacob

1. Esau sent (27:1-4)
2. Rebekah's deception (27:5-17)
3. Jacob's deception (27:18-25)
4. Jacob blessed (27:26-29)
5. The discovery (27:30-40)
6. Esau hates Jacob (27:41)
7. Rebekah advises Jacob to flee (27:42-46)

With this chapter the story of Jacob begins. Three periods of his life are especially to be noticed: 1. His life in Canaan; 2. His departure from the land and his servitude in Padan-aram; 3. His return to the Land. The history of his descendants, the people Israel, may be traced in this. They were in the land; now they are away from the land scattered among the nations; like Jacob they will return to the land. Isaac knew the Word of God, "the elder shall serve the younger," yet he wanted to bless Esau. This was failure on his side. Yet he blessed Jacob by faith (Heb. 11:20). Rebekah wants to comply with the divine declaration but uses unholy means trying to aid God by her own devices to fulfill His Word. Jacob obeys his mother and makes use of the deception. Esau deceives, too, for he claimed a blessing to which he had no right before God and man. The flesh and its sinful ways is fully manifested in this chapter, nevertheless the will of God was accomplished.

Isaac lives after this event 43 years longer, but with this he passes from the page of history. Of his death and burial by Esau and Jacob we hear later. His life was characterized by patient endurance and suffering and his faith consisted in quietness and waiting.

CHAPTER 28 Jacob's Departure to Padan-Aram and His Vision

1. Isaac sends Jacob away and gives his blessing (28:1-5)
2. Esau's action (28:6-9)
3. Jacob's vision and vow (28:10-22)

We enter with this upon the interesting wanderings of the third patriarch, Jacob. God was pleased to reveal Himself to the three illustrious men, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, as He did not before. In Exodus 3:4-15 Jehovah reveals Himself to Moses and Jehovah calls Himself "the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob. This is My name forever." In Abraham, as we have seen, we have the type of the Father; in Isaac the type of the Son and now in Jacob we shall find the type of the work of the Holy Spirit. Jacob in his history foreshadows the history of Jacob's sons.

Jacob's departure stands for Israel's expulsion from their own land to begin their wanderings and suffering, till they are brought back again to the land sworn to the heads of the nation. In the chastening which passed over him we see God's governmental dealings with Israel.

The vision at Bethel is mentioned by our Lord in John 1:51. The Jehovah who stood above the ladder Jacob saw is the same who spoke to Nathaniel, "Hereafter ye shall see heaven open and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man." It is the vision of the future. Jehovah in that vision gave the promise of the land to Jacob and told him that his seed shall be as the dust of the earth. Notice while to Isaac the promise is of a heavenly seed to Jacob a seed as the stars of heaven is not mentioned. Still more was promised to Jacob. Read verse 15. "I will not leave thee until I have done that which I have spoken to thee about." Here again is Sovereign Mercy. What did Jacob do to merit all this? Why should God meet him thus? Did he think of the Lord and call on Him for mercy before he slept on the stone? Nothing whatever.

And Jehovah kept His promise and did all He had promised. "I will not leave thee" is a repeated promise. See Deut. 31:6; Josh. 1:5; 1 Chronicles 28:20; Hebrews 13:5-6. "Happy is he that hath the God of Jacob for his help, whose hope is in Jehovah his God" (Ps. 146:5). And He is our God and our Lord and in His grace keeps and leads us and does all He has promised. Thus God met Jacob at Bethel (the house of God), assured him of His watching care over him and of a return home in peace. Though Israel is now nationally set aside and they are dispersed, yet God watches over them, keeps them and will lead them back in his own time.

The ridiculous claim that "the coronation stone" in London is the stone upon which Jacob slept needs no refutation. Leading geologists declare unanimously that this stone did not come from Palestine.

CHAPTER 29 Jacob with Laban

1. Jacob's arrival at Padan-aram (29:1-14)
2. His service for Rachel (29:15-20)
3. Laban's deception (29:21-25)
4. Jacob receives Rachel 29:26-31)
5. Leah's sons (29:32-35)

The Lord brought him to Padan-aram, where he was to dwell as an exile for twenty years. During these twenty years Jehovah did not manifest Himself to him, even as Israel dispersed among the nations has no communications from the Lord. His sojourn in Padan-aram produced suffering, the disciplinary dealings of God with him. He reaps in a measure what he had sown. He deceived his father Isaac and now Laban deceives him in different ways, especially by substituting Leah for the beloved Rachel. A week after he received Leah, Rachel was given to him. But though he possessed her, he had to serve seven years for her.

Interesting are the names of the sons of Leah. Reuben (behold a Son!); Simeon (hearing); Levi (joined); Judah (praise). It is the order of the gospel.

CHAPTER 30 Jacob with Laban

1. The sons of Bilhah: Dan and Naphtali (30:1-8)
2. The sons of Zilpah: Gad and Asher (30:9-13)
3. The children of Leah: Issachar, Zebulon and Dinah (30:14-20)
4. The birth of Joseph (30:22-24)
5. Jacob's request to return (30:25-26)
6. Laban's confession and Jacob's prosperity (30:27-43)

Little comment is needed on this. The avarice and deceit of Laban is matched by the dexterity and cunning of Jacob. Joseph's birth marks an important event. It is then that Jacob said unto Laban, "Send me away that I may go unto mine own place and to my country." All this is likewise typical. Rachel the first loved represents Israel; Leah, the Gentiles. The names Reuben, Simeon, Levi and Juda (see translations) tell out the story of His grace towards the Gentiles. Rachel, the barren, was remembered and gave birth to Joseph (adding), the one who was made great among the Gentiles and the deliverer of his brethren, and therefore the type of Christ. How interesting that Jacob thought at once of returning when Joseph had been born. But he had to wait six years more.

CHAPTER 31 Jacob's Servitude Ended and Flight from Laban

1. Laban's behavior and God's commandment (31:1-10)
2. The dream vision to return to the land (31:11-16)
3. Jacob's flight (31:17-21)

4. Laban warned (31:22-24)
5. Laban's accusation (31:25-30)
6. Jacob's answer (31:31-42)
7. The covenant between Jacob and Laban (31:43-55)

The twenty years had expired. Laban's hatred and the hatred of his sons had increased. When the crisis had been reached the voice of Jehovah was heard. "Return unto the land of thy fathers and to thy kindred; and I will be with thee." This is the first time Jehovah spoke since the vision at Bethel. Jacob then laid the matter before his wives and relates a dream in which the angel of the Lord had spoken to him. What comfort it must have been for him to hear "I have seen all that Laban doeth unto thee." The Lord watched over Jacob and though Laban hated him Jacob prospered. So Israel in the dispersion, hated by the Gentiles, increases and prospers.

Rachel and Leah consented to flee and Jacob departs with his great wealth, his cattle and his goods. Soon Laban pursued and overtook Jacob. God warned the Syrian to beware how he treated Jacob. It seems that the main reason of the pursuit was the teraphim (household gods) which Rachel had stolen and which Laban wanted to recover. Idolatry was practiced in the household of Laban, though he used the name of Jehovah (verse 49). The dialogue between Jacob and Laban is intensely interesting.

CHAPTER 32 Jacob's Fear of Esau and Prayer at Peniel

1. The vision at Mahanaim (32:1-2)
2. The message to Esau (32:3-5)
3. Esau's coming and Jacob's fear (32:6-8)
4. Jacob's prayer (32:9-12)
5. Preparing to meet Esau (32:13-23)
6. Jacob's prayer at Peniel (32:24-32)

What a welcome it was when he came near to his land, that the angels of God met him. They were like divine ambassadors sent to welcome him back to assure him of God's presence and protection. When the remnant of Israel returns in the future to the promised land, the angelic hosts will not be absent. They have a share in the regathering and restoration of the people Israel (Matt. 24:31). But he faced the greatest trouble, his brother Esau. Fear drives him to prayer. It is a remarkable prayer: 1. He acknowledges his utter unworthiness; 2. He gives God the glory for all he has received; 3. He cries for deliverance; 4. He reminds God of the promises given at Bethel. And the Lord heard and answered his prayer. The returning remnant of Israel during the great tribulation will confess and pray in the same manner.

The night experience at Jabbok was not a dream, nor a vision, but an actual occurrence. The same person who appeared to Abraham at Mamre (chapter 18) appeared to Jacob that night. It is often stated that Jacob wrestled with the Lord who came to him that night; it is the other way, the Lord wrestled with Jacob. And He appeared in that memorable night as Jacob's enemy and opponent. Jacob uses the same carnal weapons with which he had in the past contended against God; he meets Him in his own natural strength. That stubbornness is overcome by the Lord touching the hip-joint of Jacob, dislocating it. In this way He completely crippled his strength and now Jacob could wrestle no more. In utter weakness and helplessness he could but cling to Him and ask a blessing. "By his strength he had power with God, yea he had power over the angel and prevailed; he wept and made supplication unto Him" (Hos. 12:3-4). The weeping and supplication was his strength. His name is changed. From now on his name is "Israel"-a Prince with God. And the descendants of Jacob, at the time of Jacob's trouble (Jer. 30:7), will make a similar experience and have their Peniel.

CHAPTER 33 The Reconciliation of Esau

1. Jacob meets Esau (33:1-17)
2. In the city of Shechem and the altar erected (33:18-20)

The reconciliation is effected, but Jacob is the same man of deceit. He tells his brother he will follow him to Seir. But he goes instead to Succoth. He built an altar there, but it is not the worship God expected. He should have gone to Bethel and fulfilled his vow.

CHAPTER 34 Defilement of Dinah

1. The defilement (34:1-3)
2. Hamor's proposal (34:4-12)
3. The deceitful answer of Jacob's sons (34:13-24)
4. The males of Shechem slain (34:25-29)
5. Jacob's shame and grief (34:30-31)

If Jacob after the Peniel experience had gone to Bethel instead of building a house at Succoth and buying a parcel of a field, perhaps this sad event might never have occurred. God permitted it for the humiliation of His servant Jacob. Again he reaps what he had sown and the deceit of the father is reflected in the deceit of some of his sons.

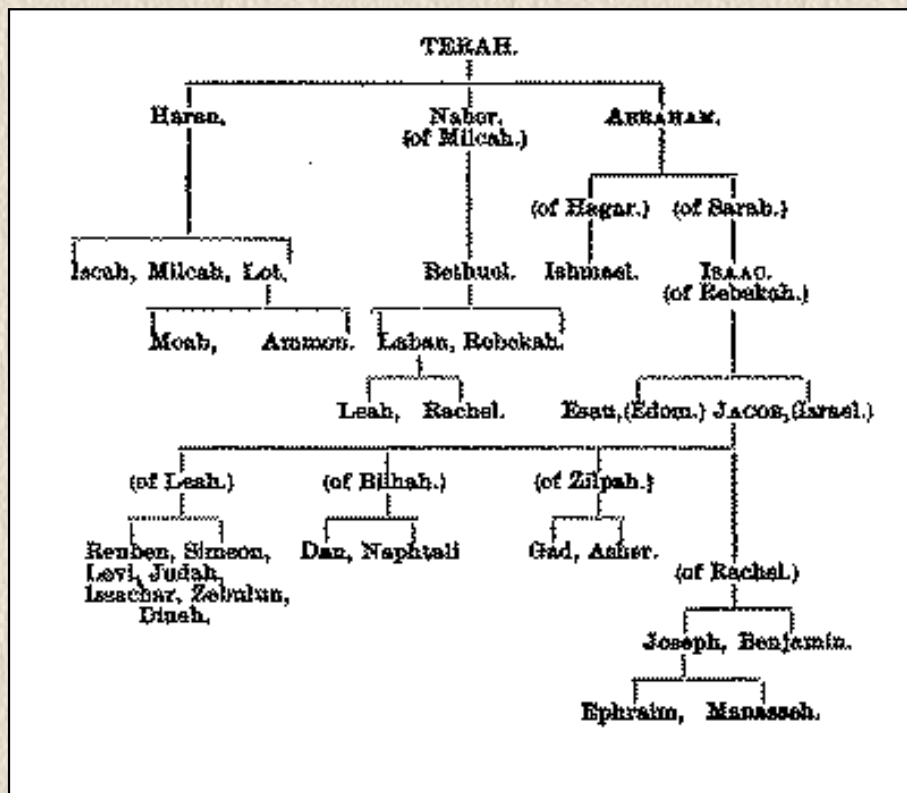
CHAPTER 35 Jacob at Bethel and Three Deaths

1. The divine commandment (35:1)
2. The defilement put away (35:2-4)
3. The journey to Bethel and the altar (35:5-7)
4. Deborah, Rebekah's nurse, dies (35:8)
5. God appears to Jacob (35:9-15)
6. Benoni-Benjamin and Rachel's death (35:16-20)
7. The twelve sons of Jacob (35:21-26)
8. Isaac's death (35:27-29)

The Lord did not leave Jacob in Shechem amidst the evil and corrupting influences. The Lord now reminded him of what had happened long ago and of the unfulfilled vow he had made when he had his dream-vision. And he responded. His house, however, was first cleansed from the defilement; the strange gods among them, most likely teraphim, or household gods, had to be put away. After that was done he gave the order to go to Bethel to make an altar there unto God. They gave up their gods and earrings; the latter must have been in the shape of figures representing idols. And after this cleansing they became a mighty host, the terror of God fell upon the cities through which they journeyed. The altar is built and the place called El Bethel (God of the House of God). Rebekah's nurse died. After chapter 49:31 Rebekah is no longer mentioned; not even her death. This corresponds with that which she typifies, the church. Jacob as we learned foreshadows the history of the earthly people of God and as that is related no more mention of Rebekah is made. Then God met him again and Jacob becomes Israel in reality.

Rachel gives birth to another son at Ephrath and dies there. The one born has a double name. "Benoni," which means "son of sorrow"; "Benjamin," which is "the son of the right hand." Here we have another type of the Lord Jesus Christ, His humiliation and exaltation. Bethlehem is here mentioned for the first time in the Bible.

After the names of the twelve sons of Jacob are given and Reuben's evil deed is recorded we hear of the death of Isaac. He died 180 years old and his sons Esau and Jacob buried him. We now add a little diagram, which gives the family tree of the patriarchs down to the end of this book.



X. THE GENERATIONS OF ESAU

1. Esau in Canaan, his wives and sons (36:1-5)
2. Esau leaving Canaan and in Edom (36:6-8)

XI. THE GENERATIONS OF ESAU IN MOUNT SEIR

1. Sons of Esau (36:9-10)
2. Sons of Eliphaz (36:11-12)
3. Sons of Reuel (36:13)
4. Sons of Aholibamah (36:14)
5. Dukes of Eliphaz (36:15-16)
6. Dukes of Reuel (36:17)
7. Dukes of Jeush (36:18)
8. Dukes of Horite and kings of Edom (36:20-43)

We point out a few interesting facts in these two generations of Esau and Esau's sons. In verse 6 we read that Esau went into the country from the face of his brother Jacob. It came at last to a pronounced and complete separation between Esau and Jacob. Jacob dwelt in the land in which his father was a stranger. And Edom became the treacherous foe to the people of Israel. Read Obadiah, verses 8-16. From the concubine of Eliphaz was born Amalek, one of the terrible enemies of Israel with whom there was to be a continual warfare (Exodus 17:8-14).

And what a prolific progeny of the wicked Esau! The Hebrew names tell the story of their expansion, their wickedness and power. What was not of God developed rapidly, as it does now, in the earth.

XII. THE GENERATIONS OF JACOB

CHAPTER 37 The Story of Joseph

1. Jacob dwelling in Canaan (37:1)
2. Joseph's character and feeding the flock (37:2)
3. Beloved of his father (37:3)
4. Hated by his brethren (37:4)
5. The dream of the sheaves (37:5-8)
6. The dream of the sun, moon and stars (37:9-11)
7. Joseph seeks his brethren (37:12-17)
8. The plot against Joseph (37:18-22)
9. Joseph in the pit and sold (37:23-28)
10. Reuben's grief (37:29-30)
11. The deception of Jacob's sons (37:31-32)
12. The grief of Jacob (37:33-35)
13. Joseph in Egypt (37:36)

The story of Joseph is one of the most interesting in the whole Bible. The Holy Spirit has devoted more space to the life of Joseph than He devoted to Abraham. The reason for this must be sought in the fact that the story of Joseph foreshadows the story of Christ. Some critics have made out that the story of Joseph is an invention and that the record was written hundreds of years after Moses. However, archeological evidence has fully and completely established the historical character of Joseph. Two of the El Amarna tablets show that a Semite held such a high position as attributed to Joseph. Others, while they believe in the historicity of Joseph, deny that his life is typical of our Lord. Such a denial is akin to spiritual blindness. It is true nowhere is a statement made that Joseph typifies Christ, but throughout this age all teachers of the Word have treated the life of Joseph as foreshadowing Christ. Stephen in his great address before the Jewish council mentions Joseph (Acts 7:9-14); the Messianic application must have been in his mind.

The life of Joseph falls into two periods; his humiliation and his exaltation. In these two parts the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow are blessedly foreshadowed. There is no other type so perfect as that of Joseph. In our annotations we shall not be able to point out all the comparisons; only the leading ones we give as a hint.

Israel loved Joseph more than all his sons and that reminds us of Him who is the Father's delight. Joseph was separated from evil, even as Christ was. Joseph had a coat of many colors, the expression of the Father's love; thus God honored His Son. And as Joseph was hated by his brethren without a cause, so Christ was hated (John 15:25). The dreams foretold Joseph's future exaltation; he saw things in heaven and things on earth bowing before him, even as before Christ things in heaven and on earth must bow the knee.

Then the father sent forth his beloved Joseph to seek his brethren who were lost. Israel put Joseph into their hands. All this foreshadows God's unspeakable gift in sending His only begotten Son into this world to seek what is lost.

Then note the following typical suggestions. When he came to his brethren, they conspired against him to slay him. "Come now therefore let us slay him, and cast him in some pit." And in John 5:16 it is written that the Jews sought to slay Christ. The brethren stripped Joseph of his coat, as our Lord was stripped of His garment. He was cast into the pit and they sat down to eat bread. And the Pharisees who had delivered up the Lord Jesus sat down to eat the Passover, while the soldiers, who had parted the garments sat down to watch them. They sold him as the Lord was sold and Judah was the one who said "let us sell him." This brings the betrayal by Judas to our mind.

And Jacob is deceived by his sons as he deceived his father. The coat stained by the blood of a kid reminds us of the skin of the kid with which he had deceived Isaac.

CHAPTER 38 Judah and Tamar

1. Judah's marriage to the Canaanitish woman (38:1-2)
2. His sons: Er, Onan and Shelah (38:3-5)
3. Tamar married to Er and Onan (38:6-10)
4. Tamar waiting for Shelah (38:11)
5. Her deception and Judah's sin (38:12-16)
6. The birth of Pharez and Zarah (38:27-30)

Historically this chapter comes before the thirty-seventh. The higher critics are one against the other in their unbelieving speculations over the composition of this chapter. It is inserted here for a most interesting purpose. Judah's history foreshadows the history of the Jews after they had rejected the Lord Jesus. His connection with a Canaanite (trafficker) and his marriage to the daughter of Shuah (riches) shows what the Jews have been ever since they rejected Christ. His offspring is Er (enmity) and Onan (wickedness) till the significant third one comes, Shelah (the sprout) pointing to the godly remnant of that nation in the future. (On that remnant see chapter on Isaiah.)

And Tamar's sin, so dark and vile, shows forth the grace of God. We find her name and the names of her two sons in the genealogy of Christ (Matthew 1).

CHAPTER 39 Joseph In Egypt

1. In Potiphar's house (39:1-6)
2. Tempted by Potiphar's wife (39:7-18)
3. Joseph in prison (39:19-23)

Potiphar, the master of Joseph, was an officer of Pharaoh. His name means "devoted to Ra," a god of Egypt. Why is it stated a number of times that Potiphar was an Egyptian? Discoveries have shown that Egypt had come at that time under a new dynasty; therefore it is repeatedly stated that Potiphar, the Egyptian, was retained in his official position. Joseph in Egypt is the type of Christ among the Gentiles. Jehovah blessed the Egyptian's house for Joseph's sake.

The temptation of Potiphar's wife brings out the marvelous character of Joseph. The critics in rejecting this story have dug their own pit into which they have fallen. A number of critics (Von Bohlen, Tuch, and others) claim "that Joseph could never have seen his master's wife, for the women were secluded and had separate apartments." Monuments and Egyptian paintings have shown that the women were not secluded, but mingled freely with the men. Woman in the hieroglyphics is called neb-t-en pa, which means "mistress of the house." An ancient papyrus was discovered containing "the romance of the two brothers." It contains an episode similar to that of our chapter. It fully bears out the fact that the temptation of Joseph is not a myth and it is thought that this event in Joseph's life formed the basis for the romance of the two brothers.

Joseph suffered innocently, but the prison in which he was confined becomes the high road to power and glory. How much greater were the sufferings of Him, who was not only innocent, but holy.

CHAPTER 40 Joseph the Interpreter of Dreams

1. The fellow prisoners (40:1-8)
2. The dream of the chief butler (40:9-11)
3. The interpretation (40:12-13)
4. Joseph's request (40:14-15)
5. The dream of the chief baker (40:16-17)
6. The interpretation (40:18-19)
7. The fulfilment (40:20-22)
8. Joseph forgotten (40:23)

He was reckoned among the transgressors. To the one he spoke the word concerning life, while the other heard the message of death. Thus Christ was reckoned among the evildoers. To the one crucified with Him He said, "Today thou shalt be with Me in paradise," while the other malefactor railed and died in his sins.

Critics do not believe even this simple story and deny the culture of vines in Egypt. But the Egyptian paintings have given them the lie. They picture the pressing of the grapes in a cup, which was a religious ceremony. Joseph was forgotten; two years longer he had to remain in prison. What exercise of patience and faith he must have had!

CHAPTER 41 Joseph's Exaltation

1. Pharaoh's dreams (41:1-7)
2. Joseph brought from the prison (41:8-15)
3. Joseph's humility (41:16)
4. The revealer of secrets (41:17-32)
5. Joseph's wise counsel (41:33-36)
6. Pharaoh's answer (41:37-40)
7. Joseph's exaltation and marriage (41:41-46)

All is so simple that little comment is needed. The dreams impressed Pharaoh, because the cow was a sacred animal, the emblem of Isis. At last Joseph is remembered and brought out of the prison and his raiment is changed. All this finds an application in the life of our Lord. He was taken out of the grave. Compare verse 16, Joseph's humility, with the humility of another Hebrew prisoner, Daniel in Babylon. (See Dan. 2:27-30.)

The seven years of plenty and the seven years of famine are typical. This age will close with the seven years of tribulation.

And this dream of Pharaoh and Joseph's interpretation has been remarkably confirmed by the hieroglyphic inscriptions. One was discovered in 1908 which tells of the seven years of famine, because the Nile did not overflow. It has been ascertained that this was the very time when Joseph was in Egypt.

Then follows Joseph's exaltation. The name of this Pharaoh was Apepi. His father and grandfather were for a time co-regents with him. He recognized the presence of the Spirit of God in Joseph. Note the beautiful comparisons with our Lord. Pharaoh said, "I have set thee over all the land of Egypt." Of Christ we read, "Thou didst set Him over the works of Thy hands." Joseph said, "God hath made me lord of all Egypt" and Christ is "Lord over all." Joseph is arrayed in royal vesture, and Christ is crowned with glory and honor. The word "Abrech" was cried before him. This word means "bow the knee." According to Prof. Sayce of Oxford "Abrech" is the Sumerian "Abrok," which means the seer. This would call for prostration. Thus every knee must bow before our exalted Lord. The name by which he was called is in the Septuagint "Psomtomphanech." This is an Egyptian name, meaning "saviour of the world." The word Zaphnethpaaneach means "revealer of secrets." Even so Christ after He was rejected by His own brethren became the Revealer of secrets and the Saviour of the world.

Before the seven years of famine came Joseph received his bride, Asenath, the Gentile, and Christ will have His beloved with Him before the years of tribulation and judgment come. All had to come to Joseph for corn, as all must come to Christ for the bread of life.

CHAPTER 42 The First Visit of Joseph's Brethren

1. Joseph's brethren sent to Egypt (42:1-5)
2. Joseph meets his brethren (42:6-16)

3. Put in prison for three days (42:17)
4. Joseph's demand (42:18-20)
5. The accusing conscience (42:21-23)
6. Joseph weeps and Simeon bound (42:24)
7. The return of the nine (42:25-38)

The famine years bring Joseph's brethren to repentance and after the deepest exercise Joseph makes himself known to them and they find forgiveness and deliverance. Thus it will be during the tribulation of the last days of the present age. The remnant of Israel will pass through that time called "Jacob's trouble" and be saved out of it. Then the Lord Jesus Christ will make Himself known to His brethren, according to the flesh.

Joseph's treatment of his brethren, whom he recognized, was harsh, so that they might be led to acknowledge their sin. And they readily confess their guilt on account of having sold their brother and take the harsh treatment and imprisonment they received as a just retribution. And Joseph understood all their words so that he wept. And He who was rejected by His own has a loving sympathy for this nation. Simeon remains behind; while Joseph demands Benjamin. The grief of Jacob is pathetic.

CHAPTER 43 The Second Visit to Joseph

1. The journey to Egypt with Benjamin (43:1-15)
2. The kindness of Joseph (43:16-34)

CHAPTER 44 The Feigned Dismay and the Bringing Back

1. The cup concealed and the dismay (44:1-13)
2. The return to Joseph's house (44:14-34)

CHAPTER 45 Joseph Reveals Himself

1. He reveals himself (45:1-3)
2. His address (45:4-13)
3. He kissed his brethren (45:14-15)
4. Pharaoh's command (45:16-20)
5. His brethren sent away and their return to Jacob (45:21-28)

These three chapters belong together because they lead up to the great climax in the story of Joseph. The nobility of the character of Joseph is here fully brought out. Besides being a wise man, the great statesman of Egypt, he had a heart of tender love. Seven times we read of Joseph that he wept. The trial with the cup, which had been hidden in Benjamin's sack, was the needful and decisive test. Benjamin had become the object of Jacob's love. The trial with the cup was to bring out whether they cherished the same bitter feelings against Benjamin which had governed their conduct towards Joseph. Their behaviour now reveals the great change which had taken place. They confess that their iniquity has been found out and Judah, the spokesman, manifests the most affectionate reverence for his old father and the ardent love for his younger brother.

But who is able to describe the scene where Joseph made himself known to his brethren, when they had come the second time? It is a chapter of great tenderness. Some day He who was rejected and disowned by His brethren, the Lord Jesus Christ, will come the second time. Then when the deep anguish, the soul exercise of the Israel of the end time has reached the climax, He will come and they that pierced Him shall look upon Him. He will forgive them their sins and remember them no more (Romans 11:26-27).

CHAPTER 46 Jacob Goes Down to Egypt

1. Israel's departure and the vision (46:1-4)
2. The journey and the arrival in Egypt (46:5-7)
3. The offspring of the sons of Jacob (46:8-27)
4. Israel meets Joseph (46:28-30)
5. Joseph's directions concerning Pharaoh (46:31-34)

The whole family of Jacob, consisting of seventy souls, exclusive of the wives and the servants, came to Egypt. Once more God appears to Israel, but addresses him as Jacob. He gives him permission to go down to Egypt and assures him of His presence. They were directed to the land of Goshen, which was east of Memphis. And what a meeting it was, when Joseph fell around his father's neck and kissed him!

This emigration to Egypt was, without doubt, directed by the Lord for the purpose of guarding against the dispersion of the family, as well as against its admixture with strangers, during the important period which had arrived in which it was appointed to be developed as a nation; neither of these unfavorable results, which would have been inevitable in Canaan, could follow in Egypt: for Goshen afforded ample room for their increasing numbers, on the one hand, while, on the other, the aversion of the Egyptians to shepherds (46:34) effectually prevented the formation of ties between them by intermarriage. Besides, the opportunity which was furnished for becoming acquainted with the wisdom of Egypt, and also the pressure of the future bondage, may have been both designed to serve, in the hands of God, as means for training and cultivating the chosen nation. And the transition from a nomadic to an agricultural life, which was designed to constitute the foundation of the polity of Israel on acquiring independence and a home in the promised land, may also be assigned, in its incipient stages, to this period.--J.H. Kurtz, sacred History.

CHAPTER 47 The Settlement in Goshen

1. Before Pharaoh (47:1-10)
2. The settlement (47:11-12)
3. Joseph's wise administration (47:13-26)
4. Jacob's request (47:27-31)

Jacob and some of his sons were presented to Pharaoh, who received them graciously, and Jacob blessed Pharaoh. The great and powerful monarch of the great land of Egypt was blessed by the poor old Jacob. He is more than blessed, but a blesser, a type of what Israel is yet to be for the nations of the earth.

There is no discrepancy in verse 11, for Goshen is also called Rameses. We likewise get a glimpse in this chapter of the wonderful administration of Joseph during the years of famine. Verse 27 speaks of Israel's prosperity in the land. Notice how the names of Jacob and Israel are used. He requested to be buried in Canaan and Joseph promised to carry out his wish.

CHAPTER 48 Jacob adopts Ephraim and Manasseh

1. The sons of Joseph brought to Jacob (48:1-2)
2. The words of Jacob (48:3-7)
3. Ephraim and Manasseh presented (48:8-14)
4. Jacob's blessing (48:13-16)
5. Joseph's interference (48:17-20)
6. Jacob's last words to Joseph (48:21-22)

The adoption of Joseph's sons is interesting and instructive. As the offspring of the Gentile wife Asenath they were in

danger of becoming gentilized and thus forget their father's house. Jacob frustrated this by adopting the sons. It was an action of faith. "By faith, Jacob, when he was dying, blessed both the sons of Joseph; and worshipped leaning on the top of his staff" (Hebrews 11:21). Again the younger is preferred. When Jacob speaks of "the Angel, the Redeemer" (literal translation) he speaks of Jehovah who appeared unto him, whom he met face to face at Peniel. Full of hope, dying Jacob predicted the return of his offspring to the land of Canaan.

CHAPTER 49

Jacob's Prophecy

1. The call of Jacob: "Gather yourselves together" (49:1-2)
2. The prophecy concerning his sons (49:3-27)
 - Reuben (49:3-4)
 - Simeon and Levi (49:5-7)
 - Judah (49:8-12)
 - Zebulun (49:13)
 - Issachar (49:14-15)
 - Dan (49:16-18)
 - Gad (49:19)
 - Asher (49:20)
 - Naphtali (49:21)
 - Joseph and Benjamin (49:22-27)

The last words of Jacob to his sons are often called "the blessings." What he said is rather a prophecy. Concerning Judah he saith the most because from Judah there was to come the Shiloh, that is, the Messiah. Jacob's prophecy covers in a remarkable way the entire history of Israel, past, present and future. We give a few brief hints, which will be helpful in a closer study of this important chapter. Seven periods of Israel's history are given here.

1. Reuben, Simeon and Levi show the character of the nation up to the time of Christ. 2. Judah points clearly to the period of this nation when our Lord was on the earth. 3. Zebulun and Issachar, where the sea and commerce, indolence and service are prominent, describes Israel scattered among the nations during this age. 4. Dan shows Israel apostate during antichrist (Dan is left out in Revelation 7). 5. Gad, Asher and Naphtali describe the godly remnant during the great tribulation. 6. Joseph speaks of the second coming of Christ; and 7. Benjamin, the son of the right hand, of the righteous rule of the King.

CHAPTER 50 The Burial of Jacob and Joseph's Return and Death

1. The grief of Joseph (50:1-3)
2. The burial (50:4-13)
3. The return to Egypt (50:14-23)
4. The death of Joseph (50:24-26)

This great book which begins with the perfect and good creation of God ends with a burial and the last words are "a coffin in Egypt." What havoc sin has wrought. Jacob died 147 years old and after his body was embalmed was carried to Canaan. Read in connection with Joseph's death Ex. 13:19, Josh. 24:32 and Hebrews 11:22.

Genesis and Geology

Genesis is a revelation from God; geology is a discovery of man. A revelation from God can be augmented by God only; a discovery by man may be improved, matured, advanced, ripened progressively, till the end of the world. We

therefore assume that Genesis is perfect and beyond the possibility of contradiction or improvement by us; and we equally assume that geology, because the discovery of man, and the subject of the investigation of man, may be improved by greater experience and more profound acquaintance with those phenomena which lie concealed in the bosom of the earth, waiting for man to evoke, explain, and arrange them. I am sure, therefore, that Genesis, as God's Word, is beyond the reach of the blow of the geologist's hammer; or the detection of a single flaw by microscope or telescope; it will stand the crucible of the chemist; and the severer the ordeal to which it is subjected, the more pure, resplendent, and beautiful it will emerge, indicating its origin to be from above, and its issue to be the glory of God, and the supreme happiness of mankind. Geology has before now retraced its steps; Genesis never. Before now it has been discovered, that what were thought to be facts incontrovertible were fallacies. It is found that phenomena described and discussed as true, were mistakes and misapprehensions, which maturer investigations have disposed of, and therefore I am not speaking dogmatically and without reason, when I say, that while Genesis must be true, geology--having already erred, may err again, and some of its very loudest assertions, made rashly by those who have least acquaintance with its data--may yet be proved to be wrong. But certain facts in it are now beyond all dispute. Let geology and Genesis be alleged to clash, and the discovery from the depths of the earth contradict the text from the page of the Bible; in such a case, I would submit first these questions: Are you sure that there is a real contradiction between the fact of geology and the text of the Bible, or is it only a contradiction between the fact discovered by science, and the interpretation that you put upon the text of the Bible? In the next place, if there be in any instance contradiction between a clear text of the Bible and a supposed fact or discovery made by the geologist, my inference, and without hesitation, is, that the geologist must have made a mistake, that Moses has made none; and there fore the advice we give to the geologist is, not to say, God's work beneath contradicts God's Word without, but just to go back again, read more carefully the stony page, excavate more laboriously in the subterranean chambers of the earth, and a maturer acquaintance with the facts of science may yet elicit the desirable result, that there is harmony where we thought discord, and perfect agreement where to us there seemed only discrepancy and conflict. We have instances of the possibility of some deductions of science being wrong in other departments of it. Astronomy was once quoted as contradicting the express declarations of the Word of God; maturer acquaintance with it has proved its perfect coincidence. Again, the hieroglyphics on the banks of the Nile, as deciphered by Young and Champollion, were instanced to prove a far greater age of the human race than that declared in the Bible; but subsequent investigation showed that the hieroglyphics were wrongly interpreted, not that God's Word was untrue. The traditions of the Chinese were viewed as upsetting the records of the Mosaic history, but subsequent investigation has proved that those were wrong, and that God's Word is true.

The Bible, whether we take it in Genesis or in the Gospels, contains no error; it has not a single scientific error in it. Yet it was not designed to teach science; but wherever it touches the province of science, it touches so delicately that we can see the main object is to teach men how to be saved, while its slight intimations of scientific principles or natural phenomena have in every instance been demonstrated to be exactly and strictly true. If the Bible said in any part of it, as the ancient philosopher alleged, that there were two suns, one for the upper hemisphere, and the other for the lower, then science would prove that Scripture was wrong; or if the Scripture said, as the Hindus believe, that the earth is a vast plain, with concentric seas of milk, honey, and sugar, supported by an elephant, and that the earthquakes and convulsions of the globe are the movements of that elephant as he bears it on his back, then science would have proved that to be absurd; and if Scripture has asserted it, such assertion would be demonstrably untrue. But the striking fact is that you find no such assertion, nor anything approaching such assertions in the Bible. How comes it to pass, then, that Moses has spoken so purely and truly on science where he does speak, and has been silent where there was such a provocative to speak--his very silence being as significant as his utterance? How happens it that Moses, with no greater education than the Hindu, or the ancient philosopher, has written his book, touching science at a thousand points so accurately, that scientific research has discovered no flaws in it; and has spoken on subjects the most delicate, the most difficult, the most involved; and yet in those investigations which have taken place in more recent centuries, it has not been shown that he has committed one single error, or made one solitary assertion which can be proved by maturest science or the most eagle-eyed philosopher to be incorrect scientifically or historically? The answer is, that Moses wrote by the inspiration of God, and therefore what he writes are the words of faithfulness and of truth. (Cumings.)

Dictionary of the Proper Names of Genesis with Their Meaning

- A -

Abel -- Vanity, vapor.
 Abel-mizraim -- Mourning of Egypt.
 Abidah -- Father of knowledge.
 Abimael -- My father from God.
 Abimelech -- My father is king.
 Abraham -- Father of many. Abram -- Father exalted.
 Accad -- Band; city of Nisibis.
 Achbar -- Mouse; Swift.
 Adah -- Adorned.
 Adam -- Man (red).
 Adheel -- Sorrow from God.
 Admah -- Red earth.
 Adullamite -- From Adullam; Restingplace.
 Aholibamah -- Tent of the high place.
 Ahuzzath -- Possession.
 Ajah -- A young hawk.
 Akan -- Wrestling.
 Allon-bachuth -- Oak of weeping.
 Almodad -- Beyond measure.
 Alvah -- Wickedness.
 Alvan -- Unrighteous.
 Amalek -- A nation that licks up.
 Amorite -- Mountain dweller.
 Amraphel -- Uttering dark sentences.
 Anah -- An answer.
 Anamin -- Gushing of the waters.
 Aner -- Exile; Sprout.
 Aram -- Exalted.
 Aran -- Wild goat.
 Ararat -- High or holy ground.
 Arbah -- Four.
 Ard -- Fugitive (uncertain).
 Areli -- Lion of God.
 Arioeh -- Strong lion.
 Arkite -- One who gnaws.
 Arodi -- Roaming, untamed.
 Arphaxad -- Laying on or at the side.
 Arvadite -- Break loose; Wanderer.
 Asenath -- Devoted to the goddess Neith.
 Ashbel -- Fire of Bel; or, Correction of God.
 Asher -- Happy.
 Ashkenaz -- Scattered fire.
 Ashteroth-Karnaim -- Dougle-homed
 Astarte (Phoenician); Venus.
 Asshur -- Step.
 Asshurim -- Steps.
 Atad -- Bramble.
 Avith -- Ruins.

- B -

Baal-hanan -- Baal is merciful.
Babel -- Confusion.
Bashemath -- Pleasant smell.
Becher -- First born.
Bedad -- Solitary, separate.
Beeri -- My well.
Beersheba -- Well of the oath.
Bela -- Devouring.
Benammi -- Son of my people.
Benjamin -- Son of the right hand.
Ben-oni -- Son of my sorrow.
Beor -- Torch; Burning.
Bera -- Excelling in evil.
Beriah -- Unfortunate.
Bethel -- House of God.
Beer-lahai-roi -- Well of the living and seeing.
Bethlehem -- House of bread.
Bethuel -- Separated of God.
Bilhah -- Timid.
Bilhan -- Their fear.
Birsha -- Son of wickedness.
Bozrah -- Sheep fold.
Buz -- Contempt.

- C -

Cain -- Acquisition; Acquired of Jehovah.
Cainan -- Deplorable.
Calah -- Completion, old age.
Calneh -- Complete wailing (Cal-neh.)
Canaan -- Merchant; Trafficker.
Caphtorim -- Crowns.
Carmi -- My vineyard.
Casluhim -- Barren mountains.
Chedorlaomer -- Handful of sheaves.
Cheran -- Their lamb; joyous shouts.
Chesed -- Meaning is unknown.
Chezib -- Lying.
Cush -- Black.

- D -

Damascus -- City of activities.
Dan -- Judging.
Deborah -- Bee, or her words.
Dedan -- Their leading forward.
Diklah -- Palm tree.
Dinah -- Vindicated; judgment.
Dinhabah -- She gives judgment.
Dishan -- Their threshing; Gazelle.
Dishon -- A thresher.
Dodanim -- Leader, or loves.

Dothan -- Decrees.

Dumah -- Silence.

- E -

Ebal -- Heaps of barrenness.

Eber -- He that passes over, a passenger.

Edar -- A flock.

Eden -- Delight, according to others, a plain.

Edom -- Red.

Ehi -- My brother.

Elah -- Strength, an oak.

Elam -- Forever, eternal.

El-bethel -- God, God's house.

Eldaah -- God's knowledge.

El-elohe-Israel -- God, the God of Israel.

Eliezer -- My God is help.

Eliphaz -- My God is fine gold.

Elishah -- My God is salvation.

Ellasar -- Of uncertain meaning.

Elon -- Mighty; Oak.

El-Paran -- The might of their adorning.

Emims -- Terrors.

En-mispat -- Fountain of judgment.

Enoch -- Dedicated; Teaching.

Enos -- Frail, mortal man.

Ephah -- Darkness.

Epher -- A young hart.

Ephraim -- Great fruitfulness, doubly fruitful.

Ephron -- A fawn; Of dust.

Ephrath -- Fruitful.

Er -- Watcher; Stirring up; Enmity.

Eri -- My watching; My enmity.

Erech -- Length.

Esau -- Hairy.

Eschol -- A cluster.

Eshban -- Very red.

Ethiopia -- Black.

Euphrates -- Fruitfulness; Sweet water.

Eve -- Life, life giver.

Ezbon -- Uncertain meaning; perhaps, Hastening of the son.

Ezer -- Help.

- G -

Gad -- Good fortune is come; Invading.

Gaham -- Flame, burning.

Galeed -- Heap of witness.

Gatam -- Coming in touch.

Gaza -- Fortified.

Gera -- Ruminant.

Gerar -- Sojourning.

Gershon -- Outcast, stranger.

Gether -- Turning aside; A spy.
Gihon -- Breaking forth.
Gilead -- Rocky; Heap of witness.
Girgasites -- Dwellers in swamps.
Gomer -- Completion.
Gomorrah -- Heap or bundled together.
Goshen -- Meaning obscure.
Guni -- Protected.

- H -

Hadar -- Honor, ornament.
Hadad -- Sharp, noisy.
Hadoram -- Exalted people.
Hagar -- Flight, sojourner.
Haggi -- My feast.
Hai -- Ruins.
Ham -- Hot; Black; Sunburnt.
Hamathite -- Defender; Fortress.
Hamor -- An ass.
Hamul -- One who has been pitied.
Hanoah -- Dedicated.
Haran -- Their Mountain; Parched.
Havilah -- Trembling in pain (childbirth).
Hazarmaveth -- Court of death.
Hazon-Tamar -- Pruning of the palm.
Hazo -- Vision.
Heber -- A company; also, Passing through.
Hebron -- Fellowship.
Hemam -- Destruction; Crushed.
Hemdan -- Delight.
Heth -- Dread; Fear.
Hezron -- Walled in; Division of song.
Hiddekel -- The swift; Tigris.
Hirah -- Nobility.
Hittite -- Same as Heth.
Hivite -- Together; Villagers; Winding.
Hobah -- Hiding place.
Hori, Horites -- Dwellers in caves.
Hul -- Writhing in pain.
Huppim -- Coverings.
Husham -- Haste.
Hushim -- Hasters.
Huz -- Counsellor.

- I -

Irad -- City of witness.
Iram -- Belonging to their city.
Isaac -- Laughter.
Iscah -- Gaze upon, or She will see.
Ishbak -- He will remain.
Ishuah -- He will be equal.

Ishmael, Ishmaelites -- God will hear.
Israel -- Prince with God.
Issachar -- Bringing wages; He will be hired.
Isui -- He will level.

- J -

Jaalam -- He will hide.
Jabal -- A river.
Jabbok -- He will pour out.
Jachin -- He will establish.
Jacob -- The supplanter.
Jahleel -- Hope of God.
Jahzeel -- Allotted of God.
Jamin -- Right hand.
Japheth -- Expansion.
Jared -- Descent.
Javan -- Clay (Greece).
Jebusite -- Treader down.
Jegarsahadutha -- Heap of witness.
Jehovah-jireh -- The Lord will see.
Jemuel -- Day of God.
Jerah -- Moon.
Jetheth -- Strengthened; A nail.
Jetur -- Encircle; Defence.
Jeush -- Gathering together.
Jezer -- Form; Purpose.
Jidlaph -- He will weep.
Jimnah -- Right-handed; Prosperity.
Job -- One who returns
Jobab -- Crying aloud.
Jokshan -- Ensnaring.
joktan -- He will be small.
Jordan -- Descending.
Joseph -- Let him add.
Jubal -- Musician.
Judah -- Praise.
Judith -- Jewish; Praising (in Phoenician form).

- K -

Kadesh -- Set apart; Devoted to licentious idolatry.
Kadmonites -- Ancients.
Kedar -- Dark-skinned.
Kedemah -- Eastward.
Kemuel -- Congregation of God.
Kenaz -- Hunter.
Kenites -- Acquiring.
Kenizzites -- Hunter.
Keturah -- Incense; Fragrance.
Kirjath-arba -- City of four.
Kittim -- Subduers.
Kohath -- Congregation, Waiting.

Korah -- Ice.

- L -

Laban -- White.

Lahai-roi -- The living and seeing one.

Lamech -- Powerful.

Leah -- Weary.

Lehabim -- Flames.

Letushim -- Hammered ones.

Leummim -- Nations.

Levi -- Joined.

Lot -- Covering.

Lotan -- Covering up.

Lud, Luddim -- of uncertain meaning; perhaps, to shine.

Luz -- Perverting.

- M -

Maachah -- Oppression.

Machir -- Seller.

Machpelah -- Double; Folded together.

Madai -- My extension.

Magdiel -- Preciousness of God; others; Mighty tower.

Magog -- Expansion, overtowering.

Mahalaleel -- Praise of God; The Blessed God.

Mahalath -- Stringed instrument; Harp; also, To be weak.

Mahanaim -- Two hosts or camps.

Malchiel -- My King is God.

Mamre -- Fatness; Strength.

Manahath -- Gift; Resting place.

Manasseh -- Forgetfulness.

Marah -- Bitterness.

Masrekah -- Vineyard.

Massa -- Bearing patiently; A burden; An utterance.

Matred -- Thrusting forward.

Medan -- Strife.

Mehetahel -- Benefited of God.

Mehujael -- Destroyed of God; or, Blot out that Jah is God.

Merari -- My bitterness.

Mesha -- Deliverance brought.

Meshech -- Drawing out.

Mesopotamia -- Exalted.

Methusael -- Dying who are of God.

Methuselah -- Death sent away.

Mezahab -- Waters of gold.

Mibsam -- Sweet smell.

Mibzar -- Defence.

Midian, Midianites -- Contention; Strife.

Milcah -- Queen.

Mishma -- Hearing.

Mizpah -- Watch-tower.

Mizraim -- Egypt; Double distresses.

Mizzah -- From sprinkling.
Moab -- From father, Water of father.
Muppim -- Anxieties; Shakings.

- N -

Naamah -- Pleasantness.
Naaman -- The same as Naamah.
Nahath -- Rest.
Nahor -- Snorter.
Naphish -- Refreshment.
Naphtali -- My wrestling.
Naphtuhim -- Openings.
Nebajoth -- Exalted places.
Nimrod -- Rebel.
Nineveh -- House of Ninus.
Noah -- Comfort.

- O -

Obal -- Stripped of leaves.
Ohad -- To be wild; joined together.
Omar -- Eloquent.
On -- Light; Sun (Egyptian).
Onam -- Vanity; Iniquity.
Onan -- Iniquity.
Ophir -- Abundance.

- P -

Padan-aram -- Plain of Aram (Mesopotamia).
Paran -- Abundance of foliage.
Pathrusim -- Southern countries.
Pau -- Crying out.
Peleg -- Division.
Peniel -- Face of God.
Perrizites -- Country folks.
Phallu -- Distinguished.
Pharaoh -- The King; a title.
Pharez -- Breach.
Phichol -- Mouth of all.
Philistines -- Land of wanderers.
Phut -- Extension.
Phuvah -- Mouth.
Pildash -- Flame of fire.
Pinon -- Distraction.
Pison -- Great increase.
Potiphar -- Devoted to Ra (Egyptian).
Poti-phaera -- The same meaning.

- R -

Raamah -- Roaring; Thunder.
Rachel -- An ewe.
Rameses -- Son of the sun.

Rebekah -- Typing; rope Rehoboth -- Streets.
Rephaims -- Giants.
Resen -- Bridle.
Reu -- Friend, associate.
Reuben -- Behold a son.
Reuel -- Friend of God.
Reumah -- Exalted.
Riphath -- Crushing.
Rosh -- Chief, Head.

- S -

Sabtah -- Breaking through.
Salah -- Sent forth.
Salem -- Peace.
Samlah -- Covering; Enwrapping.
Sarah -- A princess.
Sarai -- My princess.
Saul -- Asked for.
Seba -- Drink thou; Drunkard.
Seir -- Rough, hairy.
Sephar -- Numbering; Census.
Serah -- A princess; same as Sarah.
Sered -- Fear; Trembling.
Serug -- A branch.
Seth -- Set; Appointed.
Shalem -- Peace.
Shamah -- Hearing.
Shaul -- Asked for (Saul).
Shaveh-Kiriathain -- Plain of cities.
Sheba -- To the oath.
Shebah -- The same.
Shechem -- Shoulder.
Shelah -- Sent forth; Sprout.
Sheleph -- Drawn out.
Shem -- Name.
Shemeher -- Name of wing.
Shepo -- Prominent.
Shillem -- Retribution.
Shimron -- A keeper.
Shinab -- Tooth of father.
Shinar -- Dispersing.
Shobab -- Backsliding.
Shuah -- Sink down; Depression; also: Riches.
Shuni -- Quiet; My rest.
Shur -- A wall.
Sichem -- Shoulder.
Siddim -- Plains; Name of a valley.
Sidon -- Fishing.
Simeon -- Hearing in obedience.
Sinite -- Clay.
Sitnah -- Accusation; Enmity.

Sodom -- Scorching; Burning; Locked up (Arabic).

Succoth -- Booths.

Syria -- Lifted up; Sublime.

- T -

Tamar -- A palm tree.

Tarshish -- Subjection; Scattering.

Tebah -- Slaughtering.

Tema -- Desert; Southern region.

Teman -- The same.

Terah -- Delay.

Thahash -- Badger; Seal.

Tidal -- Fear; Reverence.

Timna -- Restraint.

Timnah -- The same.

Timnath -- A portion.

Tiras -- Desire.

Togarmah -- Breaking bones.

Tola -- Little worm; (Cocus-cacti: from which comes the scarlet color).

Tubal -- Flowing forth.

Tubal-cain -- Coming forth of Cain.

- U -

Ur -- Light.

Uz -- Counsel.

Uzal -- Flooded; Going to and fro.

- Z -

Zaavan -- Great unrest.

Zaphnath-paaneah -- Revealer of secrets.

Zarah -- Sun rising.

Zeboim -- Troops.

Zeboiim -- The same.

Zebulun -- Habitation.

Zemarites -- Double cuttings off.

Zepho -- Watchfulness.

Zerah -- Rising of light.

Zibeaon -- Of many colors.

Zilpah -- Dropping.

Zillah -- Shadow.

Zimran -- Their song.

Ziphim -- Smelters.

Zohar -- Whiteness; Light.

Zuzims -- Murmuring; Commotions.

Chronological Arrangement of Some Leading Persons and Events in Genesis

B. C.

The creation of Adam..... 4004

The birth of Seth..... 3874

Enos born..... 3769

Cainan born..... 3679

| | |
|-----------------------------|---------|
| Mahaleel born..... | 3609 |
| Jared born..... | 3544 |
| Enoch born..... | 3382 |
| Methuselah born..... | 3317 |
| Lamech born..... | 3130 |
| Adam's death..... | 3074 |
| Enoch's translation..... | 3017 |
| Noah's birth..... | 2948 |
| The Flood..... | 2348 |
| Peleg born..... | 2247 |
| Nahor born..... | 2155 |
| Terah's birth..... | 2126 |
| Noah's death..... | 1998 |
| Abraham's birth..... | 1996 |
| Abraham's call in Ur..... | 1945 |
| Terah's death..... | 1921 |
| Second call to Abraham.... | 1921 |
| Abraham in Egypt..... | 1920 |
| His return..... | 1912 |
| Abraham takes Hagar..... | 1911 |
| The birth of Ishmael..... | 1910 |
| The Covenant sign given... | 1897 |
| Birth of Isaac..... | 1896 |
| Sarah's death..... | 1859 |
| Isaac's marriage..... | 1856 |
| Jacob born..... | 1836 |
| Abraham's death..... | 1821 |
| Marriage of Esau..... | 1796 |
| Death of Ishmael..... | 1773 |
| Jacob's flight..... | 1759 |
| His marriages..... | 1752 |
| Jacob's flight..... | 1739 |
| Meets his brother..... | 1738 |
| Jacob at Bethel..... | 1731 |
| Death of Rachel..... | 1728 |
| Joseph sold..... | 1727 |
| Joseph in Egypt..... | 1717 |
| Death of Isaac..... | 1716 |
| Joseph interprets dreams... | 1715 |
| Egyptian famine..... | 1707-01 |
| Jacob's death..... | 1689 |
| Joseph's death..... | 1635 |

THE BOOK OF EXODUS

The Annotated Bible

Arno Clement Gaebelein

THE BOOK OF EXODUS

Introduction

The word "exodus" means "way out" or "going forth." The book has been given this Greek name because it relates to the history of the deliverance of the children of Israel from the house of bondage and how they were led forth by the power of God. It needs hardly to be stated that this second book of the Pentateuch is closely linked with Genesis. Without the events recorded in the final chapters of Genesis, the book of Exodus would have no meaning; without the continuation of the story of Israel in Egypt, the book of Genesis would be in an unfinished state. The promises given by God to the patriarchs which we find recorded in Genesis, make this book a necessity. For instance, we read in Genesis 15:13-14: "And He said unto Abram, Know of a surety that thy seed shall be stranger in a land that is not theirs and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years; and also that nation, whom they shall serve, will I judge; and afterward they shall come out with great substance. To Jacob the Lord said, I am God, the God of thy Father; fear not to go down to Egypt; for I will there make a great nation of thee" (Genesis 46:3). The fulfillment of these predictions and promises, as well as others, are seen in the book of Exodus.

"And"

The close connection with the book of Genesis is also learned by the first little word with which Exodus begins. It is the Hebrew conjunction "ve." The Authorized Version has translated it with "now," but it really means "and."

Each of the four books, which, besides Genesis constitute the Pentateuch, begins with this little word. It fully establishes the fact that these books form one great record and must have been written by one instrument. Originally the present division of the writings of Moses into five books did not exist. He wrote in a continuous way, which formed one record. The division into five parts, we doubt not, was made under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

The Higher Criticism

The book of Exodus has been treated by the higher critics in the same manner as the first book of the Bible. Its inspiration and the Mosaic authorship have been denied as well as the great judgments and miracles of which we read in Exodus. What ridiculous inventions have been made to explain some of the miracles wrought by the power of God we care not to follow.

The school of the destructive Bible criticism claims that Exodus is of a composite origin. The same confusing nonsense of a "Jehovist-Elohism-Priestly" narrative with a number of redactors, with which they dissect Genesis, has been applied to Exodus. Canon Driver, an ardent disciple of the fathers of higher criticism, makes the following statement: "The two main sources used in Exodus are those now generally known as 'Jehovist-Elohism,' the chief component parts of which date probably from the seventh or eighth century before Christ, and the 'Priestly' which is generally considered to have been written during or shortly after the Babylonian captivity." According to these statements Moses had nothing whatever to do with the composition of this book. We do not care to invite our readers to a closer inspection of this higher critical

dissecting room, nor do we wish to burden our pages with the infidel assertions of these so-called "learned men." It is a hopeless labyrinth of theories and contradictions, which lead gradually but surely into the outer darkness. Yet these pernicious inventions are taught in many colleges and seminaries of the different evangelical denominations.

A Jewish rabbi of considerable learning, after a close examination of the arguments produced by the critics, has of late shown their absolute worthlessness from a literary point of view. He declares, "All these and similar analyses of the sources of Exodus and the conclusions based thereon are entirely wrong.... The theory that the book of Exodus was compiled from previous works is not sufficiently supported; and the attempt to analyze it into its component parts is a hopeless one, for all the elements of the book are closely welded together into one harmonious whole (Rabbi Dr. Benno Jacob of Goettingen , Germany).

But it does not take scholarship to discover the truth of the last sentence, that "all the elements of the book are closely welded together into one harmonious whole." Every intelligent reader of Exodus makes this discovery. The impression is at once created that only one person wrote this book, and that this person was intimately acquainted with the history of the period which Exodus treats. That the author was Moses is indisputable.

In Exodus 24:4 we read, "And Moses wrote all the words of the Lord." In Chapter 34:27 another command to write is given, "Write thou these words." The Hebrews speak of the Pentateuch as "the law," and "the law of Moses." The book of the law, the law of Moses, now divided into five parts, was in existence at the time of Joshua (Joshua 1:8).

The Witness of the New Testament

Our Lord Jesus Christ, the infallible Son of God, perfect in knowledge, said to the Sadducees: "And as touching the dead, that they rise, have ye not read in the book of Moses, how in the bush God spake to him, saying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob" (Mark 12:26). Our Lord thus gives positive evidence that Exodus is the book of Moses. See also Luke 20:37. Exodus is quoted twenty-five times by Christ and His apostles, and there are almost as many allusions to it scattered throughout the New Testament books. The rejection of the inspiration of Exodus means the rejection of the inspiration of the entire New Testament, and worse than that, it means the rejection of the testimony of the Son of God.

Israel 's Birthday Book

The book of Exodus may well be called " Israel 's birthday book." Israel entered Egypt as a family and left Egypt as a nation, brought forth by the grace and power of God. Jehovah calls Israel "my Son, my Firstborn" (Exodus 4:22).

The national birthday of Israel is recorded in this book. First we find the travail pains in the house of bondage, preceding the birth. The birth itself takes place in the twelfth chapter, when sheltered by blood they went out, to leave Egypt behind. The memorable month in which they were redeemed by blood was now to be "the beginning of months," the beginning of a new year, the starting point of their national existence. Then followed their deliverance and redemption by the power of God at the Red Sea , the giving of the law and the statutes and their divine calling as a nation to be "a kingdom of priests and an holy nation."

Typical Teachings

Perhaps no other Old Testament book is so rich in typical teachings as Exodus. The power of Satan and God's salvation by blood are most clearly revealed in the first part of the book. The Lord Jesus Christ and His work in redemption are foreshadowed throughout the book. The two great phases of the gospel of God, so fully and blessedly revealed in the Epistle to the Romans, are found in type in Exodus. These two phrases are, redemption from the guilt of sins and redemption from the power of sin. The former is seen in type in Israel 's Passover experience, and the latter is typified by the overthrow and destruction of the Egyptians in the Red Sea . These two great events give us two aspects of the death of

Christ.

And how rich and full in typical meaning is the tabernacle with its different appointments and its priesthood. Here we find Christ everywhere. Various experiences of God's people may be traced in the conflicts and victories of Israel , their failure and unbelief. The annotations of the different chapters take notice of all this.

Dispensational Foreshadowings

Equally important are the dispensational foreshadowings. Israel 's suffering in Egypt is typical of their history of sorrow and tears until their final restoration and fulfillment of God's promises to them as a nation takes place. God's dealing in judgment with Egypt foreshadows future judgments in store for the world. The deliverance out of Egypt is a pattern of their future deliverance, when they will be brought back. To this Jeremiah 16:14 refers: "Therefore, behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that it shall no more be said, As the Lord liveth that brought up the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt , but, As the Lord liveth, that brought up the children of Israel from the land of the north, and from all the countries, whither He had driven them." The life of Moses, as a type of Christ, gives other dispensational hints of great interest. It is a most blessed book. May He guide us by His Spirit and unfold its precious truths to our hearts.

The Division of Exodus

We do not find in the book of Exodus a characteristic word like the word "generation" in Genesis, which points out the division in that book. Exodus contains a continuous story. We believe the key text for this book is found in the third chapter, in the words which the Lord spoke out of the burning bush to Moses, whom He called to be the leader of His people. We find them in chapter 3:7-8.

And the Lord said, I have surely seen the affliction of My people which are in Egypt , and have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters; for I know their sorrows; and I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians; and to bring them up out of the land unto a good land flowing with milk and honey, unto the place of the Canaanites: and the Hittites, and the Amorites, and the Perizzites and the Hivites, and jebusites.

These are beautiful words. They tell us that the Lord took notice of the affliction of His people and heard their cry. He was now ready to act in their behalf and to deliver them out of the house of bondage. In the eighth verse we have the two parts of Exodus indicated. The Lord announced two things He would do for His people. 1. I am come down to deliver them out of the hands of the Egyptians. 2. And to bring them up out of the land unto a good land flowing with milk and honey. Exodus has two great parts which correspond to these two statements.

I. ISRAEL 's DELIVERANCE OUT OF THE HANDS OF THE EGYPTIANS

1. The House of Bondage (1:1-22)
2. Moses the Chosen Deliverer (2-4:28)
3. Moses and Aaron in Egypt (4:29-7:13)
4. The Nine Plagues; the Tenth judgment Announced (7:14-11:10)
5. Redemption by Blood: The Passover and the Law of the Firstborn (12-13:16)
6. Redemption by Power (13:7-14:31)
7. The Song of Redemption (15:1-21)

II. THE JOURNEY TOWARDS THE PROMISED LAND. ISRAEL AT SINAI

1. The Experiences in the Wilderness (15:22-18:27)
2. At Sinai: The Covenant and the Law (19-24:18)

3. The Tabernacle and the Priesthood (25-31:18)
4. Israel 's Sin and Rebellion (32:1-35)
5. Moses' Intercession and its Results (33-34:35)
6. The Building of the Tabernacle (35-39:43)
7. The Tabernacle Set Up: The Finished Work and the Glory (40:1-38)

We learn from this division and analysis that the first section begins with the groans of the enslaved people in the house of bondage and ends with the song of redemption, sung by the redeemed and delivered nation. The beginning of the second section shows the redeemed people in the wilderness of Shur and describes their experiences; it ends with the finished work and the glory of the Lord filling the tabernacle. Both sections are prophetic. Israel 's groans and captivity will end in deliverance. Their wilderness wanderings will yet terminate in a future of glory, with Jehovah in their midst.

Analysis and Annotations

I. ISRAEL 'S DELIVERANCE OUT OF THE HANDS OF THE EGYPTIANS

1. The House of Bondage

CHAPTER 1

1. The names of the children of Israel; their increase (1:1-7)
2. The new king and his policy (1:8-11)
3. The continued increase (1:12)
4. Their hard bondage (1:13-14)
5. The midwives commanded (1:15-16)
6. Their disobedience and God's reward (1:17-21)
7. Pharaoh's charge to all his people (1:22)

The opening verses take us back once more to the end of Genesis; as already stated the word "now" (literally, "and") makes Exodus a continuation of the previous book. They had come into Egypt while Joseph was already there. Joseph and all his brethren had passed away, but their descendants multiplied rapidly. The Hebrew word "increased" means "swarmed." The seventh verse emphasizes their wonderful increase both in numbers and in power. Inasmuch as a comparatively short time had elapsed after Joseph's death, some 64 years only, infidelity has sneered at the description of this increase. It is generally overlooked that besides the 70 souls which came into Egypt a very large number of servants must have accompanied them. Abraham had 318 servants born in his house. Jacob had a still larger number. And they had been received into the covenant, though they were not natural descendants. The command of circumcision extended to "every man child in your generations, he that is born in the house, or bought with money of any stranger, which is not thy seed" (Gen. 17:12). There may have been thousands of such servants besides immense herds of cattle. Yet even this does not fully explain the great increase. It was miraculous, the fulfillment of the promises given to the patriarchs. God witnessed thereby that they were His people.

The Egyptian account given by their historian Manetho, speaking of the Hyksos, the shepherd kings of the East, is in all probability a distorted account of the increase and influence of the Israelites. A new king, or dynasty, then arose. Josephus, the Jewish historian, states: "The government was transferred to another family." The debt which Egypt owed to Joseph was forgotten.

The increasing Israelites filled the Egyptians with terror, hence the attempt to crush them by hard labor and the cruel taskmasters. They were used in the construction of some of the great monumental buildings and became the slaves of the Gentiles. The ruins of cities bear witness to it, for they were composed of crude brick and in many of them straw was not used (chapter 5:10-12). The oppression was in degrees. But the more they were afflicted, the more they multiplied and

grew. Here we may read the history of Israel among the Gentiles. Their increase and expansion has produced what is known as "anti-Semitism." The Gentiles fear the Jews. Their miraculous increase always takes place when oppression and persecution is upon them. When they are oppressed then God's time for deliverance draws nigh.

Their oppression and sorrow in Egypt was also permitted for their own good. The idolatry of Egypt began to corrupt the chosen people. See Joshua 24:14; Ezek. 20:5-8; 23:8.

The attempt to destroy all the male children follows next. Satan, who is a murderer from the beginning, manifested his cunning and power in this way. He desired to destroy the seed of Abraham so as to make the coming of the Promised One impossible. The murder of Abel was his first attempt. Here is an attempt on a larger scale, which was followed by many others. See Exodus 14, 2 Chron. 21:4, 17; 22:10; Esther 3:6, 12, 13; Matt. 2, etc. Throughout the history of Israel during this age Satan has made repeated attempts to exterminate this wonderful people, because he knows God's purpose concerning their future. His final attempt is recorded in Rev. 12.

Pharaoh was the instrument of Satan, and is a type of him. Blessed is the record of the faithful Hebrew midwives. They were pious women. Satan tried to use woman again for his sinister purposes, but he failed. Later we find that the wicked Pharaoh was defeated by the faith of a Hebrew mother and by the loving kindness of his own daughter (chapter 2). And God rewarded the actions of these women. They received honors; their families increased and were blest. When Pharaoh saw his attempt frustrated he appealed to his own people to commit wholesale murder. They began to sow an awful seed; the harvest came when years later there was no house in Egypt without one dead, when the firstborn were slain. Galatians 6:7 applies also to nations, "Whatsoever a man soweth, that he shall also reap." God honored the Hebrew midwives because they honored Him. The retribution came upon cruel Egypt in God's own time.

And yet there are other lessons. Egypt is the type of the world; Pharaoh the type of the prince of this world. The bondage of sin and the wretchedness of God's people, still undelivered, are here depicted. God permitted all so that they might groan for deliverance. The house of bondage opens the way for redemption by blood and by power.

2. Moses the Chosen Deliverer

CHAPTER 2 Moses: His Birth, Education, Choice, and Exile

1. His birth and concealment (2:1-4)
2. His rescue and education (2:5-10)
3. His choice and failure (2:11-14)
4. His exile (2:15-20)
5. His marriage (2:21-22)
6. The answered cry (2:23-24)

The history of the chosen deliverer, recorded by himself under the guidance of the Spirit, follows the dark picture of Israel's suffering. He was the offspring of a son and daughter of Levi. His name was Amram (chapter 6:20 and Num. 26:59). His wife's name Jochebed. As we saw in Genesis, Levi means "joined," and Levi was the third son of Jacob (Gen. 29:32-35). Here we have a typical hint of the true Mediator, joined to God and man. Levi was Jacob's third son, and Moses the third child of a son of Levi. The number "three" is the number of resurrection. It all foreshadows Christ. Pharaoh's command had been to cast the male children into the river. The river is the type of death (Jordan , for instance). By death Satan tried to oppose God's purposes. The babe was in danger of death; Satan's hatred through Pharaoh was directed against this child as Herod through Satan's instigation tried to kill the newborn King in Bethlehem .

The child was beautiful. Acts 7:20 states he was (literally) "beautiful to God." For three months he was hid and then his own mother prepared the ark of bulrushes and laid him in the reeds at the river's brink, in the place of death. The word "ark" is the same as in Gen. 6:14 and the pitch with which it was daubed reminds us likewise of Noah's ark. The dark

waters were kept out. It was not alone the natural love of the mother which acted, but faith. "By faith Moses, when he was born, was hid three months by his parents, because they saw that the child was beautiful; and they were not afraid of the King's commandment" (Heb. 11:23). What faith this was! First they saved the child by faith for three months and then the mother's faith prepared the little casket, the place of safety, and in faith committed the ark of bulrushes to the river's brink. But while faith depends on God's power and trust in God's Word, it also fears nothing. They were not afraid of the king's commandment. And God acted as He always will in answer to faith. He guided Pharaoh's daughter to the very spot where the child rested with his sister standing afar off. Her faith did not fully measure up to the faith of the mother; but even this was God's leading. According to Jewish tradition the name of Pharaoh's daughter was Thermoutis. The weeping babe stirred her compassion. And what these tears accomplished! Not the smiling face, but the tear-stained countenance of sorrow, led to the far-reaching results of deliverance. How it reminds us of Him who was the Man of Sorrows, who wept and went into the dark waters of death and judgment.

The mother receives her child again, whom she gave up in faith, and then the child becomes the son of Pharaoh's daughter, who gave him the Egyptian name "Moses," which means "saved from the water." The beautiful faith of Moses' mother here meets its full rewards; Satan is confounded; and the marvelous wisdom of God is displayed. Who would have thought that the one who had said, "if it be a son, then ye shall kill him," and, again, "Every son that is born ye shall cast into the river," should have in his court one of those very sons, and such a son. The devil was foiled by his own weapon, inasmuch as Pharaoh, whom he was using to frustrate the purpose of God, is used of God to nourish and bring up Moses, who was to be His instrument in confounding the power of Satan. Remarkable providence! Admirable wisdom! Truly, Jehovah is "wonderful in counsel and excellent in working." May we learn to trust Him with more artless simplicity, and thus our path shall be more brilliant, and our testimony more effective. (C.H. Mackintosh, Exodus)

In Egypt Moses received his instruction and education. What followed is more freely revealed by Stephen in his Spirit-given message.

And Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and in deeds. And when he was full forty years old, it came into his heart to visit his brethren the children of Israel. And seeing one of them suffer wrong, he defended him, and avenged him that was oppressed, and smote the Egyptian: For he supposed his brethren would have understood how that God by his hand would deliver them; but they understood not. And the next day he shewed himself unto them as they strove, and would have set them at one again, saying, Sirs, ye are brethren; why do ye wrong one to another? But he that did his neighbor wrong thrust him away, saying, Who made thee a ruler and a judge over us? Wilt thou kill me, as thou didst the Egyptian yesterday? (Acts 7:22-28).

He had learned the wisdom of Egypt, but not yet the wisdom of God. He manifested zeal for his brethren, but it was not according to knowledge. He attempted a deliverance before the time. Yet it was an action of faith.

By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter. Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward. By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured, as seeing Him who is invisible (Hebrews 11:24-26).

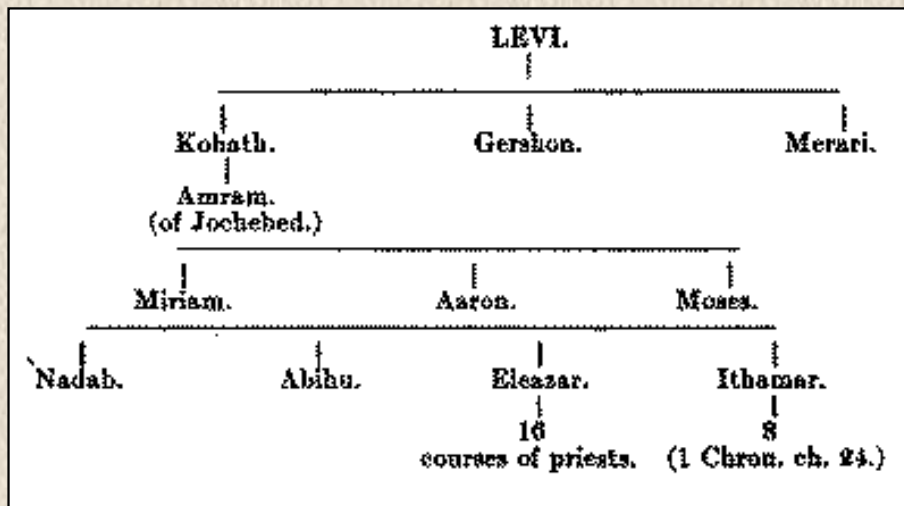
He acted in self will, assuming the office of a judge and leader, without having received the divine call. It was faith, nevertheless, which led Moses into this path and to make this remarkable choice. His heart was filled with deep sympathy for his suffering kinsmen and he yearned for their salvation. He was, however, not received by them; they rejected him. He left the palace and, perhaps, the throne, and came to his own to take up their cause. It all points to Him, who left the glory and came to His own and they received Him not. When Moses came the first time to his brethren to deliver them, "they understood not" (Acts 7:25). But they understood when he came the second time, as Israel will understand, when He, who is greater than Moses, comes the second time.

He became an exile in Midian and met Reuel. His name also is Jethro (3:1). Reuel means "friend of God." He also was

a priest, no doubt a true worshipper of God. Moses received a daughter of the Midianite, Zipporah, for his wife. Rejected by his own people, he entered into union with a Gentile. All this is typical. Christ after His first coming, rejected by His own, receives her, who shares His rejection and who will come with Him, when He comes the second time. The church is here indicated.

The forty years spent by Moses in Midian were, as we express it, the best years of his life. He had forty years' training in Egypt, and then the Lord took him aside into His school to train him for the great work for which he had been chosen. In the obscurity of the desert he was prepared to be "a vessel fit for the Master's use." How blessed must have been his experience, away from man, away from Egypt's pleasures, alone with God. Thus the Lord has dealt with all His servants. Elijah came forth out of the wilderness and went back to Cherith, Ezekiel was alone at the river Chebar. Paul spent his schooling days in Arabia. Blessed are His servants who follow His leading into the desert place, to find their never-failing source of strength in communion with their Lord, who receive their service from Himself, and then go forth to serve.

We give a little diagram of the genealogy of Moses and his brother Aaron.



CHAPTER 3 The Burning Bush and the Call and Commission of Moses

1. The vision of the burning bush (3:1-3)
2. Jehovah speaks and calls Moses (3:4-10)
3. Moses' answer (3:11-12)
4. The name revealed (3:13-14)
5. The commission of Moses (3:15-18)
6. The promise (3:19-22)

The two last verses of the preceding chapter form the introduction to the great manifestation of Jehovah in the burning bush and the call of Moses. God's time had come. He heard their groaning, He remembered the covenant, and looked upon His suffering people. The scene is at Horeb, called here the mountain of God by anticipation. Moses had become a shepherd, that occupation which the Egyptians despised (Gen. 46:34). It was part of God's training by which he became "very meek above all the men which were upon the face of the earth" (Num. 12:3). In his shepherd character he is the type of Christ.

The burning bush is the picture of the suffering people, the wretched slaves in Egypt. It was a thornbush. Thorns being the results of sin, it typifies the sinfulness and worthlessness of the people. The fire is the symbol of their suffering and tribulation. It has the same meaning as the "smoking furnace" Abraham saw in his vision. Later God called Egypt the "iron furnace" (Deut. 4:20). The thornbush, however, is not consumed. All the fires of persecution and tribulation could not consume Israel. In the flame of the fire in the midst of the burning bush the angel of the Lord appeared. This was the

secret of the preservation of the bush; God was there and kept them. "When thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee" (Is. 43:2). He is with all His people in their affliction; He preserves them and carries them through the fire. But the fire is also the figure of God's consuming and purifying holiness. All that is unholy must be consumed by the fire. "Our God is a consuming fire."

The angel of Jehovah, who addressed Moses out of the burning bush reveals His name. It shows that the Angel of Jehovah (God the Son) is God. He calls Himself the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob. The triune God is thus revealed as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. In Abraham, as the Father, in Isaac as the Son and in the experience of Jacob as the Holy Spirit. Our Lord quotes these words and silenced with them the unbelieving Sadducees, who rejected the doctrine of resurrection (Matt. 22:31, 32). The words Jehovah spoke to Moses are the expressions of His sovereign grace. What had they merited? What could they do to secure His intervention? Nothing whatever. They were in Egypt, a lot of miserable slaves, given more or less to idolatry, a sinful people. It was grace which looked upon them and heard their cry. It was grace which came down to deliver them. The work of salvation He came to do was all His own work. It foreshadows His coming down in incarnation for the work of salvation. Note the five words: 1. I have surely seen the affliction of my people; 2. I have heard their cry; 3. I have known their sorrow; 4. I have come down to deliver them; 5. And to bring them up out of the land into a good land. He is ever the same, Jehovah, who changeth not. He ever sees, hears and knows and acts in behalf of His people. He never leaves nor forsakes.

And when the Lord called Moses to send him to Pharaoh to lead His people forth, he answered, What am I that I should go to Pharaoh and that I should bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt? Forty years before in self-confidence he had undertaken the work and had run before he was sent, and now he had learned humility and his weakness. God answered his confessed distrust with the all-sufficient assurance, "I will be with thee." When He sends forth He goes along to accomplish His own purposes. What encouragement for all who wait on the Lord and conscious of their own weakness, go forth in service. In response to another question, God reveals His name. "And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM, and He said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you." God had made Himself known to Abraham as Jehovah (Genesis 15:7). But here He gives the explanation of His name Jehovah. The patriarchs knew the name Jehovah, but the blessed significance of that name was not known to them. He reveals Himself as the Self-Existing One, THE I AM THAT I AM. He is the One, which is, which was, which is to come (Rev. 1:4). And this wonderful Name of the Unchanging, Living One, the Eternal, the Name unsearchable in its depths is the Name of our Lord who has redeemed us. When about to act in the deliverance of His enslaved people to lead them out and to bring them in, He makes Himself known as the I AM. "Before Abraham was I AM" (John 8:58). Our ever-blessed Lord is the I AM, who spoke to Moses. And what is Jehovah, the I am for His people? Well has it been said, "Jehovah, in taking this title, calling Himself 'I AM,' was furnishing His people with a blank check, to be filled up to any amount. He calls Himself I AM, and faith has but to write over against that ineffably precious name whatever we want."

In verse 15 we have the hint of Jehovah's eternal relationship with His people Israel. He is still and ever will be the God of Abraham, of Isaac and of Jacob. "This is my name forever and this is my memorial unto all generations." Here is the hope for Israel. He hath not cast them away; He is their God still and His gifts and calling are without repentance.

The commission to Moses follows, and Jehovah telling beforehand that the king of Egypt would not let them go also promises Moses that He would smite Egypt and that when the exodus takes place, they were not to go empty-handed. This is in fulfillment of a previous promise (Gen. 15:14).

CHAPTER 4:1-28 Moses' Objections, Jehovah's Answer and the Return to Egypt

1. The first objection (4:1)
2. The two signs and Jehovah's assurance (4:2-9)
3. The second objection (4:10)
4. Jehovah's answer (4:11-12)
5. Moses' request (4:13)

6. Jehovah's anger and answer (4:14-17)
7. The command to return to Egypt (4:18-23)
8. The event by the way in the inn (4:24-26)
9. The meeting of Moses and Aaron (4:27-28)

The division of chapters at this point is unwarranted. Moses' objections reveal his unbelief and self-distrust. Jehovah's patience and condescending grace are blessedly manifested. Moses first expressed his doubt that the people would not believe him and his mission. Though he saw the vision of the burning bush and heard Jehovah's voice, which assured him of His presence and power, yet did he not believe. His former experience with his people, and the fact that generations had passed since Jehovah had appeared to an Israelite must have led him to express this doubt.

The Lord gave him three signs: the rod cast down, which became a serpent; the leprous hand; and the water turned into blood. The first two signs were carried out in Jehovah's presence. Moses cast his rod on the ground and it became a serpent, and he fled from it. In obedience to Jehovah's command, Moses took the serpent by the tail and it became a rod. The rod Moses held was his shepherd's rod. It is the emblem of government and power. Moses cast it on the ground and out of his hand the rod became a serpent. The serpent stands for the power of Satan. Egypt (the type of the world) is under the control of Satan. The serpent was worshipped in Egypt. It was used as the emblem of the goddess Ranno and also used as a sign of royalty. The serpent, Satan, had usurped the place of government and power. But Jehovah can deal with the serpent and this is seen by Moses' taking the serpent by its tail so that it became a rod. The sign was to inspire and teach confidence. The sign of the leprous hand teaches another lesson. Sin, typified by leprosy, and cleansing from sin are indicated in this sign. Israel was in a leprous condition, but the power of Jehovah could cleanse his people. When Moses came the first time to deliver his people, they treated him as an outcast; but when he put his hand in his bosom the second time to act the reproach was removed.

The third sign teaches how the blessing, the water of the Nile, is to be changed into a curse. It is the sign of judgment to come upon Egypt. Moses, in receiving these signs and the power to enact them, is a type of Christ. He will take the rod, the government, into His blessed hand, and then Satan's dominion ends. He will cleanse and restore His people and smite Egypt, the world, with judgment.

Moses' second objection was his slow speech and slow tongue. The same unbelief is here in evidence. Had he but believed "I will be with thee," and that the "I AM" would be His tongue and his speech, this objection would never have come from his lips.

How gracious Jehovah's answer: "Now, therefore, go, I will be with thy mouth and teach thee what thou shalt say." Every servant of the Lord, who serves under Him, can appropriate this great promise. And still Moses hesitates. What patience from the side of the Lord! He now makes another gracious provision. Aaron is to be his spokesman. This was for Moses' humiliation. Then Moses' objections were silenced. Grace is fully illustrated in the call of Moses and how the Lord dealt with him.

Jethro sanctions his return to Egypt. The Lord prepared his way as He always does, when He sends forth His servant. He took his wife and sons, who were still young, for he set them on an ass. This shows that his marriage to Zipporah did not take place immediately after his arrival in Midian. Then he took his rod, which is now called "the rod of God," and the Lord gave him the solemn message to Pharaoh. Israel is to be nationally God's firstborn son. Jehovah's demand is, Let my son go, that he may serve Me. God's firstborn is to be brought out of Egypt, where service for God was impossible. Then follows the message of death and judgment for Egypt.

What comes next is closely connected with the message to Pharaoh. There was a stumbling block in Moses' family. Circumcision, which stands for the sentence of death, had not been executed in the case of one of Moses' sons. No doubt Zipporah made objections to this rite and kept her husband back from doing what he knew was imperative. This failure of Moses stood in his way to carry out the divine commission. The hand of the Lord was upon Moses, and he was in danger

of being cut off for his sin, for he had been disobedient and yielded to his wife. Then Zipporah is forced to do herself what she hated and the reproach was removed. The words "surely a bloody husband art thou to me," were addressed to Moses. She had been forced, as it were, to purchase him again by the shedding of the blood of her beloved son. She received him back as one who had been in the realm of death and was joined to him anew. It must have been there that Moses brought the sacrifice of separation by sending Zipporah and the sons back to Jethro (chapter 18:2). What a meeting it must have been which took place between Aaron and Moses. They met in the Mount of God and kissed each other. Compare with Num. 20:27, 28.

3. Moses and Aaron in Egypt

CHAPTERS 4:29-5:23 Before the Elders and Before Pharaoh

1. Before the elders of Israel (4:29-31)
2. Before Pharaoh, and his answer (5:1-4)
3. The increased oppression (5:5-19)
4. Israel 's complaint and Moses' prayer (5:20-23)

The people were willing and believed. Notice they believed after the signs were done. Faith was followed by worship. It is almost a constitutional thing with the Jew to see first and then believe. Compare with John 20:26-29.

Then the messengers of God appeared before Pharaoh. This must have been in his capital Zoan (Psalm 78:43). Jehovah made of Pharaoh seven demands. They are found in chapters 5:1; 7:16; 8:1; 8:20; 9:1; 9:13; 10:3. Satan's power now becomes more fully manifested. Israel is Jehovah's people and He must have His chosen ones out of Egypt and fully delivered. The objects of his love and grace must be completely freed from the miserable slavery of sin and Satan. The typical application as to man's condition as a sinner is so well known that we need not to follow it in detail.

Pharaoh's attitude is that of defiance, though he spoke the truth when he said, "I know not Jehovah." The threat of coming judgments is disbelieved. His answer was increased burdens marked by the most awful cruelty. It was Satan's rage through Pharaoh in anticipation of Jehovah's intervention in the redemption of His people. As far as Israel is concerned this will yet be repeated during the great tribulation. Then Satan's wrath will be great, for he knows his time is short and the Lord will deliver the remnant of Israel (Rev. 12:12-17). It is the same in the individual experience. Satan will not let his victims go. When sin and the power of the flesh is felt, then comes the conflict and Satan's rage.

What discouragement for the poor slaves in Egypt ! They had rejoiced in faith and worshipped because Jehovah's servants had announced deliverance, and now a darker night had settled upon them; but it was only the harbinger of the glad dawn of the redemption. They murmured while Moses, deeply perplexed, turned to the Lord in prayer. Moses was a great man of prayer. He cast his burden upon the Lord.

CHAPTER 6:1-27 Jehovah's Answers and the Genealogy

1. Jehovah answers Moses (6:1-13)
2. The Genealogy (6:14-27)

Moses' "wherefore" and "why," his outburst of impatience, is graciously met by Jehovah. In His answer He speaks more fully of Himself as Jehovah, and what He will do in behalf of His afflicted and oppressed people. "I am Jehovah," is His solemn declaration. Note the continued utterances of what He is and what He will do. "I appeared unto Abraham; I have heard; I have remembered; I will bring you out; I will rid you out of their bondage; I will redeem you; I will take you to be for Me a people; I will be to you a God; I will bring you into the land; I will give it to you for a heritage; I am Jehovah." In Ezekiel, chapter 36, the reader will find Jehovah's "I will" concerning the future restoration of His people Israel .

No condition is mentioned; for their salvation as well as ours, is "not of works" but of grace alone. The source of all is His love (Deut. 7:7, 8). Salvation is Jehovah's work and not ours. Thus while the patriarchs knew the name of God as Jehovah, the full revelation of Jehovah, working in the gracious performance of His promises, they knew not. Verse 3 means that they did not understand the name Jehovah, though they knew that name. Then follows the record of "the heads of their fathers' houses." He knows them by name. He comes down where the slaves are, and calls them by name, thus identifying Himself with them. And then He knew, as He does now, every groan, every burden, every spot upon which the whip of the cruel taskmaster had fallen. This is the precious lesson of this register of names. No other genealogy is found in Exodus. What a great redeemer is Jehovah, our Lord Jesus Christ! All praise and glory be to His holy Name.

CHAPTERS 6:28-7:13 The Renewed Commission and Before Pharaoh Again

1. Renewed commission and renewed hesitation (6:28-30)
2. Jehovah's instructions (7:1-9)
3. Before Pharaoh and the sign of the rod (7:10-13)

Once more Moses received his commission, and again he hesitated on account of his poor speech. After all the gracious words Jehovah had spoken he pleads again his weakness. It shows what the unbelieving heart is. Twice Jehovah said that Moses should be a god. A god to Aaron (4:16) and a god to Pharaoh (7:1). He received divine authority and power over Pharaoh, while he was to his spokesman Aaron a god, because the word he uttered to him to communicate to Pharaoh was the word of the Lord. "And I will harden Pharaoh's heart." This was stated before in chapter 4:21. Eighteen times we read of the hardening of Pharaoh's heart. However, different words are used in the Hebrew to show an important distinction. One means to "make firm" or "strong." The other, "to make stubborn." These two words show Pharaoh's hardening of his own heart and God's hardening after he continued in his wicked way. After it is five times declared that Pharaoh hardened his heart, then God began His hardening and made Pharaoh's heart stubborn. Pharaoh hardened himself, then God hardened him. Pharaoh had his opportunities and as he refused and continued in unbelief, God made him stubborn. God hardens as a judicial act because man refuses His Word. God never hardens first nor compels a man to be an unbeliever. A solemn warning is contained in this. Thousands harden their hearts now, and ere long apostate Christendom will be hardened by God without remedy (2 Thessalonians 2).

Moses' age was 80 years and Aaron's 83 when they spoke to Pharaoh. They are before the monarch to show a miracle. Moses did not use his rod as before the elders of Israel, but it was Aaron's rod which was cast down and became a serpent. There is likewise another word used for serpent. In chapter 4:3, it is *_nachash*, the same word as in Genesis 3. But the word used in chapter 7 is *_thanin*, which the Septuagint translates dragon. This does not show that there were two different records, but that the two events have a different significance. Aaron's rod, which later blossomed, is the type of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, the mighty victor over Satan, sin and death. Aaron's rod swallowing the rods of the magicians of Egypt seems to indicate the complete triumph of Jehovah over him who has the power of death.

The question is, was the action of the magicians a real miracle or produced by juggling? Snake charming was carried on in ancient Egypt. However, these magicians were the instruments of Satan, who manifested his power through them. What they did were "lying wonders." The names of two of these endued with demoniacal powers are given in 2 Timothy 3:8, Jannes and Jambres. Such manifestation of demon power is found today in spiritualism and will be fully revealed during the days of Antichrist at the end of this age (2 Thess. 2:9-12). Pharaoh's heart was hardened (literal translation) because he wilfully rejected the sign given.

4. The Nine Plagues and the Tenth Judgment Announced

CHAPTER 7:14-25 The First Plague

1. The plague announced (7:14-19)

2. The judgment executed (7:20-25)

Nine judgment plagues follow, and after they had passed, the tenth, the great judgment, fell upon Egypt. There are striking and different characteristics of these plagues. Aaron uses his rod in the beginning of the plagues, while Moses stretches out his rod and hand in the last three, not counting the slaying of the firstborn. Some of them were announced beforehand, others were not announced and came without warning. We give them now in their order:

1. Water turned into blood;
2. Frogs;
3. Lice;
4. Flies;
5. Murrain;
6. Boils;
7. Hail;
8. Locusts;
9. Darkness (see Psalm 105:26-36).

The process of the hardening of Pharaoh's heart progresses with these judgments till God hardened him completely. After the first plague his heart was hardened (or firm) and deliberately he set himself to do this. Note this process in chapters 8:15; 8:19; 8:31; and 9:7. When this present age closes with the great tribulation and the vials of God's wrath are poured out upon an unbelieving world, the hearts of the earthdwellers and Christ rejectors will be hardened and thus ripe for the day of wrath. The book of Revelation acquaints us with this solemn fact.

"The plagues of Egypt are founded on the natural features which Egypt presents, so that they are unprecedented and extraordinary, not so much in themselves, as on account of their power and extent, and their rapid succession when Moses simply gives the command. As they are, consequently, both natural and supernatural, they afford both to faith and to unbelief the freedom to choose (in Pharaoh, unbelief prevailed); they are, besides, adapted to convince the Egyptians that Jehovah is not merely the national God of the Israelites, but a God above all gods, who holds in his hand all the powers of nature likewise, which Egypt was accustomed to deify" (J.H. Kurtz).

The water of the river Nile was turned into blood. The Nile was worshipped by the Egyptians and now this great river was polluted. Strange that even orthodox commentators can state that the change in the water was a change in color produced by red earth or by a certain water plant. But we know a real change took place, for the water stank and the fish died. Thus the Nile, known as Osiris, became an object of abomination and death. The messengers of Satan imitated this miracle also. This plague lasted seven days.

CHAPTER 8 The Second, Third, and Fourth Plagues

1. The demand and the plague of frogs announced (8:1-4)
2. The plague executed (8:5-7)
3. The request of Pharaoh and the frogs removed (8:8-15)
4. The divine command for the third plague (8:16)
5. The plague executed (8:17)
6. The confession of the magicians (8:18-19)
7. The renewed demand and the plague of the flies announced (8:20-23)
8. The plague executed (8:24)
9. Pharaoh's promise and his refusal (8:25-32)

The different demands made of Pharaoh to let God's people go and Pharaoh's objections are of much interest. In Jehovah's demands to let His people go we have God's purpose that His people must be completely brought out of Egypt

(the world) and be separated unto Him. Before they could worship and serve Him they had to be delivered from Egypt . It is so with us. Pharaoh is the type of Satan, the god of this age. He made his objections, as Satan makes his opposition to a full and complete deliverance of God's people. Study Pharaoh's objections: In chapter 8:25, he says, "Go ye, sacrifice to your God in the land." Then in verse 28 he makes a compromise, but they must not go far away. In chapter 10:9-11 he desired the men to go, but the rest and their belongings were to stay behind. The final compromise is in chapter 10:24. In these objections and compromises we read Satan's attempt to keep God's people ensnared with the world and thus hold them under his control and power. How well he has succeeded in Christendom.

If we connect the last verse of the previous chapter it seems it was on the seventh day, the day of rest, the Sabbath, which Israel must have completely forgotten, when the Lord again spoke to Moses and announced the second plague. This consisted of frogs, which proceeded from the worshipped, sacred Nile . The rationalistic higher critics have tried to explain this plague also as a natural occurrence. But they do not explain how it is that they came as soon as Aaron stretched his hand over the waters of Egypt and that they died by the millions after Moses prayer. Surely Pharaoh was better than the modern day critics, for he acknowledged at least that it was a miracle of Jehovah (verse 8). Frogs were also connected with Egyptian idolatry. One Egyptian goddess called Hekt appears with the head of a frog. Frogs stand for unclean things. See Revelation 16:13. The magicians enabled by Satan's power also imitated this miracle. But with this their power in counterfeiting ceased.

The third plague consisted in lice, or rather gnats." It came like the sixth and ninth plague, without any previous warning. They smote the dust and divine power for judgment brought out of the dust these tormenting insects. The very soil of Egypt now was turned into a curse. God now restrained the demoniacal powers of imitation and the wicked magicians had to confess, not for the glory of Jehovah, but for their own protection, "this is the finger of God."

The fourth plague was still more disastrous and significant. The appeal was made in the morning (Jeremiah 25:4; 26:5; 29:19). Swarms of flies covered all Egypt . These were not the common house flies, but a more powerful insect, the bite of which was exceedingly painful. There were different kinds of them. He sent divers sorts of flies among them, which devoured them (Psalm 78:4 5). They fastened themselves upon men and tormented them. It was another blow against the idols of Egypt . The beetle was revered as the symbol of creative power and the Egyptian Sun-god had a beetle's head. This plague did not touch Israel . Jehovah showed that Israel is His people. All the terrible punitive judgments did not touch His people. And this was a sign. The word "division" in verse 23 means "redemption." Jehovah is here clearly revealed as the author of the plague judgments. His supreme authority stands out prominently. After the removal of this plague, Pharaoh hardened his heart anew.

CHAPTER 9 The Fifth, Sixth, and Seventh Plagues

1. The fifth plague: the grievous murrain (9:1-7)
2. The sixth plague: boils (9:8-12)
3. The warning given (9:13-21)
4. The seventh plague: hail (9:22-35)

In the demand God calls Himself "the Lord God of the Hebrews" (see also verse 13 and 10:3). The fifth plague strikes animal creation. cattle, such as mentioned in the opening of this chapter, formed the most important part of the wealth of Egypt . Egypt 's wealth is therefore stricken. But God waited and warned before He executed this judgment. Jehovah's power sheltered Israel in Goshen and not a beast suffered there. Notice Pharaoh's curiosity. He sent to see if Israel had escaped and found that not one had died. What an evidence that the Lord God of the Hebrews is the Lord. Yet his heart was hardened.

The next plague came without warning, unannounced. Moses and Aaron sprinkled the ashes of the furnace, and it became a boil upon man and beast. The magicians may have attempted then another counterfeit move, but the boils broke out on them. If they were of the priestly class they had become defiled by the nasty sores. The priests were obliged to be

scrupulously clean in everything. The ashes of the furnace have a double meaning. Egypt in its fiery persecution of Israel is called a furnace. Divine retribution now came upon them in the boils, which must have burned as fire. But the furnace may have been the altar in Egypt upon which sacrifices were offered to their god Typhon. Most likely the Egyptians brought such sacrifices to stay the plagues, and now the very thing in which they trusted is turned into a plague. This plague was the first which endangered human life, and therefore the forerunner of the death which Pharaoh would bring upon himself and his people by his wicked opposition.

The seventh plague is ushered in by a solemn warning and more lengthy address to Pharaoh. A very grievous hail is threatened to fall upon man and beast; the hail was to kill all found in the open field. Note verse 16 and compare with Romans 9:17. God dealt with Pharaoh in this way that he might know Jehovah and His power and that through what Jehovah did His name might be made known throughout the earth. Jehovah's holiness, omnipotence, justice, as well as His patience and longsuffering are revealed in these judgments, foreshadowing all future judgments to come for this earth. The report of what Jehovah had done in Egypt spread soon to other nations, and inspired a holy awe (Exodus 15:14-16). It was a loving and gracious advice God gave through Moses (verse 19). No doubt there were many Egyptians who believed and escaped. The unbelieving suffered. Divine mercy still lingered. Those of the Egyptians who believed the divine warning must have belonged to the mixed multitudes which went out with Israel (chapter 12:38).

The fearful hail was accompanied by fire (lightning) which ran along the ground, and thunderings. These are called in the Hebrew "the voices of God." The tempest is the type of God's wrath in judgment. Hail is mentioned repeatedly in Revelation and there it is called "the plague of hail" (Rev. 8:7, 11:19, 16:21). The plagues of Egypt will be repeated on this earth during the great tribulation. Note Pharaoh's confession, which shows that this plague had made a deep impression on him (verse 27). Pharaoh used the name of "Jehovah" and the name of God (Elohim). "Entreat Jehovah that there be no more voices of God" (literal rendering). What a desperately wicked thing the human heart is. He sinned more after this than before.

CHAPTER 10 The Eighth and Ninth Plagues

1. The eighth plague: locusts (10:1-15)
2. Pharaoh's renewed confession and refusal (10:16-20)
3. The ninth plague: darkness (10:21-26)
4. Pharaoh's anger (10:27-29)

The eighth plague is introduced by another warning; the ninth came without it. As a result of the eighth plague, Pharaoh confessed his sin against God and against Moses and Aaron; but after the ninth plague drove Moses from his presence and threatened the divine messenger with death.

Locusts covered the face of the whole earth and every green thing was destroyed. On the ravages of the locusts we find a vivid description in the book of Joel. Locusts are typical of God's punitive judgments. The locusts plague was aimed to show the impotence of the Egyptian god Serapis, in whom the Egyptians trusted as the protector against the locusts. Locusts are likewise mentioned in a symbolical way in Revelation 9:1-12.

In the ninth plague, darkness covered Egypt for three days. Beautiful must have been the vision of the land of Goshen. Out of the dense darkness the light shone brightly in the miserable abodes of the children of Israel. "All the children of Israel had light in their dwellings." Note again the book of Revelation, chapter 16:10-11.

The sun as the source of light was worshipped in Egypt. If Menephtah was the Pharaoh of the exodus, as some hold, this plague has a special significance. A sculptural image of this Pharaoh is preserved. His hand is out-stretched in worship, and underneath stand in hieroglyphics these words: "He adores the sun; he worships Hor of the solar horizons." Suddenly darkness, which could be felt, came upon Egypt. Pharaoh and all Egypt learned now that their idols were helpless. Darkness is the withdrawal of light. It stands for the solemn truth of the forsaking of God. (We may well think

here of the darkness which enshrouded the cross and the unfathomable cry of our Lord, "my God, My God, why hast thou forsaken Me?") God was about to abandon Egypt, the darkness was the herald of it. All Egypt was to be plunged into the severest of all judgments, the death of the firstborn. This darkness was God's final appeal to repentance. For three days they were shut in and all business was suspended. Rich and poor, king and beggar, the learned and the ignorant, all classes were shrouded in that awful darkness. The suspense must have been frightful. What was to come next? God waited, and in that silence and darkness appealed to their conscience. How slow God is to judge; it is His strange work. In infinite patience He waited before He dealt the final blow to Egypt. Thus He waits now and warns till at last His patience ends and His threatened judgments sweep the earth. The last objection and compromise by Pharaoh is found in verse 24, but Moses answered "not an hoof shall be left behind." Jehovah's demands and purposes concerning the completest separation from Egypt stand and must be literally executed.

CHAPTER 11 The Tenth Plague Announced

1. God's Word to Moses and to the people (11:1-3)
2. The tenth plague announced to Pharaoh (11:4-8)
3. Pharaoh's unbelief and his heart hardened (11:9-10)

In chapter 10:29 we hear Moses say to Pharaoh, "I will see thy face again no more." In this chapter, however, we hear him address Pharaoh once more concerning the tenth plague judgment. The announcement made to Moses and recorded in the first verse of this chapter occurred before the inter-view of the previous chapter and verses 4-8 in chapter 11 is the continuation of Moses' address to Pharaoh after he had spoken the words in chapter 10:29. The eleventh chapter is therefore a supplement to the tenth. The command to ask (this is the correct word; 'borrow' is incorrect) of the neighbors jewels of silver and gold had already been given in chapter 3:22. The death of all the firstborn in Egypt is announced to Pharaoh. A great cry shall be throughout all Egypt, but Israel should also be exempt of this last plague as the previous plagues were not shared by them. "Not a dog shall point his tongue (literal translation) against Israel," promising perfect rest and peace in the coming night of death and sorrow.

Verses 9 and 10 mark the close of Moses' interviews and negotiations with Pharaoh, which began in chapter 7:8. The right rendering of verse 9 is "And the Lord had said unto Moses." Moses left Pharaoh in a great anger. Judgment was now ready to fall.

5. Redemption by Blood, the Passover and the Law of the Firstborn

CHAPTER 12 The Passover Instituted and Kept, the Death of the Firstborn and the Exodus

1. The Passover instituted and the feast of unleavened bread (12:1-20)
2. The command given to the people and obeyed (12:21-28)
3. The death of the firstborn in Egypt (12:29-30)
4. The departure of the children of Israel (12:31-36)
5. From Rameses to Succoth (12:37-39)
6. The fulfillment of the 430 years (12:40-42)
7. The ordinance of the Passover (12:43-51)

This is the birth chapter of Israel as a nation. The birth pangs are about over and the deliverance is at hand. The first thing announced is the change of the year (verses 1, 2). A new beginning is made with the deliverance out of the house of bondage; the past is left behind and blotted out. This is typical of the new birth of the individual. The month which marks this new beginning is Abib, the "green ear" month, because the corn was then in the ear. After the captivity it was called Nissan (Nehemiah 2:1; Esther 3:7). It is our April.

Verses 1-14 give the instructions concerning the Passover, and verses 15-20 those concerning the feast of unleavened

bread. The Passover Lamb is a most blessed type of the Lord Jesus Christ in His work. He is the Lamb of God and our Passover (John 1:29; 1 Cor. 5:6, 7; 1 Peter 1:18, 19). The chapter is extremely rich in typical foreshadowing and spiritual truth. The spotless character of our Lord is indicated in that the lamb had to be without blemish. Taken out, separated, and a male; all has a meaning. For four days the lamb had to be set aside before it was to be killed. This was done to discover if there would be a flaw, some defect in it, which would unfit the lamb for the sacrifice. Here we are reminded of the four Gospel records in which the holy, spotless life of Him is told out who gave His life for a ransom. The lamb was to be killed by the whole congregation, even as it was with Christ. It was to be killed "between the evenings." That is between noon and the night, the afternoon; that is when Christ died. And what more could we say of the roasting with fire and other instructions, which all foreshadow the death and suffering of the Lamb of God? We call attention to the fact that Satan did not want to have the Lord Jesus put to death on the Passover feast. Satan knew He was the true Lamb, and he tried to prevent His death at the predicted time (Matt. 26:5; Mark 14:2). But the Lamb of God, the true Passover, died at the very time appointed, thus fulfilling the Scriptures. The shedding of the blood and its application is the prominent thing in the Passover. The word "pesach" means to "pass through," and "to pass over." God passed through Egypt in judgment; it was also liable to fall upon the people Israel. They were guilty before God and had deserved the same judgment which was about to fall upon Egypt. But Jehovah provided a sacrifice and in the shed blood a shelter and complete deliverance. The blood secured all they needed as a sinful people and as it was sprinkled in obedience to Jehovah's command perfect peace and rest was obtained. "When I see the blood, I will pass over you." The blood was the token for Jehovah. They were not to see the blood, but He in passing through saw the blood. Faith in what Jehovah had said and what had been done gave peace to all in the dwellings. The blood of Christ is thus blessedly foreshadowed. Peace has been made in the blood of the cross. Upon the Lamb of God, the holy Substitute, the sentence of death was executed and now whenever God sees the blood there He passes by, no more condemnation, but perfect justification. Wherever there is faith in the blood, there is the enjoyment of perfect peace. The blood of the Lamb and the assuring word of Jehovah, "When I see the blood I will pass over you," were the solid foundations of Israel's shelter and peace in that awful night of death and judgment. And they are our solid foundations too. We quote helpful words from another.

"While outside the house the blood of atonement spoke to God, to whom it was addressed; inside He provided that which was to satisfy them, and enable them for that path with Him upon which they were now so shortly to go forth. The lamb is theirs to feed upon, and God is bent upon their enjoying this provision of His love. The lamb, too, must all of it be eaten. If the household were too little for the lamb (we read nothing of the lamb being too little for the house), then, says the Lord, let him and his neighbor next unto his house take it. God would have Christ apprehended by us. He would have our souls sustained, and He would have Christ honored. We are to eat--to appropriate to ourselves what Christ is; and what we appropriate becomes, in fact, part and parcel of ourselves. This laying hold of Christ by faith makes Christ to be sustenance indeed to us, and Himself to be reproduced in us.

"Death God ordains as the food of life; and it is as sheltered and saved from death that we can feed upon death. It is not merely vanquished and set aside; it is in the cross the sweet and wonderful display of divine power and love in our behalf, accomplished in the mystery of human weakness. Death is become the food of life, and the life is life eternal." (Numerical Bible, Vol. 1, p. 172.)

The eating of the Passover lamb (verses 9-11) is full of meaning. It is the type of feeding upon Christ, occupation with His blessed Person. And that is what we need to keep our feet in the way of peace.

The feast of unleavened bread is mentioned next. Leaven means corruption; it is the type of sin. The lesson of holiness, which God looks for in His redeemed people, is here before us. The old leaven must be purged out. The leaven of malice and wickedness must be put away (1 Cor. 5:6-8). We are delivered from the power of indwelling sin. Saved by grace our calling is to holiness. Spiritually to keep the feast of unleavened bread means to live in the energy of the new nature and that is the walk in the Spirit. The bitter herbs mentioned in verse 8 with the unleavened bread speak of self-denial and self-judgment. The terrible judgment fell that fourteenth day, or between the fourteenth and fifteenth day of Abib. All Jehovah had announced in judgment was literally carried out. There was not a house where there was not one dead. So God will yet put all His predicted judgments for this age into execution and a hardened world will find out the truth of His word.

Then the Exodus took place, and they left with the riches of the Egyptians. The whole experience of Israel in Egypt and their deliverance is typical of their coming final and glorious deliverance.

From Rameses (city of the sun) the city of earthly splendor, they went to Succoth, which means "booths." There pilgrim character is now brought out. The wilderness begins. Redemption by blood makes us pilgrims and strangers, for we are no longer of the world, though we are in it. The mixed multitude came along. They were Egyptians stirred up by the mighty judgment events, which had taken place (Numbers 11:4; Nehemiah 13:3). They became a snare to the Israelites.

A word on verses 40 and 41 will terminate these brief annotations of this remarkable chapter. The 430 years' sojourning does not mean that it was 430 years since Jacob and his sons had come to Egypt. "The selfsame day" means the fifteenth day of the seventh month; it was the day on which Abraham left Ur to go forth in obedience to the divine command.

CHAPTER 13:1-16 The Sanctification of the Firstborn

1. The separation commanded (13:1-2)
2. Remember this day: the memorial (13:3-10)
3. The separation of the firstborn (13:11-16)

The firstborn had been delivered in a special manner in Egypt and because Jehovah had delivered them they were to be sanctified unto Him. There is an inseparable connection between redemption and holiness. What the Lord has redeemed He claims for Himself. Here we have a definition of sanctification; it is separation unto God. But let us notice that salvation out of the house of bondage is the foundation of all. The same order is more fully revealed in the New Testament. In Romans 3-5:11 we read of our salvation corresponding to the type in Exodus 12 and that is followed by the exhortation to holiness, separation unto God (chapter 6). We are saved unto holiness. The blood of atonement has sanctified us unto God. The more we realize this great redemption by blood, the more we shall yield ourselves and our members unto God.

Upon verse 9 and 16 as well as Deut. 6:4-9 and 11:13-21 the Hebrews have built their ordinance of the phylacteries. They use leather strips with Scripture verses contained in a small box. These they put at certain times when they pray upon their hand and forehead. Thus they try to fulfill these words literally. It is only an outward ceremony and corresponds to certain usages in ritualistic Christendom. They were to retain those commandments in their hearts and practise them as well. The ass is especially mentioned. Why? It is an unclean animal and used here to show that unredeemed man is on the same level with the ass and must either be redeemed or die.

6. Redemption by Power

CHAPTER 13:17-22 From Succoth to Etham

1. God's leading (13:17-18)
2. Joseph's bones carried away (13:19)
3. The pillar of cloud and the pillar of fire (13:20-22)

Jehovah now begins to lead His redeemed people forward. God chose their way for them, as He chooses the way for us. He was with His people, therefore He led them in His way. If His people are in His way He is with them and all is well. If we are not in His way He cannot be with us in the fullness of His power. What grace and tenderness is revealed in the fact that the Lord did not permit them to go through the land of the Philistines! They had to learn lessons in God's way, which they could never have learned in the shorter way through the land of the Philistines (Deut. 8:2-4). He wanted them to escape trials and other experiences which might discourage them. Nor were they fitted for the warfare which would have resulted from the journey through the country of the Philistines. He would not suffer to have them tried above that they

were able to bear. He deals thus with all His people. "But God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape that ye may be able to bear it" (1 Corinthians 10:13).

It was Moses who took the bones of Joseph with him. They must have rested in a magnificent sarcophagus known to Moses. Joseph's request was not forgotten. It may have been the word which Israel remembered in the house of bondage; they did not lose sight of the fact that redemption had been promised and that Joseph had looked forward to it (Genesis 50:25). "And as the people bore his honored ashes through the desert, these being dead spoke of by-gone times, they linked the past and the present together, they deepened the national consciousness that Israel was a favored people, called to no common destiny, sustained by no common promises, pressing toward no common goal" (Bishop G.A. Chadwick).

The pillar of cloud and of fire was the outward sign of Jehovah's presence with His people. By day and by night He guarded and led His people. The Keeper of Israel does not sleep nor slumber. He journeys along with them. It was but one pillar and Jehovah was present in it (chapter 14:24). The glory of the Lord appeared in that cloud (16:10; 40:34; Numbers 9:15). That glory cloud filled Solomon's temple and was seen retreating and returning to heaven (Ezek. 11:22-25). It will be seen again when the King comes back from heaven's glory and His glory will be established over Jerusalem (Isaiah 4). The sign of the Son of Man may be the Shekinah cloud.

CHAPTER 14 The Pursuit of the Enemy and Redemption by Power

1. The coming of Pharaoh announced (14:1-4)
2. The pursuit and Israel troubled (14:5-12)
3. Moses speaks to the people (14:13-14)
4. The Lord speaks to Moses (14:15-18)
5. The passages through the Red Sea (14:19-22)
6. The Egyptians overthrown (14:23-29)
7. The great work accomplished (14:30-31)

While the marching host of Israel was ignorant of Pharaoh's device and the threatening danger, Jehovah's eye was watching every move the enemy made. He knew what Pharaoh would do and Jehovah had planned how to deliver Israel completely by His power from the Egyptians. That Jehovah might be honored upon Pharaoh and all his host, He told His people to encamp in a place which made their position, from a human standpoint, almost hopeless. They were hemmed in by mountains and the sea was in front of them and behind them the Egyptian host was soon to appear. Only the outlook upward to heaven was unobstructed. From there help had to come. Pharaoh appeared to bring them back into bondage. Then the unbelief of the redeemed people, whom Jehovah had so marvelously led forth, is manifested. Though their lot had been so severe in Egypt and Jehovah's power upon Egypt had been seen in the terrible judgments, yet they regretted that they had left Egypt. It was unbelief. They feared that the God who had taken such pains to deliver them out of Egypt, who had led them out and was visibly present with them, would now abandon them, so that they would die in the wilderness. How many Christians give way again and again to such an unreasonable doubt. "Unbelief leads to interpret God in the presence of the difficulty, instead of interpreting the difficulty in the presence of God. Faith gets behind the difficulty and there finds God in all His faithfulness, love and power."

Verses 13 and 14 are the words to faith. The Lord was now taking up their case and fighting their battles. It was no longer the question of Pharaoh and Israel, but Pharaoh and Jehovah. But notice the words are Moses' words, as given to him by the Spirit of God. After he had spoken them and assured the people that all their enemies were to be wiped out, he began to pray, for the Lord said to him, "wherefore criest thou unto Me?" This is followed by the command to go forward, to stretch out the rod over the sea and the assurance that the sea would be divided so that they should pass through to the other side.

In verse 19 we learn that the Angel of God--that is Jehovah--who went before the camp of Israel, removed and went behind them. Thus the pillar of cloud descended between them and their enemies; they were involved in the deepest

darkness, while Israel had light throughout the night. Moses did according to the word of the Lord. The east wind from the Lord caused the sea to go back; a strong wind, which blew all night, divided the sea. Higher criticism has tried to explain this miracle as a natural occurrence, but they overlooked the fact that on the right and on their left the waters were a wall. It was a grave; so to speak; into which Israel passed, when God's power had made the way through it. It was faith which led them through. "By faith they passed through the Red Sea as by dry land; which the Egyptians assaying to do, were drowned" (Hebrews 11:29).

When Pharaoh and his army followed to pursue them, Jehovah acted in judgment. "in the morning watch Jehovah looked unto the host of the Egyptians through the pillar of fire." It was not a thunderstorm which confused them, but they saw the Lord in His majesty and the fearful judgment overtook them after Moses had stretched out his hand over the sea. The overthrow of the Egyptians came "when the morning appeared." Not one of them remained, but Israel saw the Egyptians dead upon the seashore.

This great deliverance by the power of God has many lessons. It foreshadows the future judgment which is in store for the enemies of Israel, when the Lord "in the morning watch" looks upon them. Greater still are the typical lessons in connection with our redemption "in Christ." The Red Sea is a type of the death of Christ. Deliverance from sin by being dead with Christ is the aspect which the Red Sea passage illustrates. It is the truth so fully brought out in Romans 6, 7 and 8. When Israel had passed through the Red Sea and reached the other side, we have a type of resurrection. Dead with Christ and risen with Him; our old enemy is gone, and we can look upon our enemies as dead. Many pages of annotations could be given in following this story. We must leave the fuller application to our readers. Victory is on our side. Redeemed by blood, God's power is with us, the power of His Spirit, who is given to us of God. We are not asked to fight our enemy, the old man, or to subdue him. God has done this for us in the death of Christ.

7. The Song of Redemption

CHAPTER 15:1-21

1. Jehovah acknowledged and praised (15:1-2)
2. The victory celebrated as His victory (15:3-10)
3. His holiness praised (15:11-13)
4. His enemies tremble (15:14-16)
5. Thou shalt bring them in (15:17-18)
6. The judgment and salvation (15:19)
7. The women's chorus (15:20-21)

This is a great chapter. It is the first song in the Bible. In Egypt was no singing for Israel but only weeping and groaning. Nor did they sing in Babylon (Psalm 137:2-4). There is to be a future song for Israel in connection with their coming great deliverance (Isaiah 12). Moses sang this song. It is his first song; his last song is that great prophetic outburst recorded by him in Deut. 32. The song of Moses, the servant of God, is mentioned in Rev. 15:3. This whole song breathes the spirit of praise and worship. The destructive criticism has not left this song unchallenged. They object to it on account of the prophetic utterance in verses 17 and 18, as if this were impossible to say at that time, thus ruling out the inspiration by the Holy Spirit. A closer study of this song will be very profitable. Note the expression "Jehovah is a man of war." This foreshadows His incarnation and His coming as the mighty King, who conquers his enemies (Psalm 45:3; 46:8-9; Isaiah 63:1-7, Revelation 19:11). The whole song is prophetic. What Jehovah has done in the judgment of His enemies and the complete deliverance of His people that He will do again. It is interesting to compare this outburst of praise in which Miriam* (Mary) and the women joined with the song of praise of Hannah (1 Sam 2:1-10), the praise of the mother of our Lord, Mary, in Luke 1:46-55, and Zechariah's words in Luke 1:68-79. The whole atmosphere of Exodus 15:1-21 is that of praise and adoration, joy and victory; such is yet in store for the earth and for Israel, when that goal is reached, of which verse 18 speaks, "Jehovah shall reign forever and ever. (* Miriam is significantly called "Aaron's sister," not Moses'. She could not rank with Moses. Leadership did not belong to her. She was subordinate to Moses, as Aaron was.)

Exodus 12 foreshadows our deliverance from the guilt of sins (Romans 1-5:11). Chapter 13 teaches God's claim on those He has delivered, which is separation unto Himself Chapter 14 tells in type of our deliverance from the power of sin. The song of redemption contained in chapter 15 points us to the beautiful ending of Romans 8, the song which every delivered believer can sing (Romans 8:31-39).

II. THE JOURNEY TOWARDS THE PROMISED LAND AND ISRAEL AT SINAI

1. The Experiences in the Wilderness

CHAPTER 15:22-27 In the Wilderness of Shur

1. Marah (15:22-26)
2. Elim (15:27)

They went out into the wilderness of Shur. Shur was a great wall of protection which Egypt had erected. The surrounding country was called by that name. The trials of the wilderness journey at once begin; typical of our passage as redeemed ones through this world. Redemption has for a consequence the wilderness. We are in Christ crucified unto the world and the world unto us. The bitter waters are the first wilderness experience of the nation. It is a hint of what their subsequent history would be. Naomi in the book of Ruth called herself "Mara." "Marah," the bitterness, is the perfect picture of the world under sin and death. Then came the first wilderness murmuring. Six more are reported in Exodus and Numbers: Exodus 16:2; 17:2, 3; Numbers 11:33, 34; 14:2; 16:41; 21:5. God had a remedy. The tree is typical of the cross. The tree was not discovered by Moses, but by Jehovah. Christ went into the deep, dark waters of death; by Him the waters were made sweet for those who believe on Him. Now the bitterness of death is passed, and if we find the bitterness in the world through which we pass as pilgrims and strangers and we follow the path which He went while in the world, then murmuring will be forever excluded if the heart sees Christ and following in His steps, looks upon every bitter experience as the fellowship of His sufferings. Compare the tree for healing with Rev. 22:2.

In verse 26 Jehovah speaks of Himself as "Jehovah Ropheka," the Lord thy Healer. The bitter waters showed them that they needed Jehovah in the wilderness as much as they needed Him in their deliverance from Egypt and Pharaoh's power. And now He offers Himself as their healer. He takes gracious care of His people while they follow Him in the path of obedience. Some have pressed this promise to such an extent that they say sickness in a Christian is the result of direct disobedience; a Christian has no need of being sick, etc. This is wrong, and has led into theories which are far from sane and scriptural.

Marah is followed by Elim with its twelve wells of water and seventy palm trees. A beautiful oasis in the desert, giving them a foretaste of Canaan . What a place of refreshing and peace it must have been. So in our experience many a Marah is followed by an Elim, as the cross is followed by the crown. Elim means "trees," and they must have been of luxuriant growth, planted by the wells of waters. So Israel after their Marah experience, when Jehovah has forgiven their sins and healed all their diseases, in the day of their future blessing and glory, will be like trees planted at the water brooks and will draw water out of the wells of salvation (Isaiah 12:3).

CHAPTER 16 In the Wilderness of Sin

1. The renewed murmuring (16:1-3)
2. The bread from heaven promised (16:4-10)
3. The promise fulfilled and the quails and bread given (16:11-14)
4. Instructions concerning the gathering (16:16-18)
5. The manna corrupted (16:19-21)
6. The manna and the Sabbath (16:22-31)

7. The manna kept for a memorial (16:32-36)

After they removed from Elim, they encamped by the Red Sea (Numbers 33:10). They came into the wilderness of sin. The Hebrew word means "thorn," the bush in which Jehovah had appeared to Moses in the Hebrew is "Sineh," a thornbush. The second murmuring takes place. This gives a deep glimpse into the desperately wicked condition of the human heart. God had brought them out of the house of bondage; they wished themselves back. God had sheltered them beneath the blood; they wished the judgment might have carried them away. They were ready to leave the ground of redemption, guided by Jehovah, and turn back to Pharaoh to become slaves once more. What infinite patience and grace the Lord manifested toward them. All this is repeated in the lives of many believers. It need not to be so and it will not, if Christ and the redemption we have in Him as well as our glorious inheritance which is before us, is a reality in our lives.

Heaven offers now to minister to the daily need of such a people. The glory of the Lord was seen again out of the cloud (verse 7, 10). The bread from Heaven was given. It is described as small in size, round, white like coriander seed, like wafers made with honey and hard. Rationalists have tried to explain the giving of this bread in a natural way. In a certain part of the desert is found a tree from which exudes at certain times an eatable gum and falls to the ground in the form of small cakes; this, it is claimed, explains the manna. But they do not explain how it is that the Israelites received the manna in every part of the desert, that they received it in such immense quantities that the hundred thousands were fed by it and it lasted for forty years. It ceased as miraculously as it was given (Josh. 5:12). The word "manna" is from the Hebrew "Man-hu," the question, "What is that?" It is designated as the bread from heaven (Psalm 78:24; 105:40). Our Lord speaks of it as the bread from heaven in John 6, a chapter which is of importance in connection with the typical meaning of the manna. But quails were given first and in the morning dew, and after it arose, the manna. The quails and the manna are both the types of Christ, the food for God's people. The dew after which the manna is seen, speaks of the Holy Spirit, who ministers Christ. Each gathered the bread which had come down according to his eating. Each got what he wanted, and not more. So Christ meets the need we have of Him if only our need of Him were greater and felt more.

It could not be hoarded up, but had to be gathered every morning. We must feed on Christ daily in living faith. Yesterday's experience and enjoyment cannot feed us today. We must gather afresh, and let the dew, the Holy Spirit, minister to our hearts. Many live on past experiences, and become puffed up. Stagnation and corruption follow. The Sabbath is mentioned in connection with the manna and it is the first time that the Sabbath for Israel as a nation is spoken of. To feed on Christ, the bread from heaven, means rest for the soul. The keeping of the manna in the golden pot (Hebrews 9:4) tells us of what our Lord said concerning the bread from heaven, "He that eateth of this bread shall live forever." The true manna endureth to eternal life and we shall eat in His own presence in glory "the hidden manna" (Revelation 2:17).

CHAPTER 17 At Rephidim

1. The water from the rock (17:1-7)
2. The conflict with Amalek (17:8-16)

From Sin they went to Dophkah and Alush before they came to Rephidim (Numbers 33:12, 13). Again there was no water and Moses feared they might stone him. Without following the historical record we point out some of the most interesting lessons of the two events at Rephidim. The Rock is a type of Christ. Jehovah stood upon the rock to be smitten, even as "God was in Christ" (2 Cor. 5:19). The smiting by the rod, used in judgment upon the river of Egypt, is the type of the death of Christ. There could be no water till the rock was smitten. There could be no water till Christ had died. The water from the cleft rock is the type of the Holy Spirit, who was given as the result of the finished work of Christ. Exodus 16 and 17 go together and John 6 and 7 go together likewise. In Exodus 16 we find the manna and in John 6 the bread of life. In Exodus 17 the water out of the rock, the type of the Holy Spirit; in John 7 the Lord Jesus announces the coming gift of the Holy Spirit. "If any man thirst, let him come unto Me and drink. He that believeth on Me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. But this He spake of the Spirit, which they that believe on Him should receive; for the Holy Spirit was not yet given, because that Jesus was not yet glorified" (John 7:37-39). "They drank of that

spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ" (1 Corinthians 10:4).

The first conflict followed. There was no conflict at the Red Sea, but immediately after the water had been given in such wonderful abundance, Amalek appeared. Amalek is the type of the flesh. The conflict illustrates Galatians 5:17. "The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh, and these are contrary, the one to the other, so that ye should not do the things ye would." The flesh and its lusts, which war against the soul (1 Peter 2:11), are represented by Amalek. And Amalek attacked Israel, and Israel, Amalek. The attack was made when Israel in unbelief had asked, "Is the Lord among us or not?" Even so, when God's people do not reckon in faith with the presence and the power of the Lord the flesh rises up; but if we walk in the Spirit we shall not fulfill the lusts of the flesh.

Joshua is here mentioned for the first time. He was twenty-seven years younger than Moses, that is fifty-three years. He is the type of the Lord Jesus Christ, the captain of our salvation. Moses, on top of the hill, represents Christ risen from the dead and at God's right hand, to appear in the presence of God for us as our advocate. Aaron and Hur at Moses' side typify His priesthood of loving sympathy and His righteousness. ("Hur" means "white," the color used for righteousness.) But the hands of Christ never hang down. He ever liveth and intercedes for US.

Amalek is not destroyed and the flesh is not. Amalek's end comes when Christ comes (see Numbers 24:17-20). The conflict with Amalek, the flesh, continues as long as we are in the body.

In verse 14 we have the first command to Moses to write. Not so long ago critics claimed that writing at Moses' time was unknown. The tablets of Lachish and Tel-el-Amarna have silenced this foolish assertion. The memorial altar, "Jehovah Nissi," the Lord is my banner, tells us of victory. "The assurance of victory should be as complete as the sense of forgiveness, seeing both alike are founded upon the great fact that Jesus died and rose again. It is in the power of this that the believer enjoys a purged conscience and subdues indwelling sin. The death of Christ having answered all the claims of God in reference to our sins, His resurrection becomes the spring of power in all the details of conflict afterwards. He died for us, and now He lives in us. The former gives us peace, the latter gives us power."

CHAPTER 18 Moses and Jethro

1. The coming of Jethro (18:1-5)
2. Moses' and Jethro's communion (18:6-12)
3. Jethro's advice (18:13-23)
4. Moses' action (18:24-27)

This chapter concludes the first section of the second part of Exodus. We have in it a beautiful dispensational foreshadowing of things to come. God had redeemed Israel, delivered them from Pharaoh's host, manifested His power and had given them victory. The priest of Midian, a Gentile, now comes, having heard all that Jehovah had done for Moses and for Israel, his people. Zipporah, Moses' wife, and his two sons are with him. What a happy reunion. And there was praise unto Jehovah from the lips of the Gentile as well as burnt offering and sacrifices for God. It foreshadows what will take place when Israel is finally restored and delivered. Then the Gentiles will come and "many nations shall be joined unto the Lord in that day" (Zech. 2:11). Read Jeremiah 16:14-21. First Jehovah's power in the restoration of His scattered people is mentioned; then the coming of the Gentiles is announced. "The Gentiles shall come unto thee from the ends of the earth."

Moses judging, and the faithful men, fearing God, judging with him, may well remind us of that day, when He who is greater than Moses will judge the earth in righteousness. Then we shall have share with Him. "Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world?" (1 Cor. 6:2).

what grace is and grace has done and will do is the most beautiful and precious revelation of Exodus up to the end of the eighteenth chapter. Jehovah took notice of the poor slaves. He heard their cry. He sent them a deliverer. He smote

Egypt with great tribulation and judgment. He sheltered His people under the blood. He led them forth as His redeemed people. Their enemies perished through His power and He brought them through the Red Sea . He gave them bread from heaven and water out of the rock. Victory was on their side and the glory of His name extended to the Gentiles. But over our brief and imperfect annotations we have to write, "Not the half has been told."

2. At Sinai: The Covenant and the Law

CHAPTER 19 Israel at Sinai and the Covenant

1. Israel before Mount Sinai (19:1-2)
2. The covenant and calling of Israel stated (19:3-6)
3. The covenant accepted (19:7-15)
4. The glory of the Lord at Sinai (19:16-25)

Sinai is mentioned 31 times in the Pentateuch and only three times more in the rest of the Old Testament. In the New Testament the word occurs only in Acts 7:30, 38 and Gal. 4:24, 25. The place where the law was given is a barren wilderness of high towering rocks. Moses went up to God and Jehovah reminded the people first of all of His gracious dealing with them. Then He revealed His purposes concerning them as a nation. They were to be His peculiar treasure above all people and to be unto Him a kingdom of priests and an holy nation. This purpose is founded upon a theocracy, that is, He Himself would reign over them as King. For this He must ask obedience from them. How else could they be a kingdom of priests and a separated people, unless they hearkened to His voice, and kept His covenant? But it is still the purpose of grace. Jehovah in His grace would make all this possible if they had received it. The law which followed, with its principle, obedience, as the place of blessing, never led to the realization of Israel 's calling, nor ever will. When at least Israel becomes the kingdom of priests, it will be through grace and not of works.

It was a fatal thing, which all the people did when they answered together, "all that the Lord hath spoken we will do." It was a presumptuous declaration, which sprang from self-confidence and showed clearly that they had no appreciation for that grace which had visited them in Egypt and brought them hitherto. They had received grace, they needed grace. With the vow they had made, they had put themselves under the law. The legal covenant had its beginning with the rejection of the covenant of grace, and the legal covenant ends with the acceptance of grace. God permitted all this for a wise purpose. For what the law serves, why it was given, is fully answered in the New Testament (See Romans 7 and Galatians 3). In this we cannot enter here.

At once the scene changes. The character of the law they had chosen and its ministration unto death is manifested in the outward phenomena of clouds and darkness and in the first mention of death since they had left Egypt . "Whosoever toucheth the mount shall surely be put to death." On the third day the glory of the Lord appeared. The thunderings, lightnings, the trumpet, the trembling of the mountain, the voice of God, which accompany the manifestation of Jehovah, may be traced throughout the Bible. All this will be repeated in His glorious second coming. (Deut. 33:1-3; 1 Sam. 2:10; Psalm 18:7-16; Heb. 3; Rev. 10:4, etc.)

CHAPTER 20 The Covenant Revealed

1. The Ten Commandments (20:1-17)
2. Jehovah's gracious provision (20:18-26)

This law covenant is now stated. It was given three times. First orally here, when God spake all these words. Then in Exodus 31 Moses received the tables of stone, "written with the finger of God," the same finger which later wrote on earth in the sand (John 8). The first tables were broken and Moses was commanded to hew two tables of stone upon which Jehovah again wrote the Ten Commandments (Ex. 34:1). This law was given to Israel exclusively, which is seen in the opening word. The voice of God spoke these words so that the people heard Him speak. In what sense the law was given

by the ministration of angels (Acts 7:53; Gal, 3:19, Heb. 2:2) is not revealed here. Our Lord has divided the Ten Commandments into two sections. The first three go together and speak of duties towards God and the seven which follow of duties towards our fellowmen. And He who gave this law expounded the law and filled it full when He appeared on earth in humiliation. And after He lived that holy life on earth He went to the cross and the curse of the law rested upon Him (Gal. 3:13). The law given in these commandments shows man's condition. Most of the commandments are negative, "thou shalt not." It is a prohibition of the will and natural tendency of man. Man is a sinner, and the law was given to make a full demonstration of it. Read Rom. 5:12-14, 20; 7:6-13; Gal. 3:19-29. May we fully understand that this law cannot give righteousness nor life and that it is not in force as the rule for the Christian in order to receive blessing from God. We are not under that law but under grace. But grace teaches us to live righteously, soberly and godly in this present evil age. The righteous requirements of the law are fulfilled in us, who walk according to the Spirit.

The altar is mentioned and in the sacrifice we behold Christ. "But further, God will meet the sinner at an altar without a hewn stone or a step--a place of worship which requires no human workmanship to erect, or human effort to approach. The former could only pollute, and the latter could only display human 'nakedness.' Admirable type of the meeting place where God meets the sinner now, even the Person and work of His Son, Jesus Christ, where all the claims of law, of justice, and of conscience are perfectly answered! Man has, in every age and in every clime, been prone, in one way or another, to 'lift up his tool' in the erection of his altar, or to approach thereto by steps of his own making; but the issue of all such attempts has been 'pollution' and 'nakedness.'" (C.H. Mackintosh, Notes on Exodus.)

CHAPTER 21 Different Judgments

1. Master and servant (21:1-11)
2. Concerning injury to the person (21:12-32)
3. Concerning property (21:33-36)

The Three Chapters which follow the giving of the Ten Commandments give the practical application of the Decalogue in the daily life. The duties towards the fellowman are demonstrated in part. There are seven sections to these three chapters; each section contains ten precepts.

The servant occupies the first place. He was to obtain his freedom for nothing after serving six years. In Deuteronomy we read that the master is commanded not to let him go empty-handed, but give him of his flock, his threshing floor and his winepress. In this Israel was to remember their own deliverance from the house of bondage (Deut. 15:12-18). If the servant chose to remain with his master forever, his ear was to be bored through as the sign of perpetual servitude. This was a custom in other nations as well and signified that the servant was, as it were, fastened by the awl to the house (Deut. 15:17).

The Hebrew servant is put so prominently in the foreground because the Son of God became a servant and has chosen the perpetual service. Psalm 40:6 and Hebrews 10:5 show that it is typical of the Lord Jesus Christ. Notice what it says in our chapter: "And if the servant shall plainly say, I love my master, my wife and my children, I will not go out free." It was love which decided the Hebrew servant to be a servant forever. And it was love which brought Him to this earth to do the Father's will, and love for the church. "He loved the church and gave Himself for it." And He loves us as individuals. This corresponds to the love of the servant to his wife and his children. Christ was a servant on earth; He is serving in glory now as the priest and advocate of His people, and in glory "He will gird Himself ... and will come forth and serve them" (Luke 12:37).

This is followed by judgments concerning the injury of a person. Injury of a person had to be punished in a manner corresponding to the injury. The principle of retribution is marked throughout these laws. Smiting father or mother, man-stealing, and cursing the parents was punishable with death. Many pages might be written to follow these laws in detail. Read verses 23-27, and compare with Matthew 5:38-48.

Notice again the mention of the servant in verse 32. The price of a servant was thirty shekels of silver. The redemption price of a free Israelite was fifty shekels (Lev. 27:3); that of a slave, thirty shekels. How it reminds us again of Him who was sold for thirty pieces of silver (Deut. 11:12).

CHAPTER 22 Further judgments

1. Concerning theft (22:1-5)
2. Concerning neglect in case of fire (22:6)
3. Concerning dishonesty (22:7-15)
4. Concerning immoralities and forbidden things (22:16-20)
5. Concerning oppression (22:21-28)
6. Concerning offerings to God (22:29-31)

These laws need no further comment; they are good and just. The wisdom of them is the wisdom from above. We call attention to verse 18: "Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live." The nations with which Israel came in contact were given to the most satanic cults and the powers of Satan were manifested among them. Demoniacal possessions abounded, and witchcraft, sorceries, asking the dead, and other abominations were practised. Witchcraft and sorceries, communicating with the wicked spirits is therefore more than a possibility. It can be traced throughout the history of the human race and whenever nations ripened for judgment this form of evil became prominent. The female sex was then, as it is still the case, principally addicted to this sin. In our day it flourishes in spiritualism, Christian Science, theosophy, and other cults.

CHAPTER 23 Further Judgments and Directions

1. Concerning unrighteous dealings of various kinds (23:1-9)
2. Concerning the seventh year (23:10-13)
3. Concerning the three feasts (23:14-19)
4. Promises concerning the possession of the land (23:20-33)

We call attention to the words concerning the seventh year. The seventh day was the day of rest. The seventh year was to give the land rest; it was to rest and lie still. Besides this there was the jubilee year, which occurred every seven times seven years, that is, the fiftieth year was the year of jubilee, in which liberty was proclaimed. We hope to examine this more closely and learn its typical and prophetic significance when we read the book of Leviticus (chapter 25). The seventh year was especially meant for the poor. Whatever grew by itself belonged to them, and what they left the beasts of the field were to eat. What gracious provision this was! How merciful and gracious our God is!

The three feasts are next mentioned. The connection with verse 13 is obvious. It is a warning concerning other gods. The feasts were designed to keep Jehovah, His power and His grace, as a living reality before the nation. The three feasts are: The feast of unleavened bread in memory of the exodus; the feast of the first fruits, also called the feast of weeks, because it came seven weeks after the feast of unleavened bread (Lev. 23:15-16; Deut. 16:9), and still another name is "the feast of the first fruits of the wheat harvest." It was now known by the name of Shavuoth. The third feast came on the fifteenth day of the seventh month (Lev 23:34), and is the feast of ingathering, known as Succoth, the feast of tabernacles. Of all this we shall learn more in Leviticus. The last clause of verse 19 has led to ridiculous speculations among the rabbis. It is looked upon by the Jews as a prohibition against eating flesh prepared with milk (see Deuteronomy 14:21).

We must not overlook in our study verses 20-23. Who is this angel? He is called in chapter 33:15, "the face of Jehovah" (literal translation). The name of God is in Him; God revealed Himself in Him. His voice must be obeyed. He has power to pardon transgressions or not to pardon them. This angel is not a created being, but the same who appeared in the burning bush; the same of whom Jacob said, "The angel, the Redeemer." It is Jehovah Himself, the Son of God. The ancient synagogue paraphrased this person by using the expression "Memra," which means "the Word." They have believed and taught that "the Word" brought Israel out of Egypt ; "the Word" led them in the pillar of a cloud; "the Word"

confounded the Egyptian host. And they paraphrased "the angel" by "the Word."

CHAPTER 24 The Ratification of the Covenant and the Glory of Jehovah

1. Moses called into Jehovah's presence (24:1-2)
2. The covenant ratified and the sprinkling with blood (24:3-8)
3. in the presence of God and Jehovah's glory (24:9-18)

This chapter is a fitting conclusion of this second section of the second part. It begins with the giving of the law and ends with the glory of the Lord. Moses alone was to come near to Jehovah; Aaron, Nadab and Abihu with the seventy elders of Israel, had to worship afar. Moses is a type of Christ in his exclusive privilege and attitude. Twice the people make the promise to keep the covenant, not realizing what they were doing. Then the blood was sprinkled upon the altar, upon the book of the covenant (Heb. 9:19), and on the people. In this way the covenant was ratified. This sprinkling of the blood here has not the meaning of atonement. It rather stands for the penalty of the broken covenant. The blood standing for life given, was a solemn warning that the penalty of disobedience would be death. At the same time the offerings and the blood point to Christ. He came and took the curse of the law upon Himself. When He came to give His life a ransom for many, the people, so occupied with the ordinances, the law and the traditions of men, cried, "This blood be upon us and upon our children." Ever since blood-guiltiness rests upon them and the curse of their own law is their portion till they shall look upon Him whom they have pierced.

The people were afar off, the leaders were not to come nigh, and had to worship afar off. The blood of the Lord Jesus Christ, however, makes nigh and we can draw nigh. The legal covenant ever puts man into a solemn and guilty distance from God; the covenant of Grace brings man nigh to God. The presence and glory of God appeared. Moses was on the mount forty days and forty nights.

3. The Tabernacle and the Priesthood

CHAPTER 25 The Tabernacle

1. The freewill offering and the materials (25:1-9)
2. The ark (25:10-22)
3. The table of showbread (25:23-30)
4. The golden candlestick (25:31-40)

This is another intensely interesting portion of this great book. To give a few annotations and hints on the tabernacle is an extremely difficult task, for there is such a wonderful mine of wealth here that a book of hundreds of pages could not contain all.

The tabernacle concerning which the Lord instructed Moses was the earthly place of worship of Israel; it was the means of a continued relationship of a holy God with a sinful people. But besides this the tabernacle and its worship foreshadow in the completest way the Person and work of our Lord Jesus Christ. The epistle to the Hebrews bears witness to this. The types in the tabernacle are simply inexhaustible. The word "tabernacle" in the Hebrew is mishkan, which means dwelling-place. The construction and arrangement were not left to man. God gave Moses the instructions and showed to him a pattern.

The materials are mentioned first, and they are to be supplied by His willing people. The Hebrew expression is literally, "every one whom his heart drove." Only His people, not strangers, could furnish the material. And they had to give with the heart. The same principle holds good in the New Testament. The support of the Lord's work by unsaved people and the methods of the world are wrong; they have not the blessing of God. We do not touch upon the materials now, but shall do so later.

The ark of shittim wood is the first thing mentioned. Man builds differently. Man lays first a foundation, builds the walls, works from the outside to the inside. God begins within. The ark with the mercy seat is where Jehovah dwelt, "between the Cherubim." It is, therefore, a type of Christ. The shittim wood, that is, acacia, grows in the desert, out of a dry ground (Is. 53:2). It is of all the wood the most durable, almost imperishable. We have in it the type of the humanity of Christ. The gold which covered it is typical of His deity. The mercy seat fitted the ark. It was of the same dimensions as the ark. The Hebrew word is kapporeth, which means covering, and has reference to atonement. The two cherubim faced each other and looked down upon the mercy seat, where the blood was sprinkled. They are always seen in the Word in connection with the throne (Ezek. 1; Rev. 4). Beautiful is verse 22.

The table of Showbread still tells us of Christ, for it is of the same material as the ark. What was on the table, the showbread and all its blessed lessons we shall consider in Leviticus. The table and the bread are typical of Christ, who sustains us in fellowship with God.

The golden candlestick is the next article of furniture described. It was of pure gold. Three times almonds are mentioned. From the book of Numbers we learn that the almond, on the blossoming rod of Aaron, is the type of Christ in resurrection. The candlestick typifies Christ in heaven's glory, outshining the glory of God. It also is the type of Him, risen from the dead, giving the Holy Spirit, who is seen as the sevenfold Spirit in the candlestick. See and compare with Rev. 1:4, 13, 20; 3:1 and 4:5.

CHAPTER 26 The Tabernacle and its Construction

1. The curtains (26:1-6)
2. The coverings (26:7-14)
3. The boards (26:15-30)
4. The vail (26:31-35)
5. The hangings for the door (26:36-37)

While the tabernacle is a type of the heavenly places (Heb. 9:23) it is also a type of Christ, who tabernacled among men. The wonderful foreshadowings we find here down to the minutest details is an evidence of inspiration. We must confine ourselves to a very few things.

The colors used were blue, purple, scarlet and white. Blue is the color of heaven, purple that of royalty, scarlet the color of blood, and the white tells of righteousness. The ten curtains of fine twined linen which surrounded the tabernacle typify the holy, spotless humanity of our Lord. How the colors tell out the blessed story of the gospel, that heaven's King came down to shed His blood, we need not to follow in detail. The loops of blue and taches of gold which unite the curtains tell of Him likewise.

"We have here displayed to us, in the 'loops of blue,' and 'taches of gold,' that heavenly grace and divine energy in Christ which enabled Him to combine and perfectly adjust the claims of God and man; so that in responding to both the one and the other, He never for a moment marred the unity of His character."

The curtains of goats' hair were to be a tent over the tabernacle and the tent had other coverings of rams' skins, dyed red, and covering of badgers' skin. These coverings hid the ten curtains of the fine twined linen, and their beauty. Thus He was not beheld in His lovely character when on earth. The goats' hair covering reminds us of the divine statement, "He hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see Him, there is no beauty that we should desire Him" (Is. 53:2). The rams' skins, dyed red, are the symbol of His devotion and obedience to God, even unto the death of the cross. The badgers' skins are taken to mean His holy determination and steadfastness.

Christ and his people are typified in the board of shittim wood (the same as in the ark and the table) resting in the

sockets of silver. The silver was the ransom money (chapter 30:11-13), out of it the sockets were made (chapter 38:25-28). The whole frame work of the tabernacle rested in that which tells of atonement. Thus we stand in Christ and we are one with Him, separated from the world as the boards were separated from the earthly sockets of silver. And as we look upon this frame work, with the bars of shittim wood uniting the boards (typical of Christ) we may well think of Eph. 2:21: "In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord."

The vail as described in verses 31-35 is interpreted in Heb. 10:2. It marked the division of the holy and the most holy, or Holy of Holies. Like the inner curtains this vail typifies the holy humanity of our Lord. That vail barred the entrance into the presence of God. But it was rent by the hand of God, when our Lord had laid down His life on the cross. Christ is the way into the presence of God, "by a new and living way, which He hath consecrated for us, through the vail, that is to say, His flesh." Therefore we have boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus. The hanging for the door of the tent has the same meaning, Christ the way.

CHAPTER 27 The Tabernacle Concluded

1. The altar of brass (27:1-8)
2. The court of the tabernacle (27:9-19)
3. The oil for the lamp (27:20-21)

The brazen altar stood at the door of the tabernacle. Later we find in this book the golden altar of incense mentioned. It stood between the golden candlestick and the brazen altar. This altar was likewise of shittim wood. Instead of gold, here was brass, because the altar is the type of the cross where Christ met the burning heat of divine justice. Upon this altar the burnt offering was brought and wholly consumed, speaking of Him who knew no sin and was made sin for us. The altar was hollow, the sacrificial fires burned mostly within. This tells of His work on the cross and the sufferings "within," when He was forsaken of God; they are for us unfathomable. The horns on the four corners of the altar indicated that His great work on the cross should go forth in world wide proclamation.

The court of the tabernacle had for a wall fine twined linen. This was symbolical of the righteousness of God. This excludes the sinner from His presence. But there was a gate (verse 16) in which the colors reappeared. Blue, purple and scarlet were seen there. The gate typifies Christ. If an Israelite entered through that gate in the linen wall, which shut him out, he found, after entering in, that the same fine twined linen shut him in. Even so, if we enter in through the one door, Christ, the righteousness of God which condemned us, covers us. There were also hooks and fillets of silver and sockets of brass, telling once more the story of atonement and divine righteousness executed in judgment.

CHAPTER 28 The Priesthood

1. Aaron and his sons (28:1)
2. The garments mentioned (28:2-4)
3. The ephod (28:5-14)
4. The breastplate (28:15-30)
5. The robe of the ephod (28:31-35)
6. The mitre (28:35-38)
7. The ordinary garments (28:39-43)

This chapter is still richer in typical lessons, a very few of them we can notice. Two chapters are devoted to the priesthood. Aaron is the type of Christ. The sons of Aaron are types of Christians representing false worshippers (Nadab and Abihu) and true worshippers (Eleazar and Ithamar.) The holy garments are mentioned first, but not in the order as they were put on. The correct order is found in Leviticus 8:7-9. The garments were for glory and beauty, typifying Him who is altogether lovely. The ephod stands first. Ephod in Hebrew means "to bind on"; it held the breastplate in position. It was of gold, blue, purple, of scarlet, fine twined linen, with cunning work. How beautifully it was wrought we read in Exodus

39:3. The same material as in the curtains was used in the ephod; gold is added and the figures of the cherubim are absent. It all tells us of Himself and His priestly service in behalf of His people. The two onyx stones Aaron wore on his shoulders with the names of the twelve tribes engraven, are the type of Christ, carrying His people upon His shoulders. The shoulder is the symbol of power. From the moment He puts His sheep He has found upon His shoulder (Luke 15:5) to the blessed day, when He gathers His own, He carries them in His power.

Read verse 11 how these names were put into the stones. They were ineffaceable and could not be blotted out. It speaks of our security in Christ. The breastplate consisted of twelve stones. Every one of these stones has a meaning, which we cannot follow here, and the names of the twelve tribes were engraved upon these precious stones. The breastplate was "upon his heart when he goeth in unto the holy place." The words "upon his heart" are twice repeated in verse 30. Here we have the blessed type that Christ carries all His people upon His heart of love. That the breastplate be not loosed from the ephod (verses 26-28) blue lace was attached. There was no possibility that the breastplate could shift; there is no possibility that His love for His own can ever grow less. His power and His love go together. In the breastplate there were also placed "Urim and Thummim," which means "lights and perfections." Seven times they are mentioned: Ex. 28:30; Lev. 8:8; Num. 27:21; Deut. 33:8; 1 Sam. 28:6; Ezra 2:63; Neh. 7:65. In two of these passages only Urim is mentioned and in Deut. 33:8 Thummim stands first. It is not certain in what the Urim and Thummim consisted. Some think they were two costly stones drawn as a lot in difficult questions. Others think it was one stone which by various scintillations gave an answer from the Lord. Israel did not need to be in darkness about any matter. We possess as believers a gift in us to guide and direct our steps; it is the Holy Spirit. He is our Urim and Thummim. The robe of the ephod was entirely blue. Christ is our heavenly highpriest. Bells and pomegranates, the types of testimony and fruit, were around the robe. "His sound shall be heard when he goeth in." That happened when He as a priest went in to God and Holy Spirit came and the gospel bells began to ring. And fruit in the conversion of souls ever followed. The bells also rang when Aaron came out from the presence of God. Even so when our Lord comes again a fresh testimony in power will be heard yielding wonderful fruit.

The "holy crown" Aaron wore is equally suggestive. "Holiness unto the Lord" was on the golden plate. So He is our holy Priest and we are holy priests with Him. Read Zech. 14:20, 21.

CHAPTER 29 The Consecration of the Priests

1. Aaron and his sons wash with water (29:1-4)
2. Aaron clothed (29:5-7)
3. The consecration (29:8-25)
4. The food of the priests (29:26-35)
5. God's meeting place (29:36-46)

In Leviticus we find the record of their consecration, which is linked there with the offerings. Here it is only the instruction, while in Leviticus we find the act of the consecration. We touch upon it briefly; in Leviticus, we shall follow it a little closer. First they were washed with water. This is the type of the washing of regeneration. It stands for the new birth, which is by the water (the Word) and the Spirit (John 3:5). It is the one washing of which our Lord spoke to Peter (John 13:10). This puts all believers into the position of priests before God; we are a holy priesthood. But Aaron towers above his sons; we see him separated from them (verses 5-7). This is on account of typifying Christ. Aaron was washed with water like his sons because he was a sinner. It made him typically what Christ is essentially, that is, holy. The sons of Aaron represent Christians; all true believers are one with Christ as Aaron's sons were. But Aaron was anointed alone before the blood was shed, besides wearing already his priestly garments. In this he is a very striking type of our Lord. He was anointed with the oil, the Holy Spirit, in virtue of what He is in Himself.

Notice the sacrifices brought. First, Aaron and his sons put their hands upon the head of the bullock, which was then slain. The blood was put upon the horns of the altar, and then all the blood was poured at the base of the altar. It was a sin offering. Then there were two rams. The first one was for a burnt offering. The significance of these different offerings we shall examine in the book of Leviticus. The blood of the second ram was put upon the tip of the right ear, the thumb of the

right hand, and the great toe of the right foot of Aaron and his sons. The ram was killed after they had laid their hands upon his head. Then the blood and the anointing oil was sprinkled upon them and their garments. This was the consecration proper. It tells us how they were set apart completely. Thus in redemption we are set apart to be a holy priesthood, to have our ears open to hear His voice and receive from Him, the hand set apart to act for Him, and the foot to walk with Him. In all this we see Christ and ourselves linked by grace with Him, as Aaron's sons were so fully identified with Aaron.

Then there was the wave offering put into the hands of Aaron and his sons, and what this wave offering was is learned from verses 22, 23. It all expresses Christ, and is a sweet savor. The breast and the left shoulder of the ram of consecration (verse 22), as well as all else which had not been offered to God, belonged to the priests. This tells of practical enjoyment of the love of Christ (the breast) and the enjoyment of His strength (the shoulder) who bears us up. It was eaten in the holy place, and the unleavened bread had to be used.

In verse 33 we find the English word "atonement" for the first time. The Hebrew word is kaphar, to cover. Of this likewise we shall have more to say when we read the book of Leviticus.

In the concluding section of this chapter we read God's promises, "where I will meet you and speak there unto thee;" "I will meet with the children of Israel;" "I will dwell among the children of Israel." The meeting place is the burnt offering altar. The daily offerings make known what the work of Christ is to God. And that is the place of the blessing.

CHAPTER 30 The Altar of Incense and the Worshippers

1. The altar (30:1-10)
2. The atonement money (30:11-16)
3. The brazen laver and the unction of the Spirit (30:22-33)
4. The incense (30:34-38)

This is a beautiful chapter, filled with blessed lessons. We have before us instructions concerning true, priestly worship. The brazen altar was of shittim wood, but this altar is of shittim wood covered with pure gold. The altar of brass tells of the work of Christ on the cross when judgment fell upon Him. There we learn in faith that our sins and guilt were fully met. The golden altar typifies Christ as entered into heaven. He is an altar there likewise, a place of sacrifice, but not a bleeding sacrifice. As believers we are a holy priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ (1 Pet. 2:5). "By Him, therefore, let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips confessing His name." The altar of incense stands for this true, heavenly worship. There is a warning not to offer strange incense. In Leviticus (10:1-3) the additional warning is against strange fire. Strange incense is that kind of worship which is called ritualistic; a mere outward form, which puts a man in the place of leader in worship. Strange fire is a soulical, emotional worship, which is destitute of the Holy Spirit, who alone gives power to worship.

And those who come as true worshippers must be redeemed. This is seen in verses 11-16. Here is a confession of the fact that all are lost, all on equal footing, and all need redemption.

The brazen laver is mentioned next. This was for the washing of the hands and feet, symbolical of the washing of water by the Word, the cleansing from daily defilement. This is so blessedly illustrated in the washing of the feet of the disciples by our Lord. We must be cleansed, self-judged and self-denied, separated from evil, if we are to be true worshippers before the altar of incense. No real communion with God is possible save on the ground of personal holiness. Later we shall find that the laver was made of the looking-glasses of the assembling women (38:8). The Word of God is the true looking-glass where we see ourselves as we are, and then go to Him who is our laver for cleansing.

The holy anointing oil is the type of the Holy Spirit. He is needed for worship in the Spirit. A closer examination of the principal spices and their possible meaning, we must pass over. Notice that this oil was not to be poured upon man's flesh,

"neither shall ye make any other like it" (verses 32-33). "The natural man cannot receive the things of the Spirit of God for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." The flesh is so corrupt that the Holy Spirit can have nothing to do with it. And how much the Spirit and His real work is counterfeited in these days.

The ingredients of the incense are also given. It is typical of the wonderful fragrance Christ is to God. His life on earth, His obedience, His death on the cross, His presence in Glory, all He is and all He does are of unspeakable fragrance and value to God.

CHAPTER 31 The Workmen and the Sabbath

1. The workmen called (31:1-11)
2. The Sabbath law emphasized (31:12-17)
3. Moses receives the tables of stone (31:18)

The call of the builders of the tabernacle follows the instructions. The plan and worship of the tabernacle was by divine appointment, only God could give such a plan foreshadowing the redemption work of His Son. To carry out this plan, the Lord called His own workmen by name and filled them with His Spirit, so that they could do the work in a manner which would please Him. "I have called; I have given; I have filled" are the words of Jehovah showing that He selected and qualified the two men to undertake the work. The New Testament ministry rests equally in the hands of the Lord. He has the exclusive right to select His servants for the ministry. As the risen Lord in Glory He gave some apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ (Eph. 4:11-12). And whom He calls into the work of the ministry He also qualifies. His Spirit gives the wisdom and power to carry out the work into which the Lord calls. It is therefore all of Him; no room for boasting or jealousy.

What confusion would have resulted if certain Israelites had decided to do part of the work and others, calling themselves "superintendents," had directed the construction of the tabernacle, or a committee selected the design of the breastplate and another committee examined drawings of the cherubim. Great is the confusion in the professing church with its man-made, self appointed ministry, with its organizations, committees and worldly methods. The truth so clearly revealed in the New Testament epistles concerning the ministry in the body of Christ and the Holy Spirit who fits for this ministry, is almost entirely forgotten. But wherever there is the divine call and divine qualification through the Spirit of God, there the work is done and is accompanied by the power and blessing of God.

The principal workman called was Bezaleel, the grandson of Hur of the tribe of Judah . He had an assistant in Aholiab, as well as others who were wisehearted and to whom God gave wisdom (verse 6). Bezaleel means, "in the shadow of God"; this tells of his trust, filled with the Spirit of God in wisdom and understanding. He may well be taken as a type of the Lord Jesus Christ. Uri means "Light of Jehovah"; and Hur means "white." All these words point clearly to the great workman selected by God to fashion a dwelling place for Him and to make a kingdom of priests unto God, the Lord Jesus Christ. And as Bezaleel did all as God commanded so that He was pleased, so our Lord has done the work in perfect wisdom to the eternal glory of God His Father.

Aholiab, Bezaleel's assistant, means "tent of my father." Ahisamach has the meaning "brother of support." This, likewise, reminds us of our Lord. Bezaleel belonged to the tribe of Judah, the leader in the camp of Israel , and Aholiab to Dan, the last in the camp. Thus the first and the last were selected to do the work. What a glorious time is yet to come when all Israel , saved by grace in that day of His appearing, filled with the Spirit and divine wisdom, erects the great millennial temple (Ezek. 40-48).

The Sabbath law is restated and emphasized. This was also done when the manna was given. Here the Sabbath is especially mentioned as "a sign between Me and you in your generations." The Sabbath is altogether a Jewish institution; it

is always mentioned when Israel is seen in their responsibility in the special position given to them. Here the penalty for breaking the Sabbath is stated for the first time; it is death. Notice the peculiar expression in verse 17, that the Lord rested on the seventh day and was refreshed He must have looked forward to His own work on the cross and the marvellous results of this work.

We quote from another some well-put distinctions between the Sabbath Israel had and could not keep, and the Lord's day. This distinction is of importance in the days when some consciences are disturbed by teachers who would force the seventh day upon those who are under Grace.

1. The Sabbath was the seventh day; the Lord's day is the first.
2. The Sabbath was a test of Israel 's condition; the Lord's day is the proof of the Church's acceptance, on wholly unconditional grounds.
3. The Sabbath belonged to the old creation; the Lord's day belongs to the new.
4. The Sabbath was a day of bodily rest for the Jew; the Lord's day is a day of spiritual rest for the Christian.
5. If the Jew worked on the Sabbath, he was to be put to death; if the Christian does not work on the Lord's day, he gives little proof of life;--that is to say, if he does not work for the benefit of the souls of men, the extension of Christ's glory and the spread of His truth. In point of fact, the devoted Christian who possesses any gift is generally more fatigued on the evening of the Lord's day than on any other in the week, for how can he rest while souls are perishing around him?
6. The Jew was commanded by the law to abide in his tent; the Christian is led by the spirit of the gospel to go forth, whether it be to attend the public assembly or to minister to the souls of perishing sinners. (C.H. Mackintosh, Notes on Exodus.)

How higher criticism, the whole rationalistic school, and their brethren, the infidels, have amused themselves with verse 18. Why should this be thought to be impossible with God? Their sneers but reveal their darkened and wicked hearts. God had made the tables and wrote on them (chapter 32:16).

4. Israel 's Sin and Rebellion

CHAPTER 32

1. The people in rebellion (32:1-6)
2. Jehovah threatens his wrath (32:7-10)
3. Moses beseeches Jehovah (32:11-14)
4. Moses descends and in the camp (32:15-29)
5. Moses' offer and failure (32:30-35)

This chapter records the breaking of the covenant by Israel 's sin, rebellion against Jehovah, and idolatry. Here we find man's heart fully uncovered, that wicked heart of unbelief. What manifestations of God's power they had seen! Their eyes beheld the dreadful judgments which fell upon the land of Egypt and wiped out the Egyptian hosts. They were guided by the visible sign of Jehovah's presence. He had given them manna, yea, they were eating that bread the very day on which they rebelled. The smitten rock had yielded water. God had entered into covenant with them. And now when Moses delayed, they requested of Aaron, "Up, make us gods." God was not mentioned at all by the rebellious mass. It seemed

Moses and not God was the object of their faith. The heathen had gone that way and "changed the glory of the Uncoorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts and creeping things" (Rom. 1:23). The favored nation shows that their heart is as corrupt as the heart of the Gentiles, who know not God. They plunged into the degradation of idolatry. The unseen One, the One who had honored Abraham's faith, who spake to the fathers, was rejected by them, and they preferred a golden calf fashioned with a graving tool. And Aaron plays the leading part in this awful scene of degradation and wickedness. He announces a feast unto the Lord, after he had made the golden calf from the golden ear-rings (copied, no doubt, after the Egyptian idol Apis; see Ps. 106:19-20). Then the people "rose up to play"; wild dances, licentious and filled with the abominations of the heathen, the flesh let loose, is what followed. The people were naked (verse 25).

Alas! the same has been repeated on "Christian" ground. The ritualistic, religious worship, appealing to the senses, filled with God, Christ and the Holy Spirit dishonoring counterfeits, the inventions of the "religious nature" of man under satanic control, is nothing but idolatry. It rejects the invisible One, who demands our faith and trust, and puts something else in His place. That is idolatry. All God's true people are in danger of that sin in the most subtle forms. Whenever we lean on the arm of flesh and not exclusively upon the "I Am," our gracious Lord, then we are guilty of the same sin. "Little children, keep yourselves from idols" (1 John 5:21).

As Moses went up, so our great High Priest has gone to the Father. We see Him not, but we know He is there and will come back again. May we live by faith during His absence and be kept from idols.

Then Jehovah told Moses what was going on in the camp. Note that He said to Moses, "thy people which thou broughtest out of the land of Egypt ." The Lord puts them, so to speak, upon Moses and commits them into his hands. Moses only needed to say the word and the rebellious nation would have been consumed and Moses and his offspring would become a new beginning. It was a test of Moses, but Jehovah knew beforehand what His servant would do. Beautiful is Moses' intercession. He uses the same words the Lord had used. "Thy people which Thou hast brought forth out of the land of Egypt ." The Lord had put them into Moses' hands; Moses puts them back upon the Lord. How wonderful was Moses' intercession in their behalf. He reminds Him of His promises and the covenant made with Abraham, Isaac and Israel (avoiding the word Jacob). His intercession is typical of our great intercessor before the throne.

The covenant was broken and the first tables of stone were broken. The golden calf was burnt and ground to powder. This was cast into the water (the brook, Deut. 9:2 1), and the children of Israel had to drink it. They had to drink their own shame; a humiliating experience. Aaron is questioned first, and he adds a new sin to the one already committed. (Compare verse 24 with verse 4). The sons of Levi gathered themselves to Moses. They, too, had shared in the rebellion, but were now the first to confess and take their stand with the Lord. Judgment follows and three thousand fell by the sword. They did not spare their nearest relations (Deut. 33:9). Besides this, the people were plagued (32:35). Moses returned to the Lord. But he failed in his proposition. "None of them can by any means redeem his brother, nor give unto God a ransom for him" (Ps. 49:7). Yet Moses' willingness to be blotted out of the Book foreshadows Him who alone could do the atoning work. He offered himself without spot unto God, (Heb. 9:14) and gave His life a ransom for many. He died for that nation (John 11:51, 52).

5. Moses' Intercession and its Results

CHAPTER 33 Repentance and Intercession

1. The word of the Lord and the people's repentance (33:1-6)
2. The tabernacle without the camp (33:7)
3. Moses enters the tabernacle (33:8-11)
4. Moses' prayer and Jehovah's answers (33:12-17)
5. Moses' request (33:18-23)

The words of the Lord, with which this chapter begins, reveal Him as the covenant-keeping Jehovah. He remembers His covenant, though they are a stiff-necked people. Yet He is a holy God and if He were to be in their midst they would be consumed. They had to take the place in self-judgment and acknowledge their guilt and separation from the Holy One. They were obedient to this demand and stripped themselves of their ornaments. In this place they had taken the Lord could show them mercy.

The word "tabernacle" here in this chapter means "tent" and of course is not the real tabernacle, for that had not yet been erected. It was a tent which had been used as a place of worship, it now had to occupy a place outside of the camp. All who wanted to seek the Lord had to go to the "tent of meeting," outside of the camp. See Hebrews 13:13. Christ and His gospel is now rejected; the professing people of God are in rebellion and apostasy; the call, therefore, is to go outside of the camp, bearing His reproach. Christ occupies this place in Laodicea, the phase of Christian profession in these last days. He is outside, standing at the door and knocking. And there, "outside of the camp," the Lord spake unto Moses, as a man speaketh unto his friend. Again he represents Christ as mediator, only our mediator is higher than Moses. And through Christ we have access into His presence. "Outside of the camp" leads to the closest communion with Himself. The Lord talked to Moses out of the cloud and then Moses turned again into the camp. Joshua remained in the tabernacle and did not enter the camp. All is written for our learning. Though we go "outside of the camp" yet we have a solemn duty and responsibility towards those in the camp. May we discharge these. Moses' prayer pleads now grace, and upon that the Holy One answers graciously. But His face Moses could not see. Read and compare with John 1:18 and 14:9.

CHAPTER 34 The Result: The Second Covenant and the Glory

1. The command to hew two tables of stone (34:1-4)
2. The proclamation of Jehovah (34:5-7)
3. Moses' worship and prayer (34:8-9)
4. The covenant restated (34:10-26)
5. The second tables written (34:27-28)
6. The glory upon the face of Moses (34:29-35)

The command is given to Moses to hew two tables of stone like the first, which Jehovah Himself had hewn and which were broken by Moses. The first were hewn of one stone; the second of two stones. Moses was permitted to furnish the material for the second tables, while the Lord had furnished it for the first. The second tables were given as the result of the intercession of Moses. But God wrote the words on the second tables of stones as He had done on the first.

The manifestation of Jehovah recorded in this chapter is deeply interesting. In chapter 33:21-23 the Lord promised Moses a vision. This is now fulfilled. Jehovah came down from heaven in a cloud and stood with him there; He proclaimed the name of Jehovah. This reminds us of Exodus 19:24. What Moses saw is not stated. The Lord had come down to him and the descended Lord made known the name of the Lord. It is a most blessed hint on the incarnation of Jehovah and the manifestation of the name of Jehovah through Him, who is Jehovah. "For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ" (John 1:17). The descended Lord makes known grace, but also divine righteousness. The full manifestation of grace could not be then made known; only in the cross of Christ, where God's righteousness is revealed, grace shines forth in all its marvelous glory. In the gospel of Jesus Christ the justification of the ungodly is announced as well as the glorious inheritance of eternity for justified believers. Of this the law had nothing to say, for it could not give righteousness and God never meant to give to man eternal glory by keeping the commandments.

Moses worshipped and bowed his head toward the earth. His prayer to Jehovah is that He might come among them. He confessed the sinful condition of the people and asks for pardon. He includes himself. In chapter 33:5 Jehovah called the people stiff-necked. Moses then did not use this word; but here when Jehovah speaks of grace he pleads this charge of Jehovah for forgiveness and mercy. This is a blessed foreshadowing of the gospel of grace. But there is another lesson here. Moses realizes that the presence of Jehovah who had uttered such gracious words, if He were among them, would result in their forgiveness. The Holy One of Israel will some day be in the midst of His earthly people, then He will forgive

their sins and remember them no more, and they will be His inheritance.

In the statements of the renewed covenant the separation of the people from the inhabitants of Canaan is made prominent. They were to have nothing to do with the impure and abominable idolatries of these nations. He called His people unto holiness. Moreover, they were to destroy their altars, their images and their groves. The word groves is "asherah." It was an image used for the most lascivious practices, commonly known as the phallic worship. It flourished among all the ancient nations, but was especially used by the Canaanites. When Israel later fell in with these abominations, the judgment fell upon them. The commandments concerning the feasts, the Sabbath, and the firstfruits are repeated.

The conclusion of this chapter is used in 2 Cor. 3.

When Moses was on the mountain the first time to receive the first tables of stone no glory was seen on his face, because the covenant was altogether legal and not a ray of glory can come from that. The second time, because grace and mercy were mingled with it, glory shines from the mediator's face. But they could not look upon that glory. He had to cover his face with a vail. Thus grace and glory are covered in the law. This vail is done away in Christ. In Him grace and glory in the most perfect splendor shine forth. And it is a glory which does not wane, but increases. "But we all with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord" (2 Cor. 3:18).

Of Israel it is written, "But their minds were blinded, for until this day remaineth the same veil untaken away in the reading of the Old Testament, which veil is done away in Christ. But even unto this day, when Moses is read, the veil is upon their hearts. Nevertheless, when it shall turn unto the Lord, the veil shall be taken away" (2 Cor. 3:14-16). And that glorious day is coming, when they will believe.

6. The Building of the Tabernacle

CHAPTER 35 The Commandments Concerning the Tabernacle Remembered and the Offerings

1. The Sabbath law emphasized (35:1-3)
2. The offerings restated (35:4-10)
3. The tabernacle and its furniture restated (35:11-19)
4. The offerings given (35:20-29)
5. The workmen and the teachers (35:30-35)

It is interesting to review the events and steps which lead to this consummation in Exodus, the setting up of the tabernacle. After Jehovah had redeemed His people and led them through the wilderness to Mount Sinai, dealing with them in grace, the law covenant was made. It was broken by them in their rebellion and idolatry. Intercession and another covenant followed, mingled with grace. And now there is obedience and the tabernacle is put up. And when it was finished the glory filled the place, showing that God was well pleased. Jehovah dwelt there with His people. In New Testament times, the true church is His dwelling place, "an habitation of God through the Spirit." When the age to come, the millennium is reached, He will again dwell in the midst of Israel and manifest His visible glory in Jerusalem and above the city. Then comes eternity when God is all in all. "And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them" (Rev. 21:3).

The Sabbath rest is once more mentioned. This is not a vain repetition, nor is it the mark of imperfection, or the work of different writers, as the critical school has claimed. Rest precedes the work, not work precedes the rest. This is the blessed spiritual principle. This cannot be under the law, but it is blessedly so under grace. We rest in Him, and He gives us rest so that we can labor and give back to Him.

All the details commanded by Jehovah concerning the tabernacle are repeated and also the material to be furnished by

the people in free will offerings. How needful was the repetition! He had made the specifications show what they were to bring, as He has shown in His Word the service and work He expects of His people. And then we behold their willing service. Men and women came and brought their gifts. How it must have refreshed His heart. The women are prominently mentioned. The willing heart and the cheerful giver are also seen in the New Testament. When in the future the day of Christ's power dawns (His second coming) His earthly people, Israel, will be willing to bring their all to His feet: "Thy people shall be willing in the day of Thy power" (Ps. 110:3). Then they will build that great and glorious millennial temple, the house of prayer for all nations.

Once more the two leading workmen are mentioned by name and the fact is made known that the Spirit of God fitted them for the work. But something is added here which we do not find in chapter 31, "And He hath put in his heart that he may teach, both he and Aholiab, the son of Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan." Besides having the spirit of wisdom they also had the gift of teaching, to pass on to others what they had learned.

CHAPTER 36 The Work Carried Out

1. The work begun (36:1-4)
2. The over-supply in the offerings (36:5-7)
3. The curtains (36:8-13)
4. The covering of the tent (36:14-19)
5. The boards and the sockets of silver (36:20-30)
6. The bars (36:31-34)
7. The vail and the hanging for the door (36:35-38)

In the abundant offerings, more than was needed, we see the results of the grace of God. Every morning the offerings were presented. So large was the supply that they had to be restrained. What a contrast with the professing people of God in our days! How little self-sacrifice and self denial; how little willingness to spend and be spent. The methods used to help along the work of the Lord, such as collections from unbelievers, are condemned by the word of God. The willingness of the people was the fruit of the spirit of God. The different curtains and coverings, boards and bars and the vail and hanging were prepared. In chapter 30 we saw God began with that which is within; the building began with the outside things.

CHAPTER 37 The Ark, The Table, the Candlestick, and the Incense Altar, the Oil and Incense

1. The ark made by Bezaleel (37:1-9)
2. The table of shittim wood (37:10-16)
3. The candlestick (37:17-24)
4. The incense altar (37:25-28)
5. The oil and incense (37:29)

The word of Jehovah is literally carried out, because the Holy Spirit was in the workmen. Compare verses 1-9 with 25:10-22; verses 10-16 with 25:23-30; verses 17-24 with 25:31-40; verses 25-28 with 30:1-10; verse 29 with 30:22-38. Notice that the ark is mentioned especially as the work of Bezaleel.

CHAPTER 38 The Burnt Offering Altar, the Laver, the Court and the Metals Used

1. The altar of burnt offering (38:1-7)
2. The laver (38:8)
3. The court (38:9-20)
4. The amount of metal used (38:21-31)

The pattern as previously given is closely followed and everything done according to the divine command. Nothing was left in the work to the choice of the workman. They had the pattern and the spirit of God gave the power to carry it out. Thus God expects us to work and serve after His own pattern in the power of the indwelling Spirit. He will eventually carry out all His revealed plans and purposes concerning this earth. Women furnished the material for the laver. They gave their looking glasses, which were of shining metal. (See job 37:18.) They were pious women of Israel who gave willingly what must have been a costly possession. They assembled at the door of the tabernacle. The Chaldean paraphrase is "of the mirrors of the women, which came to pray at the door of the tabernacle."

Interesting is the estimate of the amount of metal used. Gold occupies the first place: 29 talents and 730 shekels. Silver was given by every male a half of a shekel (the atonement money). The number of men from 20 years and upward was 603,550; so they gave 301,775 shekels of silver. Then there was the brass (copper). Precious metals, like gold and silver, were plentiful in Egypt, which had immense gold mines.

CHAPTER 39 The Priestly Garments and the Work Finished

1. The material used (39:1)
2. The ephod (39:2-7)
3. The breastplate (39:8-21)
4. The robe, the bells and pomegranates (39:22-26)
5. The coats (39:27-29)
6. The holy crown (39:30-31)
7. The work finished (39:32-43)

All is done "as the Lord commanded." This expression is used seven times in chapter 39 (verses 1, 5, 7, 21, 26, 29, 31). It is again repeated exactly seven times in chapter 40, the last chapter of Exodus (verses 19, 21, 23, 25, 27, 29, 32). Seven is the number of perfection and completion. All had been well done and Jehovah was pleased and could own the work, of which He was the originator. Blue, purple, and scarlet, the colors of heaven, royalty and blood, are given in the preparation of the holy garments. It tells once more of Him who is the priest. The order is significant. The heavenly color comes first, for He came from heaven's glory. The kingly color next; He manifested Himself in His kingly power, and the blood color last, He died and shed His blood. Urim and Thummim are not mentioned in the list, for they could not be made.

The work was finished and all presented to Moses for inspection. The principal parts are mentioned once more. With what joy Moses must have looked upon the ark, the curtains, the boards, the altars, the laver and the garments of beauty and glory. There was no flaw in anything. With what liberality and zeal the great work had been accomplished. Then Moses blessed the children of Israel.

7. The Tabernacle Set Up, the Finished Work and the Glory

CHAPTER 40

1. Jehovah gives the directions (40:1-15)
2. Moses' obedience (40:16)
3. The tabernacle set up (40:17-19)
4. The ark brought in (40:20-21)
5. The furniture placed and the offerings brought (40:22-29)
6. The laver and the court (40:30-33)
7. The glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle (40:34-38)

While the people had offered and the chosen workmen labored in the production of the tabernacle, the Lord had not spoken. He looked upon His people as they carried out His commands. But after Moses had blessed them, then the Lord

spoke and commanded the setting up of the tabernacle on the first day of the first month. He directs the placing of the different pieces of furniture. The table with the shewbread was to be arranged, water to be put into the laver, the anointing of all was to follow, the priests to be washed, clothed and anointed. All was carried out again. Moses did according to all the Lord commanded him. The building of the tabernacle and all the work connected with it occupied not quite six months. The tabernacle was reared in the first month in the second year on the first day of the month. The setting up began with the sockets, in which the boards were placed. The testimony was put into the ark (the tables of stone). Then after the ark had been brought in, Moses hung the curtain. The holy part of the tabernacle was next arranged. The table was placed on the right side towards the north, and the shewbread was laid upon it. Of all this we shall read in Leviticus, where the typical meaning will be pointed out. The altar of burnt offerings was placed before the door of the dwelling of the tabernacle and the laver between the tabernacle and the altar. Moses burned sweet incense and offered the burnt offering and meat offering. When Moses had looked upon all that had been done, he was well pleased and blessed the people (39:43). When Jehovah looked upon the finished work and saw that all was according to His heart, He was well pleased. His approval as witnessed to by the cloud, which covered the tabernacle, and His glory filled the place, e entered in to take possession of it. Moses had to stand back; He could no longer go into the place where Jehovah dwelt.

While here the cloud covered all and the glory filled the whole place, later the cloud drew back into the most holy place to dwell above the outspread wings of the cherubim, Moses and the priests could then enter the holy place without coming in touch with the sign of Jehovah's presence, which was hidden from human gaze by the curtain of the holy of holies.

As long as the cloud rested upon the tabernacle the children of Israel remained in camp; when it moved, they continued their journey. This had a blessed meaning for the people of God and has its lessons for us. The cloud in its movements made known Jehovah's will. We have no such external sign to declare the will of God to us. We have the internal presence of the Holy Spirit. And He guides us through His Word, which we must consult for direction and guidance. All this we shall find fully stated in Num. 9:15-23; when we reach that "wilderness book" we hope to point out some of its lessons.

We state once more the fact that Exodus begins with a groan and the first part ends with the song of redemption. The second part begins with Israel's wilderness wandering and ends after the work was finished with the glory of the Lord filling the tabernacle. The Lord Jesus Christ and His Word is foreshadowed in the entire book. Glory is the great goal of all He has done. He has reached down and set the miserable slaves of sin and Satan free; He changes our groans into songs of victory, because He, the Lamb of God, shed His blood. He guides His people home. Glory will yet cover Zion, the place of His rest. In the day of His glorious manifestation, when He appears in glory and majesty as the King of Kings, the glory cloud will be seen again in the midst of the redeemed Israel (Isa. 4:4-6). And in all eternity, the ages to come, His glory will be with the redeemed and the redeemed will share His glory.

"And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain, for the former things are passed away" (Rev. 21:3-4).

Appendix A

THE ATONEMENT MONEY

(by Henry W. Soltau, The Tabernacle, Priesthood and the Offerings.)

EXODUS 30:11-16

The word silver in Hebrew is frequently translated money. It was indeed, the precious metal ordinarily in use, in all transactions of buying and selling; and even at this day, in many countries, it is the current money of the merchant. Francs, dollars, thalers, scudi, are all coins of Silver; and mercantile transactions are generally calculated in one or other of these

coins, in most of the countries of Europe , and indeed of the world.

We have two memorable instances in Scripture, where life was bartered for silver. Joseph for twenty, and the Son of God for thirty pieces. The idea therefore, of price or value, especially attaches to this metal. It ranks also with us, as one of the precious metals; and though not displaying the brilliant glory of the gold, it is especially beautiful, by reason of its soft purity and unsullied whiteness; and like gold, it corrodes not, and wastes not in the fining pot, though subject to the intense heat of the furnace.

The silver, used in the construction of the tabernacle, was all derived from the atonement money.

The whole range of God's truth rests upon two great verities: the Lord Jesus, the Son of God, the Son of Man--and His work of atonement on the cross. Throughout the history of God's ancient people, type after type, and shadow upon shadow, reiterated the absolute necessity of atonement. And while the law prescribed commandments, to obey which Israel fatally pledged themselves, it at the same time contained abundant ritual observances, which testified to man's incapability and need, and prophesied of One, who while they were yet without strength, should, in due time, die for the ungodly. As a covenant of works, it was a ministration of death. But to one who was really a child of Abraham, it must have shone out, like the face of Moses, with a prophetic glory; and have pointed onwards to the Lamb of God; in whom all the shadows of good things to come passed into substance.

This type before us, of the atonement-money, preached a very clear and blessed gospel. It told out the great truth, that birth in the flesh availed nothing. An Israelite might trace up, in unbroken succession, his descent from Abraham, or from one of Jacob's sons. Still, that sufficed him not, if he desired to be entered on the roll as one of God's soldiers and servants. The Jews, in the time of the Lord, could say, "We be Abraham's seed"; and the Samaritan sinner claimed Jacob as her father. But they were captives of the devil, and of fleshly lusts; and their human pedigree had not raised them out of the dominion of sin. God had therefore enjoined that, whenever Israel were numbered as His people, every man must give a ransom for his soul. The price was fixed by God himself. Each man, whether poor or rich, must bring the same. One could not pay for another; but every one must tender his own ransom-money, of pure silver, and of perfect weight. "Half a shekel, after the shekel of the sanctuary, (a shekel is twenty gerahs) a half shekel shall be the offering of the Lord" (Exod. 30:13). Other gospel truths here shine out. When the question came to be one of ransom, the poor and the rich, the foolish and the wise, the ignorant and the learned, the immoral and the moral, stood on the same level. Each person was estimated by God at the same price. He proved Himself no respecter of persons. And so it is still. The third chapter of the Epistle to the Romans defines the state of every one in the whole world, and levels the way for the gospel. John the Baptist prepared the way of the Lord by his voice, calling all to repentance, declaring all to be in one condition, needing change of heart. And the Lord Jesus began to speak of the great salvation to hearts thus prepared. The chapter above referred to makes the path straight for the proclamation of justification through faith in Christ, by pronouncing that all are under sin; that every mouth must be silent; that all the world is guilty before God; and that there is no difference between the religious Jew, and the irreligious Gentile; for, "all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God."

Another truth enunciated in this type is, that salvation must be an individual, personal matter; between the soul and God. Every man has to bring his own half shekel. One of the devices of Satan at the present day--and it is spread far and wide--is the way in which he obscures this truth, by inducing whole communities to believe they are Christians; made such, either by baptism, or by some formal profession of religiousness; and placing, in the lips of thousands, "Our Saviour," and "Our Father"; and thus beguiling them into the thought that they are included in a general redemption of mankind, which affects the whole human race. Constantly, therefore, in speaking to persons, we find the reply: O yes, we are all sinners: and Christ has died for us all.

Each individual Israelite had to present himself to the priest, bringing with him his own piece of money as a ransom; and his name would then be entered in God's book. The Lord Jesus, in the 6th chapter of John, says: "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you." Eating and drinking are actions which one cannot perform for another. The food, taken into the mouth, becomes one's own, and ministers strength and nourishment to the

body. So, the death of Christ must be appropriated by each to himself. The soul has to say, My Saviour; My Lord; My God. I have been crucified with Christ. Christ loved me, and gave Himself for me. Just as assuredly as the Israelite of old had to eat the manna he had collected for his own sustenance; or according to his eating, to make his count for the lamb.

The half shekel was to be of silver; the unalloyed, unadulterated metal. Three things are probably here presented to us in type: the Lord Jesus as God--as the pure and spotless One--and as giving His life a ransom for many. The silver, being a solid, imperishable precious metal, may have this first aspect: its chaste whiteness representing the second; and its being ordinarily employed as money or price, may point out its fitness as a type of the third.

The weight was also defined by God: "the shekel of the sanctuary"; kept as a standard in the tabernacle; and perhaps bearing some stamp or inscription to authenticate it. Its weight was twenty gerahs. The half-shekel, brought by each man who desired to be numbered, was to be compared with this. God kept the just weight and the just balance; and His priest would neither take dross instead of silver, nor receive less weight of the precious metal than was required by the Lord. With confidence the true-hearted Israelite would ring out the silver sound, from his half shekel before the priest: with confidence would he see it put into the balance. And, in the blessed antitype, with confidence does the believer sound out, in the ears of God, and of the great High Priest of His sanctuary, his full dependence on Christ and His precious blood. He knows that this price is up to the full estimate demanded by God. He has one standard of perfection and purity, against which He weighs the hearts, spirits, and actions of men. Everything short of this standard, every one who fails to reach this sterling value, will be condemned; like the Babylonian prince, who was weighed in the balances and found wanting. To come short of the glory of God, is to be in the distance and darkness of corruption and death. How wondrous the grace, which has provided One, in whom we are raised from the depth of human misery, degradation and ruin, to the height of the throne and glory of the Most High! How passing knowledge, that love of God, which has not hesitated to plunge into judgment and wrath, His only-begotten Son, and to shed the blood of Christ like water, in order to redeem, from filthiness and sin, the worthless and the vile; and to number them among the hosts of light and glory, in the courts above!

There is a manifest allusion to the atonement-money in 1 Peter 1:18; "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation, received by tradition from your fathers; but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a Lamb without blemish and without spot." An allusion, by way of contrast. What men consider precious metals, and free from impurity and corrosion, God calls "perishable" and "corruptible." He says that gold and silver "canker" and "rust."

The man who amasses wealth is an object of praise and envy. "Men will praise thee when thou doest well to thyself" (Ps. 49:18). But in this epistle, gain is denominated filthy lucre. The redemption, which God has paid for us, is no amount of corruptible things, as silver and gold. Lebanon is not sufficient to burn, nor the beasts thereof sufficient for a burnt-offering. Nothing less than the precious blood of Christ would avail. God has valued our salvation at no less cost, than the pouring out of His soul unto death.

The Hebrew word, from which the words ransom and atonement are derived, has a variety of senses all bearing on the same truth. Thus, we find the word includes the thought of covering over our sin; as a covering of pitch covers over the wood on which it is spread (Gen. 6:14).

The blood of the atonement blots out the page of sin, and hides it from the eye of God. The secret sins, which have stood out in their glaring evil, in the light of His countenance, are hidden by the blood sprinkled on the mercy-seat. It also means, to appease or pacify. Thus Jacob sent a present to (atone or) appease his brother Esau (Gen. 32:20). "The wrath of a king is as messengers of death: but a wise man will (atone or) pacify it" (Prov. 16:14). "That thou mayest remember, and be confounded, and never open thy mouth any more, because of thy shame, when I am (atoned or) pacified towards thee" (Ezek. 16:63).

This is the sense of the word in the New Testament--propitiation; God's wrath being appeased in Christ through the shedding of His blood (1 John 2:2; and 4:10).

Pardon and forgiveness are included in the word. "The blood shall be (atoned, or) forgiven them" (Deut. 21:8).

Hezekiah prayed, "The good Lord (atone, or) pardon every one" (2 Chron. 30:18); also, to reconcile.

"A sin-offering brought in (to atone, or) to reconcile withal, in the holy place" (Lev. 6:30).

"And when He hath made an end of (atoning, or) reconciling the holy place" (Lev. 26:20).

"Poured the blood at the bottom of the altar, and sanctified it, to make (atonement, or) reconciliation upon it" (Lev. 8:15).

"So shall ye (atone, or) reconcile the house" (Ezek. 45:20; also 15 and 17).

In the New Testament also, the word atonement is synonymous with reconciliation.

"To make reconciliation for the sins of the people" (Heb. 2:17).

"We have now received the atonement" (Rom. 5:11; margin-reconciliation).

"Reconciling of the world" (Rom. 11:15).

"That He might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross" (Eph. 2:16).

"By Him, to reconcile all things to Himself" (Col. 1:20).

To put off, or expiate.-- "Mischief shall fall upon thee; thou shalt not be able to put it off" (margin - expiate; Isa. 47:11).

To disannul. - "Your covenant with death shall be disannulled" (Isa. 28:18).

Ransom, or, satisfaction - "Deliver him from going down into the pit: I have found a ransom" (Job 33:24).

"A great ransom cannot deliver thee" (Job 36:18).

"Nor give to God a ransom for him" (Psa. 49:7).

Satisfaction.--"Yet shall take no satisfaction for the life of a murderer" (Num. 35:31).

In the New Testament.--"To give His life as a ransom for many" (Matt. 20:28; Mark 10:45).

Lastly: To purge or cleanse.--"Purge away our sins, for Thy name's sake" (Psa. 79:9).

"By mercy and truth, iniquity is purged" (Prov. 16:6).

"This iniquity shall not be purged" (Isa. 22:14).

"By this, therefore, shall the iniquity of Jacob be purged" (Isa. 27:9).

"The land cannot be cleansed of the blood" (Num. 35:33).

We shall perceive from these various quotations, that the same Hebrew word translated atonement, signifies also, covering over; appeasing; forgiveness; reconciliation; expiation; disannulling; ransom or redemption; satisfaction; and cleansing.

One sense of our word atonement is, at-onement; two opposing parties being brought together in agreement as one. And the means whereby this is effected, the payment of a price, ransom or satisfaction. So, this beautiful type of the half shekel or silver, shadows forth the precious blood of Christ, as the redemption price provided by God. And, when the sinner estimates its all-sufficient value in the presence of God, he answers the action of the Israelite in paying down the silver half shekel; as it is beautifully expressed in 1 Peter 2:7: "Unto you which believe, He is precious"; or, as it might be rendered, "He is the preciousness" your full satisfaction, and value also before God.

We have also another important aspect of truth portrayed in this type--viz.: that redemption brings us to, and fits us for God. The Israelite, who paid his ransom-money, was numbered as a soldier and a servant for God. A place was assigned him in the battlefield; and he had his position in the camp, appointed with reference to the tabernacle, the dwelling-place of God in the midst of the hosts. From henceforth Jehovah was his Leader, his Lord, his King. In like manner, the believer is redeemed to God, by the blood of Christ, from the world, and from slavery to sin and Satan; that he may be a soldier and a servant of the Most High; to be led, guided, and sustained by Him, who has called him out of darkness, into His marvellous light.

Two other words deserve our notice in this passage (Exod. 30:13-14). "Every one that passeth among them that are numbered." And the word "offering" (30:13-15). The allusion, in verses 13 and 14 is to the sheep passing under the rod of the shepherd, as he numbers them (Ezek. 20:37). "I will cause you to pass under the rod: and I will bring you into the bond of the covenant." The priest took the place of a shepherd, counting the sheep of God's hand. And as the true mark of the sheep came under his eye, in the ransom-money offered by each, he entered each in the book of the covenant. So the good Shepherd has laid down His life for the sheep; and they are entered in the Lamb's book of life, because the atonement-price has been paid for each.

The word offering is a peculiar word in the Hebrew, signifying something that is lifted off the ground and presented on high; and is the word translated heave-offering. All the various offerings brought by the Israelites, as contributions for forming the tabernacle, the enumerated (Exod. 25:2-7) are called heave-offerings. This atonement-money was a peculiar piece of silver, separated off to God, and lifted, as it were, from the earth, with the special object of being paid into His treasury, as a ransom for the soul. So has the Lord Jesus been lifted up, first on the cross, to pour out His blood a ransom for many; and secondly, He has been exalted, and made very high, "to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins" (Acts 5:31).

This ordinance was transgressed by David, as related in 2 Sam. 24, 1 Chron. 21. Israel had settled down in self-contentedness and pride; David their king and shepherd, himself drinking into the same spirit. Satan, by God's permission, was allowed to tempt the king, and provoke him, by whisperings of vanity and self exaltation, to number Israel. The desire in David's heart was, not that God might be glorified and His promise made manifest, in the vast increase of His people; but that he, the king, might congratulate himself on the number of his subjects. "Number ye the people, that I may know." "Bring the number of them to me, that I may know it." Joab, to whom the command was given, though himself an ambitious worldly-minded man, yet was keen-sighted enough to perceive that this desire of his master was not of God. He even had some insight into David's sin. He looked upon Israel as a people belonging to Jehovah; and on David, as committing a trespass in having them numbered for himself. But, like all unbelievers, though he could point out the fault, he was not able to direct David to the remedy. He did not allude to the atonement-money.

One result of this numbering was that even cities of the Hivites, and the stronghold of Tyre, were included in the tale; which could never have been the case had the silver half-shekel been required. At the present day, unconverted inhabitants of earth are too often classed as of the church of God, by reason of the same neglect, viz.: that they are not required to confess openly their confidence in the precious blood of Christ, before being reckoned among the hosts of God.

David's heart soon smote him after the numbering was completed; he fully confessed his own sin and folly; he at once cast himself on the mercies of God for pardon, and preferred being dealt with in chastisement immediately from the Lord rather than fall into the hands of men. Accordingly, the plague (which had already been threatened, in Exod. 30:12) broke out amongst the people; and the destroyer stayed not his hand until the Lord, listening to the humiliation of David, and appeased by the burnt-offering, presented at the threshing-floor of Ornan the Jebusite, said "It is enough." David in his intercession, manifests a soul restored to the Lord; and proves that he has discovered his former error; for he speaks of Israel as sheep, and as the people of the Lord; whereas he had numbered them as fighting-men, and for his own glory.

Also the price of the spot for the altar is paid in shekels of silver. There may be some reference to this in the atonement-money. The apparent discrepancy between the fifty shekels, mentioned as the purchase-money in 2 Sam. 24:24, and the six hundred shekels of gold in 1 Chron. 21:25, may be reconciled on the supposition that the former money was paid for the mere spot on which the altar itself was erected; whereas the latter was the purchase-money for the whole place of the threshing-floor.

The blessed words "it is enough" were again, in principle, uttered by Jehovah from heaven, when He raised the Lord Jesus from the dead. Satisfaction had been completely made: the sword of vengeance had been buried in the heart of God's own Son; the precious blood had been poured out; the full redemption-price had been rendered; and Jesus was raised from the dead; at once the proof of the perfect value of His own death, and to receive the due reward of His loving faithful obedience. "It is enough" may be a fitting superscription for the half shekel ransom-money.

It appears that the question asked of Peter, (Matt. 17:24) "Does not your master pay tribute?" (or, according to the margin, the didrachma) had reference to this ransom-money. Probably the payment, which had been instituted in Exod. 30, of a half-shekel, when the Israelites were numbered, had in the course of time been converted by the Jewish rulers into a kind of poll-tax, payable for the uses of the temple. Peter, with his usual readiness, or rather rashness, answered the question in the affirmative, without referring, as he should have done, to the Lord Himself for a reply. And when he was come into the house, Jesus anticipated his request for the ransom-money, (to the payment of which he had just committed the Lord) by putting the question, "What thinkest thou, Simon, of whom do the kings of the earth take custom or tribute? of their own children, or of strangers?" The Lord thus addresses him as Simon, instead of Peter. The Apostle had relapsed into the natural man; and Jesus uses the name, which Peter had received from his earthly parents, instead of the new name, given him on his confession of faith.

Peter had forgotten the late glorious scene of the transfiguration, when the Voice had sounded from the excellent glory, "This is my beloved Son: hear ye Him;" and he had committed two errors. Instead of harkening to Jesus, and learning of Him, he had acted on his own self-confident judgment; and instead of owning the Lord as the Son of God, he had lowered Him down to the position of a stranger, or captive, from whom a ransom was demanded by God. This serves to explain the Lord's question quoted above. Peter replies to it--to his own condemnation--"of strangers." Jesus saith unto him, "Then are the children free." Jesus came to declare the Father. "He that hath seen Me, hath seen the Father." He had come to redeem them that were under the law; that those who believed on Him might receive the adoption of sons. Liberty of sonship, and not the bondage of servanthship, not the slavery of bondmen confined under rigid commandments, was the liberty that Christ came to proclaim. The law, even in its type of the atonement-money, did not intimate the blessing of sonship. Grace and truth, which came by Jesus Christ, placed the believer in the freedom of new birth; as many as received Christ, were born of God. But Peter had not yet received the spirit of sonship. The Holy Ghost had not yet been sent from the risen Christ; and thus the apostle mingled up and confounded adoption and bondage, and lowered the Son down to the position of a stranger.

This is an instructive lesson to our souls; for the spirit of bondage is constantly working within us. It is of the flesh, of nature. It springs from Simon, the son of Jonas, instead of from Peter, a child of God. If we have known God, or rather, are known of God, we are no longer aliens or strangers, but children and heirs; and the spirit of slavery cannot dwell with the spirit of the Son. Law and grace can never be united.

The Lord Jesus, having claimed for Himself and Peter the liberty of children, adds: "Notwithstanding, lest we should offend them, go thou to the sea, and cast a hook, and take up the fish that first cometh up; and when thou hast opened his mouth, thou shalt find a piece of money (a stater), that take and give unto them for Me, and thee." Thus, one piece of silver, brought up from the depth of the sea, was paid into God's treasury, in which piece Jesus and Peter were both included. There seems to be a wonderful significance in this. The sea yielded up the precious ransom-money. The depths, with their billows and waves of wrath and death, were, so to speak, the birthplace of atonement. Jesus rose not alone, but inseparably linked on with His Church--one with Him in all His own preciousness--presented in Him to God in glory--laid up and hidden in God's treasury above.

Whatever God's demand against Peter, the blessed Lord was involved in the same demand: Peter's responsibility became Christ's--"for Me and thee"--and thus is Jesus now in the presence of God for us, to answer every liability, to render payment in the full for all our infirmities and sins, to save, to the very end, all that come unto God by Him. He has bound us up with Himself, in one bundle of life; and we can never look upon Him now, without also beholding in union with Him, the whole ransomed church of God, one precious piece of silver in God's temple above.

Appendix B

THE JEWISH YEAR

Abib or Nivan--First month (April)

- Fourteenth day--Passover Feast
- Sixteenth day--Firstfruits of the Barley Harvest

Zif--Second month (May)

Suvan--Third month (June)

- Sixth day--Feast of Weeks or Pentecost Firstfruits of the Wheat, etc.

Thammuz--Fourth month (July)

Ab--Fifth month (August)

Elul--Sixth month (September)

Tisri--Seventh month (October)

- First day--Feast of Trumpets
- Tenth day--Day of Atonement
- Fifteenth day--Feast of Tabernacles

Succoth Bul--Eighth month (November)

Chislev--Ninth month (December)

- Twenty-fifth day--Feast of Dedication Tebeth

Tenth month (January) Shebat

Eleventh month (February)

Adar--Twelfth Month (March)

- Fourteenth and Fifteenth days--Purim

The Jewish year begins with a feast commemorating the great deliverance out of Egypt. It ends with a feast commemorating another deliverance. Heman is a type of the Antichrist. Read the book of Esther.

THE BOOK OF LEVITICUS

The Annotated Bible

Arno Clement Gaebelein

THE BOOK OF LEVITICUS

Introduction

The third book of the Pentateuch is Leviticus. It has been called by this name because it gives fully the functions of the Levites. The Hebrews have given the book the name "Va-yikra," the first word in the Hebrew text, meaning, "And He called."

The little word "and" connects the book closely with the preceding one. Its beautiful relation to the book of Exodus we hope to show later. The opening verses of Leviticus solemnly declare that the words contained in this book are the very words of Jehovah. "And the Lord called unto Moses and spake unto him out of the tabernacle of the congregation, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel," etc. In no other book of the Bible is such stress laid upon the fact that Jehovah speaks, and nowhere do we find so many repetitions of this fact. Twenty-four times we find the divine command, "speak unto the children of Israel"--"speak unto Aaron." Thirty-six times occurs the phrase "the Lord spake." Twenty-one times the speaking One says, "I am the LORD (Jehovah)," and as often, "I am the Lord your God." No other proof is needed that the Lord is speaking on every page of this book. Moses received the very Word of God. He wrote the words as he had received them from the Lord. Any other belief is untenable.

And here we must add the testimony of the New Testament Scriptures. Those contain at least forty references to the book and its ordinances. When our Lord Jesus Christ, the infallible Son of God, was on earth, the book of Leviticus, as well as the entire Pentateuch, was known and believed to be the Word of God, and written by Moses. Our Lord set His seal to this, and repeatedly bore witness to the Mosaic authorship and inspiration of the Pentateuch, called "the Law of Moses." How He confirms the book of Leviticus may be seen by turning to the following passages: Matthew 8:4 and Lev. 14:3-10; Matthew 12:4 and Lev. 24:9; Matthew 15:3-6 and Lev. 20:9; John 7:22 and Lev. 12:3. Without giving other New Testament references we briefly mention the Epistle to the Hebrews, which contains so many allusions to the levitical institutions, the priesthood and sacrifices, their typical meaning and realization in the person and work of Christ. This remarkable Epistle alone, in its God-breathed unfoldings, bears an incontrovertible testimony to the divine, as well as Mosaic, origin of Leviticus. And to this must be added another fact. The closer study of this book will disclose the fact that the different rites and divinely appointed institutions are indeed the "shadow of good things to come." The gospel of the grace of God is inseparably connected with the entire book of Leviticus. Nowhere else do we find the redemption-work of Christ so fully and so blessedly told out as in this book. The beauty and wisdom of all is from above.

An Astonishing Assertion

Leviticus, then, is by its own testimony the Word of God. The Son of God and the Holy Spirit in the New Testament confirm this testimony. The work of Christ and the gospel are foreshadowed in it and closely linked with the levitical institutions. In view of these great facts, believed and cherished by the people of God, including the most scholarly and devout, how astonishing is the assertion now so generally made by the boasting rationalistic school of higher criticism, that Leviticus is "a priestly forgery of the days after Ezra"! One is loath to refer again to this most dangerous infidelity which has become so widespread throughout all Christendom. Our times, however, demand a positive and outspoken

condemnation of this modern day infidelity, which comes in the garb of an angel of light, with the claim of being reverent and devout, but behind which stands the dark and sneering shadow of the enemy of God. Higher criticism has consigned Leviticus to a date after the Babylonian captivity. According to these "scholars" the priestly laws were collected in Babylonia and were brought back to Palestine. Some even go so far as to claim that the levitical institutions were influenced by the institutions of Babylon. But enough of this! We do not want to fill our pages with the inventions of those blind leaders of the blind. If the book of Leviticus was not written by Moses, given to him directly by Jehovah Himself, then this book is a colossal fraud and forgery. Inasmuch as so many "theological" professors deny the inspiration and Mosaic authorship of Leviticus, this book has been branded as a concoction of falsehoods. Such is the logical consequence. We let another scholar speak on this matter: "While the Lord Jesus taught in various ways that Leviticus contains a law given by revelation from God to Moses, these teach that it is a priestly forgery of the days after Ezra. Both cannot be right; and if the latter are in the right, then--we speak with all possible deliberation and reverence--Jesus Christ was mistaken, and was therefore unable even to tell us with inerrant certainty whether this or that is the Word of God or not. But if this is so, then how can we escape the final inference that His claim to have a perfect knowledge of the Father must have been an error; His claim to be the incarnate Son of God, therefore, a false pretension, and Christianity, a delusion, so that mankind has in Him no Saviour?"

"But against so fatal a conclusion stands the great established fact of the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead; whereby He was with power declared to be the Son of God, so that we may know that His word on this, as on all subjects where He has spoken, settles controversy, and is a sufficient ground of faith; while it imposes upon all speculations of men, literary or philosophical, eternal and irremovable limitations.

"Let no one think that the case, as regards the issue at state, has been above stated too strongly. One could not well go beyond the often cited words of Kuenen on this subject: 'We must either cast aside as worthless our dearly bought scientific method, or we must forever cease to acknowledge the authority of the New Testament in the domain of the exegesis of the Old.' With good reason does another scholar exclaim at these words, 'The Master must not be heard as a witness! We treat our criminals with more respect.' So then stands the question this day which the first verse of Leviticus brings before us: In which have we more confidence? In literary critics, like a Kuenen or Wellhausen, or in Jesus Christ? Which is the more likely to know with certainty whether the law of Leviticus is a revelation from God or not?"

"The devout Christian, who through the grace of the crucified and risen Lord of whom Moses, in the law, and the prophets did write, and who has 'tasted the good word of God,' will not long hesitate for an answer." (S.H. Kellogg, Leviticus.)

To this we say, heartily, "Amen," if these critics, whose real difficulty is the "puffed up head" and "the empty heart" were to turn in humility of mind and in dependence upon the Spirit of God to the Word itself, casting their "little learning" to the winds, they would soon learn the wisdom of God and repent of their foolishness.

The Message of Leviticus

We have pointed out the fact that Leviticus has in itself the unmistakable imprint of divine revelation. What then is its message? One word gives the answer. The word "holy." Ninety times this word is found in the twenty-seven chapters. And here we call the attention to its relation to the book of Exodus. We found in our study of Exodus that redemption is there blessedly foreshadowed. The message of Leviticus is that which is the outcome of redemption, "holiness unto the Lord," "sanctification." In the New Testament the sanctification of a redeemed people is revealed in a twofold aspect: Sanctification by the precious blood of atonement, and sanctification by the Spirit of God. The first is the foundation of all, and the second is the result of it. We see, therefore, that the book of Leviticus begins with the divine instructions concerning the offerings, in which the perfect work of the Lord Jesus Christ and His perfect life are typically foreshadowed. It is perhaps the most complete as well as wonderful description of His work and sacrifice which we possess. In their typical meaning the first seven chapters can never be exhausted. Then follows the divine account of the consecration of the priesthood, telling us typically that a redeemed and sanctified people, a holy priesthood (1 Peter 2:5),

can draw nigh and enter into His presence. Access and worship are thus most blessedly illustrated. Practical sanctification in a separated walk and holy living is demanded by the different statutes and laws. And these typify the work of the Holy Spirit in the believer. All this, and much else, makes the study of Leviticus of great interest and value. It is needed in our days. The fundamental truths of the gospel, typically foreshadowed in Leviticus, are the truths mostly denied or belittled. And all that know the gospel, and rest upon the finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ, will surely find in this book new beauties of Him, who is altogether lovely, and learn more what His great work as our substitute meant to Him and what it means for us.

Prophetic Foreshadowings

By far the greater number of the types of Leviticus have found their fulfillment in the life and death, the resurrection and priesthood of our Lord. Others, however, are still unfulfilled. This is especially true in connection with some of the feasts of Jehovah. The feast of trumpets, the ingathering at the full harvest, the Sabbath year, the year of jubilee await their glorious fulfillment in a future day, when Israel shall be restored as a nation. These prophetic foreshadowings will be pointed out in the annotations.

The Time When Leviticus Was Given

Different views are held concerning the period of time consumed in the giving of these words of Jehovah. It is evident that Leviticus and Numbers 1-10:10 were given between the first day of the month and the twentieth day of the second month, that is of the second year after their departure from Egypt.

The Scope and Division of Leviticus

Leviticus containing the divine instructions for a redeemed people reveals a progressive order. A rapid glance at the contents will demonstrate this at once. First the Lord gives to the people, whom He brought out of Egypt, His communications concerning the different sacrifices. After these offerings are described, and the law concerning them is given, the account of the consecration of Aaron and his sons, his fellow-priests, follows, and how they began their priestly functions. The judgment of Nadab and Abihu for presenting strange fire is closely connected with this. God demanding holiness in His redeemed people comes next in this book. The account of the great day of atonement, when Aaron entered the Holiest for a brief season, precedes the precepts for the people of God in which their walk in separation from evil is so fully entered upon. The great day of atonement is the center of the book of Leviticus; everything in the book is related to that day. The next which follows, after the giving of instructions of a holy walk, is the divine appointment of the different feasts, and the laws connected with these feasts, especially the great year of jubilee. This, with a chapter on things vowed and devoted, closes the book. It is most interesting to note this last chapter, for it contains the consummation of the book, and foreshadows the time when God will receive what belongs to Him, and when He will be all in all. The words "unto Jehovah"--"holy to Jehovah"--"it is Jehovah's"--occur fourteen times in this last chapter. (The word "Lord" in Leviticus, as throughout the Old Testament, is in the Hebrew "Jehovah.") "Holy unto Jehovah" is mentioned thrice in the closing verses of Leviticus. And this is in keeping with the message of the book. Jehovah is holy; His people must also be holy. "Ye shall be holy: for I the LORD your God am holy" (chapter 19:2). The last verse of Leviticus states once more the solemn fact of the beginning of the book, that Jehovah spake all these words unto Moses.

This brief sketch shows the unity of the book of Leviticus and its progressive revelation. That it could be the patchwork of different writers or the product of after exilic days, as claimed by the rationalists, is impossible. A closer study of this book, so directly communicated by Jehovah to Moses, shows the marvellous wisdom of God. Only the omniscient Lord could give such instructions and institutions, which foreshadow His gracious ways in redemption. We shall aim, as much as this is possible, in our annotations, to point out the wonderful types and prophecies of Leviticus. Here the atoning work of Christ, the results for His people, their privileges and responsibilities are most blessedly outlined. Israel's future restoration connected with the coming day when they shall see Him, who is typified by Aaron, when they shall look upon the pierced One, and their great national day of atonement dawns, the millennial times of blessing and glory and the great

Jubilee: all is more than indicated by the Divine communications.

The Division of Leviticus

The brief outline of the scope of the book shows that the division is not difficult to make. As this book is so little known, we suggest first of all a careful reading of the book, noting the three general parts.

These are the following: 1. The offerings and the priesthood (1-10). 2. Laws and precepts (11-22). 3. The feasts of Jehovah (23-27). In our study we shall divide the book in a way which, we trust, will make the study not alone helpful, but interesting. We divide the book in seven parts, which we give first of all, so that the reader can have the contents of the entire book for a careful survey at his command. It will help much in the study of Leviticus to go over this division a number of times and if possible to memorize the parts and contents of the chapters before following the analysis and studying the annotations.

I. THE OFFERINGS AND THE FOUNDATION OF HOLINESS

1. The Burnt Offering (1:1-17)
2. The Meal Offering (2:1-16)
3. The Peace Offering (3:1-17)
4. The Sin Offering (4:1-5:13)
5. The Trespass Offering (5:14-6:7)
6. The Laws of the Offerings (6:8-7:38)

II. THE PRIESTHOOD AND THE RESULTS OF HOLINESS

1. Aaron and His Sons and Their Consecration (8:1-36)
2. The Functions of the Priesthood Exercised (9:1-24)
3. Nadab and Abihu: The False Worship and its Results (10:1-20)

III. HOLINESS DEMANDED

1. The Clean and the Unclean (11:1-47)
2. Childbirth Law. Inherited Sin (12:1-8)
3. Leprosy. Type of Indwelling Sin (13:1-59)
4. The Cleansing of the Leper (14:1-57)
5. Concerning Issues: Man's Weakness and Defilement (15:1-33)

IV. THE DAY OF ATONEMENT: IN THE HOLIEST

1. The Day of Atonement (16:1-34)
2. The Testimony Concerning the Blood (17:1-16)

V. PRACTICAL HOLINESS IN DAILY LIFE

1. Different Relationships (18:1-30)
2. Different Duties (19:1-37)
3. Warnings Against Special Sins and their Penalty (20:1-27)
4. Laws for the Priests (21:1-22:33)

VI. THE HOLY FEASTS AND SET TIMES

1. The Feasts (23:1-44)
2. Priestly Duties; the Light and the Shewbread (24:1-9)
3. Blasphemy: Israel's Sin Foreshadowed (24:10-23)
4. The Sabbath Year and the Year of Jubilee (25:1-55)
5. The Blessings and the Curse: Israel's History (26:1-46)

VII. VOWS AND DEVOTION

1. The Claims of Jehovah Realized (27:1-34)

Analysis and Annotations

I. THE OFFERINGS THE FOUNDATION OF HOLINESS

1. The Burnt Offering

CHAPTER 1

1. The bullock (1:1-9)
2. The sheep or the goat (1:10-13)
3. The doves or pigeons (1:14-17)

Jehovah spoke out of the tabernacle which had been set up and upon which the cloud descended, filling the Holy of Holies with the glory of the Lord. Thus Leviticus is closely linked with the ending of the book of Exodus. Out of that glory, from between the cherubim, the same Person spoke to Moses, who had spoken to him out of the burning bush and on Mount Sinai. The first three chapters with which Leviticus opens form one utterance of Jehovah. The second utterance begins with chapter 4:1. This first utterance of Jehovah is concerning three offerings: the burnt offering, the meat offering, and the peace offering. They are distinguished from the other two offerings by being called "a sweet savour (or odor) to Him." This tells of the value and acceptability of these offerings. No direct reference to sin is made in connection with the "sweet savour" offerings. For Israel these three offerings were the divinely appointed means to approach Him, who dwelt in the Sanctuary. The sin and trespass offerings had more specially to do with their sins and were the means of restoring communion with God. The burnt offering stands first among the offerings because it foreshadows in a most precious and simple way the perfect work of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself to God. This offering was wholly consumed, and was therefore also called "whole burnt offering" (Deut. 33:10; Psalm 51:19). It was a holocaust. It went up entirely to God; the priests could not eat of it. The altar upon which it was brought was called the altar of burnt offering, while the fire upon that altar was never permitted to go out. Every part of it typifies Christ offering Himself completely to God; the sweet odor is unto God and it is for the believer's acceptance in Him. A few hints on this offering and the other offerings will be sufficient to show their typical meaning.

First the bullock is mentioned. The ox gives us the highest type of Christ offering Himself. Like the sheep and goats used in the burnt offering, the ox was easily gotten. He needed not to be hunted or be gotten by man's efforts; the ox and the other domestic animals used were, so to speak, ready and willing. Led from the green pastures to be killed before the Lord, the ox is the type of Christ, who left the Father's glory and presence to do His will and give Himself as the willing sacrifice (Psalm 40:6-8; Hebrews 10:1-6). But the ox is also the type of the servant, and reminds us of Christ, the obedient servant, who came not to be ministered to, but to minister and give His life as a ransom for many. There was to be no blemish whatever in the animal. Even so Christ was without blemish, holy and undefiled. The type was to be without blemish, Christ is without blemish, and the Church which He loved and for which He gave Himself will be through His gracious work without blemish, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing (Eph. 5:27).

The offerer had to offer it of his own voluntary will. The correct rendering is (verse 3) "for his acceptance." This reveals the great purpose of the burnt offering. Through Christ as the sin offering, as we shall see later, the believer knows that all sins are paid for and put away. The burnt offering leads us higher. The spotless One offered Himself unto God and we are accepted in Him. The believer is therefore completely identified with the perfect obedience and devotion of the Lord Jesus Christ and accepted as His willing sacrifice was accepted by God and a sweet odor unto Him.

The offerer had to put his hand on the head of the sacrifice. This simple act identified the offerer with the offering. It also stands for faith, for the hand is for taking hold. Thus faith must lay hold in faith on Christ and become identified with Him. God and the believing soul meet in the One, who offered Himself. In connection with the command to put the hand on the head of the sacrifice we find the statement: "it shall be accepted for him to make atonement for him." While we saw before the believer's acceptance in Christ, here the fact is made known that the sacrifice is accepted in the offerer's place and that the burnt offering makes atonement. And because "without shedding of blood is no remission of sins" the ox had to be killed. The Hebrew word "killing" has a sacrificial meaning. The offerer had to slay the victim himself to indicate that he deserved the death which the animal suffered in his place. The next thing done was the sprinkling of the blood by the priests round upon the altar by the door of the tabernacle. Thus He who knew no sin was made sin for us; and His blood has made atonement. And how blessed it is to see it was done "before the LORD" (verse 5). How exceedingly precious and of inestimable value the devotedness of Christ, His obedience unto the death of the cross, and the shedding of His blood must be in God's holy sight! Thus everything in the burnt offering foreshadows the blessed truth--"Christ hath given Himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling savour" (Eph. 5:2).

The victim was flayed, cut into pieces. His inwards and his legs were washed with water. The head and the fat, as well as the other parts including the inwards and the legs, were put in order on the wood upon the altar. It was then completely consumed by fire and rose up a sweet savour unto the Lord. All has its typical meaning. All is exposed to the Divine gaze and all witnesses to the perfection and excellencies of Him who gave Himself. The fat is typical of His internal excellencies. The inwards and the legs washed in water apply to Christ's holy character in His affections and in His walk in perfect accord with the Word (the water). The wood tells of His humanity which He took on for the suffering of death. The fire was the fire from heaven. It is not, as often taken here, the symbol of Divine wrath consuming the sacrifice, but it has another meaning. It is the figure of God's perfect delight in the devotion of His ever blessed Son. God rested in Christ and found His fullest satisfaction in Him. The Hebrew has different words for burning. The one that is used here is the same as used for the burning of incense. This in itself shows that it has no connection with wrath. The continual fire upon the altar in connection with this greatest of all the offerings, tells us of God's perpetual delight in the work of Christ, what He is and what He has done.

What became of the skin of the ox? Chapter 7:8 gives the answer. It belonged to the priest. And thus the burnt offering aspect of the death of Christ covers and hides all, who trust in Him.

Next we find that sheep and goats could also be brought as a burnt offering. The highest grade was the ox and the grades which followed, the sheep and the goat. This was in case the offerer was poor and could not bring the more costly ox. It also represents the faith of the offerer. A lower faith and estimate of Christ which does not reach up to the highest conception, however, does not affect the acceptance of the offerer. The inferior offerings typified Christ and were therefore a sweet savour unto God, who beheld in all the same perfect sacrifice. Our faith should rest completely upon God's estimate of Christ and His work. The sheep is the type of Christ in His devoted self-surrender, unresisting and silent (Isaiah 53:7). The goat offering clearly typifies the substitutionary character of the work of the Lamb of God on the cross. The goat is more linked with the sin offering aspect of the death of Christ. Here also the fact is made known that the lamb and goat offering is to be brought on the side of the altar northward before the Lord (verse 11). It stands typically for distance and not the same nearness is recognized as in the first grade offering.

Turtle-doves and pigeons are the lowest grade of burnt offerings. These were for the poorest of the people and they express typically the weakest faith in Christ and the lowest estimate of His work. But here also we read that it was

accepted as an offering made by fire, of a sweet savour unto the Lord. These birds speak of Christ as do the ox and the lamb. The dove is the bird of peace, love and sorrow. The dove pictures Him as holy and undefiled, filled with tenderness and love. The bird was put to death by "wringing off its head," the type of the violence done to Him, who was so tender and loving. The crop and the feathers (correct meaning, "filth") were cast away. As those were unclean they had to be thrown away so as to make the type correspond to Him, who is undefiled and holy.

2. The Meal Offering

CHAPTER 2

1. The general instruction (2:1-3)
2. Baked in the oven (2:4)
3. Baked in a pan (2:5-6)
4. Baked in a frying pan (2:7)
5. Presented unto the priest (2:8-11)
6. The oblation of the firstfruits (2:12-16)

The word "meat" should be changed throughout this chapter to "meal." This offering or oblation is closely connected with the burnt offering. No doubt it could not be brought apart from the sacrificial animal. The meal offering is the type of Christ in His perfect humanity and holy, devoted character. It was not for atonement even as the holy humanity of Christ and devotedness of His life could not atone for sins. It is called "most holy" for in His humanity He was "that holy thing." The fine flour, sifted and pure, coming from the corn of wheat, is the apt and beautiful type of His perfect humanity. The oil, so prominent in this offering, is the type of the Holy Spirit. The oil was connected in a twofold way with this offering. The fine flour was mingled with oil. This is typical of the incarnation, His conception by the Holy Spirit, His whole being Spirit-filled. It is a blessed illustration of Luke 1:35. Leaven was entirely absent. "Unleavened fine flour" and "no leaven" is repeatedly stated by Jehovah. It had to be excluded, for leaven is a type of evil, and no evil was in Him.

Nor was any honey permitted in the fine flour. Honey is the type of the sweetness of human nature apart from grace; the picture of fallen nature in an amiable character, yet sin connected with it. Leaven is fermentation; and the sweet honey is the cause of it. It was not allowed in the fine flour, for nothing of an unholy sweetness was in Christ. Only the oil was mingled with the flour. But the oil was also poured upon the flour. This is the type of the Holy Spirit, as He came upon Christ, the anointed One. He was on earth the One whom the Father had sealed (John 6:27); in the meal offering "salt" had likewise a place. It is the type of the separating power of holiness. Believers, born again, have the Holy Spirit in the new nature, and by the Spirit are sealed. Thus we are enabled to walk even as He walked, and show forth His excellencies. We add here a beautiful tribute to the perfect humanity and the moral glory of Christ:

This meal offering of God, taken from the fruit of the earth, was of the finest wheat; that which was pure, separate and lovely in human nature was in Jesus under all its sorrows, but in all its excellence, and excellent in its sorrows. There was no unevenness in Jesus, no predominant quality to produce the effect of giving Him a distinctive character. He was, though despised and rejected of men, the perfection of human nature. The sensibilities, firmness, decision (though this attached itself also to the principle of obedience), elevation and calm meekness, which belong to human nature, all found their perfect place in Him. In a Paul I find energy and zeal; in a Peter, ardent affection; in a John, tender sensibilities and abstraction of thought, united to a desire to vindicate what he loved which scarce knew limit. But the quality we have observed in Peter predominates and characterizes him. In a Paul, blessed servant though he was, he did not repent, though he had repented.... In him in whom God was mighty toward the circumcision, we find the fear of man break through the faithfulness of his zeal. John, who would have vindicated Jesus in his zeal, knew not what manner of spirit He was of, and would have forbidden the glory of God, if a man walked not with them.

But in Jesus, even as man, there was none of this unevenness. There was nothing salient in His character, because all was in perfect subjection to God in His humanity, and had its place, and did exactly its service, and then disappeared. God

was glorified in it, and all was in harmony. When meekness became Him He was meek; when indignation, who could stand before His overwhelming and withering rebuke? Tender to the chief of sinners in the time of grace; unmoved by the heartless superiority of a cold Pharisee (curious to judge who He was); when the time of judgment is come, no tears of those who wept for Him moved Him to other words than 'Weep for yourselves and for your children,'--words of deep compassion, but of deep subjection to the due judgment of God. The dry tree prepared itself to be burned. On the cross, when His service was finished, tender to His mother, and entrusting her in human care, to one who (so to speak) had been His friend, and leaned on His bosom; no ear to recognize her word or claim when His service occupied Him for God; putting both blessedly in their place, when He would show that, before His public mission, He was still the Son of the Father, and though such, in human blessedness, subject to the mother that bare Him, and Joseph His father as under the law, a calmness which disconcerted His adversaries; and in the moral power which dismayed them at times, a meekness which drew out the hearts of all not steeled by opposition. Such was Christ in human nature. (J.N. Darby, Synopsis of the Bible.)

And frankincense was thereon. This is the fragrance, unspeakable in its value, as it went up from His blessed life to God.

But the meal offering was baked in an oven, in a pan and in a frying pan or cauldron. These are the types of the testings and trials in His holy humanity. He was made perfect through suffering as the captain of our salvation (Heb. 2:10). The oven typifies the temptations from the side of Satan--known only to the Lord Himself. The pan tells of the more evident testings and trials through which He passed, enduring the contradiction of sinners and all the opposition and hatred heaped upon Him. The frying pan or cauldron speaks of the combining trials and sorrows of an outward and inward nature. But all, whether the oven, the pan or the cauldron, brought out His perfection.

The meal offering was then burnt upon the altar, a sweet odor to Jehovah. The priests could eat the remainder of the meal offering. As priests of God, constituted thus through the grace of God, it is our holy and blessed privilege to feed on Himself, and the feeding on Christ will ever keep us in conscious nearness to God, and wean us away from earthly things.

The oblation mentioned in verse 12 refers to the "new meal offering" in which leaven was permitted, and which was not to be burnt. This we shall find more fully mentioned in chapter 23:15-20. When we reach that chapter we shall speak of its significance as the wave offering. The oblation of the firstfruits (verses 14-16) consisted in green ears of corn dried by fire, even corn beaten out of full ears. He again is typified here as the green corn, which was dried (roasted) in the fire. It points to His holy life, His death and His resurrection. However, all this is more fully revealed in the wave sheaf after Passover in connection with Pentecost. This we shall find in the contents of the twenty-third chapter of the book.

3. The Peace Offering

CHAPTER 3

1. The ox (3:1-5)
2. The sheep or goat (3:6-17)

This is the third "sweet savour offering," and is closely linked with the burnt offering, but it differs from it, especially, in that part of it was to be eaten. The peace offering also had the character of a thank offering (7:11-13). As it was offered on the altar upon the burnt sacrifice, it cannot therefore be separated from Christ offering Himself as the burnt offering. Leviticus 7:11-34 contains the law of the peace offering and tells of the eating of the peace offering, which is not mentioned in the third chapter. It typifies the gracious results accomplished for the sinner by the death of Christ. The blood is sprinkled upon the altar, which is for propitiation. Fellowship therefore results with praise and thanksgiving. As we shall learn more fully from the seventh chapter about the feeding upon the breast and the shoulder of the peace offering, we pass all this by. However, we call attention to the prominence given to the fat of the sacrifice. It is the type of the inward energy of Christ, expressed in doing the Father's will, even unto death; and this is called "the food of Jehovah." He delights in this.

The happy scene of how the priests, the offerer and his friends partook of that of which God partakes Himself, we shall see later.

4. The Sin Offering

CHAPTERS 4-5:13

1. The second utterance of Jehovah (4:1-2)
2. The sin offering for the high priest (4:3-12)
3. The sin offering for the congregation (4:13-21)
4. The sin offering for the ruler (4:22-26)
5. The sin offering for one of the people (4:27-35)
6. The sin offering for special inadvertent offences (5:1-13)

The burnt offering, meal offering, and peace offering typified the absolute and blessed perfection and devotion of Christ, and are therefore the sweet savour offerings. The remaining offerings, the sin and trespass offerings, are not called a sweet savour. In these offerings we see Christ typified as the bearer of the sins of His people. And as such He had to take upon Himself the judgment of God. This, no doubt, is the reason why these two offerings are not called a "sweet savour"; for God does not delight in judgment. Judgment is His strange work (Isaiah 28:21). Note also that the preceding three offerings were voluntary, the two remaining were compulsory. Forgiveness had to be sought and secured by them. In the actual approach of man to God, the sin offering always occupied the first place; the burnt offering followed. As we have seen the burnt offering is mentioned first, because it tells out the perfection and infinite worth of Him in whom, according to the eternal purpose of God, we are accepted. And now as accepted in the Beloved One, made nigh and brought into fellowship with God, the need which we have on account of our sins is fully met in the work of Christ, who bore our sins in His own body on the tree.

It is impossible to follow all the manifold types in connection with the sin offering for the priest, the ruler, and the congregation. The details of it demand a very careful and minute study which we cannot attempt here. We can treat the sin offering only in a general way. The bullock is the sin offering for the anointed priest and for the whole congregation (verses 4 and 13). Like in the burnt offering, the offerers had to identify themselves with the offering by laying their hands on the head of the bullock. But this difference must be noticed: in the burnt offering the believer is seen identified with Christ and accepted in Christ; in the sin offering Christ became identified with us in our sin. Sin was transferred to Him as our substitute. "The Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all." The blood then was sprinkled seven times before the Lord. Some of it was put upon the horns of the altar of incense; while the blood of the bullock, the greater portion of it, was poured at the bottom of the altar of burnt offering.

The skin of the bullock with the whole bullock was burned without the camp. The Hebrew word for "burned" is different from that used in the burnt offering. The word used in connection with the sin offering is "saraph"; it speaks of the burning of judgment. The commentary to this is Hebrews 13:11-12. "The bodies of those beasts whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burned without the camp. Wherefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people with His own blood suffered without the gate." With the case of a ruler having sinned the offering was a kid of the goats, a male; and in the case of any one of the common people having sinned through ignorance still other instructions are given.

"It is evident, therefore, that there is a graduated scale in these different instances. Why so? Because of a most solemn principle. The gravity of sin depends on the position of him that sins. It is not so, that man is prone to adjust matters, though his conscience feels its rectitude. How often man would screen the offense of him that is great, if he could! The same might be hard on the poor, friendless, and despised. The life of such at any rate seems of no great account. It is not so with God, nor ought it to be in the minds and estimate of His saints. And another witness of this in the last instance is not without interest for our souls. Only to one of the common people is allowed the alternative of a female lamb instead of a

kid (verses 32-35), the offering of which for his sin is reiterated with the same minute care.

"When the anointed priest sinned, the result was precisely such as if the whole congregation sinned. When a prince sinned, it was a different matter, though a stronger case for sacrifice than where it was a private man. In short, therefore, the relationship of the person that was guilty determines the relative extent of the sin, though none was obscure enough for his sin to be passed by. Our blessed Lord on the other hand meets each and all, Himself the true anointed priest, the only One who needs no offering--who could therefore be the offering for all, for any. This is the general truth, at least on the surface of the sin offering. The offence that was brought forward, confessed, and judged becomes the substitute in this case for him that was guilty; and the blood was put in the care of individuals on the brazen altar, as it only needed to be dealt with in the place of sinful man's access to God." (W. Kelly, Introduction to the Pentateuch.)

In studying the interesting details of the sin offerings it must be remembered that all is the "shadow of good things to come," and that the good things which have come, and which we now enjoy, as believers in Christ, are far higher and more blessed than the types could reveal.

5. The Trespass Offering

CHAPTERS 5:14-6:7

1. The trespass against Jehovah (5:14-19)
2. The trespass against man (6:1-7)

The brief section which gives instruction concerning the trespass offering contains twice the statement, "Jehovah spake unto Moses" (5:14 and 6:1). Sin is here looked upon as an injury done. The trespass offering was always a ram without a blemish out of the flock (verses 15, 18; 6:6). First the wrong is mentioned done in holy things of Jehovah or something done against His commands, and secondly, wrongs done against his neighbor, which Jehovah also reckons as done against Himself. There is no need to define the wrong done in the holy things of Jehovah. The word trespass in the Hebrew means "to act covertly." It was no doubt an attempt to defraud Jehovah in the holy things, as defrauding is prominent in connection with the wrong done to the neighbor. The offering of the ram, which, of course, typifies Christ, is not described here, but in chapter 7:1-10. But another feature is made prominent which contains a most interesting truth. Restitution had to be made in each trespass against Jehovah and against man, and in each case the fifth part of the whole had to be added. In the wrong done against Jehovah the fifth part was given to the priest; and in the wrong done against the neighbor the one who had been defrauded received it. This shows forth the blessed effect of the redemption work of Christ. He has not only restored what He took not away, but added more to it. God manifested thus His gracious power by giving greater blessing to His people and bringing greater glory to Himself.

6. The Laws of the Offerings

CHAPTERS 6:8-7:38

1. The law of the burnt offering (6:8-13)
2. The law of the meal offering (6:14-18)
3. The offering of the high priest (6:19-23)
4. The law of the sin offering (6:24-30)
5. The law of the trespass offering (7:1-10)
6. The law of the sacrifice of the peace offerings (7:11-38)

After Jehovah had given to Moses by direct communication the different offerings, in what they were to consist, and how they were to be brought, different laws concerning these offerings were added by Jehovah. They are mostly addressed to Aaron and his sons (6:8, 14, 19, 24). They acquaint us therefore with the relation of the priest to the offerings. In the law

of the trespass and peace offerings we do not find an address to Aaron and his sons. The proper way to study the offerings is to consider first what is said in the beginning of Leviticus and then to read the laws of the offerings in connection with each to learn their relation to the priest and the people.

The Law of Burnt Offering--It was the duty of the priest to keep the burnt offering upon the altar and the fire of the altar had to be kept burning in it. It is especially stated that the burnt offering shall be upon the hearth upon the altar all night unto the morning. This continual burnt offering with the fire, which never went out, is the type of Christ, who continually offers Himself to God and in whom all believers have the assurance of their full acceptance. It was different with the sin offering; there could not be a continuous sin offering, for Christ giving Himself as an expiatory sacrifice cannot be a continuous act. But it is different with the burnt offering. While on earth He ever presented Himself before God and the fire of His devotion never went out. And thus He continues in the heavenly sanctuary, appearing in the presence of God for us. This never ceases. It is morning by morning, evening by evening. And how blessed that the night is mentioned! The night is the present age; and it will be followed by the morning, when the day dawns. What comfort is here provided for us! While we are down here in the wilderness, tested, tried, failing and stumbling our perfect burnt offering is ever present with God and the sweet savour arises from it. By it we are kept, though we are a sinning people. It has also a blessed meaning for Israel. This is Israel's night. By the burnt offering sacrifice even Israel is kept during the dark night of their unbelief for the blessing which shall surely come in the morning, when He is revealed again. Then they will behold Him as their burnt offering, whom they had despised and rejected during the night of wandering and tribulation; then they will confess their sin and acknowledge He was bruised on account of their iniquities.

But while this is the blessed meaning of the burnt offering for the believer and for repenting and believing Israel, for the unbeliever there is another fire which will never go out. And we must see the practical application as well. This blessed continual burnt offering must lead His believing people to give themselves continually and manifest their devotion in practical holiness. "God delights to have us remind Him (though He can never forget it) of the work of His dear Son, and that we have here our occupation and live in the fragrance of His acceptance. This is really the foundation of all practical holiness, as it is of rest and satisfaction to the soul. Christ is our righteousness before God; we are accepted in the Beloved; in Christ we are as Christ, even in this world. Here the perpetual sunshine settles down on us; it is the true Beulah land for the saint, where the birds sing ever and the heart goes forth in perpetual melody" (Numerical Bible). Our answer to the continuous burnt offering in our behalf must be a life of devotion to God. Space forbids to follow the equally precious application of the other priestly actions.

The Law of the Meal Offering--As we learned in connection with the second chapter, the meal offering foreshadows Christ on earth, that blessed and holy life which was lived here in entire devotion. The principal thing here is that Aaron and his sons, the priests, were to eat of it. God had His portion in it, but the priests were to share it. All believers are priests in Christ, and as such have this precious food to enjoy. That food is Christ, and that means communion with God. To enjoy Christ, feed on Him, the bread come down from heaven; to meditate upon all His loveliness and grace, is our blessed privilege, who are brought into His fellowship. Note that it says "it shall be eaten unleavened in a holy place." This means that only in the place of separation, where grace has put us, can we enjoy this feast. The feeding on the meal offering will keep us in the sanctuary in His presence.

The Offering of the High Priest--Distinct from the general meal offering is that meal offering which the high priest had to bring on the day of his anointing. This had to be wholly burned unto Jehovah. No priest was permitted to taste this and partake of it. It had to be offered half of it in the morning and half of it at night. There is another distinction. Oil was mixed with it, but oil was not poured upon it. We saw what the oil mixed with the fine flour meant, and that the pouring of the oil upon the fine flour typified the Holy Spirit as He came upon Christ at His baptism. Now inasmuch as this pouring of the oil is omitted here, this meal offering seems to typify the blessed life of our Lord before His public ministry began. The hidden years, as we term them, were yielded completely to God, and as the Holy Spirit has not given us a record of those years we cannot feed on them. This, no doubt, is the typical meaning of this special meal offering of the high priest "on the day of his anointing."

The Law of the Sin Offering--This law contains interesting details concerning the sin offering. It had to be killed in the place where the burnt offering was killed. The priest that offered it for sin had to eat it, and he typifies Christ. This means His identification with sinners, when in our stead He bore our sins in His own body on the tree. But the priests also could eat of it. The work of atonement, the sin-bearing, no fellow priest could share with Him. He alone could do this great work. Nevertheless we eat of the sin offering if we identify ourselves in humiliation and confession with the sins and failures of the saints of God. The holiness of the sin offering is especially emphasized. It is called "most holy." The earthen vessel in which it was boiled had to be broken and the brazen pot had to be scoured and rinsed. This typifies the unique and most precious, as well as holy character, of the great work accomplished by the sin bearer on the cross.

The Law of the Trespass Offering--This also is called "most holy." Here the killing of the sacrifice, the sprinkling of the blood, the presentation of the fat, etc., and the burning upon the altar, omitted in chapters 5:14-6:7, are now commanded. Restitution is the prominent thing at the first mention of the trespass offering. It reveals the joy of God in what has been accomplished by Christ in His redemption work. But restitution must rest for a foundation upon atonement. This is now therefore brought out in the law of the trespass offering.

The Law of the Peace Offering--But one more remains. We discover that the peace offering is removed out of its connection. The order in the beginning of Leviticus is: burnt offering, meal offering, peace offering, sin offering, and trespass offering. The first three were the "sweet savour offerings." The third sweet savour offering, the peace offering, is put last in the laws of the offering. The peace offering represents the blessed results of the work of Him, who has made peace in the blood of His cross, in whom all who believe are justified and have peace with God. And the first thing mentioned is most blessed and intimate communion and enjoyment with thanksgiving. The pierced cakes, unleavened mingled with oil, etc., typify Christ. In this blessed feast Christ, as everywhere, has the preeminent place. The enjoyment of peace and its resulting communion is impossible apart from Christ. We must ever let the Holy Spirit remind us of what He is and what He has done for us. But what does it mean that the Israelite had to bring an offering of leavened bread with the sacrifice of his peace offerings for "thanksgiving"? Leaven was forbidden at Passover, in the meal offering, because it is the type of evil. Here and in the two loaves of the Feast of Weeks it was not only permitted, but commanded. In Christ there was no leaven; but in His saints, though made nigh by blood, there is still leaven, the corruption of the old nature. How harmonious with the teaching of the New Testament! We leave this to our readers to follow with prayer, searching, and, we trust, exercise of soul.

Rich and full is indeed this portion, the concluding section; one feels like touching upon every detail and meditate on these precious pictures, foreshadowing our blessings and privileges in Christ.

We must pass all these riches by, but pray that His Spirit may open up the mines of divine wisdom and comfort to every child of God. But one more phrase we mention. The priests had their portion in the peace offering. The priest, who burns the fat upon the altar represents Christ. Aaron and his sons received the breast of the sacrifice. The shoulder of the peace offering belonged to the priest for an heave offering. Like Aaron and his sons, priests of God, we can feast upon the breast, the type of His love, and thus enjoy His affections. The shoulder is the seat of power. And power belongs to Him alone, who loveth us and hath washed us from our sins in His own blood and hath made us priests and kings. May this first part of Leviticus (so often ignored) become a source of much joy and blessing to His people. The few hints we could give will, under God, show the way how these types should be studied.

II. THE PRIESTHOOD AND THE RESULTS OF HOLINESS

1. Aaron and His Sons and Their Consecration

CHAPTER 8

1. Aaron (8:1-12)
2. Aaron and his sons (8:13-21)

3. The consecration (8:22-30)

4. The sacrificial feast (8:31-36)

The second part of Leviticus is historical and gives the account of how Aaron and his sons were consecrated as priests and how they exercised their priesthood. The judgment, which fell upon the two sons of Aaron ends this interesting section.

The voice of Jehovah spoke again, commanding that Aaron and his sons should now be taken and be consecrated. The ceremony took place "at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation." The entire congregation of Israel was gathered together to witness the event. This statement has been severely attacked by the critics, who reject this report as untrustworthy inasmuch as a congregation of several millions could hardly have gathered at the door of the tabernacle. For this reason the critics have branded the account as legendary. "But, surely, if the words are to be taken in the ultra-literal sense required in order to make out this difficulty, the impossibility must have been equally evident to the supposed fabricator of the fiction; and it is yet more absurd to suppose that he should ever have intended his words to be pressed to such a rigid literality" (S.H. Kellogg, Leviticus). But the words do not necessarily mean that every individual was present at the door of the tabernacle and all remained there for the entire seven days of ceremonial observance. Perhaps only the representatives of the tribes were called to witness all that was done; these appointed leaders represented the whole assembly of Israel. All was carried out according to the divine command. Not less than twelve times is reference made to this fact in the eighth chapter. It was all according to divine appointment. Aaron was called of God to this office, and in this he was a type of Christ in His office-work as priest. "And no man taketh this honor unto himself, but he that is called of God as was Aaron. So also Christ glorified not Himself to be made an high priest, but He that said unto Him, Thou art my Son, today have I begotten thee" (Heb. 5:4-5). As Aaron and his work was appointed by God, so the work of our Lord in connection with sin. Aaron did "all the things which the Lord commanded by the hand of Moses," and Christ completely did the will of Him that sent Him. That blessed will is foreshadowed in the priestly office and the priestly work.

Without following the historical account in every detail we point out some of the leading types in this great chapter. The principal actors are Aaron and his sons. Aaron occupies the leading and prominent place; his sons are associated with him. He is, as stated above, a type of Christ. His sons typify those who are called into the priesthood in their Christian profession. The priesthood of the sons of Aaron depended upon their relationship to him. Without Aaron they could not be priests at all. Our relationship to Christ constitutes us priests. The Priesthood of Christ rests upon His Sonship, and believing on Him we become children of God and also priests with Him. The sons of Aaron typify the Christian profession; two of his sons were taken in a judgment. They foreshadow the true and the false in Christendom. But there is still another application. Israel's national priesthood is also foreshadowed. "Ye shall be unto Me a kingdom of priests" (Exod. 19:6) is God's calling for the nation. They will yet possess that priesthood. "But ye shall be named the priests of the LORD, men shall call you the ministers of our God" (Is. 61:6). This will be accomplished with the second coming of Christ. A part of the nation will then be swept away in judgment, while the believing remnant will exercise the functions of the priesthood in the kingdom. These two classes are typified by the sons of Aaron.

The first thing mentioned is the "washing with water." This washing of water is the type of the new birth. This is beautifully illustrated by the symbolical action of our Lord in the washing of the disciples' feet (John 13:2-12). The feet washing corresponds to the washing the priests had to do when they went into the tabernacle, and typifies the daily cleansing by the Word the believer needs to continue in fellowship with God. When Peter demanded to have his hands and head washed the Lord told him "He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit; and ye are clean, but not all." By these words the Lord told Peter that inasmuch as they all had believed on Him, with the exception of Judas Iscariot, they were washed and clean every whit. And in other Scriptures the same symbol is used: "Born of the water and the Spirit" (John 3:5); "the washing of regeneration" (Titus 3:5); "our bodies washed with pure water" (Heb. 10:22). But this could never apply to the Lord Jesus Christ. He needed no washing, no regeneration, for He is holy and undefiled.

Aaron was then clothed with the holy garments, invested with his official robes. These are described in detail in Exodus 28. (The annotations on Exodus give the typical meaning of the garments. This description of the official dress and what is

typified by it should be carefully studied.) The investiture of the sons of Aaron took place after the anointing of the tabernacle and Aaron as high priest. Christ and His work is put into the foreground. He is anointed with the oil of gladness above His fellows (Ps. 45:7; Heb. 1:9). But linked with Him are His fellows, His seed, the many sons He brings to glory. Their garments, including the breeches (Exodus 28:42) (not mentioned here), were of pure white linen, the type of the holiness and righteousness into which the grace of God has brought us in Christ. We are a holy priesthood. See also Rev. 4:4. "And round about the throne were four and twenty thrones, and upon the thrones I saw four and twenty elders sitting clothed in white raiment; and they had on their heads crowns of gold." "And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white; for the fine linen is the righteousness of the saints" (Rev. 19:8).

The tabernacle, the altar, the laver and finally Aaron were anointed with the holy oil. The oil was sprinkled upon the altar seven times. No blood was shed for atonement. All this has its blessed significance. While by this ceremony the tabernacle with all that was in it was sanctified and consecrated, it also typifies the consecration of all through Christ. The anointing of Aaron is the type of the anointing of our Lord. "God anointed Jesus with the Holy Spirit and with power" (Acts 10:38).

After the investiture of the sons of Aaron came the sacrifice of the bullock for a sin offering. This was followed by the ram of the burnt offering. Then the sacrifice of a second ram, the ram of consecration. Aaron and his sons laid their hands upon the head of the bullock and also upon the heads of the rams before they were killed. The sin offering had to come first for Aaron's sin and those of his sons. Aaron was a sinful man, Christ was not. But His gracious identification with us is here foreshadowed. The burnt offering, speaking of the perfection of Christ, was alone a sweet savour unto the Lord. For Aaron and his sons it had the meaning of their full consecration to the service of God. The second ram was for consecration; the literal rendering from the Hebrew is "the ram of fillings," because of verse 27, where we read that their hands were filled to wave it all as a wave offering before the Lord. The blood of this second ram was put upon the tip of the right ear of Aaron, upon the thumb of the right hand and upon the great toe of his right foot. The same was done to Aaron's sons. Their whole bodies were thus set apart for the service of God in virtue of the blood which had been shed. It is the most blessed type of sanctification by that "better blood", the blood of Christ. The ear is for hearing; we are set apart to hear the Word of God and yield obedience to it. The hand is set apart to serve and to do His will, and the feet to walk in His ways. No such sanctification was possible till the blood had been shed. All this foreshadows our sanctification by blood, and the results of this sanctification. The anointing oil was also sprinkled with the blood (of the peace offering) upon Aaron and his sons and their garments. The sacrificial feast, which followed is interesting and full of meaning. They fed upon the ram and the unleavened bread.

"This sacrificial feast most fitly marked the conclusion of the rites of consecration. Hereby it was signified, first, that by this solemn service they were now brought into a relation of peculiarly intimate fellowship with Jehovah, as the ministers of His house, to offer His offerings, and to be fed at His table. It was further signified, that strength for the duties of this office should be supplied to them by Him whom they were to serve, in that they were to be fed of His altar. And, finally, in that the ritual took the specific form of a thank offering, was thereby expressed, as was fitting, their gratitude to God for the grace which had chosen them and set them apart to so holy and exalted service.

"These consecration services were to be repeated for seven consecutive days, during which time they were not to leave the tent of meeting; obviously, that by no chance they might contract any ceremonial defilement, so jealously must the sanctity of everything pertaining to the service be guarded" (S.H. Kellogg).

How necessary for us who are constituted "a holy priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifices" to feed thus on Himself, who is ever before us in these ceremonies. It is at the Lord's table, when we eat and drink in remembrance of Him, we feed on Him and then exercise our holy priesthood of praise and worship. The seven days mean typically our life down here during which our consecration continues. The seven days stand for this age when a "heavenly priesthood" is feasting (the Church), and when the seven days end something new begins. The eighth day which follows marks this new beginning.

2. The Functions of the Priesthood Exercised

CHAPTER 9

1. The new offerings of the priests (9:1-14)
2. The people's offerings (9:15-21)
3. The fulness of blessing and glory (9:22-24)

A service follows the consecration of the priests, in which they officiated; hitherto Moses had acted by divine command. The service ordered is of great significance. For seven days, during the days of their consecration, a bullock had been offered for Aaron and his sons, and yet at the beginning of the eighth day a young calf for a sin offering and a ram for a burnt offering are needed. This reminds us of Hebrews 10:4, "For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins." But there is a deeper meaning here. In connection with these new offerings on the eighth day the promise is given "today the Lord will appear unto you," and "the glory of the Lord shall appear unto you." We must look for a prophetic, dispensational foreshadowing. And such we have here.

We have seen that Aaron and his sons typify a heavenly priesthood, Christ, and those who are priests with Him. But Aaron and his sons also typify the nation Israel. While the seven days of the consecration feast foreshadow the present age in which believers in Christ feast and exercise the functions of their spiritual priesthood, the eighth day stands for the beginning of the coming age in which the Lord will appear unto His people Israel and when His glory is manifested. Then Israel will become the kingdom of priests. The sin offering and burnt offering brought again shows that it is in virtue of the blessed work of Christ. Then "all Israel," the remnant of that day, will be saved and "there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness" (Zech. 13:1). The offerings for the people in our chapter suggest this prophetic application. When the seven days, the present age, is ended, then Israel will look upon Him, whom they have pierced and mourn for Him (Zech. 12:10).

A still more interesting event is given in the close of our chapter. Aaron came down from the altar where he had brought the offerings to bless the people. Immediately upon that he withdrew and entered with Moses into the holy place. Moses and Aaron were then invisible to the people. But they came forth, and a second blessing was pronounced upon the people. Nothing is said of how long both were in the holy place. We have here the beautiful types of the work of Christ and the blessing, which results from it for His people. As Aaron came forth the second time, so Christ will come the second time to bless His people Israel with peace. Moses, the leader of the people, typifies kingship, and Aaron the priesthood. Both coming out of the holy place foreshadow the second coming of Christ, the King-Priest. Melchisedek was king of righteousness and king of peace and priest as well, the type of Christ. When Christ comes again He will receive His throne and be a priest upon that throne. All this will mean glory for Him, glory for the church, glory and blessing for Israel, and glory for the earth. Then the glory of the Lord will appear, as it appeared when Moses and Aaron blessed the people. The fire came out from before the Lord. The Shekinah-Glory appeared and the flashing fire falling upon the altar consumed the offerings and the fat. The Lord thereby showed His approval of all that had been done. Jewish tradition claims that the fire which was never to cease burning was started in this divine act.

3. Nadab and Abihu: The False Worship and Its Results

CHAPTER 10

1. The false worship and the judgment (10:1-7)
2. New instructions (10:8-15)
3. The neglect of Eleazar and Ithamar (10:16-20)

The ceremonies were ended and the people, beholding the glory of the Lord, had worshipped. A terrible occurrence follows the beautiful ending to the previous chapter. Nadab and Abihu, two sons of Aaron, offered strange fire before Jehovah. The fire before Jehovah devoured them and they died before the Lord. The sin consisted in taking strange fire,

which Jehovah had not commanded; most likely it was fire they produced themselves, instead of taking the fire from off the altar (Lev. 16:12). The whole action was in utter disregard of the commandment given and an act of disobedience. This sin in the form as committed by Nadab and Abihu was never repeated. However, the principle of this sin is to be seen on all sides and in many forms in Christendom. It was "will worship." It was doing that in their own will, what God had not commanded. And in Christian worship, so called, how much there is which is will worship! How numerous the carnal things, the inventions and traditions of men, used in worship which have not alone no sanction whatever in the Word, but are altogether contrary to a true worship in the Spirit. Well has one said: "When one goes into many a church and chapel and sees the multitude of devices by which, as it is imagined, the worship and adoration of God is furthered, it must be confessed that it certainly seems as if the generation of Nadab and Abihu was not yet extinct; even although a patient God, in the mystery of His long suffering, flashes not instantly forth His vengeance." The fire of judgment, however, will some day fall upon all the false worship and make an end of it.

What induced them to act in this way so that the judgment of God fell upon them? The warning which follows this incident gives a strong hint on the possible cause of their presumptuous deed. Read verses 8 and 9. The warning against strong drink hints, no doubt, that they had been under the influence of strong drink. It must have been intoxication. May we remember that there is also another intoxication, which is a strange fire and which God hates. How much of Christian service and activity is there which is not done under the leading of the Holy Spirit. Then there are the so-called "revivals," with their purely soulical emotion and carnal means which are used. The unscriptural, and alas! sometimes even vulgar language used by a certain class of evangelists, aiming at excitement and popularity, the forced and often spurious results, heralded to increase the fame of the leader, the aim to receive large financial remuneration, etc., belongs all to the strange fire. In one word, all which is not done in worship and in service in dependence on the Holy Spirit and under His guidance in obedience to the Word, is strange fire.

The judgment of the two sons of Aaron makes known the holiness of Jehovah, who dwelled in the midst of His people. In some respects it is analogous to the judgment of Ananias and Sapphira in the New Testament (Acts 5).

Aaron held his peace. Grace sustained him, so that he could submit to the divine judgment without a murmur, though his heart was greatly burdened (verse 19). He and his sons were not to mourn the dead according to priestly custom. Then follows the command to abstain from the use of wine and strong drink when they were exercising their priesthood. The reason first is stated in verses 10-12. "That ye may put a difference between holy and unholy, and between unclean and clean; and that ye may teach the children of Israel all the statutes, which the Lord hath spoken unto them by the hand of Moses."

"The prohibition of wine and strong drink when going into the tent of meeting connects itself, of course, with the sin of Aaron's sons: and for us plainly covers all fleshly stimulus, which prevents clear discernment of what is or is not according to the mind and nature of God. For us also who are called to walk in the light of God's presence continually, this is not a casual, but a constant rule. The impulse of nature needs the restraining of Christ's yoke; even where, as the apostle says, things are lawful to us, we must still not be brought under the power of any (1 Cor. 6:12). And how easily do they acquire power!" (Numerical Bible).

Commandments previously given to them are then restated. The judgment demanded this. All what follows in this chapter may be looked upon as the effect of the judgment which had fallen upon Nadab and Abihu. Eleazar and Ithamar failed in not eating the sin offering, and only the intercession of Aaron kept them from judgment. The earthly priesthood has failure stamped upon it.

III. HOLINESS DEMANDED

1. The Clean and the Unclean

CHAPTER 11

1. Concerning the beasts on the earth (11:1-8)
2. Concerning things in the water (11:9-12)
3. Concerning flying and creeping things (11:13-23)
4. Concerning defilement with dead bodies (11:24-40)

The chapters which form the third section of Leviticus are by some taken to give evidence that not Moses, but another person arranged the material of the book. Even men who do not deny the inspiration of the book claim that the hand of a redactor is here discovered. In their opinion chapter 16 should follow immediately after the tenth chapter, because the first verse of the sixteenth chapter connects with the death of Nadab and Abihu. We do not agree with this view, but believe that the arrangement as we have it, is as Moses made it. Immediately after the solemn judgment Jehovah spoke again unto Moses and Aaron. Each chapter begins with the statement "And Jehovah spake." The holy One now demands that His people whom He has redeemed and made nigh, must be a holy people. The fact of man's sin and defilement is fully demonstrated in this section.

The eleventh chapter consists in commandments concerning clean and unclean animals. In chapter 20:24-26, the reason for this distinction is given. "But I have said unto you: Ye shall inherit the land and I will give it unto you to possess it, a land that floweth with milk and honey; I am the LORD your God, which have separated you from other people. Ye shall therefore put a difference between clean beasts and unclean, and between unclean fowls and clean; and you shall not make your souls abominable by beast, or by fowl, or by any manner of living thing that creepeth on the ground, which I have separated from you as unclean. And ye shall be holy unto me: for I the LORD am holy, and have severed you from other people, that ye should be mine."

All those beasts were unclean which do not both chew the cud and divide the hoof (see also Deut. 14)--those fishes were unclean which have not both fins and scales--and those birds were unclean which are known as birds of prey, as well as insects (with the exception of certain locusts) and flying mammalia. The subject before us deserves a far deeper and more extended study than we can give it here. We are obliged to confine ourselves to but a few hints. We need not to devote much space to the wisdom revealed in these laws. As God is the author of them they must necessarily reveal His wisdom. It is interesting that all civilized races abstain from the use of the greater part of the animals, which this code prohibits. With the exception of a number of forbidden animals, civilized nations partake of only such which these laws permit. And those which are commonly eaten, such as the oysters, the hog and others, prohibited in this code, science has shown to be more or less responsible for certain diseases and therefore dangerous as a food. The discoveries made by science fully demonstrate the wisdom of these distinctions between the different animals. These laws in their literal meaning are, of course, no longer binding; the religious observance of them was not a permanent thing, and is done away with in the New Testament. The church has no such laws distinguishing between the clean and unclean animals. The clean typify the Jew and the unclean the Gentile. Peter's vision on the housetop of Joppa warrants this interpretation (Acts 10). The clean, the Jews, and the unclean, Gentiles, are, in believing, gathered into the one body. Read Colossians 2:16-17, where the fact is stated that Leviticus 11 is no longer in force. (While these laws have no longer a religious significance, it is wise to follow them as much as possible. Orthodox Jews who hold strictly to these dietary laws and keep them are far more free from certain diseases than Gentile races, which ignore these laws. It has also been shown by statistics that the mean duration of Jewish life averages much higher than that of others.)

But there is also a deeper meaning to all this. Yet in looking for deeper and spiritual lessons, one must be guarded against a fanciful and far-fetched application. This has often been done. It is obvious that these laws concerning the clean and unclean, teach the path of separation, which Jehovah has marked out for His redeemed people. Only that which is clean according to the divine estimate was to be their food. And we, as His redeemed people, must feed spiritually upon the food God has provided for us, that is Christ. The clean and the unclean, all show certain characteristics, which may well be studied. In the New Testament unclean animals are used to represent unbelievers and unsaved persons. The dog and the swine are thus used (2 Peter 2:22). The sheep, as everybody knows, typifies a believer. The characteristics of the clean animals may therefore give some typical lessons on the characteristics of those who believe, and the unclean, characteristics of those who believe not. However, we repeat, these things must not be pressed too far. It is interesting to

see the prominence given to the chewing of the cud and the dividing of the hoof. These two things found together in an animal constituted them clean. Those which only chewed the cud, but did not divide the hoof, and others dividing the hoof and not chewing the cud, were unclean. The feeding and the walking are thus made prominent. A Christian, born again, and therefore clean, must feed upon the Word, meditate upon it constantly, like "chewing the cud." The feet stand for the walk, and that must correspond with the feeding upon the Word. The clean fish had to have fins and scales. The fins are for swift movement through the waters and the scales for defense. This too is not without meaning.

2. Childbirth Laws and Inherited Sin

CHAPTER 12

1. The man-child (12:1-4)
2. The maid-child (12:5)
3. The offerings (12:6-8)

The childbirth laws as contained in this chapter are full of meaning. The woman is constituted unclean by the birth of a child. When a man-child was born, she was to be unclean for seven days, and her purification was to end thirty-three days after that; forty days after childbirth. (A. Bonar, in his work on Leviticus, makes the following conjecture: "May it have been the case that Adam and Eve remained only forty days unfallen! These forty days would thus be a reminiscence of that holy time on earth. The last Adam was forty days on earth after His resurrection, recalling to mind earth's time of paradise.") In case of the birth of a maid-child the days of uncleanness were just double, fourteen and sixty-six. But why was this? The key to the spiritual meaning of this chapter is found in this very fact. "Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression" (1 Tim. 2:14). It was by the woman that the fall was brought about through the Serpent. The facts that sin is in the world, how it came into the world and that sin is inherited, transmitted from generation to generation, are made known in this brief chapter. The woman is constituted unclean because she is a sinful creature. Her sorrow and pain in childbirth, which no science nor discovery can remove, is a definite witness to the truth as contained in the third chapter of Genesis. And because she is a sinful creature and unclean, her offspring too is sinful and unclean, for "who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean?" What later David expressed, when he stood in the light, confessing his sin, is here seen in the childbirth laws. "Behold I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me" (Psalm 51:5) And one well may think here of her who was a sinful woman like every other woman, but who conceived by the Holy Spirit, Mary, the virgin. The One born of her had no sin, but is "that holy thing" called the Son of God (Luke 1:35).

on the eighth day the male child was to be circumcised. Both "circumcision" and "the eighth day" are of spiritual significance. The eighth day is the type of resurrection, the new creation. Circumcision is given in the New Testament in its true meaning. See Romans 6:6; Col. 2:11; Phil. 3:3. This indicates the manner in which God hath dealt with inherited sin in the cross of His blessed Son, our Saviour and Lord. Then follows the commandment concerning the offerings, when the days of purification were ended. It was for both the male and the female, the same offering, a lamb and a young pigeon or turtle dove. "And if she be not able to bring a lamb, then she shall bring two turtles or two young pigeons." Read and compare with Luke 2:22.

3. Leprosy: Type of Indwelling Sin

CHAPTER 13

1. Leprosy in a person (13:1-46)
2. The infected garment. (13:47-57)
3. The cleansing of the garment (13:58-59)

The entire chapter treats of leprosy. It has been argued from the side of critics that the disease described here is not the

one we know as leprosy, but only a similar disease of the skin. The arguments advanced to support this objection are silenced by Matthew 8:1-4. The man who came to our Lord had leprosy. The Lord told him "show thyself to the priest, and offer the gift that Moses commanded, for a testimony unto them." From this we learn that Leviticus 13 and 14 speak of the real disease, so loathsome and, from human side, incurable. The twelfth and thirteenth chapters of Leviticus are closely linked together. Inherited sin is the theme of the preceding chapter. Its cure is also indicated in circumcision and the offering. Leprosy is the type of indwelling sin and its awful corruption. This horrible disease was chosen by the Lord to typify sin on account of its vileness. Like sin it is progressive and eventually affects the whole being; it is hereditary and incurable. As the disease progresses the victim becomes more and more insensible to his dreadful condition and is even content with it.

"In view of all these correspondences, one need not wonder that in the symbolism of the law leprosy holds the place which it does. For what other disease can be named which combines in itself, as a physical malady, so many of the most characteristic marks of the malady of the soul? In its intrinsic loathsomeness, its insignificant beginnings, its slow but inevitable progress, in the extent of its effects, in the insensibility which accompanies it, in its hereditary character, in its incurability, and, finally, in the fact that according to the law it involved the banishment of the leper from the camp of Israel--in all these respects, it stands alone as a perfect type of sin; it is sin, as it were, made visible in the flesh." (S.H. Kellogg, Leviticus.)

The Lord had much to say about the examination of persons suspected of having leprosy, and how the disease was to be detected. First the case of leprosy is stated when it rises spontaneously, showing itself in the skin and the hair. Then follows the case where leprosy rises out of a boil and out of a burn (verses 18-28), and finally leprosy on the head or beard and its diagnosis (verses 27-44).

But these general applications of leprosy as a type of sin do not fully explain the lessons of this chapter. We must remember that Israel is viewed as Jehovah's redeemed people. As such they must keep out of their midst that which defiles. The same principle we find in the New Testament in connection with the church, the assembly of God. Leprosy, indwelling sin, showing itself in any member of the people of God, works havoc. It dishonors God and defiles others. Discipline must be exercised. "Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person" (1 Cor. 5:13). The priest was the person to examine closely the suspected person and pronounce the disease as leprosy, according to the signs given by the Word of God. On the one hand the priest had to watch that no real leper be kept in the congregation of Israel, and on the other hand, he had to be equally careful that none was put out of the congregation who was not a leper. "Holiness could not permit any one to remain in who ought to be out; and on the other hand, grace would not have any one out who ought to be in." In the New Testament this solemn duty falls upon those who are spiritual (Gal. 6:1). Note how God commanded that the suspected one should not be treated in a hasty manner. After the priest had looked upon him, the diseased one was to be shut up for seven days. On the seventh day the priest was again to look on him. Then he was again shut up for seven more days. And after all the seeing and looking upon, the priest was to consider. It showed the necessity of great care. How easy it is to condemn a brother as living in sin, showing leprosy in his conduct; a hasty action in excluding a real child of God from Christian fellowship is as sinful as permitting a wicked person in that fellowship. We cannot enter into the different signs of leprosy. Much which has been written on it by some good men is strained.

When an Israelite was found to have the true leprosy, he had to be without the camp. "And the leper in whom the plague is, his clothes shall be rent, and his head bare, and he shall put a covering upon his upper lip, and shall cry, Unclean, unclean. All the days wherein the plague shall be in him he shall be defiled; he is unclean, he shall dwell alone, without the camp shall his habitation be" (verses 45-46). Thus the poor leper was excluded from the congregation of Israel and from the tabernacle of Jehovah. The rent clothes, the bare head, the covering upon the lip, all showed his sad and deplorable condition. So the unsaved sinner is shut out from Jehovah's presence on account of his defilement and has no place among the people of God. Without the camp! Read the solemn words in Rev. 21:27 and 22:11, 15. The sinner unforgiven and not cleansed will be forever shut out of the presence of a holy God. And one, who is a child of God and belongs to the family and people of God, and permits indwelling sin to work out, is unfit for both fellowship with God and fellowship with His people. But notice it says, "all the days wherein the plague shall be in him he shall be defiled." Here is the ray of hope. Only as long as it was in him was he excluded. Recovery from the evil thing which defiles and disturbs

our fellowship is blessedly revealed in the New Testament. It has to be brought into the light, must be confessed and put away (1 John 1). And above all, we have an Advocate with the Father Jesus Christ the Righteous. Leprosy in the garment is also reckoned with, and its cleansing by washing is commanded. A garment is that which belongs to a person and is used by him. It is typical of contamination by sin in our earthly occupation. The cleansing by the water is the type of the Word of God, which uncovers the leprosy in our ways and can cleanse us.

4. The Cleansing of the Leper

CHAPTER 14

1. The cleansing of the leper (14:1-32)
2. Leprosy in the house and its purification (14:33-54)

The cleansing and restoration of the leper is full of significance, foreshadowing once more the blessed work of our Saviour. Two parts in this ceremonial are to be noticed first of all. The first thing done was to restore the leper among the people from whom he had been put away. The second part of the ceremony restored him fully to communion with God. The first part was accomplished on the first day; the second part on the eighth day. A careful distinction must be made between the healing and the cleansing. All the ceremonies could not heal the leper. Jehovah alone could heal that loathsome disease. But after the healing, the cleansing and restoration had to be accomplished. However, what was done for the leper is a most blessed illustration of the work of Christ and of the gospel in which the believing sinner is saved, and the sinning saint cleansed and restored. The leper outside the camp could not do anything for himself. He was helpless and could not cleanse himself; it had to be done for him. The priest had to make the start for his cleansing and restoration. He had to go forth out of the camp to seek the leper; the leper could not come to the priest, the priest had to come to him. Well may we think here of Him, who left the Father's glory and came to this earth, the place of sin and shame, where the lepers are, shut out from God's holy presence. He came to seek and to save what is lost.

Two birds which the priest commanded to be taken for the leper are a beautiful type of Christ in His death, and Christ risen from the dead. The birds are typically belonging to heaven. The first bird was killed in an earthen vessel over running water. This likewise typifies Christ. The earthen vessel stands for the humanity of Christ. The running water is the Holy Spirit, who filled Him and then He gave Himself and shed His precious blood. And that blessed blood of atonement is what cleanses from all sin, and on account of that blood the leper can be restored. The second bird did not die, but was set at liberty to take up a heavenward journey. The second bird was dipped into the blood of the bird that was killed over the running water. This bird typifies Christ in resurrection. The bird in its upward flight, singing perchance a melodious song, bearing upon its white wings the precious token, the blood, typifies Christ in His accomplished work, risen from the grave and going back from where He came. He died for our offences and was raised for our justification. But with the living bird there was also used the cedar wood, the scarlet and the hyssop; these, with the living bird, were dipped into the blood. What do these things signify? Scarlet is the bright and flashing color, which typifies the glory of the world (Dan. 5:7; Nahum 2:3; Rev. 17:3-4; 18:12, 16). Cedar wood and hyssop are things of nature. The cedar stands in God's Word always for that which is high and lofty. The insignificant small hyssop typifies that which is low.

"From the lofty cedar which crowns the sides of Lebanon, down to the lowly hyssop--the wide extremes and all that lies between--nature in all its departments is brought under the power of the cross; so that the believer sees in the death of Christ the end of all his guilt, the end of all earth's glory, and the end of the whole system of nature--the entire old creation. And with what is he to be occupied? With Him who is the antitype of that living bird, with blood-stained feathers, ascending into the open heavens. Precious, glorious, soul-satisfying object! A risen, ascended, triumphant, glorified Christ, who has passed into the heavens, bearing in His sacred person the marks of an accomplished atonement. It is with Him we have to do: we are shut up to Him. He is God's exclusive object; He is the centre of heaven's joy, the theme of angels' song. We want none of earth's glory, none of nature's attractions. We can behold them all, together with our sin and guilt, forever set aside by the death of Christ" (C.H. Mackintosh).

It is a beautiful illustration of the great truth stated in Galatians 6:14. "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, whereby the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world." The leper was sprinkled seven times with the dipped bird, scarlet, cedar wood and hyssop. It was put upon him. And thus it is upon us, redeemed by blood, to live as dead unto the world. Throughout the entire ceremony the leper did nothing. Only after the blood was sprinkled and the bird set loose began he to wash his clothes, shave off his hair, and wash himself in water. After we are saved and cleansed we must go to the Word and cleanse by it our habits and our ways.

The second part of the ceremony on the eighth day restored the leper completely to his privileges. All is done again "before the Lord," a phrase missing in the first part of the ceremony but repeatedly mentioned in the second part. The trespass offering occupies the prominent place. And the blood of the lamb was put upon the right ear, the thumb of the right hand and upon the great toe of the right foot. The symbolical meaning is clear; the ear is cleansed and restored to hear the Word; the hand to serve and the foot to walk. The blood of atonement in its cleansing power is therefore blessedly foreshadowed in this ceremony. It has the same meaning as it had in the consecration of the priests. The leper was like one who came out of the realms of death and corruption to become again a member of the priestly nation. The oil was put then upon the blood. Where the blood was, the oil was also applied. The work of the Holy Spirit in the sanctification of the redeemed sinner is typified by this anointing. The oil was then poured upon him, the type of the unction of the Holy One, which is upon all who are redeemed by blood.

But there is still another lesson connected with all this. The delay in the full acceptance of the healed and cleansed leper and his full reinstatement and presentation before the Lord on the eighth day is of deeper meaning. The eighth day in the Word of God represents the resurrection and the new creation. We are now as His redeemed people healed and cleansed but not yet in the immediate presence of the Lord. The seven days the cleansed leper had to wait for his full restoration and to enter in, typify our life here on earth, waiting for the eighth day, the blessed morning, when the Lord comes and we shall possess complete redemption and appear in the presence of Himself and behold His glory. The eighth day came and it was impossible for the leper, upon whom the blood of the sacrificial bird had been sprinkled, to be kept out from appearing in His presence and receive the blessings of full redemption. Even so there comes for us, His redeemed people, the eighth day. May we also remember that the leper, waiting for the eighth day, had to cleanse himself by the washing of water (verse 9). "Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God" (2 Cor. 7:1). "And every man that hath this hope in Him purifies himself, even as He is pure" (1 John 3:3).

Nor must we forget Israel typified in this entire ceremony. Israel blinded is morally like a leper. They are outside and separated from Jehovah on account of their condition. In the future the remnant of Israel will be cleansed and then wait for that full restoration which God in His gracious purposes has promised unto them.

Then follows a description of the plague of leprosy in a house. Leprosy, like other diseases, is caused by germs. These germs existing in the blood of the victim also may exist outside of the body, and under favorable conditions, especially in darkness, multiplying rapidly, spread the infection over a house and its contents. Bacteriology after years of laborious research has discovered these facts. Moses did not know about these bacteria in a house, but Jehovah knew.

The house with leprosy in it has often been applied to Israel. What was done to the house to arrest the plague is applied to what God did to His people. But the plague re-appeared and culminated in the rejection of Christ; then the house was completely broken down. Others apply it to the church and see that the leprosy has entered into the professing church and will some day terminate in the complete judgment of Christendom. We do not believe this to be the entire meaning of leprosy in the house. It likewise typifies the presence and working of sin in the place where man has his abode, that is, the material creation of God. All has been dragged down by the fall of man. All creation is under a bondage of corruption, made subject to vanity and therefore travaileth in pain and groaneth. But there is hope, for groaning creation is to be delivered. Then for the cleansing of the house the same ceremony with the two birds was enacted and the house was cleansed by the sprinkling of the blood. This is typical of the work of Christ as it will eventually bring blessing to all creation and all things will be reconciled (Col. 1:20). But here is also indicated the judgment by fire which is in store for

the earth (2 Peter 3:10). Then there will be a new heaven and a new earth.

5. Concerning Issues: Man's Weakness and Defilement

CHAPTER 15

1. The uncleanness of a man (15:1-18)
2. The uncleanness of a woman (15:19-33)

The whole chapter shows the deplorable physical condition into which man has been plunged by sin. The issues mentioned were therefore an evidence of the presence of sin in man's nature with the curse upon it, and constitutes man and woman unclean in the sight of God. "Not only actions, from which we can abstain, but operations of nature which we cannot help, alike defile; defile in such a manner and degree as to require, even as voluntary acts of sin, the cleansing of water and the expiatory blood of a sin offering. One could not avoid many of the defilements mentioned in this chapter, but that made no difference; he was unclean." Fallen human nature in its weakness and defilement is taught, and that this human nature is impure and polluting even in its secret workings. The blood and the water cover all this. It must be noticed that the water and the different application of water is constantly mentioned throughout this chapter. The water always typifies the Word by which our way is to be cleansed.

"Again, we learn that human nature is the ever-flowing fountain of uncleanness. It is hopelessly defiled; and not only defiled, but defiling. Awake or asleep, sitting, standing, or lying, nature is defiled and defiling: its very touch conveys pollution. This is a deeply humbling lesson for proud humanity; but thus it is. The book of Leviticus holds up a faithful mirror to nature: it leaves 'flesh' nothing to glory in. Men may boast of their refinement, their moral sense, their dignity: let them study the third book of Moses, and there they will see what it is all really worth in God's estimation" (C.H. Mackintosh).

The case of the woman with an issue of blood (Matthew 9:18-26) is stated in verses 25-27. How great must have been her trial and her sorrow during the twelve years of her uncleanness. Still greater was her faith and the testimony she bore to the holy Person of our Lord. All what came in touch with such an unclean person became unclean. She believed both that her touch could not make Christ unclean, for He is holy, and that His power could heal her.

IV. THE DAY OF ATONEMENT: IN THE HOLIEST

1. The Day of Atonement

CHAPTER 16

1. The command how Aaron was to enter (16:1-5)
2. The presentation of the offerings (16:6-10)
3. The blood carried into the Holiest (16:11-19)
4. The scapegoat (16:20-22)
5. Aaron's burnt offering and that for the people (16:23-25)
6. The ceremony outside of the camp (16:26-28)
7. Cleansed and resting (16:29-34)

A brief rehearsal of the ceremonies of this great day of atonement, with a few explanatory remarks, will help in a better understanding of this chapter. The day of atonement was for the full atonement of all the sins, transgressions and failures of Israel, so that Jehovah in His holiness might tabernacle in their midst. On that day alone the Holiest was opened for the high priest to enter in. That all connected with this day is the shadow of the real things to come, and that in the New Testament we have the blessed substance, is well known. The Epistle to the Hebrews is in part the commentary to Israel's

great day of atonement. The way into the Holiest by the rent veil which is revealed in the Epistle to the Hebrews, was not made known on the day of atonement. The day itself was celebrated on the tenth day of the seventh month, and it was a Sabbath of rest in which they were to afflict their souls (chapter 23:27-29). What is called "afflict" was fasting, the outward sign of inward sorrow over sin. When this was omitted the atonement did not profit anything "for whatsoever soul it be that shall not be afflicted in that same day, he shall be cut off from among his people." Only true faith manifested by repentance gives the sinner a share in the great work of atonement.

Aaron is the central figure in the day of atonement. All is his work with the exception of the leading away of the scapegoat. Aaron is the type of Christ. Aaron had to enter the Holiest with the blood of sacrifice, but Christ entered by His own blood. "Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by His own blood He entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us" (Heb. 9:12). Aaron had to come into the holy place with a sin offering and a burnt offering. Nothing is said about a meal or a peace offering. These would be out of keeping with the purpose of the day. As we have seen, the sin and the burnt offerings foreshadow the perfect work of Christ in which God's righteous claims are met and in which atonement is made for the creature's sins. Aaron had to lay aside his robes of beauty and glory and put on white linen garments after he had washed his flesh in water. Christ did not need fine linen garments, nor was there any need in Him for washing. Aaron wearing these garments and washed in water typifies what Christ is in Himself. Aaron had to take next two kids of the goats for a sin offering and a ram for a burnt offering. He had to offer the bullock of the sin offering (chapter 4:3). Such an offering for Himself Christ did not need (Heb. 7:27). But Aaron's offering was an atonement for his house. And Christ is Son over His house, whose house we are (Heb. 3:6). The bullock offering made by Aaron typifies therefore the aspect of Christ's work for the Church. The two goats were for the people Israel. Lots were cast by Aaron, and one goat was taken by lot for Jehovah and the other for the scapegoat. After the choice by lot had been made Aaron killed the sin offering for himself and his house. Then having taken a censer full of burning coals of fire from off the altar, with his hands full of sweet incense, he entered within the veil, into the Holiest. The cloud of incense covered the mercy seat. He then sprinkled the blood with his finger upon the mercy seat eastward and seven times before the mercy seat. How blessedly all this foreshadows Christ and His work! The incense typifies the fragrance of His own person, and the sprinkled blood is the type of His own precious blood, in which God accomplishes all His eternal and sovereign counsels of grace.

"The blood which is sprinkled upon the believer's conscience has been sprinkled 'seven times' before the throne of God. The nearer we get to God, the more importance and value we find attached to the blood of Jesus. If we look at the brazen altar, we find the blood there; if we look at the brazen laver, we find the blood there; if we look at the golden altar, we find the blood there; if we look at the veil of the tabernacle, we find the blood there; but in no place do we find so much about the blood as within the veil, before Jehovah's throne, in the immediate presence of the divine glory."

In Heaven His blood forever speaks,
In God the Father's ears.

Then the first goat was killed and the blood was also sprinkled in the same manner. "And he shall make an atonement for the holy place, because of the uncleanness of the children of Israel, and because of their transgressions in all their sins; and so shall he do for the tabernacle of the congregation that remaineth among them in the midst of their uncleanness" (verse 16). "And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission. It was therefore necessary that the patterns of the things in the heavens should be purified with these; but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these" (Heb. 9:22-23). Christ brought the one great sacrifice on the cross and then entered into heaven itself. Having made by Himself purification of sins He sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high. Christ Himself, in the Holiest, is the blood-sprinkled mercy seat. Aaron and his presence in the Holiest behind the veil is described in verse 17: "And there shall be no man in the tabernacle of the congregation when he goeth in to make an atonement in the holy place, until he come out, and have made an atonement for himself, one for his household, and for all the congregation of Israel." We see again the difference which is made in the atonement for Aaron and his household and atonement for all the congregation of Israel. It foreshadows the atonement made by the one sacrifice of Christ for the church and for Israel. Israel, however, does not yet possess the blessings and fruits of this atonement on

account of their unbelief. We shall soon see how this great day of atonement foreshadows the forgiveness of their sins in the future. The true priest having gone into heaven with His own blood and being there alone, the day of atonement is now. And we who believe and constitute His church have boldness to enter into the Holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which He hath consecrated for us through the veil, that is to say, His flesh. This entire age is the day of atonement, and it will end when He comes forth again.

When the work was finished by Aaron and he had come forth again the live goat was brought. Aaron then put his hands upon it and confessed over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel, all their transgression, and all their sins. All these were put symbolically upon the head of the goat and a fit man sent the goat away into the wilderness. "And the goat shall bear upon him all their iniquities unto a land not inhabited; and he shall let go the goat in the wilderness." We cannot follow the different views expressed on the meaning of the second goat. However, we mention a few. The word for scapegoat is in the Hebrew *_azazel*. Some take it that *_Azazel* is an evil being. Inasmuch as it saith that one goat is to be for Azazel, Azazel must also be a person. Some critics claim that all this is a kind of relic of demon worship; such a statement is not only wrong, but pernicious. Others claim that the goat sent to Azazel in the wilderness shows Israel's sin in rejecting Christ, and that they were on account of it delivered to Satan. There are still other views which we do not mention. Jewish and Christian expositors declare that Azazel is Satan, and try to explain why the goat was sent to him.

The best exposition we have seen on this view is by Kurtz: "The blood of the first goat was carried by him into the holiest of all, on this day (on which alone he was permitted to enter) and sprinkled on the mercy-seat. The sins for which atonement was thus made, were put upon the head of the second goat, which was sent away alive into the wilderness of Azazel (the evil demon, represented as dwelling in the wilderness), in order that the latter might ascertain all that had been done, and know that he no longer retained power over Israel. This whole transaction expressed the thought that the atonement made on this day was so complete, and so plain and undeniable, that even Satan the Accuser (job 1 and 2; Zech. 3; Rev 12:10, 11) was compelled to acknowledge it. In the sacrifice of this day, consequently, the sacrifice of Christ is shadowed and typified more clearly than in any other, even as we read in Heb. 9:12: "By His own blood He entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us."

There is no need for all these speculations. "Azazel" is not at all an evil being or Satan. The Hebrew word signifies "dismissal"--"to depart." It is translated in the Septuagint (Greek version of the Old Testament) with *_eis _teen _apopompeen*, which means "to let him go for the dismissal." Both goats are for sin offering. The first goat represents Christ dying for the sins of His people. The second goat laden with those sins which were atoned for by the blood of the first goat, represents the blessed effect of the work of Christ, that the sins of His people are forever out of sight. It is a blessed harmony with the two birds used in connection with the cleansing of the leper.

And here the dispensational aspects come in. Before the transgressions of Israel could be confessed over the scapegoat and before the goat could be sent forever away with its burden, never to return, the high priest had to come out of the Holiest. As long as he remained alone in the tabernacle the scapegoat could not carry off the sins of the people. When the Lord appears the second time, when He comes forth out of Heaven's glory as the King-Priest, then the blessed effect of His death for that nation (John 11:51) will be realized and their sins and transgressions will forever be put away. Then their sins will be cast into the depths of the sea (Micah 7:19) and they shall no more be remembered (Is. 43:25). That this is the true meaning of the scapegoat taking the sins of the people into the wilderness and therefore forever out of sight, we shall learn also in the twenty-third chapter. The feasts and holy seasons mentioned there are: Passover (redemption by blood); firstfruits (resurrection); feast of weeks (Pentecost); feast of trumpets (the regathering of Israel); the day of atonement (when Israel repents and is forgiven); the feast of tabernacles (millennial times). Israel therefore is unconsciously waiting for Christ's return as their forefathers waited outside, till Aaron came back to put their sins on the scapegoat.

Of the many other interesting things for brief annotation we but mention the rest connected with this great day (verse 31). In the Hebrew "Sabbath of rest" is "Sabbath sabbatizing." No work had to be done on that great day. The work was completely on God's side, man must not attempt to supplement that work. But let us also remember the dispensational application. When Israel's great national day of atonement and repentance comes, when they shall look upon the One,

whom they pierced and the great mourning and affliction of soul takes place (Zech. 12:9-12), the glorious Sabbath will follow. Rest and glory will come at last to them as His redeemed people, while the glory of the Lord will cover the earth and all the earth will have rest.

2. The Testimony Concerning the Blood

CHAPTER 17

1. Concerning slain animals (17:1-9)
2. Concerning the eating of blood (17:10-16)

This chapter needs little comment. Everything in this chapter speaks of the sanctity of the blood, what great value God, to whom life belongs, places upon the blood and with what jealous care He watches over it. The center of all is verse 11: "For the life of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls, for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul." Every slain animal had to bear witness to this fact. Even the hunter had to pour out the blood and cover it with dust. No blood was to be eaten. But in the New Testament we are commanded to eat spiritually of the flesh of the Son of God and to drink spiritually His blood.

V. PRACTICAL HOLINESS IN DAILY LIFE

1. Different Unholy Relationships

CHAPTER 18

1. Separation and obedience (18:1-5)
2. Unholy relationships (18:6-18)
3. Vile and abominable practices (18:19-23)
4. Judgment threatened (18:24-30)

This section of Leviticus contains the words of Jehovah addressed to His people, whom He had redeemed and in whose midst He dwelt. They are to be a holy people. About thirty times in this section we find the solemn word "I am Jehovah. Ye shall be holy: for I, Jehovah your God, am holy." This is Jehovah's calling for His people. Four times in the beginning of this chapter the Lord tells His people "I am Jehovah" (verses 2, 4, 5 and 6). His name was upon them and therefore they are to manifest holiness in their life and walk. This demand and principle is unchanged in the New Testament, in the covenant of grace. His people are exhorted to walk "as obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance, but as He, who hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation, because it is written, Be ye holy for I am holy" (1 Peter 1:14-16). Brought nigh by blood, knowing the blessed relationship into which Grace of God has brought us, our solemn duty is to present our bodies a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable unto God. The Spirit of God, the Spirit of holiness and power, is bestowed upon us that we can walk in the Spirit and fulfill not the lusts of the flesh. Israel was not to walk after the doings of the land of Egypt which they had left, nor after the doings of the land of Canaan whither they were going. And the church is told the same thing in the New Testament. "This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind, having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart; who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness through greediness" (Eph. 4:17-19).

And Jehovah's words reveal all the degradations and vile abominations human nature, the nature of sin and death, is capable of. He is the searcher of hearts and Jehovah only can sound the depths of the desperately wicked heart of man. The incestuous relationships against which the Lord warns were commonly practised among the Gentiles. These unholy impure things are still common in the world, not alone among the heathen, but also in the so-called civilized world. The laxity of

the marriage laws, divorces and other evils in the same line are the curse of our age. Polygamy is forbidden in verse 18. All that would destroy the sanctity of the family and bring in abuse is solemnly warned against and forbidden. In the New Testament the Spirit of God emphasizes the absolute purity of the family relation and how the Christian family is to be a witness of the holiness and love of Jehovah to make known the mystery of Christ and the church (Eph. 5:22-32).

Molech worship is forbidden. Read 1 Kings 5:7; 2 Kings 23:10; Jer. 32:35; 7:31 and 19:5). The awful worship of Molech is described in these passages. The most unnatural crimes and vile things mentioned in verses 22-23 were connected with the idolatries of the nations which surrounded Israel. These things were practised in Egypt and in Canaan. Romans 1:18-32 gives the inspired history of the degradation of the Gentile world. Idolatry and moral degradation always go together. The fearful road of the apostasy in Christendom is no exception. Rejection of God's revelation leads into idolatry (not necessarily idols of wood and stone) and moral declension. The days of Lot, the grossest licentiousness of Sodom, are predicted to precede the coming of the Son of man (Luke 17:26-32).

A solemn warning concludes this chapter. The inhabitants of Canaan were to be cast out on account of their vileness. Jehovah would not spare His people if they practised these things. They did commit all this wickedness. Israel cast out of the land, the homeless wanderer bears witness to the fulfillment of this solemn warning.

2. Different Duties

CHAPTER 19

1. Honoring parents and fearing God (19:1-8)
2. The care of the poor (19:9-10)
3. Against stealing and lying (19:11-12)
4. Against oppression (19:13-14)
5. Against unrighteousness in judgment (19:15-16)
6. Thou shalt love thy neighbor (19:17-18)
7. Different commands and prohibitions (19:19-37)

Many of these duties enjoined upon a people called to holiness, the different commands and prohibitions, are of much interest. It is true, believers are not under the law. This, however, does not mean that we should refrain from reading and studying these commands. Jehovah changes not. May we remember that our call, like Israel's, is unto practical holiness in life. Our responsibilities are even greater. Many lessons are here for us which will greatly help us in our walk as His people. The provision made for the poor (verses 9-10 compare with Ruth 2:14-16) manifests the loving care of Jehovah. God has special regard for the poor and strangers. His blessed Son became poor and was indeed a stranger in the world He created. His people had no heart for Him and He was hungry, while His disciples had to take ears of corn from the field to satisfy their hunger. The Lord Himself was the owner of Israel's land (Lev. 25:23), and as owner He charged His servants to be unselfish in the use of the bountiful provision He was making for their temporal need.

Note the precept concerning the laborer. "The wages of him that is hired shall not abide with thee all night until the morning" (verse 13). This again reveals the gracious care of the Lord. How little such care and consideration for the poor and the servant is found in our day! If these simple instructions were followed the discontent of the poor and the unrest of the laborers would not be as prominent as they are now. Israel failed in this. They cheated the poor and hired servants (Amos 8:5-6). What is to be in the last days of the present age we find in James 5:4: "Behold the hire of the laborers, who have reaped down your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth; and the cries of them that have reaped have entered into the ears of the lord of Sabaoth." The divine plea for the poor and the laborer is utterly disregarded in the last days, and Jehovah has to take up their case.

The deaf and the blind are also mentioned. The defenceless and helpless with the poor and the hired servant are the objects of His special care.

In verse 19 the raising of hybrid animals is forbidden. Anything "mingled" God despises. His people are to avoid this, even in the smallest things.

Heathen superstitions, such as using enchantments and observing times are forbidden by Jehovah. These are unworthy of a redeemed people linked with Jehovah. All superstitions, such as dreading certain days and numbers ("Friday" or "13"), and other foolish observances, alas! found so much amidst professing Christians are heathenish and dishonor God, who alone knows and controls the welfare and future of His people. All "cuttings in your flesh for the dead" were also prohibited. Thus the pagans did who have no hope. Such sorrow, expressed in fearful lamentations and frenzied outbreaks, were unworthy of Israel, as they are more so for Christian believers (1 Thess. 4:13). Those who have familiar spirits (mediums) and wizards were not to be consulted.

But it is truly most extraordinary that in Christian lands, as especially in the United States of America, and that in the full light, religious and intellectual, of the twentieth century, such a prohibition should be fully as pertinent as in Israel! For no words could more precisely describe the pretensions of the so-called modern spiritualism, which within the last half century has led away hundreds of thousands of deluded souls, and those, in many cases, not from the ignorant and degraded, but from circles which boast of more than average culture and intellectual enlightenment. And inasmuch as experience sadly shows that even those who profess to be disciples of Christ are in danger of being led away by our modern wizards and traffickers with familiar spirits, it is by no means unnecessary to observe that there is not the slightest reason to believe that this which was rigidly, forbidden by God in the fifteenth century B.C., can now be well-pleasing to Him in the nineteenth century A.D. And those who have most carefully watched the moral developments of this latter-day delusion, will most appreciate the added phrase which speaks of this as "defiling" a man. (S.H. Kellogg)

It will be wise to meditate carefully on all these commands and prohibitions. They reveal the tenderness, the wisdom and the holiness of God.

3. Warnings Against Special Sins and their Penalties

CHAPTER 20

1. Warning against Molech--worship and familiar spirits (20:1-8)
2. Warning against cursing parents (20:9)
3. Criminal and vile connections (20:10-21)
4. Exhortations to obedience and separation (20:22-27)

This chapter reveals the justice of God in dealing with criminals. The death penalty is most prominent. It is pronounced upon the following crimes: Molech worship; dealing with familiar spirits (spiritualism); different forms of incest and sodomy. Men advocate now the abolishment of death penalty without considering the outraged justice of a holy God. The object of these severe penalties imposed by Jehovah were the satisfaction of justice and the vindication of a broken law. A closer examination of these warnings and the penalties attached will reveal the seriousness of the offences against the theocratic government set up in the midst of Israel, and the perfect justice of every penalty. It is a serious matter if critics find fault with these solemn statements, denying their authority and judging the holy and infallible judge.

The chapter gives a testimony against the awful drift of our times in the lax laws concerning marriage, divorces and its attending evils so very much in evidence among the so-called Christian nations.

4. Laws for the Priests

CHAPTER 21

1. Laws concerning the person of the priests (21:1-6)
2. Laws concerning their family (21:7-9)
3. Laws concerning the high priest (21:10-15)
4. Concerning blemishes (21:16-24)

We come now to the special laws and precepts for the priestly class among the people. The preceding laws concerned the nation as such. The requirements of the priests are the highest in the entire book of Leviticus. Responsibility is always according to relationship. The priests, as we have seen before, typify the church. The grace of God has given to us the place of nearness in Christ, access into the Holiest and constituted us priests. The holiness required of the New Testament believers corresponds to this blessed relationship.

Many are the lessons given here. 2 Tim. 3:16-17 applies to this part of Leviticus. These divine requirements and laws are given even for us "for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness." May we read with prayer and ponder over these words of Jehovah. We point again to the marriage relation. This was especially guarded. Only a virgin of his own people was he permitted to take for wife. A woman upon whose character there was a spot, who was immoral or divorced, could not be the wife of a priest. And should not God's people in the New Testament, as holy priests, be equally cautious? We have an answer in 1 Cor. 7:39. No child of God, a holy priest, should unite in marriage with an unbeliever. The harvest from the acts of disobedience in unholy alliances is often disastrous.

Interesting is this section concerning blemishes in the priestly generations. These blemishes were: blindness, lameness, deformity of the nose, any outgrowths in the skin, broken footed, broken handed, crookbacked or of small stature, etc. Such a one was not permitted to come nigh to offer the bread of his God. He could not go in unto the vail nor come nigh unto the altar. Nevertheless, he could eat the bread of his God, both of the most holy and of the holy. His deformity or blemish deprived him not of his priestly position, nor was he anything less than a son of Aaron. He was excluded from the functions of the holy priesthood. Our spiritual defects, the blemishes which often are upon us as a holy priesthood, typified by lameness (defective walk), blindness (defective sight), arrested growth (dwarf), etc., all these blemishes do not affect our sonship nor our priestly position. But they do interfere with the enjoyment of the communion into which grace has brought us. On account of spiritual defects we cannot enter into the fullest exercise of our priestly privileges and functions. Yet grace permits us to eat of the bread of God.

And Christ as our Priest is without any defect or blemish. "For such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens" (Heb. 7:26).

CHAPTER 22

1. Care to be exercised in holy things (22:1-16)
2. Care in the enforcement of the law of offerings (22:17-33)

Uncleanness such as mentioned in the first part of the chapter prohibited the partaking of holy things. Strangers who did not belong to the priestly house and even the married daughter of the priest, not living in the priestly household, were not permitted to eat of the offering of the holy things. Holy things have to be used in a reverent and holy way. The same principle holds good in the New Testament. We may well think here of the Lord's table. Read 1 Cor. 11:23-31. Coming to the Lord's table to remember Him requires self-judgment.

The instruction concerning sacrifices, their unblemished character and what constitutes an acceptable offering are all of great interest with many spiritual lessons. But space forbids our enlarging upon them.

VI. THE HOLY FEASTS AND SET TIMES

1. The Holy Feasts and Set Times

CHAPTER 23

1. The Sabbath (23:1-3)
2. The feast of Passover and feast of unleavened bread (23:4-8)
3. The firstfruits (23:9-14)
4. The feast of weeks (23:15-22)
5. The blowing of trumpets (23:23-25)
6. The day of atonement (23:26-32)
7. The feast of tabernacles (23:33-44)

This is one of the grandest chapters in Leviticus, filled with the choicest truths and prophetic from beginning to end. The holy feasts and set times, appointed by Jehovah, to be kept yearly by Israel, cover indeed the entire realm of redemption facts. The dispensational dealings of God with Jews and Gentiles are clearly revealed in these feasts. We have to look at each of these divisions separately to point out the way to a deeper study, which no child of God should neglect.

1. The Sabbath--This is in itself no feast, but set time, a holy convocation after the six work days. What it signifies we have already seen in the study of Genesis and Exodus. The reason why the Sabbath is put here first is on account of its prophetic meaning. "There remaineth a rest for the people of God." The Sabbath is the type of that rest yet to come, when redemption is consummated. When all the work is accomplished, foreshadowed in the feasts and set times of Israel, the great rest-keeping will begin. Faith can enjoy it even now. In the Sabbath the blessed outcome of all is revealed.

2. The Passover and Feast of Unleavened Bread--The Passover, with the lamb slain and its body eaten, occupies the first place. It typifies the blessed work of the Lamb of God, His redemption work on the cross. And this is the foundation of every thing, as we have seen in the levitical offerings and ceremonial. In this finished work, and the shed blood, God rests, and here the believing sinner has found his rest. The feast of unleavened bread is closely connected with the Passover, so that it cannot be separated from it. Leaven stands for sin and unleavened bread for holiness. The feast of unleavened bread therefore typifies the result of the work of Christ on the cross, which is holiness. Again we meet the great truth that Jehovah has redeemed His people to be separated unto Himself. They were not to do a servile work, but to bring an offering by fire unto Jehovah. On the first and on the seventh day no servile work was to be done. It typifies the fact that in redemption there is no servile work, but a joyous manifestation of Christ, the sweet savour in the power of the Holy Spirit.

3. The Firstfruits--While the Passover-feast foreshadows the death of Christ, the waving of the sheaf of the firstfruits is the blessed type of the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. It was just one sheaf waved before Jehovah, the earnest of the harvest which was to follow. "But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept" (1 Cor. 15:20). "But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at His coming" (1 Cor. 15:23). The grain of wheat had fallen into the ground and died. But He liveth; the full ear of the sheaf waved before Jehovah typifies the abundant fruit which He brings unto God. And it was waved before Jehovah "on the morrow after the Sabbath." The morrow after the Sabbath is the first day of the week, the glorious resurrection morning. In connection with the waving of the sheaf of firstfruits there were offerings. But of what kind? "A he lamb without blemish for a burnt offering unto the LORD," a meal offering and a drink offering. No sin offering was demanded, for that was accomplished when He died. The offerings were a sweet savour, telling forth once more the blessedness and value of His own person and work. And in Him we are accepted; with Him the firstfruits we shall be forever.

4. The Feast of Weeks--After seven Sabbaths had passed by, fifty days counted, a new meal offering was brought and two wave loaves baked with leaven. This is the feast of Pentecost (named on account of the fifty days). It is also called the feast of weeks, as seven weeks had passed by. Exactly fifty days after the waving of the firstfruits, on the morrow of the Sabbath, when Christ arose, the Holy Spirit came down out of heaven to form the church on earth. The meal offering as we saw in the first part of the book is the type of Christ in His perfect humanity. Pure flour, oil mingled with it, and oil poured

upon it. Here is a new meal offering. It does not typify Christ, but those who are one with Him, His believing people. The oil, the Holy Spirit came on the day of Pentecost upon them, as the oil was poured upon the meal offering.

The two loaves, baked with leaven, typify also the church. Sin is still there. Pure flour was in the loaves (the new nature), but baked with leaven (the old nature). The two loaves, no doubt, refer us to the Jews and Gentiles, which compose the new meal offering. And here is the sin offering, which was absent at the waving of the sheaf of firstfruits on the morrow after the Sabbath. The leaven and the sin offering indicate the presence of sin, as it is the case. Yet the loaves are waved in the presence of Jehovah and fully accepted.

The two loaves were a wave offering before Jehovah. Thus the church is presented unto Him "a kind of firstfruits" (James 1:18); the two loaves, the product of the wheat, the firstfruits of Christ's death and resurrection.

We must not overlook verse 22. The harvest here, we doubt not, is the same as in Matthew 13:39. When that end of the age comes, the church will be taken into the garner, the firstfruits will be with Christ. The poor and strangers, Gentiles, will even then be remembered in mercy.

5. The Blowing of Trumpets--With this holy convocation we are led upon new ground. The feasts we have followed typify that which is past; the death of Christ, the resurrection of Christ, and the formation of the church by the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost. The three set times which follow, the memorial of blowing of trumpets, the day of atonement and the feast of tabernacles await their great fulfillment in the near future. The first thing after the two wave loaves are completely presented unto Jehovah, when this age is about to close, will be the blowing of the trumpets. It is the call of God to the remnant of His people, their regathering. A long period of time is between Pentecost and the blowing of the trumpets. This interval is the present age. The Lord does not regather His earthly remnant till His heavenly people, the church, is complete. Read and carefully consider Isaiah 27:13; 58; Joel 2:1. Matthew 24:31 is the regathering of His elect earthly people after He has come. But the blowing of the trumpets on the first day of the seventh month precedes the great day of atonement and is the heralding of that approaching day. All this, studied with the light God has given to us in the entire word of prophecy, is intensely interesting.

6. The Day of Atonement--We have already pointed out the dispensational meaning for the people of Israel in our annotations on the sixteenth chapter. When the great high priest, our Saviour and Israel's King, comes forth out of the Holiest, when He comes the second time in power and glory, Israel will look upon Him whom they have pierced and mourn for Him. And He will take away their sins, typified by the scapegoat. "In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and uncleanness" (Zech. 13:1). Their great day of atonement will be a Sabbath of rest unto them and glory will cover their long desolate land once more.

7. The Feast of Tabernacles--The final feast began on the fifteenth day of the seventh month. It is the feast, which comes after the sin of Israel has been removed. It was the feast of ingathering of the products of the year and a memorial of Israel's dwelling in booths in the wilderness. The feast of tabernacles foreshadows the coming glory of the millennium, Israel's glorious inheritance and the Gentiles gathered with redeemed Israel in the kingdom. It will be the time of the complete harvest, the time of rejoicing, when sorrow and sighing will flee away. It comes after the harvest (the end of the age) and the vintage (the winepress of the wrath of God). How beautiful is the order in these three last holy convocations! The blowing of the trumpets; the remnant of Israel called and gathered; the day of atonement; Israel in national repentance looking upon Him, whom they pierced, when He comes the second time; the feast of tabernacles; the millennium. "And it shall come to pass that every one that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem, shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles" (Zech. 14:16). It is the great memorial feast of millennial times. Perhaps it will be during that feast that the King of Israel, the King of kings, the Lord of lords, will appear in visible glory in Jerusalem to receive the homage of the representatives of the nations of the earth. What a day that will be! The eighth day which we meet here again points us to that which is beyond the millennium. The story of the twenty-third chapter is marvellous! Only God in His infinite wisdom could give us such an unfolding and foreshadowing of His eternal counsels and purposes. We rehearse it briefly. The Sabbath is the type of the end, which will

come after the accomplishment of all His purposes; the eternal rest. Passover, the type of the death of Christ; the waving of the firstfruits, the type of the resurrection of Christ; Pentecost, the type of the coming of the Holy Spirit for the formation of the Church. Then Israel's restoration and fullest blessing comes in. How blind men must be who can call all these beautiful things fable and legends! In these poor critics there is once more fulfilled the Word of God, professing themselves to be wise, they become fools" (Rom 1:22).

2. Priestly Duties: The Light and the Shewbread

CHAPTER 24:1-9

1. The light (24:1-4)
2. The shewbread (24:5-9)

This chapter is not disconnected from the preceding one as some claim; nor is it the work of a redactor as the critics teach. It is most beautifully linked with the dispensational foreshadowings we found in the feasts of Jehovah. Between Pentecost and the blowing of the trumpets there is, as stated before, a long period of time. When the church was formed, after the sheaf of the firstfruits had been waved, Israel was nationally set aside and night settled upon them. Maintained by the high priest, a light was to be kept shining continually from evening till morning; it was the light of the golden lampstand with its lamps. The lampstand typifies Christ and the high priest also is a type of Christ. Here is a hint of the testimony which shines forth in Christ and through the heavenly priesthood (the church) during the night, the present age. But Israel also will some day shine forth and be a light-bearer (Zech. 4:1-14).

Then there was the shewbread. They were set in two rows, six on a row, upon the pure table before the Lord. Shewbread means literally "bread of the face," that is, the bread before God. Pure frankincense was also put upon them. No doubt, dispensationally, we have in the shewbread another picture of those who are now His people (the church), while the twelve loaves also typify Israel as a nation.

3. Blasphemy and Israel's Sin Foreshadowed

CHAPTER 24:10-23

1. The blasphemy (24:10-22)
2. The penalty executed (24:23)

The blasphemer who blasphemed the Name and cursed, foreshadows the sin of Israel. They sinned and blasphemed that holy Name: and on account of the rejection of the Lord Jesus Christ, the curse has come upon them. But it will not be permanent. The remnant of Israel will be saved in the future day, when He comes back and they shall welcome Him: "Blessed is He that cometh in the Name of the Lord." The Jews have based upon this incident of the blasphemer the traditional belief that it is sinful to pronounce the Name of Jehovah. For this reason they substitute the word "Adonai."

The twenty-fourth chapter shows in its first part the twofold testimony maintained in the sanctuary, the light and the shewbread; it ends with an incident which foreshadows the sin of Israel when they blasphemed and rejected the Lord of Glory.

4. The Sabbatic Year and the Year of Jubilee

CHAPTER 25

1. The Sabbatic year (25:1-7)

2. The jubilee (25:8-12)
3. The jubilee and the land (25:13-28)
4. The jubilee and the dwelling houses (25:29-34)
5. The jubilee, the poor and the bondmen (25:35-55)

This is the great restoration chapter in Leviticus. All is connected preeminently with Israel's land. The application, which has been made, that this chapter foreshadows a universal restitution of all things, including the wicked dead and Satan as well, is unscriptural. If such a restitution were true the Bible would contradict itself. The Sabbath year could only be kept after Israel came into the land. "When ye come into the land which I give you, then shall the land keep a Sabbath unto the Lord." And Jehovah uttered these words from Mount Sinai and not from the tabernacle (Lev. 1:1). Every seventh year, the land which belongs to Jehovah, and which was not to be sold, had to enjoy complete rest. See what gracious promises Jehovah had given in connection with the Sabbath year (25:20-22). Jehovah was the Lord of the land, the owner of the land, and Israel received the land as a gift; they were the tenants. Beautifully the Lord said: "Ye are strangers and sojourners with Me." When Israel sinned and broke the laws of Jehovah, when they did not give the land its rest, the Lord drove the people out of the land. Read here 26:32-35. "And I will bring the land into desolation and your enemies which dwelt therein shall be astonished at it. And I will scatter you among the nations, and will draw out a sword after you, and your land shall be desolate, and your cities waste. Then shall the land enjoy her Sabbaths, as long as it lieth desolate, and ye be in your enemies' land; even then shall the land rest, and enjoy her Sabbaths. As long as it lieth desolate it shall rest; because it did not rest in your Sabbaths, when ye dwelt upon it." This prediction has been fulfilled. Israel is scattered among the nations of the earth and the land is desolate, a witness for the Word of God. Jehovah in giving the law concerning the Sabbath year, gave to His people a picture of that coming rest, and the assurance of joy and blessing. But they failed.

The year of jubilee shows clearly the restoration which is in store for Israel and Israel's land. It points once more to the millennial times of blessing and glory. How blessedly is that coming age of restoration and of glory seen in the year of jubilee! Without entering into details we give a few of the divine statements. What did the jubilee year mean to Israel? Liberty was proclaimed; every man returned to his possession; every man to his family; all wrongs were righted and the redemption of the bondmen took place. Seven times the word "return" is used; and oftener the word "redeem." It was the time of returning, the blessed time of restoration and redemption.

And how was this year of jubilee ushered in? By the sound of the trumpet of the jubilee on the tenth day of the seventh month, in the day of atonement. This great year of returning and redemption began with the day of atonement. Most likely after the high priest had returned from his holy office work and sprinkling of blood; after he had put the sins of the people upon the scapegoat and that sacrificial animal bearing upon its head Israel's sin had vanished in the wilderness, the trumpet sounded. What all this means we have seen in the annotations of the "day of atonement" chapter. The year of jubilee begins, when our Lord comes back from the Holiest and appears in the midst of His people. And this time of restoration, blessing and glory is not confined to Israel's land. It means more than the promised blessings for that land. We have the year of jubilee in Romans 8:19-23.

We must not forget the significance of the time, the fiftieth year. The day of Pentecost came fifty days after the resurrection of Christ from among the dead. And the fiftieth day brought, as the result of the death and resurrection of Christ, the gift of the Holy Spirit, and the formation of the church began. It came on the eighth day, the first day of the week. The year of jubilee may well be termed another Pentecost. On that day a great outpouring of the Spirit of God will take place (Joel 2:28). The kingdom with all its glories and blessings will be established upon the earth. And how much more might be added to these blessed foreshadowings of the good things to come!

5. The Blessing, the Curse and Israel's History

CHAPTER 26

1. Obedience and the blessings (26:1-13)
2. Disobedience and the curse (26:14-39)
3. The restoration (26:40-46)

This great chapter is very fitting for the close of this book. We have no types here, but direct utterances of Jehovah. Israel's history and their future restoration is here predicted. He reminds them that He brought them out of the land of Egypt; they are His people. Therefore He wants obedience. If this is yielded blessings would be the results. These promised blessings consisted in abundance of rain, great fruitfulness of their land, peace in the land, deliverance from wild beasts and the sword, victory over their enemies. They would multiply and His covenant would be established with them; more than that: "I will walk among you, and will be your God and ye shall be My people." What blessings Jehovah held out to them! They never possessed them in fulness. Some day Israel and Israel's land will enter into these blessings. Then Moses' last word will be true: "Happy art thou, O Israel; who is like unto thee, O people saved by the LORD, the shield of thy help, and who is the sword of thy excellency! And thine enemies shall be found liars unto thee; and thou shalt tread upon their high places" (Deut. 33:29).

But how dreadful the threatened judgments on account of a broken covenant! judgment after judgment is announced, one greater than the other, every blessing is changed into a curse and the culminating threat is expulsion from the God-given land and dispersion, worldwide, among the nations. The nation called to blessing is threatened with the most awful judgments and disasters. And all these have become historical facts. Jewish history of many weary centuries records the constant fulfillment of these solemn declarations. We have therefore in this chapter, in the predicted curses and the literal fulfillment, a most valuable and powerful evidence of inspiration. The Jew and his history, the land and its desolation, is God's standing witness for the Gentiles that the Bible is the Word of God.

"The fundamental importance and instructiveness of this prophecy is evident from the fact that all later predictions concerning the fortunes of Israel are but its more detailed exposition and application to successive historical conditions. Still more evident is its profound significance when we recall to mind the fact, disputed by none, that not only is it an epitome of all later prophecy of Holy Scripture concerning Israel, but, no less truly, an epitome of Israel's history. So strictly true is this that we may accurately describe the history of that nation, from the days of Moses until now, as but the translation of this chapter from the language of prediction into that of history." (S.H. Kellogg, Leviticus)

To this another fact must be added. It is predicted in this chapter that the people passing through judgment devastated by the sword, famine and pestilence, would continue to exist in their enemies' land. Israel's preservation throughout the long period of these executed judgments is a miracle. It cannot be explained in any other way. And the land itself bears witness to all this. It used to be one of the richest of all lands. But ever since the people Israel are driven out of the land and no longer possess it, desolation has come upon it. How remarkable this is!

"We point to the people of Israel as a perennial historical miracle. The continued existence of this nation up to the present day, the preservation of its national peculiarities throughout thousands of years, in spite of all dispersion and oppression, remains so unparalleled a phenomenon, that without the special providential preparation of God, and His constant interference and protection, it would be impossible for us to explain it. For where else is there a people over which such judgments have passed and yet not ended in destruction?" (Professor Christlieb)

Some have speculated on the statement that, they should have the judgments upon them seven times. However, these "seven times" cannot mean the exact duration of Israel's dispersion. The "seven times," however, foreshadow the time of Jacob's trouble, the last seven years of the times of the Gentiles, during which their judgments will be the severest.

This important chapter closes with a promise of restoration. Confession of sin, acknowledgment of their guilt, humiliation and deep sorrow for their iniquity opens the way to this restoration. It will at once be seen that this connects again with the day of atonement. It is the year of jubilee. Then Jehovah remembers His covenant and remembers the land (verse 42). To this future repentance of the remnant of Israel and their regathering, the restoration of the land to the people

and the people to the land, the entire prophetic Word bears witness.

VII. CONCERNING VOWS

The Claims of Jehovah Realized

CHAPTER 27

1. The singular vow (27:1-8)
2. The sacrifice (27:9-13)
3. Concerning the house (27:14-15)
4. Concerning the land (27:16-25)
5. Concerning the firstling (27:26-27)
6. Devoted things (27:28-29)
7. All holy to Jehovah (27:30-34)

This last chapter in Leviticus concerns vows and devoted things. Israel is still in view here. At Horeb they had made their vow of being obedient and devoted to the Lord, but they could not meet the claims of what that vow meant. The sanctification as demanded in this book they could not fulfill. But grace is seen connected with it. The grace which is yet to flow out to Israel, the chosen nation. Sanctification by law is impossible; grace alone can sanctify. All mentioned is connected with the people. The house to be holy to Jehovah (verse 14) is Israel. The land too is mentioned, as well as the year of jubilee. The house, Israel, becomes Jehovah's; and the land also belongeth then to Him. The thought which runs through this final chapter of Leviticus is that Jehovah will have His own and God finally will be all in all.

May God's Spirit lead us into these blessed types and may we, as His bloodbought people, sanctified in Christ, walk in sanctification in the power of His Spirit.

Appendix

SPRINKLING THE BLOOD UPON THE MERCY SEAT (Chapter 16)

In the order of the sacrifices Aaron first killed the bullock, the sin offering which was for himself to make atonement for himself and for his house. This bullock is three times recorded as the sin offering for himself (16:6, 11); and wherever the atonement made by it is mentioned it is said to be for himself and his house (16:6, 11, 17). So closely are the high priest and his house linked on together; doubtless to draw our attention to the oneness between Christ and His house--only with a striking contrast also--Aaron's bullock for sin suffered for himself and his house--he being himself a sinner, and his house composed of sinners _like _himself. Our High Priest knew no sin, and offered up Himself solely therefore on behalf of others.

(Throughout the Epistle to the Hebrews, the high priest and the people are alone alluded to; there is no mention made "of his house" Heb. 5:3; 7:27; 9:7. The house when spoken of is God's house, and Moses, not Aaron, the head over it; the whole assembly of Israel being included in "the house" (Heb. 3:2).)

Aaron next took the censer full of coals of fire from off the altar before the Lord, and his hands full of sweet incense beaten small, and brought all within the vail, and put the incense upon the fire before the Lord, that the cloud of the incense might cover the mercy-seat upon the testimony, that he might not die.

The censer was apparently a golden censer. If we refer to the Epistle to the Hebrews, chapter 9, a description of the tabernacle is given us on this day of atonement. No incense altar is mentioned standing in the holy place; but the golden

censer in the holiest. The cherubim also, shadowing the mercy-seat are called "cherubim of glory." On this day of atonement the coals of fire were moved from off the incense altar, and the golden censer being filled with them was carried within the vail. For the time therefore, the incense altar was inactive, and is not alluded to probably on that account in the ninth chapter of Hebrews. Jehovah appeared in the cloud upon the mercy-seat--the cloud of glory--and this may be the reason why the cherubim are called "cherubim of glory." Aaron notwithstanding the washing of his flesh, and the linen garments with which he was clothed, could not enter the holiest with the blood of atonement unless he could personally shelter himself under a cloud of incense. A perfume, not his own, but provided according to minute directions given by God.

Two epithets are especially attached to the incense, "Pure," and "holy"--and it was to be holy for the Lord (Exod. 30:35, 37). The frankincense, which was one ingredient of the incense, betokened purity. The word "pure" is connected with it (Exod. 30:34; Lev. 24:7), and the Hebrew word *_levohnah* has the appropriate signification of whiteness. One of the Hebrew words for the moon is almost the same as that for frankincense--"fair as the moon" (Cant. 6:10). There is one of whom it is truly said, "Thou art fairer than the children of men"; whose unsullied purity formed a wondrous contrast with every other human being. A purity, a righteousness so made manifest upon the cross that even a Roman centurion exclaimed, "Certainly this was a righteous man" (Luke 23:47). The cloud of incense beaten small, as it wafted itself up to God, attracted with its singular perfume that Gentile soldier. Purity and holiness are not to be found here except in one whose graces were fully displayed before God.

The incense was compounded of three sweet spices besides the frankincense, "stacte, onycha, and galbanum." The two last are not known; but the stacte is manifestly derived from a word signifying "to drop," both in the Hebrew, and in the Greek translation. A sweet spice that spontaneously dropped from the tree which produced it. Another emblem of the grace of the Lord Jesus, the Son of Man. Grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. His paths dropped fatness; wherever He went, true love, sympathy, and pity flowed from His heart towards the weak, the weary, and the afflicted. He was the true Man in the midst of falsehood and deceit in human beings all around Him. True in His affection; true in His words; true in His sympathies; true in His rebukes of evil as well as in His forgiveness of sin. It is blessed to turn from the hypocrisies of our own hearts, and of men around us, and contemplate Him "who did no violence," "neither was guile found in His mouth" (Isa. 53:9; 1 Pet. 2:22). There was no effort in Him; He simply lived, manifesting life in all He did and said. There was no affectation of spirituality; He was what He appeared to be. Thus His words and ways were not forced. His sanctity was not assumed. He had nothing to lay aside when He came into the presence of others. He put on nothing to gain their admiration. He was always Himself, living in the presence of God, ever pleasing God. Blessed contrast with men who have to assume religiousness to hide their own evil, who think that roughness is sincerity, and who are unnatural oft-times even in the very presence of God.

The incense "tempered together pure and holy" may have reference to the sweet fragrance which the Man Christ Jesus ever presented to God. The Israelites were forbidden to make a perfume like it, "to smell thereto." Christ is not to be imitated by a false humility to gratify one's own self-conceit. There may be a shew of wisdom and humility by which men satisfy their own flesh, but this is like an imitation of the holy perfume to smell thereto. If we are imitators indeed of Him we must first have been washed in His precious blood, and be born of God. To follow Him would involve self-crucifixion instead of self admiration,

The golden censer was filled with burning coals, and Aaron's hands were filled with incense. The vessel that held the fire--type of the holiness of God--was full. The altar from which that fire had originally been taken was a place where holiness of God was exhibited in no scanty measure; and the censer was also filled, that in the very holiest itself that consuming fire might again be presented according to the divine estimate.

The high priest's hands were also full of sweet incense. He had to grasp that holy compound to the full extent of his ability, that his filled hands might answer to the filled censer. He then put the incense on the fire before the Lord, and the cloud of the incense covered the mercy-seat, and mingled with the cloud of glory upon the mercy-seat, in which Jehovah appeared.

We must here draw a contrast betwixt Aaron and Christ. The Lord Jesus presented Himself to God on the morning of His resurrection--called of God an High Priest, after the order of Melchizedek. His entrance into heaven itself was like the bringing in of fresh incense before God; for He entered on the ground of His perfect obedience unto death, even the death of the cross. God had been glorified in Him, on that very earth where God had been so dishonored by man; and when for the first time a Man stood in the presence of the glory of God before "the throne of the Majesty in the heavens," a cloud of human fragrance (may we not say?) mingled itself with the cloud of divine glory. What a wondrous addition to the heaven of heavens! What an added glory was the entrance of the risen man there for the first time as the risen man--a man able to stand before God on the ground of His own righteousness, His own obedience, His own purity, His own holiness; and also able to say to God, "I have glorified Thee on the earth, I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do."

May we not with reverence contemplate this resurrection of Jesus, and His thus presenting Himself before God in heaven itself, as a marvellous change in the economy of the heavens? One who bore the likeness of the creature, standing in the midst of the throne of the Most High in such nearness to God? What indeed has God wrought! What marvels has He accomplished through His blessed Son!

Aaron next took of the blood of the bullock and sprinkled it with his finger upon the mercy-seat and before the mercy-seat, seven times. So also he did with the blood of the goat, the sin offering for the people. Having sheltered himself under the cloud of incense, he was able to bring this record of death, the blood, and sprinkle it under the glory of God upon the mercy-seat, and upon the ground before the mercy-seat; first by way of atonement for himself and his house; and next on behalf of the people.

What a singular ritual this. The emblem of death placed where God in His glory manifested Himself. What a wondrous coming together of things in themselves opposed to one another. A record of life poured out on account of sin, brought into the holy of holies. And yet how this shadowy ritual portrays to us the truth in which our souls rejoice. The great enigma of truth solved to faith in the death of God's Son.

it was said of the Aaronic high priest that "he entereth into the holy place every year with blood of _others," (Heb. 9:25) or, as it might be rendered, strange or foreign blood (_allogenes,) seeing there was no affinity between the blood of a bullock, and a goat, and himself, a human being. It is written of Christ that "He by his own (_idiou) blood entered in once into the holy places," (Heb. 9:12) and the word "His own" is again repeated (Heb. 13:12).

Aaron had to make atonement for himself as well as for his house. His own blood would have been of no avail for others, or for himself, for he was a sinner. Our High Priest is "holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens"; and what He is now in the glory that He was when on earth, as far as regards holiness and harmlessness. Free from all human infirmity--the Son--who offered up Himself.

Aaron had to sprinkle the mercy-seat eastward, because his approach into the holiest was from the east, and he had to sprinkle before the mercy-seat, to establish a footing for himself before God; for his own feet would have defiled the ground before the mercy-seat. The Lord Jesus has His own rightful place--the Lamb as it had been slain in the midst of the throne--and He enables us sinners by nature to enter into the holiest by His blood, "by a new and living way, which He hath new made for us, through the veil, that is to say, His flesh."

We have no threat of "lest he die" held out to us in our approaches to God; but our very way is a living way, made new in contrast to all other ways of old, and ever new with the fresh sprinkled blood, in contrast with the blood only sprinkled once a year. The sacrifice of Christ is as fresh in all its life-giving value, and in all its cleansing power today, as it was on the very day it was first offered. The blood of Christ has ever its full, and fresh, and living value, in contrast with the blood of victims which had to be renewed daily and yearly.

(The word translated "consecrated," is as the margin of the Bible has it, "new made." The word "new" is a remarkable one, literally meaning "fresh slain," (_prosphaton), and is used by the Spirit of God apparently to mark the contrast

between the way on the day of atonement of old, when the blood must have at once ceased to keep its value, because it became stale, and had to be renewed every year, and the constant fresh value of the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb just slain.)

Aaron had to make atonement for the holy place, and for himself, his household, and the congregation of Israel. "The holy place," throughout this chapter where the word "place" is in italics, signifies the "most holy," verses 2, 16, 17, 20, 23, 27. Called "the holy sanctuary" in verse 33. No one was to be with him, or enter the tabernacle until he had completed that important work of atonement. Atonement properly speaking is all Godward; and is accomplished by one alone. The sinner who is atoned for has no part in the work. It is accomplished entirely by another. He is passive, and ignorant of the fact, until God reveals it to him by His Spirit through the Word. It is most important for the peace of the soul that this should be fully understood. And this type makes it very plain. Not one of the congregation, nor one of Aaron's house was with him whilst he thus acted for them before God. They could not be aware whether even he was alive in the sanctuary, or what he had accomplished there. They were not in any attitude of prayer or supplication outside; but they silently waited in suspense till he came out; then they knew he had fulfilled all God's requirements; this being proved by the fact that he was alive.

The whole work of atonement, from beginning to end, has been accomplished by Christ alone; whether we look at the commencement of the work in the shedding of His blood on the cross, or at its completion in His resurrection as the great High Priest, and entering in, "once for all, by His own blood into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption" (Heb. 9:12). This is emphatically stated in the Epistle to the Hebrews: "when He had by Himself purged our sins," 1:3; "this He did once when He offered up Himself," 7:27; "He hath appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself" 9:26. Alone upon the cross, the Lamb of God slain on account of sin. Alone in resurrection, the firstfruits of them that slept. Alone in the holiest with God, the great High Priest. He has offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, and has by Himself perfected the whole work of reconciliation which God committed to Him.

The sinner troubled in conscience on account of his sins, is not called upon by efforts of his own to reconcile God to himself. Every attempt of his own of this kind is the expression of an unbelieving heart, calling in question the full eternal redemption which Christ has obtained for us. He has to believe in a reconciliation accomplished. An atonement completed. A salvation finished. And that by the Lord Jesus Himself alone.

The "atonement for the holy place was because of the uncleanness of the children of Israel, and because of all their transgressions in all their sins"; or it might perhaps be rendered, "he shall make atonement upon the holy place, from the uncleanness of the children of Israel, and from their transgressions in respect to, or on account of all their sins."

Throughout this chapter uncleanness is in the plural (Heb. *_tumoth*). Uncleannesses twice in verse 16, and once in verse 19. It seems especially to refer to personal defilements originating from man's very nature, the constitution of his body, or from disease. Transgressions are also mentioned. Sin is that evil thing in which we are conceived, which renders us utterly unclean from our very birth; children of wrath by nature. The corrupt body is an outward evidence of the evil taint which pervades us. Our mortal flesh, moral as to every part; without a spot of it free from death and corruption, is a proof of what we are by nature as regards our whole being, unclean perishing sinners.

Transgressions are sins made manifest in direct acts contrary to the revealed mind of God. Atonement had to be made with reference to the uncleanness of Israel, and their transgressions. These two manifestations of evil indicating their sins.

The law had no full type of the entire corruption of man. One of the objects for which it was given, was to develop that corruption in overt acts: "wherefore then the law? It was added because of transgressions" (Gal. 3:19).

"Moreover the law entered that the offence might abound" (Rom. 5:20). It was "the strength of sin" (1 Cor. 15:56). In the types therefore which form part of the law, we do not discover that great truth, that a man is so irremediably a sinner by nature as to need new birth, a new existence.

Perhaps leprosy affords the nearest type of the entire uncleanness of the human being. But even here the priest could only deal with the manifestations of the disease. In interpreting these shadows therefore we have to go deeper than the types themselves. The atonement made by Christ does not only answer to God for us as regards our uncleanness, but also in respect to the unclean nature itself, in which we entered this world as children of the first Adam. Our unclean selves; and here we must be careful to distinguish between ourselves and our corrupt nature. The atonement made by Christ has not in any way cleansed, improved, or reconciled our flesh, our evil nature; for that is so irremediably bad that all that God could do with it was utterly to condemn it. In the death of Christ for sin, God has "condemned (damned) sin in the flesh" (Rom. 8:3). "Our old man is crucified with Him that the body of sin might be destroyed," (Rom. 6:6). The body of the sins of the flesh have been put off from us as regards all judgment and wrath of God. We (not our evil nature) have been reconciled to God (2 Cor. 5:18; Col. 1:21).

This is the great aspect of atonement. For what troubles us most is the constant presence of an evil heart, an evil nature; an inclination for sin, which will make itself to be felt notwithstanding all our efforts towards practical holiness, and notwithstanding we are new creatures in Christ, and notwithstanding the presence of the Holy Spirit dwelling in us. As believers we have a right to look at this, the old man, and say, it has been crucified; it has been condemned once for all; it has been judged under the full wrath of God, poured out upon His own Son for us. And there is "now no condemnation" of any kind to us--no condemnation on account of this evil nature which we still know to exist--no condemnation on account of weakness, failures, ignorances, sins. The uncleannesses and transgressions of the people entered the sanctuary of God, and had to be met by the blood of atonement; or otherwise wrath must have burst forth from before the Lord upon the people, or God must remove His dwelling-place from the midst of them.

"The patterns of things in the heavens were purified with these (sacrifices), but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us" (Heb. 9:23, 24). (This is the only place where the word sacrifices occurs in the plural, when the death of the Lord Jesus is spoken of. In all probability it is used to express the fact of His one sacrifice embracing every varied aspect of the many sacrifices offered under the law.)

Notwithstanding our manifest sins and uncleannesses, of which to a great extent we are unconscious, Christ has opened the way for us into the very glory of God--He has preceded us there with His own most precious blood--and now we can draw near with confidence, without defiling with our presence the holiest of all. We can confess our sins before the mercy-seat itself. We can bring our deep necessities, and find mercy and grace to help us. We can offer thanksgiving, praise and worship which God can accept because of the sweet savour of that precious blood. We can say, without fear, thou hast set our iniquities before thee, our secret (sins) in the light of thy countenance" (Psa. 90:8), because we know Christ is in the presence of God for us; His precious blood is in the very light of the glory of God on our behalf. The sins which have reached to heaven have been covered; blotted out by that sprinkled blood. "We have come to God, the judge of all." We have heard His sentence pronounced upon us as guilty and defiled sinners. We have seen that sentence executed in the death of His own Son. We have been justified from sin through that death, "justified by his blood" (Rom. 5:9; 6:7).

We have come "to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant"; the High Priest in the presence of God for us, ministering to us all the blessings of that new covenant. We have come "to the blood of sprinkling that speaketh better things than that of Abel"; the blood of sprinkling upon the mercy-seat, and before the mercy-seat. God said to Cain respecting the blood of Abel, "the voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground, which hath opened her mouth to receive thy brother's blood from thy hand" (Gen. 4:10, 11). The blood cried for vengeance. The blood of sprinkling to which we have come, speaketh incessantly mercy and grace; answers every accusation; calls down ceaseless blessings; cleanseth from all sin; utters a voice which delights the ear of God; and which enables Him to open His hand and fill us with good. The word "speaketh" is a blessed word, in contrast not only with the blood of Abel which cried for vengeance, but with the blood of bulls and of goats, which spoke but for a moment, and effected nothing in reality. Whereas this blood speaketh on and on with a ceaseless still small voice of power, until the day of full redemption, when the resurrection of the Church in glory will manifest for ever its mighty efficacy: and the voice of the precious blood will continue to sound until Israel, God's chosen nation, and others redeemed out of the world during the 1000 years reign of Christ, are clothed with immortality

(Henry Soltau).

THE BOOK OF NUMBERS

The Annotated Bible

Arno Clement Gaebelein

THE BOOK OF NUMBERS

Introduction

The fourth book of the Pentateuch bears in the Greek translation of the Old Testament (Septuagint) the title Arithmoi, of which the Latin Numeri and our English "Numbers" are translations. It is called by this name because the people Israel are twice numbered in this book. The first time when they started on their journey, and the second time at the close of their thirty-eight years wandering (chapters 1, and 26). The Hebrews have given to this book the name Be-Midbar, which means "in the wilderness."

It is the wilderness book and covers the entire period of Israel's history from the second month of the second year after the Exodus from Egypt to the tenth month of the fortieth year. However, the years of wanderings are passed over in silence, only the different camps are mentioned. Our annotations point out the significance of this.

The Author of Numbers

Numbers is closely linked with Leviticus, though it differs greatly from it. Moses wrote the record of the events in the wilderness as he wrote the instructions Jehovah gave concerning the worship of His people. Only a person who was contemporaneous with the events recorded in Numbers could have been the author of this book. In chapter 33:2 we find a statement to the effect that Moses wrote their goings out according to their journeys. If Moses did not write the book, who then was the author? If the Mosaic authorship is denied the genuineness and trustworthiness of the entire book must be given up. Higher criticism, so called, claims that Moses did not write Numbers and that the book itself was not contemporary with the events it describes. They call attention that throughout the book Moses is referred to in the third person. They make much of chapter 12:3, as bearing definite testimony against Moses as the author. (For the explanation see our annotations on that chapter.) The same documents, compilers and redactors, etc., which, as it is claimed, composed the other books of the Pentateuch, and put them into shape in which we have them, centuries after Moses lived, are also brought into play in connection with Numbers. It would be more than unprofitable to follow these foolish theories which have laid the foundation to the most serious denials of the revelation of God.

Interesting History

The story of Numbers is of deep interest. We do not need to follow here the events in detail as recorded in the different chapters; this will be our happy task as we study this book. The Lord had the people numbered first. They had to show their pedigree that they really belonged to the people of God. Then the camp was set in order. The service of the Levites in connection with the tabernacle was appointed. Everything was in readiness for the journey towards the land and the possession of the land. Jehovah Himself went before the camp. Then comes the sad history of Israel's failure, their murmuring and unbelief. They became wanderers and their carcasses fell in the wilderness.

In the Light of the New Testament

Every careful reader of the New Testament Scriptures knows that Numbers is there repeatedly quoted. The Lord spoke to Nicodemus about the serpent which Moses lifted up in the wilderness (chapter 21:9) and spoke of it as a type of His death on the cross. Balaam is mentioned by Peter, Jude and in the book of Revelation. Korah and the awful rebellion under him is used by Jude in his brief testimony concerning the apostasy of the last days.

But above all must we remember in the closer study of the book of Numbers that the Holy Spirit has called special attention to the experiences of Israel in this book in its typical character and as a solemn warning for us as pilgrims in this present evil age. The failure of Israel on account of unbelief to enter into the promised land and possess it foreshadows the failure of Christendom to possess the heavenly things in Christ. We follow this more fully in the annotations. All this is fully authorized by the divine statement in First Corinthians 10:1-12.

Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea; And did all eat the same spiritual meat; And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ. But with many of them God was not well pleased: for they were overthrown in the wilderness. Now these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted. Neither be ye idolaters, as were some of them; as it is written, The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play. Neither let us commit fornication, as some of them committed, and fell in one day three and twenty thousand. Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of serpents. Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer. Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come. Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.

And again it is written, "For whatsoever things were written aforetime, were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope" (Rom. 15:4). Read also Hebrews 3:7-19; 4:1-6. The entire wilderness experience of Israel as recorded in this book will yield to us deeper lessons if we seek them with prayer and a heart which is willing to know and to do His will. These typical and spiritual applications have been made as far as our limited space permits. Much more may be discovered in this great book, our annotations, we hope, will be used, under God, to point out the way.

The faithfulness of Jehovah in the midst of the most awful failures of His people and how He kept them and manifested His grace towards them is one of the beautiful things of this book.

The Levites and their Service

In the wilderness book only the service of the Levites is mentioned. Their responsibility in a service divinely given in taking charge of the things of the tabernacle (all typical of Christ and His work) is typical of our service into which the Lord calls each member of His body.

In this book we find likewise the first of the greater prophetic utterances of the Bible. The parables of Balaam form a great prophecy. The Appendix gives a full exposition. May it please God to use the analysis and annotations which now follow.

The Division of Numbers

The division of this book is very simple if we follow the historical account it contains. There are three parts to it. We give them and the leading contents of the different chapters.

I. THE PREPARATION FOR THE JOURNEY

1. The People Numbered (1:1-54)
2. The Camp Put in Order (2:1-34)
3. The Levites and their Ministrations (3-4)
4. The Sanctification of the Camp and the Nazarite (5-6)
5. The Offerings of the Princes (7:1-89)
6. The Consecration of the Levites (8:1-26)
7. Passover and Jehovah with His People (9:1-23)
8. The Trumpets of Silver (10:1-10)

II. THE JOURNEY STARTED AND THE PEOPLE'S UNBELIEF, FAILURE AND PUNISHMENT

1. The Departure and the First Failure (10:11-36)
2. At Taberah and Kibroth-Hattaavah (11:1-35)
3. The Rebellion of Miriam and Aaron (12:1-16)
4. At Kadesh Barnea and Israel's Unbelief (13-14)
5. Various Laws, the Sabbath Breaker, and the Tassels upon the Garment (15:1-41)
6. The Rebellion of Korah and the Murmuring of the Whole Assembly (16:1-50)
7. The Priesthood of Aaron Confirmed (17:1-13)
8. The Priesthood and Iniquity and the Recompense of the Priests (18:1-32)
9. The Red Heifer and the Law of Purification (19:1-22)
10. At Kadesh in the Fortieth Year, Murmuring and Conquests (20-21)

III. EVENTS IN THE PLAINS OF MOAB AND FACING THE LAND

1. Balaam and His Parables (22-24)
2. Israel's Sin with the Daughters of Moab and the Zeal of Phinehas (25:1-18)
3. The Second Numbering of the People (26:1-65)
4. The Daughters of Zelophehad, the Death of Moses and his Successor Announced (27:1-23)
5. Order of the Offerings and the Set Times (28-29)
6. Concerning Vows (30:1-16)
7. The War against the Midianites (31:1-54)
8. The Tribes of Reuben, Gad, Half-Manasseh and their portion (32:1-42)
9. The Encampments in the Wilderness (33:1-49)
10. Instructions Concerning the Conquest and the Boundaries of the Land (33:50-34:29)
11. The Cities of Refuge (35:1-34)
12. The Security of the Inheritance (36:1-13)

Analysis and Annotations

I. THE PREPARATION FOR THE JOURNEY

1. The People Numbered

CHAPTER 1

1. The command to number (1:1-4)
2. The appointed helpers for the work (1:5-16)
3. The congregation assembled (1:17-19)
4. The twelve tribes numbered (1:20-46)
5. The Levites separated unto the tabernacle service (1:47-54)

It was exactly one month after the erection of the tabernacle that the Lord gave the commandment to Moses to number the people. This is seen by comparing the first verse of Numbers with Exodus 40:17. It must not be overlooked that there was a previous numbering of the people in connection with the atonement money. Then all who were twenty years and above, the same as in this census, were numbered. This took place nine months before, and the number of men twenty years and over was 603,550. The same number is given in this first chapter. See Exodus 38:25-26 and Num. 1:46.

The numbering was "after their families by the house of their fathers." And those to be numbered were "all from twenty years old and upward, all that are able to go forth to war in Israel." They had to declare their pedigrees after their families, and only those who could do that had a place in this mustering and could be warriors. This showing of their pedigree was necessary on account of the mixed multitude which had joined themselves to the people of God. "And a mixed multitude went up also with them" (Exod. 12:38). This mixed multitude that was among them fell a lusting (Num. 11:4). Therefore only those who could show by their pedigree their rightful place among the people of God were mustered and could go to war. Our pedigree, which gives us a place among the people of God, is the new birth, by which we become children of God. And our calling is to a spiritual warfare, not with flesh and blood, but against the devil and his wiles and the wicked spirits (Eph. 6:11-12).

The significance of the statement "all that are able to go forth to war in Israel" must not be overlooked. God wanted His people to go forward and reach in a few days the land of promise, enter in and conquer that land. How this plan was frustrated by their unbelief, and the men of twenty years and over died in the wilderness, without seeing the land is the sad history of this book.

Moses and Aaron were called to be the leaders in numbering the people by their armies. As we saw in Exodus, both Moses and Aaron are typical of Christ. He knoweth His people and His watchful eye rests upon each. With Moses and Aaron were associated the princes of the tribes mentioned in verses 5-16. The names of these princes are of deep interest when we translate them into English. The prince of Reuben is Elizur, "My God is a rock." The Prince of Simeon, Shelumiel, "At peace with God." The Prince of Judah, Nahshon, "A diviner." Then comes Nathaniel, "The gift of God." The Prince of Issachar, Zebulun, is represented by Eliab, "My God is father." Joseph has his double portion and Ephraim has Elishama, "My God hath heart." Manasseh's Prince is Gamaliel, "My God is a rewarder." Benjamin has Abidan, "My father is judge." The Prince of Dan is Ahiezer, "Brother of help." Asher has Pagiel, "Event of God." Gad's Prince is Eliasaph, "God addeth," and Naphtali is represented by Ahira, "Brother is evil." Nearly all these names are an encouragement to faith. These helpers in forming the mighty army speak by their names of the victory and blessing in store for His people if they go forward in faith. (The deeper lessons connected with it are pointed out in an excellent manner in the Numerical Bible.)

The different tribes, except Levi, were then numbered. We give a table which gives the result of this numbering and also the second numbering thirty-eight years later. The comparison is interesting:

| | First Numbering Ch. I. | Second Numbering Ch. XXVI. | |
|-------------------|------------------------------|----------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Reuben..... | 46,500 | 43,750 | 2,750 <i>decr.</i> |
| Simeon..... | 59,300 | 52,200 | 37,100 <i>decr.</i> |
| Gad..... | 46,550 | 40,500 | 6,150 <i>decr.</i> |
| Judah..... | 74,600 | 76,500 | 1,900 <i>incr.</i> |
| Issachar..... | 54,400 | 64,800 | 9,900 <i>incr.</i> |
| Zebulun..... | 57,400 | 60,500 | 3,100 <i>incr.</i> |
| Manasseh..... | 52,200 | 52,700 | 20,500 <i>incr.</i> |
| Ephraim..... | 40,500 | 32,500 | 8,000 <i>decr.</i> |
| Benjamin..... | 35,400 | 45,600 | 10,200 <i>incr.</i> |
| Dan..... | 62,700 | 64,400 | 1,700 <i>incr.</i> |
| Asher..... | 41,500 | 58,400 | 11,000 <i>incr.</i> |
| Naphtali..... | 53,400 | 45,400 | 8,000 <i>decr.</i> |
| Total..... | 603,550 | 601,750 | 1,800 <i>decr.</i> |

The tribe of Levi is not included. The end of this chapter gives the reason. They were not to be among the warriors, but appointed over the tabernacle of testimony, over all the vessels, and what belonged to it. They were to bear it and their place was round about the tabernacle. Their service, divinely appointed and the beautiful lessons connected with it, we shall follow more fully in our annotations of the third and fourth chapters.

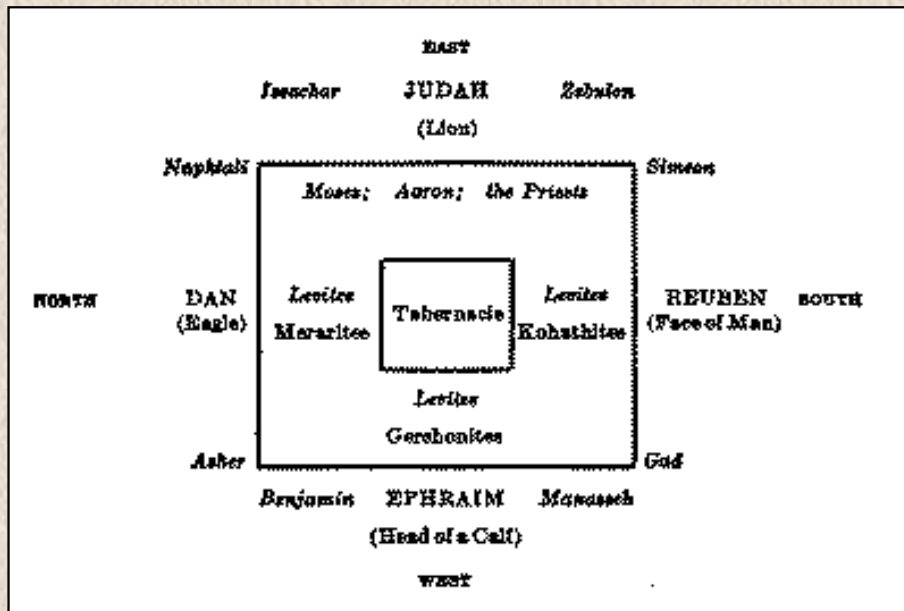
2. The Camp Put in Order

CHAPTER 2

1. The command (2:1-2)
2. The east-side: Judah, Issachar and Zebulun (2:3-9)
3. The south-side: Reuben, Simeon and Gad (2:10-16)
4. The position of the Levites (2:17)
5. The west-side: Ephraim, Manasseh and Benjamin (2:18-24)
6. The north-side: Dan, Asher and Naphtali (2:25-34)

The camp is now divinely arranged and put in order. Nothing was left to themselves. Jehovah spoke and gave the instructions, how every man of the children of Israel was to pitch by his own standard, with the ensign of their father's house over against, round about the tabernacle. The tabernacle where Jehovah dwelt was in the midst. Around this center the tribes were grouped in four camps, an east side, a south side, west side and north side, three tribes on each side. Rabbinical tradition adds many interesting details which may be true. According to this tradition each had its own standard with the crests of its ancestors. On the east, above the tent of Nahshon, there shone a standard of green, because it was on an emerald (the green stone) that the name of Judah was engraved upon the breastplate of the high priest. Upon this standard was a lion, according to the words of Jacob, "Judah is a lion's whelp." Towards the south, above the tent of Elizur, the son of Reuben, there floated a red standard, the color of the Sardius, the stone upon which Reuben's name was written. Upon his standard was a human head, because Reuben was the head of the family. And Reuben means, as we saw in Exodus, "Behold a son," typical of Him who became the Son of man. On the west, above the tent of Elishama, the son of Ephraim, there was a golden flag on which was the head of a calf, because it was through the vision of the calves or oxen that Joseph had predicted and provided for the famine in Egypt; and hence Moses, when blessing the tribe of Joseph (Deut. 33:17) said, "his glory is that of the first-born of a bull." Towards the north, above the tent of Ahiezer, the son of Dan, there floated a motley standard of red and white, like the jasper, in which the name of Dan was engraved upon the breastplate. In his standard was an eagle, the great foe of serpents, because Jacob had compared Dan to a serpent; but Ahiezer had substituted the eagle, the destroyer of serpents, as he shrank from carrying an adder upon his flag. This, we remind our readers, is Jewish tradition, and very interesting.

A little diagram will bring the camp more vividly before us.



The Lord, we repeat, arranged the camp, with Judah facing towards the sunrise; this indicates the promised goal and also reminds us of the rising of the Sun of Righteousness, the coming of the Lord, when the wanderings of His people will end. And Jehovah was in the midst of His people to guide and protect them, to supply their needs. He is still the same. His New Testament people are also put in order by Him, and He is in the midst. However, there are not different standards around which His people gather, but there is only One, which is Christ. We do not think it profitable to enter into some of the rationalistic objections made in connection with this camp and its enormous number of occupants. They say, among other things, that such a mass of people could not possibly have lived for any length of time in the peninsula of Sinai, inasmuch as the natural produce of the desert could not have sustained them. But they forget that the book of Numbers does not say they lived upon what the desert yielded, but that they were miraculously sustained. These objections, whether they come from a vile French infidel or a cultured, higher critic, are the offspring of an unbelieving heart.

3. The Levites and their Ministrations

CHAPTER 3

1. The generations of the priests (3:1-4)
2. The tribe of Levi and their ministry (3:5-10)
3. The Levites substituted for all the first-born (3:11-13)
4. The numbering of the Levites ordered (3:14-20)
5. Gershon (3:21-26)
6. Kohath (3:27-32)
7. Merari (3:33-37)
8. Moses, Aaron and Aaron's sons (3:38)
9. The numbering completed (3:39)
10. The separation of the Levites in place of the first-born (3:40-51)

The supremacy of the tribe of Levi shows the sovereignty of God. Divine grace is fully revealed in the selection of this tribe. This tribe could not be chosen on account of a meritorious character. We read in Jacob's prophecy words concerning Simeon and Levi which reveal their sin. "O my soul, come thou not in their secret; unto their assembly, mine honor, be not thou united, for in their anger they slew a man, and in their self-will they digged down a wall. Cursed be their anger, for it was fierce; and their wrath, for it was cruel: I will divide them in Jacob, and scatter them in Israel" (Genesis 49:6-7). Yet

out of this tribe Jehovah took Moses for the leader of His people, Aaron and his sons for priests, and the whole tribe instead of all the first-born for the special ministry. This is a most blessed illustration of sovereign grace. They were brought into this wonderful place of blessing and privilege by grace. In the eighth chapter we read of the cleansing of the Levites (8:5-7).

The difference between the ministry of the priests and the Levites must be noted. The book of Leviticus acquainted us with the work of Aaron and his sons, but it had nothing to say about the ministry entrusted to the Levites. The priests had given to them the ministry of the sanctuary, where they acted as worshippers and intercessors. The work of the Levites as given in this chapter, and that which follows, was of a more outward nature. They had to guard the tabernacle, to attend to its erection and taking down, to bear the different parts, all of which was ordered in all its details by Jehovah.

Levi means "joined." The grace of God had joined them to the Lord and His ministry. Christian believers are joined to the Lord and are both priests and Levites, possessing priesthood and ministry. Our priesthood consists in the ministry of the sanctuary, in worship and intercession. Our Levite ministry is many sided. It is given to us from the Lord to be exercised towards men. We bring spiritual sacrifices, the fruit of our lips, the sacrifice of praise unto God. The whole life of a Christian is to have the Levite character of ministry. "For me to live is Christ" is our service as the Levite lived for the tabernacle and its service. All Christian believers are priests and all have a ministry.

The generations of Aaron and Moses are mentioned first in this chapter. While elsewhere we read of Moses and Aaron, Aaron's name here stands first. His name is put first because he typifies Christ as Priest, upon whose intercession all depends. The Levites were then brought to Aaron to minister unto him and keep his charge. Jehovah claims them for His own instead of all the first-born. "Therefore the Levites shall be mine." "Mine shall they be, I am Jehovah." The first-born were sanctified unto the Lord because of deliverance. They knew therefore that they were sanctified unto Jehovah and owned by Him. And this is our blessed knowledge in Christ. We are delivered, sanctified, belong to Him and to keep His charge, rendering the service into which He has called us. May our hearts be led into the enjoyment of all this.

The difference between the numbering of the tribe of Levi and the other tribes must be noted. In the previous chapter those were numbered who were twenty years and over, but the Levites were numbered "every male from a month old and upward." This difference was because they were in place of the first-born, which were at the tender age of weakness and helplessness either redeemed or given up (18:16).

The sons of Levi made prominent as the heads of eight families, are, Gershon, Kohath and Merari.

Gershon (exile) with his sons, Libni and Shimei, were 7,500 souls. Their place was on the west-side of the tabernacle, over against Ephraim. (See diagram in the previous chapter.) They had charge of the tabernacle, the tent, the coverings and the hangings of the door of the tabernacle.

Kohath (assembly) with the Amramites, Izeharites, Hebronites and Uzzielites, were 8,600 souls. Their place was on the south side and they had charge of the ark, the table, the candlestick, the altars, the hanging and all the service thereof.

Merari (bitter) with the family of Mahlites and Mushites were 6,200 souls and their place was on the north-side, over against Dan. Their service consisted in handling the boards of the tabernacle, pillars, sockets, pins and cords. Each had his specific work given. There could be no misunderstanding about it. How strange it would have been if these 22,000 Levites had formed committees and sub-committees to divide the work and direct in it! All this would have brought in disorder. All they needed to do was to do the work into which the Lord had called them. All the instructions were given; obedience to these instructions, and faithfulness in the discharge of it were the essential things. The same is true in connection with the church. Every member in the body of Christ has a service to render. Each member is put into place by the Lord Himself and He gives to each the service, as He gave to these sons of Levi and their families their specific work in and around the tabernacle. "Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are differences of ministries, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God, that worketh all things in all" (1 Cor. 12:4-

6). How little this truth is recognized! Much of what is called Christian service is service in self will and therefore lacks power and blessing. As these Levites knew their work, because the Lord had spoken and called them into it, so every member of the body of Christ is to know his calling and his service.

"We, as Christians, are very apt to jostle one another, indeed, we are sure to do so if we do not each one pursue his own divinely appointed line of work. We say "divinely appointed," and would press the word; we have no right to choose our own work. If the Lord has made one man an evangelist, another a teacher, another a pastor, and another an exhorter, how is the work to go on? Surely, it is not by the evangelist trying to teach, and the teacher to exhort, or one who is not fitted for either trying to do both. No, it is by each one exercising his own divinely imparted gift. No doubt, it may please the Lord to endow one individual with a variety of gifts; but this does not, in the smallest degree, touch the principle on which we are dwelling, which is simply this, every one of us is responsible to know his own special line and pursue it. If this be lost sight of, we shall get into hopeless confusion. God has His quarry-men, His stone-squarers, and His masons. The work progresses by each man attending diligently to his own work. If all were quarry-men, where were the stone-squarers? if all were stone-squarers, where were the masons? The greatest possible damage is done to the cause of Christ, and to God's work in the world, by one man aiming at another's line of things, or seeking to imitate another's gift. It is a grievous mistake, against which we would solemnly warn the reader. Nothing can be more senseless. God never repeats Himself. There are not two faces alike, not two leaves in the forest alike, not two blades of grass alike. Why, then, should any one aim at another's line of work, or affect to possess another's gift? Let each one be satisfied to be just what his Master has made him. This is the secret of real peace and progress." (C.H. Mackintosh, Notes on Numbers.)

Worship holds the first and highest place. This is for us His people most clearly stated in the New Testament. Devotion to the Lord Jesus Christ in our life is the highest form of service and all other service must flow, and will flow, from faithfulness to the Person of our Lord.

Gershon and his sons had charge of the coverings and the fine linen. Gershon means exile, a stranger. The fine linen is typical of righteousness. The coverings, hangings, which divided off and separated the different parts of the tabernacle, must have the meaning of separation. His service points us to the fact that we are separated ones and strangers in the world. This separation must be witnessed to by practical righteousness.

Merari had charge with his sons of the boards, the sockets, pins and cords. These held the building together. We stated in the annotations on Exodus (chapter 26) that Christ and His people are typified in the boards of shittim wood, resting in the sockets of silver. The framework of the tabernacle, with the bars of shittim wood uniting the boards, is a type of that building of which we read in Ephesians, "a building fitly framed together," the church. The work of Merari suggests the thought of union.

It is interesting to compare this wilderness service as outlined above with the exhortation in Eph. 4:1-3. Knowing God's calling, in possession of God's highest and best, as revealed in that Epistle, passing through the wilderness, we are to walk worthy of that calling.

1. In all lowliness and meekness; manifesting Christ: Kohath-service.
2. With longsuffering, etc.; practical righteousness: Gershon-service.
3. Keeping the unity of the Spirit; united in the one body: Merari-service.

And if we walk thus we shall make known the excellencies of Him, who hath called us from darkness to His marvellous light and exercise in obedience the special gift He has given to us as members of His body.

The numbering then proceeded. The number of those fit for service was 8,580.

| | | |
|--------------------------|-------------------|---------------|
| Kohathites | { Able men, 2,750 | |
| | { Unable, 5,850 | |
| Total | | 8,600 |
| Gershonites | { Able men, 2,650 | |
| | { Unable, 4,870 | |
| Total | | 7,500 |
| Merarites | { Able men, 3,200 | |
| | { Unable, 3,000 | |
| Total | | 6,200 |
| Total | | 22,300 |

But how many among God's people are unfit for service, being out of conscious fellowship with God and conformed to this present evil age? May it please the Spirit of God to awaken such to see anew their calling and their blessed privileges as priests and Levites unto God.

But while it is impossible to restore the house, that is the professing church, so sadly divided and broken in pieces, it is not impossible for the individual believer to live and serve according to the divine ideal.

In verse 38 we find the place given where Moses, Aaron and the priests were to encamp. It was before the tabernacle, that is, on the east side. The number of the Levites is given as 22,000. If we add the number of the Gershonites, Kohathites and Merarites, 7,500, 8,600 and 6,200, we get 22,300. Here is a difficulty which seems to remain unsolved. The total number in verse 39 must be correct, for in verse 46 we read that the number of the first-born exceeded the total number of the Levites by 273.

CHAPTER 4

The Service of the Levites and their Numbering

1. The children of Kohath; their service (4:1-20)
2. The sons of Gershon; their service (4:21-28)
3. The sons of Merari; their service (4:29-33)
4. Their numbering for service (4:34-49)

This chapter enters more fully into the service of the Levites. They are mustered for service "from thirty years old and upwards even unto fifty years old." As we saw in the previous chapter, their service was to carry the holy things of Jehovah through the wilderness. The wilderness is for us the type of the world through which we pass, and our business as Christians is to manifest Christ. We must guard the holy things of our faith as jealously as the Levites guarded the tabernacle and its sacred contents, and this must be done by us with the testimony of our lips and the testimony of our lives. The service of the Kohathites, Gershonites and Merarites is full of blessed instructions for us, at which we can but briefly hint. In the previous chapter Gershon stands first, as he is the first-born. Here the first-born has to take a secondary place and Kohath is put first. The lesson is that the divine appointment for service is not the matter of natural relation and endowment, but of grace. The sons of Kohath had to carry the most holy things. All of them typify Christ in His humanity as our Redeemer and Lord. This stands first. It is occupation with Christ, and therefore fellowship with God.

4. The Sanctification of the Camp and the Nazarite

CHAPTER 5

1. Concerning the leper, the issue and defilement of the dead (5:1-4)
2. Concerning restitution (5:5-10)
3. Concerning the wife suspected of adultery (5:11-31)

So far we had the outward arrangement of the camp. This chapter tells us that the camp had to be holy and therefore must be cleansed from that which defiles. Divine directions are given concerning the unclean person, the restitution of anything unjustly taken and what is to be done with a wife suspected of adultery. Leprosy could not be tolerated in the camp in the midst whereof Jehovah dwelt. The persons who had an issue and had come in touch with the dead, as well as the leper, both male and female, were to be put without the camp. This command was at once obeyed. "And the children of Israel did so, and put them out without the camp." The typical meaning of leprosy we learned from Leviticus as well as the meaning of the issue. Sin is typified thereby as manifested in and through one who belongs to the people of God. While here we have the divine command to put the unclean person out of the camp, we have the equally divinely given command in the New Testament: "Put away from among yourselves that wicked person" (1 Cor. 5:13). The principle is the same whether in the camp of Israel or in the church of the Lord Jesus Christ. To touch the dead also defiled. If it was a dead person, the one who touched the same was considered unclean for seven days (Num. 19:11); if a man touched a dead animal it rendered him unclean till the evening (Lev. 11:27, 39, 40). To purify such who had become defiled in this manner, the ordinance of the red heifer was given. In no other portion of the Law is made so much of this form of defilement as in Numbers. This is in keeping with the character of the book. Israel passing through the wilderness came face to face with death on all sides. Spiritually the application is not hard to make. The world through which God's children pass is the enemy of God, alienated from Him and lying in the wicked one. Death is stamped upon it and the world is under condemnation. By the cross of Christ we are crucified to the world and the world is crucified unto us. The Word of God therefore exhorts us not to be conformed to this world (Rom. 12:2). We are not to love the world nor the things in the world (1 John 2:15-17). James tells us that whosoever will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God (James 4:4). Against defilement with the world in its different phases the child of God must constantly be on his guard. The camp must be holy, because Jehovah is in the midst. All what defiles belongs outside.

The wrong committed in the camp (verses 5-10) must be confessed, restitution be made, and, according to the law of the trespass-offering, the fifth part must be added to it. Unconfessed sin could not be tolerated in the camp where Jehovah dwells. And the same principle we find in the New Testament. "The grace of God, which has brought in unlimited forgiveness, would be rather a calamity if it did not enforce confession. Can one conceive a thing more dreadful morally than a real weakening of the sense of sin in those brought nigh to God? It may seem so where there is only a superficial acquaintance with God. Where the truth hath been hastily gathered and learned on the surface it is quite possible to pervert the gospel to an enfeebling of the immutable principles of God, ignoring His detestation of sin, and our own necessary abhorrence of it as born of God. Whatever produces such an effect is the deepest wrong to Him and the greatest loss to us. This is guarded against here." (W. Kelly, Lectures on the Pentateuch.)

In the next paragraph concerning the wife suspected of adultery, no positive defilement or sin is in view, only the suspicion of it. A careful reading of the passage is suggested. The offering of jealousy is described in detail, but the brief character of our annotations forbids a closer examination. We can only point out that the offering consisted not of fine flour as in the meal-offering, but of barley meal, which was coarser. No leaven was mixed with it, for that would have implied before the test, the guilt of the accused woman. Nor was oil and frankincense put on the offering, no joy and worship could be connected with this offering of jealousy. Then the priest took holy water in an earthen vessel and the dust of the tabernacle floor and put it into the water. This also has a symbolical meaning. The water stands for the Word, and the dust typifies death and the curse. It was a most solemn ceremony of a searching nature. The innocent one had nothing to fear; the drinking of the bitter water that causeth the curse but resulted for her in vindication. The guilty one was found out by Jehovah and the curse rested upon her. This ordinance is also applicable to Israel as the unfaithful wife of Jehovah.

CHAPTER 6

The Nazarite

1. The vow of a Nazarite (6:1-8)
2. The defilement of the Nazarite (6:9-12)
3. The law of the Nazarite (6:15-21)
4. The blessing of Aaron and his sons (6:22-27)

The word Nazarite means, one who is separated. The vow of the Nazarite meant separation unto Jehovah and separation in three things: 1. Separation from wine and strong drink, vinegar of wine, vinegar of strong drink, liquor of grapes, moist or dried grapes, from all that is made of the wine-tree, from the kernels even unto the husks. 2. His hair was to grow long and no razor was to come upon his head. 3. He was to be separated from the dead. This Nazarite vow was only for a certain period of time and not permanent. When it ended he shaved his head and drank wine.

This entire chapter concerning the Nazarite is of intense interest for it contains many helpful and most blessed lessons for us. It is needless to say that no more vows like the vow of the Nazarite can be made in the literal sense of the word, just as there is no longer a special class of priests among God's people. A Nazarite was a separate one, a saint, and such are we in Christ Jesus. But while the grace of God has constituted us saints, the practical living out of our Nazariteship remains with us. It must be the matter of the willing heart, the heart, which, in devotion to the Lord, yields itself to Him. The wine, strong drink, and all which comes from the vine stands for earthly joys, for pleasures, for that which is pleasing to the old nature. The wine and strong drink stand typically for the intoxicating pleasures which this poor, lost world indulges in and which the god of this age so often uses to dull the heart and the spirituality of the saints. But there are other things mentioned, which in themselves are harmless, like the moist grapes and dried grapes. These represent also earthly joys of a harmless character, but which cannot give to the believer the joy in the Lord which His heart craves. Christ is to be our all in all, the saint does not need anything whatever of earthly joys to sustain him. Christ is sufficient. Asaph reveals the true Nazarite spirit, when He said, "Whom have I in heaven but Thee? and there is none on earth that I desire beside Thee" (Ps. 73:25). Paul in writing to the Philippians gives the expression of a Nazarite: "For me to live is Christ." "And furthermore, I consider all things but loss for the sake of the surpassing knowledge of Christ Jesus, my Lord; for whom I suffered the loss of all things, and count them but dung, that I may win Christ" (Phil. 3:8).

"Legality this is not. Legality is the spirit of self righteousness, or of slavish dread, never of love, or desire after Christ, or of expectation from Him, such as that of which we have been speaking. Carry these ever so far, they can never land you in that in the direction of which they do not even point, but away from it. He who speaks of himself as doing but one thing was neither a legalist nor an extremist. He was simply a man into whose heart, forever filling it, the glory of Christ had shined.

"Let us not confound this, however, with the spirit of asceticism that has peopled monasteries with men fleeing vainly from this world, or scattered through the desert the abodes of the recluse. Nor let us imagine as involved in it any 'death to nature,' in which what God has made or instituted is branded as if it were unclean. It is striking that just in these two epistles in which Christian position is most emphasized (Ephesians and Colossians) the duties of earthly relationships are most largely dwelt upon. The lilies of the field could be seen by Him who as Son of Man was here on earth for us arrayed in glory beyond all Solomon's. His hands indeed had made them, and if not a sparrow fell to the ground without His Father, He could say, 'I and My Father are one.' Still as ever is it true that the Lord's works are manifold, and in wisdom has He made them all: the earth is full of His riches; yea, and His works are sought out of all them that have pleasure therein.

"But the Christian Nazarite is Christ's: therefore in his pleasures, in his business, in his duties, Christ is before him, with him, over him. He has fellowship with the Father and the Son, and there is nothing for him outside this. Here is the principle which makes him of necessity a stranger to what they find pleasure in, who find none in Him. The world's 'vine of wine,' as a whole, he is separate from" (F.W. Grant, Numerical Bible).

The long hair of the Nazarite is not difficult to interpret. 1 Cor. 11:1-15 gives the key. "if a man have long hair, it is a shame unto him. But if a woman have long hair, it is a glory to her; for her hair is given her for a covering." The long hair

of the woman testifies of the authority under which she is put. The long hair of the Nazarite therefore showed that he had humbled himself, made of himself no reputation. He took the place of dependence and loneliness. He gave up his rights and became nothing. And this is the place of blessing and power. The Christian Nazarite in his practical separation to the Lord, loves the low place and delights to follow after Him who emptied Himself and stooped so low. The separation from the dead has the same meaning as in the previous chapter. May it please God to give the writer and every reader of these lines a deeper longing to live as a true Nazarite, separated unto the Lord.

The Nazarite vow ended. Our separation is only as long as we are in the wilderness. The time came when the Nazarite, having fulfilled his vow, drank wine. A time of joy is coming for the saints of God, when His words shall be fulfilled. "I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom" (Matt. 26:29). Then in His presence, delivered completely from sin and an evil world, we shall have joy unending, and instead of the place of lowliness we shall be exalted and share His throne with Him. Oh! for a thousand lives to devote to the Lord Jesus Christ!

The blessing with which this chapter ends gives a precious revelation of the triune God. Three times the Name of Jehovah was put upon the children of Israel; the Father-God, who keeps; Jehovah the Son, who is gracious; Jehovah the Holy Spirit, who gives peace. And there are certain people who deny the triune God and claim that no such doctrine is found in the Bible! How great will be the blessing, when He comes the second time to bless His people and all creation!

5. The Offerings of the Princes

CHAPTER 7

1. The princes present their offerings (7:1-3)
2. The command concerning these offerings and the Levites (7:4-11)
3. The twelve princes and what they offered (7:12-88)
4. Moses hears the voice from the mercy-seat (7:89)

This is the longest chapter in Numbers. The princes of Israel appear to bring their free-will offerings in six covered wagons drawn each by two oxen. No command had been given. With a willing heart they devoted of their possessions to the service of the sanctuary. The Lord accepting the offerings gave directions that the Gershonites and Merarites were to receive the wagons and the oxen for their service. The sons of Gershon received two wagons and four oxen and the sons of Merari four wagons and eight oxen. The gift was according to the service into which Jehovah had called them. The Merarites had to take care of the heavy boards and the Lord provided the means to carry the burden and render the service. For all service into which He calls His people, He also provides the strength and the means for the service. The sons of Kohath received nothing. They needed no wagons and oxen; their service was to carry the precious things upon their shoulders.

The critics of the Word of God have found fault with the lengthy statements and repetitions concerning the twelve princes and their offerings. If these critics had penned this chapter, they would have given these offerings in a verse or two. But what unbelief belittles and rejects, is precious to faith. The details of the offerings and repetitions are written by the Holy Spirit, that we may know that Jehovah takes notice of the devotion and sacrifice of His people. He keeps a record of it all. The same eye, which followed the princes as they approached the tabernacle with their wagons, saw the two mites, which the poor widow deposited into the treasury; the same eye sees us. He will not forget the least service rendered unto Him.

All the twelve are called princes, except Nahshon of Judah. He, as the leader, the representative of Judah, must be the type of the Lord Jesus Christ, and He is more than a prince. We give a bird's eye view of the persons named and their gifts.

| | |
|--|---------------------------------------|
| 1. Judah: <i>Nahshon</i> , v. 12. | 12 Silver Chargers, each 120 shekels. |
| 2. Issachar: <i>Nethaniel</i> , v. 13. | 12 Silver Bowls, " 70 " |
| 3. Zebulun: <i>Eliab</i> , v. 24. | 12 Gold Spoons, " 10 " |
| 4. Reuben: <i>Elizur</i> , v. 30. | Total Shekels of Silver, 2400 |
| 5. Simeon: <i>Shelumiel</i> v. 36. | " " of Gold, 120 |
| 6. Gad: <i>Eliasaph</i> , v. 42. | Of beasts for sacrifice: |
| 7. Ephraim: <i>Elishama</i> , v. 48. | Bullocks, 12 |
| 8. Manasseh: <i>Gamaliel</i> , v. 54. | Rams 12 |
| 9. Benjamin: <i>Abidan</i> , v. 60. | Lambs 12 |
| 10. Dan: <i>Abiater</i> , v. 66. | Goats 24 |
| 11. Asher: <i>Pagiel</i> , v. 72. | Rams 60 |
| 12. Naphtali: <i>Ahira</i> , v. 78. | He-Goats 60 |
| | Lambs 60 |
| | Total 240 |

Jehovah expressed His approval and His joy, after the offerings had been presented, by speaking to Moses in an audible voice, from between the Cherubim. The promise given in Exodus 25:21, 22 was fulfilled.

6. The Consecration of the Levites

CHAPTER 8

1. The lighting of the candlestick (8:1-4)
2. The consecration of the Levites (8:5-22)
3. The charge to the Levites repeated (8:23-26)

The candlestick is the type of Christ as in the sanctuary, that is, Christ in glory. The lighting of the seven lamps introduced in the beginning of the wilderness book is of blessed meaning. The seven lamps were to illuminate the candlestick of beaten gold, throw their light upon the candlestick so that the gold and beautiful workmanship might be seen. The oil in the seven lamps represents the Holy Spirit. Spiritually applied we have the picture here of the Spirit of God shedding light upon Christ. For this He is given to His people, to glorify Christ. And this is the great need of the people of God in their journey through the wilderness. The eyes of the pilgrim and stranger, the passenger passing through the wilderness, must be fixed upon Christ in glory.

The consecration of the Levites consisted in sprinkling with water, shaving the whole body, washing of their clothes. They had to stand before the tabernacle of the congregation and the whole assembly of the children of Israel was gathered together. The children of Israel had to put their hands upon the Levites. The whole congregation became thus identified with the service of the Levites. The Levites represented the entire congregation of Israel and served in their behalf. The sprinkling with water in their consecration stands typically for the purification from sins. This they could not do for themselves, another had to do it. But the sharp razor they were able to take to remove from their bodies all the hair, which stands for that which belongs to the flesh, the old nature. They had also to wash their clothes, which typically signifies the water (the Word) applied to our habits and to our ways. The lessons are many. He who would be a true Levite in service must constantly use the sharp knife of self-judgment to remove all what is of self.

Their period of service was fixed. It was uniform, from 25 to 50 years. It was a gracious provision that at 50 the Levite was permitted to retire from the harder work. There is no clash here with the statement of chapter 4. From 25 to 30 they could do the lighter work of the tabernacle, even as the Levites over 50 years were exempt from the harder tasks. The Lord still fixes the period in which His servants are to serve Him, as He also looks out for their comfort (John 21:12, 18-19).

7. Passover and Jehovah with his People

CHAPTER 9

1. The command to keep the Passover (9:1-3)
2. The Passover kept (9:4-5)
3. Provision in case of defilement (9:6-14)
4. Jehovah with His people (9:15-23)

Jehovah next commands His people to keep the feast of redemption, Passover. And they obeyed at once. The first Passover was held in Egypt, the second in the wilderness at Sinai, with their faces turned towards the land of promise, and it was next celebrated in the land of Canaan. This shows how essential the blood is for everything. The blood delivers out of Egypt, it keeps in the wilderness and brings into the land of promise. Here in the wilderness they looked back to redemption as it had been accomplished in Egypt, the sprinkled blood of the paschal lamb had delivered them, and they looked forward to the land towards which they journeyed. Jehovah, who had delivered them out of Egypt by blood, carried His people through the wilderness, supplying all their wants, and brought them in virtue of that redemption blood, the ever blessed type of the precious blood of the Lamb, into the land of Canaan. We have the Lord's table where we enjoy the feast of redemption, feeding on Himself and His great love. There we look back to the Cross where He died, and praise Him for our deliverance. There we look forward to the blessed goal "till He comes." And we know that while on the way all our need shall be supplied, according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus.

A gracious provision was made for the men who were defiled by the dead or were on a journey afar. They could keep the Passover a month later, in the second month on the fourteenth day. The men who were defiled made a confession of it. And Moses not knowing what to do about their case turned to the Lord for instruction, which was immediately given. The grace of God met this need in a blessed way. There was time given for cleansing and for return from the journey and then a month later they could keep the Passover. None was to be shut out from the feast of redemption which God in His grace had provided for His people. Confession and self-judgment are needed in keeping the Lord's Supper. If the wanderer but returns he finds a welcome at the table He has spread for His people. What grace the Lord manifests towards His people! But how little grace those who are the objects of His love and grace manifest towards each other! If one, however, did neglect the Passover wilfully, he was to be cut off from among his people. Such neglect showed that he had no heart for Jehovah and His redemption.

And the cloud was with His people. In that cloud Jehovah was present, He was with His people. They tarried and journeyed according to the command of the Lord. The cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night. "So it was always." He did not leave His dwelling place in the midst of the people. All their movements were ordered by the cloud, that is, by the Lord Himself.

That mighty camp of over 600,000 men of twenty years and over, the 22,000 Levites and the hundreds of thousands of women and children, were dependent on the cloud. They could make no plans of their own. They did not know where they would go the next day. When they camped they did not know for how long it would be; when they marched they were ignorant how long it would last. Their eyes had to be fixed every morning, every night and throughout the day upon the cloud. They had to look up. Daily they were dependent upon Jehovah and upon the cloud for guidance.

And does He do anything less for His people living in the present age? Is the promise of guidance confined to Israel? Is it still His promise to His trusting child, "I will guide thee with mine eye"? Every Christian knows that he is under His care and under His guidance. If He guided Israel thus, how much more He will guide us who are, through grace, members of His body, one spirit with the Lord! How often we frustrate the manifestations of His power and His love by choosing our own path.

"Thus it was with Israel, and thus it should be with us. We are passing through a trackless desert--a moral wilderness. There is absolutely no way. We should not know how to walk, or where to go, were it not for that one most precious, most deep, most comprehensive sentence which fell from the lips of our blessed Lord, 'I am the way.' Here is divine, infallible

guidance. We are to follow Him. 'I am the light of the world: he that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life' (John 8). This is living guidance. It is not acting according to the letter of certain rules and regulations; it is following a living Christ--walking as He walked, doing as He did, imitating His example in all things. This is Christian movement--Christian action. It is keeping the eye fixed upon Jesus, and having the features, traits and lineaments of His character imprinted on our new nature, and reflected back or reproduced in our daily life and ways.

"Now this will assuredly involve the surrender of our own will, our own plans, our own management, altogether. We must follow the cloud: we must wait ever, wait only upon God. We cannot say, We shall go here or there, do this or that, tomorrow, or next week. All our movements must be placed under the regulating power of that one commanding sentence (often, alas! lightly penned and uttered by us), 'If the Lord will.'" (C.H. Mackintosh).

8. The Trumpets of Silver

CHAPTER 10:1-10

1. The silver trumpets (10:1-2)
2. How they were to be used (10:3-10)

The silver trumpets were also given for guidance. They made known the mind of the Lord in an audible way. The cloud was seen. It stands for guidance by the eye. The silver trumpets were heard. When Israel was gathered together the trumpets were blown. "When ye blow an alarm, then the camps that lie on the east side shall go forward; when ye blow an alarm the second time then the camps that lie on the south side shall take their journey." They were used in time of war and the promise of victory and deliverance is connected with it. And in the days of gladness, in solemn days, in the beginning of the months, at the burnt offerings and peace offerings these trumpets were to be blown. And in the future there will be a use for the trumpet in connection with the gathering of Israel (feast of trumpets). Read Isaiah 27:12-13; Joel 2:1. Thus all was ordered for them by the Lord. The sound of the trumpets was to them the voice of God giving direction and a comforting assurance at the same time. They typify the Word of God. It must not be overlooked that the sons of Aaron, the priests, had to blow the trumpet. They were in holy communion with the Lord and made known His will to the people. As Israel was dependent on the sound of the trumpets, so are we dependent as His people on the testimony of His Word. His will is ascertained in priestly intimacy with Himself.

This ends the first part of this interesting book. It shows how Jehovah made all preparations and provisions for the wilderness journey of His people. He had them numbered, the camp was arranged and put in order, the service of the Levites appointed. The offerings were brought, the Levites consecrated, the Passover celebrated and the guidance by the cloud and silver trumpets given. All was ready for the journey.

II. THE JOURNEY STARTED: ISRAEL'S UNBELIEF, FAILURE AND PUNISHMENT

1. The Departure and the First Failure

CHAPTER 10:11-36

1. The cloud moves (10:11-13)
2. The standard of the camp of Judah (10:14-17)
3. The standard of the camp of Reuben (10:18-21)
4. The standard of the camp of Ephraim (10:22-24)
5. The standard of the camp of Dan (10:25-28)
6. The first failure (10:29-32)
7. The cloud leading (10:33-36)

It was on the twentieth day of the second month, in the second year, that the cloud was taken up from off the tabernacle and the signal was given for the camp to break up. The wilderness journey begins and we shall soon be face to face with the sad story of Israel's failure, a failure which is repeated in the history of Christendom. What a magnificent spectacle it must have been when the camp of Israel moved for the first time in its divinely arranged order! No pen can describe the scene. The cloud moved and advanced towards the wilderness of Paran. Judah with his flowing standard led by Nahshon comes first. Then the tabernacle was taken down and the sons of Gershon and Merari set forward carrying the different parts of the tabernacle. In the second chapter instruction was given that the tabernacle was to set forward with the camp of the Levites in the midst of the camp. Here the order is changed. We shall find later the reason for this. Then the Other camps followed, all in perfect order with Dan the rear guard of all the camps. Was it possible that one not an eye-witness could have given such a remarkable and minute description of all this? Only the person who was actually there and saw it with his own eyes could have written this account. No compiler living a few hundred years later could have produced such a work.

How beautiful the order in the camp! What a contrast with the disorder and concision which followed so soon! And this has all been repeated in Christendom.

The incident between Moses and Hobab is significant. The first failure is recorded and it is on the side of Moses. He turned to his father-in-law, a man who knew the wilderness well, and said, "Leave us not, I pray thee; forasmuch as thou knowest how we are to encamp in the wilderness, and thou mayest be to us instead of eyes." Criticism has pointed this out as one of the marks of imperfection in this book and calls it a contradiction. It is a contradiction, but not in the sense as infidelity takes it. It gives a perfect picture of what the human heart is, and therefore is a mark of the perfection of this record. Jehovah had offered Himself as the leader of His people. He was to be eyes for them. And Moses as the human leader of the host of Israel, knowing Jehovah and His promise, turns to a poor Midianite and expects guidance and directions of him! How true it is what one has said, "We find it hard to lean upon an unseen arm. A Hobab that we can see inspires us with more confidence than the living God whom we cannot see. We move on with comfort and satisfaction when we possess the countenance and help of some poor fellow-mortal, but we hesitate, falter and quail when called to move on in naked faith in God." Every Christian believer knows this tendency of the heart. Every failure begins with leaning on the arm of flesh and leaving out the Lord. And now we understand why the tabernacle was taken to the front and out of the place in the middle of the camps. Jehovah anticipated this failure and graciously, not in judgment, He acts towards His people. "The ark of the covenant of the Lord went before them in the three days journey to search out a resting place for them." They wanted to find a resting place through Hobab's guiding eye for the tabernacle and the camp, and now Jehovah in unspeakable condescension and marvellous patience proceeds to search out a resting place for His people. Thus while we fail, He never fails His people. "Oh! for faith to trust Him more."

2. At Taberah and Kibroth-Hattaavah

CHAPTER 11

1. The first complaint and the punishment (11:1)
2. The first prayer and the answer (11:2-3)
3. The manna rejected (11:4-9)
4. Moses' complaint and request (11:10-15)
5. The institution of the seventy elders (11:16-30)
6. The quails given and the wrath of Jehovah (11:31-35)

They were now facing the land which was only a short distance away. The ark had sought out a resting place for them. Jehovah had graciously made all provision for their need and comfort. If enemies came victory was on their side, for with the setting forward of the ark Moses said, "Arise Jehovah and let Thine enemies be scattered; and let them that hate Thee flee before Thee." No hardships whatever they had encountered. What else was necessary but to trust Jehovah, praise His Name and possess the land which He had promised to them. Instead of acting thus they complained. It is the first

complaint after the camp had been set in order. Their murmuring must have been on account of the journey, which after the long repose at Sinai seemed hard to them. It shows what man is with an evil, stubborn heart. Failure is stamped on man's history everywhere. It can be traced throughout the Word of God. Every age has this mark. Judgment fell as the result of this murmuring upon those in the uttermost parts of the camp. Most likely those who complained fell behind and expressed a desire not to go forward. Among these the fire burned; no record, however, is given of the first judgment. It must have been tempered with mercy. And the people did not turn to Jehovah in this hour of punishment, but cried to Moses. When he prayed the fire was quenched and the name of the place was called Taberah, which means "burning."

Alas! they did not profit by the chastening. The second murmuring is more pronounced and more definite. The mixed multitude were a large number who had joined the exodus. They did not know the reality of redemption as Israel did, because they were Egyptians, most likely the so-called "Fellahs." This multitude fell a lusting and infected the children of Israel. They wept and spoke lightly of the bread from heaven. Such a mixed multitude without the knowledge of redemption is found in the professing church. They have crept in unawares and have been and still are a fearful detriment to the people of God. No unregenerated person has a place in the church of God. They cannot eat and enjoy the manna God has given, but constantly lust after the food of Egypt. (Compare Num. 11:4-5 with Deut. 8:8. Egypt's food consisted in six things. Seven things are mentioned as food in the land.) in connection with the despised manna we find a description of that God-given food. It is, as we learned from Exodus, the type of Christ, the food God has given to His people. And how often that food is neglected and Egypt's food preferred to the Word of God!

Moses' complaint follows. He seems discouraged and downcast as he looks over the vast camp and sees everybody weeping. It was failure in Moses also, who did not fully trust Jehovah that He could take care of His people and endow him, the leader of His people, with His own strength. The Lord met his weak and discouraged servant and told him to call the elders, seventy of them, and the Spirit, who was upon Moses, was to be put upon them. They were to share the burden with him. But while this delivered him from some of the care it also lost him dignity. Again Moses addressed Jehovah and expressed doubt about the feeding of the six hundred thousand footmen. "Shall the flocks and the herds be slain for them to suffice them? or shall all the fish in the sea be gathered together for them to suffice them?" And the Lord rebuked him. The elders who received the Spirit prophesied and did not cease. What they prophesied is not revealed in the record. They uttered the words of God, exhorting the people in their increasing departure from Jehovah. Prophecy is always put into the foreground in the days of failure and apostasy. Here we also learn that prophecy is a gift. While Moses failed, Joshua also made a failure in being envious because Eldad and Medad prophesied in the camp. He was jealous not for Jehovah, but for Moses. "And Moses said unto him, enviest thou for my sake? would God that all the Lord's people were prophets, and that the Lord would put His Spirit upon them." This wish of Moses' is realized in the church, for all His believing people now have the gift of the Spirit. And the remnant of God's earthly people will yet be prophets upon whom the Spirit of God is poured out. This will be accomplished in the future when the Lord has come.

The end of the chapter shows Jehovah's bountiful provision in sending the flesh they had desired. But the wrath of the Lord was kindled against them, and while they were eating a great plague broke out. There was no repentance. Greedily they fell upon what God had provided. It was only to satisfy their lust; the giver they did not see behind the gift. The rebellious, stubborn heart, unrepenting, was there, making use for their own destruction what the Lord had given. Hence the severe judgment. The quails typify Christ. Professing Christendom speaks of Christ, but there is no repentance, no self-judgment, only the form of godliness, but the power is denied. The judgment of God must rest upon such. Kibroth-Hattaavah means "graves of lust."

3. The Rebellion of Miriam and Aaron

CHAPTER 12

1. Miriam and Aaron speak against Moses (12:1-3)
2. The interference of the Lord (12:4-9)
3. Miriam leprous (12:10)

4. Aaron's confession and intercession (12:11-12)
5. Moses' prayer and Miriam's restoration (12:13-16)

Open rebellion against Moses by his own brother and sister is the next step in the story of failure. Envy was at the bottom of it. The words Miriam and Aaron spoke reveal that they aimed at Moses' position. Miriam was a prophetess (Exod. 15:20). Aaron had the dignity of the priesthood. Pride, the crime of the devil (1 Tim. 3:6), lead them to speak against their own brother. Miriam was the leader in this rebellion, for her name stands first and the judgment falls upon her. She may have been moved to jealousy by the elders having received the Spirit and exercising the gift of prophecy among the people. And Aaron reveals the weakness of the flesh. It is the second time he failed in this manner. He could not resist the clamoring of the people when they demanded the golden calf and here he cannot resist his sister, who became the willing instrument of Satan, like the first woman (1 Tim. 2:14). Moses had a Cushite woman for wife. This typifies the great truth of the union of Christ and the church, that Gentiles were to be joint-heirs and joint-members of the same body. But it seems that the Cushite wife of Moses was only a subterfuge and an attempt to reflect upon the moral character of the man of God, whose position they envied.

(If this thought is followed out in its dispensational meaning, it becomes very interesting. The natural relations objected to this union, as the Jews were moved with jealousy when the gospel was preached to the Gentiles and the Gentiles believed. The book of Acts bears abundant testimony to this fact.)

"And the Lord heard it." Magnificent words these! and the Lord also said, "Wherefore then were ye not afraid to speak against my servant Moses?" It is a serious thing to speak against any servant of God. The Lord will always guard those who serve Him and vindicate their character. Moses did not take the case in his own hands. He did not answer back. His gracious character stands out in majestic greatness. How hard it is for a man who holds a high and honored position to bear any attack in silence and not to open his mouth! Moses kept silent, for he was very meek above all the men which were upon the face of the earth. In this he is a blessed type of Him who was meek and lowly; who reviled not when He was reviled, who opened not His mouth.

But did Moses really write the third verse? And if he did, does this not prove that he spoke well of himself? Some claim that this is an addition to the text. "The self-praise on the part of Moses which many have discovered in this description of his character, and on account of which some even of the earlier expositors regarded this verse as a later gloss, whilst more recent critics have used it as an argument against the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch, is not an expression of vain self display, or a glorification of his own gifts and excellences which he prided himself upon possessing above all others. It is simply a statement which was indispensable to a full and correct interpretation of all the circumstances and which was made quite objectively with reference to the character which Moses had not given to himself, but had acquired through the grace of God." (Keil and Delitzsch, The Pentateuch.) This fully meets the difficulty.

And Jehovah speaks well of His servant Moses. He is declared faithful. With him He speaks and the similitude of Jehovah he is to behold. Compare with Hebrews 3:5-6. A greater than Moses is here! Christ is faithful as Son over God's house. Aaron confesses his sin and Miriam's sin. She is leprous and excluded from the congregation of Israel, where she tried to be the leader, but graciously restored at the appointed time as the result of the prayer of Moses. And may we not read here Israel's story, leprous now, but some day healed and restored?

4. At Kadesh-Barnea and Israel's Unbelief

CHAPTER 13

1. The command to search out the land (13:1-3)
2. The names of the spies (13:4-16)
3. Directions given (13:17-20)
4. Their explorations (13:21-25)

5. The report they brought (13:26-33)

The crisis is reached with this chapter. The events of the preceding chapters are the prelude to the complete failure and disaster. To understand the situation we must consult Deut. 1:21-24. Moses spoke in faith when he said, "Behold, the Lord thy God hath set the land before thee; go up and possess it, as the Lord God of thy fathers hath said unto thee; fear not, neither be discouraged." And the people's answer was that men be sent to search out the land. It was unbelief once more. They wanted to see first before they acted upon the Word of God. The saying also pleased Moses. No doubt he asked the Lord and received an answer from Him, which is recorded in the opening verses of this chapter.

Leading men are selected to act as spies. Reuben here stands first, Simeon follows, Levi is left out, for the Levites were not to have an inheritance in the land, Judah (praise) is the third. Caleb, the son of Jephunneh, who represents the tribe of Judah is here mentioned for the first time. Caleb means "brave," "whole hearted." Joshua's name is given also as "Oshea." Oshea means "saviour" and Joshua is "Jehovah is Saviour." The name of Joshua is found some 250 times in the Bible. He is the type of the Lord Jesus Christ. The name "Jesus" is the Greek equivalent. Caleb and Joshua were the only two in the whole company who trusted In Jehovah. And Jehovah rewarded them for their faith. Another interesting name is "Sethur" (verse 13). His name means "mysterious." The four letters of the name of Sethur give the number 666. He may have been the leader of the opposition, as Antichrist has this number (Rev. 13).

They found the land exactly as it had been described. "We came unto the land whither thou sentest us, and surely it floweth with milk and honey; and this is the fruit of it." They brought a great cluster of grapes, pomegranates and figs. These tell us of spiritual food and service, which is for those who possess the land, our heavenly portion in Christ. They could not deny that Jehovah's promise was true. They carried the evidences of it upon their shoulders while they carried unbelief in their hearts. They looked at the children of Anak, the giants, which dwelled in the land and not to Jehovah, who had delivered them from the Egyptians. If they had reckoned with the Lord and trusted Him, not they, but the giants would have appeared to them as grasshoppers. Caleb said in faith, "Let us go up at once and possess it." Their unbelieving hearts refused and declared, "We are not able to go up." They brought an evil report of the land. The Hebrew for "bringing up an evil report" is in Prov. 10:18 translated "uttering a slander." Unbelief slanders God; it is an insult to the Lord.

And all this has many lessons for us. The church is called to possess a heavenly portion. This is typified by Canaan. Christendom has made a worse failure than Israel by not entering into the inheritance and by turning back to the world. And besides this, there are the lessons connected with our individual experience.

CHAPTER 14

The Rebellion of the People, Moses' Intercession and the Divine Sentence

1. The rebellion (14:1-10)
2. The intercession of Moses (14:11-25)
3. The divine sentence (14:26-39)
4. The presumption of the people and the defeat (14:40-45)

The words of unbelief of the ten spies yielded an awful harvest among the people. The camp was transformed into a camp of despair, weeping and crying during the night. Outspoken rebellion against Moses and Aaron was heard on all sides. Worse than that took place; they accused Jehovah of deception. Such is unbelief. They are ready to select a captain and march back to Egypt. Moses, Aaron, Joshua and Caleb stand alone among the hundreds of thousands of murmuring, rebellious Israelites and the mixed multitude. They fell on their faces, no doubt in the attitude of prayer and worship, to tell the Lord. They tried to stem the swelling tide of rebellion. Read the supplementary words in Deut. 1:29-3 1. "Jehovah is with us!" This was the word of cheer and comfort. Their answer was the stones with which they were ready to stone the servants of the Lord. Unbelief had robbed them of all reason, blinded their eyes and rushed them into despair and prompted them to become murderers. Beautiful is the scene of Moses' intercession. He stands out as a striking type of

our great Mediator, the Lord Jesus Christ. Jehovah's offer to Moses to make a new start after destroying the rebels and to make Moses a greater nation, even than Israel, is rejected. He does not want glory for himself, but he is jealous for Jehovah's name and glory. And in the intercession he reminds Jehovah of His own words He had spoken to him when on the mountain (Exod. 34:5-9). And upon this magnificent intercession Jehovah said, "I have pardoned according to thy word." Another, our ever blessed Lord, has secured forgiveness for His shining people. Grace now reigns through righteousness. Connected with this forgiveness is the divine declaration that the earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord. The grace which has secured pardon will yet establish glory on this earth. In spite of Israel's failure and the failure of man in this dispensation of grace, glory must ultimately cover this earth. This will be in the day when our Lord is revealed in all His glory. The measure of Israel's sin is full. They had tempted the Lord ten times (Exod. 14:11-12; 15:23-24; 16:2; 16:20; 16:27; 17:1-3; 22; Num. 11:1; 11:4; 14:2). The divine sentence is pronounced. "Your carcasses shall fall in this wilderness, and all that were numbered among you, according to your whole number, from twenty years old and upward, who have murmured against me." Only Caleb and Joshua are an exception. Up to now they had been pilgrims, but now they became wanderers (verse 33). The ten spies were carried away by the plague. Their unbelief resulted in the disaster which came upon all the people as they were the first witnesses of the divine displeasure. "They could not enter in because of unbelief" (Heb. 3:19). And Christendom in its failure to lay hold in faith of the heavenly calling and heavenly possession, has lost its pilgrim character and has become the wanderer, minding earthly things. Another failure follows. The divine sentence pronounced upon them resulted in mourning and a lip-confession, we have sinned." True repentance and self-judgment there was not. They tried to make their error good in their own strength and they attempted to go up without the ark and without Moses. "Whereas at first they had refused to enter upon the conflict with the Canaanites through their unbelief in the might of the promise of God, now, through unbelief in the severity of the judgment of God, they resolved to engage in the conflict by their own power, and without the help of God, and to cancel the old sin of unbelieving despair through the new sin of presumptuous confidence" (Dr. F. Delitzsch). And Christendom, stripped of its power, tries to meet the giants of sin and wickedness in the same way, only to suffer defeat in all their attempts.

5. Various Laws, the Sabbath-Breaker, and the Tassels on the Garments

CHAPTER 15

1. Concerning offerings in the land (15:1-16)
2. The second communication concerning offerings (15:17-31)
3. The Sabbath-breaker (15:32-36)
4. The tassels on the garments (15:37-41)

The historical account is here interrupted. What the critics have to say about this chapter speaking of it as an evidence of the patchwork of different persons, we care not to follow. Our space is too valuable for that. The chapter is beautifully in order at this point. God gave two communications to Moses (verses 1 and 17). In the foreground of these communications stand the comforting assurance, "When ye come into the land." Jehovah assured them that in spite of all their failure He would give them the land and that He would bring them there. While the great mass died in the wilderness they received nevertheless the assurance that the rest would reach that land. And then they would bring the sacrifices and offerings. God's faithfulness stands here in contrast with man's failure. We cannot enter into the details of this chapter. The offerings speak of Christ as they always do. The stranger is also mentioned (verses 14-16). There was to be one law and one custom for Israel and for the stranger among them. The stranger is placed upon the same level with the Jew. While in Exod. 12:48 the circumcision of the stranger who would keep Passover is commanded, nothing is said here of this rite as touching the stranger. And this is not without meaning.

"Israel had forfeited everything. The rebellious generation was to be set aside and cut off; but God's eternal purpose of grace must stand, and all His promises be fulfilled. All Israel shall be saved; they shall possess the land; they shall offer pure offerings, pay their vows, and taste the joy of the kingdom. On what ground? On the ground of sovereign mercy. Well, it is on the self same ground that 'the stranger' shall be brought in; and not only brought in, but 'as ye are, so shall the stranger be before the Lord'" (C.H. Mackintosh).

All will find its final great fulfillment in the day when wandering Israel is restored to the land. And that day seems no longer far off. God will keep His promises, for His gifts and calling are without repentance. The annotations in Leviticus will help in understanding verses 22-31. The burnt offering and the sin offering typify the atoning death of our Lord. The presumptuous sin mentioned in verses 30-31 is illustrated by the case of the Sabbath-breaker. And there is a deeper lesson connected with it. Rest is procured through the finished work of Christ. The sinner who refuses this offered rest and passes it by, substituting for it his own works, acts presumptuously and will be cut off. He has despised the word and the work of Jehovah. It is the "anathema" of the Epistle to the Galatians.

The tassels of blue, the heavenly color, (in Hebrew 'Tsitsith'; still worn by orthodox Jews in literal fulfillment of the command) were to remind them of the commandments so that they would do them and not go after strange things. It was a help to a separated, a holy life. May we be constantly reminded by the Word of God of an holy and heavenly calling and be delivered from worldliness.

6. The Rebellion of Korah

CHAPTER 16

1. The rebellion of Korah (16:1-19)
2. The punishment (16:20-35)
3. Eleazar and his work (16:36-40)
4. The murmuring of the whole congregation (16:41-43)
5. The staying of the plague (16:44-50)

The history is now resumed and we have the worst episode of Israel's history in the wilderness before us. We have seen and followed the steps downward and toward this fearful rebellion and the terrible punishment which followed. It started with unbelief. This tragedy is mentioned in the New Testament. In the Epistle of Jude we read, "Woe unto them! for they have gone in the way of Cain, and ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward, and perished in the gainsayings of Korah." This little Epistle gives a prophetic picture of the apostasy of the professing people of God during our age. This apostasy began in the days of Jude and is now fully developed in the end of the age. Unbelief is given in Jude's Epistle as the starting point of the departure from God (verse 5), and Israel's unbelief is used as the picture of the unbelief of Christendom. Besides Cain (the one who rejects the sacrifice) Balaam and Korah are mentioned as types of the apostasy. The consummation of the apostasy is opposition to Christ, His blessed office-work and glory. And this seems to have been reached in our day. The opposition will continue and become more outspoken, more widespread, till the judgment by fire in the day of the Lord falls upon the apostates.

The leader of the rebellion was Korah, a Kohathite. It will be remembered that the Kohathites had the choicest service among the Levites; they carried the very best upon their shoulders, the sacred things of worship. The departure from God and rebellion against His Word often begins with those who claim the office of teachers and preachers. Such is the case in our times. Korah's name means "hail; ice." May not this indicate the coldness of his heart? Even so the apostate teachers of the last days, mere hirelings like Balaam, are only natural men, not having the Spirit (Jude 19). Their mouths may speak great swelling words, their hearts have never tasted the love of Christ; they know Him not, or they would not betray Him.

The sons of Reuben, Dathan and Abiram, and On, besides two hundred and fifty, joined the revolt. Their attempt was a complete overthrow of the constitution which had been given to Israel and the establishment of another order and other leaders. They themselves sought recognition and Korah aimed at the priesthood of Aaron and would have it himself. Verses 8-10 indicate this. Korah and his associates aimed at God's appointed high priest. And Moses put this serious matter in the hands of the Lord.

Moses and Aaron could not deal with this rebellion. The glory of the Lord appeared. Divine judgment falls upon them. Dathan and Abiram, their wives, their sons and their little ones, besides the ringleader Korah, are swallowed up by the

earth and went down alive into the pit. (It is also foreshadowing the judgment to come upon the apostates when the Lord appears the second time. See Rev. 19:20.) The two hundred and fifty who had taken presumptuously censers with incense, thereby defying the priesthood, are consumed by fire. It must be noted that the sons of Korah did not perish. A careful reading of verses 27-33 will bring out this fact and chapter 26:11 settles it beyond a doubt, "notwithstanding the children of Korah died not." Sovereign grace saved the sons of Korah from the awful fate of the father. They were saved from the pit. Mercy was remembered in wrath. What grace bestowed upon them may be learned by consulting the following passages: 1 Chronicles 6:54-67; 9:19-32; 26:1-20; 2 Chron. 23:3, 4, 19; 31:14-18. They had the cities of refuge, were keepers of the gates of the tabernacle; were over the chambers and treasuries of the house of the Lord; the instruments of the sanctuary, the wine, oil, etc., were in their charge; they were mighty men of valor; strong men; they were the royal guards. And more than that, the Holy Spirit inspired them to write some of the beautiful Psalms. Read Psalm 84, "How amiable are thy tabernacles, O LORD of hosts." What meaning this Psalm has when studied in the light of the story of Korah! They were faithful, devoted in their service because they knew that they had been saved from the pit. And we have the same deliverance and knowledge of it. Should we be less faithful and devoted?

Interesting is Eleazar's priesthood and ministry. As the third son of Aaron and in his ministry here he typifies the priesthood of Christ. The censers are kept as a memorial and as a warning. This ministry of Eleazar and Aaron staying the plague with the censer of incense, when the whole congregation revolted, is a confirmation of the divinely appointed priesthood and its efficacy. The preservation of the sinning, murmuring people depended upon the exercise of the priesthood. Blessed be God for Him who has made atonement, and whose priesthood in the presence of God keeps His people.

What higher criticism has made of this may be learned by the following statement:

"From the plain account of the text it appears that Aaron separated the men and women suffering with the plague from those not yet attacked, and then he piled the censer with incense and swung it between the hosts, so that not a germ in the air could pass over from the plague-stricken to those not yet attacked by the disease.

"The disinfecting of the air and separating of the sick from the well was dictated by Moses, who had learned in Egypt all the science of his day, and the Egyptian priests were master of many secrets which we have to learn over again." How absurd!

7. The Priesthood of Aaron Confirmed

CHAPTER 17

1. The divine command (17:1-5)
2. The rods before Jehovah (17:6-7)
3. The blossoming rod of Aaron (17:8-13)

Little comment is needed on this chapter. The blossoming and fruit bearing rod of Aaron is another confirmation of the priesthood. Standing among the dying, "making an atonement," he is a type of Christ in His atoning work. The blossoming rod is the beautiful figure of resurrection. The rods were absolutely dead, not a sign of life was there. And Aaron's rod received life during that night and life was there in its abundance, buds, blossoms and almonds. Christ risen from the dead, the firstfruits of them that slept, is here blessedly foreshadowed. It was life from the dead and finds its application too in connection with the sinner who is dead in trespasses and sins, while it also foreshadows the spiritual resurrection of Israel. The murmurings of the children of Israel were taken away by the rod of Aaron preserved before the testimony or else they would have died. The blossoming rod preserved was a provision for the wilderness journey. In Hebrews we read, "Wherein was the golden pot of manna, and Aaron's rod that budded, and the tables of the covenant" (Heb. 9:4). The manna God's people need constantly in the wilderness as well as the ministry of Him who ever liveth and intercedeth for us. In 1 Kings 8:9 we read, "There was nothing in the ark save the two tables of stone." They were then in the land. When

we reach our eternal home the manna and the intercession of a merciful high priest are no longer needed.

The rebellion of Korah yielded after all something. It added two things to the tabernacle, the plates from the censers for the covering of the altar and Aaron's blossoming rod.

8. Priesthood and Iniquity and the Recompense of the Priesthood

CHAPTER 18

1. The iniquity borne by the priesthood (18:1-7)
2. The recompense of the priests (18:8-19)
3. The inheritance of the priests (18:20-32)

"Aaron, thou and thy sons and thy father's house with thee shall bear the iniquity of the sanctuary, and thou and thy sons with thee shall bear the iniquity of your priesthood." This is evidently in answer to the question, "Shall we be consumed with dying?" (17:13) The ministry of the priests and the Levites keeping the charge of the tabernacle and the charge of the altar "that there be no wrath any more upon the children of Israel" (verse 5). The priesthood which had been the object of rebellion was to be their security. If it had not been for the priestly service they would have all been consumed by the wrath of God. Christ is again here in view, He who ever liveth and intercedeth for His own people; Jesus Christ the righteous, who is the propitiation for our sins. He bore the iniquity and the wrath Himself.

The recompense of the priests is fully described in the second section of this chapter. In conclusion of it we read, "It is a covenant of salt forever before the Lord unto thee and to thy seed with thee." It is an indissoluble and inviolable covenant. The recompense of the priest and his house must be applied to the reward which Christ has, the joy which is His and His people, His house, sharing it with Him. The two sections harmonize beautifully. Aaron had no inheritance in the land. His inheritance is the Lord. "I am thy part and thine inheritance among the children of Israel." The Levites had no inheritance in the land, but received tithes. Aaron's was the better portion, and such is ours in Christ.

9. The Red Heifer and the Water of Purification

CHAPTER 19

1. The provision appointed: The red heifer and the ashes (19:1-10)
2. The use of the water of purification (19:11-22)

This is a most interesting chapter. The ordinance of the red heifer and the water of purification is nowhere mentioned in Leviticus. The day of atonement, so prominent in Leviticus, is not referred to in Numbers at all. The provision of the water of purification is characteristic of the wilderness book. The people were dying by the thousands, and means had to be provided for the cleansing of those who became defiled by contact with the dead. The ashes of the red heifer used in the way as described in this chapter were for the cleansing of the defiled. Without following the details of this new ordinance in the wilderness we point out briefly its typical meaning. That the red heifer is a type of Christ no one can fail to see. "For if the blood of bulls and goats and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?" (Heb. 9:13-14) This fully warrants the typical application. The red heifer was to be without spot, wherein is no blemish is the type of Christ, without spot and blemish. It had to be an heifer upon which never came a yoke. A yoke is put on an animal to restrain the wild nature, to bring it to subjection. Our blessed Lord needed no yoke, for He came willingly. "Lo, I come to do Thy will." Nowhere is the color of a sacrificial animal mentioned but here. Red is the color of blood. It is the type of His obedience unto death. The heifer was slain without the camp. So Christ suffered without the camp (Heb. 13:12). The sprinkling of the blood seven times toward the tabernacle is the type of the blood of atonement. Everything of the red heifer was consumed by fire and into the fire was cast cedar

wood, hyssop and scarlet. These things typify the world. (See cleansing of the leper in Lev. 14). The world and all its glory is judged in the judgment of the cross.

Here is the essential difference between this and all other offerings: it is an offering once offered which (ideally, at least) never needs to be renewed. In all other cases, if any man sinned, fresh blood had to be shed, a fresh sacrifice to be made; but in this, the virtue remained of what had already been offered: the ashes were the memorial of an already accepted work. (F.W Grant)

The ashes of the red heifer were gathered up by a clean man and put outside of the camp in a clean place. Water was used with the ashes and was sprinkled upon the defiled persons, upon the tent and all the vessels. This was the mode of their purification. It is all so full and rich that it would take many pages to explain all the blessed lessons connected with it. We need constant cleansing because we pass through the wilderness, the world, and death is stamped upon everything. The death of Christ has made provision for our cleansing, as it has provided for the removal of our guilt. The living water is the type of the Holy Spirit. Defilement with the world interrupts communion with God. The death of Christ and the work of the Holy Spirit through the Word cleanse us from that defilement. See 1 John 1.

"If we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin" (1 John 1). But if we fail to walk in the light--if we forget, and, in our forgetfulness touch the unclean thing, how is our communion to be restored? Only by the removal of the defilement. And how is this to be effected? By the application to our hearts and consciences of the precious truth of the death of Christ. The Holy Ghost produces self-judgment, and brings to our remembrance the truth that Christ suffered death for that defilement which we so lightly and indifferently contract. It is not a fresh sprinkling of the blood of Christ--a thing unknown in Scripture--but the remembrance of His death brought home, in fresh power, to the contrite heart, by the ministry of the Holy Ghost.

10. At Kadesh in the Fortieth Year: Murmuring and Conquest

CHAPTER 20

1. The death of Miriam (20:1)
2. The murmuring of the people (20:2-5)
3. The divine instruction (20:6-8)
4. Moses' and Aaron's failure (20:9-13)
5. Edom's refusal (20:14-22)
6. The death of Aaron (20:23-29)

Between the nineteenth and twentieth chapter lies the unrecorded period of almost 38 years, the wandering of the children of Israel in the wilderness. In chapter 33 we find their different camps mentioned. In verse 38 of that chapter we read, "And Aaron the priest went up into the mount Hor at the commandment of the Lord, and died there, in the fortieth year after the children of Israel were come out of the land of Egypt, in the first day of the fifth month." The death of Aaron is recorded in the twentieth chapter. It was therefore about 37 years and six months when the spies had been sent out and their arrival in the desert of Zin. The critics have made this unrecorded period the occasion of attack upon the Mosaic authorship of this book. They suppose that the last historian who wrote on the Pentateuch left out a great deal of the history of the forty years wanderings. There was nothing to record but the scenes of death and sorrow; the entire theocratic covenant was suspended, and therefore theocratic history has no occurrence to record. It is even so now during the present age, during which Israel is set aside and wanders among the nations of the world.

During all these years of wandering in the wilderness circumcision was not carried out (Joshua 5:2-5). What else happened during this unrecorded period in the wilderness may be learned from a number of passages. "But the house of Israel rebelled against Me in the wilderness; they walked not in My statutes, and they despised My judgments, which if a man do, he shall live in them; and My sabbaths they greatly polluted. Then I said, I would pour out My fury upon them in

the wilderness to consume them" (Ezek. 20:13, etc.), "Have ye not offered unto Me sacrifices and offerings in the wilderness forty years, O house of Israel? But ye have borne the tabernacle of your Moloch and Chiun your images, the star of your god, which ye made to yourselves" (Amos 5:25, 26). "Then God turned, and gave them up to worship the host of heaven, as it is written in the book of the prophets, O ye house of Israel, have ye offered to me slain beasts and sacrifices by the space of forty years in the wilderness? Yea, ye took up the tabernacle of Moloch, and the star of your god Remphan (worship of Saturn) figures which you made to worship them" (Acts 7:42, 43). They continued in stubbornness and rebellion and became idolaters. But oh! the mercy of God! He continued to feed them and gave them water. "These forty years the Lord thy God hath been with thee, thou hast lacked nothing" (Deut. 2:7). "And I have led you forty years in the wilderness; your clothes are not waxen old upon you, and thy shoe is not waxen old upon thy foot" (Deut. 19:5). What marvellous compassion! And thus He still deals in mercy with His wayward wandering people. (Psalm 90, standing at the beginning of the fourth section of the book of Psalms (Numbers) was written by Moses, no doubt, when he saw them dying.)

This chapter, which brings us to the last year of their journey, begins with death and ends with death. In the middle we find the record of the failure of Moses and Aaron.

Miriam is the first to die, and her brother Aaron followed her four months later. Hundreds of thousands had passed away; their carcasses fell in the wilderness. And the new generation which has come up also murmured like their fathers and brethren. Such is the heart of man! "Would God that we had died when our brethren died before the Lord!" The Lord commanded Moses to take the rod and speak to the rock, and He promised that the rock should give water. No word of displeasure came from the lips of the gracious Lord, who had compassion with His people. Moses took the rod from before the Lord as He had commanded him. But he also took the rod in his hand with which he had smitten the rock, according to the Lord's command in Exodus 17:5-6. But the words Moses spoke were far from being gracious. "Hear now ye rebels; must we fetch you water out of this rock?" God had not called His people rebels. And Moses' words are far from meek. He makes it appear as if he could supply the water. "They angered Him also at the waters of strife, so that it went ill with Moses for their sakes. Because they provoked his spirit so that he spake unadvisedly with his lips" (Ps. 106:32-33). And greater still was his failure when he took his rod and not the blossoming rod of Aaron and smote the rock twice. The first smiting of the rock in Exodus 17 with Moses' rod, the rod of judgment is the type of the death of Christ. This should not be repeated; one smiting was enough just as the death of Christ once for all has opened the floodgates of divine grace. Aaron's rod, the type of Christ in resurrection, was sufficient, and but the word spoken would bring forth the water. But the anger of Moses marred this scene. He completely lost sight of the gracious Lord and misrepresented Him by his action. "Moses failed, departed from the rich grace of God, fell back on judgment, and judgment accordingly dealt with him." It was a grievous sin, and on account of it he was not fit to lead Israel into the land. And Aaron, equally weak in faith, shared Moses' fate. Edom then bars the way for the hosts of Israel and would not let them pass through their land. And Aaron dies on Mount Hor, after Moses had, in obedience to the Lord, removed his priestly garments and put them upon Eleazar.

CHAPTER 21

Murmuring and Conquest

1. Opposition of King Arad (21:1-3)
2. Murmuring and the fiery serpents (21:4-7)
3. The serpent of brass (21:8-9)
4. Journeying and singing again (21:10-20)
5. Sihon and Og (21:21-35)

The first victory is here recorded. The Lord delivered Canaanites into the hands of Israel, and according to their vow they utterly destroyed them and their cities.

But in spite of this victory the people became again discouraged because of the way, and they spoke against God and

against Moses. "Our soul loatheth this light bread." Here we may trace our own individual experience. As one has said, "A time of victory has to be watched, lest it be a precursor of danger. A time of defeat on the other hand constantly prepares one for a fresh and greater blessing from God. so rich is His grace."

The punishment by the fiery serpents follows. Jehovah provided a remedy in the serpent of brass,* which was put on a pole.

* "It is less easy to arrive at the interpretation of the serpent that was lifted up, in its purely symbolical character, that is, to ascertain the aspect which it presents, when regarded from an Old Testament point of view. The serpent appears to have been almost universally received by antiquity as a symbol of healing, or the healing art; this symbolization probably originated when it was ascertained that some of the most efficacious remedies of nature are precisely the most dangerous poisons. When we, accordingly, regard the serpent, in the present instance, as a symbol of healing, we obtain from such a view a bond of union between the symbol and the type; we are, also, enabled by this view to explain the fact that idolatrous worship was rendered to the brazen serpent till the reign of Hezekiah, who destroyed it" (2 Kings 18:4) J.H. Kurtz.

"And it came to pass that if a serpent had bitten any man when he beheld the serpent of brass, he lived." Our Lord has given us the meaning of this remedy. "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of man be lifted up, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:14, 15). The type is so simple and clear that we refrain from enlarging on it. Dr. Martin Luther in one of his sermons on John 3 made the following statements: "in the first place, the serpent which Moses was to make was to be of brass or copper, that is to say, of a reddish color (although without poison) like the persons who were red and burning with heat because of the bite of the fiery serpents. In the second place, the brazen serpent was to be set up on a pole for a sign. And in the third place, those who desired to recover from the fiery serpent's bite and live, were to look at the brazen serpent upon the pole, otherwise they could not recover or live." In these three points we find the typical character of the brazen serpent. "God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh" (Rom. 8:3). "He hath made Him to be sin for us who knew no sin" (2 Cor. 5:21). This took place when Christ was lifted up, when He hung on the cross. And now "there is life in a look at the Crucified One." By His sacrificial death, life, even eternal life is the present and eternal possession of the sinner who believes on the Son of God.

And now we see them journeying on, healed and victorious. Nine places are mentioned. The last is Pisgah, from which they get a vision of the land and can look back over the desert lands which are now forever behind them. Two songs are recorded. Israel begins now to sing again. There were no songs in the wilderness, nothing but murmurings. The first time they sang was at the Red Sea, and now as they are nearing the land they break out once more in song. The first is a battle-song, which speaks of victory; the second song is on account of the water from the digged wells. Spiritually considered, the victory and the abundant water may well be brought in connection with Him who is typified in the brazen serpent. There is not alone life by faith in Him, but God gives us freely with Him all things. There is victory, there is the abundance of water, the gift of the Holy Spirit. The princes digged the well. But how? It was not a laborious task. They did it with their staves. It is the sweet picture of grace supplying the need. It seems as if the brazen serpent incident is a marked turning point. And in a future day the remnant of Israel shall look upon Him whom they have pierced (Zech. 12:10). "Behold He cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see Him, and they also which pierced Him." Then Israel will be healed, have victory and sing a new song. Read the song prophetically given in Isaiah 12. "Therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation." And then a still greater victory is won. Israel conquers Sihon, king of the Amorites, and Og the giant-king of Bashan. Both typify the powers of darkness in the world in their resistance to God's people. But victory is on our side because God is for us and with us.

Numerous critical points in the text we have to pass by. We mention but one in connection with the book of the wars of Jehovah. This book has been declared to be of different origin. The critics have made much of it by the fragmentary character of verses 14-16. Some state "that it is a work dating from the time of Jehoshaphat, containing the early history of Israel." All these statements are mere theories and invention. The book of the wars of Jehovah was undoubtedly a

collection of odes of the time of Moses himself in celebration of the wonderful and glorious acts of the Lord. These critical points and questions raised are of no importance whatever.

III. EVENTS IN THE PLAIN OF MOAB FACING THE LAND

1. Balak and Balaam and Balaam's Parables

CHAPTER 22

1. Balak's message to Balaam (22:1-20)
2. The journey of Balaam (22:21-35)
3. Balaam with Balak (22:36-41)

The last section of the wilderness book begins with the story of Balak and Balaam. An enemy, the Gentile Balaam, has to speak the words of prophecy, predicting wonderful blessing and glory for the hosts of Israel. The advancing Israelites inspired terror and Balak (waster), the king of Moab, not willing to meet Israel in open battle, sent for Balaam (devourer of the people) to put his powerful magic spell upon Israel and curse them.

Balaam, originally a heathen magician of an ordinary class, was, very probably (like Jethro, Exodus 18) and Rahab (Joshua 2) conducted to the acknowledgement of Jehovah by the overpowering influence of the wonderful deeds of God in Egypt and in the wilderness, which made a deep impression on all of the surrounding nations (Exodus 15:14; Joshua 5:1). He resolved to serve Jehovah and to perform his enchantments henceforth in the name of Jehovah. Analogous instances in the New Testament occur in Matt. 12:27; Acts 19:13; and, particularly, in Acts, ch. 8, which relates the case of Simon the sorcerer, the Balaam of the New Testament. Such a combination of heathenish magic with the service of Jehovah, could not be permanent, and the experience of Balaam would necessarily soon compel him to abandon the one or the other. When the message of Balak reached him, the period of decision arrived--the test was applied, and Balaam was found wanting.

Balak send gifts to Balaam, but he declined the invitation as the result of divine instructions. He could not resist the second deputation, which was more imposing than the first. God gave him permission on the condition that he was to say nothing but what God would tell him. How God's anger (not Jehovah, the covenant name) was kindled against him and the ass saw the angel of Jehovah, how the Lord opened the mouth of the ass and all the other details the reader will find in the text, so that a repetition here is not needed. Infidelity and higher criticism scoff at the incident of the speaking ass. One of their arguments is that the story of the speaking ass is disproven by the fact that Balaam carried on a conversation with the beast without expressing any astonishment at all at the occurrence. This is admirably answered by Augustinus: "Balaam was so carried away by his cupidity that he was not terrified by this miracle, and replied just as if he had been speaking to a man, when God, although He did not change the nature of the ass into that of a rational being, made it give utterance to whatever He pleased for the purpose of restraining his madness." That the ass saw the angel of the Lord first, before Balaam saw him, does not present any difficulty at all.

Naturalists tell us that irrational animals have a much keener instinctive presentiment of many natural phenomena, such as earthquakes and storms, than man. The horses, for instance, sometimes will see dangers when the rider is entirely ignorant of what is ahead.

"Jehovah opened the mouth of the ass." An omnipotent God can do this; why then should it be thought impossible? It is unbelief which makes objection to a miracle of this kind. If the occurrence did not happen, and must be classed as they Claim, with legends, what becomes of the inspiration of the New Testament? The Holy Spirit through Peter confirms the miracle (2 Peter 2:15-16).

Balaam is used in the Epistle of Jude and in the corresponding testimony in the second Epistle of Peter (chapter 2) as

well as in the message to Pergamos, as a type of the apostates in Christendom. "They ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward" (Jude 2). "Following the way of Balaam, the son of Beor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness" (2 Peter 2:15). They make merchandise of the things of God. They deny the Master, who bought them, and exercise a religious office for "filthy lucre's sake." We shall find additional information on this matter in the twenty-fifth chapter.

The Parables of Balaam

CHAPTERS 23-24

1. The first parable (23:1-10)
2. Balak's surprise and Balaam's answer (23:11-12)
3. At Zophim (23:13-17)
4. The second parable (23:18-24)
5. Balak's request and Balaam's reply (23:25-30)
6. Balaam's third parable (24:1-9)
7. Balak's anger and Balaam's firmness (24:10-14)
8. Balaam's fourth parable (24:15-24)
9. Balaam and Balak separate (24:25)

The parables of Balaam compose the first great prophetic utterance of the Bible. They are remarkable in every way. The language is sublime. The unwilling prophet is forced to say what Jehovah put into his mouth. Here is a hint on inspiration. The thoughts and revelations of Jehovah are put into Balaam's lips by the Spirit of God, so that he had to utter them. How did Moses find out what was said by Balaam? Balak would surely not report the sayings to Moses; Balaam did not tell Moses. What transpired at the different stations where Balak and Balaam were, was not known to Israel. The Holy Spirit gave the correct report of all that took place and all what was said to Moses.

These parables are of such importance and interest that we give a complete exposition and point out the prophetic meaning. The reader will find this exposition and a metrical version of these parables at the close of these annotations on Numbers.

But what was said of Israel is also true, spiritually, of the church. We wish all our readers would follow this thought. Israel was a separated people; so is the church. God keeps His covenant with Israel and does not go back on His Word; the same is true of His spiritual people. He does not behold iniquity or perverseness in His redeemed people; this speaks of justification. God is with His people to bless them and give them complete victory over all their enemies, These are but brief hints.

2. Israel's Sin with the Daughters of Moab: Phinehas

CHAPTER 25

1. The transgression and the anger of Jehovah (25:1-5)
2. Phinehas' action (25:6-9)
3. Phinehas and his reward (25:10-15)
4. The Midianites to be smitten (26:16-18)

The sin of Israel was the result of Balaam's work. He could not turn Jehovah from Israel (no enemy can), but he could turn Israel from God. While we do not read here that the fornication and idolatry into which Israel fell was Balaam's work, elsewhere this information is given. See Numbers 31:16 and Rev. 2:14. The stumbling block, which this instrument of Satan put into the way of Israel, by which they committed fornication and idolatry, were the daughters of Moab. Pergamos in the second chapter of Revelation is prophetically that period of the church which began with Constantine the Great.

Then the church left the ground of separation and was wedded to the world. Spiritual fornication was committed and idolatry followed in its train. This was Satan's work as much as Balaam's act was. And today we see Christendom in the sad condition of Israel at Shittim. Separation is given up completely. Judgment will be visited ere long upon apostate, adulterous Christendom as it fell upon Israel. In the plague 24,000 died. In 1 Cor. 10:8, we read, "Neither let us commit fornication as some of them committed, and fell in one day three and twenty thousand." The record in Numbers speaks of a previous punishment when the heads of the transgressors were hung up before the Lord against the sun. Traditions among the Jews states that the number of those who were thus punished was a thousand, so that only 23,000 perished in the plague. In verse 9 this thousand is reckoned in, while in Corinthians they are left out.

Then followed an outrageous act of defiance (verse 6). The name of the Midianitish woman was Cozbi (my lie). By the zeal of Phinehas the people were saved from further judgment and Jehovah was glorified. He was zealous for His God and made an atonement for the children of Israel. He received for reward an everlasting priesthood. It is another type of Christ in His righteousness and holy zeal for God.

3. The Second Numbering

CHAPTER 26

1. The command to number (26:1-4)
2. The census taken (26:5-50)
3. The total number (26:51)
4. The inheritance (26:52-56)
5. The Levites (26:57-62)
6. The new generation (26:63-65)

The reader will find the comparison of these two numberings in the annotations of the first chapter. The increase and decrease of the different tribes may be learned by consulting that table. The many names in their meaning teach many lessons of interest. At the close of the chapter we have the fact stated that the penal sentence which God had pronounced upon the people who came out of Egypt (Num. 14:29, 38) had been executed. God kept His Word, as He always will.

"Of the vast total of upwards of 600,000 then enumerated, Caleb and Joshua alone had their names registered in the present census. This, however, is to be understood with a qualification. It is evident from Josh. 14:1; 22:13, that both Eleazar and Phinehas did actually enter into the promised land. How is this consistent with the statement here made? We reply that the sentence of exclusion applied to the other tribes which were enumerated on two former occasions, and in which the Levites were not embraced. We do not read that they had any share in the transaction which brought the divine denunciation upon the mass of the people. This tribe did not, like the others, send a spy into Canaan, nor does it appear that it concurred in the general murmuring which the report of the spies occasioned."

4. The Daughters of Zelophehad, the Death of Moses and His Successor Announced

CHAPTER 27

1. The daughters of Zelophehad (27:1-11)
2. Moses' death announced and his request (27:12-17)
3. Joshua appointed (27:18-23)

The question of the daughters of Zelophehad was concerning their inheritance. Their father had died in the wilderness and there were no sons. They expected and claimed a possession among the brethren of their father. They fully counted on the Lord and His goodness, though their case was not met by the previous instructions. "It is impossible for God to be like a poor man, who says, 'You expect more good than I am prepared to bestow.' God could not make such an answer. He

always gives more. Whatever may be the petition of faith, the answer of grace never fails to go beyond it." The answer given to Moses was that they were surely to receive their inheritance.

Moses' departure is announced by Jehovah. He cannot go over Jordan on account of his sin. But the Lord graciously permits him to go upon the mountain and view the land of promise in all its glory. Beautiful is Moses' answer to Jehovah. He does not speak of himself, nor does he think of his own interest. The people of God and their need are upon his heart. If they are taken care of he is satisfied and content with his own lot. What a blessed spirit of unselfishness he manifested! Joshua is the appointed successor, who is to lead the people into the land as Moses had led them out of Egypt. Moses and Joshua are both the types of Christ. Verse 21 is the key to understand the typical significance. "And he (Joshua) shall stand before Eleazar, the priest, who shall ask counsel for him." Aaron's priesthood, as we learned in Exodus and Leviticus, is the type of Christ in His sacrificial work on the cross. Eleazar, his successor, typifies the resurrection--heavenly priesthood of Christ. Moses is in different ways the type of Christ, as we have seen in his official and personal character; Joshua is the type of Christ in Spirit, who acts in His people by the Holy Spirit. Therefore Joshua has to stand before Eleazar the priest. He had, so to speak, to depend upon Eleazar, as the work of the Holy Spirit in the believer is dependent on the priesthood of Christ in glory.

5. The Offerings and the Set Times

CHAPTER 28

1. The daily offerings (28:1-8)
2. The Sabbath offerings (28:9-10)
3. The monthly offerings (28:11-15)
4. The Passover (28:16-25)
5. The firstfruits (28:26-31)

CHAPTER 29

1. The blowing of trumpets (29:1-6)
2. The day of atonement (29:7-11)
3. The feast of tabernacles (29:12-16)
4. The second day offering (29:17-19)
5. The third day offering (29:20-22)
6. The fourth day offering (29:23-25)
7. The fifth day offering (29:26-28)
8. The sixth day offering (29:29-31)
9. The seventh day offering (29:32-34)
10. The eighth day offering (29:35-40)

These two chapters go together. They tell of Jehovah's portion which he is to receive in the worship of His people. The second verse reveals this. "Command the children of Israel and say unto them, My offering and My bread for My sacrifices, made by fire, for a sweet savour unto Me, shall ye observe to offer unto Me in their due seasons." Needless to say that all speaks of Christ. He is seen in all the offerings, in the lambs, the young bullocks, the ram, the meal offerings and all the others. In Christ God has found His delight. In Leviticus we saw that aspect of the different offerings by which God has met our need in Christ and His blessed work; but here Jehovah speaks of these offerings as being "My bread." The heart of God feeds, humanly speaking, upon Christ. The sweet savour-offerings are the prominent feature of these two chapters. The sin-offerings take a secondary place. As we learned in Leviticus, the offerings which are a sweet odor in the presence of God are those which typify the matchless worth and blessed devotion of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Leviticus 23 must be studied with these two chapters. The reader should turn to that chapter and see the meaning of the

different feasts as given in the annotations. We call attention to the enlarged command concerning the feast of tabernacles. Ten verses are given in Leviticus 23 to the feast of tabernacles, but in Numbers 29 not less than twenty-seven are devoted to this feast. The seven days of the entire feast are mentioned with the different sacrifices, which were to be brought. They were to be brought in the following order and numbers:

| | | | | | | | | |
|------------------|----|----------|---|------|----|-------|---|------|
| First Day..... | 13 | Bullocks | 2 | Rams | 14 | Lambs | 1 | Goat |
| Second Day..... | 12 | " | 2 | " | 14 | " | 1 | " |
| Third Day..... | 11 | " | 2 | " | 14 | " | 1 | " |
| Fourth Day..... | 10 | " | 2 | " | 14 | " | 1 | " |
| Fifth Day..... | 9 | " | 2 | " | 14 | " | 1 | " |
| Sixth Day..... | 8 | " | 2 | " | 14 | " | 1 | " |
| Seventh Day..... | 7 | " | 2 | " | 14 | " | 1 | " |

In all there are 70 bullocks, 14 rams, 98 lambs, and 7 goats. And besides these there were the daily burnt offerings and meal offerings. Why this detail in Numbers? And why should the feast of tabernacles begin on the first day with 13 bullocks and there be a gradual decline? As we learned in Leviticus, the feast of tabernacles the last of the feasts, foreshadows the millennium. The character of the millennium will therefore help us to understand some, at least, of the typical meaning of these offerings. The large number of offerings, especially the double seven in the lambs, which are offered, stand for the praise which Jehovah will receive during the age to come. But it is not perfect praise. The number thirteen on the first day is an incomplete number. It lacks one to make it perfect. And then we see that the number decreases from thirteen down to seven on the seventh day of the feast. The millennium, as we know from Revelation (chapter 20), ends in failure. There will be most likely a decline in devotion to God and full obedience to His will. A look at the above table shows that there is something which mars. The goats, only one each day, are for sin offering, for sin will be possible during the millennium, however, it will be very exceptional. The twice fourteen lambs means fulness of redemption which will be enjoyed unhindered in the coming age. The eighth day has the same offerings as the day of atonement. The eighth day in Scripture marks a new beginning; it is the day of the new creation. Following the feast, the eighth day stands for eternity. The precious work of Christ will never be forgotten in the ages to come.

6. Concerning Vows

CHAPTER 30

1. The vow of a man (30:1-2)
2. The vows of women (30:3-16)

The entire chapter treats of vows. It also has a deeper meaning. There is a sharp contrast between the vow of a man and the vows of virgins, widows or wives. The vows of women could be set aside under certain conditions. The husband or the father could disallow the vow. But if they kept their peace or if she was a widow or divorced, she had to keep the vow. It was different with the man; he was not to break his word, but to do according to all that proceeds out of his mouth.

The man who keeps his word, who does all that he vowed, typifies the Lord Jesus Christ. He has completely done the work He voluntarily bound Himself to do. The woman represents the nation Israel. They made a vow at Sinai which they could never keep. "Alas, when the gracious proffer of redemption came, though they had been even then long under the penalty of it, they refused redemption, held stubbornly to their broken contract, and remain under it today, the enduring lesson, published in every land, of what the law is for those who seek righteousness by it" (Numerical Bible).

Some day the vow under which Israel has put herself will be disallowed, then Israel is received back into favor. "And the Lord shall forgive her" (verse 8).

7. The War Against the Midianites

CHAPTER 31

1. The command to fight Midian (31:1-6)
2. The war (31:7-12)
3. The cleansing (31:13-24)
4. The spoil taken (31:25-47)
5. The oblation of the officers (31:48-54)

War is commanded next by the Lord. The Lord said to Moses, "Avenge the children of Israel of the Midianites; afterward shalt thou be gathered to thy people." This is, therefore, the last thing in the official life of Moses. This war against Midian had been commanded before (25:16-18), the execution had been delayed. It was now to be carried out and the Midianites were to suffer for the wicked thing they had done to Israel by seducing them to the idolatrous worship of Baal Peor. Phinehas, the high priest, accompanied the army of 12,000 men. They were victorious and slew the kings of Midian; Balaam also was slain (verse 8). His wish, "let me die the death of the righteous," was not granted unto him, for he remained in his wickedness.

This war of revenge has a significant meaning. The key is found in the third verse, which, literally translated, reads: "Arm some of yourselves unto the war, and let them go against Midian, to execute the vengeance of Jehovah upon Midian." There is another day of vengeance coming which will fall heavily upon the Gentile world. The Lord will avenge His people Israel and judge the nations for the sin they committed against them. Of this the prophetic Word speaks often. That day is closely linked with Israel's restoration to the land. Then the true King-Priest will appear, like Phinehas, who was with the army of Israel (Isaiah 63:1-6; 2 Thess. 1:7-9).

Purification took place and the spoil was divided. This table may be studied in connection with verses 25-47.

| | |
|-------------------------|--|
| Sheep, 675,000. | The soldiers, 337,500; therefrom to the Lord... 675. |
| | The people, 337,500; therefrom to the Levites. 6,750. |
| Beeves, 72,000. | The soldiers, 36,000; therefrom to the Lord... 72. |
| | The people, 36,000; therefrom to the Levites. 720. |
| Asses, 61,000. | The soldiers, 30,500; therefrom to the Lord... 61. |
| | The people, 30,500; therefrom to the Levites. 610. |
| Persons, 32,000. | The soldiers, 16,000; therefrom to the Lord... 32. |
| | The people, 16,000; therefrom to the Levites. 320. |

When the officers returned they discovered to their great joy that they had not lost a single man. God's power had been with them and kept them in a miraculous way. They brought a magnificent oblation. The gold they offered was brought into the tabernacle for a memorial.

8. The Tribes of Reuben, Gad, Half-Manasseh and their Portion

CHAPTER 32

1. The petition of Reuben and Gad (32:1-5)
2. The rebuke by Moses (32:6-15)
3. Their answer (32:16-19)
4. Moses' reply (32:20-24)
5. The final agreement (32:25-41)

Failure is now again manifested. Reuben and Gad looked upon the beautiful territory which had been taken from the

two Amorite kings, Sihon and Og. As Reuben and Gad were especially rich in cattle and the territory was one of great fertility, they were anxious to possess the land. The half-tribe Manasseh evidently made the same request and joined Reuben and Gad (verse 33). A lengthy controversy followed between Moses and these tribes. Moses saw at once the evil which was connected with such a request. They despised the land of promise. God had commanded them to possess that land. By their request they showed readiness to disobey God. Furthermore by desiring the land of Jazer and Gilead they would become separated from their brethren; they would let them go to fight alone in the land. The whole request manifested selfishness.

Compare them with Lot and his selfish choice (Gen. 13). He lifted up his eyes and beheld all the plain of Jordan, that it was well watered, even as the garden of the Lord, He then chose the plain of Jordan. How he suffered for it we know well from the divine record. Reuben and Gad also looked upon the good land and with the same selfishness as Lot requested the land. Consult 1 Chron. 5:25, 26 and 2 Kings 15:29, to find out how their descendants had to pay for the selfishness of their ancestors. They went a whoring after the gods of the people of the land and were the first carried away into captivity.

We see in their behaviour the picture of the Christian who is worldly-minded, who walks according to the flesh. He does not enter into the promised land and prefers earthly things to spiritual things. The story of Christendom is also written here.

9. The Encampments in the Wilderness

CHAPTER 33:1-49

1. The first stage: From Egypt to Sinai (33:1-15)
2. The second stage: From Sinai to Kadesh (33:16-17)
3. The third stage: From Rithmah to Kadesh-- The 38 years wandering (33:18-36)
4. The fourth stage: From Kadesh to the plain of Moab-- The fortieth year (33:37-49)

The chapter shows most blessedly how the eye of God follows the journeys and wanderings of His people and how He keeps record of them. Nothing escapes His watchful eye. And He leads His people in spite of their failures to the promised goal. Notice the long list of encampments of their wanderings with no history. Many lessons must be written here which God's people have not been able to understand. The Hebrew names given in this long list of stations shed much light on what may have taken place.

10. Instructions Concerning the Conquest and the Boundaries of the Land

CHAPTERS 33:50-34

1. Command to drive out the inhabitants of the land (33:50-56)
2. The division of the land (34:1-15)
3. The names of the men who shall divide the land (34:16-29)

The extermination of the Canaanites is first of all demanded. Everything of idolatry was to be destroyed. The land was to belong to a holy people who belong to Jehovah, therefore the Canaanite with his abominations had to be driven out of the land. "If ye will not drive out the inhabitants of the land from before you, those that ye let remain of them shall be pricks in your eyes and thorns in your sides and shall vex you in the land wherein ye dwell. Moreover, it shall come to pass, that I shall do unto you as I thought to do unto them" (33:55-56). The same warning was repeated by Joshua in his last address (Josh. 23:13). They did not drive them out as they were commanded, and they had to suffer in consequence of their disobedience.

The land of Canaan does not typify heaven, but our heavenly portion in Christ. In the annotations of the book of Joshua

we hope to follow this more fully. The enemies in the land typify the wicked spirits, Satan and his powers. With these is our warfare, and we are commanded, like Israel, to conquer them. The boundaries of the land are given, and we find at the close of the chapter the names of the men who were to divide the inheritance unto the children of Israel. Notice the difference which is in the boundaries here as compared with Genesis 15:18. The promise given to Abraham and to his seed was under the covenant of grace, but Israel entered into the land under the law-covenant. If they had kept the law-covenant and had been obedient to Jehovah, they would have received the whole land. This they could not do. The original promise made to Abraham and his seed will be fulfilled in the future when the Lord will bring Israel back to possess the land. This will be in the millennium. The land will then be divided in a new way, revealed in the closing two chapters of Ezekiel.

11. The Cities of Refuge

CHAPTER 35

1. The provision of the Levites: Forty-eight cities (35:1-8)
2. The cities of refuge (35:9-34)

The cities of the Levites were scattered through the land. Genesis 49:7 is therefore fulfilled. The provision of cities for refuge is full of interest. The careful study of the purpose of these cities is recommended. Note especially that they were provided to give shelter for those who had killed a person unawares. The avenger of blood (Hebrew: *_goel*, which means to redeem) pursued the person and the city of refuge gave shelter. The death of the high priest resulted in liberty for all who were in the cities of refuge. It was the signal that they could return to their possessions (verse 28).

Israel's history may be easily read in this chapter in connection with the cities of refuge. The innocent blood shed is the blood of Christ. Blood guiltiness is upon the nation. They did it ignorantly, even as He prayed on Calvary's cross, "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do." They are on account of this blood-guiltiness kept out of their inheritance, and yet they have had their city of refuge and have been preserved till the time comes when they are set free and return to the possession in the land. And that will be when the Priesthood of Christ as now exercised by Him in glory ends, when He comes forth as the King-Priest to exercise the Melchisedek priesthood. The names of the cities are not given in the book of Numbers. They were: Bezer, Ramoth, Golan, Kedesh, Shechem and Hebron (Deut. 4:41-43; Josh. 20:7). The cities are also types of Christ because they gave shelter. He is our refuge and our hiding place.

12. The Security of the Inheritance

CHAPTER 36

1. The applicants and their statement (36:1-4)
2. The response of Moses (36:5-12)
3. The epilogue (36:13)

The chapter explains itself. But what is the lesson? It is evident that the inheritance given by the Lord must remain with those to whom it is given. And this brought security and comfort to the daughters of Zelophehad. It brings security and comfort to our hearts when we consider that our inheritance in Christ can never be taken from us. It belongs to us and we belong to the inheritance. The same is true of Israel with its earthly inheritance, the promised land.

Thus ends the wilderness book, a marvellous book, like every other portion of God's holy Word. May we remember in the study of this book, as stated in the introduction, that "all these things happened unto them for ensamples; and they are written for our admonition upon whom the ends of the world are come" (1 Cor. 10:11). May we pass the time of our sojourning here with fear, realizing our separation unto God, the priestly and Levite service which belongs to us till we reach our eternal inheritance.

APPENDIX

THE PROPHECIES OF BALAAM

Numbers 23-24

The healing of Israel by the believing look on the brazen serpent stands at the end of their murmurings in the wilderness. Israel was victorious once more, and songs of praise and victory are heard in the camp. And now, after the sad history of their disobedience is almost ended, a prophet pronounces remarkable blessings over the wonderful nation, the nation so miraculously saved from Egypt, guided and kept and healed. This voice of prophecy comes from the lips of a Gentile, and a Gentile king hears the message first, in which, besides Israel, the king of Moab and all his Gentile successors are so eminently concerned.

Balak (waster) saw all that Israel had done to the Amorites. He knew that the people had come out of Egypt. He was sore afraid; the fate of the Egyptians and Amorites seemed to foretell his own; his heart, therefore is filled with fear and hatred, and he desired to oppose and curse Israel. He allied himself with the elders of Midian. It is nothing less than the history of anti-Semitism in a nutshell. Gentile nations, Christian in name, still hate and fear the people whom no Pharaoh and no soothsayer could overcome, a people disobedient, judged and suffering, still always conquering. Like Balak, opposing Gentile nations and kingdoms will yet rise in fear and hatred against Israel before Israel's coming King will sweep them aside, and what Balak heard from the prophet's lips in his day--the complete destruction of the world-powers by the appearing of the glorious king of Jeshurun--will be the fate of these nations. Balak sends for Balaam, a prophet and a soothsayer. Who was Balaam? His name is a terrible one, "the devourer of people"; his father, Beor, "the consumer"; his native place, Pethor, meaning "interpretation." He must have known Jehovah to some extent, for he asked of Him and God answered his request. At the same time he was known for his skill in cursing nations and for his readiness for gold and silver to destroy them by his powerful spells. He may have practiced his soothsaying for many years, becoming rich by it, when, probably, one day he heard of Jehovah, who had done such great things for and among the wandering nation. Most likely for selfish reasons he sought God, like Simon, the sorcerer, who offered the apostles money for the power to heal the sick, thus Balaam may have desired the acquaintance of God, seeking revelations from Him for the sake of gain, and Jehovah revealed Himself to him. It is very significant that Balaam is mentioned in that important prophetic Epistle of Jude, where he stands as a type of the great apostasy at the end of this age. Balak, the representative of the anti-Semitic world-powers, and Balaam, the half hearted prophet, a type of apostate Christendom, forming an alliance against Israel.

The parables which Balaam is obliged to give by the power of God, are divided into four parts. He utters them from three points, all mountain tops. The first from the high places of Baal, the second from the summit of Pisgah, and the last from Peor. From these mountain tops Balak and Balaam had a good view of the camp of Israel. Each one of the three points is nearer to the camp and a more complete view obtained from them. It seems Balak tried to diminish the number of Israel and their strength in the eyes of Balaam, for he took him first to a place from which he saw only a part, the utmost part, the fourth part of the people. Seeing that his scheme failed, Balak took Balaam to Pisgah; from there the view was more complete, and then at last to Peor, from which point he saw the twelve tribes of Israel with their flags in camp. Upon each mountain Balaam had seven altars erected, and two sacrifices, a bullock and a ram, are brought upon each altar. The whole proceedings were evidently calculated to make all as impressive and solemn as possible. On the heights of Baal, Balaam says to Balak: "I will go, may be Jehovah will come to meet me, and whatever He may say to me I will declare to thee." He went to a bare height and God met him there and put a word in his mouth. Next is Pisgah; here Balaam tells Balak to stand by the burnt offering, "while," he says, "I go to meet," in the authorized version it says "the Lord," but that does not appear in the original. In Hebrew it reads, "I will go to meet--yonder." He tried to impress Balak once more with his mysterious power, and in proceeding to Mount Peor, Balak, utterly disheartened by the continued blessing of Israel from Balaam's lips, demands that he is neither to curse nor to bless. Balaam, however, knows that it pleased the Lord to bless Israel; he no longer goes out to meet with enchantments; he drops the mask, and now the Spirit of God comes upon him. Balak's anger is kindled after this third parable, and while he smites his hands together the prophet opens his mouth once more and utters the sublimest of all his prophecies, after which he went to his place soon after to meet with his

terrible fate.

And now we will read the parables themselves and study their wonderful meaning. The first from the heights of Baal:

From Aram Balak hath fetched me,
 The King of Moab-from the mountains of the East.
 Come, curse me Jacob,
 Come and denounce Israel!
 How shall I curse? God hath not cursed,
 How shall I denounce? The Lord hath not denounced,
 For from the top of the rocks I see Him
 And from the hills I behold Him.
 Behold a nation that dwelleth alone,
 Not to be reckoned among the nations.
 Who counted the dust of Jacob?
 By number the fourth part of Israel.
 Let me die the death of Jeshurum,
 And let my last end be like his.

This first inspired utterance of Balaam speaks of the general character of Israel as the chosen people of God. It is, so to speak, the foundation, the key-note for all he is about to say by divine inspiration to Balak. We may divide this first parable into four parts.

1. After stating the fact of Balak's call and his wish that he should curse Jacob and denounce Israel, he states the impossibility to curse and to denounce--for God hath not cursed him, He hath not denounced him. In the original the name El, God, stands in connection with Jacob, and Jehovah, the covenant-keeping God, with Israel. When Balak's deputation came to Balaam, God had said to him, "Thou shalt not curse the people, for they are blessed." And now what God told him there in the secret place he is to speak here in public. It is the truth which we find all through the Word of God, Israel's blessed calling, the seed of Abraham blest and to be a blessing. How many have tried to curse Jacob and to denounce Israel? They have never succeeded, for Isaiah's vision has been fulfilled in all generations, "No weapon that is found against thee shall prosper, and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn." No magic, no voice, no power, no tongue can counteract the decree of God. Jacob and his seed is blest of God. Oh that men would understand it, but alas, they are wise in their own conceits, and boasting against the broken off branches they think of Jacob as accursed and denounce Israel, and thus dishonor God and make Him a liar.

2. With his hands before his eyes, Balak gazes upon the fourth part of the Israelitish camp from the tops of the rocks and from the hill and sees a second general characteristic of the people, namely, that Israel is to be a separated people. Israel is Ho-Am, the nation, and as such different from the nations and not to be reckoned among them.

Here then we have the destiny of Israel, a destiny the same for all times--a peculiar people, separated from all other nations. As far as Old Testament times are concerned, this decree of God can hardly be denied; but many Christians have stated and believe that in these New Testament times Israel has ceased to be a peculiar people, and that there is no difference between them and the other nations. Experience, however, teaches differently. Truly the seed of Abraham is today mingling with the nations, scattered in fact among all the nations, and there the sons of Jacob have not lost their peculiar characteristics. Assimilation has been attempted, and quite often by themselves, but rarely if ever has it been successful. God has kept Israel as His own separated people as truly as He has separated and keeps unto Himself by His Holy Spirit a spiritual, heavenly people, the church. All movements endeavoring to rob Israel of its peculiarity and separation have failed, and thus Israel remains a stranger in a strange land. What a tremendous testimony the Zionistic movement is in this direction! It is a movement to establish a Jewish state for the Jewish people in the Jewish land, and in itself a confession that assimilation with other nations is impossible. In speaking the Word of our God to the scattered

Jews, God's future purpose in Israel as a nation must not be overlooked.

3. In the third place, we have the wonderful increase. "Who has counted the dust of Jacob?" The promise to Jacob when he went out from Beer-Sheba was, "Thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth." It stands for the earthly promises and earthly blessings which are Jacob's. What a sight it must have been for Balaam and Balak, standing beside their smoking altars, and down, way down in the desert, tent after tent is to be seen; but still it is only the fourth part, and appears like the dust of the earth--a people having passed through so much affliction and punishment, yet in spite of it all, strong and numerous as ever. In looking over the past, a still grander picture presents itself to us. Israel has wandered through a greater desert and through greater afflictions and punishments than ever before; they have been a people scattered and peeled, yet how wonderfully God has kept them, and more than ever they are like dust, down-trodden yet ever increasing, and multiplying, to the astonishment of their enemies. Who counted the dust of Jacob? The question is often asked, How many Jews are living today in the world? We tried to give a conservative estimate, still some tell us it is too low and others too high. The fact is no one seems to be able to get a correct number of the Jews living. Surely they are increasing rapidly all over the earth, and it is more true than ever before, "Who counted the dust of Jacob?"

4. Balaam's exclamation forms a fitting conclusion to his first parable. "Let me die the death of Jeshurum and let my end be like his." We do not think that Balaam had so much the physical death of Israel in view, as their hope and glorious end, the glorious end of ages when the God of Jeshurum will reveal Himself once more for the salvation of His people and brings vengeance upon their enemies. Of that glorious end which is Israel's, that glorious morning after a night of storm and disaster, he has here the first glimpse, and in his next parable the Holy Spirit puts it before him and before Balak in detail. It remains only to be said that the contents of this first parable are in part a repetition of God's promises to Abraham, but now the promise is not given to a member of Abraham's family, but put into the mouth of a Gentile to transmit it to the Gentile king.

Next they are on top of Mount Pisgah, on the fields of Zophim. Balaam, after having been away from Balak hastens back, and filled with a greater degree of inspiration, it seems, he bursts forth:

Rise up Balak and hear!
 Listen to me, son of Zippor!
 God is not a man to lie;
 Nor son of Adam to repent.
 Hath He said and will He not do it?
 Or spoken and shall not make it stand?
 Behold I have commanded to bless:
 Yea, he hath blessed and I cannot change it.
 He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob:
 Nor has he seen travail in Israel:
 Jehovah, his God is with him,
 The shout of a king is in his midst.
 God bringeth them out of Egypt:
 He hath strength like that of the wild ox:
 No enchantment there is against Jacob,
 There is no divination against Israel.
 In its time shall it be said of Jacob and of Israel,
 What hath God wrought?
 Behold the people rise up as a lioness!
 And as a lion does he raise himself up!
 He shall not lie down till he eat of the prey,
 And drink the blood of the slain.

What an awful rebuke this was to unbelieving Balak. He surely had expected a change in the mind of that God whose aid and help Balaam was to invoke. Maybe, he thought that God would once more, after a second request, allow Balaam, as at the time when Balak's princes came to him, to speak a more favorable word; instead of that with an awful commanding voice--for thus it must have been--Balaam shouts to Balak to rise and listen. He hears now that God's promises to Israel are unchangeable, they can never be reversed. The same truth we have not alone from Balaam's lips, but likewise from the lips of Paul, the servant of the Lord, who after giving his wonderful prophetic testimony concerning his own beloved Jewish nation, cries out in exaltation, "The gifts and calling of God are without repentance." God is ever the covenant-keeping God, and every word which has come from His loving heart through the prophets to His people Israel He will yet fulfill. Balak, in his unbelief and his ignorance, as well as his hatred against Israel, is, alas, a sad type of Christendom, apostate, disbelieving the promises of the God of Abraham, ignorant of His purposes concerning Israel, and, therefore, despising and cursing those whom they should honor and love. Again, in this parable, we notice four principal thoughts, which now bring us a step nearer to Israel, Israel's calling and Israel's future, just as Balaam and Balak were on Pisgah's mountain top nearer to the camp than on the heights of Baal.

1. He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob nor seen travail (or perverseness) in Israel. It seems to us a very significant fact that in all of Balaam's parables sin and guilt are never mentioned. However, it does not say here that Israel is without iniquity or evil travail, but the statement is that God hath not beheld iniquity and not seen perverseness in Israel. Truly Israel had sinned against God during their travels in the wilderness. Israel was likewise punished for it, but their apostasy was never hopeless. In all their iniquity and perverseness they are still His beloved children, and the promise is theirs very definitely, that the seed of Israel can only be cast away for all that they have done if the heavens above can be measured and the foundations of the earth searched out beneath (Jeremiah 31:36, 37). That, of course, means that it will never come to pass. But more than that, to Israel belongs the promise of forgiveness, when, indeed, the eyes of God will not behold iniquity in Jacob nor will He see perverseness in Israel. In Micah, the last chapter and last three verses, is one of these sweet national promises to Israel, "Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of His heritage? He retaineth not His anger forever, because He delighteth in mercy. He will turn again and have compassion upon us; He will tread our iniquities under foot, and Thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea. Thou wilt perform the truth to Jacob, and the mercy to Abraham, which Thou hast sworn unto our fathers from the days of old." God looking upon Israel and no iniquity, God beholds His people and no perverseness; their sins forgiven and remembered no more.

2. In the second place notice the statement of Balaam, "Jehovah his God is with him, and the shout of a king in his midst." This was true in part when Balaam looked upon the camp of Israel. I wonder if Balaam's prophetic eye did pierce that cloud of glory, which in all its splendor was resting in the midst of Israel? Maybe he saw in that cloud, what the prophet Ezekiel saw in his vision, a throne, and upon the throne one like the Son of Man surrounded by the sign of the first covenant, a rainbow. There was no king in the midst of Israel at that time; Jehovah was King. Prophetically all points to the time when Israel's travail and iniquity will have an end, and He whose name is ever Emanuel will be the King in the midst of His redeemed people.

3. In the next place we notice that Balaam speaks of that deed of salvation, the redemption of Israel from the house of Egypt, which stands in the Old Testament as a type not only of our redemption in the blood of the Son of God, but likewise as the type of that future deed of God when He will gather His outcast children from the four corners of the earth. (See Jeremiah 16:14-15.) It is important that in the next parable Balaam repeats the same words only in another connection. Connected with the fact in this parable that God brought Israel out of Egypt stands the statement that there is no enchantment against Jacob and no divination against Israel. Egypt could hold Israel for centuries, but Egypt's wickedness ripened, and when the hour had come there was no power in the air nor upon the earth which could prevent the carrying out of the judgments of God upon Egypt, and the mercies upon Israel. No enchantment and no divination will ever frustrate God's plan in the future.

4. And then in the fourth place: In its time shall it be said of Jacob and of Israel, "What hath God wrought?" Just a glimpse is given here of that time of conquest in Israel and through Israel, when the people shall rise up as a lioness, when she shall not lie down till she has eaten the prey and drunk the blood of the slain; which not only Balaam in his next

parables has to make plainer because the vision now hastens towards the end, but likewise which all the prophets from beginning to end have revealed. We shall see more of this in the third parable of Balaam.

From the top of Peor, Balaam now beholds Israel abiding in their tents according to their tribes. The Spirit of the Lord comes upon him. It is no longer meeting with the Lord and receiving it from Him, but the Spirit is upon him and through the Spirit he receives a higher revelation. He is now fully persuaded that Israel is to be blessed and he yields himself without resistance to God.

The oracle of Balaam, son of Beor,
 Even the oracle of the man with eyes that had been shut:
 His oracle who heard the words of God,
 Who seeth with the vision of the Almighty;
 Falling, but his eyes uncovered:
 How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob!
 Thy tabernacles, O Israel!
 As valleys are they spread forth
 As gardens by the river's side;
 As aloe trees that Jehovah planted;
 As cedars beside the waters!

Water poureth from his buckets,
 And his seed is in many waters:
 And his king shall be higher than Agag,
 And his kingdom shall be exalted.
 God bringeth him out of Egypt;
 He hath strength like that of the wild ox
 He shall eat upon the nations, his adversaries,
 Yea, he shall break their bones,
 And smite them through with his arrows,
 He couched, he lay down as a lion;
 And as a lioness, who will rouse him?
 Blessed is he that blessed thee,
 And cursed is he that curseth thee!

Balaam, forced to speak, is now made to proclaim the victory of the nation of destiny and what God will do among them.

1. We notice first a description of Israel: "Goodly tents, beautiful tabernacles spread forth as valleys, gardens by the river side, aloe trees and cedars beside the waters, waters poured from his buckets, seed in many waters." Every Sabbath day and at every feast commanded by God, in entering the synagogue, this beautiful description of Israel's happiness is chanted by the orthodox Jews. Still it has not yet been realized, and whatever spiritual lessons for the church we may derive from it, we do not care to follow them at this time. Israel still living in miserable huts, no tabernacles among them, far from being like gardens by the riverside, and aloe trees and cedars beside the waters. Truly his seed in many waters, but not in honor and peace, but dishonor and unrest. The prophetic eye, however, sees it all accomplished, and Balaam's vision leaps over centuries and centuries to the time of the end when Israel's unbelief has ended and once more the tribes are gathering to take possession of the land, their glorious inheritance. When that great Sabbath day commences, that day of the Lord, Israel's hope will be realized, and what the pious orthodox Jew today sees in faith and often repeats with tears in his eyes, will then be a blessed reality. How goodly are thy tents O Jacob, thy tabernacles O Israel. In the highly poetical strain we realize the type of the living Spirit, the water poured from His buckets.

2. In two lines Balaam speaks of the king and kingdom which is to be exalted. Agag was the title of the king of the Amalekites, the national enemy of Israel. Haman was an Agagite; he came from Amalek, a fitting type of Antichrist, and here Balaam sees a king coming, who is higher than Agag, than all the powers which are anti-Semitic, and that king will have a kingdom which will be exalted. It is hardly necessary to enlarge upon this.

3. We notice now for the second time the repetition, "God bringeth him out of Egypt," but after the phrase, he hath strength like that of a wild ox, he changes his words. In the second parable we saw that he continues saying, "there is no enchantment against Jacob and no divination against Israel," while in this he says after stating, "God bringeth him out of Egypt, he shall eat up the nations, his adversaries, yea, he shall break their bones and smite them through with his arrows." It seems in the second parable Egypt of the past is meant, and in this parable, it is Egypt of the future, as already quoted from Jeremiah, the regathering of the people through the high and wonderful hand of the Lord. Connected with that second Egypt, that great and wonderful deed of Jehovah's, when the whole nation will be redeemed and spirit-filled in that day; connected with that is the judgment of the nations, which are the adversaries of Israel. There is a wonderful similarity between the story in Exodus and the future history of Israel, and the nations still unwritten on the pages of history and only visible by eyes of faith in the word of our God, who will speak again and not keep silence. The words, "he couched, he lay down as a lion and as a lioness will rouse him," is a quotation from Jacob's prophecy of Judah, but here applied to the entire nation, which will become through the lion of the tribe of Judah the lioness who will lie down and spring upon its prey and drink the blood of the slain. The last stanza of the first part of the third parable is again a repetition of God's promise to Abraham now seen in its fulfillment; both declare from an enemy's mouth how surely, how fully every utterance of God shall come to pass.

However, the prophecy in these parables is still incomplete, something is lacking which must be said. Step by step the Lord and the Spirit led Balaam up to the consummation, and while Balak's anger is kindled and like a raving maniac he stamps with his feet and smites his hands together, crying to Balaam, "I called thee to curse mine enemies and lo, thou hast altogether blessed them these three times, flee to thy place," and while Balak denied him the honor he had promised, Balaam in a divine defiance, the fire of God burning forth from his eyes, turns once more to Balak and says, "Behold I am going to my people; come, I will admonish thee what this people shall do unto thy people in the last days." Then--

The oracle of Balaam, son of Beor,
 Even the oracle of the man with eyes that had been shut!
 The oracle of one that heareth the sayings of God
 And who knoweth the knowledge of the Most High;
 Seeing with the vision of the Almighty;
 Falling, but his eyes uncovered:
 I see him, but not now;
 I behold him, but not nigh:
 There hath come a star out of Jacob,
 And a sceptre hath risen out of Israel,
 And hath smitten through the sides of Moab,
 And dashed against each other all the sons of tumult.
 And Edom is a possession--
 Seir also a possession--his enemies;
 And Israel doeth valiantly.
 Yea, out of Jacob one hath dominion,
 And destroyeth what is left from the city.

And he looked upon Amalek and took up his parable, saying--

Amalek first of the nations!
 And his latter end, destruction!

And he looked at Kenites and took up his parable, saying--

Firm is thy dwelling place,
 And thy nest fixed in the rock!
 But the Kenite shall be ruined,
 Until Asshur carry thee captive away.
 And he took up his parable, saying--

Who shall live when God appointeth this?
 And ships shall come from the coasts of Kittim,
 And shall afflict Asshur, and afflict Eber,
 And he also ... to destruction.

And Balaam rose up and went and returned to his place and Balak also went his way.

This is the most remarkable parable of Balaam, and surely it is the very breath of God. He boasts himself of knowing the knowledge of the Most High, seeing with the vision of the Almighty. After this introduction he speaks again that he sees Him and beholds Him. However, not now and not nigh. We recollect that in the first parable he said likewise from the top of the rocks, "I see him and from the hills I behold him." There it was the nation, here it is a person; namely, the King of Israel whose shout he had heard before among the wonderful people. The description of this coming King is glorious. First he sees Him as a star coming out of Jacob, and then he calls Him a sceptre risen out of Israel, smiting through the sides of Moab and turning against each other all the sons of tumult. In consequence of this Edom becomes His possession, likewise Seir; all His enemies are conquered and Israel stands with the King and does valiantly. It is a very pronounced Messianic prophecy relating to the time when the kingdom is to be restored to Israel. Many teachers of God's Word have made a mistake in applying this prophecy to the time of the first coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. The Jews recognize the prophecy as relating to the King Messiah. One of their false messiahs was known by the name Bar-Chochva, the son of a star. We also notice that after he has taken Edom and Seir for his possession, Balaam says, "Yea, out of Jacob one hath dominion and destroyeth what is left from the city." In these words reference is made to His reign and rule in the coming age. The vital point of this last parable of Balaam is the prophecy concerning the fate of the Gentile powers. We have first Moab, who is smitten through the sides; the sons of tumult are connected with Moab and who are dashed against each other, Edom and Seir, Amalek, Asshur, Eber, and the ships coming from the coast of Kittim. All these nations having passed away stand nevertheless in a very pronounced relation to the great day of the wrath of the Lord, when He whose right it is will appear once more. In fact they seem to come again to the front in the latter day. We will quote here a remarkable passage from the prophet Jeremiah, which relates to Moab. Jeremiah 48:47, "Yet will I bring again the captivity of Moab in the latter days, saith the Lord." In chapter 49:6, we read, "And afterward I will bring again the captivity of the children of Ammon, saith the Lord." And in the 39th verse, "But it shall come to pass in the latter days that I will bring again the captivity of Elam, saith the Lord." All these nations have been judged in the past, and their descendants are hard to find, yet God knows and in His own way and in His own time He will have every one of His words fulfilled.

What else do we see in this last parable of Balaam than the judgment of the world powers? Later Nebuchadnezzar, another Gentile ruler like Balak, had a dream, and he saw the great image, the wonderful picture of the four kingdoms of the world; and Daniel, a true prophet of Jehovah, not like Balaam, interpreted the dream for Nebuchadnezzar, but what Nebuchadnezzar dreamed and Daniel saw in his vision Balaam here sees in his last vision from the top of Peor. Wonderful description of the time when the stone cut out without hands smashes the proud image and reduces it to dust! Wonderful vision later seen by Zechariah, the four carpenters who are being raised up to conquer the four horns who have scattered Israel, Judah and Jerusalem (Zechariah 1). There is no doubt that Asshur stands for the first of the Gentile empires, that is Babylon, and Eber probably for the other, the Medo-Persian, while Kittim, the isles of the west, stand for the Greek and Roman rule.

THE BOOK OF DEUTERONOMY

The Annotated Bible

Arno Clement Gaebelein

THE BOOK OF DEUTERONOMY

Introduction

The fifth book written by Moses is called Deuteronomy on account of an erroneous Greek translation of Chapter 17:18. The words "a copy of this law" were translated by mistake "a second law." Deuteronomy means "second law." The Hebrews call it *_haddeborim*, which means "the words."

This book does not contain a second law, as suggested by the word Deuteronomy; nor is the book a mere repetition of the law previously given in Exodus, Leviticus and Numbers. The analysis and annotations as given in this work show that such is not the case. Dr. Martin Luther remarks on this book: "Deuteronomy is a compendium and summary of the whole law and wisdom of the people of Israel, wherein those things which relate to the priests and Levites are omitted, and only such things included as the people generally are required to know." This is a correct view. It is "a hortatory description, explanation, and enforcement of the most essential contents of the covenant revelation and covenant laws, with emphatic prominence given to the spiritual principle of the law and its fulfilment; and with a further development of the ecclesiastical, judicial, political and civil organization which was intended as a permanent foundation for the life and well-being of the people in the land of Canaan. There is not the slightest trace, throughout the whole book, of any intention whatever to give a new or second law."

The book of Deuteronomy is the book which demands obedience. Obedience is the keynote of almost every chapter. It is the great lesson of the book. Obedience in the spirit of love, flowing from a blessed and enjoyed relationship with Jehovah, is the demand made of His people. Over and over again in this final portion of the Pentateuch the people Israel are reminded of the great goodness and faithfulness of Jehovah. How He redeemed them out of the house of bondage, carried them through the wilderness, guided them, gave them food, sustained them is repeatedly stated. And He, who chose Israel and dealt thus with them has a perfect claim on their love; that love is to be expressed by obedience. There are some misguided believers who pass by this magnificent book as if there were no lessons to be learned here. To do this is a very serious mistake. No book in the Bible must be ignored. Each bears its own peculiar character and message. We do well to look under the guidance of the Holy Spirit for the spiritual lessons which are written for us here.

Is the principle of the book of Deuteronomy, obedience to Jehovah and His Word in the spirit of love and godly fear, abandoned in the New Testament? We answer, it is as prominent there as it is in this fifth book of Moses. New Testament believers, forming the body of Christ, are brought into the highest possible relationship with the Lord. They possess a position which Israel never possessed and of which even their greatest prophets were ignorant. Christian believers are one with the Lord Jesus Christ. Everywhere in the Gospels and in the Epistles this relationship into which the grace of God has brought believers forms the basis of exhortation to love the Lord and to obey His Word; to live unto Him. "He that hath My commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me; and he that loveth Me shall be loved of My Father, and I will love him, and will manifest Myself to him.... If a man love Me he will keep My words, and My Father will love him, and We will come unto him and make Our abode with him. He that loveth Me not, keepeth not My sayings, and the Word which ye hear is not Mine, but the Father's, who sent Me" (John 14:21, 23, 24). "If ye keep My commandments, ye shall abide in My love; even as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love" (John 15:10). May God's people everywhere be reminded, in the days of laxity and worldliness, that the Lord who has redeemed us and has washed us from

our sins in His own blood, claims our love and obedience. This fact makes the book of Deuteronomy, if carefully studied in a spiritual way, of great importance to every child of God. If read it is bound to produce a response from every heart indwelt by His Spirit and a closer walk with God and more childlike obedience will be the result. It is deeply interesting at the same time to study this old book. This book, three thousand years old, having power to touch the heart and the life of all who receive its message, is an evidence in itself of its divine origin. Well has it been said: "Take any human writing of the same date as the book of Deuteronomy; if you should lay your hand on some volume written three thousand years ago, what would you find? A curious relic of antiquity--something to be placed in the British Museum, side by side with an Egyptian mummy, having no application whatever to us or to our time--a musty document--a piece of obsolete writing, practically useless to us, referring only to a state of society and to a condition of things long since passed away and buried in oblivion."

Higher Criticism and Deuteronomy

On account of the sublime character of this book, Deuteronomy has been the object of the special attacks by the critics. These boasting "scholars" have left nothing unattacked, but have defiled with their foolish theories and inventions the perfect Word of God. Throughout our studies in the preceding books, we have touched repeatedly upon their arguments and repudiated their claims. It is quite impossible to follow here the history and development of the criticism of Deuteronomy. There is a reason, which we hope to state later, why this book has been the special object of these satanic attacks, to rob it of its authority. And we wish to add, that nowhere else in their criticism are the critics so at sea and often contradicting each other, as in their attacks upon Deuteronomy. All deny, of course, the Mosaic authorship. The dates are placed many centuries after Moses. To show how these "learned" gentlemen agree, we give a few names of professors and others and what they say about the date of the book. Oettli and others assume that it was composed during the earlier, but post-Solomonic, time of the kings. Vatinger and Koenig claim it was written under Hezekiah. Ewald, Riehm, Smith, Kautsch, etc., teach it was composed under Manasseh's reign. De Wette, Bleck, Welshausen, Reuss, Dillman, etc., believe it was written when Josiah was king. Gesenius and a host of modern critics put the composition of Deuteronomy during or even after the Babylonian captivity. Here is harmony!

If Deuteronomy was not written by Moses immediately before his death, then the book has no claim whatever upon our confidence. It must be rejected as a colossal fraud. And if this book was not written by Moses and therefore must be classed as a forgery, then the testimony of the Lord Jesus Christ concerning this book would have to be dismissed as untrustworthy; that would rob Him of His infallibility. Furthermore the entire New Testament teaching would be affected by it, for the New Testament writers in their inspired testimony make constant use of the book of Deuteronomy.

Higher Criticism is Infidelity

Higher criticism is infidelity and that of the most dangerous kind, because it comes in the garb of an angel of light and often claims to be a friend and a helper, to lead people into the truth. All the prominent infidels (and most of them, if not all, immoral men) ridiculed the idea that Moses wrote Deuteronomy.

We quote from that well-known infidel, who lived more than a hundred years ago, Thomas Paine:

"In Deuteronomy the style and manner of writing marks more evidently than the former books that Moses is not the writer." "Though it is impossible for us to know identically who the writer of Deuteronomy was, it is not difficult to discover him professionally, that he was some Jewish priest who lived, as I shall show in the course of this work, at least 850 years after Moses."

Recently an official of high standing in the Methodist Episcopal Church wrote a book in which he followed closely in the tracks of German infidel critics. He made the following assertions:

"It is clear, say our modern authorities, that he (Moses) could not have been the author of this book (Deuteronomy). For reasons equally convincing, it is evident that the book must be the product of a period or periods far later than that of

Moses." "The date of its origin is probably not far from the middle of the sixth century B.C."

Is there any difference between the statements of the infidel Thomas Paine and the Methodist preacher of prominent standing? Both speak the same language. Doubly sad it is, when the men, who adopt this destructive criticism, are destitute of any scholarship whatever. They are but weak echo-men of others.

Our Lord and Deuteronomy

Our Lord Jesus Christ put special honor upon this book. It is this book which He quoted exclusively when Satan came to Him with his vile temptations. Three times He took His answers from that one book, quoting chapter 6:13, 16; 8:3; 10:20. This certainly is highly significant. He, who knew the Word so well, might have gone to any other portion and used it with equal effect. But He chose to take refuge behind this book and draw the weapon from it to defeat Satan, who now tries, by his instruments, to destroy the trustworthiness of the book in which the Lord Jesus Christ so firmly believed as the very Word of God. And our Lord no doubt foresaw all this modern day infidel criticism. Did He know anything of the authorship of Deuteronomy? Would He have quoted from this book if it had been a forgery? if these words are not truly the Word of God, though claiming to be that, then they are falsehoods. How could Satan have been defeated by falsehoods? Alas! these critics go so far in their blasphemy, that they charge Christ with ignorance, or that He acquiesced in a popular error of His times! The testimony our Lord has given to this book is sufficient to establish its divinity as well as the Mosaic authorship.

But there is another reason why He selected Deuteronomy in answering the Devil. As we have seen Deuteronomy tells of obedience. Hence the One who had come to be obedient, yea obedient unto death, the death of the cross, went to that book, which speaks of obedience, to show how He submitted to the will of His Father and to defeat Satan thereby. Our Lord therefore bore witness also to the very character of the book itself.

In the New Testament

Equally striking it is that the Lord in many other instances made use of Deuteronomy. And the Holy Spirit in almost every portion of the New Testament connects His testimony with this great book. We earnestly request our readers to study the following passages and turn to these references. This not only shows how Deuteronomy is made use of in the New Testament, but it will help in understanding the book. Deut. 1:16, 17; 16:19 and John 7:24; James 2:1. Deut. 4:2; 12:32 and Matt. 5:18; Rev. 22:18-19. Deut 4:7 and James 4:8. Deut. 4:29-31; 31:6 and Hebrews 11:6; 8:8. Deut. 5:5 and Gal. 3:19. Deut. 7:8 and 1 John 4:10. Deut. 9:7, 24; 10:16 and Acts 7:51. Deut. 9:15, 19 and Heb. 12:18. Deut. 10:17 and Acts 10:34 and 1 Tim. 6:15. Deut. 13:14 and 2 Cor. 6:15. Deut. 4:2; 26:19; 28:9 and 1 Peter 2:9. Deut. 15:11 and Matt. 26:11; John 12:8. Deut. 16:20 and 1 Tim. 6:11. Deut. 17:6; 19:15 and Matt. 18:16; John 8:17; 2 Cor. 13:1; Heb. 10:28. Deut. 18:15 and Acts 3:22; 7:37; John 1:21; 6:14; Matt. 17:5. Deut. 18:16 and Heb. 12:19. Deut. 18:19 and Luke 10:16; John 12:48; Acts 3:23. Deut. 18:18 and John 12:49. Deut. 19:19; 17:7 and 1 Cor. 5:13. Deut. 19:21 and Matt. 5:38. Deut. 21:6 and Matt. 27:24. Deut. 21:23 and Gal. 3:13. Deut. 22:22 and John 8:4. Deut. 23:25 and Matt. 12:1. Deut. 14:1 and Matt. 5:31; 19:3. Deut. 24:14 and James 5:4. Deut. 25:3 and 2 Cor. 11:24. Deut. 25:4 and 1 Cor. 9:9; 1 Tim. 5:18. Deut. 25:5 and Matt. 22:24. Deut. 27:26 and Gal. 3:10. Deut. 29:3 and Rom 11:8. Deut. 29:18 and Heb. 12:15. Deut. 30:6 and Rom. 2:29. Deut. 30:11 and Rom. 10:6-8. Deut. 31:26 and Rom. 3:19. Deut. 32:21 and Rom. 10:19. Deut. 32:35 and Rom. 12:19; Heb. 10:30. Deut. 32:43 and Rom. 15:10.

And if Deuteronomy were not true, not the Word of God, what then? Every part of the New Testament would collapse.

Interesting Prophecy

But Deuteronomy is also a book of prophecy. Moses is called in it a prophet. He exercises His office in this final book he wrote. From Pisgah he beheld the land in all its beauty. But before he had that vision, he had seen the future of the people, who had been his charge during the weary years through the desert sands. How wonderful it is that he, their appointed leader, who knew the people so well, uttered prophecies, which cover the past, present and future history of

Israel. How minutely curses, which were to come upon the people, are predicted in this book! How minutely they were fulfilled and are still in course of fulfillment.

His great song (chapter 32) is wholly prophetic. It is, if rightly understood, a key to the entire prophetic Word. What is yet to come upon the nation, both in judgment and in blessing, was beheld by Moses.

His last message was the blessing. The man, the faithful servant of Jehovah, to whom was given the ministry of the law (which can do nothing but curse), ends his earthly testimony by uttering a blessing. That blessing will yet come upon the sons of Jacob and all nations will rejoice in coming days, when His people is brought back and all His promises are fulfilled. May it please God to make the study of this book a great blessing to all His people.

The Division of Deuteronomy

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III. THE FINAL WORDS OF MOSES AND THE VISION OF THE FUTURE

1. Moses' Final Charge, the Written Law Delivered, and Jehovah's Word to Moses (31:1-30)
2. The Song of Moses (32:1-43)
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4. The Death of Moses (34:1-12)

Analysis and Annotations

I. THE FIRST DISCOURSE OF MOSES AND RETROSPECT

1. The Introduction

CHAPTER 1:1-5

The people were still on this side of Jordan in the wilderness. The second verse, containing a parenthetical statement, gives the story of their unbelief, as recorded in the Book of Numbers. "There are eleven days' journey from Horeb by the way of Mount Seir unto Kadesh-barnea." They might have reached the place they occupied now, facing Jordan and the land, in eleven days. It took them almost forty years. Unbelief had kept them back. It was towards the end of the fortieth year, in the eleventh month, that Moses began his wonderful addresses. In the first month of that memorable year Miriam had died (Num. 20:1). His brother Aaron had died in the fifth month (Num. 33:38). Moses was soon to follow him at the close of the fortieth year, at the ripe age of one hundred and twenty. Forty years were spent by Moses in the palaces of Egypt; forty years he was a shepherd in the land of Midian and forty years he was the leader of God's people through the wilderness. Before he went to the top of Pisgah to behold the land and to die, he pours out his heart in the presence of all Israel. His words were "according unto all that the Lord had given him." All he had received from the Lord, he passed on faithfully to the Lord's people. "Moses verily was faithful in all God's house, as a servant, for a testimony of those things, which were to be spoken afterward" (Heb. 3:5). Once more, therefore, he placed the words of the Lord before their hearts. This is the blessed object of ministry, to make known what God has revealed. True ministry is to deliver the message received. "For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received" (1 Cor. 15:3). Moses declared the Law unto them (verse 5). The Hebrew word "declare" means "to make plain." it is used in Habakkuk 2:2.

2. From Horeb to Kadesh

1. The command to go in and to possess the land (1:6-8)
2. The appointment of judges reviewed (1:9-18)
3. The failure to possess the land (1:19-33)
4. The judgment of God (1:34-46)

In the beginning of our annotations we must guard once more against the misleading conception, that the book of Deuteronomy is nothing but a rehearsal of previous history. On account of this wrong estimate, the book has not received the close study it deserves and God's people have missed the blessing, which results from such a study. It is true, Deuteronomy contains much that is retrospective, but it is far from being mere repetition. Spiritual lessons are found here, which are very much needed at the present time.

God had spoken at Horeb, "Ye have dwelt long enough in this mount." This communication is not found in the book of Numbers, though the opening chapters of that book presuppose such a command. Not a word is said here of the cloud and the trumpets, the twofold means by which Jehovah guided and directed His people. We therefore learn, that the Lord also spoke in direct words to them. He had watched their dwelling at Horeb; the purpose He had with them at that mountain was accomplished and now they had been instructed to move. It reveals the loving interest the Lord took in His people and in their movements. And He is still the same, who controls the tarrying and the journeying of His people. Every word in verses

7 and 8 reveals the divine purpose to lead His people at once into the land, which He had sworn unto Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (Genesis 22:16). The land was set before them; all they needed was to go forward in faith and possess it. They failed miserably.

The nation had greatly multiplied and Moses was not able to bear them alone (Exodus 18:17- 18; Num. 11:14). To guard against any misunderstanding of his word: "I am not able to bear you myself" Moses added the gracious wish "the LORD God of your fathers make you a thousand times so many more as ye are and bless you, as He hath promised you!" These beautiful words still breathe the warmth of the loving heart of Moses and they are also expressing his faith in the promise of Jehovah. Provision was made for the relief of Moses. There is no discrepancy here with the statements in Exodus and Numbers on this matter. Moses in his address does not give a repetition of the historical-chronological facts, and circumstances, but simply mentions them incidentally as leading up to the main object of his address. It was failure on his part, when he complained of his burden. We learned this in our annotations of Numbers 11. May we think here of the great burden-bearer, our Lord, who never fails His people and who never complains. We can cast our burdens and cares upon Him and shall ever find that He careth for us.

The sending out of the spies is next mentioned. Here we find the hidden things uncovered and the motives are given, which prompted the people to ask for the spies. They asked for the spies themselves. So we learn that the wish did not come from the Lord, nor from Moses. When Jehovah saw the desire of their hearts and heard their request, He commanded the sending out of the spies. He knew in what it would result. Moses was ignorant of that, therefore, the saying pleased him well. If the people had faith in God they would have been obedient at once and gone up to possess the land. The story of their unbelief and rebellion follows. Fearful was the accusation, which came from their lips. "Because the Lord hated us, He hath brought us forth out of the land of Egypt to deliver us into the hands of the Amorites, to destroy us." What ingratitude and blindness! The Lord, who had so graciously delivered them out of Egypt, who had overthrown the hosts of Egypt, who had given them the bread from heaven and water out of the rock, Him they accused of hatred.

The words of Moses to inspire the murmuring people with new courage (verses 29-31) do not appear in the book of Numbers. Deuteronomy is clearly not a mere rehearsal of what took place. Moses honored the Lord by the words he spoke. He did not share the unbelief of the people. The concluding paragraph of the first chapter shows the judgment, which fell upon that unbelieving generation. The opening words of Moses in this book are of a solemn character. Unbelief and disobedience had brought judgment upon the people. God's demands here and throughout this book are faith and obedience as the expression of faith. Confidence in Him and obedience, unswerving obedience He asks of us; He can never dispense with these. We find these demands of Jehovah everywhere. Obedience is the way to blessing and the enjoyment of what Jehovah is, while disobedience plunges into darkness and despair. And how significant are the burning exhortations to obedience from the lips of the servant of God, whose failure by being disobedient and self-willed had deprived him from entering into the land!

3. After the Forty Years and From Conflict to Conquest

CHAPTER 2

1. From Kadesh to the land of the Amorites (2:1-23)
2. The command to possess (2:24-25)
3. The conquest of Sihon (2:26-37)

The many days in the first verse are the thirty-eight years. We must notice the little word "we." "We turned and took our journey into the wilderness." Moses, Aaron, his sons, Joshua, Caleb and the faithful Levites turned back with the unfaithful, murmuring Israelites. Moses and all who had not shared in the unbelief of the people submitted to the sovereign will of the Lord. How strange it would have been if they had complained in sharing in the judgment of the mass of the people. This is true obedience and humility. "God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble; submit yourselves, therefore, to God" (James 4:6-7). The faithful ones shared the trials, the sorrows, the hardships of the murmuring multitudes. And Jehovah was with them and in gracious tenderness. Can there be anything more beautiful than the testimony of Moses he

gives in verse 7! "For the LORD thy God hath blessed thee in all the works of thy hand; He knoweth thy walking through this great wilderness: these forty years the LORD thy God has been with thee; thou hast lacked nothing." Well may we ponder over it. The people, who had accused Him, insulted Him, disbelieved His word, this people He carried through the great wilderness so that they lacked nothing. May we take courage. Our failures, our short-comings, our unbelief do not arrest the gracious tenderness of His loving heart.

Intensely interesting is the divine injunction not to molest Edom, Moab and Ammon. The great principle which goes through Deuteronomy is very outstanding in this command of Jehovah. He guided them, gave His instructions and they were to depend on Him and be obedient to His will. They might have coveted to possess the plains of Moab or Mount Seir and the lands of Ammon. The Lord forbade them to do so. Disobedience would have been disastrous. Though Edom had harrassed Israel greatly and displayed an arrogant pride, yet Jehovah would not give Edom's possession to Israel. He remembered His word "I have given Mount Seir unto Esau for a possession" (Gen. 32:3; 36:6-8; Josh. 24:4). They were, therefore, not to seek what the Lord had not given to them. And this is obedience and a lesson of faith. What happy contentment there would be among God's people, if this rule were followed.

The same command not to distress the Moabites and Ammonites (blood relations to Israel) is given. The races of giants are mentioned, which occupied the territories of Moab, Ammon and Edom. They had different names as stated in the text. Emim means "the terrible ones;" Zamzumim has the meaning "to murmur and meditate." This may have some reference to demon possession as seen in some of the present day mediums of spiritism. They were powerful and extremely vicious beings, given up to the control and service of Satan.

Then Jehovah called to action. "Rise up, take your journey, and pass over the river Arnon, behold I have given into thine hand Sihon the Amorite, King of Heshbon, and his land, begin to possess it and contend with him in battle." (In verse 13, "Now rise up, *said I*"--the words in italics "said I" must be omitted. Not Moses, but Jehovah gave the command.)

Obedience is again the demand. While the statement in verse 25 "I begin to put the dread of thee and the fear of thee upon the nations that are under the whole heaven" has been taken as hyperbolic, it also has a prophetic meaning. The Gentiles fear the Jews and the nations stand in dread of them. Some day the Jewish race will be the head of the nations of the world. Sihon's measure of wickedness and cruelty was full. His spirit was hardened like Pharaoh's and Israel completely overthrew him and his kingdom. "The LORD our God delivered all unto us" (verse 36). Read Psalm 136:19-26. It was His mercy. And His mercy endureth forever and is blessedly on our side. May we walk in obedience and find His mercy acting in our behalf.

CHAPTER 3

1. The conquest of Og (3:1-11)
2. The land possessed (3:12-20)
3. Joshua in the place of Moses (3:21-29)

In obedience to the word of the Lord, they went to battle against Og, the king of Bashan. Obedience to the Lord and its results and blessing are the marks of the second and third chapters of Deuteronomy, while the first chapter shows disobedience and its fruit.

The kingdom of Og in Bashan was a powerful kingdom. The cities had high walls with gates and bars. Their number was sixty. Archaeological research has proven the existence of strong and fortified cities in that territory, the ruins of which may still be seen. The oldest dwellings and ruined towers of Hauran (Bashan) are described by C. Von Raumer in the following words: "Simple, built of heavy blocks of basalt, roughly hewn, and as hard as iron, with very thick walls, very strong stone gates and doors, many of which were about eighteen inches thick, and were formerly fastened with immense bolts, of which traces still remain; such houses as these may have been the work of the old giant tribe of Rephaim, whose king, Og, was defeated by the Israelites 3,000 years ago." King Og was a giant, belonging to the remnant of the giant tribe

of Rephaim. His iron bedstead is mentioned by Moses. There is nothing exaggerated about it. The bed was about twelve feet long and six feet broad, which does not mean that Og was as tall as that. Moses must have mentioned the bedstead of the slain giant, to remind the people of the great victory which the Lord had given them and to inspire them with confidence in the possession of the land. The Lord, who overthrew Og would certainly not fail them when they entered the land and met the enemies there.

They utterly destroyed men, women and children of every city. Many an infidel has sneered at this statement and blasphemed God, charging Him with cruelty and injustice for allowing such an extermination of human beings. God is righteous. These people were steeped in all kinds of vices and wickedness, similar to the depravity and vilest corruption of the Canaanites. God had to deal in judgment with them. He could not permit them to exist, and as the sovereign God He dealt with them in His righteous government.

"Now, the question is, Are we competent to understand these ways of God in government? Is it any part of our business to sit in judgment upon them? Are we capable of unraveling the profound and awful mysteries of divine providences? Can we--are we called upon to--account for the tremendous fact of helpless babes involved in the judgment of their guilty parents? Impious infidelity may sneer at these things; morbid sentimentality may stumble over them; but the true believer, the pious Christian, the reverent student of holy Scripture, will meet them all with this one simple but safe and solid question, 'Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?'

"This, we may rest assured, is the only true way in which to meet such questions. If man is to sit in judgment upon the actings of God in government--if he can take upon himself to decide as to what is and what is not worthy of God to do, then, verily, we have lost the true sense of God altogether. And this is just what the devil is aiming at. He wants to lead the heart away from God; and to this end, he leads men to reason and question and speculate in a region which lies as far beyond their ken as heaven is above the earth. Can we comprehend God? If we could, we should ourselves be God" (C.H. Mackintosh).

This is a good answer to the infidel scoffer and should satisfy every Christian as well. The time is coming when the Lord will deal again in righteousness with this earth and then the slain of the Lord will be many.

The goodness and faithfulness of the Lord is thus unfolded by Moses in his address; it was meant for an encouragement to their faith and obedience. Next he speaks to them of the land, which the tribe of Reuben, Gad and half Manasseh received. We learned in our study of the book of Numbers that it was in self-will that they made the request. They were disobedient. Their failure is here completely overlooked by Moses. How beautifully this illustrates the grace of God!

He also reminded them of Joshua's call to be his successor; it took place at that time, after the conquest of the land on the east of the Jordan. He had seen what the Lord had done and that was an assurance of what the Lord would do in the future. All is worded so as to encourage confidence in the Lord and obedience to His command. And is it not even so throughout His entire Word? Everything in His Word urges us on to trust in Him with fullest confidence. Happy are we if we do so and manifest that confidence by a loving obedience.

Then we find a prayer of Moses, which is unmentioned in Numbers. It is a beautiful prayer. He pleaded with the Lord to let him go over to see the good land. It could not be, on account of his sin at the waters of Meribah. Meekly he tells out the story of failure in the presence of the people and gives the Lord's answer to him. Divine government had to shut him out from the land, but grace took him to the top of Pisgah to see, in company with the Lord, the land of promise.

3. Hearken, O Israel!

CHAPTER 4

1. Obedience demanded (4:1-8)

2. The covenant to be observed (4:9-14)
3. Take heed unto yourselves lest ye forget (4:15-24)
4. The warning (4:25-31)
5. Israel, the chosen nation (4:32-40)

"Now therefore hearken, O Israel" marks the beginning of the exhortation to keep the law of the Lord. First he had shown the goodness and faithfulness of the Lord and upon that Moses admonishes them to be true to Jehovah and to the covenant. The same order is followed in our great New Testament Epistles. What the Lord has done for us, His grace and faithfulness, always occupies the first place; this is followed by our responsibilities to walk worthy of the Lord. The first great discourse of Moses in its two main features, the retrospect of what Jehovah had done and Israel's obligation to keep the law to enjoy the blessings of the covenant, is the key to the entire book.

They were to hearken and to do. Hearing and doing stand in the foreground of this section. The result of obedience is life and possession of the land. "That ye may live" does not mean the possession of eternal life, but a long earthly life in the promised land. See chapters 5:33; 6:2; 8:1; 11:21; 16:20; 25:15; 30:6, 16; 32:47. Nothing was to be added to the law and nothing to be taken from it. Alas! this warning has not been heeded. The elders with their traditions and commandments of men, added to the law and put the word of man above the Word of God, while later the Sadducees took away from the law and reduced the Word of God to the level of the word of man. The same is done today in ritualistic and rationalistic Christendom.

His voice had spoken to them; they had heard His words. They were privileged above all other nations. "For what nation is there so great, who hath God so nigh unto them, as the LORD our God is in all things that we call upon Him for? And what nation is there so great, that hath statutes, and judgments so righteous as all this law, which I set before you this day?" Therefore, they had great responsibility. Three times Moses told them to take heed (verses 9, 15 and 23). He warned them to beware of idolatry. They were to serve only Jehovah for He had brought them forth out of the iron furnace, to be unto Him a people of inheritance. He had delivered them and made them His own people, therefore, they were to obey Him. Solemnly Moses said, "I call heaven and earth to witness against you this day,¹ that ye shall soon utterly perish from off the land whereunto you go over Jordan to possess it; ye shall not prolong your days upon it, but shall utterly be destroyed." Moses in speaking these words had the first prophetic glimpse of their coming history of idolatry, followed by national ruin. This vision widens and he beheld them scattered among the nations.

Verses 30 and 31 refer not only to past history, but they are yet to find a fulfilment in the latter days. It is the first prophetic note we hear in Deuteronomy from the lips of Moses. More fully he speaks of it towards the end of his farewell message to the people he loved so well.

Especially beautiful are the closing verses of this section (verses 33-40). What a display of what Jehovah had done for them, how He had revealed Himself and His power in their behalf! Therefore, He was entitled to a wholehearted obedience from His people. "Know therefore this day, and consider it in thine heart, that the LORD He is God in heaven above, and upon the earth beneath; there is none else." And what greater works He has made unto us His people, that great salvation in His blessed Son, our Lord! He has the right to claim our full obedience. May we consider constantly, who He is and what He has done for us and we shall yield to Him the obedience He looks for in His people.

4. The Three Cities of Refuge

CHAPTER 4:41-43

1. The cities set apart (4:41-42)
2. The cities named (4:43)

The first address being ended, an action of Moses takes place. To detect here the hand of an editor, who added these

verses, as critics claim, cannot be sustained. The cities of refuge were mentioned in Numbers. Here the three on this side of Jordan are given. Then there were three more on the other side of which we read in chapter 19 and in the book of Joshua. As stated in our annotations in Numbers, the cities of refuge are typical of Christ, who is our shelter from the avenger. Scattered through the land for the gracious purpose of sheltering the slayer, they also bear a prophetic testimony. They speak of Israel's hope.

"These cities of refuge, set at intervals through the land of Israel, are a garrison for it from God, which even still, in ruin, as the land is, watch over it, as ministers of unchanging grace, and prophets of now near-coming glory. This people of God, separated to Him in the wonderful way attested by their annals,--What, after all, has been their condition for many and long centuries of subjection to hostile races? They have been strangers and wanderers, Cain-like, and indestructible as Cain,--a nation surviving even in death, but as if to perpetuate only the memory of the doom under which they lie,--the doom of an awful fratricide. Such is, in fact, their conditions condition hopeless to most yet, though it may be now with a streak of gray dawn widening upon it. But these cities of refuge have all the time been watch-towers set to face eastward, ramparts round prostrate Zion, upon which the watchmen hold not their peace, and give Him no rest, till He establish it again,-- yea, till He make it a praise upon earth (Isa. 62:6, 7).

"They are His pledge, in view of what has in fact come to pass, that what He has foreseen cannot thwart His purposes, nor their sin His long-foreshown grace. Preach they may in sackcloth, but it is good tidings that they preach, of a place of security even for homicides,--for those for whom His plea shall yet avail, "They know not what they do."--F.W. Grant, Notes on Deuteronomy

The meaning of the three names are of equal interest. "Bezer" means "defence," a fortified place. Such Christ is for all who trust in Him. In Him we have our shelter and blessing as well. "Ramoth" means "heights." Our Lord occupies the exalted, the preeminent place and shelter in Him, we share His place as we read in the second chapter of Ephesians. "Golan" means "joy" or "their rejoicing." Even so we have in Him, who is our refuge, our joy and He has His joy in us.

II. THE EXPOSITION OF THE LAW, EXHORTATIONS AND WARNINGS, BLESSING AND CURSE

1. The Proclamation of the Decalogue

CHAPTERS 4:44-5:33

1. The introductory words (4:44-49)
2. The law proclaimed (5:1-21)
3. Moses, the mediator (5:22-33)

First a general announcement is given of the discourse on the law. The fact is emphasized, that it was set before them after they came forth out of Egypt. Then the victories over Sihon and Og are mentioned once more and that they now possessed their land. Why this repetition? It was to remind them of the goodness and faithfulness of Jehovah, whose law they were about to hear expounded. It was to be a helpful encouragement to them and stimulate their obedience, while it also was the pledge of greater victories and blessings to come. Jehovah would keep His promise.

All Israel is gathered about Moses. The aged servant, so soon to leave their midst, now solemnly begins to utter the main discourse, which composes this book. The first verse of the fifth chapter contains the four words, which are found so often in this book of moral responsibility and practical obedience. These words are "hear" (over thirty times); "learn" (seven times); "keep" (thirty-nine times); "do" (almost one hundred times). These are therefore characteristic words of this great book. They were to hear, and hearing to learn, and learning to keep, and keeping to do. And this is still Jehovah's demand of us His people. All who have a spiritual nature love to have it so. What is more delightful and blessed, than to hear Him speak, to learn of Him, to keep His Word and to do what He tells us!

Jehovah had made a covenant with them, not with their fathers, the patriarchs. The law covenant was made 430 years after Abraham. Moses then speaks in their hearing the words of the Decalogue. The words differ somewhat from the twentieth chapter in Exodus, showing again that Deuteronomy is not a mechanical repetition of previous history. Higher criticism with its confused and confusing theories has made the best of this difference. Upon this difference critics claim that Moses could not have been the author of both. Says a critic: "Indeed he could not have written either in its present form, because that in Exodus is Jehovistic, and older than the record in Deuteronomy" (Dr. Davidson). Such an assertion simply shows the blindness of these men of supposed learning and scholarship. Anyone can see that the records in Exodus and Deuteronomy differ. We do not need scholarship for that. The mysterious person, whom the critics call "Deuteronomist" certainly possessed the record in Exodus and could have easily copied the exact words. But why is there a difference? Exodus gives the history; Deuteronomy does not repeat that history, but in restating the Decalogue, Moses makes such comments which are in perfect keeping with the object of Deuteronomy. If Deuteronomy claimed to be a literal repetition of the history recorded in Exodus and Numbers, then one might speak of discrepancy.

"Deuteronomy proves that we have here a grave and instructive reference to the commandments formally given in the second book of Moses. Such moral motives as are added are therefore as appropriate in Deuteronomy as they could not, ought not to, be in Exodus. The remembrance of their own estate as slaves in Egypt till delivered by Jehovah is most suitable in verse 15; but it is certain that this is an appeal to their hearts, not the ground stated by God in promulgating the fourth commandment. All is perfect in its own place, and the imputation of self contradiction as baseless as it is malicious and irreverent. But one must only expect this from men whose aim is to reduce the inspired writers to their own level, and who think that piety can co-exist with fraud, yea, with fraudulent falsehood about God."

Moses left out purposely certain statements he uttered when the law was given through him in Exodus; and he added by way of comment other words in fullest keeping with the moral purpose of his message to the people. This is most evident in connection with the commandment to keep the Sabbath-day holy. In Exodus 20 we find the words "for in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day; wherefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath-day and hallowed it." This reference to creation is omitted now by Moses, but he adds another spiritual motive to keep that day. "And remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt, and that the LORD thy God brought thee out thence through a mighty hand and by a stretched out arm; therefore, the LORD thy God commanded thee to keep the Sabbath-day" (verse 15). We see at once that the characteristic of Deuteronomy is maintained. The people are reminded of the faithfulness and goodness of Jehovah, His gracious dealing with them, and that is made the ground of their responsibility to obey His Word. See in connection with the Sabbath Exodus 31:12-17. It was a sign between Jehovah and Israel. We refer the reader to our remarks on the Sabbath in the analysis of Exodus.

Moses then confirms the record in Exodus. "And He wrote them in two tables of stone, and delivered them unto me." They possessed them. Moses was also appointed as mediator, the type of Him, who is mediator between God and man, our Lord Jesus Christ. And He has done more than Moses did; He made atonement. The people had recognized their sinful distance from God as well as their merited condemnation (that which is the purpose of the law), and therefore had asked for the mediator. Note verse 29: Jehovah speaks, the One who searches the heart and knows what is in man. Absolute obedience is again demanded in the closing verses of this chapter.

2. The First Commandment and What It Involves

CHAPTER 6

1. Hear, therefore, O Israel! (6:1-3)
2. The first commandment (6:4-5)
3. The remembrance of these words and practical obedience (6:6-25)

"Hear, O Israel! The LORD our God is one LORD." Much has been made of this verse by orthodox Jews, who reverence it greatly. They call it the "Shema" after the first word "Hear." It is often used by Jews and Unitarians to deny the three persons of the Godhead. The Hebrew word "echod" (one), however, excludes forever such a denial, for it means a

compound unity. The Hebrew has another word which expresses exactly what Jews and Unitarians, who reject the three persons in the Godhead, believe. It is the word "yochid"; this has the meaning of a single one.

"Jehovah, our Elohim is one Jehovah," thus the name of God is used in this verse. The verse states that to Him alone the name of Jehovah (the Self-existing One) rightfully belongs, He is the one who is absolutely God. It is the testimony against the polytheism (many and different gods) of the Gentiles, which surrounded Israel on all sides. And therefore, because He is the one God, and none beside Him, He must be loved with all the heart, with all the soul, with all the might. The heart with all its affections and energies must belong to Him. To believe on Him and to know Him must ever result in giving Him the heart. Spirit, soul and body must be devoted to Him. This is the first and the great commandment (Matthew 22:38; Mark 12:29-30). And we know this Jehovah as our Redeemer, who came and died in our stead. The New Testament fully reveals the claims He has on those, for whose redemption He paid the price with His own blood. "We love Him, because He first loved us" (1 John 4:19). "And this commandment have we from Him, that he who loveth God love his brother also" (verse 21). "This is the love of God, that we keep His commandments" (1 John 5:3). "For ye are bought with a price; therefore, glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's" (1 Cor. 6:20).

Verses 6-9 are literally carried out by orthodox Jews. They write these words on parchment and put them in little boxes, which they bind with strips of leather to their foreheads and upon the hand. These are the phylacteries. They also put them in tin-boxes and nail them on the doors of their houses. All His words are worthy to be constantly remembered. The Word must be hid in the heart. It is to be in the family. It is never to be forgotten, whether we sit in the house, or walk, or rest, or rise up. Such a true spiritual remembrance of His words will increase and constantly produce devotion and obedience to the Lord. How solemn the warning not to forget Jehovah in the days of blessing and prosperity! (verses 10-15) How often they did forget Jehovah in the days of peace and earthly blessing.

Verse 16 is of deep interest. "Ye shall not tempt the LORD your God, as ye tempted Him in Massah." The tempting of the Lord at Massah was questioning His presence among them (Exodus 17:7). Our Lord made use of this word when the devil demanded that He should cast Himself from the pinnacle of the temple. Satan then quoted Scripture in His presence. The enemy knows how to do that; but he either leaves something out from the Word or he adds something to it. In quoting from Psalm 91, he omitted seven words, "to keep thee in all thy ways." Satan knew the obedience of Christ and he tried to make our Lord act in obedience to the Word by testing God's Word. But such was not God's way; it was not according to His command to cast Himself from the pinnacle of the temple. If He had done it, it would have been an act of self-will and therefore disobedience. And that is why Satan left out those seven words. But what did our Lord do? He did not call Satan to task for mutilating the Scriptures, but quoted another Scripture to show His unswerving obedience. "Again it is written, Thou shalt not tempt the LORD thy God." He would not tempt God. He quoted the book of Deuteronomy, because it is the book of obedience, and He had come not to do His own will, but the will of Him who sent Him. He also quoted the words in 8:3 and 10:20. How this fact confirms the inspiration and genuineness of Deuteronomy, we have already mentioned in our introduction.

3. The Possession of the Land and Their Separation

CHAPTER 7

1. The command to destroy the Canaanites (7:14)
2. The command to destroy their idolatry (7:5-11)
3. The promise of blessing and help (7:12-26)

Seven nations are mentioned as occupying the land, which God gave to Israel. These nations were steeped in the most awful licentiousness and practised the vilest abominations. There are different reasons to believe that Satan possessed them in a peculiar manner. God had tolerated these nations for many centuries. He waited in His mercy before the sword of justice was unsheathed. The measure of their wickedness was now full, the time for judgment had come. The Lord called Israel to be the executioner of that awful judgment. And whenever they carried out the divine judgment, not sparing any one, they had an object lesson of the holiness and righteousness of God. Their sons and daughters were not to marry any

members of these doomed nations. That would result in apostasy from Him and in idolatry. All their altars, their images and their groves they were to destroy. They were a holy people. But the Lord did not choose them because they were more in number than other nations. Jehovah loved them. Solemnly they are once more told that the Jehovah who hath set His love on them is a faithful, a covenant keeping God. He keeps His covenant and mercy with them that love Him and keep His commandments. But He also repays them that hate Him. Promises of blessings follow. If they are obedient, if they hear, keep and do (verse 12) the Lord would bless them. It is refreshing to read all these gracious promises. May they encourage us to trust in Him and walk in obedience. In Christ even greater blessings than these are put on our side. We know from subsequent history, how completely Israel failed to carry out all these instructions. They practised the vile abominations of the nations they were commanded to destroy. God had to deal with them in judgment. Instead of the blessings enumerated in verses 12-24, the curse was visited upon them. God's gifts and calling are without repentance; in a future day the remnant of Israel will inherit these things through the grace of God.

4. Thou Shalt Remember! Provision and Warning

CHAPTER 8

1. Remember the forty years and Jehovah's care (8:1-6)
2. The gracious provision in the land (8:7-10)
3. Warning against forgetting Jehovah (8:11-20)

Admonition to obedience begins this chapter. Disobedience and what will result from it closes it. Between the first and last verses we find extremely precious words. They are called upon to remember the experiences of the wilderness. It was Jehovah, who led them and watched over them. The wilderness experience was made a blessing to them. It taught them the blessed lessons of humility and brought out all that was in their hearts. And this corresponds to our own experiences. Jehovah's care over them had been manifested. They had to learn in the wilderness the lessons of dependence upon God. He supplied their need. They were fed with manna. Their raiment waxed not old. Their feet did not even swell (Chapter 29:5; Neh. 9:20-21). "As a man chasteneth a son, so the Lord thy God chasteneth thee." And thus He still deals with His people, whom He loves and whom He has redeemed in His Son, the people He is leading home to Himself through the wilderness. Oh, that we may trust Him fully and yield ourselves to Him in obedience!

"How wonderful to think of God's patient grace and painstaking love with His people in the wilderness! What precious instruction for us! With what intense interest and spiritual delight we can hang over the record of the divine dealings with Israel in all their desert-wanderings! How much we can learn from the marvelous history! We, too, have to be humbled and proved, and made to know what is in our hearts. It is very profitable and morally wholesome."

Verse 3 was quoted by our Lord, when Satan asked Him to turn stones into bread. His perfect obedience to God was again revealed, when our Lord defeated Satan by quoting this verse.

He also gives them a glimpse of the good land. There would be abundance of water, no scarcity of food, wheat, barley, vines, fig trees, pomegranates, oil and honey. Then there were the hidden treasures in the mountains. These things speak typically of our blessings, the spiritual blessings, with which we are blessed in Christ Jesus, to which we are fully entitled, but which we can only enjoy if we walk in faith and obedience to His Word. Another solemn warning is given to them by their loving leader. The warning is against highmindedness and forgetting the Lord, who has done all these things. The warning was not heeded and what Moses testified against them overtook them in their national history. May we also remember here the warning God has given to Gentile Christendom, not to be highminded, but to fear (Romans 11:17-24).

5. Warning Against Self-Righteousness and Their Previous Failures

CHAPTERS 9:1-10:11

1. The warning (9:1-6)
2. The failures of the past (9:7-24)
3. The intercession of Moses (9:25-29)
4. The results of the intercession (10:1-11)

This chapter and the first eleven verses of the tenth are aimed against the spirit of self righteousness. First there is the warning. This is followed by their shameful history of the past, which showed that a boast of being righteous, or having any righteousness had to be positively excluded in their case. They had been rebels and they owed their existence wholly to the mercy of God and that was secured by the intercession of Moses. They were, therefore, to understand that the good land was not given to them for their righteousness; they were a stiffnecked people. How humbling the recital of their failures, their rebellion and murmuring against Jehovah, must have been! And Moses added to it, which must have cut them to the very heart. "Ye have been rebellious against the Lord from the day that I knew you" (verse 24). Mercy alone had saved them and had effected their restoration. How easy it is for our poor hearts, not different from theirs, to forget all we were and that we owe all we are to the grace of God. Self righteousness is an abomination in God's sight. True faith and obedience means a true humility.

The chronological order is not followed by Moses in the first part of the tenth chapter. That is known by the historical account. Verses 6 and 7 are a parenthesis. The beginning of verse 8, "At that time," does therefore not stand in connection with the death of Aaron, but it refers to the time when the broken covenant was restored. Higher critics have made much of this as a glaring contradiction. There is no such contradiction here and the apparent difficulty is easily solved by understanding the parenthetical character of verses 6 and 7. But why should such an historical statement be here introduced by Moses by way of a parenthesis? The answer is not difficult to find. Moses describes the gracious results of the intercession. Not only was the covenant restored, but also the institution and maintenance of the priesthood. Moses reminds the people of this gracious gift on the part of their God, by recalling to their memory the time when Aaron died and his son Eleazar was invested with the high priesthood in his stead.

6. Jehovah's Love and His Requirements of His People

CHAPTER 10:12-22

1. Jehovah's delight and love (10:12-15)
2. Admonition to fear and serve Jehovah (10:16-22)

This section is especially precious. Jehovah speaks through Moses and reminds His people of Himself and His Love and what He requires of them. "Behold the heaven and the heaven of heavens is Jehovah's thy God, the earth also, with all that therein is." What a marvellous call to fear and serve such a Lord! What He required of them was a loving obedience, to fear Him, to walk in all His ways, to love Him and to serve Him. They were to be followers of Jehovah their God. He is God of gods, Lord of lords, great, mighty, terrible. His goodness again is revealed by Moses as an incentive to love and to obey Him. He cares for the fatherless and loveth the stranger; for this reason they were to love the stranger. Yet far greater is our knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ, who loveth us and hath washed us from our sins in His own blood and made us priests and kings unto God His Father. And this carries with it a higher obligation to serve Him, to love Him and to walk in obedience, than Israel's obligation.

"Well then, let us ever bear in mind--yea, let us have it deep, deep down in our hearts, that according to our privileges are our obligations. Let us not refuse the wholesome word 'obligation,' as though it had a legal ring about it. Far from it! It would be utterly impossible to conceive any thing further removed from all thought of legality than the obligations which flow out of the Christian's position. It is a very serious mistake to be continually raising the cry of 'Legal! legal!' whenever the holy responsibilities of our position are pressed upon us" (C.H. Mackintosh).

7. Israel's Responsibility, the Blessing and the Curse

CHAPTER 11

1. Therefore thou shalt love the Lord thy God (11:1-9)
2. If ye hearken unto my commandments (11:10-21) 3. The blessing and the curse (11:22-32)

The great characteristic teaching of this book, obedience springing from love to Jehovah, is still further developed in this chapter. It begins with a "therefore." The last verse of the previous chapter shows that Jehovah had kept the promise made to the fathers of the nation. Then once more the mighty acts of Jehovah are reviewed. His miracles and acts done in Egypt; what He did at the Red Sea and what He did unto them in the wilderness--therefore thou shalt love the Lord thy God. They were also to love Him and keep His words in view of the land they were about to possess. What He had done and what He was going to do for them, called for the love and obedience of His people. May we heed the same call. The result of obedience in loving and serving the Lord would be the first and the latter rain, fruitful fields and abundant harvests. Jehovah would also drive out the enemies and give them the land. Blessing and curse are solemnly set before the people by their leader. Of the mount of blessing, Gerizim, and the mount of curse, Ebal, we shall hear more fully later (chapter 17).

(The foolish theory that "latter rain" means a spiritual revival and is a special "outpouring of the Holy Spirit" has no foundation at all in the Word of God. Such "spiritualizing" leads and has led into confusion.)

8. The Place of Worship

CHAPTER 12

1. The overthrow of false worship (12:1-4)
2. The true place of worship (12:5-14)
3. Concerning eating and the blood (12:15-28)
4. Warning against the abominations of idolatry (12:29-32)

The law, and love as the fulfilment of that law, was the main subject of the words of Moses up to the close of the eleventh chapter. The chapters which follow also contain expositions of the different statutes, as well as exhortations to obedience and warnings against departure from Jehovah. How significant that worship occupies the prominent place! A false worship must be completely extirpated, for it would lead their hearts away from the one Jehovah. All images and pillars were to be destroyed. True worship is ever linked with obedience to and love for Jehovah. False worship is apostasy.

The one place is mentioned repeatedly, the place, which Jehovah has appointed for worship (verses 5, 11, 14, 18, 21 and 26). What disobedience if they left that one place and turned somewhere else to worship! The subsequent history of God's ancient people teaches the awful results of such a course. We have in the New Testament also commandments to worship. Our worship is in spirit and in truth. It is not connected with an earthly place, an earthly altar, but we worship in the power of the Spirit in heaven itself, where our forerunner is. But Christendom has a false worship which apes after the ritualistic Jewish worship. In that worship we find also images, holy places, etc., and that is in the sight of God as great an abomination as the Canaanite worship, which Israel found in the promised land.

We do not touch here again upon the eating of flesh, the sanctity of the blood, etc. All this we have had in Leviticus to which we refer the reader. Nor do we enter into the alleged contradictions, which the modern day infidels, in the camp of Christendom, claim exist here. It is but blindness (we fear often wilful blindness), which can bring such criticism and accusations against the Word of God.

9. Warnings Against False Prophets and Their Punishment

CHAPTER 13

1. The first case: The false prophet and dreamer (13:1-5)
2. The second case: Temptation to idolatry from blood-relations (13:6-11)
3. The third case: The apostasy of a city (13:12-18)

Three cases are mentioned. The false prophet or a dreamer of dreams, who confirms his claims by a sign or a miracle, yet whose aim is to seduce to idolatry, is to be put to death. False teaching, which leads from God, is an abomination. It results finally in the most awful moral corruption. A false prophet may do signs and wonders to prove thereby that what he teaches is truth. Signs and miracles are therefore no evidence of the truth. Spiritualism and Christian Science claim to be the truth and they often refer to the evidences of supernatural manifestation and miraculous hearings which take place in their cults. Satan can work signs and miracles. He does so in these delusive systems of the last days and God permits it to prove thereby His people. In the light of Matthew 24:23-25, 2 Thess. 2:8-12 and Rev. 13:12-14 the first five verses of the chapter we study are of great interest. The false prophet to come, the personal and final Antichrist will do lying wonders and the many who received not the love of the truth will be permitted to believe the lie. One does well to be on the guard whenever teachers claim some special power or signs. The second warning is against a more subtle snare, when the deception worketh secretly, emanating from a blood relation. If it is the dearest one, no pity is to be shown to him. The third case is that, when a whole city has departed from the Lord and serves other gods and practices the abominations of idolatry. It was to be completely destroyed and the city burned with fire. Such will be some day the awful fate of apostate Christendom, having rejected God's Son and the gospel.

10. The Children of God and Their Separation

CHAPTER 14

1. The declaration of relationship: A holy people (14:1-2)
2. Their food as a separated people (14:3-21)
3. Concerning tithes (14:22-29)

Ye are the children of the Lord your God. Because God had chosen them to be a peculiar people unto Himself, above all the other nations, they were to be an holy people. To them belongeth still "the adoption" (Rom. 9:4). God called Israel His firstborn son and that nation holds that place, in the divine purpose, among the nations. Sonship, in the New Testament, bestowed upon the individual believer, who is possessed by the Spirit of Sonship (the Holy Spirit) and who is an heir of God and joint-heir with Christ, is infinitely higher, than Israel's national and earthly calling. Therefore our responsibility is so much greater. The children of the Lord were not to participate in the sinful customs of the heathen, who have no hope. No disfigurement as mentioned in the first verse was permitted. The Lord whom they served is a Lord of life; they belonged wholly to Him; they were not their own. To sorrow like those who have no hope is also forbidden in the New Testament (1 Thess. 4:13). Then follows once more the reminder concerning the clean and the unclean. See Leviticus 11 and the annotations. The laws concerning the food Israel was to eat and to abstain from were given in Leviticus to Moses and Aaron; in Deuteronomy the whole congregation hears these instructions. A number of animals are also mentioned in Deuteronomy, which we do not find in Leviticus. Thus their separation is once more emphasized. They belonged to a holy Lord and were to be an holy people. We have for our food the living Bread, which came down from heaven. And as we feed on Christ, abiding in Him, we become also like Him. It has been well said "for a Christian to participate in the vanities and follies of a sinful world would be to use a typical phrase, like an Israelite eating that which had died by itself." How sad the condition of the great majority of those who profess Christianity, who run after this present evil age and are conformed to it!

The tithe mentioned in verses 22-29 is peculiar to Deuteronomy and forms one of the supplementary laws. Israel and the land, they were to possess, belong to Jehovah. The tithe gave expression to the fact of the proprietorship of the Lord. And when they came before Jehovah to eat before Him in the spot where He had placed His Name, they owned in His presence all His goodness and mercies and rejoiced in the Lord. Verses 28 and 29 are more fully developed in chapter 26:12-19. Annotations are given there on the happy scene when, at the end of every third year, the Levite, the stranger, the fatherless and the widow were to eat and be satisfied.

There is a gathering place for His people in the New Testament. "Where two or three are gathered together in My Name there am I in the midst of them." And when we remember His love at His table, we rejoice in Him and He rejoices in us. But the gathering of Israel in connection with the tithe also looks forward to the coming days when there will be a gathering for Israel and the nations. See Isaiah 2:1-4; 11:10; Zech. 14:16-17.

11. The Year of Release and Liberation of Hebrew Slaves

CHAPTER 15:1-18

1. The year of release (15:1-11)
2. The liberation of the Hebrew slaves (15:12-18)

The poor and those who have no possession were to be remembered in kindness and have a share in the blessings. Linked with this law are the laws not to force and oppress the poor, the year of release and the liberation of the slaves. The great Sabbatic year, the seventh, brought the release. See Exodus 23:10 and Leviticus 25:2-7. Here we have an enlarged exposition of the previously given law. The debtor not to be pressed then for what he owed and nothing was to be exacted from him. While the land rested all debts and obligations had also to rest. It does therefore not mean a complete remission of all debts forever. And linked with this merciful institution is the promise of blessing. Obedience to these gracious laws would bring to them great blessing. Especially interesting is verse 6. "For the LORD thy God blesseth thee, as He promised thee; and thou shalt lend unto many nations, but thou shalt not borrow; and thou shalt reign over many nations, but they shall not reign over thee." Even today in their blindness and dispersion this promise is being fulfilled. Who does not know that the Jews are the money lenders of the nations? Kings and princes have borrowed from this wonderful people. Some day when the time of our fulness and blessing comes, this promise will be fully accomplished and Israel will reign over the nations, be the head and no longer the tail.

The poor were also to be treated in great kindness. What grace and love breathes in verses 7-11! Twice we read "thou shalt open thine hand wide." "Thou shalt open thine hand wide unto him, and shalt surely lend him sufficient." "For the poor shall never cease out of the land, therefore, I command thee, saying, Thou shalt open thine hand wide unto thy brother, to thy poor, and to thy needy, in thy land." Throughout the Word of God the poor are mentioned to be remembered in kindness and some most blessed promises are given to those who obey these gracious words. See Proverbs 14:21; 19:17; 22:9; 28:8, 27; Ps. 41:1. Oppression of the poor is a sin, which God specially marks. See Isaiah 3:14, 15; 10:2; Ezek. 18:11-13; Amos 2:6, 4:1; 5:11; James 2:6. When the Lord comes He will remember the poor and deliver them. See Ps. 72:2, 4, 12, 13; 113:7; 132:15; Isaiah 11:4.

The teaching of some, who say that we are not under the law but under grace, and therefore do not need to pay any attention whatever to these gracious words, which Jehovah bound upon the hearts of Israel, is fatally wrong. "Under grace" is often used to cover a selfish life. The grace, which has saved us, which pledges our eternal security in Christ, demands of us that we be followers of God. This is learned from the exhortations of the New Testament. "As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith" (Gal. 6:10). "But to do good and communicate forget not; for with such sacrifices God is well pleased" (Heb. 13:16). "The Lord loveth a cheerful giver" because "He giveth to all and upbraideth not." "it is more blessed to give than to receive."

The liberation of the slave is also stated in Exodus 21, to which we refer the reader. The Hebrew woman is mentioned here. In Exodus 21 only the male slave is spoken of. But why is it given here again? Is it a mere repetition? It is not. The Lord gives through Moses the mode in which this law is to be kept. His loving kindness shines out once more in the gracious addition made here. "And when thou sendest him out free, thou shalt not let him go away empty." This verse and verses 14-15 are not found in Exodus 21. How blessedly He cared for the poor slaves. They were set free, laden down with the riches of the flock, the floor and the winepress. Other lessons connected with this we must leave untouched.

12. The Firstlings and the Three Feasts

CHAPTERS 15:19-16:17

1. Concerning the firstlings (15:19-23)
2. Passover (16:1-8)
3. Feast of weeks (16:9-12)
4. Feast of tabernacles (16:13-17)

What is said in the closing verses of chapter 15 is supplementary to the law given concerning the first-born in Exodus 13:2, 12 and Numbers 18. They were not to be worked or sheared. "Before the Lord thy God shalt thou eat it, year after year, in the place which the Lord shall choose, thou and thy household." Nothing which had a blemish, was lame or blind could be sacrificed. The spotless Lamb of God is here in view once more and the type is given how we are to feed on Him in the presence of God, in the sanctuary.

The feasts were mentioned in Exodus 12; Leviticus 23; Numbers 28-29. Here only the Passover, the feast of weeks and the feast of tabernacles are given. The critics claim that there is contradiction between this chapter and the laws concerning the feasts in the previous books of the Pentateuch. Such contradiction, however, does not exist. That only these three feasts are mentioned here is in full harmony with the character and message of Deuteronomy.

Obedience, as we have repeatedly learned from the study of past chapters, is the demand of Jehovah from His people. The three prominent feasts were absolutely obligatory. Three times in a year all the males were commanded to appear before the Lord to keep these three feasts. No such demand was made in keeping the feast of trumpets and the day of atonement. Because these three feasts were to be obeyed, they are mentioned in Deuteronomy. The objections of the critics spring (as all other objections and criticisms) from the lack of spiritual discernment. The contradiction they see is only another evidence of the perfection of His Word. "The place, which Jehovah thy God will choose" occurs six times in this chapter. This was not mentioned in Exodus, Leviticus or Numbers. This again is characteristic of the book. Over twenty-five times mention is made of the place which Jehovah will choose, the gathering place of His people in His presence, and this demands obedience. What these feasts mean typically and dispensationally may be learned by consulting the annotations of Leviticus 23. The fact is also to be remembered that they came out of Egypt (verses 3 and 12). They are commanded to rejoice on the feast of weeks (Pentecost) and on the feast of tabernacles (typical of the time of joy and blessing in the coming age); but the statement "thou shalt rejoice" is omitted in connection with Passover. Redemption is typified in that feast. This calls forth gratitude and praise to God. The solemnity of the death of the Lamb of God and the judgment our Lord had to pass through, must be the reason why the command to rejoice is absent.

13. Justice and the Choice of a King**CHAPTERS 16:18-17:20**

1. Appointment of judges and their instruction (16:18-17:1)
2. The higher court at the place He chooses (17:8-13)
3. The choice and right of the king (17:14-20)

This chapter leads us upon new ground. The obligations of the religious life of Israel were stated in the first part of chapter 16 and now the government of the people in the land is commanded. "Just as in its religious worship the Israelitish nation was to show itself to be the holy nation of Jehovah, so was it in its political relations also. This thought forms the link between the laws already given and those which follow. Civil order, that indispensable condition of the stability and prosperity of nations and states, rests upon a conscientious maintenance of right, by means of a well-ordered judicial constitution and an impartial administration of justice" (F. Delitzsch). Judges and officials were to be appointed and a higher judicial court for more difficult cases to be established, the latter at the place of the sanctuary. Idolatry is prominently mentioned again because it is the most serious matter, both individually and nationally, to forsake the one Jehovah. Apostasy from Jehovah and His covenant is wickedness. Chapter 16:21-22 also has reference to idolatry. The

idoltrous altars and images were set up under, or, beside green trees. See 1 Kings 14:23; 2 Kings 17:10; Jeremiah 17:2. Then there is provision made for the choice of a king. The Lord foresaw Samuel's time, when the people would reject Him as their King and desire to be like other nations; and foreseeing their failures He made provision for this emergency.

"And yet the wisdom and grace of God are only the more, not the less, conspicuous in this provision. True, of Saul it was said, 'I gave thee a king in Mine anger, and took him away in My wrath' (Hosea 13:11). But this only brings out God's real choice--David, 'the beloved,' type of One who is indeed that, and in whom a King is found who reigns forever. He is the One of whom the king that Deuteronomy announces is the shadow. Brought forth when priesthood has failed in Eli, and prophet in Samuel, the true king is God's resource for Israel and the earth. For neither priesthood nor prophecy alone will set right the earth, or bring in the time when it shall be filled with the glory of the Lord. He must come to whom the throne belongs, and who shall bring back judgment to righteousness; He in whom Prophet, Priest, and King are one,--a threefold cord that never shall be broken" (Numerical Bible).

A comparison of verse 16 and 17 with 1 Kings 9-11 is most interesting. What failure man is in himself. And Solomon was the wisest and most influential of all the kings. This fact that Solomon did the very opposite from what the king should do has led the critics to say that this passage was written after Solomon. As if God did not know all this beforehand! But there is not allusion to Solomon's kingdom at all in the words Moses spoke.

14. The Rights of the Priests and the Levites, the True and the False Prophet

CHAPTER 18

1. The rights of the priests and Levites (18:1-8)
2. Forbidden things (18:9-14)
3. The true and the false prophet (18:15-22)

The priests, the Levites, were the servants of Jehovah and had no inheritance with Israel, but Jehovah Himself was their inheritance. How the people were to minister unto them is now commanded by Moses. They were both dependent on the Lord and closely identified with Him. And this is true of us, who are in Christ constituted priests and called to the Levite service.

Of great interest are verses 9-14. The nations who possessed the land practised evil things, through which Satan manifested his awful power to lead astray and to corrupt. His people were to beware of these things. We, too, are warned not to intrude into those things which we have not seen (Col. 2:18). Moses puts together the words which the language contained for the different modes of finding out the future and discovering the will of God. Passing a son or daughter through the fire, the awful Moloch service, is forbidden once more (Lev. 18:21). Then follow all the abominable things. There are seven of them mentioned, which come under the term "divination": 1. Observer of times, predicting good or bad things by observation of the heavens and circumstances; 2. Enchanter. The Hebrew word is *_menachesh* connected with *_nachash* the Hebrew word for serpent. It means one who murmurs enchantments; 3. Witch; 4. Charmer; 5. A consulter with familiar spirits; 6. A wizard, who has access to an unlawful wisdom; 7. The necromancer, who asks the dead. These abominations existed then and they exist today. Clairvoyancy, palmistry, astrology, soothsaying, fortune-telling, spiritualistic seances, theosophy, the formulas and treatments of "Christian Science" are a few of the modern names of this ancient demonism. It is awful to see their growth as the end draws near. What is claimed to be "Psychical research," studying "occult phenomena," is nothing less than stepping upon the same territory of evil. And Satan uses these wicked things, his familiar spirits, and asking the dead to prepare the way for the great delusion of the end, with its signs and lying wonders. Spiritualism with its demon-possessed mediums, Psychical research, theosophy, Christian Science, are Satan-cults. They are an abomination to Jehovah and His righteous judgment will soon fall upon them. We add here the solemn warning of another.

I take this opportunity of solemnly warning every soul--more particularly the young--from levity in hankering after that

which they do not understand, and very especially in the way of giving up their will to any but the Lord Jesus. This is the essential point of danger. I do not raise the smallest doubt that there are powers in the natural world which lie quite beyond the explanation of men. It is not my wish therefore to excite a kind of hue and cry against that which may not be yet explained. Let us avoid the presumption of supposing that we can account for everything. But in our ignorance (which the wisest most feel and own) this wisdom at least ought to belong to the least of God's children, that they know in whom they believe, and they have His word and His Spirit, and can count on infinite love and power as well as wisdom on their behalf. They can well afford therefore to leave what is beyond themselves or any others in the hands of God their Father. They with sorrow see others rush in who have nothing higher, who have no God to count on or look to. But above all beware. Whenever any one asks you to give up your mind or will to another--were it but for a moment--there is the evident hand of the devil in it. This is no question of physical powers, or of what is naturally inexplicable. What is behind giving up yourself, your will, to any one but God, is plain enough in its character and consequences; it is too easy to understand it. The divine axiom is that the Lord and He alone has a right to you. Consequently such a demand proves that Satan is taking advantage, it may be of what is natural, but certainly of you (W. Kelly).

The Prophet promised in verse 15 is the Lord Jesus Christ. Acts 3:22-23 refers us to this prophecy. Acts 7:37 also confirms the fulfilment of Moses' prediction in the person of Christ.

15. Laws for Israel in the Land

CHAPTER 19

1. Concerning the cities of refuge (19:1-13)
2. Removing a landmark (19:14)
3. The punishment of a false witness (19:15-21)

Here again we have not a repetition of the previous law concerning the cities of refuge (Num. 35:9-34), but an earnest admonition to be obedient to those laws. The three cities on the east of Jordan were named in chapter 4. Here the other three in the midst of the land are in view. They were to be in a place of easy access with a prepared way leading to them. Grace and judgment are illustrated in the case of the slayer, who killed his neighbor ignorantly and he who killed his neighbor purposely. When the slayer reached the city he found a shelter there and lived, for he had done it ignorantly. Grace gave him shelter and he knew he was safe. For the wilful murderer there was no mercy, but judgment. "Thine eyes shall not pity him." Obedience was demanded in all these utterances of Moses.

16. Concerning Future Wars

CHAPTER 20

1. Words of encouragement (20:1-4)
2. The fearful and faint-hearted (20:5-9)
3. Concerning sieges (20:10-20)

In the appointed warfare there was no need to fear the enemies. The priest was commissioned to speak words of encouragement not to fear, nor to tremble, nor to be terrified by the horses and chariots. The divine assurance was threefold: Jehovah goeth with you, to fight for you, to save you. This presupposes their obedience. If they were obedient, they had nothing to fear. Victory was on their side. And we too need to fear nothing in our warfare with the wicked spirits (Eph. 6). The Lord is on our side and if we resist the devil he will flee from us.

But if Israel was disobedient and departed from the Lord, He fought against them and their enemies overcame them. See also Zech. 14:3 about the time when Jehovah will overcome the nations who gather against Jerusalem at the close of the age. The faint-hearted and the fearful as well as those who might hanker after their possessions and become homesick were

not to go into the battlefield. They were unfit for warfare, because they did not wholly trust in Jehovah. There was a most merciful arrangement, which consisted in an offer of peace to a besieged city. (The cities of the Canaanitish nations are not included.) Peace was the first thing proclaimed. If the offer was accepted the lives of the inhabitants were saved. If not and the people resisted the proclamation of peace and therefore showed the wickedness of their hearts, resisting God, the city was besieged. All the males were to be smitten with the sword, but the women and little ones were saved. It was different with the wicked inhabitants of the land. Their utter destruction was demanded. The reason for this is again stated in verse 18. The fruit trees during a siege were not to be cut down, for they sustained life.

17. The Expiation of an Uncertain Murder and Various Instructions

CHAPTER 21

1. The expiation of an unknown murder (21:1-9)
2. Concerning a wife, who had been a prisoner of war (21:10-14)
3. The right of the firstborn (21:15-17)
4. The punishment of a rebellious son (21:18-21)
5. The burial of one who hanged on a tree (21:22-23)

The expiation of an unknown murder seems to find an interesting application in the case of the nation itself. Bloodguiltiness is upon them for they cried "His blood be upon us and upon our children." And the nation has suffered as the result of it. But there is a full expiation coming through Him who prayed for them on the cross, "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do." He died for them as the heifer (the type of Christ) died in the rough valley (the type of His deep humiliation) for the unknown murder. Then the prayer in verse 8 will be graciously answered, when Israel turns to the Lord in the day of His manifestation. "Be merciful, O LORD, unto Thy people Israel, whom Thou hast redeemed, and lay not innocent blood unto Thy people of Israel's charge. And the blood shall be forgiven them."

The woman captive desired by an Israelite for a wife could not be one of the Canaanitish races for they were to be all slain; but other Gentiles are meant. She was to be mercifully protected. Polygamy is taken in consideration in verses 15-17 and a law is given in view of it to guard against an abuse in favor of a beloved wife. The son of the hated wife, if he is the firstborn, cannot be defrauded of his birthright; he must receive the double portion. If we look deeper we shall find here too the dispensational lesson concerning Israel's relation to Jehovah. Israel has been the unfaithful wife, but she will be reinstated in due time and receive the blessing promised unto her.

The stubborn and rebellious son, who is to be stoned to death, is but another type of the finally disobedient in Israel. While in the future the penitent and believing remnant of Israel will be reinstated in Jehovah's favor and inherit the glorious things promised to them, the apostate part of that nation, going on in self-will and rebellion, will be cut off in judgment. The prophetic Word predicts such a stubborn and rebellious condition among the great mass of that people before the Lord comes. But the same judgment also falls upon the rebellious, disobedient among the Gentiles, those who profess to be children of God, but their disobedience shows that they are not.

The close of this remarkable chapter plainly refers to our blessed Lord and His work on the cross. Galatians 3:13 quotes verse 23 and applies it to the Lord Jesus.

18. Against Inhumanity and Different Violations, False Testimony and Sins of Adultery

CHAPTER 22

1. Laws against inhumanity (22:1-12)
2. Concerning false testimony (22:13-21)
3. Sins of adultery (22:22-30)

Laws on the second table are now more fully expounded by Moses. The love to the neighbor is to be expressed by guarding and preserving that which is his property. The strayed and fallen animal belonging to another had to be helped. To leave them in that condition would have been a violation of the law "love thy neighbor as thyself" as well as an act of inhumanity. Another interesting law is the one which forbids woman to wear man's garments (verse 5). "The immediate design of this prohibition was not to prevent licentiousness, or to oppose idolatrous practices; but to maintain the sanctity of that distinction of the sexes, which was established by the creation of man and woman, and in relation to which Israel was not to sin. Every violation or wiping out of this distinction--such as even the emancipation of women--was unnatural, and therefore, an abomination in the sight of God." Yet to-day we find a universal movement in the world for the complete emancipation of women, which ignores and even defies the place which the Creator and the Redeemer has given to woman.

The law concerning the bird's nest manifests the Creator's care and His people are to recognize it. The keeping of this law has the same promise as the commandment relating to obedience to parents. Diverse seeds were forbidden. Spiritually we find a lesson here. There are two seeds, the good and the bad. The good seed stands for the truth. It must not be mixed with error. The truth must be kept unmixed. The opposite is done today as never before in the history of Christendom. They were not to plow with an ass and an ox together. They were not to wear a mixed garment. And we are exhorted not to be unequally yoked with unbelievers, but be separated in our habits, in life and walk, unto the Lord. The concluding part of the chapter reveals the heart of man in its deceitfulness and corruption.

19. The Congregation of Jehovah and Its Constitution and Holiness

CHAPTER 23

1. The constitution of the congregation of Jehovah (23:1-8)
2. The cleanness of the camp in time of war (23:9-14)
3. Concerning the escaped slave and the harlot (23:15-18)
4. Usury forbidden (23:19-20)
5. Concerning vows (23:21-23)
6. The neighbor's vineyard and field (23:24-25)

The congregation of Israel is called in this chapter "the congregation of Jehovah." And because it was the congregation of Jehovah, all that is unclean and which defiles had to be kept out of it. The same principle applies to the New Testament assembly, which is called the Church of God. Only those who are born again and therefore clean have a right to belong to the church.

The following interesting typical meaning of verses 1-8 is a paragraph taken from the Numerical Bible:

First, then, we have the assembly in its refusal of all discordant elements; and here the exclusion of the unsexed male is based on the need of maintaining the integrity of the creature. Mutilation was a reproach to God; and thus the whole spirit of asceticism is condemned and excluded both for Israel and for us today. The word of "bastard," "one born of corruption," only occurs once beside in Zech. 9:6, is explained by the Rabbins, and received by commentators in general as meaning "one born of incest or adultery." Typically, one corruptly born is not the mere child of nature; but rather one corruptly introduced among the people of God. "Baptismal regeneration," as the ritualist holds it, is such a birth; and the Moabite and the Ammonite following here emphasizes this thought, though it be true that they are not distinctly reprobated for their birth, but for their enmity to the true people of God, and their employment of Balaam to curse. But even thus does the false professor, like an Ammonite or a Moabite, show his birth today. The Edomite is the simple natural man, and for him there is more hope, and the Egyptian is classed with him, though only in the third generation (dead and risen with Christ) could they enter the congregation of the Lord.

Cleanness and purity had to be preserved in Israel's camp. They were constantly to remember "Jehovah thy God walketh in the midst of thy camp ... therefore shall thy camp be holy; that He see no unclean thing in thee, and turn away from thee."

All uncleanness and uncleanliness of the body was considered for this reason an evil thing. The Lord gave even such instructions as these, because He wanted His people to be clean and separated unto Himself. And how it behooves us to take heed to all these things. Jehovah is not alone with us, in the midst of His people, but God the Holy Spirit has made our bodies His temples. "What! Know ye not that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom ye have from God, and ye are not your own? For ye were bought with a price, therefore glorify God in your body" (1 Cor. 6:19-20).

And how beautiful it is that the poor, escaped slave found in the congregation of Jehovah a refuge! He was not to be oppressed. But the Israelites, who practised the abominable things of the flesh under a religious garb (verse 17) were an abomination unto the Lord.

Verses 24 and 25 prove that Jehovah is the owner of the land and He invited the hungry one to satisfy his hunger, to be His guest, so to speak. But the right of the tenant of the land was also respected. See on plucking the ears of corn (Matthew 12:1; Luke 6:1).

20. Concerning Divorce and Laws of Mercy

CHAPTER 24

1. Concerning divorce (24:1-5)
2. Concerning pledge and slavery (24:6-7)
3. Concerning leprosy (24:8-9)
4. Concerning the oppression of the poor (24:10-15)
5. Concerning injustice (24:16-18)
6. The stranger, the fatherless and the widow remembered (24:19-22)

Matthew 19:1-9 must be studied with the words of Moses on divorce. The Pharisees asked the Lord "why did Moses then command to give a writing of divorcement, and to put her away?" But they erred when they called Moses' word a commandment. It was only something which Moses allowed. Adultery according to the law was punishable with death. "He saith unto them, Moses, because of the hardness of your hearts, suffered you to put away your wives; but from the beginning it was not so. And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery; and whosoever marrieth her that is put away doth commit adultery."

No part of the handmill, the millstone, was to be taken as a pledge, for that would have deprived the person of the necessary instrument in the preparation of food. Manstealing was forbidden under penalty of death (Ex. 21:16).

Merciful are the laws found in verses 10-15. If these laws were obeyed how many questions would be solved and how much injustice would be abolished. See also James 5:4. Mercy was to be shown to the poor in remembrance of their former condition in Egypt.

21. Various Laws and Responsibilities

CHAPTER 25

1. Corporal punishment (25:1-3)
2. Thou shalt not muzzle the ox (25:4)
3. The brother-in-law's marriage (25:5-10)
4. Concerning a sinful freedom (25:11-12)
5. Concerning divers weights and measures (25:13-16)
6. Concerning the conquest of Amalek (25:17-19)

Corporal punishment is mentioned in the first paragraph of this chapter. But this also was tempered with mercy. Not more than forty stripes were to be administered in the presence of the judge. The rabbinical instructions put the limit at thirty-nine--"forty save one." Five times our blessed apostle Paul was punished in this manner, for we read, "Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes, save one" (2 Cor. 11:24).

In comparison with the cruel beatings and tortures so universally found among the Gentile races the law concerning corporal punishment appears very merciful. The chastisement was not to be severer than it could be endured. It speaks typically also of the chastisement His people have to undergo.

The ox was not to be muzzled when he treaded out the corn.

"Who goeth a warfare any time at his own charges? who planteth a vineyard, and eateth not of the fruit thereof? or who feedeth a flock, and eateth not of the milk of the flock? Say I these things as a man? or saith not the law the same also? For it is written in the law of Moses, Thou shalt not muzzle the mouth of the ox that treadeth out the corn. Doth God take care for oxen? Or saith He it altogether for our sakes? For our sakes, no doubt, this is written: that he that ploweth should plow in hope; and that he that thresheth in hope should be partaker of his hope" (1 Cor. 9:7-10).

"For the Scripture saith, Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn. And, the laborer is worthy of his reward" (1 Tim. 5:18). These are most blessed comments on this verse, which otherwise would be rather obscure. The toiling ox is the type of the servant and his ministry. And this has its rewards.

The commandment given by Moses, that a surviving brother is to marry his brother's widow is seen in its working in the story of Ruth and the kinsman-redeemer. The law itself was founded upon an old traditional custom, which we find already in Genesis 38:8-11. Moses here recognized this custom was not to be considered compulsory.²

And Amalek was to be remembered, Amalek, who feared not God. When Israel had rest in the land and all the other enemies were conquered, then the remembrance of Amalek was to be completely blotted out. As we saw from our annotations in Exodus Amalek typifies the flesh, while Egypt is the type of the world. The complete perishing of Amalek is seen in Balaam's parables. When the sceptre rises out of Israel (the second coming of Christ), when He comes that shall have dominion, then Amalek shall perish forever (Num. 24:20). When we are indeed in the land and possess our inheritance, when all our enemies are gone, then the remembrance of Amalek, the old flesh, will be blotted out forever.

22. Firstfruits and Prayer

CHAPTER 26

1. The basket of first-fruits, confession and rejoicing (26:1-11)
2. Obedience yielded and prayer (26:12-15)
3. Jehovah acknowledges His people (26:16-19)

The possession of the land is anticipated and a most beautiful ceremony is appointed for confession and worship in the place the Lord chose to place His Name there. The first of all the fruit of the land was to be gathered and put in a basket. This basket was presented unto the priest with the following words: "I profess this day unto the LORD thy God, that I am come unto the country which the LORD sware unto our fathers for to give us." The priest then set it down before the altar. It was an acknowledgment of His Grace and His faithfulness in keeping His promise and bringing them into the land. The Lord had brought them in and the basket of fruits witnessed to the fact that they possessed the good things promised unto them. They could truly say, the Lord kept His Word, He promised us this land and now we are in it; it is ours. And we know, as saved by grace and in Christ, that we are blessed with every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies. We too are brought In and have the right of access into His presence. And this blessed consciousness that we are redeemed and belong to Christ is essential to true worship in spirit and in truth.

Most beautiful is the confession Moses gave to Israel, to be used when the basket of firstfruits was set before Jehovah. "A Syrian ready to perish was my father." Lovely words! They brought to remembrance what they were and the grace which Jehovah manifested, when that Syrian ready to perish was called out. And this is but a picture of what we are by nature, "ready to perish." Then comes the story of Egypt and their deliverance out of the house of bondage. Even so we are delivered. They were to rejoice in every good thing the Lord had given unto them; and we rejoice in the Lord and all His goodness to us. And this joy was practically expressed in giving to the Levite, the stranger, the fatherless, the widow; they ate and were filled. Thus they could tell Jehovah, "I have not transgressed Thy commandments, neither have I forgotten them." While we rejoice in the Lord, know that we are saved and worship in the spirit, may we also remember that it is written, "But to do good and to communicate forget not; for with such sacrifices God is well pleased." How often we forget this! Yet it must ever be an outflow from true worship.

23. The Memorial of the Law at Mount Ebal; Gerizim and Ebal

CHAPTER 27

1. The memorial to be set up in the land (27:1-8)
2. Gerizim and Ebal (27:9-26)

Little comment is needed on this chapter. The memorial stones were to be set up on Mount Ebal. Upon that mountain the curses of the law were to be uttered. The blessings were to be pronounced upon Mount Gerizim. However, on Gerizim were no stones with the law written upon it. How strikingly this illustrates the true ministration of the law! It cannot give blessing, but it must curse man. "For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse; for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them" (Gal. 3:10). Then the tribes are divided to stand upon Gerizim to bless and upon Ebal to curse. But where are there words of blessing in connection with Gerizim? Not one. The law cannot give blessing. But the word "cursed" we find twelve times in this chapter. What a confirmation that the law holds out no blessing for man, but can do nothing but curse. But, blessed be God! upon Mount Ebal there stood not alone the great stones with plaster, with the words of the law upon them, but there was also an altar unto Jehovah, for burnt offerings and for peace offerings, for rejoicing before the Lord. And this speaks of Christ, who has redeemed us from the curse of the law.

24. The Blessing and the Curse

CHAPTER 28

1. The blessing promised (28:1-14)
2. The curse announced (28:15-68)

This is one of the most solemn chapters in the Pentateuch. Orthodox Hebrews read in their synagogues each year through the entire five books of Moses. When they read this chapter, the Rabbi reads in a subdued voice. And well may they read it softly and ponder over it, for here is prewritten the sad and sorrowful history of that wonderful nation. Here thousands of years ago the Spirit of God through Moses outlined the history of the scattered nation, all their suffering and tribulations, as it has been for well nigh two millenniums and as it is still. Here are arguments for the divine, the supernatural origin of this book which no infidel has ever been able to answer; nor will there ever be found an answer.

It would take a great many pages to follow the different predictions and show their literal fulfilment in the nation, which turned away from Jehovah and disobeyed His Word. What a warning this chapter is to Gentile Christendom! "If God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest He also spare not thee" (Rom. 11:21).

Apart from such general predictions as found in verses 64-66 and fulfilled, as everybody knows, in the dispersion of

Israel, there are others, which are more minute. The Roman power, which was used to break the Jews, is clearly predicted by Moses, and that in a time when no such power existed. Read verses 49-50. "The LORD shall bring a nation against thee from far, from the end of the earth, as swift as the eagle flieth, a nation, whose language thou shalt not understand." The eagle was the standard of the Roman armies; the Jews understood many oriental languages, but were ignorant of Latin. "Which shall not regard the person of the old, nor show favor to the young." Rome killed the old people and the children. "And he shall besiege thee in all thy gates, until thy high and fenced walls come down, wherein thou trustedst, throughout all thy land" (verse 52). Fulfilled in the siege and overthrow of Jerusalem by the Roman legions. "The tender and delicate woman among you, which would not adventure to set the sole of her foot upon the ground for delicateness and tenderness, shall eat their children, for want of all things in the siege and straitness wherewith thine enemy shall distress thee in thy gates" (54-57). Fulfilled in the dreadful sieges of Jerusalem, perhaps the most terrible events in the history of blood and tears of this poor earth. Every verse beginning with the fifteenth to the end of this chapter has found its oft repeated fulfilment. It does not surprise us that the enemy hates this book, which bears such a testimony, and would have it classed with legends.

25. The Repetition of the Covenant and the Repetition of the Curse

CHAPTER 29

1. The repetition of the covenant (29:1-15)
2. The repetition of the curse (29:16-29)

The words of the covenant are once more brought to their remembrance. Once more all the goodness of the Lord towards them is unfolded by Moses, how the Lord had dealt with Egypt and how their eyes had seen the signs and great miracles. (Verses 5 and 6 are the direct words of Jehovah, ending with the declaration, "I am the LORD, your God.") Again the forty years are mentioned, during which their clothes and their shoes did not get old. God took care of them and provided for their needs in the wilderness. Bread from heaven was their portion and therefore they had no need of stimulants, such as wine and strong drink (verse 6). But in the midst of these words, calling to remembrance the goodness and faithfulness of the Lord, we find a solemn statement: "Yet the LORD hath not given you an heart to perceive, and eyes to see, and ears to hear, unto this day" (verse 4). In all the manifestations they had remained without understanding and their heart was not touched and broken down. Therefore these gracious dealings are here repeated, that they might receive understanding and love and obey the Lord with all their heart. But they were a stiffnecked people, their heart of stone. How fully Israel's history illustrates the words of our Lord, "that which is born of the flesh is flesh!" Later, when Israel went deeper and deeper into apostasy, Isaiah received the message, "Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed and perceive not. Make the heart of this people fat and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes, lest they see with their eyes and hear with their ears and understand with their heart, and convert and be healed" (Is. 6:9-10). Judicial blindness came upon them when they rejected the Lord of Glory (Matt. 13:14-15; John 7:40; Acts 28:26-27). See also Stephen's testimony given in the power of the Holy Spirit (Acts 7:51-52). But a day is coming when there will be for that nation a New Testament (Jer. 31:31-34; Heb. 8:7-11). Then Ezekiel 36:24-31 will be fulfilled. A careful reading of these passages will be helpful.

Here the Lord reminded them of what He had done for them to show them the claim He has on their obedience. "Keep therefore the words of this covenant, and do them, that ye may prosper in all ye do."

After an earnest appeal to enter into the covenant, including the little ones, the stranger, the hewer of the wood and the water-carrier (Josh. 9:21, 27), we find the curse mentioned once more as the result of departure from the Lord. Especially interesting are verses 22-24. Such evil is to come upon them and upon the land, that "the stranger that shall come from a far land, shall say, when they see the plagues of that land, and the sickness which the LORD has laid upon it ... even all nations shall say, Wherefore hath the LORD done thus unto this land? What meaneth the heat of this great anger?" Strangers from far lands, tourists and pilgrims, have visited Palestine in fulfilment of this prediction and in view of the deplorable condition of that land have often asked these questions and known their answer. "Then men shall say, Because they have forsaken the covenant of the LORD God of their fathers, which He made with them, when He brought them forth out of the land of

Egypt."

26. The Dispersion, the Return and the Final Appeal

CHAPTER 30

1. The message of hope (30:1-10)
2. The final appeal (30:11-20)

These things, which Moses spoke into the ears of the people were to come to pass. And they have been fulfilled. The people Israel are scattered among all the nations, and yet they have not been assimilated by the nations. They are kept as a separate people. Connected with the prediction of their dispersion is the message of hope, the prophecy relating to their return. The Lord promises, that if they return unto Him and obey His voice, that He will return unto them. "Then the LORD thy God will turn thy captivity, and have compassion upon thee, and will return and gather thee from all the nations, whither the LORD thy God hath scattered thee" (verse 3). That will come to pass when this present age closes. Then when the greatest trouble, the time of Jacob's trouble is upon them (Matt. 24) they will return. The Lord Himself will return, as announced in the above verse, and gather them from all the nations. He will bring them back into their land; they will possess it once more. Spiritual blessings will also come upon them and upon their children. Earthly blessings will be multiplied unto them and the Lord will rejoice over them, because they are a converted, an obedient people. God's gifts and calling, which are without repentance, will then be fully accomplished in that nation. "Behold I will gather them out of all countries, whither I have driven them in mine anger, and in my fury, and in great wrath; and I will bring them again unto this place, and I will cause them to dwell safely. And they shall be my people and I will be their God" (Jer. 32:37-38). "For I will take you from among the nations, and gather you out of all countries, and will bring you into your own land" (Ezek. 36:24). Many more passages might be added from other portions of the prophetic Word. Moses, the prophet, speaks of that which all the other prophets after him have restated, confirmed, and enlarged. Israel's present condition, dispersed among the nations of the earth, is not permanent. God will bring them back and keep all the promises of blessing. How wonderful are some of the visions of glory relating to the time, when this will be accomplished. Read Isaiah 24; 60; 61; 62, etc.; these magnificent promises of blessing are not for a spiritual Israel, as people sometimes term the church, but for the literal Israel. Some say, the return predicted by Moses and the other prophets was fulfilled when a remnant of Jews came back from Babylon. This is incorrect for neither were the people scattered among all the nations, nor did the small remnant, which came back from the Babylonian captivity, enjoy the glories and blessings predicted in the prophetic Word. Another return will take place, when their once rejected King comes back. The Old Testament is practically a sealed book to every person who does not believe in a literal restoration of Israel to their land.

The final appeal of Moses as given in the second part of this chapter, has for its leading note "obedience," the characteristic word of this entire book. Notice in the last verse the significant statement, that the Lord, who is to be loved and whose voice is to be obeyed, is their life. "For He is thy life."

III. THE FINAL WORDS OF MOSES AND THE VISION OF THE FUTURE

1. Moses' Final Charge, The Written Law Delivered, and Jehovah's Word to Moses

CHAPTER 31

1. The final charge of Moses (31:1-8)
2. The written law delivered (31:9-13)
3. Jehovah's word to Moses--Moses to Joshua (31:14-23)
4. A prophecy (31:24-30)

The final words of Moses to the people are full of tenderness and affection. There he stood, an hundred and twenty years

old, a witness to the grace of His God. His eye was still the eye of youth, for it knew no dimness. And his frame was not bowed down by old age; there was no sign of feebleness about him (34:7). The words "I can no more go out and come in" are not in clash with the statement about his physical condition. He knew that he had to die because the Lord had told him so. He encouraged the people to trust in the Lord and assured them that the Lord would give them victory. "He it is who doth go with thee; He will not fail thee nor forsake thee." Precious words these! And the same Jehovah is on our side, never to leave nor forsake His people. May we walk in the obedience of faith and find that His promise is true. Then followed an impressive scene. Joshua is called and in the sight of all Israel Moses addressed him. Joshua would bring them into the land. The same words given to Moses by the Lord to address to Joshua were spoken again to Joshua by the Lord Himself (Josh. 1).

The law, which Moses had written was next delivered unto the Levites. "Moses wrote this law." Could there be a more emphatic statement than this! And this declaration that Moses wrote this law is confirmed by our Lord, the same Lord who spoke to Moses and whose words and laws Moses committed to writing. The denial of the Mosaic authorship includes the denial of the infallibility of the Son of God. It is infidelity. The infidels of the past ridiculed the teaching that Moses wrote the five books of the law. The infidels of Christendom do now the same. And this law was to be read before all Israel at the feast of tabernacles. They were to be dependent upon the Word of God and learn, fear, and obey by reading and hearing it. Our dependence is the same. Apart from believing and obeying the Word, spiritual life, walking in the Spirit, in fellowship with God, is impossible.

Then the Lord appeared in the tabernacle in a pillar of cloud, when Moses and Joshua presented themselves in the tabernacle of the congregation. The omniscient One, who knows everything from the beginning, announced the failure and apostasy of the nation, with whom He had dealt in such marvellous kindness, and who had been the witnesses of His power and glory. They would break the covenant and apostatize. He would forsake them also, because they turned away from Him to go a whoring after other gods. He would hide His face. All the predicted and threatened evils and troubles would come upon them. And their past, as well as present history, proves the solemn truth of these divine words. And there is one more chapter of their shameful history to be written. "The great tribulation" is still future. It will sweep over them in the days when the apostate nation will accept the false messiah, the Anti-christ, he who comes in his own name.

And Jehovah was to give Moses a song, which he was to teach Israel. The song is found in the chapter which follows. It has for its foundation the words of the Lord in verses 16-21. And Moses was obedient and wrote the same day and taught it to the children of Israel. It was a witness against them. It is so today. How striking that they should read this great final book of the law, read their own curses, their own history, past, present and future, and still abide in unbelief.

The parallel with the church is easy to recognize. Apostasy and failure were predicted for the latter days of the church on earth; that prediction was made in the very beginning of the church. How abundantly it has found its fulfillment! Compare Moses' words in verse 29 with the words of Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles, in Acts 20:29-30.

2. The Song of Moses

CHAPTER 32:1-43

1. The introduction and the theme (32:1-4)
2. The foolish people (32:5-6)
3. How Jehovah loved them (32:7-14)
4. Their apostasy (32:15-18)
5. The results of the apostasy (32:19-33)
6. Jehovah's final dealing with Israel (32:34-42)
7. The glorious consummation (32:43)

The song of Moses is a great prophecy. The first great prophetic utterance is found in the parables of Balaam. The

second prophetic discourse is this song. The song of Moses embraces the entire history of Israel, past, present and future. It bears in a most remarkable way every mark of being a prophetic testimony from the inspired leader of God's people. The men, who deny this and who boast of literary ability, must be wilfully blind. The critics have denied to a man, that Moses wrote a single word of this song. But they have not informed us who wrote this wonderful ode. "The assertion that the entire ode moves within the epoch of the kings, who lived many centuries after the time of Moses, rests upon a total misapprehension of the nature of prophecy" (Keil).

Moses began his song by calling heaven and earth to hear the words of his mouth. What he was about to say concerned indeed heaven and earth. Isaiah too began his book with the same call (Isa. 1:2). The name of Jehovah is exalted. He is the Rock and His work is perfect. He is a God of truth, just and right. But His people, what are they? Their character is described in verses 5 and 6. How He uncovers the true nature of the people, who had acknowledged Him as Jehovah! Corrupt, perverse, crooked, foolish, unwise, are the terms used to describe their character. The failure they would be, their apostasy and the necessity of disciplinary dealings of Jehovah with them, are thus mentioned in the first stanza of this song.

The third section, verses 7-14, reveals the goodness and the love of the Lord for them. The eighth verse has a deep meaning. "When the Most High divided to the nations their inheritance, when He separated the sons of Adam, He set the bounds of the people according to the number of the children of Israel." This verse carries us backward. The boundaries of the nations were made by God with a direct reference to the children of Israel. The name of God used here, "the Most High," is the millennial title, which He will have when His blessed Son our Lord receives His Kingdom. (See Genesis 14:19.) When that time of blessing comes and Israel converted is no longer the tail but the head of the nations, this divine division will then be fully made known. And how they are reminded again what Jehovah did for them! "He found him, He led him, instructed and kept him." Verses 9-14 are wonderful words. And they apply to us spiritually as they described Jehovah's goodness to Israel.

But how great is the contrast when we reach the fourth section of this prophetic song? (See verses 15-18.) The first step in their apostasy is the forsaking of God and the worshipping of false gods. The next step is, they "lightly esteemed the rock of His salvation." No doubt this latter statement refers to the rejection of the son of God, when He appeared in the midst of His people.

The awful consequences of this rejection are seen prophetically. Here again we have history prewritten. But these predictions were so minutely fulfilled, the unbelieving heart of man refuses to accept these words as being the words of Moses. Here again we have a striking evidence of inspiration. God foretells through Moses the future of an apostate people. Compare verse 21 with Romans 10:19 and 11:10-11. The call of the Gentiles is anticipated in Moses' song; salvation came to us Gentiles by their fall. It seems almost as if they are going to perish completely as a nation. But the song changes suddenly. Jehovah will yet arise in their behalf. It will be in a time when their power is gone, when they are helpless and their enemies press down upon them as never before in their long, dark night of suffering and tears. That will happen in the end of this present age, during the predicted time of great trouble, which is to come upon them. Compare verse 39 with Hosea 5:15-6:3. The judgment, which is announced by Moses in verses 40-42 is the judgment which will fall upon Gentile nations in the day when the Lord appears in His glory. To follow this throughout the entire prophetic Word is as helpful as it is interesting.

The last verse of this song (verse 43) shows the glorious consummation. After the storm of judgment and indignation, peace will come to this earth. The nations will learn war no more; they will learn righteousness. Then the world will be converted. The Lord will be merciful unto His land and to His people. The blessings and glories promised to Israel have come. Therefore the nations will rejoice with His people. The song of Moses is the key to all prophecy.

3. The Blessing of Moses

CHAPTERS 32:44-33:29

1. Introduction (32:44-52)
2. Jehovah's manifestation (33:1-5)
3. The blessing of Reuben, Judah and Levi (33:6-11)
4. The blessing of Benjamin and Joseph (33:12-17)
5. The blessing of Zebulun and Issachar (33:18- 19)
6. The blessing of Gad, Dan, Nephtali and Asher (33:20-25)
7. Happy art thou, O Israel! (33:26-29)

Moses and Joshua (same as Hoshea) spoke the song in the ears of the people. They had to learn it. He exhorts them once more to set their hearts to do all these words. "It is not a vain thing for you; because it is your life." But they could not keep the law and therefore could not obtain life and the blessing promised to them. The law cannot bestow life and blessing. It can only curse. But grace gives life. To illustrate this very fact, that the law is for condemnation, the death of Moses is once more announced by Jehovah, as well as his sin at Meribah-Kadesh. He could see the land from afar, but could not enter in. The great man through whom the law was given, the humble Moses, the self-sacrificing, faithful servant of Jehovah, on account of the one transgression, was excluded from the possession of the land.

In the foreground of Moses' prophetic blessing of the tribes stands a description of the manifestation of Jehovah in His glory. This theophany is more than a description of how Jehovah came from Sinai. It is a prophetic picture of how He will come again. Compare this with Habakkuk 3. The blessing of the tribes is different from the blessing which Jacob put upon his sons when they gathered about him (Genesis 49). Jacob foresaw the entire history of his offspring. (The reader is referred to the section on Genesis, where the different periods of the nation are given as indicated in Jacob's prophecy.) The blessing of Moses describes the blessing, which the people Israel will enjoy, when the Lord has been manifested. For this reason it is correct to say (a fact seldom mentioned by exposition), the blessing of Moses is an inspired expansion of the last verse of his song. That verse (32:43) speaks of the Lord's people rejoicing and the Gentiles rejoicing with them.

What Israel will possess and enjoy during the millennium are the contents of these last utterances of Moses. As a closer exposition of these blessings is beyond the scope of these annotations, we confine ourselves to a few hints which will show the way to a deeper study of this remarkable closing section of Deuteronomy. Reuben's, Judah's and Levi's blessings reveal the salvation of the Lord that Israel will enjoy in that coming age of blessing. Benjamin's and Joseph's blessings picture most beautifully the things which the sacred nation will enjoy during the millennium. This section is a most precious one. Zebulun's and Issachar's blessings make known the fact, that the nation will enjoy the abundance of the seas (the Gentiles). The correct translation of verse 19 is "they shall call the peoples (Gentiles) to the mountain." The mountain is Mount Zion and the Lord's house, which will be a house of prayer for all nations. The nations will go there to worship (Isa. 2:14). We have therefore a prophetic description of the blessings which Gentiles receive through a saved Israel. The blessings of Gad, Dan, Naphtali and Asher, speak of the full blessing and supremacy the converted and restored nation will enjoy.

Simeon is left out. We shall not give the different explanations which are offered, nor burden our pages with the unworthy theories of higher criticism.³

We quote the beautiful ending of this chapter in a revised metrical version:

There is none like the God of Jeshurum (upright),
 Who rideth on the heavens for thy help,
 And in His majesty, upon clouds.
 The eternal God is thy home
 And underneath, the everlasting arms.
 And He shall drive out the enemy from before thee,
 And shall say: Destroy! Then Israel shall dwell in safety alone,
 The fountain of Jacob, In a land of corn and new wine,
 His heavens also shall drop down dew.
 Happy thou, O Israel! Who is like thee, people saved by Jehovah,
 The shield of thy help,
 And the sword of thy excellency!
 Surely thine enemies shall crouch before thee,
 And thou shalt tread upon their high places.

And the same Jehovah is our Lord. May we know Him more fully as our home, with the everlasting arms underneath and taste the happiness of our salvation, till we shall see Him face to face.

4. The Death of Moses

CHAPTER 34

1. The death and burial of Moses (34:1-7)
2. The mourning of the people (34:8)
3. The conclusion of the book (34:9-12)

This chapter was not written by Moses, but is an addition by another chosen instrument.

The home-going of this great man of God is beyond description. What a scene it must have been when he ascended Nebo to the top of Pisgah! And the Lord met him there and showed him the land and said: "This is the land, which I swore unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, saying, I will give it unto thy seed. I have caused thee to see it with thine eyes, but thou shalt not go over thither." What vision it must have been! What peace and joy must have filled the heart of the servant of God! Then he died. Jewish tradition has woven many stories around this event. One, however, is so beautiful that we must mention it. "At God's command Moses crossed his hands over his breast and closed his eyes; and God took away his soul with a kiss. Then heaven and earth and the starry world began to weep for Moses."

And the Lord buried Moses. How and where is unrevealed. Jude informs us that Michael, the archangel, contended with the devil about the body of Moses. No doubt Satan tried to bring the buried body to light and to seduce Israel to worship the body of their departed leader. What honor Jehovah put after all upon His servant! He is the only one who was buried by the Lord, and he appeared on the Mount of Transfiguration with the Lord. And the beautiful testimony concerning him by the Spirit of God at the end of this book! "And there arose not a prophet since in Israel whom the LORD knew face to face."

May it please God to bless this book and its many lessons to our hearts. May He grant unto us to live and walk dependent upon and obedient to His Word.

1. It has been stated Luke 23:43 is this Old Testament idiom in the New Testament, as if our Lord meant to say: "Verily I say unto thee today, thou shalt be with Me in Paradise." However, this is positively wrong. It is the argument advanced by the teachers of the soul-sleep. The same hint is made in the Companion Bible. The comma does not belong after "today" but after "thee" as we have it in the English Bible.

2. "The taking off of the shoe was an ancient custom also, adopted, according to Ruth 4:7, in cases of redemption and exchange, for the purpose of confirming commercial transactions. The usage arose from the fact, that when any one took possession of landed property, he did so by treading upon the soil, and asserting his right of possession by standing upon it in his shoes. In this way the taking off of the shoe and handing it to another became a symbol of the renunciation of a man's position and property."

3. Reuben (behold a son!); Simeon (hearing); Levi (joined); Judah (praise). This is the order of the sons of Jacob according to their birth. It tells out the gospel. In the blessing of Moses the order is: Reuben (behold a son!); Judah (praise); Levi (joined). Simeon (hearing) is left out. When the Lord comes Israel will behold Him as the Son and will break out in praise and worship and become joined to Him. No "hearing" is needed then. We pass this on to our readers for consideration. We have nowhere seen this application.

THE BOOK OF JOSHUA

The Annotated Bible

Arno Clement Gaebelein

THE BOOK OF JOSHUA

Introduction

The book of Joshua heads in the Hebrew arrangement of the Old Testament Scriptures, that division which is called "the former Prophets." It is the first book in the Bible which bears in its title the name of a person.

Joshua means "Jehovah is Saviour"; the Greek name for Joshua is Jesus. In our study of the previous books, beginning with Exodus, we have met his name at different times and have learned much of this great man of God. He was the Son of Nun, an Ephraimite (Num. 13:8), grandson of Elishama (1 Chron. 7:26-27). In Exodus we saw him as the leader of Israel against Amalek. He is mentioned as Moses' servant and attendant (Ex. 24:13; 32:17-18); as the servant of Moses, he did not depart out of the tabernacle (Ex. 33:11). He went with Moses, up into the mount of God.

We meet him again in Num. 11:27-29. In Num. 13:8, 16 we find him as one of the spies sent to Canaan. With Caleb he had confidence in God and His promises, and bravely exhorted the people to trust the Lord and go forward. His name, however, is not given at all during the thirty-eight years' wandering in the wilderness. In Deuteronomy he is divinely pointed out as Moses' successor. Moses and Joshua presented themselves in the tabernacle of the congregation, and after the Lord had announced the approaching death of Moses, Joshua hears the charge from the lips of the passing leader of God's people. "Be strong and of a good courage; for thou shalt bring the children of Israel into the land, which I swear unto them; and I will be with thee" (Deut. 31:23). In the analysis and annotations of the book itself we shall have abundant occasion to study the character of Joshua more fully.

The Authorship of the Book

Jewish tradition makes Joshua the author of the book which bears his name. There is no reason why this should be denied. No other person was more fitted to write down the great events, connected with the entrance of Israel into the land, than Joshua. As Moses by inspiration wrote the account of how the Lord brought out His people from Egypt, so Joshua is the instrument, divinely chosen and equipped, to give the story of how the Lord brought them in. That another person should be the author of the book of Joshua appears unreasonable.

The modern critics, however, deny that Joshua had anything whatever to do with the book as we possess it. These wise men have discovered what equally learned and pious men of passed generations, seemingly did not know. They tell us that the date of the composition of Joshua is very late and that it is not the work of one man at all, but a compilation from the same sources that have been utilized in the Pentateuch. These are termed Jehovist (J.); Elohist (E.); Priestly Code (P.); Deuteronomist (D.) and still another Deuteronomist, termed D2. This So-called "science," higher criticism, tries to show which is which. And to these must be added a number of redactors, revisors and editors, who all had a hand in putting the book of Joshua into the shape in which we have it now. (The letters behind the names are used by the critic to indicate these different sources. W.H. Bennett in 1895 published Joshua in a number of colors, indicating the various documents.) Well has it been said:

"One is tempted to say of this complicated but confidently maintained scheme, that it is just too complete, too wonderfully finished, too clever by half. Allowing most cordially the remarkable ability and ingenuity of its authors, we can hardly be expected to concede to them the power of taking to pieces a book of such vast antiquity, putting it in a modern mincing machine, dividing it among so many supposed writers, and settling the exact parts of it written by each!"

And now we must mention in connection with the authorship of the book of Joshua, the Hexateuch theory.

The Hexateuch Theory

The word "Hexateuch" means "six-fold book." The five books written by Moses, Genesis to Deuteronomy, are called "Pentateuch," that is, "five-fold book." The critics claim that the book of Joshua belongs properly to the five books of the law, thereby adding a sixth book. This combination they call the Hexateuch. In itself this appears harmless. However, a closer examination reveals that this invention is the offspring of unbelief. They call attention to the fact that throughout the Pentateuch the land of Canaan and its final conquest and inheritance by Israel is mentioned and presupposed. The following passages are generally pointed out: Gen. 13:14-17; 15:13-16; 26:3; 28:13-15; Ex. 3:8, 17; 32:13; 33:1-3; Num. 13:17, 27:18-23; Deut. 1:38; 3:21; 31:3-6. Upon those passages predicting the future occupation and possession of Canaan, the critics base the claim that the same person or persons who wrote the Pentateuch must have also written the book of Joshua. We quote the exact words of one of the leading critics. "It is self-evident that a writer who has commenced his narrative by the brilliant promises made to the patriarchs, is bound to conclude it by showing us their accomplishment; to say the least, it would be impossible for him to pass that accomplishment in silence."

Such a claim involves the denial of the possibility of prediction of future events. This denial is in very fact the whole foundation of the destructive criticism of the Bible; and such a denial is unbelief. To explain, in a scientific way, as it is termed, the predictions found in the Bible, all kinds of theories have been invented. These theories attempt to explain away the supernatural in the Word of God. Thus different Isaiahs have been invented, because the one Isaiah, who wrote the book which bears his name, must be denied an account of such a marvellous prediction as the mention of Cyrus, the king unborn, when Isaiah lived. Daniel is rejected as the author of the book of Daniel and a "pious Jew" (without a definite name) living hundreds of years after Daniel, has to pose as the author of that prophetic book, because, according to the critics, Daniel could not have foretold the events recorded in his prophecies. And the book of Joshua, for the same reason, must have been composed by the same author or authors, compiler or compilers of the Pentateuch. Of course the critics deny that Moses had anything to do with the writing of the first five books of the Bible. If they were to assign the composition of the book of Joshua to Joshua, and the Pentateuch to Moses, the denial, that there can be no genuine prediction, could not be sustained. And this supposed "Hexateuch," the six-fold book, is relegated to a very late period.

But all this Hexateuchal invention is easily disproven. The Hebrews always revered the five books, universally ascribed to Moses. They look upon them, and rightly so, as standing by themselves in solitary grandeur. The Hebrew Old Testament has three parts, Thora (Pentateuch), Neviim (Joshua, Judges, Samuel, Kings, Isaiah to Malachi, except Daniel), and Kethubim (Psalms, Proverbs, Job, Song of Solomon, Ruth, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes, Esther, Daniel, Ezra, Nehemiah and Chronicles). To link Joshua with the five books of Moses is a thing unknown among the Hebrews. The book of Joshua was never bound together with the law. No manuscript has ever been found which links Joshua with the Pentateuch. The Pentateuch always stood alone by itself and was jealously guarded by the Hebrews. The critics are unable to furnish any proof that originally the Pentateuch and Joshua were combined.

We state another fact, which overthrows the Hexateuch theory. The Pentateuch is the model of the entire Bible. The five-fold division can be traced in both Testaments. The Book of Psalms, for instance, in the Hebrew Bible has five divisions. The ancient Hebrews called therefore the Psalms "the Pentateuch of David." Each division corresponds in a remarkable degree with the character of the different books written by Moses. The New Testament also has five parts which correspond to the Pentateuch: Gospels (Genesis); Acts (Exodus); Pauline Epistles (Leviticus); General Epistles (Numbers); Revelation (Deuteronomy). All this shows that the Hexateuch is a man-made theory pure and simple. It is invented by such, who refuse to accept the supernatural in the Bible.

We cannot follow the different other objections made against the book of Joshua, as being written by Joshua. These objections are easily answered and we need not to burden our readers with these controversial matters which are of no value at all. We shall, however, in our annotations, call attention to some questions raised by the critics. The study of the book itself will furnish continued evidence, that it is written by inspiration.

The Historical Events and their Typical Meaning

The book of Joshua records the entrance of the people Israel into the promised land, how this entrance was effected by the power of God, the conflicts which arose when they came into the land, the partial conquest and the division of the land among the tribes. All this is fully given in our analysis and followed in the annotations of the different chapters.

There is no other historical book in the Bible so rich in typical foreshadowings as the book of Joshua. It is inexhaustible and full of blessed meaning and encouragement to every child of God, because these historical events typify Christian position, Christian experience and Christian conflict. We shall find that a part of Joshua illustrates for us in a typical way the Epistle to the Ephesians. We point out a few of the leading types; the annotations will give the details and touch upon others as well.

Joshua is, of course, a type of Him whose earthly Name he bears. He is the first one in the Word of God who bears that ever blessed Name. As already stated Joshua is the same as "Jesus," the Greek form for Joshua. Joshua therefore typifies Christ. The earthly people Israel typifies the heavenly peoples and the earthly possession promised and given to Israel is the type of the heavenly possession given to His heavenly people. However, Canaan is not the type of heaven, the place into which the believer enters in the future. Canaan could not be the type of heaven for two reasons. The first is, Israel's conflict when they came into the land. They had to fight their way through the land. Their battles, so to speak, began after they had crossed Jordan. They got into the land without even lifting a single sword or spear. But no sooner were they in the land, their fighting began. This can never be said of heaven. When we reach the Father's house all conflicts will be forever ended and Satan will be completely bruised under our feet.

The second reason why Canaan cannot mean heaven is, that Israel could be driven out of the land. This is not possible with heaven. It is impossible that the place into which God's grace brings us could ever be lost to a child of God. Canaan is the type of the heavenly position and possession which the believer has in Christ Jesus. It corresponds to that which in Ephesians is called "in heavenly places," or as better rendered "in the heavenly." It is the heavenly sphere, the heavenly, spiritual blessings given to us in Christ Jesus.

Jordan is not the type of the death of the believer, but Jordan typifies in Joshua the death of Christ, by which we are separated into this blessed heavenly possession. We are brought into it by the death of Christ, as Israel was brought into Canaan through the passage of Jordan.

The passage of Jordan, the erection of the memorial stones, the events at Gilgal, all find a most blessed typical application, illustrating our redemption in Christ as well as our privileges and responsibilities.

The enemies of Israel, the Canaanites, were usurpers of a land which did not belong to them. They were steeped in wickedness. Immoralities of the most abominable nature were connected with their idolatries. They practised sorcery, divinations; they asked the dead and had familiar spirits. Satan and his demons had complete control over them. They are the types of the "wicked spirits" with which a heavenly people wage their warfare. See Ephesians 6:10-13. All these typical applications we shall make in the annotations.

The division of the land among the tribes has its many typical lessons for us, who are called to possess and enjoy our heavenly possession.

The Dispensational Aspect

The book of Joshua has also a marked dispensational aspect. Israel is yet to possess the promised land in the dimensions in which they never possessed it. God brought them in under Joshua, the second one. The first one, Moses, could not bring them in. When our Lord Jesus Christ appears the second time, He will gather His people from the wilderness of the nations and will give them the land and they shall occupy their full inheritance.

The fall of Jericho, the overthrow of Israel's enemies, the battle at Gibeon, the division of the land, the rest which followed, all have their striking and most interesting dispensational meaning.

May it please God to make the study of the book of Joshua a blessing to the hearts of His people.

The Division of the Book of Joshua

The division of the book of Joshua is not difficult to make. The opening chapters are taken up with a description of the entrance of the people into the promised land and the conflicts with the enemies. This is followed by the record of the division of the land among the tribes. The book closes with the last words of Joshua, as Deuteronomy closed with the final words of Moses. The death and burial of Joshua and a few other historical statements are added to the book. These, of course, were not written by Joshua.

I. THE ENTRANCE OF THE PEOPLE INTO CANAAN AND THE CONFLICTS

1. The Entrance Commanded and Success Promised (1:1-18)
2. The Spies and Rahab's Faith (2:1-24)
3. The Passage of Jordan (3:1-17)
4. The Memorial Stones (4:1-24)
5. At Gilgal (5:1-15)
6. The Fall of Jericho (6:1-27)
7. Achan's Sin and Israel's Defeat (7:1-26)
8. The Overthrow of Ai (8:1-35)
9. The Gibeonites and their Victory (9:1-27)
10. The Victorious Conquest (10-12)

II. THE DIVISION OF THE LAND

1. Instructions Given: The Two and a Half Tribes (13:1-33)
2. Caleb's Request and Inheritance (14:1-15)
3. The Portion of Judah (15:1-63)
4. The Portion of Ephraim (16:1-10)
5. The Portion of Manasseh (17:1-18)
6. The Portion of the Rest of the Tribes (18-19)
7. The Cities of Refuge (20:1-9)
8. The Portion of the Levites (21:1-45)

III. THE FINAL WORDS OF JOSHUA AND THE EPILOGUE

1. The Two and a Half Tribes (22:1-34)
2. Joshua's Two Addresses (23:1-24:28)
3. The Epilogue (24:29-33)

Analysis and Annotations

I. THE ENTRANCE OF THE PEOPLE INTO CANAAN AND THE CONFLICTS

1. The Entrance Commanded and Success Promised

CHAPTER 1

1. The Lord speaks to Joshua (1:1-9)
2. Joshua speaks to the people (1:10-15)
3. The answer of the people (1:16-18)

The little word "now" with which this book begins is in the Hebrew "and." It links the book with Deuteronomy and the other books of the Pentateuch. It also shows that the previous books were in existence, for the mention of Moses, his death, and Joshua, the minister of Moses, presupposes that the reader knows all about them. But there is a stronger evidence in the eighth verse of the chapter, that the Pentateuch was then completely written. The term "This book of the law" applies to the five books written by Moses.

Joshua begins with the statement of Moses' death and ends with the record of Joshua's death. The book which follows, the book of judges, begins with the statement of Joshua's death. Moses and Joshua are closely linked together. Both are beautiful types of the Lord Jesus Christ. Moses, the servant, is the type of Christ, the perfect servant of God. Joshua typifies Christ in and among His people in the power of His Spirit.

He leads His people victoriously into the promised possession. Moses' death also typifies Christ. The people could not enter the land as long as this servant of God was living. After his death the land could be possessed. So after the death of Christ the heavenly inheritance is thrown open.

The Lord mentions once more the death of His servant. "Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of His Saints" (Ps. 116:15). After that the command to enter the land is given. The land promised to the seed of Abraham is God's gift. "The land which I do give unto them." They beheld that land across the river with its beautiful hills and mountains and its fertile valleys. The third verse contains a condition. "Every place that the sole of your feet shall tread upon, that have I given unto you, as I said unto Moses." They had to appropriate what God had given and as they appropriated it, they would possess and enjoy the land. If they made it their own by putting their feet upon the land, whether mountain or valley, it became theirs in reality. This required energy. As stated in our introduction, Canaan typifies the heavenly places mentioned in the Epistle to the Ephesians. We are blessed "in Christ" with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places (Eph. 1:3). All is the gift of the grace of God. Unsearchable riches, far greater than that land, even in its widest dimensions, belong to us. The unsearchable riches of Christ are by the death of Christ put on our side. We must take possession in the energy of faith, as Israel had to plant their feet upon the territory and conquer it. If we are apprehended of Jesus Christ, we also must apprehend. "I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which I am also apprehended of Jesus Christ" (Phil. 3:12). Israel failed in the wilderness and Israel failed in the possession of the land. And greater still is our failure in not claiming in faith our possessions "in Christ".

The words the Lord addressed to Joshua are extremely precious. "I will be with thee," stands first. He was with Joshua and gave him the promise "There shall not any man be able to stand before thee all the days of thy life." And this is true of us. He is with us, indwelling us; His Spirit is with us and His power on our side. God is for us; who can be against us? "I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee." He never fails His people. Divine strength and power are on our side. In the midst of the conflict He will never forsake His people.

After these assuring and encouraging words come the exhortations to obedience. "Be strong and very courageous." Notice the courage is linked with the law (the Word of God) and obedience to it, as well as meditation in it day and night.

Joshua was put in dependence on the written Word. So are we. Spiritual growth and enjoyment are impossible apart from meditation in the Word and obedience to it. The Word and obedience to it, separates us, and keeps us separated. And we need courage to obey. It requires courage in an ungodly age, a blinded world with its eyeblinding god (Satan) "to observe to do according to all that is written." It becomes more difficult as the present age draws to its close, to fight the good fight of faith, to appropriate in faith the spiritual blessings, to stand and withstand the wiles of the devil. But if we are obedient His strength will sustain us and give us victory. We constantly need the courage of faith, which looks to God and which is expressed by obedience to His Word. "God's strength is employed in helping us in the paths of God's will, not out of it. Then no matter where we go, what the difficulties are, how long the journey seems, He makes our way prosperous."

Joshua addressed the officers of the people and especially the Reubenites, Gadites, and half the tribe of Manasseh. They had made their choice and had found rest on this side of Jordan. But they were not to be exempt from the approaching warfare; they are commanded to help their brethren by passing with them over Jordan. Then after their brethren had found rest, they were to return to their rest. They could not escape the conflict, though they had no reward in the land itself.

2. The Spies and Rahab's Faith

CHAPTER 2

1. The spies sent forth (2:1)
2. Rahab's faith and works (2:2-14)
3. The escape of the spies and assurance given (2:15-21)
4. The return of the spies (2:22-24)

The historical account needs not to be restated. Joshua, who was one of the spies sent out by Moses, now sends two spies to view the land, even Jericho. Jericho was the great stronghold of the enemy, surrounded by high walls. Jericho means "fragrance" and is a type of the world. (It is interesting to note that in the Hebrew Jericho differs in its spelling in Joshua from that in Numbers. This proves certainly a different authorship.) It is situated near Jordan, the river which typifies death and judgment. The King of Jericho is the type of Satan, the god of this age. The city was grossly immoral, so that it is not strange that the spies came to the house of an harlot. Some have tried to change her character by making her to be an innkeeper. But it cannot be done on account of the word used in the record here and also in the New Testament. Why should even such an attempt be made? Rahab, the harlot, is a beautiful type of the power of the gospel of grace. "By faith the harlot Rahab perished not with them that believed not, when she had received the spies with peace" (Hebrews 1:31). Her faith she witnessed to by works. "Likewise also was not Rahab the harlot justified by works, when she had received the messengers, and had sent them out another way?" (James 2:25) Rahab belonged to the doomed race, the race against which the curse had been pronounced. In the doomed city she practised her vile occupation. But she heard the report and she believed. She confessed her faith in Jehovah, the God of the heaven above and of the earth beneath. She had a reason for this faith, for she said, "We have heard how the Lord dried up the water of the Red Sea for you, when ye came out of Egypt" (verse 10). She prayed for mercy for herself and her father's house. She knew judgment would overtake Jericho, that she was a sinner and needed salvation. She believed in Jehovah and believed, that while He is a holy God, who had dealt in judgment with Egypt, that He is also merciful. She trusted in that mercy and appealed to it in her prayer. She claims assurance of salvation and that of her house and she received it in positive terms.

The scarlet-line by which the spies escaped is bound by herself in the window. It was a token to her and a sign to the coming executioners of judgment, when Jericho fell. They saw that scarlet-line; but she was not told to look upon it. How scarlet speaks of the blood needs hardly to be mentioned. It is the type of being sheltered by the blood. "When I shall see the blood, I will pass over you," was spoken to Israel, behind the blood-sprinkled door posts. The scarlet-line has the same meaning. And we must not forget that two living witnesses gave her the assurance of Salvation. Thus we have our assurance in Him, who died for our sins and who was raised on account of our justification.

By hiding the spies and lying to the King of Jericho, she shows her faith and the weakness of it. To her was also given a

place of honor in the first chapter of the New Testament as one of the ancestors of Him who, according to the flesh, is the Son of David.

Dispensationally the application is equally interesting. When Israel is about to be restored to their land, a witness is sounded forth once more, the preaching of the gospel of the kingdom (Matt. 24:14). Before the judgments of the Lord are executed in the world, those will be saved during the end of the age who, like Rahab, hear and believe this last kingdom message. They will do good to the Jewish messengers of this final testimony, before the coming of the Lord in power and in glory, as Rahab did good to the spies, the messengers of Joshua. They are those to whom the Lord will say, "What ye have done to the least of these, My brethren, that have ye done unto Me." Rahab was saved and remained in the land to enjoy the earthly blessings with Israel. So the Gentiles, who hear and believe the last message, who have done good to the messengers of the King, the Lord's brethren, will be saved from the wrath to come. For a more complete unfolding of this interesting theme, we refer the reader to the exposition of the Olivet discourse in the Gospel of Matthew.

3. The Passage of Jordan

CHAPTER 3

1. The Ark of Jehovah going before (3:1-6)
2. Jehovah's words to Joshua (3:7-8)
3. Joshua's words to the people (3:9-13)
4. The passage accomplished (3:14-17)

The River Jordan divided the people from the promised land. To be in the land Jordan had to be crossed. Jordan, overflowing all its banks at that time (verse 15), rolled its dark waters between them and their God-given possession. Only the power of God could bring them through those dark waters. It was a miracle which took place, when a way was opened and "the waters which came down from above stood and rose up upon an heap ... and those that came down toward the sea of the plain, even the salt-sea, failed and were cut off" (verse 16). Unbelief has always branded this miracle as a legend. The destructive criticism has done the same. This is the second time the Lord made a way for His people through the waters. He made first a way for them through the Red Sea, by which Israel was separated from Egypt and from their enemies. The passage of Jordan separated them from the wilderness and brought them into the land.

Both, the Red Sea and Jordan, are types of the death of Christ in its blessed results for His people. The Red Sea experience typifies the fact that the believer, through the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, is dead to sin and dead to the law. The passage through Jordan is the type of the fact, that the death and resurrection of Christ brings us into the heavenly places; we are seated together in Christ in heavenly places.

And how was the passage accomplished? We read now nothing more of the movement of the pillar of cloud and of fire, so prominent at the Red Sea and during the wilderness journey. The ark of the covenant of the Lord appears in the foreground to lead the way and made a way through the overflowing waters. Taken up by the priests, carried towards the river, as soon as the priests touched the brim of it, the waters were stemmed back, till all the people had passed over on dry ground. The ark with the blood-sprinkled mercy seat is the type of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is the type of our Lord going into the deep waters of death to make a way through them for His people. The distance between the ark and the people was to be two thousand cubits. It illustrates the fact that our Lord had to do this work alone. Peter declared that he would go with Him into death, but the Lord told him, "Thou canst not follow Me now, but thou shalt follow Me hereafter." There was none with Him, when He made the way, but He takes all His people through death into resurrection life and glory.

In the midst of Jordan, the mighty waters standing as a heap above, the priests that bare the ark of the covenant of the Lord stood firm on dry ground, until all the people were passed clean over Jordan. It was a dry way, not a drop of the dark, muddy waters were left. It shows the truth, that the power of death (typified by the waters of Jordan) is completely gone; nothing is left of it. The work is accomplished for all His people. Not one is left behind; the weakest and the smallest pass

over. What effect it must have had upon the enemies, and especially upon Jericho! Jericho was but five miles away. No doubt they watched the hosts of Israel before the passage. They felt secure on account of the mighty waters of Jordan, which seemed to bar the Israelitish invasion. How panic-stricken they must have become when they saw or heard of the great miracle and that God's people had reached the other shore! But one person was calm in Jericho. One enjoyed peace and rest and did not fear. The one from whose window there streamed the scarlet line.

4. The Memorial Stones

CHAPTER 4

1. The first memorial (4:1-8)
2. The second memorial (4:9)
3. The return of the priests with the ark (4:10-18)
4. The encampment at Gilgal (4:19-24)

Jehovah commanded that the great event should be remembered by a memorial. From the river-bed, where the priest's feet stood firm, twelve men, one from each tribe, were to carry twelve stones and leave them at the first lodging place in the land, that is, at Gilgal. These memorial stones were to tell subsequent generations the story of God's faithfulness and power in bringing His people through Jordan into the land. Another memorial of twelve stones was set up by Joshua in the midst of the river, where the priests stood with the ark. This whole record has been much questioned by the critics; it has been charged that there are two different accounts. Professor George Adam Smith states: "For instance, in the story of the crossing of Jordan, as told in Joshua 3 and 4, there are two accounts of the monument set up to commemorate the passage. One of them builds it at Gilgal on the west bank with stones taken from the river-bed by the people; the other builds it in the bed of the river with twelve stones set there by Joshua. (The same view is held by Friedrich Bleek; no doubt Prof G.A. Smith has it from him.) Such criticism reveals the astonishing weakness of that entire school. Why should the ninth verse of the fourth chapter be looked upon as an interpolation, or as another account of one transaction? There is nothing in the text to warrant such a statement. The fact is there are two transactions. The one by the twelve men, who take the twelve stones and set them up at Gilgal. The other by Joshua, who puts twelve stones in the river-bed.

But if these critics but knew a little more of the spiritual and typical significance of all these events and transactions, they would soon learn better. What do these two memorials mean? They tell out the story what God has done for His people. In the midst of Jordan the children of Israel could see the pile of twelve stones Joshua had put there as a memorial. As they looked upon them and the waters rushing about them, they remembered that where these stones are, there the ark halted and the waters were cut off and His people passed over.

The typical application is not hard to make. The twelve stones in the river-bed tell out the story of the death of Christ and our death with Him. We are dead to sin and to the law as well as crucified unto the world. We must, therefore, reckon ourselves dead unto sin.

The other memorial was erected at Gilgal. As they looked upon these stones and their children asked them, "What mean these stones?" they could point to them and say, as these stones were taken out of Jordan on the dry land, so had they been brought out of Jordan into this land of promise. This memorial is the type of the fact "that we are alive unto God in our Lord Jesus Christ." We are a new creation in Christ Jesus, the old things are passed away, behold all things are become new. It is the memorial which tells us, that we are raised up and seated in Christ in the heavenly places. These two great truths seen in this double memorial must ever be remembered by God's people, as Israel was charged to remember the passing over Jordan and the bringing into the land.

5. At Gilgal

CHAPTER 5

1. The terrified enemies (5:1)
2. Circumcision commanded and executed (5:2-9)
3. The Passover kept (5:10)
4. The old corn of the land (5:11-12)
5. The captain of Jehovah's host (5:13-15)

The events at Gilgal are of much interest. Jehovah had brought His people over Jordan. All His promises were kept. He had promised to deliver them out of Egypt and to bring them into the land of Canaan. All is now accomplished. The wilderness is behind them and they face the marvellous land with its riches and resources, the land flowing with milk and honey. The advance and the conquest is next in order. At the Red Sea their enemies were slain by the power of God, but now, after the power of God had brought them into the land, the real conflict begins.

Gilgal, the new ground gained and occupied by the people brought over Jordan, is the type of the resurrection-ground upon which our feet have been planted. That we are risen with Christ and seated in Him in the heavenly places must be constantly remembered, as Israel could never forget at Gilgal that they had been brought over Jordan into the land. The memorial stones served as a constant reminder.

But before they could advance a number of things took place. First we read of the fear which took hold on the kings of the Canaanites. Their hearts melted. They were the instruments of Satan under whose control they were; their fear denotes Satan's fear. He knew the power of Jehovah, which had brought them into the land. The enemy is defeated by the death and resurrection of our Lord. Through death He has annulled him, who has the power of death, that is the devil. Being in Christ, risen with Christ and seated in Him in the heavenly places, we can look upon the enemy as conquered. Yet it is only in the Lord and in the power of His might that we are strong. Apart from Him we become the easy prey of our enemy. What an encouragement to Israel it must have been, when they learned, as no doubt they did, that the mighty enemies, who had inspired such terror to their fathers over thirty-eight years ago, were now trembling. Israel's fear was gone, because God's power was on their side. What confidence we should have when we remember that "we are translated from the power of darkness into the kingdom of the Son of His love"! Victory is on our side. All we need to do is to put on the whole armour of God, to resist the devil and he will flee from us.

Circumcision is next commanded by Jehovah. "At that time the LORD said unto Joshua, Make thee sharp knives and circumcise again the children of Israel the second time." This command was carried out at once and the reproach of Egypt was rolled away. Therefore the place was called Gilgal, which means "rolling." The circumcision was carried out on all the males, who were born in the wilderness (verses 5 and 7). The rite of such deep meaning had been neglected. No doubt they had plenty of excuses for that during the wilderness journey. No command was given to circumcise during the thirty-eight years' wandering. It was suspended; it may have been a punishment for their unbelief. But now all is changed. They are in the land. The Passover, the great memorial feast, was about to be kept. The uncircumcised could not eat the Passover. The reproach of Egypt, for as uncircumcised they were the same as in bondage in Egypt, in no covenant with Jehovah, is rolled away. The visible token of belonging to Jehovah was now borne by every male in the camp.

Joshua exhibited the courage of faith in circumcising the thousands of Israelites at that time. His action has been called "most unmilitary." He put the vast majority of his fighting men into an unfit condition. What if these Canaanites should have fallen upon the settlers in their territory? May Joshua not have remembered the dastardly crime of the sons of Jacob? See Genesis 34:24-26. He knew no fear, his first concern was to yield obedience to God. They tarried for several weeks at Gilgal.

What are the typical lessons of all this? Circumcision stands for the carrying out of the sentence of death to the flesh. The death of Christ is for His people a circumcision. "In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ" (Col. 2:11). But this fact that we are dead to sin by the circumcision, the death of Christ must be carried out practically. The sharp knife has to be applied to the flesh

and the things of the flesh. The members, which are on earth, must be mortified, which means, put into the place of death, where the death of Christ has put them. If it is not done the reproach of Egypt will rest upon His people and they are unfit to enjoy their heavenly possession, and unable to advance in the things of Christ.

Gilgal, therefore, stands for the judgment of self. This is the place of our strength and power. Israel had always to return to Gilgal; when they did not they were defeated. Defeat, failure in our walk, always drives us back to self-judgment and humiliation. Victory and blessing may keep us from it; and that is our real spiritual danger.

Passover is kept next. See Numbers 9 and our annotations there. What blessed memories must have come to them? They remembered that fearful night in Egypt and how Jehovah had passed over them, when He saw the blood of the lamb. Notice the difference between these two Passovers. The first they kept as guilty; they needed protection. But now they keep it as delivered and brought into the land. And we have a feast of remembrance likewise, the Lord's table. "Do this in remembrance of Me." It must be kept by us on resurrection-ground, realizing that we are dead with Christ and risen with Him; self-judgment is needed as well.

"The remembrance of the past is often an excellent preparation for the trials of the future, and as often it proves a remarkable support under them. It was the very nature of the Passover to look back to the past, and to recall God's first great interposition on behalf of His people. It was a precious encouragement both to faith and hope. So also is our Christian Passover. It is a connecting link between the first and second comings of our Lord. The first coming lends support to faith, the second to hope. No exercise of soul can be more profitable than to go back to that memorable day when Christ our Passover was sacrificed for us. For then the price of redemption was paid in full, and the door of salvation flung wide open. Then the Son sealed His love by giving Himself for us. What blessing, whether for this life or the life to come, was not purchased by that transaction? Life may be dark and stormy, but hope foresees a bright tomorrow. "When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory" (Professor W.G. Blaikie).

Then the manna ceased and they ate the old corn of the land. Both foods are typical of Christ, the food God has given to His people. The manna is the type of Christ, on earth, in humiliation. The old corn is Christ in Glory. May we constantly feed on both.

Then Joshua meets before Jericho the man with the drawn sword. What a courageous man Joshua was! He meets the stranger alone. Most likely he had no sword, while the man had his sword drawn. He soon hears who the stranger is. It is the same One who appeared to Moses in the burning bush, to Abraham at Mamre, to Jacob at Peniel and to others afterward. It is Jehovah in visible form. These theophanies were surely not incarnations, yet they foreshadowed the incarnation of the Son of God. Here Jehovah who in the fulness of time became Man, appears as a man of war, as Captain of the host of the Lord. The host are Israel. And He is the Captain of our salvation.

The book of Joshua is the book of conflicts and conquests. The sword is freely used in carrying out the divine judgments upon the ungodly tenants of the land. Yet the first drawn sword, mentioned in the book, is in the hand of the Lord as He appeared unto Joshua. He fights for His people. He will yet execute the righteous judgments in the earth, It will be when He appears the second time.

6. The Fall of Jericho

CHAPTER 6

1. The divine instruction (6:1-5)
2. The instructions followed (6:6-19)
3. The fall of Jericho (6:20-21)
4. Rahab remembered (6:22-25)
5. The curse upon Jericho (6:26-27)

We do not enlarge upon the history of the chapter, which needs no comment. The fall of Jericho by the power of God, as described in this chapter, has also been ridiculed by infidels. Others have tried to explain the occurrence in a natural way. It has been said that the marching Israelites, by tramping around the city for seven days, weakened the walls, and the trumpet blasts and shouting of the people brought about their collapse. How utterly ridiculous! But what are the typical and dispensational lessons of this interesting chapter?

Jericho is the type of the world, as already stated in the annotations of the second chapter. As Jericho falls and is laid in ruins as soon as Israel is in the land, so the world is laid in ruins for the believer who apprehends his position in Christ. Our faith is the victory which overcometh the world. It was faith which obtained the victory over Jericho. A faith which trusted in the Lord; a faith which acted in obedience to the divinely given instructions. "By faith the walls of Jericho fell down, after they were compassed about seven days" (Hebrews 11:30). And we must walk in faith and in the power of His Spirit, as crucified unto the world and the world crucified unto us. The world must remain in ruins for the believer who walks in the Spirit, as Jericho was not to be rebuilt.

It is a remarkable circumstance, in various aspects, that Jericho, the first and the strongest city of the land, is taken in this peculiar manner, without a single stroke of the sword. This result was intended, on the one hand, to furnish the faith of the Israelites with unquestionable evidence of the success of their future warlike movements, which now commenced, and, on the other hand, to secure them in advance, from a carnal reliance on their own strength, and from all vainglorious tendencies to ascribe their success to their own courage, their own intelligence, and their own power.

We must also think here of the walls, the hindrances, the obstacles in our lives as believers, as we pass through the world. The enemy often tries to terrify us by these, as he discouraged Israel at Kadesh by the walled cities. Alas! we often do what Joshua did not do before Jericho. We measure the walls, we study the difficulties, we are occupied with our perplexities and trials. We reckon with the walls, instead of reckoning with the Lord and His power. By faith walls still fall down.

Richer is the meaning of the fall of Jericho viewed in the light of prophecy. Jericho is the type of the world ripe for judgment. The high walls are types of the walls of unbelief, apostasy, wickedness and self-security. Seven days Israel had to march around the walls. Seven priests with seven trumpets were there. On the seventh day they had to march around seven times and blow the seven trumpets. Note the number "seven." It stands for divine completion. How it all reminds us of the last book of the Bible with its seven seals, seven trumpets and seven vials. The trumpets, however, in Joshua are the trumpets of jubilee. The great jubilee, the time of blessing for this earth comes, when judgment is executed. As the walls of Jericho fell, so comes the day, when all the high and exalted things will be laid low (Isaiah 2:10-22) The stone will fall out of heaven (Christ in His second coming) smiting the image, representing the world-power. Complete ruins will be the result, never to be built again; but the smiting stone becomes a mountain, filling the earth. It is the prophetic picture of the coming kingdom.

"The details of the fall of Jericho seem not, however, to be facts of present experience, but prophetic of actual judgment when it comes; and this is quite as we might expect. We see by them, however, that the people of God have to maintain the testimony as to these things: compassing the city and blowing the trumpets until the city falls; although it be only in the meantime to awaken the scorn of the men of the world, as they hear the frequent alarm of that which seems never to come. But it comes, comes steadily nearer, is surely even now at the door, and how urgent should be our testimony, which, if of no effect upon the mass, yet helps to fill Rahab's house, where the true scarlet-line, as despicable in men's eyes as that of old, shields with the power of the Almighty the prisoners of hope" (F.W. Grant).

How blessedly the promise was kept to Rahab and her house! No doubt that scarlet line was the object of ridicule in Jericho. She alone and her house escaped the dreadful judgment. The entire walls fell; but one small portion was kept standing, the portion upon which her house stood.

Jericho was built three times and three times razed to the ground. It was first destroyed under Joshua. Then Hiel, the Beth-elite rebuilt it in Ahab's reign (822-790). He experienced the curse of Joshua. Compare Joshua 6:26 with 1 Kings 16:34. Hiel's city was destroyed by the Herodians in 3 B.C. The next year Archelaus built Jericho again, the Jericho standing in the days of our Lord. This was destroyed by Vespasian 68 A.D.

7. Achan's Sin and Israel's Defeat

CHAPTER 7

1. The defeat of Israel (7:1-5)
2. The source of the defeat revealed (7:6-15)
3. The transgressor found out (7:16-23)
4. The judgment of Achan (7:24-26)

The insignificant place Ai brings defeat. Joshua sent men to view Ai. What authority was given to him to do so? There was no need to send spies once more, for the Lord had said, that the whole land was given to them. They report Ai a place without walls and recommend that only two or three thousand men be sent up. Defeat follows.

Ai means "ruins." It is mentioned for the first time in Genesis 12. Abraham built his altar between Bethel (House of God) and Ai. Ai is another type of the world. But the source of the defeat was Achan's sin. The shekels of silver and gold, the Babylonian garment, had blinded his eyes. These things were to be "accursed," which literally means devoted; devoted to the treasury of the Lord (6:19). Joshua had given the command that such should be the case, and also announced, that disobedience would bring trouble upon Israel. Achan's sin was responsible for the defeat of the people. He confesses, "I saw--I coveted--I took." The same old story, first enacted in the garden of Eden. The evil in the midst of the people of God, unjudged, becomes the most powerful agent against Israel and withholds God's power and blessing. It is so still. As soon as we cling to the things of the world, the enemy gets an advantage over us, and we have little power and cannot advance in the things of Christ. Ah! the Achans in our lives! Judge self, bring the evil thing into the light and victory and blessing will follow. Joshua's prayer and Jehovah's answer; Achan's sin discovered and forced confession; the judgment which falls upon him and his house; the heap of stones raised over him--all is of interest and instruction, which our limited space forbids to follow in detail.

The valley of Achor is mentioned in Hosea 2:15 as a door of hope. The place and door of hope is in Him, who died not for his sins, but who took the sin and guilt of the nation upon Himself.

"The valley of Achor was not only the place of national repentance, and of a national repudiation of sin, but it was also the place of a great and tragic national expiation. Israel had sinned, and so Israel had suffered, but it was the sin of one man that had brought judgment on the camp. Now, observe, the sin of a single man was imputed to Israel, and became Israel's sin, and because of that imputation of sin, the wrath of God fell on the whole nation. But when the sin of that one man was discovered, and when it was confessed before God, then the sin imputed to the congregation reverted on to the head of the one criminal. Thus the penalty due to a national sin was actually carried out upon him whose guilt had involved the nation in judgment; and as the deadly stones were hurled upon him, that man in his death was not only reaping the reward of his disobedience, but the sin of the nation was being expiated in the death of the individual; and thus was opened 'a door of hope' through 'the valley of trouble,' whereby Israel might enter the land of promise, and find her vineyards from thence."--Aitken.

8. The Overthrow of Ai

CHAPTER 8

1. The advance commanded (8:1-2)

2. The strategy of Joshua (8:3-13)
3. Ai's defeat (8:14-29)
4. Joshua's obedience (8:30-35)

Sin confessed, judged and put away restored communion with the Lord. If any burden remained upon the mind of Joshua, it was removed by the repeated words of comfort and cheer. "Fear not, neither be thou dismayed." The failure is no longer mentioned, but instead, comfort and assurance is given and victory promised. He deals in the same gracious way with us, whenever we have failed and humbled ourselves before Him in self-judgment. However, their former presumption is not overlooked by Jehovah. The capture of Ai is hard work for them. They had to learn the lesson. Their pride and self reliance was dealt with by Jehovah, who ever wants His people in the place of lowliness and weakness. Instead of 3,000 men, ten times as many had to go up and engage in the warfare.

The Lord commanded Joshua to stretch out the spear toward Ai. This corresponds to the uplifted hands of Moses in the warfare against Amalek in Exodus 17. It was a token of the presence of divine power in securing the complete victory. We read nothing of Joshua's arm with the spear becoming weak, as it was with the uplifted hands of Moses. "For Joshua drew not his hand back wherewith he stretched out the spear, until he had utterly destroyed all the inhabitants of Ai" (verse 26). It was an act of faith, and divine power supported the out stretched arm.

Then, after the victory, Joshua built an altar unto the Lord God of Israel, in Mount Ebal. He is doing this in obedience to the previously given command. See Deuteronomy 27:2-8. What an impressive scene it must have been when "he read all the words of the law, the blessings and the cursings, according to all that is written in the book of the law."

"Both mounts belong to the range of Mount Ephraim; the elevated valley of Shechem lies between them. The transaction probably took place in the following manner. Six tribes occupied each mount; the priests, standing below in the valley with the ark of the covenant in their midst, turned toward Mount Gerizim as they solemnly pronounced the words of blessing, and then, looking towards Mount Ebal, repeated the words of cursing; all the people responded to each of the words, and said: 'Amen!' Ebal, the Mount of cursing, is naked and bald; Gerizim, the mount of blessing, is green and fertile. The circumstance that the mount of cursing was assigned for the writing of the law, the erection of the altar, and the offering of sacrifice, is highly significant; the cause lies in the intimate relations existing between the curse, on the one hand, and the Law and Sacrifice, on the other--the former brings a curse, or gives a sharp point to it, the latter abolishes it" (J.H. Kurtz).

9. The Gibeonites

CHAPTER 9

1. The confederacy of the enemies (9:1-2)
2. The deception of the Gibeonites (9:3-13)
3. The failure (9:14-15)
4. The deception discovered (9:16-27)

Israel now comes face to face with the other inhabitants of the land. These enemies, which Israel encountered, are the types of our enemies, and the conflict of God's earthly people is typical of our conflict. There is, however, a difference. Israel's enemies were flesh and blood; ours are not. Israel's conflict was in the land; ours is with the wicked spirits in the heavenly places. Israel was asked to drive them out; we are not asked to do this, but to resist the devil. Israel's land rested from the conflict; we shall not rest till we are with Him, when Satan will be bruised under our feet. Read Ephesians 6:10-17.

The Canaanites are the types of the evil powers, with whom we have to wage our warfare. As the Canaanites opposed the possession and enjoyment of the land, so the aim of the wicked spirits is to keep us back, to hinder us in possessing and

enjoying our spiritual blessings in Christ Jesus.

The Gibeonites were Hivites. They came with deceptions, knowing well what was their lot. The deceptions were inspired by the father of lies.

In Ephesians 6, we are especially warned against the wiles of the devil. We are to stand against the wiles of the devil. Elsewhere we read that he transforms himself into an angel of light. The Gibeonites illustrate these wiles of the devil. Not alone had they their mouldy bread and old wineskins, as a kind of credential to back up their lies, but they talked very piously. What are these wiles of the devil? We have to turn to the so-called "religious world" to find them. The "religious world," which speaks piously of God and Christ, is at best hypocrisy, phariseeism. Ritualism, Galatianism, manmade ordinances, belong to the wiles of the devil. Philosophies, traditions of men, delusive doctrines, cunningly devised fables, all these belong to the wiles of the devil (Colossians 2). Such systems as Christian Science, spiritism, Russellism, Bahatism, higher criticism, theosophy and others belong to the wiles of the devil. So does "social-reform." These world reformers, "Christian" socialists, talk piously like the Gibeonites, but the devil's wiles are underneath.

And these wiles of the devil are multiplying. Satan, knowing that his time is short, does all he can to keep God's people from enjoying their blessings and from advancing in spiritual things.

The Gibeonites, with their pious talk, were received into the congregation of Israel, just as the professing church is receiving the world into the church. The failure was with Israel. They asked not counsel of the Lord. Had Joshua gone in the presence of the Lord, He would soon have exposed the deceptions of the Gibeonites. Here is where our failure comes in likewise. Never can Satan, with his superior knowledge and his wiles, get an advantage over us, if we hold closely to the Word of God, the Sword of the Spirit, and if we ask counsel of the Lord through His Word and in prayer. The covenant made had to stand. It would have been unrighteousness, if Israel had acted differently. How many unequal yokes there are among God's people, entered into without having asked counsel of the Lord!

And there is generally no escape, but suffering in consequence. Israel had to stand much on account of the unholy alliance with the Gibeonites. What a man sows that he will reap. Read 2 Samuel 21:1-6.

10. The Victorious Conquest

CHAPTER 10

1. Adoni-zedec and his confederacy (10:1-6)
2. The war (10:7-11)
3. The miracle (10:12-15)
4. The victory won (10:16-21)
5. The five kings slain (10:22-27)
6. Further conquests (10:28-43)

The name Jerusalem is mentioned here for the first time in the Bible. (Salem in Genesis 14:18, is generally taken to be Jerusalem. See Psalm 76:2. The ancient tablets give the name as Ur-Salim. But the name "Jerusalem" is found the first time in Joshua 10:1.) It is in connection with war, and the next time we find Jerusalem on fire (judges 1:8). This may be taken as a prophecy of the history of that city. Yet something better is in store for Jerusalem. Adoni-zedec is here the King of Jerusalem. His name means "lord of righteousness." He represents the counterfeit king in opposition to Him who is Jerusalem's true King, the true Melchizedec, King of righteousness and King of peace. He is a type of Anti-christ. On account of Gibeon having gone over to Israel, Adoni-zedec forms an alliance, which he heads as leader. His confederates are given by name. We give the meaning of their names in parenthesis, which will be helpful in a deeper study of these types. Horam (the noise of a multitude), King of Hebron; Piram (the wild ass), King of Jarmuth; Japhia (causing brightness); King of Lachish; Debir (an oracle), King of Eglon. This satanic alliance was aimed at Gibeon and at Israel as

well. And Gibeon appealed to Joshua for help.

Notice that they sent to Gilgal, the first camp of Israel. Joshua and the people were at Gilgal and from Gilgal they ascended. At Gilgal they saw the memorials of God's power, and encouraged by a direct message from Jehovah they went forth to war. Blessed are we, if in our spiritual warfare we go forth from Gilgal (the place of self-judgment and of power).

The great miracle of the standing still of the sun and the moon occurred then. The way this miracle has been held up to ridicule is known to everybody. Infidels of all generations have sneered at it. Critics have followed, as they always do, close in their footsteps. But even good men have found difficulties here and tried to explain it with their human wisdom. One explanation given is that the Hebrew word *_dum*, to stand, means rather that the sun was to cease to give its light. Upon this the statement is made, that Joshua's command was that the sun and moon should cease giving their light, and not that they should cease continuing their apparent motion. Herder in his "Hebraische Poesie" says:

"It is astonishing that this fine passage has been so long misunderstood. Joshua attacked the Amorites in the early morning, and the battle continued till night; that is, for a long day, which seemed to protract itself into night, to complete the victory. The sun and moon were witnesses of Joshua's great deeds, and held their course in the midst of heaven till the triumph was perfect. Who does not recognize this as poetry, even if it had not been quoted from the Book of Poems on Heroes. In the usual language of the Hebrews such expressions were neither bold nor unusual."

These are the attempts of man, by which he tries to explain the supernatural by the natural. The occurrence is a miracle. It says the sun stood still. But how is that when science tells us the sun does not move? We give the answer from Kurtz in his Sacred History, because it is the most concise statement we have ever seen:

"A voucher from the Old Testament for the promise in Mark 11:23, 24, 'Whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, etc..' is furnished by Joshua's bold word of faith with its fulfilment. It was his prayer that the light of day might be prolonged, and the darkness of night be retarded, until he had secured the object for which he pursued the enemy: he obtained the answer which he sought by the miraculous power of his faith. No investigation respecting the natural means which produced this supernatural effect can furnish valuable results. The command of faith is pronounced in the sense which Joshua assigns to the words; the divine answer is given in the sense in which God understands them. No arguments that are either favorable or unfavorable to any particular system of astronomy are furnished by the occurrence."

The miracle must have stricken with terror the fighting nations, for they worshipped the sun and the moon.

Signs in heaven are frequently mentioned in the Word.

Read and study carefully the following passages: 2 Kings 20:11; Isa. 38:8; Amos 8:9; Isa. 13:10, 60:20; Ezek. 32:7; Joel 2:10, 31; 3:15; Matt. 24:29; Rev. 6:12; 8:12; 9:2; 16:8. When the age ends with the battle of Armageddon and the Lord Jesus Christ appears the second time in great power and glory, these signs as predicted in some of these passages will be fulfilled. The sun and moon will be darkened. What terror will take hold upon the great masses of Christendom, who reject the miracle and Christ! Read Revelation 6:12-17.

What is the book of Jasher, mentioned in verse 13?

The Book of Jasher (or, of the Upright, that is, Israel) was a collection of sacred war-songs, and may have, possibly, formed a continuation, in a certain sense, of the "Book of the Wars of the Lord" (Numbers 21:14; 2 Samuel 1:18). The collection was probably commenced in the wilderness, and, at different periods, received additions.

The fact that it is no longer in existence proves its noninspiration.

Great are the victories described in this chapter. See verse 41 as to the territory which was covered. From Kadesh-barnea unto Gaza, all the country of Goshen unto Gibeon. And why? Because the Lord God of Israel fought for Israel (verse 42). If God is for us, who can be against us! "And Joshua returned, and all Israel with him, unto the camp of Gilgal." How wonderful it is to return after our victories to Gilgal, the place of self-judgment and confessed weakness. How often our victories and blessings are more dangerous than our failures and defeats!

Further Conquests

CHAPTER 11

1. Jabin and his confederacy (11:1-5)
2. The divine encouragement (11:6)
3. The victory (11:7-14)
4. The obedience of Joshua (11:15)
5. The continued conflict with the kings (11:16-23)

The Kings of the north formed the second confederacy, headed by Jabin, King of Hazor. Jabin means "understanding" and Hazor, "an enclosure." He with other kings, and with them "much people even as the sand that is upon the seashore in multitude, with horses and chariots very many," came to fight against Israel. These different confederacies opposing the rightful owners of the land may be taken as types of the opposition from confederate nations which Israel will have to face during the great tribulation.

Did Joshua fear in the presence of such a powerful enemy? If he feared, his fear must have vanished completely when Jehovah said, "Be not afraid of them, for tomorrow about this time will I deliver them up all slain before Israel; thou shalt hough their horses, and burn their chariots with fire." The Lord assured Joshua, and with such an assurance he rushed at once against the enemy by the waters of Merom. It does not matter how strong the enemy is, how cunningly his plans are laid, how he may come upon us with an host to terrify; if we are right with the Lord and on the Lord's side, we shall be more than conquerors. The victory is complete; their chariots are burned and the horses were disabled by cutting the sinews of their legs. The latter no doubt had for its purpose to make it impossible for His people to trust in human resources. If they had used these horses, they might have put their confidence in them. "Some trust in chariots and some in horses; but we will remember the LORD our God" (Psalm 20:7).

At Hazor, as in other cities and places, the divine command of utter extermination of all human beings was literally carried out. "There was not any left to breathe." An awful picture indeed it is! Infidels have made the best of it by denouncing these records and blaspheming the righteous and holy God. Others again have tried to excuse the Israelites by saying that it was the customary thing 1,500 years before Christ to treat conquered nations in this way. But it was God Himself who commanded their extermination. Joshua and Israel had no choice whatever in the matter. They acted in obedience to the divine will. God's time for the execution of His righteous judgments had come and He used Israel as His instrument. To Abraham the word was spoken concerning his seed, "in the fourth generation they will come hither again; for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full." The iniquity of these nations had reached such a degree, that God's wrath and holy vengeance had to fall upon them. They were given to the most awful abominations and practised unspeakable immoralities. The hour of judgment had come. The whole race was to be swept away. And who dares to question God's sovereign right to do so. Should not the judge of all the earth do right?

Nor must we forget that the judgment of Canaan, as well as the judgment of Egypt, is prophetic. Judgment and wrath are in store for this earth. The divine sword will some day be unsheathed again. The conditions of the earth are such that God must judge. Thousands are hardening their hearts; ere long, as it was with the Canaanites (verse 20), the Lord will harden their hearts. These judgments are written in language which cannot be misunderstood.

Notice Joshua's obedience. He left nothing undone. He obeyed the Word; he followed closely the divine instructions.

That led to success and blessing.

The Conquered Kings

CHAPTER 12

1. The kings on the other side of Jordan (12:1-6)
2. The kings on this side of Jordan (12:7-24)

"The land rested from war" is the concluding statement of the previous chapter. It was after Joshua had made war a long time with all those kings (11:18). Deut. 6:10-11 was also fulfilled. "And it shall be, when the LORD Thy God shall have brought thee into the land, which He sware unto thy Fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob, to give thee great and goodly cities, which thou buildest not, and houses full of all good things, which thou filledst not, and wells digged, which thou diggedst not, vineyards and olive trees, which thou plantedst not." The list of kings which is given in this chapter needs no comment. Thirty-one are mentioned as conquered by Joshua. The land was only 150 miles from north to south, and 50 miles from east to west. Criticism has also objected to this, as if so many kings could not exist in so small a territory. Professor Maspero, one of the foremost archaeologists, fully confirms the Bible-record. We quote from him:

"The Canaanites were the most numerous of all these groups, and had they been able to amalgamate under a single king, or even to organize a lasting confederacy, it would have been impossible for the Egyptian armies to have broken through the barrier thus raised between them and the rest of Asia; but, unfortunately, so far from showing the slightest tendency towards unity or concentration, the Canaanites were more hopelessly divided than any of the surrounding nations. Their mountains contained nearly as many states as there were valleys, while in the plains each town represented a separate government, and was built on a spot carefully selected for purposes of defence. The land, indeed, was chequered by these petty states, and so closely were they crowded together, that a horseman travelling at leisure could easily pass through two or three of them in a day's journey." Of the richer country towards the north he writes: "Towns grew and multiplied upon this rich and loamy soil."

II. THE DIVISION OF THE LAND

The divine record concerning the division of the land, as it is before us in these chapters, is often looked upon merely as history barren of any spiritual meaning. Many expositors pass over the greater part of it or give only geographical information. However, a deeper meaning must be sought here; there are many and blessed lessons in spiritual and dispensational truths hidden in these chapters. Why should the Holy Spirit have recorded all these things if they have no meaning whatever? It is written, "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness" (2 Timothy 3:16). This surely applies to all Scripture, including the chapters which contain nothing but names. Again it is written, "Now all these things happened unto them (Israel) as types, and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages have come" (1 Corinthians 10:11). "For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope" (Romans 15:4). We dare not deny these chapters in Joshua a spiritual application in the light of these plain words of the Spirit in the New Testament.

In the study of the previous books we have discovered (especially in Genesis) the fact that the meaning of the Hebrew names are of deep significance and often helpful in the types as well as the spiritual and dispensational lessons. Here is a wide field, which has been but little covered. Hundreds of names are found in this second part of Joshua. They all have a meaning and through these names we can learn the lessons the Spirit of God has written there for our learning. Yet caution is needed. While some ignore this study entirely, others swing into the opposite direction and are fanciful in their application. This must be avoided.

We are sorry that the scope of our work does not permit a more detailed exposition and research. If we were to give

way to the desire to do this we would have to write a volume. But we hope, with His gracious help, to give such hints which will help in a more extended, private study. (F.W. Grant in the Numerical Bible gives excellent help, both in the meaning of the names and in application. We know of no other attempt in this direction and acknowledge our own indebtedness to him. This, of course, does not mean that we endorse all the translations or applications he gives.)

1. Instruction Given: The Two and One-half Tribes

CHAPTER 13

1. Jehovah speaks to Joshua (13:1-7)
2. Inheritance of the two and one-half tribes (13:8-33)

About seven years had gone by since the passage over Jordan and Joshua, being old and advanced in years, is addressed by the Lord. He takes care of His servants in their old age and provides for their comfort. Much land was yet to be possessed. Israel never responded to the fulness of God's gift to them. How great their failure, as well as our failure as His spiritual people, to possess our possessions, which God's grace has put on our side!

The unpossessed land is described in verses 2-7. It was never possessed in full by Israel, nor did they ever have the land, as promised to them from the Red Sea to the River Euphrates. God's gifts and calling being without repentance (Romans 11:29) the time must yet come when they receive that land in the dimensions as promised in Exodus 23:31. When their restoration comes with the coming of their once rejected King, our Lord, this promised land will be possessed by the nation.

These undisposed enemies may well be taken as the types of our spiritual enemies. The Philistines, who were not Canaanites, stand in the foreground. Their origin may be traced in Genesis. They were sons of Ham and sprang from Egypt. The name "Palestine" is derived from "Philistine." They typify the power of corruption to the people of God. The Philistines today, which keep God's people back from the enjoyment of their inheritance, are the corrupt forms of Christianity, Rome and her daughters. Note the five princes of the Philistines and their residence. Gaza (strong); Ashdod (I will spoil); Ashkelon (the fire of infamy); Gath (wine-press, a type of wrath); Ekron (uprooting). These names describe the character of these powerful enemies of Israel. We leave it with the reader to apply them to that powerful ecclesiastical world-system, Rome. The Avites belonged to the gigantic races, which dwelt in the land. The name means "perverters." Satan with his powerful agencies perverts the truth and keeps God's people in bondage.

And the Lord promises to drive them out (verse 6). With His own power He was ready to dispossess these wicked usurpers, if Israel was but willing to advance in faith and act upon His promise. Here is where they failed. Oh! that we might see that God is on our side in the conflict and in the possession of our inheritance.

The inheritance of the two tribes and a half, Reuben, Gad and half Manasseh is then restated and confirmed.

2. Caleb's Request and Inheritance

CHAPTER 14

1. The inheritance by lot (14:1-5)
2. Caleb's request (14:6-15)

Judah's portion comes first, and as they draw near to Joshua to receive their inheritance by lot (See Proverbs 16:33 and Acts 1:26) at Gilgal (note the recurrence of this place and its significance), Caleb, the son of Jephunneh, steps to the front. It was not forwardness or love of the preeminence which led him to do this, but the burning zeal in that old, yet youthful

soul. He comes to claim the inheritance, which forty-five years ago Moses had promised unto him. Caleb was eighty-five years old. "As yet I am as strong this day as I was in the day that Moses sent me; as my strength was then even so is my strength now, for war, both to go out and to come in." One can almost see him standing before Eleazar, Joshua and the heads of the tribes. What a beautiful testimony he gives to the faithfulness of the Lord! He could say, "I wholly followed the LORD my God." He stands for the man who trusts his God, who reckons not with earthly circumstances and conditions, but with the Lord and His promised power. They that honor Me, I will honor. Forty years old was Caleb when he was put among the spies and when, with Joshua, he honored God and His Word. The reward of faith became evident in his life. Mental vigor and physical strength remained unimpaired. And now he claims his inheritance. Patiently he had waited for forty-five years. The hour has come. He claims the mountain with its Anakim, the giants, the fenced cities, the great cities. That beautiful mountain with its strenuous task is the claimed inheritance. Old age is often characterized by "the pride of life." The lust of the flesh is peculiar to youth; the lust of the eyes, the desire of increase in earthly things to enjoy them, comes with middle life, and in old age temptation is "the pride of life." But not so with the man of faith. Listen to his humble language. He does not pride himself on his faith and trust in God; he knows nothing of self-confidence. "If so be the LORD will be with me, then I shall be able to drive them out, as the LORD said."

In our day of departure from God and unbelief, may we be like Caleb, "wholly following the LORD." We, too, wait in faith and in patience for the promised inheritance, which some day will be ours, when He comes to reward His Saints. Then as Israel's land had rest from war (verse 15) we shall enter into our rest from strife and conflict.

3. The Portion of Judah

CHAPTER 15

1. The south-border of Judah's portion (15:1-4)
2. The eastern and northern border (15:5-11)
3. The western border (15:12)
4. Caleb's conquest (15:13-19)
5. Inheritance according to families (15:20-63)

This is a chapter which contains many names; nearly one hundred and fifty are recorded. With the help of a good concordance, or dictionary of Hebrew names, the English meaning may be ascertained. However, many of these names may be derived from different roots and have therefore a different meaning, while the meaning of others is rather obscure. For the reason already stated we cannot follow the possible meaning and application of these names. The lesson, however, is that the Lord distributed the inheritance to His people and placed them as it pleased Him. He knew their faithfulness and their ability, and accordingly they received their portion. And we, too, as members of His body, receive our portion and inheritance from Himself, "dividing to every man severally as He will" (1 Corinthians 12:11).

Caleb's conquest is of additional interest. In the previous chapter we learned of his faith and how he honored the Lord. He acknowledged that the Lord had kept him alive; by His mercy he had been spared (14:10). He claimed His portion, and in humility of faith he expected success and victory. He gets Hebron, which means "communion." The application in spiritual lines is interesting. Faith longs for Hebron, for communion. But the giants, the Anakim, are there, to keep away from real communion with God. They must be dispossessed. Caleb drove out the three sons of Anak. Their names are Sheshai, which means "my fine linen," reminding us of our own righteousness (Shesh is the Hebrew word used for the fine linen in the tabernacle. In this way we get "Sheshai," my fine linen); Ahiman, the meaning of this word is "who is my brother?" which may be applied to pride of descent; Talmai, the third son of Anak, means "abounding in furrows," the pride of achievement. Pride in different forms is the hindrance to real communion with God. Pride has to be dethroned in the heart and in the life of His people. Only as we follow the Lord wholly, as Caleb did, shall we conquer and enjoy our Hebron in the Lord Jesus Christ. And he also had Debir (Oracle--the voice speaking); Kirjath-sepher means "city of the book." Thus Hebron, communion, is closely linked with the written Word and the voice which speaks there. And in Achsah, Caleb's daughter, we have another side of faith represented. When Caleb said unto her, "What wouldest thou?"

she answered, "Give me a blessing, for thou hast given me a south land; give me also springs of water. And he gave her the upper springs and the nether springs." It is faith which asks much and receives much.

4. The Portion of Ephraim

CHAPTER 16

1. The lot for the children of Joseph (16:1-4)
2. Ephraim's portion (16:5-9)
3. Ephraim's failure (16:10)

A wonderful lot was that of Joseph, beginning at Jordan, the river of death, up to Bethel, which means "the house of God." Then the portion of Ephraim comes first. Ephraim with the blessed inheritance to be "doubly fruitful" (the meaning of Ephraim) fails. "They drove not out the Canaanites that dwelt in Gezer." Josephus, the Jewish historian, remarks on this: "They grew effeminate as to fighting any more against their enemies, but applied themselves to the cultivation of the land, which producing them great plenty and riches, they indulged in luxury and pleasure." No doubt this tradition is correct. How this has been repeated in Christendom! What Ephraim became, joined to idols, we read in the prophet Hosea.

5. The Portion of Manasseh

CHAPTER 17

1. Their names (17:1-6)
2. Their border (17:7-13)
3. The complaint and the answer (17:14-18)

Half of the tribe of Manasseh had their inheritance on the other side of Jordan, having joined themselves to Reuben and Gad. The rest of Manasseh are now named according to their families. These are: Abiezer, Helek, Asriel, Shechem, Hopher and Shemida, The son of Hopher, Zelophehad, had no sons (see Numbers 27:1-11); the names of the five daughters are given here again. They claim now the inheritance which the Lord had given to them. They, too, exhibit the courage of faith. May we also claim in faith that inheritance which belongs to us through the grace of God.

The complaint of the children of Joseph shows dissatisfaction with their lot; it was selfishness. Joshua takes them by their word. His answer reminds us of the divine command given in chapter 13. "Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, that have I given unto you, as I said unto Moses." Yonder were the stately forests, the wooded hills and mountains, inhabited still by the Perizzites and the giants. All they needed to do was to go there and drive them out and they would possess a larger portion. But this answer but brings out their unbelief and failure. They plead weakness; it was nothing less than unbelief, for they looked to the iron chariots the Canaanites possessed, instead of looking to the Lord and trusting His power. They refused to meet the enemy and have their borders enlarged under these conditions. What a contrast with bold and humble Caleb! And yet Joshua encourages them. He urges them to go forward and possess the forest and cut it down. It was his challenge to their faith. Faith does not reckon with chariots, with difficulties.

6. The Portion of the Rest of the Tribes

CHAPTER 18

1. The tabernacle at Shiloh (18:1)
2. The remaining seven tribes (18:2-10)
3. The lot of Benjamin (18:11-28)

The tabernacle of the congregation is now set up at Shiloh. Shiloh means "peace," "security." The land was then subdued before them. Shiloh is now the center. From there the operations proceed. Seven times after this Shiloh is mentioned in the book of Joshua: Chapter 18:8, 9, 10; 19:51; 21:2; 22:9, 12. Read these carefully and see what happened in connection with Shiloh, the place of rest. The tabernacle remained at Shiloh till the Philistines came and took the ark, as recorded in 1 Samuel 4:11. Then it was at Nob in the days of Saul, then at Jerusalem, at Gibeon in the beginning of Solomon's reign (2 Chronicles 1:3). It never got back to this first resting-place.

At that time seven tribes still remained without an inheritance. They seemed to be content without any inheritance whatever. Most likely they had also become tired of war. Theirs had been a strenuous experience. It was difficult work to go forth and conquer, to occupy new territory and meet the enemies. They must likewise have come into possession of many things for their comfort, which were unknown to them in the wilderness; and with the natural and plentiful resources of the land they became self-indulgent and were at ease. Joshua's earnest appeal suggests such a state of the people. "How long are ye slack to go to possess the land which the LORD God of your fathers hath given you?" And their negligence in not possessing the land avenged itself, for the unpossessed land with its enemies became "scourges in their sides and thorns in their eyes." What ingratitude it was, after God's wonderful power had brought them in, that they should neglect to avail themselves of so great a gift! Such is man, always a failure in himself. It needs hardly to be said, that all this finds an application with ourselves, whom the Lord has brought into a better land and richer inheritance. How slack we are to go to possess the land! How many neglect so great salvation! Joshua then gave instructions and the men selected walked through the land and made a survey of it.

The inheritance of Benjamin is described in the remaining portion of this chapter. Their lot fell into a steep, mountainous country; many of the cities they received were in high places, indicated by such names as Gibeon (hilly); Gibeath (a hill); Gaba (elevation); Ramah (the height); Mizpeh (watch-tower), etc. May we ascend the heights of glory we have in Christ, and walk in our high-places, with feet as swift as the hinds' feet (Habakkuk 3:19). And we too have our "Mizpeh," the place of watching and waiting for Him, who will lead us into our wonderful inheritance in the day of His coming glory.

"Benjamin was counted the least of the tribes (1 Samuel 9:21), and when, with other tribes, it was represented by its chief magistrate, it was rather disparagingly distinguished as 'little Benjamin with their ruler' (Psalm 68:27). Yet it was strong enough, on one occasion, to set at defiance for a time the combined forces of the other tribes (Judges 20:12, etc.) It was distinguished for the singular skill of its slingers; seven hundred, who were left-handed, 'could every one sling stones at an hair-breadth and not miss' (Judges 20:16). The character of its territory, abounding in rocky mountains, and probably in game, for the capture of which the sling was adapted, might, in some degree, account for this peculiarity.

"Many famous battles were fought on the soil of Benjamin. The battle of Ai; that of Gibeon, followed by the pursuit through Bethhoron, both under Joshua; Jonathan's battle with the Philistines at Michmash (1 Samuel 14), and the duel at Gibeon between twelve men of Saul and twelve of David (2 Samuel 2:15, 16); were all fought within the territory of Benjamin. And when Sennacherib approached Jerusalem from the north, the places which were thrown into panic as he came near were in this tribe. 'He is come to Aiath, he is passed through Migron; at Michmash he layeth up his baggage; they are gone over the pass; they have taken up their lodging at Geba; Ramah trembleth; Gibeah of Saul is fled. Cry aloud with thy voice, O daughter of Gallim! Hearken, O Laishah! O thou poor Anathoth! Madmenah is a fugitive, the inhabitants of Gebim gather themselves to flee. This very day shall he halt at Nob; he shaketh his hand at the mount of the daughter of Zion, the hill of Jerusalem (Isaiah 10:28-32, R.V.). In later times Judas Maccabeus gained a victory over the Syrian forces at Bethhoron; and, again, Cestius and his Roman troops were defeated by the Jews" (Expositor's Bible).

The tribe counted the least, "little Benjamin," came into possession of the richest inheritance, which is abundantly witnessed to by the names of the different cities, if we diligently search out their meaning. God delights to take up what is little and make it great. (Saul of Tarsus, our great Apostle Paul (Paul means "little"), was of the tribe of Benjamin. He possessed and enjoyed his inheritance in the heavenlies.)

CHAPTER 19

1. The inheritance of Simeon (19:1-9)
2. The inheritance of Zebulun (19:10-16)
3. The inheritance of Issachar (19:17-23)
4. The inheritance of Asher (19:24-31)
5. The inheritance of Naphtali (19:32-39)
6. The inheritance of Dan (19:40-48)
7. The inheritance of Joshua (19:49-51)

The many names of cities and villages, the inheritance of the remaining six tribes, we must leave untouched. Blessed and deep spiritual lessons are written in all these names. Simeon's inheritance is closely connected with that of Judah. "Their inheritance was in the midst of the inheritance of the children of Judah." Simeon means "hearing" and Judah means "praise." Thus the two are linked together. If our hearts are open to hear and our faith appropriates we praise and worship and enjoy our God-given inheritance in the Lord Jesus Christ. And the different cities have a blessed meaning. Diligent and prayerful searching will discover the hidden treasures which faith prizes more than gold, and which are "sweeter than honey." Let us glance briefly at Asher to give a little illustration of this. Asher means "happy," commonly translated by "blessed" (Psalm 1:1; 32:1; 119:1).

The Lord's people must be a happy people. Moses had pronounced them so (Deuteronomy 33:29). A few of the cities and boundaries of Asher and their meaning will show in what the happiness of God's people consists. Helkath means "portion"; the Lord Himself is the portion of His people. He is our joy and happiness. Hali means "an ornament worked out with pain." We possess that which Christ has worked out for us in His death. Ahamelech means "God is King." This is a sweet morsel to faith. Amad, "an eternal people," speaks of our security, that we belong to God and nothing can separate us from Him. Misheal, "feeling after God," tells of the longing of the new nature, which finds happiness in God. Hammon, "sunny"; Kanah, "He has purchased"; Zidon, "taking the prey"; Hosah, "trust"; Ummah, "union"; Aphek, "strength"-these and others are easily seen as giving spiritual lessons on the happiness of the people of God who enjoy in faith the inheritance.

After all had received their portions Joshua received his. It was Timnath-serah, which means "an abundant portion." The portion of Joshua is the blessed type of the inheritance, which the Lord Jesus Christ has received. We must not overlook the fact that the children of Israel gave Joshua the inheritance. Christ is our inheritance and we are His inheritance. He has an inheritance in the saints (Ephesians 1:18). May we give Him that inheritance.

7. The Cities of Refuge

CHAPTER 20

1. The ordinance repeated (20:1-6)
2. The cities named (20:7-9)

The reader will find the meaning of the ordinance of the cities of refuge in Numbers and Deuteronomy, so that we do not need to repeat it here. But only three cities are mentioned in the Pentateuch. Here the three cities in the land are added. Kedesh was in Naphtah, Kedesh means "sanctuary," and Naphtali means "wrestler-struggler." Christ is the refuge for the struggling sinner. Shechem means "shoulder," and is the type of service. He who is the perfect servant, who ministered and gave His life, is the place of refuge. Kirjath-arba, which is Hebron, is the third, and Hebron means "communion." This we find in Him. Bezer (defense), Ramoth (heights) and Golan (rejoicing) were the other three beyond Jordan, named already in the Pentateuch.

8. The Portion of the Levites

CHAPTER 21

1. The Levites, the children of Aaron, and their portions (21:1-8)
2. Kohath (21:9-26)
3. Gershon (21:27-33)
4. Merari (21:34-40)
5. The Lord's faithfulness (21:41-45)

In chapters 13:14, 33 and 14:3, 4 the statement is made that Moses gave no inheritance to the Levites. The Lord was their inheritance. After the tribes had received their allotments the heads of the fathers of the Levites came to Joshua and Eleazar with a petition. They based their petition upon the Word of God spoken to Moses. "Command the children of Israel, that they give unto the Levites of the inheritance of their possession cities to dwell in; and ye shall give also unto the Levites suburbs for the cities round about them" (Numbers 35:2). The people were obedient and gave them cities out of their several inheritances. But the cities were also assigned by lot, so that the Lord assigned them their habitations. How it must have pleased Him to see His Word remembered, obeyed and acted upon! They were scattered throughout the entire domain of Israel. The Kohathites and the children of Aaron had thirteen cities in the tribes of Judah, Benjamin and Simeon, and two more in Ephraim, Dan and Manasseh. The Gershonites were placed in cities in eastern Manasseh, Issachar, Asher and Naphtali. The Merarites were in Zebulun and among Gad and Reuben. The divine purpose in scattering them over the land was, no doubt, that they might exercise a beneficent influence in divine things to exhort the tribes to worship Jehovah, to remind them of His goodness and to restrain them from idolatry. At the close of this chapter we read of the faithfulness of the Lord. He gave them the land; He gave them rest; He gave them victory. "There failed not ought of any good thing which the LORD had spoken." All God's promises will be in due time accomplished.

III. THE FINAL WORDS OF JOSHUA AND THE EPILOGUE

1. The Two and One-half Tribes and the Altar Ed

CHAPTER 22

1. Joshua's address (22:1-6)
2. The tribes dismissed and their return (22:7-9)
3. The great altar erected (22:10)
4. War proposed (22:11-12)
5. The mission of Phinehas and the explanation (22:13-29)
6. The explanation accepted (22:30-31)
7. The altar Ed (22:32-34)

A beautiful scene is before us. Joshua, the aged servant of God, called the Reubenites, the Gadites and half of Manasseh. Their selfish choice is selecting their portion on this side of Jordan is found in Numbers. They had, however, to pass over Jordan with the other tribes and help them in the conflict (chapter 1:12-18). The promise they had made was conscientiously kept and the time for their return to their habitations had come. Joshua commends them for their faithfulness, and exhorts them to love the Lord, to walk in all His ways, to keep His commandments, to cleave unto Him and to serve Him. May we also heed these words. Only as we walk in all His ways and are obedient to His Word can we enjoy the fellowship and the spiritual blessings which belong to us. They returned with great riches, with silver, gold, brass, iron and raiment.

They erected, after their homegoing, a great altar (Hebrew: An altar great to the sight). It was of immense size, so that it might be seen far and wide as a silent witness. When the rest of Israel heard of this altar, and thinking that it meant a separate worship, instituted by these two and a half tribes, they were ready to go to war. They exhibited great zeal for the

Lord and were ready to carry out His Word. See Exodus 20:24; Leviticus 17:8-9; Deuteronomy 7:5-13; 8:7-13. But while they were zealous, they also exhibited wisdom and sent Phinehas with ten princes to investigate the supposed apostasy. The explanation follows and is accepted. The altar was then called Ed, which means "witness." It was to bear witness between them, that the Lord is God, and that the tribes, though separated by Jordan, are one people. But where is today the witness in Christendom that there is one body? That witness seems to have been lost.

2. Joshua's Two Addresses

The First Address

CHAPTER 23

1. The people gathered (23:1-2)
2. God's faithfulness remembered (23:3-5)
3. Exhortations to obedience (23:6-11)
4. Warning (23:12-13)
5. Conclusion of first address (23:14-16)

It was about eight years after the Lord had given rest unto Israel, that the aged Joshua called for all Israel and their elders to assemble in his presence. He was very old and the time of his departure at hand. The purpose of his first address is to remind the people and their elders of the Lord's faithfulness in keeping all His promises, and to exhort them to be faithful to Him and to warn them of the results of apostasy. He exhorts them with the same message, which the Lord had given to him in the beginning of the book. Compare verse 6 with chapter 1:7. He had been obedient to this command and the Lord had done all for him He had promised. Joshua was a man of faith and courage, an excellent character.

"He is characterized by conscientious fidelity to the Law, and unclouded theocratical sentiments. He is deliberate and prudent when he acts himself, for he conducts the wars of the Lord; but he becomes prompt, bold and decided, when the Lord sends him. His courage is humility, his strength is faith, his wisdom is obedience and the fear of the Lord. He has a gentle spirit, but does not betray weakness; the evidence of the latter is furnished by his strict judgment in the case of Achan, and the scrupulous exactness with which he executes the Lord's sentence respecting the Canaanites. Such a union of gentleness and rigor, of simplicity and prudence, of humility and grandeur of sentiment, presents evangelical features. This peculiarity of his character, combined with the peculiarity of that age of the kingdom of God in which he lived, and also of the position which he occupied, adapts both himself and the work which he performed to be highly significant types of the future. He conducts the people into the land of promise and of rest; but there remains a better rest into which his archetype, who bears the same name, conducts the people of God (Hebrews 4:8, 9); he carries on the wars, and executes the judgments of the Lord, in which are shadowed the victories and judgments of Christ.

"The sentiments which govern Joshua, pervade the people in general in his day. The whole history of the chosen people presents no other period in which they were generally animated by such zeal in the cause of the theocracy, by such conscientious fidelity to the Law, by such vigorous faith and sincere fear of God as that generation manifested. It was the period of first love, and, in this aspect, may be compared with the first centuries of the Christian Church." (J.H. Kurtz, Sacred History)

And we need, as His people, the courage of faith to stand for the Lord and for His Word in the days of departure from God. And Joshua's warning was sadly fulfilled in the subsequent history of Israel.

The Second Address

CHAPTER 24:1-28

1. The gathering at Shechem (24:1)
2. Historic retrospect and exhortations (24:2-15)
3. The answer given by Israel (24:16-18)
4. Joshua's answer (24:19-20)
5. The promise made (24:21)
6. Joshua's appeal and the repeated promise (24:22-24)
7. The covenant made and Joshua's final word (24:25-28)

In Joshua's second and last address to the people at Shechem we have first a historic retrospect. It must not be overlooked, that the words of Joshua are not his own, but the words given to him by the Lord. "Thus saith the LORD God of Israel," is the manner in which he begins. The retrospect is a marvel in terse statements and rehearsal of the entire history of Israel, beginning with the call of Abraham. Its object is to remind the assembled congregation once more of the mercies and faithfulness of Jehovah. How soon they may be forgotten! Yet upon remembering what we are by nature and what the Lord in His infinite grace has done for us, depends a true walk with God. The Spirit of God, through Joshua, shows that Abraham was called away from idolatry and traces all Jehovah did for him and his seed. Notice the different acts of the Lord. I took your father Abraham--I led him--I multiplied his seed--I gave him Isaac--I gave--I sent Moses--I plagued Egypt--I brought you out--I brought you into the land. All the promises made in Exodus and Deuteronomy concerning the possession and conquest of the land had been fulfilled. Read Exodus 23:28 and Deuteronomy 7:20 and compare with verse 12. He gave them a land for which they did not labor.

The covenant is then renewed. Beautiful are Joshua's words, "As for me and my house, we will serve the LORD." He had served Him all his life and on the eve of his departure, he renews his vow. With such an enthusiastic, consecrated and successful leader, the people could only answer in the affirmative. They renewed their previous promise to serve the Lord. The answer they gave is an echo of Joshua's words. They repeat what Jehovah had so graciously done unto them. Joshua's answer to the enthusiastic reply of the people was "Ye cannot serve the LORD." He well knew by the light of the Spirit of God that this people, so stiffnecked in the past, would soon depart from this resolution and follow other gods. Besides this, Joshua knew the final words of Moses, the great prophecies concerning the apostasy of the nation, their deep fall into idolatries and their coming dispersion among the Gentiles. With the Word of God before him, he could not believe that the future of the people, whom Jehovah had brought out and brought in, would be a future of obedience and blessing. He is not deceived by the enthusiasm which had taken hold of the assembled congregation. We also have in the New Testament the predictions and the warnings concerning the course of the professing church on earth during the present age. We do well to heed these. If not we shall be deceived in expecting that which is nowhere promised for this age.

"The predictions of the Church's course have so little ambiguity that it is marvelous that the smooth preaching of peace, and the comforting assurance of progressive blessing, could ever gain credence with those who boast in an 'open Bible,' But the Bible can be but little 'open' as long as man's pride and self seeking hang their imaginative veil before it; and the Church, believing herself heir to Israel's promises, has largely refused to accept the lessons of Israel's career, which she has so closely followed. Thank God, we are near the end of the strange history of almost two millennia; and for us the end is the coming of the Lord" (F.W. Grant).

The covenant was thus renewed and a great stone set up as a witness. How long did it last? Our next book gives the answer: "And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD, and served the Baalim" (judges 2:11). "And they forsook the LORD and served Baal and Ashtaroth" (verse 13).

3. The Epilogue

CHAPTER 24:29-33

1. Joshua's death and burial (24:29-31)
2. The bones of Joseph buried (24:32)

3. Eleazar's death (24:33)

Moses, the instrument through whom the law was given, was buried by the Lord, no doubt a hint that some day the Lord would put away the law, with its curse, as we learn in the New Testament. Joshua was buried by the people in his own inheritance; he died ten years younger than Moses, that is 110 years old. Joseph had reached the same age, having died some 200 years before. Genesis 50:25, Exodus 13:19 and Hebrews 11:22 must be consulted to understand the burial of his bones recorded here. They had carried those bones all through the wilderness and never attempted to bury them till they were settled in the land. The book closes with the account of Eleazar's death.

APPENDIX

THE DISPENSATIONAL ASPECT OF THE BOOK OF JOSHUA

The book of Joshua foreshadows the great coming events in which Israel, Israel's land and the nations are concerned. Everything in Israel's history is prophetic. The events connected with the lives of the patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, as well as the story of Joseph, have a prophetic dispensational meaning. Israel in the furnace of Egypt foreshadows Babylon, and also the great dispersion in which they are now. Their persecutors then were Gentiles, who hated them and would not let them go; Gentiles are still troubling them and will persecute them during the time of the end. Their remarkable experiences and preservation in Egypt are the types of their miraculous keeping, and no less miraculous increase among all the nations of the world, among whom they have been scattered. The plagues which fell upon Egypt are typical of the judgments of God, which will fall upon the world at the close of the present age. Their Exodus from Egypt teaches similar lessons. The passage through the Red Sea, their slain enemies and the song of praise, as given in Exodus 15, have likewise a dispensational aspect. So has the visible presence of Jehovah. As He was there with His people, so will He be with them again.

As we have seen in the study of Numbers, the parables of Balaam are great prophecies touching the future of Israel. When the dying people were looking upon the brazen serpent, and the healing which resulted, may also be taken as a type of their future looking upon Him, whom they have pierced. There is therefore also a dispensational foreshadowing in the book of Joshua. We shall mention seven things.

I. The Possession of the Land

That goodly land in its great dimensions is still Israel's land, the land of promise. They have yet to possess it from the Euphrates to the River Nile. To say that Israel will never receive the land and possess it in the future as a redeemed people, would mean the same as accusing God of breaking His promise and oathbound covenants.

As surely as we are in Christ the heirs of God and joint-heirs with the Lord Jesus Christ, so surely will Israel inherit and possess the land. As there was a definite time for Israel to cross Jordan and possess the land, so is there a definite time when God will bring them in again. It will be when the measure of wickedness of the nations, who are the present possessors of the land, is filled up, as the wickedness of the Canaanites was filled up in Joshua's days. When that time comes God will once more remember the covenant, and He will give the land back to His people and bring them in through Joshua.

The land is God's gift. We have often talked with Jews and Zionists. Some years ago a Zionistic leader mentioned in our presence their plans of getting the land back gradually, and eventually buy the whole land. We asked him: "What would you think, if your horse had been stolen by a thief, and you knew the thief, went to him and offered him a hundred dollars to buy your horse back? Would it not be the most nonsensical as well as unjust dealing? You Zionists are trying to buy back the land from the power which has no right to have the land." That power holds stolen property. And, besides, this land, according to the law, is not to be bought nor to be sold. Today the power which holds Palestine, Turkey, is crumbling to pieces. It is only the question of time when the fate of Palestine has to be decided.

II. Joshua Their Leader

As we have mentioned before in the annotations, Joshua means "Jehovah is Saviour." Moses, the first one, could not bring them in, but Joshua, the second divinely appointed leader, brought them in. Moses is the type of Christ's first coming, and Joshua the type of the second coming of Christ. It is at the second coming of our Lord that Israel will receive the land. He will restore to them the God-given inheritance.

Under Joshua the people were no longer stiff-necked, but obedient and submissive, willing followers of Him who led them forth. This will be the case when the Lord Jesus Christ returns. Then they will be His willing people (Psalm 110:3). Joshua was magnified before the eyes of all Israel, even as Christ will be magnified when He comes again. At the close of the fourth chapter of Joshua we read that all the people may know and fear the Lord. This surely will be the result of the second Coming of our Lord.

III. The Spies and Rahab

God's abounding grace is illustrated in the salvation of Rahab and her house. In the New Testament we find her with three other Gentile women in the genealogy of our Lord in Matthew's Gospel. We read of her in Hebrews 11 and in the Epistle of James. The meaning of these passages has already been pointed out. The scarlet line, and her security and salvation from judgment, we have also seen in the annotations. But the story has still another application.

The two spies entered the land in advance of the whole nation. They were faithful and courageous men, and took their lives into their own hands. They may well be taken as a type of the faithful remnant, which will be a kind of an advance guard entering into the land, before the rest of Israel is taking possession. The King of Jericho, who seeks their lives, is the type of that wicked one, the counterfeit king and messiah. Their flight to the mountains reminds us of the word of warning given by our Lord in His Olivet discourse, "Let them that be in Judea flee unto the mountains." Rahab, who believed and hid the spies and was saved on account of it, foreshadows those of the nations, who believe the last message concerning the coming of the King and the judgment in store for this earth. They will do good to the Jewish remnant, as Rahab did hide the spies. When the Lord comes and takes the seat upon the throne of His Glory, He will say to them: "What ye have done to the least of these, My brethren, ye have done unto Me." Rahab remained in the land and enjoyed blessings with Israel. So the nations, who believe during the great tribulation, will remain on the earth, and not be swept away by the divine judgments.

IV. The Events at Gilgal have a Prophetic Significance

The circumcision of Israel, as carried out by Joshua, is the type of the spiritual circumcision which the Lord will effect for the whole nation. Of this the Word of prophecy speaks: "And the LORD thy God will circumcise thine heart and the heart of thy seed, to love the LORD thy God with all thine heart and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live" (Deuteronomy 30). "Behold I will gather them out of all countries, whither I have driven them in My anger, and in My fury and great wrath; and I will bring them again unto this place, and I will cause them to dwell safely. And they shall be My people, and I will be their God. And I will give them one heart, and one way, that they may fear Me forever, for the good of them, and of their children after them" (Jeremiah 32:37-39). "Then I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean; from all your filthiness and all your idols will I cleanse you. And a new heart will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you. And I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh" (Ezekiel 36:25-28). Then the reproach, which has rested upon them for so long, will be rolled away. They will become the head of all the nations of the world.

V. The Fall of Jericho and the Overthrow of Israel's Enemies

As stated in the annotations, Jericho is the type of the world ripe for judgment. The number seven, in its frequency in

the fall of Jericho, the reader will find more fully described in the annotations of chapter 6. The walls of Jericho fell without a single sword being lifted up. The breath of Jehovah laid them flat. So shall the day come when the power of God will throw down the high and lofty things.

The warfare which Israel carried on is likewise prophetic. Israel was used to execute God's vengeance upon the wicked nations of Canaan. It will be repeated in the future. "Thou art My battle-ax and weapons of war, for with thee will I break in pieces the nations, and with thee will I destroy kingdoms" (Jeremiah 51:20). Read also Micah 5:8-9; Ezekiel 39:10; Zechariah 2:6; Zechariah 14:14.

VI. Battle at Gibeon

It was the most remarkable battle in Israel's history. There was no day like it, nor ever after, because the Lord hearkened unto the voice of Joshua. The Lord fought for Israel. The sun stood still, and the moon stayed until the people had avenged themselves upon their enemies. This is a prophetic type of the coming day of the Lord. What will happen in that day? Habakkuk, seeing that day and describing its detail, tells us, "The sun and the moon stood still in their habitation: at the light of thine arrows, as they went, at the shining of thy glittering spear. Thou didst march through the land in indignation; thou didst thresh the nations in anger. Thou wentest forth for the salvation of thy people, for salvation with thine anointed; thou woundest the head of the house of the wicked by laying bare the foundations to the neck" (Habakkuk 3).

VII. The Division of the Land and Israel's Rest

They came into the land, and the land was divided unto them by lot. Though it was not a permanent rest, yet the land had rested from wars for a time, and the tabernacle was set up at Shiloh. The prophetic Word tells us, that when Israel is brought in, they shall no more be plucked out of the land. There is in store for them a great Sabbath, a great jubilee, when His people and His land will have rest. It will be after the Lord has come. Then the land will be re-divided. See Ezekiel 47-48. Israel's land will then become, with its magnificent temple, the gloryland of this earth, the center of the Kingdom.

THE BOOK OF JUDGES

The Annotated Bible

Arno Clement Gaebelein

THE BOOK OF THE JUDGES

Introduction

The previous book began with the statement: "Now after the death of Moses, the servant of the LORD, it came to pass"; the book of Joshua is, therefore, closely linked with Deuteronomy. The book of Judges has for its opening word a similar announcement: "Now after the death of Joshua it came to pass." Judges is, therefore, the book which contains Israel's history after the occupation of the promised land and the death of Joshua. It covers about 320 years, extending to the judgeship of Samuel. In Acts 13:20 we read: "And after that He gave them judges about the space of four hundred and fifty years, until Samuel the prophet." This is a general statement and does not claim a chronological character. It is founded on the addition of the numbers mentioned in Judges. Some of these synchronize with others and must be deducted from the total.

"We find one express and clearly fixed chronological point in 1 Kings 6:1, according to which 480 years intervene between the departure out of Egypt, and the building of the temple, in the fourth year of Solomon's reign; after the necessary deductions have been made, about 320 years remain for the age of the judges. The chronological data in the book of Judges agree with this result, if the Ammonite oppression of the east-Jordanic territory (Jephthah, Ibzan, Elon, Abdon) are assumed as contemporaneous with the Philistine oppression of the west-Jordanic territory (Eli, Samson, Samuel). In this case, Eli's priesthood preceded the term of Samson's labors; the first operations of Samuel (merely prophetic in their character), belong to Samson's term, and it was only after the death of the latter that he assumed the office of a judge. It may, indeed, appear a singular circumstance, that the book of Judges should not refer to Eli and Samuel, and that the two books of Samuel should not mention Samson, but both circumstances are readily and satisfactorily explained by the difference in the objects for which these books respectively were written. The books of Samuel design to relate the history of David, the necessary introduction of which is an account of Saul, Samuel, and Eli, the events of whose lives are interwoven with those which belong to the earlier years of David's career; and here no reference whatever to Samson was required. The book of Judges, on the other hand, relates nothing concerning Eli, because he was not a judge, in the peculiar sense of that word, but presided over public affairs merely in the capacity of a high-priest; and it related nothing concerning Samuel, since his later acts, when he officiated as a judge, no longer belong to the period of Israel's repeated apostasy from Jehovah, which it is the design of this book to describe." (J.H. Kurtz, Sacred History)

The main part of the book of Judges is given to the sad history of Israel's departure from God, their chastisement and deliverance through the mercy and faithfulness of the Lord. The divinely given predictions through Moses, recorded in Deuteronomy, are now seen passing into history. Joshua's warning is being fulfilled. "Know for a certainty that the LORD your God will no more drive out any of those nations from before you; but they shall be snares and traps unto you, and scourges in your side, and thorns in your eyes, until you perish from off this good land which the LORD our God hath given you" (Josh. 23:13). The whole nation disintegrates. All goes to pieces. The whole sad story of decline is written in two statements, one at the beginning and the other at the end of the book. In the beginning of this book they asked the question of who is first to go up to fight the Canaanites (chapter 1:1). At the end they ask who is to battle against their own, to fight the children of Benjamin (20:18). They began in the Spirit and ended in the flesh. First, they fought the

common foe, then they fought each other.

The book of Judges, therefore, records the complete failure of the people of God and the graciousness of the Lord. Perhaps nowhere else in the Word of God do we find the patience and faithfulness of Jehovah towards an unfaithful and backsliding people so fully made known as in Judges. The instruments Jehovah used were the judges. They were raised up by God in the days of declension to bring about deliverances from the enemies, who had been permitted to bring Israel into servitude. They were, therefore, more than what the word judge in our language denotes. They were prophets in action. Their persons show how God has chosen the weak things to accomplish His purposes. One was left-handed. Another used an ox-goad; still another pitchers and trumpets and one had for a weapon the jawbone of an ass. One was a woman. There were thirteen judges. Six declensions are clearly marked by the phrase that the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord (3:7, 12; 4:1; 10:6; 8:1). And these six main declensions resulted in corresponding punishments followed by gracious deliverances through the judges.

What is the value and meaning of this historical book? If it has no other object beyond acquainting us with Israel's history, a deeper study would indeed be useless.

Again we refer to that familiar New Testament word, which fully authorizes us to read these histories in their typical hearings. "Now all these things happened unto them as types; and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages have come" (1 Cor. 10:11). "For as many things as have been written before have been written for our instruction, that through endurance and through encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope" (Rom. 15:4).

We have learned from the study of the Pentateuch, especially from the history of Israel in Egypt, her experiences in the wilderness and entrance into the promised land, how indeed all these things are types and what blessed lessons are written everywhere for our instruction. The history of the book of Judges finds also a most interesting and important typical application. The book of Joshua typifies the heavenly blessings of the people of God and the heavenly inheritance (corresponding to Ephesians). The book of Judges unfolds in a typical way the sad story of the decline, apostasy, dissension and corruption of the professing church on earth. The different errors and evils of Christendom may be traced here as well as the different revivals and restorations. The flesh and the world and what allegiance these lead to, slavery and misery with distance from Jehovah, and how the Lord can deliver and bring back His people, are the prominent lessons of this book. Like Joshua and the Pentateuch, Judges is so full and rich in these spiritual types and instructions that they cannot be exhausted. We touch upon these things in the analysis and annotations. May they prove to be helpful hints to a deeper study of this neglected book. And blessed are we if we discover our individual experience, our failures, our need and the faithfulness of our gracious Lord in this book and thus learn more of Him.

The Division of the Book of the Judges

The history of the different declensions in Israel, their oppression by the enemies, and the work wrought by the judges the Lord raised up, begins with chapter 3:5 and is continuously related to the end of chapter 16. The opening chapters of the book are a general introduction, part of which touches upon the contents of the book itself. Chapters 17-21 are an appendix to the main part. The events recorded in these closing chapters must have occurred a little while after the death of Joshua, during the lifetime of Phinehas, the high-priest (20:28). They give a glimpse of the sad internal conditions of the people, how every man did that which was right in his own eyes. Their complete failure towards God and towards themselves as the people of God is clearly seen in these records.

This gives us a threefold division of the book of Judges.

I. THE INTRODUCTION--ISRAEL'S FAILURES AND THE RESULTS

1. Israel's Failure in mingling with Canaanites (1:1-36)
2. The Angel at Bochim and the history of the entire Book (2:1-3:4)

II. THE DECLENSIONS, PUNISHMENTS AND DELIVERANCES

1. The Sin of Idolatry and Othniel (3:5-11)
2. Second Declension: Under Moab--Ehud and Shamgar (3:12-31)
3. Third Declension: Under Jabin and Deborah and Barak (4:1-5:16)
4. Fourth Declension: Under Midian and Gideon, Tola and Jair (6:1-10:5)
5. Fifth Declension: Under the Philistines and Ammon. Jephthah, Ibzan, Elon and Abdon (10:6-12:15)
6. Sixth Declension: Under the Philistines and Samson (13-16)

III. THE APPENDIX: ISRAEL'S INTERNAL CORRUPTION

1. Micah's idolatry and its punishment (17-18)
2. Israel's moral condition and the War on Benjamin (19-21)

Analysis and Annotations

I. THE INTRODUCTION: ISRAEL'S FAILURE AND THE RESULTS

1. Israel's Failure in mingling with the Canaanites

CHAPTER 1

1. The question and the answer (1:1-4)
2. Adoni-Bezek (1:5-7)
3. Jerusalem (1:8)
4. Judah's victory and failure (1:9-20)
5. The children of Benjamin and their failure (1:21)
6. The failures of others (1:22-36)

The book begins with an inquiry of the Lord. This was immediately after the death of Joshua. From chapter 2:7-10 we learn that the people served the Lord during the days of Joshua and the elders who had seen the great works of the Lord and who outlived their leader. Israel looked to the Lord for guidance. They feel their dependence upon Him. How different the history of His people would have been if they had maintained this dependence on the Lord, and acted always in subjection to Him! And the Lord answered the inquiry as He always delights to answer those who put their trust in Him. Judah is to go up to fight against the Canaanite, and the Lord promises victory. The first sign of weakness follows at once. Judah invites Simeon his brother to go with him to fight against the Canaanites, and he promises in return to help Simeon in conquering his lot. It showed that Judah had not full confidence in Jehovah. He put some dependence in his brother, as if he needed his help to gain the promised victory. How often His people have dishonored the Lord by trusting in something besides Himself. Judah going forward by divine command, yet asking the help of Simeon, gained victories, yet he could not drive out the inhabitants of the valley, for they had chariots of iron (verse 19). What is iron to omnipotence! Had Judah gone forth in utter dependence on Jehovah and in His promise, "I have delivered the land into his hand," the chariots of iron would have not stopped him.

But there were great victories, the blessed assurance that Jehovah is with His people, if they go but forward. Adoni-Bezek is punished in the same manner as he in his wickedness had done to others. Infidels have often found fault with the extermination of the Canaanites. The confession of Adoni-Bezek answers these objections. "As I have done, so God hath requited me." Their punishment was just and well deserved.

The eighth verse is of interest. In Joshua 10:1 Jerusalem is mentioned for the first time in the Bible and that in

connection with war. Here the city is smitten by the sword and burned with fire. This has been her history over and over again, and will be again in the future, till the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.

Then there is mentioned once more the most refreshing picture of Caleb, Othniel and Achsah. (See Joshua 15:16-19.) Othniel, which means "lion of God," is the center of it. God delights in whole-heartedness and the victories of His people.

The rest of this first chapter has failure stamped upon it. Benjamin, the warrior tribe permitted the Jebusites to dwell with them and did not drive them out. There is not even a reported attempt. The command of the Lord was wholly ignored by them. They were in the worst condition (chapters 20-21). Manasseh failed. Ephraim did not drive out the Canaanites that dwelt in Gezer. Zebulun, Asher and Naphtali all failed to dislodge the enemies God had commanded them to destroy entirely. And Dan instead of conquering was conquered. The Amorites forced them into the hill country. Unbelief, lack of confidence in Jehovah, was the cause of it all. These enemies here are typical of the flesh and the fleshly lusts in the believer. And these lusts, the carnal nature, must be put and kept in the place of death. We are enabled to do this by faith in our Lord Jesus Christ and through the power of the Holy Spirit, who is given to us of God. If we walk not in the Spirit, that is, in faith, we shall be overcome by these things; instead of conquering we will be conquered. The old nature not triumphed over will bring us into bondage as it is with so many of God's children.

2. The Angel at Bochim and the History of the Entire Book

CHAPTERS 2:1-3:4

1. The angel at Bochim (2:1-5)
2. Israel's obedience remembered (2:6-10)
3. Israel's strange gods (2:11-15)
4. Israel's history under the judges outlined (2:16-18)
5. The nations left to prove Israel (2:19-3:4)

The opening event of this chapter is significant. The Angel of the Lord came up from Gilgal to Bochim. This Angel is Jehovah Himself. His own words reveal this fact. In Joshua's time after the land had been possessed the Angel of the Lord, Jehovah in visible form, was with them and as leader of the Lord's host led them on in the conquest (Joshua 5:13-15). Israel had left Gilgal, the place where the reproach had been rolled away, the place of the "sharp knives," typical of self-judgment. It was for Israel the place of strength and power for victory, as it gave the flesh nothing to glory in. They had left Gilgal. How often we, who are crucified with Christ, leave our Gilgal and instead of glorying in the Lord and having no confidence in the flesh, we too act in self-confidence. The place to which the Angel went was "Bochim." It means "weepers." It was the best place for Israel to be after all their failures to do what the Lord had commanded them. It is the place today for us in the midst of the worldliness in which so many of the Lord's people have drifted, as well as the divisions which exist among those, who are members of the one body, and other evils besides. But Bochim, the place for weeping, must be the place of self-judgment and confession. It was not so for Israel. They wept when the plain words of Jehovah told them their disobedience and when they heard what should follow. "I will not drive them out before you; but they shall be as thorns in your sides, and their gods shall be a snare unto you." But we do not read anything of a true repentance and return unto Jehovah.

From chapter 2:6-3:4 we have the history of the whole period of Judges outlined. There is first mention made of their obedience and service, how they began in the Spirit. The second generation, as it is always the case, leads to failure. For the first time we read the words which, as already stated, appear in six other places in this book. "And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord." They forsook Him, the loving, gracious Jehovah, whose kindness and tender mercies are so fully revealed in their past history and instead of serving such a God, they served Baal and Ashtaroth. Connected with this Canaanite "religion" were the vilest immoralities by which they were dragged down to the level of these doomed nations. All moral corruption, social and political confusion is the result of turning away from God. Romans 1:19-32 reveals the awful steps down. Christendom in apostasy, turning away from God and from the light, leads to moral

corruption as well. Turning away from the truth means being turned into fables.

The Lord then acted in behalf of His backslidden people and raised up judges (verses 16-18). The result was recovery, and once more the people under these revivals rejoiced in victory over their enemies and the promised covenant blessings. Self-judgment, which is true repentance, had to precede each revival. They cried unto the Lord; they sought His face, and then deliverance came. Even so it is in the individual experience of the children of God.

Yet in spite of these revivals in Israel the tendency is downward. "When the judge died they returned and corrupted themselves beyond their fathers ... they ceased not from their own doings, nor from their stubborn way." So it has been in the professing Church. Revivals have come and gone, but it has not remedied the wayward conditions, and the departure from God and His Word becomes more and more pronounced till the final great apostasy is reached. The only complete deliverance can be the coming of the Lord which we do not find fully revealed in the types of the book of Judges.

II. THE DECLENSIONS, PUNISHMENTS AND DELIVERANCES

1. The Sin of Idolatry and Othniel

CHAPTER 3:5-11

1. The first declension (3:5-7)
2. Sold to the king of Mesopotamia (3:8)
3. The deliverance through Othniel (3:9-11)

The first declension, bondage and deliverance is briefly related. We see how Israel went from bad to worse. First, the wicked nations they were to exterminate dwelt amongst them. Then the children of Israel established some relationship with them and dwelt amongst these nations. First, the children of Israel permitted them to exist in their midst; then the doomed nations gained the power over Israel and the people of God became dependent on them. The third step down is intermarriage. They did exactly what Jehovah had forbidden (Deut. 7:2). Then they began to serve their idol-gods. It began by "forgetting the LORD." The application to the individual believer and to the professing church can easily be made. If He is forgotten, who has redeemed us and made us His own, an alliance with the world is soon formed and rapid decline follows. The same story is written in the message to Ephesus, which stands prophetically for the Apostolic age. "I have against thee that thou hast left thy first love" (Rev. 2:4). Leaving the first love means to have no longer the Lord Jesus Christ as the all-absorbing object before the heart. Thus the decline began in the Church, and it always begins in this way in the individual believer.

Chushan-Rishathaim, king of Mesopotamia, becomes their lord and they served him eight years. This king is the first punitive instrument in Jehovah's hands. His name very significantly reveals the very condition into which Israel had plunged. Chushan-Rishathaim means "the blackness of double wickedness." They had become doubly wicked, leaving Jehovah and serving strange gods.

When they cried unto the Lord out of the depths of their misery and sin, casting themselves once more upon Jehovah and turning their backs upon the strange gods, the Lord answered and sent a saviour who saved them. (The authorized version has "deliverer." The correct translation is "saviour.") It is the same Othniel of whom we read in chapter 1:13 and Joshua 15:17. Othniel means "lion of God," and as he was of Judah, he is the type of Him, who is the Lion of the tribe of Judah. Upon him rested the Spirit of the Lord. The king of Mesopotamia was given into his hands, and a rest of fifty years followed for Israel. Thus we too must return to the Lord and expect our deliverance from Him. What grace towards His people is manifested in this first deliverance!

2. Second Declension Under Moab--Ehud and Shamgar

CHAPTER 3:12-31

1. The second declension: serving Eglon, king of Moab (3:12-14)
2. Ehud raised up (3:15)
3. Eglon, king of Moab, slain by Ehud (3:16-25)
4. The deliverance by Shamgar (3:31)

When they continued to do evil Jehovah used Eglon, king of Moab to punish their disobedience and evil-doings. With him there is Ammon and Amalek, a trinity of evil. The city of Palms is Jericho (Deut. 34:3) a type of the world, as we saw from Joshua. Moab pictures typically an outward, empty, Christian profession. Amalek is the type of the lusts of the flesh which flourish with those, who have the form of godliness but deny the power thereof. How many today have become captives of Moab! The greater part of Protestantism, with a name to live, yet dead, is in that deplorable condition.

They served Eglon eighteen years. For the second time they cried unto the Lord and again He answered graciously by raising up Ehud, the son of Gera, the left-handed Benjamite. The story of the deliverance wrought by him is interesting. Without repeating the history of the chapter we give briefly its typical meaning. Ehud's father was Gera, which means "meditation." This is needed first of all to get deliverance from a mere profession or world prosperity with its attending evils to bring the soul to a blessed realization of its possessions and blessings in Christ. Ehud means "I will give praise." Here is the deliverance for God's people out of a dead formalism. Meditation on the Word leads to a believing possession of the realities of redemption in our Lord Jesus Christ. This is followed by praise, the confession of His Name. Then Moab's bondage is ended.

Ehud was left-handed, showing the weakness of the instrument. The two-edged dagger is the type of the Word of God, while the hand which grasps it illustrates how faith is to use the sword of the Spirit. Then Ehud, the Son of Gera, the left-handed, thrust the two-edged dagger into the fat belly of Eglon. Fat is the emblem of prosperity, the prosperity of the world by which so many of God's people become captivated. The sword of the Spirit must be plunged into that which is of the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life.

"Face to face in this solemn place, in solemn silence and alone they stand; the fat, prosperous world; and poor, left-handed faith. The scene is quickly over. Into the very belly of Eglon sinks the sharp sword of Ehud; the very belly, the center of all that is of the world and not of the Father; of 'the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, the pride of life'; that which flesh serves (Phil. 3) and which is never satisfied, is pierced through and through. With what result? Its true nature is fully exposed. Let us not be so falsely delicate as not to profit by this strong-worded truth. The prosperity of the world, fat and flourishing as it appears externally, is seen under the stroke of God's word--in the light of Jesus, whom it crucified, being the Son of the living God--as nothing but 'dirt.' Yea, so says another Benjamite, who well knew how to wield that sword: 'I count all things but loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord; for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung that I may win Christ and be found in Him.' How much does this leave of fat Eglon alive?" (F.C. Jennings, Notes on judges.)

Then the trumpet of victory was blown. Even so is our faith the victory which overcometh the world.

Shamgar's work seems to have been closely connected with that of Ehud. He smote the Philistines with an ox-goad. The ox-goad is like the sword, an emblem of the Word of God. Then the land had rest for eighty years.

3. Third Declension: Under Jabin, Deborah, and Barak**CHAPTER 4**

1. Sold into the hand of Jabin (4:1-2)
2. The cry of the children of Israel (4:3)

3. Deborah and Barak (4:4-11)

4. The conflict and Jael's deed (4:12-24)

Ehud the mighty instrument of Jehovah had died, and again the children of Israel lapsed into evil. Then the Lord sold them into the hand of Jabin, King of Canaan, that reigned in Hazor. His captain was Sisera, which dwelt in Harosheth of the Gentiles. A powerful oppressor he was, for this King had nine hundred chariots of iron and oppressed Israel twenty years. About one hundred and thirty years before Joshua had overcome Jabin, King of Hazor. "He took Hazor and smote the King thereof with the sword, for Hazor before him was the head of all these kingdoms." All were slain and Hazor was burnt with fire. And now the Lord sold them into his hand. This Jabin is a successor of the one whom Joshua had killed. Hazor had been built again out of its ruins. We see, so to speak, a resurrection of an old enemy. It is significant too that this declension and captivity under Jabin is the third one. As mentioned in annotations on Genesis the number three stands everywhere in the Word for revival and resurrection. The former enemy enslaves Israel once more. How often has this been the case in the history of the church, and how true it is today. Satan knows how to revive old errors and evils and use them to bring God's people into captivity. And is it not so in our individual experience? Some sin which overpowered us was through the grace and strength of Christ and of His Spirit mastered, and its power broken. But can that same sin not be revived? Is it forever gone? If there is neglect of prayer, no childlike dependence in true humility, no watchfulness, it will, like Jabin, return and domineer over us in even greater power than before. Jabin means "discerning"--"understanding." This city Hazor, where he dwelt, means "enclosure." This Jabin represents human intellect, the understanding of the natural man, which is corrupt and opposed to God and to His revelation. It is the wisdom of the world. Jabin is in his own "enclosure," which rejects and excludes what God has given. The Christian believer is called upon to bring every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ. "Casting down imaginations (reasonings), and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing every thought to the obedience of Christ" (2 Cor. 10:5). Man's own thoughts, his natural understanding, must be completely subjected to God's Word. How much of this spirit of exaltation against the knowledge of God is about us and in the professing church! Higher criticism belongs here. All the errors in doctrine, affecting always the Person of our Lord, are the results of putting the thoughts of man above the Word of God. Then in connection with this we must think of the sects and parties, the works of the flesh, that is the natural man and his reasonings, which have divided the body of Christ. These divisions are "the enclosures" of Jabin.

"As the enemy of the people of God, it is the wisdom of the world with which we have here to do--a wisdom which reigns in its own 'enclosure,' shut up, as is the constant fashion, in cliques and parties and philosophies, by which it elevates itself over what is outside its boundary. The spirit of it is easily manifest as that of self: self-interest, self-assertion, self-satisfaction, the true 'trader' or Canaanite spirit, that of gain. The inroad of this into the Church was early indeed. 'All seek their own, not the things of Jesus Christ,' was said, in the apostle's days, of those at Rome (Phil. 2:21). Of the Ephesian elders it was prophesied, 'Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them' (Acts 20:30). But already at Corinth the sects and parties produced by such attempts were being formed, as we know, and the true people of God were becoming subject to Jabin's rule; and this has developed much more widely since, even until the Church of God has been broken up into various denominations, to the dishonor of the One Name which is upon us all" (F.W. Grant).

Then once more the children of Israel cried unto the Lord. Jabin's mighty oppression and the humiliation connected with it had become so great that they turned to the Lord. How beautiful it is to see throughout these declensions, that the Lord seemed just to wait for this one thing, His people to cry to Him. As soon as they cried He answered. He is the same today. How willing and ready He is to break all the chains of His people and save them from the hands of all their enemies! True revivals always started in deep humiliation, in self-judgment, in prayer. But alas! the state of such, who have departed from the faith, who are the willing captives of Satan, who love this present evil age and who do not cry to the Lord! The Lord brought deliverance through a woman, Deborah, the prophetess. The weaker vessel is now summoned to judge. The name Deborah means "the Word." It is the Word and the Word of God alone which can deliver from the wisdom of this world and from error and sin. But Deborah is married. She is the wife of Lapidoth. Lapidoth means "firebrands." He is typical of the Holy Spirit. The Word, and the Spirit in the Word give the victory and deliver. And Deborah did not dwell in an "enclosure." She dwelt under the palm tree between Ramah and Bethel. The palm tree typifies the spiritual prosperity of the believer. This we enjoy if we let the Word in the power of the Spirit judge us. Then we have

our Ramah (heights) the blessed knowledge of our standing in Christ and Bethel (House of God) our fellowship with Him. That is where our palm tree, our spiritual blessing lies.

Deborah sent for Barak. Barak means "lightning." Here we have judgment indicated. The Word calls for judgment and judgment will surely come, as it was executed through Barak upon Jabin and his host.

And so this age ends with the lightning flash of judgment, when the bundled up tares will be burned with fire. All the wisdom of this world, higher criticism, Christian Science, falsely so-called, and every other form of evil will then pass away. All error will end forever with the coming of our Lord. But there is a second woman mentioned in this chapter, Jael the wife of Heber. She slew Sisera, the wicked captain of Jabin, with the tent pin. Her deed is specially celebrated in song.

CHAPTER 5 The Song of Deborah and Barak

1. The praise of Jehovah (5:1-5)
2. The condition of the people and their deliverance (5:6-11)
3. The celebration of the victory and the victors (5:12-22)
4. The fate of the enemy (5:23-31)

This is one of the prophetic songs of the Bible. It is full of the fire of passion and enthusiasm, reflecting the character of the woman through whom the deliverance had been wrought. It has been classed with the barbaric outbursts of the battle-hymns and odes of triumph of heathen nations, likened to some wild chant of a victor, whose blood-thirst has been quenched in the cruel overthrow of his enemies. Such estimates of this song, so often made by the critics of the Bible, are incorrect. Deborah speaks as a prophetess. She begins with ascribing praise to Jehovah; she ends with Jehovah. This prophetic outburst is marked by limitations. She has no glimpse of the final victory which is mentioned in other songs of triumph, and especially in the Psalms. There are phrases which the Holy Spirit utters through Deborah, which He used in other prophetic songs. The following passages of Scripture may be compared with Deborah's words and will be helpful in the closer study of this chapter. Exodus 15:1-9; Deut. 32:1-3, 16-17; Psalm 67:1-4, 8, 11, 34- 35; Psalm 83:9-10; Hab. 3:1-4; Psalm 18:7; Psalm 77:11-12; Luke 1:28, 71-74.

While all this is true and we do not forget that Deborah was the chosen instrument, raised up to effect the great deliverance, we also must recognize the strong human element which is so prominent. One must beware of giving to the deeds done, especially to the deed of Jael in its detail, divine sanction and endorsement. It was an act of courage and of faith; she was moved by faith and that faith led her to kill Sisera, the enemy of Israel.

"The act of Jael, who smote a nail into the temples of the sleeping Sisera, does not claim our approbation; still, when we estimate the character of the act, the extenuating circumstances are entitled to attention--the times in which she lived, her ardent and enthusiastic devotion to the cause of Israel, the general and glowing hatred of the tyrannical oppressor of the people, etc. If such considerations are allowed to plead in favor of a Charlotte Corday, much more appropriately do they vindicate the act of a Jael. The same remark applies to the act of Ehud, which, according to our moral principles, was an assassination worthy of reprobation alone." (J.H. Kurtz, Sacred History)

Meroz is especially mentioned (verse 23). Deborah speaks with authority then, and has her message from the Angel of the Lord. He said: "Curse ye, Meroz, curse ye bitterly the inhabitants thereof, because they came not to the help of the LORD, to the help of the LORD against the mighty." Meroz might have helped, but they lived there in luxuries. Meroz means "built of cedars"; they dwelt in palaces of cedars and lived in ease, unconcerned about the condition of their brethren. And the angel of the Lord said that they did not call up to the help of the Lord. The indifference they manifested in not helping their brethren is thus charged as not helping the Lord against the mighty. As in the New Testament so here the Lord identifies Himself with His suffering people. God deliver His people today from the indifference of Meroz, which is high treason against the Lord and His cause!

Verses 24-31 are a vivid description of what took place. The mother of Sisera is seen awaiting the return of her victorious son. She expects nothing but good and her wise ladies are with her. It is a remarkable irony. Thus all the enemies of Jehovah will perish, while for those who love Him there is glory and rest in store. Deborah could only express a longing that the enemies might perish, and those that love Him be as the sun in might and splendour. It was her prayer. We know more through the full light of prophecy how the enemies of God will perish and the glory shall be for those who love Him.

4. Fourth Declension: Under Midian and Gideon, Tola and Jair

CHAPTER 6

1. Israel's suffering from Midian (6:1-6)
2. Their repentance and the divine answer (6:7-10)
3. Gideon, the deliverer, chosen (6:11-24)
4. The restored worship (6:25-32)
5. The gathering for the conflict (6:33-35)
6. The sign of the fleece (6:36-40)

After Deborah and Barak the land had fifty years' rest, and when again they did evil they were delivered into the hand of Midian for seven years. It was a most cruel oppression which they suffered and on account of their repeated unfaithfulness. They sank now lower than during the previous declensions and captivities. They were stripped of everything and greatly impoverished. The Amalekites came also and made common cause with Midian against Israel.

The word Midian means "strife." Midian is typical of the world in its opposition to and separation from God. Midian and Moab are often seen together. Both typify the world as the enemy of God. The Midianites with Moab tried to get Balaam to curse Israel (Num. 22:6). Moab and Midian were the means of bringing God's judgment upon Israel through the woman Balaam brought into the midst of God's people. Then Israel was joined to Baal-Peor, and the Lord told Moses: "Vex the Midianites and smite them" (Num. 25:17). Amalek represents the flesh with its lusts. The world and the flesh ever combine to enslave God's people and rob them of their blessings; "greatly impoverish them" as Midian did to Israel. How the Church has been spoiled by Midian and is today in the sad condition typified by Midian's power over Israel, we cannot follow at great length. The world is in the Church--separation is given up and the methods of the world have become the methods of the Church. In the Church message to Pergamos, Balaam and the stumbling-block he cast before the children of Israel, are mentioned. It represents that period of the Church when the Church gave up her separation and settled down in the world. (The seven Church messages in Rev. 2 and 3 are prophetic of the history of the Church on earth. Pergamos is that period which began with Constantine.)

And the same application of Midian must be made of the individual believer. How God's Word warns against the world and the corruption which is through lust. "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him" (1 John 2:15). "Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? Whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God" (James 4:4).

When they cried to the Lord a prophet was sent to them. The deliverer they looked for is withheld for a time to deepen their need and burden their souls with a greater sense of the evil they had done. The unnamed prophet brings therefore a twofold message: The message of God's faithfulness and the message of their disobedience.

Next we see an angel of the Lord under an oak in Ophrah. Gideon, the son of Joash, threshed wheat by the winepress to hide it from the Midianites. The angel greeted him. "The LORD is with thee, thou mighty man of valour." And Gideon addressed him telling out the burden of his soul. If the LORD be with us why then is all this befallen us? ... But now the LORD hath forsaken us." It was the language of despair "Then the LORD looked upon him and said, Go in this thy might, and thou shalt save Israel from the land of the Midianites; have not I sent thee?" And still Gideon is reluctant to believe the

message and the Lord tells him "Surely I will be with thee, and thou shalt smite the Midianites as one man." The Lord had called him, and when He calls He also fits for the service and is with the servant. Oh! the blessed word "I will be with thee." And the One who spoke to Gideon is the same, who has left to us the precious word, "Lo, I am with you always even to the end of the world." Then Gideon brought his offering upon the rock, and the Angel of the Lord with his staff brought the fire which consumed it all, while He departed from Gideon's sight. Then it dawned upon Gideon that he had been face to face with Jehovah, and he feared death. A blessed message came to him then. "Peace be unto thee; fear not; thou shalt not die."

Then he built an altar and called it "Jehovah-shalom"--the LORD is peace. All is full of meaning. The offering he brought typifies Christ; so does the rock upon which it was brought. The fire consumed it all, carried it upward to God. And upon that the assurance of peace is given. Even so He is our peace. Blessed be God for such a precious, beautiful name--"Jehovah-shalom"--the Lord is peace. So we need not to fear, for He has made peace through the blood of His cross, and He is our peace. And therefore like Gideon we need an altar to worship. True peace with God, and the enjoyment of Himself as our peace, leads to worship, yea, it demands worship. Such the Father seeketh. As holy priests we come, made nigh by His precious blood, and bring our spiritual sacrifices. If Christ were constantly enjoyed, the facts of our redemption of blood never forgotten, Midian, this poor world, could never impoverish us. And deliverance out of worldliness and a new separation unto Him must needs have for its starting point a heart-return to Himself, who is our peace.

Then Gideon does what his name (cutter down) means. Baal's altar must fall down. He began his great work at home. It was a bold deed by which he put himself completely on the Lord's side and stirred up the wrath of the enemy. And then the enemies gather for the battle. The Spirit of the Lord then came upon Gideon. He was endued with the Spirit for the approaching deliverance. The enemies were coming in like a flood, but the Spirit of God lifted up a standard against them.

Finally Gideon asked his signs. He still hesitated. And the wonderful patience and condescension of Jehovah in meeting poor, wavering Gideon! The fleece in the midst of the ground is the type of Israel in the midst of the nations. The dew is the symbol of divine grace and mercy. It is the Lord who forsakes and who refreshes Israel. Israel today is like the fleece without the dew, while the ground, the Gentiles, possess of the grace of God. But ere long the dew will fall upon Israel again and the time of their blessing and fulness will come.

CHAPTER 7 The Victory of Gideon

1. The sifting of Gideon's army (7:1-8)
2. The dream of the Midianite (7:9-15)
3. Victory through weakness (7:16-25)

Gideon "the cutter down," now also called Jerubbaal "the contender with Baal," after his faith had been strengthened, pitched his camp at the well of Harod (trembling). The Lord did not need the large army he had gathered, lest Israel would say: "Mine own hand hath saved me." First 22,000 were let go. They were afraid. What an evidence of the sad conditions among the people. Jehovah had commanded through Moses this test. "And the officers shall speak further unto the people, and they shall say, What man is there that is fearful and faint hearted? Let him go and return unto his house, lest his brethren's heart faint as well as his heart" (Deut. 20:8). Faint heartedness and fear are but unbelief. Faith is courage and does not reckon with iron-chariots, with the powers of Midian, but with an omnipotent Lord. After the 22,000 had left, 10,000 remained and the Lord said again, "The people are too many." Only 300 were selected who took up water out of the brook in their hands as they drank. Kneeling down, drinking in leisure, is the natural way for man to do. They showed thereby that they were inclined to take matters easy and to satisfy their need to the full. Taking the water into the hand and lapping it like a dog is not the natural way for man to drink. They were less absorbed with satisfying their natural wants. They showed thereby their eagerness to press on. Thus the army was narrowed down to the 300 whom the Lord would use in His service. How many of the Lord's people today like Gideon's army are unfit for service? Unbelief and too much occupation with earthly things, the creature wants, stand in the way.

To encourage Gideon still more the Lord permitted him to overhear how a soldier related his dream. That dream was like Nebuchadnezzar's great dream given by the Lord. The loaf of barley bread which smote the tent is another figure of the Word of God. Midian and Amalek, the world and the lusts of the flesh, can only be dealt with and overthrown by the Bread of Life, the living and abiding Word of God.

Read in connection with Gideon's victory 2 Cor. 4:4-12. Here we find a blessed application. The light hath shined into our hearts, so that it might shine out. The pitchers, the earthen vessels, represent our old self. If the light is to shine out, the victory to be won, the old self must be broken to pieces.

CHAPTER 8 Internal Strife, Gideon's Failure and End

1. The strife (8:1-9)
2. The complete deliverance (8:10-21)
3. Gideon's failure and end (8:22-32)
4. Israel's failure after Gideon (8:33-35)

Internal strife follows. The two princes of Midian, Oreb and Zeeb, were slain (7:25). Oreb means "raven" and Zeeb means "wolf." Oreb, the raven, is slain on the rock and Zeeb, the wolf, at the winepress. The raven, the bird which represents darkness and evil, is the type of corruption; the wolf is the destroyer of the sheep. The rock and the winepress typify the Lord Jesus Christ and His Cross. There the victory over both was won.

The internal strife was born in selfishness. Ephraim chided him sharply, because he had not called them to the fight. Gideon's wise and gracious answer averted the threatening dissension. How beautifully it illustrates Phil. 2:1-5. All church strifes begin with self-seeking vain-glory. The remedy is "in lowliness of mind let each esteem the other better than themselves."

A greater victory follows after the internal strife had been overcome. The men of Succoth and of Peniel, Israelites, mocked Gideon and refused him help. They were really secret allies of Midian. After the victory these mocking, half-hearted Israelites were whipped by Gideon with the briers and thorns of the wilderness to teach them the needed lesson. How often we also in half-heartedness, world-bordering and being occupied too much with earthly things, need the thorns and briers, anxieties, disappointments and sufferings to bring us into line.

When they wanted to make Gideon king he refused. But while he refused that honor he tries to grasp another, the priesthood. He gathers the gold to make a priestly ephod and put it in Ophrah. It became a snare for all Israel as well as for Gideon, for they went "a whoring after it." The gold was taken from the enemy. It was a self-glorification of the victor Gideon. He and all Israel forgot that the glory belonged to Jehovah. Gideon claimed an honor which did not belong to him. Even so it has been done on Christian ground. A false priesthood with man in place of the Lord and His work, the instruments used in the power of the Spirit of God exalted instead of Him who furnished the instrument, these are the lessons which may be traced here in Gideon's sad failure. How many a servant of Christ, forgetting 1 Cor. 4:7: "And what hast thou that thou didst not receive? Now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?" has fallen into the same snare, and as a result lost his power and blessing! The many wives of Gideon and the concubine of Shechem tell the other side. Amalek (the flesh) spoiled him. Like priest, like people. Israel went whoring after Baal and forgot once more Jehovah.

CHAPTER 9 Abimelech the King and His Wickedness

1. The murder of Gideon's sons (9:1-6)
2. Jotham's parable (9:7-21)
3. Scenes of strife and destruction of Shechem (9:22-49)

4. Abimelech's end (9:50-57)

The story of Abimelech is intensely interesting in its typical meaning. Abimelech was the offspring of an unlawful union: the son of Gideon and the concubine in Shechem. He was half Israelite and half Canaanite. Abimelech means "my father was king"; he claims therefore supremacy, lordship over the people Israel on the basis of succession. His father had refused that honor; the bastard offspring claims it. He gains his object by a conspiracy and by murdering the sons of his father, with the exception of Jotham, who hid himself. And this domineerer over the people bears the name of the Philistine kings.

This illustrates perfectly that corrupt system of Christendom which is half Christian and half heathenish--Rome. It is like Abimelech--a bastard system. She is called in Revelation "Jezebel," the heathen woman who was married to an Israelitish king. Rome claims apostolic succession through Peter, who disclaimed any preeminence, but rather warned against "lording over God's heritage." Ecclesiastical assumption to control and govern the people of God, so prominent in corrupt Christendom, is dearly indicated in Abimelech's act of putting himself forward as king. And the murderous spirit of Abimelech is there likewise.

Jotham (Jehovah is perfect), the youngest son of Gideon, is the witness against it. He uttered a parable from Gerizim. The olive, the fig-tree and the vine refused to reign over the trees. The bramble becomes king to devour with fire the cedars of Lebanon. He applied the parable to Abimelech, who had been made king.

"The tendency of man's heart is to make another king than God, to put leaders in His place, and thus to destroy the use and blessing for which the olive, the fig, the vine, the various gifts of God, are given. But just those who are really worthiest will most surely refuse to leave their spheres of happy service, their sweetness, and their fruit, to go to 'wave over,'--flutter idly in the wind over the trees. Thus royalty comes naturally to the thorn-bush, which need give up nothing, but which has thus nothing in its gift but thorns,--such as, indeed, the men of Succoth (chapter 8:16) were taught with. But worse would come than this--the fire of God's wrath, which, from this side and from that, would destroy both king and people" (Numerical Bible).

Three years later the prediction in Jotham's parable comes true; fire came out from Abimelech and devoured the men of Shechem; and fire came out from Shechem and devoured Abimelech. It was God who sent an evil spirit between Abimelech and the men of Shechem. Then there is the revolt of Gaal, (loathing), the son of Ebed (servitude), and he opposed Abimelech. Something similar came to pass in Christendom. On account of the domineering rule of Rome there was the revolt against her. The overthrow of the ecclesiastical oppressor was attempted. But Gaal's attempt fails. He is overcome. Abimelech and his officer Zebul are victorious. The revolt has failed. Even so today Rome is gaining, and those who "protested" once against her wickedness, now are following her pernicious ways once more. Abimelech's end was brought about by a piece of a millstone which a woman cast on him, and a young man thrust him through with a sword and he died. It was a fearful end in judgment. Even so it is written of Babylon, the mother of harlots, Rome. "And a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone, and cast it into the sea, saying, Thus with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no more." ... "And in her was found the blood of prophets, and of saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth" (Rev. 18:21, 24).

CHAPTER 10:1-5 Tola and Jair

1. Tola judging twenty-three years (10:1-2)
2. Jair judging twenty-two years (10:3-5)

These are but brief records but not without meaning. Tola means, translated, "a worm." What a contrast with the proud, wicked, domineering Abimelech! Here is one, who takes the place in self-abasement. It reminds us of Him, whose voice we hear in the great Atonement Psalm "I am a worm and no man." Tola, no doubt, typifies our Lord in His humiliation. When Abimelech's awful rule is ended, He who was obedient unto death, the death of the cross, will come to reign in

righteousness.

And this seems to be more fully brought to our attention in Jair, the judge, who followed Tola. His name means, "enlightener." He is a type of our Lord in His coming as "the Sun of Righteousness." The thirty sons, who rode on thirty ass-colts and had thirty cities, must mean the rule of that kingdom to come in which His sons, His co-heirs, will have a part, as Jair's sons had authority over these cities.

5. Fifth Declension: Under the Philistines and Ammon. Jephthah, Ibzan, Elon, and Abdon

CHAPTER 10:6-18

1. The great declension (10:6-9)
2. Their cry and the Lord's answer (10:10-14)
3. Confession and self-judgment (10:15-18)

This is the greatest declension yet. They did evil again, served Baalim, Ashtaroth, the gods of Syria, Zidon, Moab, Ammon and the Philistines. They were then sold by the Lord into the hands of the Philistines and into the hands of the children of Ammon. Ammon has rightly been taken to typify rationalism in every form and the wicked doctrines, the denials of the faith, which follow in its train. Christian Science, Russellism, higher criticism, Seventh Day Adventism, Unitarianism and a host of other "isms" are of the Ammonite tribe. The Philistines typify ritualism. Like Ammon and the Philistines, these two enemies distress sorely the people of God from all sides. Then they cried unto Him and confessed their sins, and Jehovah reminded them of all His goodness in past deliverances and threatened them that He would not deliver them. "Go and cry unto the gods which ye have chosen; let them deliver you in the time of your tribulation." But when they continued to plead and to confess, when they put away the strange gods, when they began to serve Him again, though He had denied their first cry--His soul was grieved for the misery of Israel. What a compassionate Lord He is! Then they gathered together and encamped at Mizpah--the watchtower.

CHAPTER 11 Jephthah and the Ammonites

1. Jephthah's covenant (11:1-11)
2. The messages to Ammon (11:12-28)
3. Jephthah's vow and victory (11:29-33)
4. Jephthah keeps his vow (11:34-40)

Jephthah the judge who delivered Israel from the servitude of Ammon was the offspring of an unholy union "the son of an harlot." Then he became an outcast and had to flee from his brethren. He dwelt in the land of Tob (goodness) and vain, or worthless, men gathered unto him. Yet he was a mighty man of valor. He was therefore an humble instrument, despised and rejected by his own. But finally those who rejected him had to send for Jephthah to be their saviour from the hands of the children of Ammon. They had to own him as their leader, whom they had hated and cast out on account of his lowly birth. He reminds us of our Lord, who was hated by His own and who is yet to be their deliverer.

Jephthah means "he opens." Gilead, to which he belonged, means "witness." The enemy, Ammon, as we stated in the annotations of the previous chapter, typifies for us rationalism and the wicked errors connected with it, which distress the people of God. Here then we have in a simple yet blessed way the deliverance from those evils indicated. It needs "a true witness," one who "opens." The witness of an opened Word, the testimony of the Word of God and with it the Spirit of God, will make an end of error. It is the only true way to combat the wicked departures from the faith so prominent in the last days. How God in this book bears witness in types to the one remedy for all the declensions and backslidings of His people! Othniel has Debir "the Word"; Ehud with his sword, the sword of the Spirit; Shamgar and his oxgoad; Deborah and Lapidoth, the Word and the Spirit; the barley loaf which smote down Midian's tent and Jephthah, the one who opens, the true witness.

Jephthah made a hasty vow. It was bargaining with Jehovah, as Jacob did. And when his daughter met him first the awful vow was carried out. In reading the story one can hardly escape the literal offering up of the child.

"it is true that a mode of interpreting this vow and its fulfilment has been proposed, according to which Jephthah's daughter was not offered as a sacrifice, but devoted to a life of celibacy, and consecrated to the service of the tabernacle; and the confirmation of this view has been sought in the institution of an order of females who served before the tabernacle (Exod. 38:8; 1 Sam. 2:22; Luke 2:37). Luther already remarked: 'Some maintain that she was not sacrificed, but the text is too clear to admit of this interpretation.' But stronger evidence of her sacrifice than even the unambiguous words of the vow afford, is found in the distress of the father, in the magnanimous resignation of the daughter, in the annual commemoration and lamentation of the daughters of Israel, and, particularly, in the narrative of the historian himself, who is not able to describe clearly and distinctly the terrible scene on which he gazes both with admiration and with abhorrence. The Law undoubtedly prohibited human sacrifices as the extreme of all heathen abominations (Lev. 18:21; Deut. 12:31, etc.). But the age of the judges had descended to a point far below the lofty position occupied by the Law." (J. H. Kurtz, Sacred History.)

And yet there are difficulties in connection with literal interpretation. The word burnt-offering is in the Hebrew "an offering that ascends."

"The great Jewish commentators of the Middle Ages have, in opposition to the Talmud, pointed out that these two last clauses ('shall surely be the Lord's and I will offer it up for a burnt-offering') are not identical. It is never said of an animal burnt offering that it 'should be to Jehovah,' for the simple reason that as a burnt offering it is such. But where human beings are offered to Jehovah, there the expression is used, as in the case of the firstborn among Israel and of Levi (Num. 3:12, 13). But in these cases it has never been suggested that there was actual human sacrifice. If the loving daughter had devoted herself to death, it is next to incredible that she should have wished to have spent the two months of her life conceded to her, not with her broken-hearted father, but in the mountains with her companions" (A. Edersheim).

Whatever it was, one thing stands out very prominently, the loyalty of Jephthah to Jehovah and the obedience and surrender of the daughter.

CHAPTER 12 The strife--Jephthah's Death--The Other Judges

1. The strife and the slaying of the Ephraimites (12:1-6)
2. Jephthah's death (12:7)
3. Ibzan, Elon and Abdon (12:8-15)

The strife of Ephraim and their question reminds us of what happens under the judgeship of Gideon. There the soft answer turned away wrath. How different it is here. Jephthah in self exaltation shows a far different spirit. Notice the "I" in his answer. "I was at great strife"--"I and my people"--"I called you"--"I saw"--"I put my life in my hand." A great strife follows. The Gileadites take the fords of Jordan and those who said "Sibboleth" were slain. Horrible record! Forty-two thousand Ephraimites were murdered. And this sad extermination of brethren has its sequel in Christendom. Shibboleth means "flood," that which divides. Sectarianism is undoubtedly in view here. How God's people have suffered under it and still suffer! It is true "every test that divides the people of God from one another, and not from their enemies, is another false 'shibboleth.'" May God graciously deliver His people from all sectarian strife, which is but the work and the fruit of the flesh (Gal. 5:19-21).

Three judges follow after Jephthah's death. These correspond to their typical meaning to Tola and Jair after Abimelech's lordship had been broken. Ibzan of Bethlehem. Ibzan means "shining"--"splendour." Then there is Elon, which means "strength"; and Abdon, the meaning of which is "service," the son of Hillel, "praising." These three give us a little glimpse of "Him who will come in splendor and in strength"--that is "in power and great glory," to set things right.

Then all strife and disorder will end and happy service and praise will follow.

6. Sixth Declension: Under the Philistines and Samson

CHAPTER 13

1. Israel delivered to the Philistines (13:1)
2. Manoah and his wife (13:2-23)
3. Samson born (13:24-25)

The sixth and last declension of Israel in this book is now before us. This section has deep and interesting lessons. The darkest period is reached. The Philistines lorded over Israel. We miss in connection with this declension the statement which occurs in every preceding departure from Jehovah: "And the children of Israel cried unto the LORD." Here is no cry recorded nor a return unto the Lord. It seems the greatest indifference controlled the people so that there was no desire to cry to the Lord. And when we come to the deliverance we find that it was an imperfect one. "He shall begin to deliver Israel out of the hand of the Philistines" (verse 5), is the divine announcement of Samson's work. And how did he end? He died as a captive of the Philistines. But what does the Philistine typify? He represents the religious man, one who has the form of godliness but knows not the power, the ritualistic Pharisee. We quote from Notes on Judges by F.C. Jennings:

Turning to the tenth chapter of Genesis, we find the genealogy of the Philistines. They are the children of Ham, and Ham is, as his name denotes, the "black one" or sunburnt. Dark indeed, but darkened by the sun. God wanted a man who should show us, as in a figure, or picture, what He sees man who is turned away from Himself (light), so He brings on to the stage of this world a "black man," a man made black by the sun, and crystalizes the sorrowful truth in his name, Ham. A very clear picture of the "old man." The sun has shone upon him indeed, but he has not received the light. He has rejected the light--has not come to the light, has hated the light, and, of course, it has not enlightened him; but it must have had some effect. What is it? It has been only to darken him. We may truthfully say that if he had never had light he would not have been dark as he is, and the brighter the light, the darker he has become. Now this is surely the picture of the Pharisee rather than the Publican. It was the Pharisee, the religious man, who was warned "if the light which is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness." It was the Pharisee, the religious man, not the Publican, of whom the Lord testified that his deeds were evil. It was the Pharisee, the religious man of that day, who with the very Light of the World--the true, bright light shining clearly right before his eyes--asked for a sign! As if one should ask for a light at noonday--what would it prove but his blindness? Oh, blind Pharisee, oh, dark Pharisee, oh, thou child of Ham, thou unregenerate religionist, thou unconverted church-member, how great was, and is even up to this day, thy darkness--a "black man" indeed!

The marks of the Philistine are given as follows:

First. Wherever there is an introduction of carnal principles--that is, principles that the flesh can understand and approve--into the things of God, there is the Philistine.

Second. Wherever there is the teaching of some other way into the land of blessing than by the Red Sea and Jordan (the Cross of Christ) there is the Philistine.

Third. Wherever there are claims to sole authority over the refreshing fountain of God's Word, which is then tightly shut up, there is the Philistine, for that is how his ancestors treated Abraham's wells.

Fourth. Wherever you get uncertainty as to sins forgiven--a dread, cold fear that all is not well, for there is no knowledge of a sacrifice that takes away sin--there is the work of the Philistine.

Fifth. Wherever you get principles that would bind the energy of faith, there is the Philistine. And one may still further question whether there are not other phases of Philistinism, far more subtle and dangerous in these last days, than these

open expressions of it. The Philistine women of whom we shall read were not warriors, but they were always the ensnarers of the Nazarite.

And who is the deliverer out of the hands of the Philistine? A Nazarite. (See our annotations on Numbers 6 of what the Nazarite is and represents. A careful perusal of that chapter is needed to understand the typical meaning of Samson.) Even so the heart knowledge of Christ, our blessed place in Him, as well as the practical life of separation unto which we are called, is the power which delivers from the evil of Philistinism. The Angel of the Lord appeared to the wife of Manoah and later also to Manoah. Her name is not given. He announces to her, who was barren, the birth of a son, who was to be a Nazarite unto God from the womb. The mother herself was to abstain from wine and strong drink and defilement with any unclean thing. The messenger, the Angel of the Lord, is the same who had come from Gilgal to Bochim, the Captain of the Lord's host, He who appeared to Moses in the burning bush, Jehovah Himself. When asked what is thy Name? He answers: "It is Wonderful" (Isaiah 9:6). Then He ascended in the flame of the altar. Samson was born and Jehovah blessed him. The Spirit of the Lord even in his young days began to move him in Mahaneh-dan, the camp of Dan. (Dan means "judging.")

CHAPTER 14 The First Deeds of Samson

1. The woman in Timnath (14:1-4)
2. The killing of the young lion and the honey in the carcass (14:5-9)
3. The marriage feast and the riddle (14:10-14)
4. The riddle answered (14:15-18)
5. Thirty Philistines slain by Samson (14:19-20)

Samson was called of God to be a true Nazarite, but in his life which was to manifest the Nazarite character he failed. "He went down to Timnath" is a foreboding beginning. It was a step in the wrong direction. He stepped upon the territory of the enemy to enter into an alliance with the Philistines. He meets one of the daughters of the Philistines, a woman in Timnath. Two other women we find in Samson's life, an harlot of Gaza and Delilah. They are alike, representing the "wiles of the devil." They lead him down and ultimately accomplish his downfall and death. Timnath means "portion assigned." He left his occupation to seek a portion with the Philistines. Yet it was of the Lord in the sense that He permitted it for a wise purpose. And in that wrong course he came to the vineyards of Timnath and met the roaring lion. The lion is the type of Satan (Amos 3:8; 1 Pet. 5:8). He roared at the Nazarite, as Satan still roars against any one who bears the marks of separation unto God. Then in the power of the Spirit who came upon Samson he rent the lion as a kid. Then he saw the woman and she pleased him well. Strange contrast! In the power of the Spirit he tore the lion and then falls victim to the enemy in another form. How often this is the case in the experiences of God's people. Afterwards he found in the carcass of the lion the swarm of bees and the honey, which he ate and also gave to his parents. "Out of the eater came forth meat, and out of the strong came forth sweetness." Our blessed Lord has conquered Satan and as the result of that mighty overthrow and victory, accomplished on the Cross, we have our meat, our sweetness, our salvation and blessing.

Another application besides the above and also of the believer's personal experience in conquering by faith the enemy and receiving sweetness through it, has been suggested: "The occurrences which took place when Samson visited Timnath, the residence of the woman (the lion, and the honey afterwards found in the carcass), were highly significant, and adapted to instruct both him and his people. He seems himself to be aware, in some degree, of their importance, as he introduces them in his riddle. The lion, namely, is an image of the kingdoms of the world which are hostile to the kingdom of God; the attack, the struggle, and the victory thus acquire a symbolical meaning. The riddle also includes a truth of great importance, the evidence of which is furnished in manifold ways by the history of the world, and which admits of an appropriate application even to our times. The attack of the lion was an image of the Philistine invasion; the eater famished Israel with meat and sweetness, the destroyer brought salvation and blessings with him; for the yoke of the Philistines was a chastisement, designed to lead the people to repentance, and terminate in their renewed acceptableness before God."

Then he is in very bad company. He went down to Timnath alone. He met the woman, then he made a feast and was

surrounded by thirty Philistines as companions. He had allied himself with the enemy. And this compromise, this mingling with the enemies of the cross of Christ, is the common thing today and has led to the grieving of the Spirit and the loss of power. "For example, the modern system of revival--to which our Samson, in his failure, so closely answers--in which, whilst there doubtless often is more or less of true faithful service, yet to effect the end an alliance even with the enemy is sought; the aid of the world is sought in obtaining deliverance from the world! Fleshly attractions, eloquent speakers, exquisite music, cunning schemes for gathering crowds to attract crowds; all the churches closed except one, thus awakening a natural excitement; all these are daughters of the Philistine, very fair, all serving religion and pleasing us well; but very, very dangerous. For whilst at first they may not appear serious, they point to the possibility of their becoming so in the future; nor do they ever radically aid, but always hinder, the Nazarite.

He gives the riddle to the Philistines and makes a wager. The woman, now Samson's wife, wept and continued till he told her the secret, "and she told the riddle to the children of her people." Here was his weak point, which eventually resulted in his shameful downfall and humiliating experience. He could not keep a secret. But it was all the results of his going down, forming an alliance with the enemy he was called to overcome. He did not see that he had stepped in the wrong direction. He blamed the Philistines and not himself. "If ye had not plowed with my heifer, ye had not found out my riddle." Then he slew thirty Philistines to make good his promise and thus openly declared his hatred and antagonism to the enemy for the first time.

CHAPTER 15 The Conflict with the Philistines: Bound Yet Free

1. The damage done to the Philistines (15:1-8)
2. Bound by his own brethren (15:9-13)
3. The deed with the jawbone (15:14-17)
4. His prayer and the answer (15:18-20)

He discovered next the true character of the Philistines. His wife has been given to another. Nothing came of his alliance with the Philistines but trouble and unpleasantness for himself. Was it of the Lord when he took the 300 foxes (literally, jackals; it would have been hard work to catch 300 foxes, for they go alone, but jackals go in packs) and the firebrands to destroy the corn, the vineyards and olive-groves? We find that there is no record that the Spirit of the Lord came upon him for this work. He acted out of revenge, because they had given his wife to another, whom as an Israelite with the Nazarite vow upon himself, he should never have taken. It was anger and not a judgment commanded by the Lord. And touching the jackal, an unclean beast, he had defiled himself. How often God's people act in the same way in an undignified manner, biting and devouring each other and like Samson destroying corn, vineyards and olives, the types of spiritual blessings. Whenever an unchristlike spirit manifests itself among the children of God, the spirit of malice, envy and vain-glory, the people of God are robbed of their joy and peace. The Philistines paid him in the same coin. They burnt his wife and her father. Then he slew the Philistines with a great slaughter and dwelt in the rock Etam (literally, the cleft of the rock). It was a safe place for him against "their ravening," the meaning of Etam. And we too have our safe place in the cleft of the rock. His own brethren bind him out of fear for the Philistines, but in the Spirit of the Lord he bursts now the new cords and with the jawbone of an ass he slew a thousand men. It is now faith which acts. It was a feeble thing he used; boasting was excluded. Nor was it his own physical strength which accomplished the deed, but the Spirit of the Lord, who had come upon him. The jawbone having done its work is cast away.

"He will not keep it. It might become a snare to him: Israel might go a whoring after it as after Gideon's ephod. It has served his purpose, now let it go--after all it is nothing more than the poor jawbone of a dead ass! Oh, that we could learn something from this! It is such a day to exalt the poor, foolish instruments that God, in His goodness, may use. Do not we everywhere hear what a wonderful man is such a man! What marvellous power in the gospel! What beauty of exposition! What magnetism! What a smart man is he! Yes, indeed, just as well might Samson say, 'What a powerful jawbone! What a wonderful jawbone! What a magnetic jawbone!' No, no, put the poor jawbone where it belongs, lest it detract from the glory of Him to whom all glory alone is due." (F.C. Jennings, Notes on judges.)

Then after the victory he thirsts and God cleaves a place in Lehi. "God clave the hollow that was in Lehi" and water flows forth to refresh him. A beautiful picture of Him who was smitten that the refreshing waters of life may flow forth.

CHAPTER 16 Delilah, and Samson

1. In Gaza (16:1-3)
2. Delilah and her victory over him (16:4-20)
3. The captive of the Philistines (16:21)
4. The feast of Dagon and Samson's death (16:22-31)

Down he goes again, and this time to Gaza, the Philistine stronghold. There he unites himself with a harlot. We are here reminded of the history of the Church. The harlot typifies that system which in Revelation is called by the same name, she who seduces to commit fornication, Babylon the great, Rome. Rome is the capital of Philistinism, ritualistic Christendom, as Gaza was the capital of the Philistines. But the attempt of the Philistines to kill him fails. He carries the gates, posts and bars of the city and took them to the top of the hill before Hebron. We may see in it a little picture of the recovery from the power of the harlot in the Reformation movement. But it was not Samson's last visit and farewell to Gaza. We shall see him there again, stripped of his power, his eyes put out, a ridiculed captive. We find him first at Sorek. He is entangled with Delilah, which means "exhausted." He loves her and she becomes the fearful instrument of his downfall. She is the type of the world, the fair, pleasure-loving, religious world, which aims, like Delilah, to rob the true Nazarite of his separation, the real power of the Christian life. It would take pages to describe the subtleties, the cunning ways, the wiles of the fair Delilah of the last days. And even then we would have to say "not the half has been told." And how she presses upon the Nazarite! Again and again he deceives her and keeps his secret. He knows well she is after his destruction. Like a moth attracted to the light though burning awaits it, he goes back to the dangerous sport, till at last, vexed unto death, he tells her his secret. Again he sleeps upon her knees. The locks of hair fall under the razor. Then she, the fair Delilah, afflicts him. Her caresses become blows and his strength went from him. "And he awoke out of his sleep, and said, I will go out as at other times before, and shake myself. And he wist not that the LORD was departed from him." Alas! the sad story, how it has been repeated in the individual experiences of many believers. Flirting with the unholy principles of this present evil age is a dangerous thing. Loving the world will end, if unchecked, in disaster for the child of God. And the remedy is the close walk in heart dependence and heart devotion to the Lord Jesus Christ. And thus it has happened and still more happens in our days with the Church. Stripped of her strength, her confessed weakness, lowliness, separation and utter dependence on the Lord, the Philistines have come upon her, lulled to sleep by Delilah's wiles. There is a shaking too, like Samson's shaking. Efforts are made by a powerless Church and they do not know that the power is no longer there, for the Spirit is grieved and quenched. That is the sad state of the professing Church as seen in those of Laodicea (Rev. 3:14-17).

Oh, the sad picture of the Nazarite shorn of his locks, naked in this sense; eyes put out, blind, bound in fetters, grinding in the mill! What sport the Philistines had with him! And is a Church robbed of power, naked and blind, not a sadder spectacle? The end of Samson was a great victory. He had learned his lessons. Thoroughly humbled and chastised he must have repented of all his sin and folly. His hair grew again. He cries to Jehovah between the pillars, where he made sport. Then follows his prayer. "O Lord GOD, remember me, I pray thee, and strengthen me; I pray thee, only this once, O God, that I may be at once avenged of the Philistines for my two eyes." Then he bowed himself, and an awful catastrophe follows when the house collapsed and he and the vast multitude of Philistines were slain and buried in the ruins.

III. THE APPENDIX: ISRAEL'S INTERNAL CORRUPTION

1. Micah's and Dan's Idolatry and Its Punishment

CHAPTER 17 The Images Made and the Hired Priest

1. The stolen money restored and the images (17:1-6)

2. The Levite hired for a priest (17:7-13)

The last five chapters of the book form an appendix. The events given did not occur after Samson's death, but they happened many years before. These chapters are not in chronological order but arranged in this way to teach the root of the evil and its results. This answers much, if not all, of the objections of the critics. These chapters reveal the internal corruption which existed in Israel during the different declensions. Idolatry and lawlessness are the two characteristic features. True worship and dependence on God is given up and then follows the dreadful fruit of this, which is hatred, strife culminating in lawlessness. The predictions in the New Testament reveal the same two phases. Departure from the faith is followed by moral corruption (1 Tim. 4:1; 2 Tim. 3:1-4). Then we find in these chapters a statement which does not appear elsewhere in the book. "There was no king in Israel" is the statement made four times (17:6; 18:1, 19:1; 21:25). A king was needed to remedy these sad internal conditions, this departure from God and strife of one against the other. This is an evident link with and preparation for the history which follows. Even so in this age of evil, darkness and cunning lawlessness; what the world needs is a king, the King of Righteousness and Peace. When He comes, order will be brought out of chaos, all strife and war, all bloodshed and lawlessness will cease.

Into what a scene this chapter introduces us! The thieving son, the cursing mother. He, for the fear of the curse (true faith was not there, but superstition), restores the money and that ungodly woman can say, "Blessed be thou of the LORD, my son." Then she used two hundred shekels of silver and has two images made. Micah, whose wicked life belies his name (Micah means "who is like Jehovah"), had a house full of gods, made an ephod, teraphim and then "ordained" one of his sons for a priest. Then a wandering Levite passed by and to make his idolatrous worship a little more "religious" he hires the Levite to be a "father" and "a priest." He also promises him a yearly salary, his board and clothing. Then he settled down and said, "Now know I that the Lord will do me good, seeing I have a Levite to my priest."

There is no need of much comment. The typical application is seen at a glance. Here is a man-made god, a man-made worship and a man-made priest. Such is the state of ritualistic Christendom. Much of that which is called worship is simply man-made and dishonors God as much, or even more, than the idolatry of heathendom. And how the false priesthood is here typified! We have but one Priest as the people of God and that is our gracious Lord. Through His infinite grace all true believers are constituted priests with Him. We are a holy and a royal priesthood. Any other priesthood is man-made and a wicked assumption which has corrupted and is corrupting Christianity. The hirelings too are represented in this scene. Religious service is so much reduced to a commercial basis. And there is the delusion of thinking that the Lord must surely bless and give prosperity.

The Levite himself is another sign of the times. He is of the Levites of Judah, has been for a while in Bethlehem-judah and wandered away again to find, where he may, another temporary resting place. His is the restless foot of a stranger where he might have claimed inheritance, and he is ready to find a home where he should have been a stranger. Little solicitation prevails with him: his sustenance, a suit of clothes, a salary, has prevailed with many in all ages of the world, and the Levite exchanges his ministry for priesthood in the house of Micah, where the idolatry of the place is sanctified with Jehovah's name. All this is simple enough to read by those that care, and Christendom has exhibited every detail of this transformation--not, alas, as it would seem, a long process: a manufactured priesthood for manufactured gods, all covered with a fair name of orthodoxy, and men doing with great satisfaction what is right in their own eyes!

CHAPTER 18 The Danite Idolatry

1. The Danites seek an inheritance (18:1-12)
2. Their robbery (18:13-26)
3. Laish taken and idolatry consummated (18:27-31)

The history of this chapter is closely linked with the preceding. The tribe of Dan had failed to take the God-given inheritance (Josh. 19:40-46). "The Amorites forced the children of Dan into the mountain: for they would not suffer them to come down to the valley" (Judges 1:34). Then in self-will, entirely disregarding the will of God, they sent out spies to

seek another inheritance. They meet Micah's priest, the hireling. Micah's idolatrous outfit including the hired priest are taken by the invaders. The hireling sees an advantage for himself, his "usefulness" is enlarged for filthy lucre's sake. Then they killed the people of Laish and set their city on fire. The whole tribe of Dan becomes idolatrous. We have in all a picture of complete apostasy.

2. Israel's Moral Condition and the War on Benjamin

CHAPTER 19 The Levite and His Concubine

1. The Levite and the unfaithful woman (19:1-21)
2. The fate of the concubine (19:22-30)

The results of departure from God are now revealed in the awful corruption and violence so faithfully recorded in this chapter. The moral condition of Israel has gone down to the same level of the Canaanites; they sank even lower than the nations whom God had doomed to destruction. We do not repeat the horrible details of this deed of lust and violence. Apostasy from God, rejection of the truth is followed by moral corruption. Romans 1:26-32 shows the vileness of the Gentiles, who turned their backs to the light and did not glorify God. 2 Timothy 3:1-5 contains the description of the moral corruption of the last days of the present age, the conditions of those who claim to be "religious" and yet are apostates. The days of Lot, with their vileness, are to precede the coming of the Son of Man (Luke 17:28-30). Evidences that such moral corruption and violence exist today throughout professing Christendom are only too numerous.

CHAPTER 20 The Horrible War

1. The Levite's story (20:1-7)
2. The uprising (20:8-11)
3. The slaying of the Israelites (20:12-25)
4. Benjamin exterminated except six hundred men (20:26-48)

This and the concluding chapter bring before us the awful harvest of what had been sown. "For whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap" (Gal. 6:7). They had sown the wind and now reaped the whirlwind. Violence and lawlessness result in the slaying of 40,000 Israelites and 23,000 of the tribe of Benjamin. Nearly the entire tribe was wiped out. From Dan to Beersheba into the land of Gilead they gathered at Mizpeh to hear the story of the Levite. Benjamin refused to give up the wicked men and instead of humbling themselves, acknowledging the dreadful guilt and bringing the guilty ones to judgment, they gathered themselves together to fight their own brethren. Their company was small in comparison with the mighty host of Israel. The divine counsel was that Judah should go up first to battle with Benjamin. What a contrast with the beginning of the book! There they were to fight against the common foe; here against their own brethren.

"But to be fit to be used of God to deal with evil involves much more than readiness to be His instrument. They are too ready, as we see in the result. Their wrath is too prompt, too implacable, too unsparing. Theirs is the reckless haste of vengeance, and not the solemn discrimination of divine judgment. They remember not their own sins, bring no sin offering to God, no tears of penitence. They build on their numbers; no doubt on the justice of their cause, also, but in self-righteousness and without self-suspicion. Thus they go up to smite, and they are smitten heavily, disastrously. Benjamin, the wrong-doer, is wholly victorious."

Here too are the lessons for God's people in judging what is evil amongst them. Then the children of Israel went to Bethel (House of God) and with prayer and fasting waited on the Lord and brought the offerings. Then the Lord gave them the assurance of victory. Benjamin is smitten, their women and children are wiped out. Only six hundred men escaped to the rock of Rimmon. All their cities were burned.

To even greater scenes of violence, bloodshed and desolation this poor world, which has rejected God and His beloved Son, is hastening on.

CHAPTER 21 The Repentance About Benjamin

1. Sorrow of the people and Jabesh-Gilead smitten (21:1-15)
2. The restoration of Benjamin (21:16-25)

A tribe of the nation was almost entirely exterminated. Then the oath they had made not to give their daughters to wife to the Benjamites left assured the complete extinction of the tribe. The dreadful work they had done dawned suddenly upon them and weeping before Jehovah they said, "Why is this come to pass in Israel that there should be today one tribe lacking in Israel?" The answer surely was, it came to pass on account of their departure from God and their sins. Thus people ask when they behold the scenes of bloodshed and war, as we see in our times, why is this? and are even ready to blame God, instead of thinking of sin and its curse. Then once more they acted themselves and committed another deed of violence. Jabesh-Gilead is destroyed; only four hundred virgins are saved. These were given to the Benjamites. But what hypocrisy they showed in having a feast of Jehovah and commanding the Benjamites to steal the daughters of Shiloh! Failure and decline is written in this book. God's faithfulness towards His people whom He loves is not less prominent.

"This is Israel, the people of God: infirm and wavering where good is to be accomplished; quick and decisive where patience and forbearance would become them; tolerant of what is only of themselves; scrupulously keeping an insane oath, yet managing to evade it by a jesuitry that deceives no one. Such is the people of God, and such is Christendom today; and such it has been. Let us search our hearts as we read the record,--not given as a record without purpose in it. How solemn is the repetition at the end of what has been the text of these closing chapters: 'In those days there was no king in Israel: every man did what was right in his own eyes'" (Numerical Bible).

THE BOOK OF RUTH

The Annotated Bible

Arno Clement Gaebelein

THE BOOK OF RUTH

Introduction

This book, containing the beautiful story of Ruth, is closely linked with Judges. The beginning of the book makes this clear: "Now it came to pass in the days when the judges ruled." The events happened during the period of the judges. It therefore belongs next to that book. In the Hebrew Bible it occupies another place. We find it there next to the Song of Solomon, followed by Lamentations. Five books are called by the Jews "Megilloth" and are read by them at different feasts commemorating past events. The Song of Solomon is read during Passover; Ruth at Pentecost; Lamentations on the ninth day of the month Ab in memory of the destruction of Jerusalem; Ecclesiastes is read during the feast of Tabernacles and Esther they read when they celebrate Purim.

The author of the book of Ruth is unknown. The conclusion of the book shows that it must have been written after David had been made king. However the late date assigned to it by the critics, after the exile, is incorrect. We do not enter into their arguments. Any intelligent reader must see at once that its place between judges and Samuel is the right place, for it is as sequel to the former and an introduction to the latter. If we read the books of Samuel we discover that they do not contain any reference whatever to the ancestors of the house of David. To supply this deficiency is one of the reasons why this book was written. It is more than probable that Samuel is the author.

The story is so familiar that we do not need to repeat it in this brief introduction. Ruth the Moabitess is the chief character in the story. She who was cursed by the law becomes married to Boaz and as we learn from the ending, Ruth is the great-grandmother of David. Her name appears therefore in the first chapter of the New Testament in the list of ancestors of Him, who is David's son and David's Lord. She is the third Gentile woman in the genealogy of our Lord. The two Canaanitish women, Tamar and Rahab, precede her. The promises made to Abraham that the Gentiles were to receive blessing through his seed are confirmed through the history of these Gentile women among the ancestors of David and our Lord.

The typical dispensational meaning of the story of Ruth is interesting and has many blessed lessons. (The best application we have seen is in the Numerical Bible to which we acknowledge our indebtedness.) Ruth is often given as a type of the Church, as the bride of Christ. This application is difficult to make and leaves much of the beautiful story unexplained. Naomi represents Israel in unbelief, widowed and in bitterness. Ruth is the type of the remnant, who is called and received back by grace (like the sinners of the Gentiles) identifying itself with Israel's ruin, as Ruth identified herself with Naomi. The Kinsman-Redeemer, who espouses their cause and through whom Naomi's bitterness is changed to joy, who marries Ruth, is the type of the Redeemer, Christ. We shall follow briefly this correct dispensational foreshadowing in the annotations. A special division of this little book is not needed. The story has been divided into four chapters which makes another division unnecessary.

Analysis and Annotations

CHAPTER 1 The Story of Naomi: Orpah and Ruth

1. Naomi and her sorrows (1:1-5)
2. The return (1:6-13)
3. Orpah turning back, Ruth cleaving (1:14-18)
4. Naomi and Ruth in Bethlehem (1:19-22)

The story begins with a famine. Elimelech, "my God is king," and Naomi, "pleasant," leave Bethlehem, "the house of bread," to go to the land of Moab, the heathen country. The story ends in Bethlehem with a marriage. Naomi far from the land, in unbelief and bitterness, bereft of Elimelech, her two sons also dead, Mahlon, which means "sick," and Chilion "pining," pictures Israel's condition, away from the land, no longer married unto Jehovah, but forsaken. Like Naomi, Israel has had trouble upon trouble and sorrow upon sorrow. There is no hope for Naomi amidst the Gentiles in Moab, as there is no hope for Israel among the nations. Hearing that Jehovah had visited His people with bread, she arose that she might return from Moab. Then Orpah said farewell to remain in Moab, while Ruth, the Moabitess, clave unto Naomi. She had faith and the beautiful words she addressed to Naomi were the expression of that faith. Not alone did the poor Moabitish woman say "thy people shall be my people," but also "thy God my God." It was grace which had drawn her. She thus clung closely to Naomi, became one with her in all her misery, yet with a faith, a confidence in Naomi's God, which Naomi did not possess. When Israel sets her face homeward once more, there will be in the midst of the unbelieving nation a remnant, searching for the promised blessing, longing for God, a remnant* which ultimately will come in touch with the mighty Kinsman-Redeemer and inherit through Him the promised blessings.

* Of this remnant called through the grace of God, after the true Church has left this earthly scene, the prophetic Word has much to say. Read: Is. 6:13; 10:21-22; 11:11; Micah 4:7; Zeph. 2:7; Ezek. 9; Rom. 11:5 and many other passages. In the Psalms we read the future prayers of this remnant, the sorrows and sufferings they will have and the glorious deliverance when the King comes.

This remnant is represented in Ruth, cleaving to Naomi. But the objection may be raised that Ruth was a Gentile. How can she represent the remnant of Israel? Israel through her unbelief has become practically the same which the Gentiles are. They are "Lo-Ammi," not my people (Hosea 1:9). The grace which called and saved Gentiles will call and draw them. Therefore this remnant is called "according to the election of grace" (Romans 11:5-6).

Naomi is back in Bethlehem, empty and with a bitter spirit. She calls herself "Mara" which means bitter. This pictures Israel's return in unbelief. And it was at the time of the barley harvest. The harvest, as our Lord tells us, is the end of the age. When that end comes, after the true church has been gathered home, Israel, like Naomi, with a believing, trusting remnant cleaving to her, represented in Ruth, will return.

CHAPTER 2 Gleaning in the Field

1. Ruth gleaning in the field of Boaz (2:1-3)
2. Grace shown to Ruth by Boaz (2:4-17)
3. Ruth hears concerning Boaz (2:18-23)

Boaz comes now upon the scene. His name means "in Him is strength." He is called "a mighty man of wealth." As the kinsman-redeemer he is a beautiful type of the Lord Jesus Christ. He is the one in whom there is strength, the rich one. Ruth knows at first little of him and the coming relationship with the wealthy one. Boaz is related to Elimelech, whose name "my God is king" is typical of Israel's faith. Through Elimelech only Naomi (the nation Israel) has a claim on Boaz. And she can only lay claim through Ruth. Even so Israel has a claim on the blessings promised to her through the remnant which returns to Him in the beginning of the harvest, the end of the age; that remnant, as stated before, is represented in Ruth.

How simple and beautiful is the story which follows. The mighty man of valor knows evidently all about her, though he

does not act at once in her behalf. He appears on the harvest field. Beautiful greeting he brings! "The LORD be with you"; and they answer him, "The LORD bless thee." Gracious are his words to her, who had cast herself upon his grace, for Ruth had said to Naomi, "Let me now go to the field and glean ears of corn after him in whose sight I shall find grace." She anticipated in faith, though she did not fully know what grace was awaiting her. Even so the remnant of Israel in the last days. How he permits her to continue in the humble work. He provides for her. She is only to glean in his field. She is not to be molested; his gracious power shields her. She can also drink of the water he provides. Then she falls on her face. Beautiful are her words of humility, "Why have I found grace in thine eyes, that thou shouldst take knowledge of me, seeing I am a stranger?" Then she hears from his lips that he knows all about her. More than that. He assures her of coming blessings, blessings Ruth will get because she trusted; blessings not of works, the law covenant, but of grace, because she believed. "The LORD recompense thy work, and a full reward be given thee of the LORD God of Israel, under whose wings thou art come to trust.

All foreshadows dispensationally the soul-exercise of the believing remnant of Israel, when the harvest begins, and the gracious dealing of the Lord with that remnant. Another application may also be made on spiritual lines of a soul which seeks blessing and how the Lord deals in His grace with those that seek Him. This we cannot follow in these brief annotations. Then he comes closer to her. She receives from his own hands. He also, unknown to her, gives instructions that "handfuls on purpose" are to be dropped, just for her. What evidences that the mighty, wealthy Boaz loves the poor stranger, Ruth! So the remnant will gradually learn of His love. And we also find our comfort here. We glean in His Word. It is typified by the wheat, the barley and the corn. Then when we feel our need and dependence on Him, and plead, as we always should, our ignorance, He drops the handfuls on purpose, so that we find just what we need for our spiritual sustenance and comfort.

And Naomi tells her something about Boaz. But she only calls him "one of our redeemers." She should have said he is the redeemer. The secret who he is and what he will do for her, the trusting Ruth, she will learn only from himself. So unbelieving Israel does not know the full story of Him, who is the Redeemer. Boaz, Christ Himself, will make it known when He reveals Himself in His grace and power to the remnant of His people.

CHAPTER 3 At the Feet of Boaz

1. Naomi instructs Ruth (3:1-5)
2. At his feet (3:6-7)
3. The discovery (3:8-13)
4. The six measures of barley (3:14-17)
5. He will not rest until he have finished the thing (3:18)

What follows in the realization of redemption must be connected with Leviticus 25, the law concerning the redemption of an inheritance and the other law about the marriage of a brother-in-law as given in Deut. 25:5-12. See the annotations on that passage. Naomi gives instructions to Ruth which are based upon that law. But notice it is the question of the rest. "My daughter, shall not I seek rest for thee, that it may be well with thee?" She then is seen resting at his feet. Blessed truth indeed which even Naomi realizes, rest can only be found at the feet of the redeemer. This truth is known to all His beloved people. He promises rest and He giveth rest. Like Mary it is the good part for us to be at His feet.

But what is Boaz's occupation when Ruth seeks him to claim her full blessing? "Behold he winnoweth barley tonight in the threshing floor." The winnowing is a sifting process by which the wheat is separated from the chaff. Read Matthew 3:12. The threshing floor is Israel. The dark night of tribulation is coming for them, when the mighty One will do the work of separating among His people. "His fan is in His hand." In that coming night the believing remnant will seek, like Ruth, the place at His feet and claim Him as their own redeemer. Critics and unbelievers have often sneered at this scene and suggested evil motives. They do the same with other portions of the Word of God. Only an evil mind can read evil into this beautiful scene. It was at midnight when Boaz became conscious of her presence and asked, "Who art thou?" She answered, "I am Ruth." She owns all she is and prays that he may cover her, "for thou art a redeemer." Notice the steps.

His question--her answer and prayer because she believed in him as the kinsman redeemer.

She tarried there during the night. "And she lay at his feet till the morning." Then she left not empty handed!

CHAPTER 4 The Redemption and Marriage

1. The other kinsman (4:1-5)
2. His refusal (4:6-8)
3. Boaz's redemption (4:9-10)
4. The marriage (4:11-13)
5. Naomi's happiness (4:14-17)
6. The ancestry of David (4:18-22)

And now the other redeemer, who cannot redeem, appears. Boaz sits in the gate and hails the one whom he knew as he passeth by. He calls him not by name but said, "Ho, such a one! turn aside, and sit down here." If Boaz had not called him he would surely have passed by. Then ten men also sit down. The case is stated and the other redeemer is willing to redeem the land. But when he hears that he also must take Ruth the Moabitess, he declares his powerlessness to do it. "I cannot redeem it for myself, lest I mar mine own inheritance. Redeem thou my right to thyself, for I cannot redeem it." Whom does this unnamed redeemer represent who can redeem the land but can do nothing for the poor stranger, the Moabitess? This powerless redeemer is the law. Ten witnesses are there confirming his inability to do it. These represent the Ten Commandments. The curse of the law rested upon the Moabitess for it is written, "An Ammonite or Moabite shall not enter into the congregation of the LORD, even to the tenth generation forever" (Deut. 23:3). Therefore the law could not bring in Ruth, but only keep her out. Her case is indeed hopeless from the point of the law. Grace alone can help her. And this grace is beautifully seen in Boaz. He acquires both the land and Ruth, the Moabitess. "And Boaz took Ruth and she became his wife." It is a blessed type of Him who has paid the redemption price for the land and the people. The great day is coming after He had the fan in His hand, at the time of the harvest, when He will redeem both by His gracious power. Then all the blessings will follow--which are but faintly seen in Ruth's union with Boaz. "For thou shalt break forth on the right hand and on the left; and thy seed shall inherit the Gentiles, and make the desolate cities to be inhabited. Fear not, thou shalt not be ashamed; neither be thou confounded: for thou shalt not be put to shame. For thou shalt forget the shame of thy youth, and shalt not remember the reproach of thy widowhood any more. For thy Maker is thine husband; the LORD of hosts is His name; and thy Redeemer is the Holy One of Israel; the God of the whole earth shall He be called" (Is. 54:3-5). "Thou shalt no more be termed Forsaken; neither shall thy land be any more termed Desolate. But thou shalt be called Hephzibah, and thy land Beulah; for the LORD delighteth in thee, and thy land shall be married" (Is. 62:4).

The conclusion of this precious little book is the generations of Pharez ending with David. Ruth became the great-grandmother of David.

THE BOOK OF FIRST SAMUEL

The Annotated Bible

Arno Clement Gaebelein

THE FIRST BOOK OF SAMUEL

INTRODUCTION

The two books of Samuel and the two books of Kings bear in the Greek Version of the Old Testament (the Septuagint) the name First, Second, Third, and Fourth Books of Kingdoms. In the Latin Version, known as the Vulgate, they are called the Books of Kings. In Hebrew manuscripts and the earlier printed editions of the Hebrew text, both the books of Samuel appear as one; the same is true of the book of Kings. It must also be remembered that in the Hebrew Bible, the books of Samuel belong to that section which Jewish authorities have named "The Former Prophets." The books of Samuel are, therefore, classed by the Jews with the writings of the Prophets.

The Authorship

The books bear the name of Samuel. This, however, does not mean that Samuel is the author of these books. That would be impossible, inasmuch as the greater part of them contains events which transpired after the death of Samuel. The only hint in Scripture about the authorship of these two books is found in 1 Chronicles 29:29: "Now the acts of David the King, first and last, behold, they are written in the book of Samuel the Seer, and in the book of Nathan the Prophet, and in the book of Gad the Seer." Ancient tradition among the Jews assigns to Samuel the authorship of the first twenty-four chapters of the first book of Samuel. These chapters contain what may be termed the life of Samuel up to the time of his death. The twenty-fifth chapter begins with the record of his death. It is reasonable that Samuel wrote these opening chapters of the first book which bears his name. That Samuel did write is fully established by chapter 10:25: "Then Samuel told the people the manner of the Kingdom, and wrote it in a book and laid it up before the LORD." The same Jewish tradition credits Nathan the Prophet and Gad the Seer with having written the remainder of the two books. The passage in the first book of Chronicles seems to support this view. Evidently Samuel began to write these books, which, for this reason, were called by his name. Modern criticism rejects this view and claims that the books of Samuel could not be the work of men who lived during the reign of Saul and David. We do not give their speculative theories and conflicting opinions, which are of no value whatever in the spiritual study of the text. The best scholars believe that these books belong to a very early period, and that the critical view of a compilation of certain documents and fragments, immediately before the exile, cannot be sustained. "The minute sketches and vivid touches with which these books abound prove that their author speaks what he knows and testifies what he has seen" (John Eadie). Some of the more important objections higher criticism has raised against the early date of the books of Samuel and the alleged discrepancies we shall point out and answer in our annotations.

The Continuation of Israel's History

These books contain the continuation of the history of the people Israel. The opening chapters cover the period of the Philistine oppression, during which Samson began to deliver Israel out of the hands of the Philistine (Judges 13:5). As stated in our introduction to the book of Judges, Samuel's first operations fall into the same time when Samson was acting as judge. Samuel assumed the office of judge after the death of Samson. In the beginning of the Philistine oppression these two boys were born, both devoted to the Nazariteship and both to a definite work. There is, however, a difference between

the two, as Edersheim puts it: "Samuel was God-granted, Samson God-sent; Samuel was God-dedicated, Samson was God-demanded. The work of Samson ended in self-indulgence, failure and death; that of Samuel opened up into the royalty of David."

The final statement with which the book of Judges closes is the following: "In those days there was no king in Israel; every man did that which was right in his own eyes." This shows that Israel was looking forward towards having a king; the need of a king was recognized, for the government by judges had wrought no deliverance for the people. The ruin into which Israel had fallen, besides being described in the closing chapters of judges, is also seen in the opening chapters of Samuel. The priesthood is corrupted. Eli is old and weak, his sons, Hophni and Phinehas, were wicked men. The Philistines smite them again. Then they used the ark of the covenant to overcome the foe; but instead there is more defeat. The ark of God is captured by the Philistines and taken to Ashdod. After the return of the ark Samuel called the people to repentance. "Then the children of Israel put away Baalim and Ashtaroth, and served the LORD" (1 Sam. 7:4). The result was victory over the Philistines. Samuel then judged Israel; he also made his sons judges. Like Eli's sons, they were ungodly. "They turned aside after lucre, and took bribes, and perverted judgment" (1 Sam. 8:3). It was at that time that the elders of Israel made their demand. "Behold thou art old, and thy sons walk not in thy ways, now make us a king to judge us like all nations" (1 Sam. 8:5). With this the crisis is reached. A king is demanded and the Lord grants their request. They had rejected Him as king over them.

The two institutions which we find now definitely introduced among Israel are the prophetic order and the monarchy. Samuel heads the order of the prophets and is also chosen to crown the first two kings. That the kingly office in the midst of Israel had been anticipated is learned from Deut. 17:14-15. "When thou art come into the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee, and shalt possess it, and shall dwell therein, and shalt say, I will set a king over me, like as all the nations that are about me; Thou shalt in any wise set him king over thee, whom the LORD thy God shall choose; one from among thy brethren shalt thou set king over thee: thou mayest not set a stranger over thee, who is not thy brother." Thus the demand was anticipated and provision made for it in the law.

Foreshadowing the True King and His Kingdom

Israel had to have a monarchy established in her midst to foreshadow the true King and His Kingdom. That true King of Israel, the promised One, and His dominion had already been mentioned by Balaam. "A sceptre shall rise out of Israel"--"Out of Jacob shall come He that shall have dominion" (Numbers 24:17-19). Hannah in her inspired outburst of praise and her prophetic vision beheld that true king. "He shall give strength unto his King and exalt the horn of his Anointed" (1 Sam. 2:10). It is Israel's true King, the Anointed, the Christ, she beheld.

Saul, the first king, is the people's choice and ends in complete failure. Then David comes upon the scene; he is God's choice; the king after His own heart. But he also fails. However, he is a type of Him who is both David's Lord and David's son, the root and offspring of David, our Lord Jesus Christ, the true King of Israel. David and Solomon are faint shadows of the true King and His work both in judgment and in the Kingdom of peace. The historical records in the books of Samuel are especially rich in typical and dispensational lessons and teach many spiritual truths. We hope to point out many of them as we follow the text in the annotations.

The Division of First Samuel

Inasmuch as the first book of Samuel contains the record of Samuel's labors and the anointing of the first two Kings of Israel, Saul and David, Saul's reign and David's exile, we divide the book into three sections. In the first section we find the birth, childhood and judgeship of Samuel; in the second, the anointing and coronation of Israel's first King, Saul, his reign and rejection. In the third section David, his anointing, and exile are before us. We give these sections and subdivisions as we shall follow them in our analysis and annotations.

I. SAMUEL THE PROPHET AND JUDGE

1. The birth and Childhood of Samuel (1:1-28)
2. Hannah's Prophetic Song (2:1-10)
3. The Failure of Eli and His Sons (2:12-36)
4. Samuel's Call and Prophetic Ministry (3:1-21)
5. The Judgment of Eli and his Sons--Ichabod (4:1-22)
6. The Ark in the hands of Philistines and Its Return (5:1-7:2)
7. The Return unto Jehovah and the Deliverance (7:3-14)
8. Samuel Exercising His Office and His Failure (7:15-8:3)

II. KING SAUL--HIS REIGN AND REJECTION

1. The King Demanded (8:4-22)
2. The Story of Saul and His Anointing (9:1-10:16)
3. The Open Acclamation of Saul as King (10:17-27)
4. The King's First Victory: the Kingdom Renewed at Gilgal (11:1-15)
5. Samuel's Witness and Warning (12:1-25)
6. The First Failure of Saul and Its Results (13:1-23)
7. Jonathan's Heroic Deed of Faith (14:1-52)
8. War with Amalek: Saul's Disobedience and Rejection (15:1-35)

III. DAVID, THE KING AFTER GOD'S HEART--HIS EXILE AND SUFFERING

1. David Anointed King and the Departure of the Spirit from Saul (16:1-23)
2. David and Goliath (17:1-58)
3. Jonathan and David and Saul's jealousy (18:1-30)
4. Saul's Renewed Attempt and David's Escape (19:1-24)
5. Jonathan Protects David and Their Separation (20:1-42)
6. David's Varied Experiences (21-27)
7. Saul and the Witch at Endor (28:1-25)
8. David and Achish and Ziklag Destroyed and Avenged (29-30)
9. The Death of Saul (31:1-13)

Analysis and Annotations

I. SAMUEL THE PROPHET AND JUDGE

1. The Birth and Childhood of Samuel

CHAPTER 1

1. Elkanah and his wives (1:1-8)
2. Hannah's prayer and vow (1:9-18)
3. The prayer answered and Samuel born (1:19-20)
4. The child weaned and presented unto the Lord (1:21-28)

The descent of Samuel opens the book. The names are of striking significance. Elkanah means "acquired of God." He was the son of Jeroham (tenderly loved), the son of Elihu (my God is He), the son of Tohu (prostration), the son of Zuph (honeycomb). They were pious generations from which the great man came. Elkanah had two wives. Hannah (grace) the much beloved was barren; Peninnah (pearl) had children. The fact that Hannah's name stands first makes it probable that

her barren condition led Elkanah to marry a second wife. (See Deut. 21:15.) Elkanah was an Ephraimite. But from 1 Chronicles 6:20-28 we learn that Samuel and his father were of levitical descent. This has been pointed out as a discrepancy. It is however not at all inconsistent with the statement that Samuel's father was of Ephraim. He was one of those Levites to whom cities were assigned in the portion given to the tribe of Ephraim (Josh. 21:20).

Each year Elkanah went to Shiloh to sacrifice unto the LORD of Hosts. It is noteworthy that the name of God as "LORD of Hosts" (Jehovah Zebaoth) appears here for the first time in the Bible. (It is found 281 times in the Bible. It is not found in the Pentateuch; it occurs some 80 times in Jeremiah and 50 times in Zechariah.) It is the name of God as the Lord of power, the Lord of all the hosts of heaven and earth. That it is used the first time in the book which reveals the Kingdom is especially appropriate.

Hannah in her visits to Shiloh presents a sorrowful picture. She is beloved and receives a double portion from Elkanah, while Peninnah, her adversary, provoked her on account of her childless condition, so that she wept and did not eat at the feast. Then she arose from the sacrificial feast which she had not tasted and sought the presence of the Lord. There she wept and vowed a vow that if the Lord of hosts would grant her a man-child she would give him back to the Lord and he should be a Nazarite. She cast herself upon the Lord and laid hold on Him. Samuel therefore was the child of prayer, asked of the Lord; his whole life afterwards manifests the spirit of prayer and dependence.

Then Eli the priest is mentioned for the first time. He was astonished seeing her thus engaged in silent prayer and accused her of drunkenness. His astonishment and accusation are a witness to the sad state of Israel. Evidently few ever sought the presence of the Lord, and his reproof makes it evident that it was not an uncommon thing that drunkenness prevailed during the feasts at Shiloh.

Hannah's prayer was answered. The son is born and was called Samuel, which means "heard of God." Little did she know of the mighty work her son was called to do; her prayer was answered far beyond her thought. She did not go up again to Shiloh till the child was weaned. Then she went up to fulfill her vow and presented him unto the Lord. Before Samuel could begin to serve the Lord he had to be weaned. "As a weaned child no longer cries, frets, and longs for the breast, but lies still and is content, because it is with its mother, so the soul must be weaned from all discontented thoughts, from all fretful desires of earthly good, waiting in stillness upon God, finding its satisfaction in His presence, resting peacefully in His arms." (Perowne, The Psalm.) He began to minister at once unto the Lord before Eli the priest (2:11). He was brought up in the sanctuary and became that solid, earnest, prayerful man of God. It is the weaning and the sanctuary every servant of Christ still needs. And Hannah had given back to the Lord what He so graciously had bestowed upon her. This should be the case with all our prayer-answers.

2. Hannah's Prophetic Song

CHAPTER 2:1 - 10

1. The praise of Jehovah-God (2:1-3)
2. Jehovah's power and grace in deliverance (2:4-8)
3. The prophetic outlook (2:9-10)

Hannah's heart filled with the Holy Spirit overflows with a marvellous utterance. Higher criticism claims "that this beautiful sacred lyric could not have been sung by Hannah in the circumstances as described. The words of verse 5 alone approach her situation, and doubtless led to the insertion of the psalm in its present context." They also say "that the Virgin's song (Luke 1:46-55) is largely modeled on the song of Hannah" (Prof. A.R.S. Kennedy). Such statements deny inspiration. Hannah's and Mary's songs are so much alike because the same Spirit spoke through both. Why should it be thought impossible for pious Hannah to give forth such sublime and far reaching words which stand so closely related to all subsequent prophecy, if we believe that the Holy Spirit inspired her as He did Isaiah and other prophets?

As every other song given by the Spirit of God, so her song begins with extolling the Lord, glorifying His name. The first four stanzas give her own experience. She knows Jehovah and rejoices in His salvation. Especially beautiful are the utterances the Spirit of God makes through her in describing Jehovah's power and grace in deliverance. We must think here first of all of our Lord Jesus Christ. He went down into the dust of death and was raised from the dead. He was brought down to the grave and brought up; He became poor and is made rich; He was made low and is lifted up (verses 6-7). And therefore He reaches down to our misery and raiseth the poor out of the dust, and lifteth the beggar from the dunghill to set them among princes to inherit the throne of glory. What a glimpse she, whose name means "grace," had of grace which stoops so low and lifts so high! Her words came nearest in the Old Testament to the gospel of grace as revealed in the New. With the middle of the eighth verse she speaks of the future. The day of the Lord with its judgment bursts into view. The feet of His Saints will be kept; the wicked will be in darkness; the adversaries broken to pieces. Then heaven is no longer silent. The Lord judges. The King, Israel's true and once rejected King, our Lord Jesus Christ, will be exalted. In the beginning of the books of Kingdoms heaven's true King is seen in prophetic vision.

The ministering child Samuel before the Lord is a most beautiful and sweet picture. Faithfully his little hands did whatever they could do, and Jehovah was well pleased with it.

3. The Failure of Eli and His Sons

CHAPTER 2:12-36

1. The wicked sons of Eli (2:12-17)
2. Samuel before Jehovah and Hannah blessed (2:18-21)
3. The empty warning of Eli (2:22-26)
4. Judgment announced (2:27-36)

The corruption of the sons of aged Eli is next exposed. They were sons of Belial; they knew not Jehovah, and yet they ministered in the outward things of the sanctuary. It could result only in the worst corruption. They handled holy things and were wicked in heart and life. It has been well said "a holiness that is but external is the worst unholiness." It is so today in Christendom. Men who know not Jehovah, who are not serving the Lord but themselves and are thus under the control of Satan, the god of this age, minister in the things of God. It results in all kinds of departures and corruption. It is the curse of Christendom. "The sin of the young men was very great before the LORD, for the men despised the offering of Jehovah." Beholding such wicked conduct in the priests men became disgusted with all religious performances and the truth they foreshadowed. They turned away from the offering of Jehovah. It is so still. An unholy, selfish ministry is the greatest stumbling block to the great mass of the people.

And then the contrast! The child Samuel in his little ministry is mentioned once more. What a charming picture he must have been in his little ephod and the little robe finished by his loving mother! Upon him a mere child, so innocent and simple, the white linen robe had been bestowed. Everything else in Shiloh was corrupted.

Eli makes an attempt to warn his sons of their immoral and wicked conduct. His weak effort but reveals the state of his own soul. The law demanded as a penalty the death of the offenders. The lack of zeal in Eli's remonstrance made no impression upon his wicked sons. Then an unnamed man of God came to Eli and carried to him the message of judgment. Hophni and Phinehas are to die both in one day. Then there is the promise of the raising up of a faithful priest. Such a priest was Zadok, but the promise finds its ultimate fulfillment in Him who is the King-Priest, our Lord Jesus Christ.

4. Samuel's Call and Prophetic Ministry

CHAPTER 3

1. Samuel's call (3:1-9)

2. The message from Jehovah (3:10-18)
3. Samuel the prophet (3:19-21)

After the priesthood had so completely failed and divine judgment had been pronounced, Samuel receives his call to the prophetic office. He continued his ministrations as a Levite during the time that the word of the Lord was precious (literally, rare); there was no vision. Up to this time Samuel had not known the Lord nor had the word of the Lord been revealed to him (verse 7). It must have been near the hour of dawn, for the tabernacle lamp was not yet gone out, when the voice of Jehovah called Samuel by name. He knew him, as He knows all His own by name. Three times the voice called and three times he ran unto Eli. Then Eli understood that Jehovah called the child and he instructed him to answer at the next call--"Speak, Jehovah, for thy servant heareth." Jehovah then appeared and stood and called again. Samuel in answering omits the word "Jehovah" Eli had told him to use. He may have omitted the name Jehovah out of reverential fear. He hears thus from Jehovah's lips the message of doom for Eli and his house, which he faithfully transmitted to Eli in the morning. He kept nothing back and Eli bowed to it in resignation; however, he did not repent. "By the faithful discharge of a commission so painful, and involving such self-denial and courage, Samuel had stood the first test of his fitness for the prophetic office. Henceforth "the word of the LORD" was permanently with him. Not merely by isolated commissions, but in the discharge of a regular office, Samuel acted as prophet in Israel. A new period in the history of the kingdom of God had commenced, and all Israel, from Dan to Beer-sheba, knew that there was now a new link between them and their God, a living centre of guidance and fellowship, and a bond of union for all who were truly the Israel of God." (A. Edersheim, Bible History.)

5. The judgment of Eli and His Sons--Ichabod

CHAPTER 4

1. The fulfilled prediction: The death of Eli's sons (4:1-11)
2. The death of Eli (4:12-18)
3. Ichabod (4:19-22)

Israel then renewed the conflict with the Philistines and suffered defeat. It seems that they acted in self-confidence, and when the battle was lost they readily acknowledged the hand of the Lord in the disaster: "Wherefore has the LORD smitten us today before the Philistines?" But there was no self-judgment, no repentance, no crying unto the Lord. The ark of the covenant of the LORD is brought out of Shiloh. They trust in the ark instead of Jehovah; they expect salvation from the ark of gold and wood: "it may save us out of the hand of our enemies." Alas! "the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, were there with the ark of the covenant of God" (verse 4). They forgot Jehovah whom they had offended and insulted. How could He bless and deliver His people when such sons of Belial were associated with the sanctuary? A worse defeat followed. Thirty thousand Israelites fell, among them the sons of Eli. The Philistines, first terrified by the presence of the ark, gain a great victory and capture the ark.

On the words "these are the gods that smote the Egyptians with every plague in the wilderness" Wellhausen, the well known critic, remarks: "Either an excusable inaccuracy, or a copyist's slip." He meant that the Egyptians were not smitten in the wilderness, but in their own land. However, Wellhausen did not see that the Philistines said this. They expressed their inaccurate knowledge of what had happened and Samuel reports it as if it was spoken by the Philistines.

The tidings of the awful disaster reach Eli, ninety-eight years old and totally blind. When he heard that the ark of God was taken, he fell backward, broke his neck and died. Significant is the final paragraph of this chapter. The wife of Phinehas in child-birth also hears of the capture of the ark and the death of Eli, her father-in-law, the death of her husband and his brother. Dying, she named her baby son "Ichabod," which means "no glory." The glory had departed from Israel. Israel had indeed brought forth, by her departure from God, the condition of "Ichabod." The ark as the glory of God's manifest presence among His people was gone. "He forsook the tabernacle of Shiloh, the tent which he placed among men; and delivered his strength into captivity, and His glory into the enemy's hand" (Ps. 78:60-61). In a higher sense the word

"Ichabod" is written over that which professes to be the church, but which has departed from the truth. The power and the manifest presence of Jehovah are lost. And many individual Christians have drifted into the same conditions by their sinful and worldly ways.

6. The Ark in the Hands of the Philistines and Its Return

CHAPTER 5

1. The ark in the house of Dagon (5:1-5)
2. The Philistines smitten by Jehovah (5:6-12)

The ark was brought to Ashdod, the leading city of the Philistines, and set up in the temple dedicated to Dagon, the chief god of the people. It was half fish and half man, the symbol of fertility. Before this idol the ark was set up. In their blindness they imagined that Dagon had conquered the God of Israel. The next morning they found Dagon fallen with his face to the earth before the ark. It was the Lord who did it and not an accident. The next morning the whole idol-image, except the fish-part, is fallen upon the ground. "The head of Dagon and both the palms of his hands lay cut off upon the threshold." The God of Israel demonstrated His power over the gods of the Philistines, yet they continued to reverence even the threshold where the fragments of their idol had lain. Such is the darkness of fallen man.

A severer visitation came upon the Philistines; they were smitten with malignant boils. At the same time a plague of field mice destroyed the fields and the harvest (4:4, 11, 18). It reminds us of the plagues of Egypt. Yet the Philistines did not repent of their sins, but carried the ark of God about, but wherever it was carried the same punishment came upon the people. Yet there was no repentance from the side of the Philistines. All this becomes still more interesting if we consider what the Philistines as the enemies of the people of God represent. (See annotations on Judges.) The world is to experience the judgments and plagues of God in a future day foreshadowed in these plagues which came upon the land of the Philistines; and there will be no turning to God. In the book of Revelation, where these final judgments upon a wicked world and an apostate world-church are described, we hear not a word of repentance. The answer God receives will be blasphemy of His name. "And they blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and sores, and repented not of their evil deeds" (Rev. 16:11).

CHAPTERS 6:1-7:2

1. The counsel of the Philistines (6:1-9)
2. The ark at Beth-shemesh (6:10-20)
3. The ark at Kirjath-jearim (6:21-7:2)

The ark had remained among the Philistines seven months. For them they were months of suffering and deadly destruction. Now they plot to get rid of the ark and of Him whose hand rested so heavily in judgment upon them. The advice of the heathen priests and diviners is that the ark should be sent away with votive offerings of gold, representing that which had plagued them. This was a heathen custom, which has also been adopted and is practiced by Roman Catholicism, the great Philistine system of Christendom. In Romish churches, especially at shrines, one can find hundreds of votive offerings to God by those who are suffering affliction to appease the wrath of God. It is heathenish and denies Him who shed His blood for our redemption. And as these Philistine priests had some knowledge of God's judgment upon Egypt they added to their counsel a warning reminding them of Pharaoh and Egypt. Their unbelief and superstition are manifested by the way they returned the ark. But the power of the Creator is seen in the incident.

"In result it is proved conclusively that Jehovah is the God of Creation, supreme above all the natural instincts: the kine, though unaccustomed to a yoke, take the cart with its sacred burden directly away from where their calves are shut up, even while lowing after them, and take the straight road to Bethshemesh, a priestly city near the Israelite border. There, at the border, they stop, still under the eyes of the Philistine lords, at a great stone upon which the Levites place the ark, and

where the kine are offered up a burnt offering to Jehovah.

"Thus the Philistines have Jehovah's sovereignty demonstrated to them in the precise terms which they have themselves chosen,--the goodness of God thus meeting them with what should have turned them from idolatry forever and brought them to His feet. But they go back, after all, to worship instead the humbled Dagon" (Numerical Bible).

The ark reaches Beth-shemesh (house of the sun) the nearest point across the border. It is welcomed with much rejoicing, but they forgot the holiness of God and looked into the ark, and the people of Beth-shemesh were smitten. As Beth-shemesh was only a small town it is generally taken that the number of the slain as given in verse 19 was changed by the mistake of a copyist. Various readings give smaller numbers; but that is immaterial.

The ark is removed from Beth-shemesh to Kirjath-jearim, "the city of the woods." It was an humble place where the ark abode for twenty years. It was brought into the house of Abinadab; his son Eleazar (my God is help) was set aside to keep it. David found it there (Psalm 132:6). The ark never returned to Shiloh again.

7. The Return Unto Jehovah and the Deliverance

CHAPTER 7:3-14

1. Samuel's message and the response of the people (7:3-4)
2. Gathered at Mizpah (7:5-6)
3. The deliverance (7:7-14)

Samuel now is seen beginning his great national ministry. The message he brings is the message of repentance and the assurance of faith. In simple words he addressed the people, who no doubt were prepared for it by their long period of humiliation. He demands that their true return to the Lord must be practical; the strange gods and Ashtaroth must be put away. If they serve the Lord only, deliverance out of the hands of the Philistines would come. The message was at once obeyed. Every true return to the Lord must manifest itself in the same way. True repentance without self-judgment and self-surrender is impossible. The earnest appeal and whole-hearted response by the people led to the great gathering at Mizpah (the watch tower). It was a day of humiliation and prayer. Samuel said "I will pray unto the Lord for you." He was the child of prayer and the man of prayer (8:6; 12:19, 23). "Samuel among them that call upon His name; they called upon the LORD and He answered them" (Ps. 99:6). There was confession of sin and they drew water, and poured it out before Jehovah. It was a symbolical act showing the undone and helpless condition of Israel. "We must needs die, and are as water spilt on the ground" (2 Sam. 14:14). When the Philistines came up against them they were afraid and acknowledged prayer as their only refuge and help. "Cease not" they appealed to Samuel, "to cry for us unto the LORD our God." And afterwards he offered a whole burnt offering unto the Lord. This offering represents Christ. Then Samuel cried unto the LORD and the LORD answered him. The elements of a true return unto the Lord and a true revival among God's people are found in this great national movement. While Samuel offered the burnt offering and interceded for Israel the Philistines drew near. Then came the interference from the LORD. It was a supernatural thundering which discomfited the Philistines, and they were smitten. Israel gains a great victory. They pursue the enemy to Beth-car (house of the lamb). Between Mizpah and Shen the stone called by Samuel "Ebenezer" is put up as a memorial. Ebenezer means "stone of help." "Helped--but only 'hitherto'! For all Jehovah's help is only 'hitherto'--from day to day, and from place to place--not unconditionally, nor wholly, nor once for all, irrespective of our bearing." (A. Edersheim, Bible History.)

8. Samuel Exercising His Office and His Failure

CHAPTERS 7:15-8:3

1. Samuel the Prophet-Judge (7:15-17)
2. His failure (8:1-3)

Samuel's activity as the great prophet-judge is now seen. He had a blessed circuit of ministry, which has its spiritual lessons for us. He first visited Bethel (the house of God). Judgment must begin there. When Jacob was obedient to the divine call "Arise and go up unto Bethel," he buried the strange gods, the household gods under the oak of Shechem. So the evil things must be put away. Then came Gilgal (rolling). There the reproach of Egypt was rolled away (Joshua 5). This is what we need, to be freed from the world, dead to it and the world dead to us. Mizpeh (watch tower) was his third station. This is our constant need to be on our guard and watch against the foe, as well as look upward and forward from Mizpeh to that blessed home where He is and which we shall surely share with Him. This is represented in Ramah (heights) where Samuel had his home. But there is failure. Samuel makes the mistake in making his sons judges. Because he was a judge and prophet and had success in it, his sons are to follow him in the same capacity. God does not work by succession, nor does He transmit gift and power from father to son. The so-called "apostolic succession" and traditional authority is an invention and one of the greatest factors in the corruption of Christianity. The Lord alone can call to service and give gifts for the ministry. Joel and Abiah were judges in Beersheba, but walked not in his ways, but turned aside after lucre, and took bribes, and perverted judgment. And this opened the way for the introduction of the monarchy in Israel.

II. KING SAUL: His REIGN AND REJECTION

1. The King Demanded

CHAPTER 8:4-22

1. The king demanded (8:4-9)
2. The rights of the king (8:10-22)

The kingly government is now to be established through the deliberate and untheocratic self-determination of the people. Jehovah was their invisible King, and Him they rejected by requesting a king like all the nations. The motives for the demand of a king are three: 1. The old age of Samuel and the unfitness of his sons; 2. The desire to be upon the same footing with other nations; 3. To have a leader and fight their battles (verse 20).

"The state or political organization reaches its highest development when royalty is introduced. The King of Israel is not, however, intended to be an autocratic but a theocratic king; the prophet and the priest, in their official capacity, did not occupy a subordinate, but a co-ordinate rank. As men and as citizens, they were under an obligation, like all other subjects, to obey the king; but with respect to their prophetic and priestly offices, they were dependent on God alone, and by no means on the king" J. H. Kurtz, Sacred History.

Samuel was displeased by the request, but the man of prayer turned to the Lord and received from Him the needed direction. The Lord comforts the heart of His servant "for they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected Me, that I should not reign over them." As they did to Jehovah, so the Lord told His servant, do they also unto thee. The servant is identified with His Master. It reminds us of the words of our Lord: "if they have persecuted Me, they will persecute you also." We are called to share His reproach. And they were to have a King according to their own choice. Later the Lord reminded Israel through Hosea of this event. "I will be thy King; where is any other that may serve thee in all thy cities? and thy judges of whom thou saidst, give me a king and princes? I gave thee a king in mine anger, and took him away in my wrath" (Hos. 13:10-11). Then Samuel describes the manner, literally the rights, of the king. Military service, harsh and compulsory, forced labour and other evils are spread before them. Yet they refused to hearken and the Lord said again: "Hearken unto their voice, and make them a king."

2. The Story of Saul and His Anointing

CHAPTERS 9:1-10:16

1. Saul the son of Kish and the lost asses (9:1-10)
2. Samuel and Saul (9:11-24)
3. Saul anointed King (9:25-10:16)

And now the Lord gives them a king according to their choice. "He should possess all the natural attractions and martial qualities which the people could desire in their king; he should reflect their religious standpoint at their best; but he should also represent their national failings and the inmost defects of their religious life; that of combining zeal for the religion of Jehovah, and outward conformity to it, with utter want of real heart submission to the Lord, and of true devotedness to Him" (A. Edersheim). They obtained exactly what they wanted. God's choice for them would have been a different character, one who seeks Him and is in subjection to Him, as we shall find in the king after God's heart, King David. But now He gives to the people what they had asked for.

Saul means "asked." The genealogy of Saul is given; the five names in their original meaning suggest the pride and self-glorification of the natural man. Saul is described as an ideal man, "a young man" (literally, "in the prime of manhood") and goodly; and there was not among the children of Israel a goodlier person than he; from his shoulders and upward he was higher than any of the people. Saul, ignorant of the divine purpose, sets out to seek the lost she-asses of his father. Little did he know how the search would end and that he would soon become the head of the nation, which had gone more astray than the lost asses (Is. 1:3). A small matter it was going forth to look for animals which had strayed away; but the guiding hand of Jehovah was there. The search is futile. The servant then suggests a visit to the man of God, none other than Samuel. Saul seems to have no knowledge of Samuel. He is willing enough to seek the man for counsel but he is troubled about the present for the man of God. It shows the tendency of the natural man to give in order to get from God. The servant has the fourth part of a shekel of silver which he offers to give to the man of God. Verse 9, containing a parenthetical statement, is not a gloss by a later hand, as the critical school maintains. The difference between seer and prophet is an interesting one. A prophet is one who speaks for God being moved by God; he is the mouthpiece of the Lord. The term seer suggests the knowledge the prophet had. The people were more concerned about the seer than the prophet. Thus Saul shows the state of his heart. He does not seek God, nor the prophet as the man and mouthpiece of God; only the seer.

Then Samuel and Saul meet for the first time. First Saul and the servant meet maidens going out to draw water, and they directed them to the heights where a sacrificial feast was to be held. And the Lord had spoken into Samuel's ear the day before that the man of Benjamin would come. All had been ordered by the Lord and Samuel, knowing the expected one would come had reserved the shoulder of the peace offering for him (9:23-24). (See annotations on Leviticus.) What the Lord had said to Samuel concerning Saul reveals His gracious purpose of love towards Saul. Though he was the people's choice yet the Lord was willing to make him much more, even the saviour of this people Israel (9:16). Samuel tells Saul that the asses were found, so that he was relieved of the anxiety. And when Samuel acquaints him that all Israel desires him, he speaks of his own littleness (9:21). It reminds us of that other Saul of the tribe of Benjamin, the Apostle Paul, whose name means "little." However Saul, the son of Kish, knew nothing of real self-judgment. It was rather the language of surprise than the expression of a deep, heartfelt humility. Then we see them in communion, and afterwards Samuel anoints him with the holy anointing oil and kissed him. The anointing is the symbol of power conferred upon him and also implies dependence upon the Holy Spirit, typified by the oil. The kiss was given in token of homage. Thus Saul became the first king in Israel. Samuel also gave him three significant signs, which all came to pass. They were given to Saul to assure him of all which had taken place and to teach him certain spiritual lessons. He was assured that God is with Him (10:7). The Spirit of God also came upon him and he prophesied.

"By this, as in the case of Judges, we are, however, not to understand the abiding and sanctifying presence of the Holy Ghost dwelling in the heart as His temple. The Holy Ghost was peculiarly "the gift of the Father" and "of the Son," and only granted to the Church in connection with and after the resurrection of our blessed Lord. Under the Old Testament, only the manifold influences of the Spirit were experienced, not His indwelling as the Paraclete. This appears not only from the history of those so influenced, and from the character of that influence, but even from the language in which it is described. Thus we read that the Spirit of Elohim "seized upon" Saul, suddenly and mightily laid hold on him,--the same expression being used in Judges 14:6, 19; 15:14; 1 Sam. 16:13; 18:10."

3. The Open Acclamation of Saul as King

CHAPTER 10:17-27

1. The lot at Mizpeh (10:17-21)
2. The acclamation of the King (10:22-27)

Samuel called once more a national gathering at Mizpeh. The lot is now to be cast. But before this is done the Lord through Samuel reminds them once more of their serious mistake: "And ye have this day rejected your God, who Himself saved you out of all your adversities and your tribulations; and ye have said unto Him, Nay but set a king over us." They had not heeded this warning before and now they are to receive what they had asked in their self-will. The lot was therefore but an outward, empty ceremony. It fell on Saul, the son of Kish. He could not be found. Why did he hide? Some say it was humility and modesty. It was not that, but rather fear of the responsibility he was now to assume. And that revealed lack of confidence in God of whose power he had received such evidences. All foreshadows the coming failure of the people's king. When he is presented before the people it was seen that he towered above them all. When Samuel introduced him, "See ye him whom the LORD hath chosen," there was a wave of fleshly enthusiasm. And all the people shouted and said, God save the King. (literally, Live the King!) Now they had a king like the other nations, a king who reflected their own carnal, unspiritual condition. How his heart must have been lifted up with pride even then! Once more Samuel tells them the manner of the kingdom; it was undoubtedly a restatement of Deut. 17:14-20. And Saul did not assume leadership at once. He went home to Gibeah. A faithful company whom God had touched accompanied the king, while the sons of Belial despised him and brought no present. There was opposition to him. He showed the wisdom of the natural man by holding his peace. He was as a deaf man.

4. The King's First Victory and the Renewal of the Kingdom at Gilgal

CHAPTER 11

1. The victory over Ammon (11:1-11)
2. The kingdom renewed (11:12-15)

Nahash the Ammonite encamped against Jabesh-gilead. Nahash means "the serpent." This invasion took place before Saul had been made king. From chapter 12:12 we learn that it really was the occasion why Israel demanded a king. In despair the inhabitants of Jabesh-gilead offered to make a covenant with this old foe of Israel, whom Jephthah had so successfully fought. Ammon represents typically the enemy of God's people characterized by evil doctrines and perversions of the truth of God. How often compromise is made with the most subtle errors which emanate from Nahash, the serpent! But he makes his condition, their right eyes are to be plucked out. We speak of the eye of faith, and typically we may apply it in this way. All errors and false doctrines blind the eyes of faith and rob God's people of their true vision.

Then Saul acts for the first time. However his actions are characteristic of his spiritual condition. We read nothing of prayer; he did not seek the presence of the Lord. It is true, the Spirit of God came upon him, but that does not mean that he was right with God. The Spirit of God came also upon Balaam to prophesy. Even so the Spirit came upon King Saul with external power in the same sense as He came upon the Judges. The anger which he manifested, the methods he employed to stir up the people, the threat he makes and his leaning on Samuel for authority (verse 7) all show again the lack of true faith. He is but the man in the flesh who knows not the Lord.

At Gilgal the kingdom is renewed. The people are united and suggest the killing of the sons of Belial mentioned in the previous chapter. Saul forbids it and acknowledges that the Lord had wrought salvation that day. But there is no real outburst of praise. They were at Gilgal, the place which typifies death to the flesh. Here Saul is made king before the Lord. But while Saul and the people rejoiced nothing is said of Samuel's joy. The man of God looked deeper, for he knew that all

was only skin deep and that the Lord, whom they had rejected from being king over them, could not be pleased with their outward joy.

5. Samuel's Witness and Warning

CHAPTER 12

1. His witness to his own integrity (12:1-5)
2. His warning (12:6-15)
3. Heaven's answer (12:16-19)
4. His words of comfort (12:20-25)

What a scene! The man of God, the man of prayer, now advanced in years, stands before them. "I have walked before you from my childhood unto this day." Here was not a Nazarite who had failed like Samson, but one who had lived out his Nazariteship in the fullest sense of the word. What unselfish service he had rendered and how he loved his own people! In all this he is a type of that greatest servant who came in the fulness of time not to be ministered unto, but to minister and to give his life a ransom for many. His witness to his own integrity reminds us also of Paul's words in the Epistle to the Corinthians (2 Cor. 11:6-9; 12:14-17). The whole nation acknowledged Samuel's integrity. A brief historical retrospect follows in which Samuel points out their sin of forgetting Jehovah. ("Bedan" in verse 11 should be "Barak.") Their present condition was like that of their fathers, unbelief and disobedience.

It was the time of the wheat harvest. Samuel prayed for a witness from heaven upon his words. Then it thundered and rained. It never thunders and rains in Palestine at that time of the year (May and June). A guilty fear seized upon them and they requested intercession. This reminds us of that coming harvest, the end of the age (Matt. 13:39). Then Jehovah will thunder in judgment and the repentance of the people of Israel will follow. However true repentance did not take place here when Samuel prayed. Beautiful are his words of comfort. How he manifests the work and character of a true prophet! Here is also the assurance for Israel. "For Jehovah for His great name's sake will not forsake His people, because it hath pleased Jehovah to make you His people." His gifts and calling are without repentance.

6. The First Failure of Saul and Its Results

CHAPTER 13

1. The failure of Saul (13:1-9)
2. Samuel's sentence (13:10-14)
3. Israel's deplorable condition (13:15-23)

Omit the first verse of this chapter as it does not belong into the text. In self-confidence Saul has dismissed the greater part of the people; only 2000 remained with him and 1000 with his son Jonathan. Saul is now passing through a test. Hath he true faith which counts and depends on God? Is he obedient to His word as given by the prophet? Jonathan appears here for the first time. His name means "the Lord hath given." He is the opposite from his poor father; the son is a man of real faith and zeal for God. In smiting the garrison of the Philistines he manifested that faith. He counted on God and in dependence on Him he acted. And what did Saul do? "And Saul blew the trumpet throughout all the land, saying, let the Hebrews hear." It was not the action of faith but the result of his own proud heart. Significant it is that he avoids the word Israel. The Lord never speaks of "My people the Hebrews," their original, national name; it is always "My people Israel." He leaves out the God of Israel. It all reveals the character of Saul. Then Saul gets the credit of having smitten the garrison of the Philistines, and when they gathered in all their strength the people are paralysed by fear, and instead of advancing in the name of Jehovah they seek the caves, the thickets, the rocks, the high places and the pits. And some of the Hebrews even crossed the Jordan. Saul remains in these demoralized conditions at Gilgal, followed by some of the people trembling. It is all unbelief; like king, like people. They fear the Philistines and distrust Jehovah. And Saul at Gilgal! He

might have remembered the captain of the Lord's hosts and sought His presence and help. All shows the chosen king knew not the Lord. Samuel's word to him (chapter 10:8) was not forgotten by Saul. He waits, but not long enough. The test is on. The people stay a few days and then begin to scatter. They have no faith; neither has the king. True faith waits on God and trusts in Him. Faith knows that man's extremity is God's opportunity. Saul makes an outward effort to be obedient, while in his soul he knows no subjection to the Lord and to His way. At last the breaking point is reached. He intrudes into the priestly office. The burnt offering, without any meaning under these circumstances, is brought by Saul and immediately after, perhaps before the seven days had fully expired, Samuel appears.

The king's own words reveal once more his character and they are his condemnation. He was tested and the test revealed a heart which did not fear the Lord, had no confidence in Him and is disobedient to His word. And Samuel delivers his message. Sentence is pronounced. Another, a man after the Lord's own heart, is to take his place. And the deplorable condition of Israel! The Philistines speak also of them as Hebrews. Instead of being dependent upon the Lord for everything, they were the slaves of their oppressors, dependent upon them. This is the place into which unbelief can put the people of God.

7. Jonathan's Heroic Deed of Faith

CHAPTER 14

1. Jonathan's victory (14:1-23)
2. Saul's adjuration and Jonathan's deed (14:24-32)
3. Saul's first altar and unanswered inquiry (14:33-37)
4. Jonathan condemned and saved (14:38-45)
5. Saul's battle and success (14:46-48)
6. Saul's family (14:49-52)

Jonathan, one of the most beautiful characters of the Bible, with a kindred spirit, his armour bearer, goes forward to attack once more the outpost of the Philistines. Saul knew nothing of it. The King is surrounded by a small company, among them the relations of Eli. They had an ephod, needed for inquiry from Jehovah, but we do not read of its use. Jonathan and his armour bearer and their conversation are blessed illustrations of true faith. What simplicity it reveals! Jonathan knew the Lord and knew that He loves His people and therefore would overthrow their enemies. He tells the armour bearer "it may be that the LORD will work for us, for there is no restraint to the LORD to save by many or by few." And the armour bearer, whose name we do not know, but known to God, answered him: "Do all that is in thine heart; turn thee; behold I am with thee according to thy heart." They were in blessed unity. They cast themselves upon the Lord and let Him decide what they were to do. And the Lord, as He always does, answers to their faith. In spite of the difficulties, the sharp rocks, which they had to ascend, difficulties which are always connected with true faith, they overcome the foe. The Lord was there, for it was His battle and the earth quaked. But twenty men were slain by the two. A great confusion followed. The multitude melted away as they beat each other, and the Hebrews which had been with the Philistines turned against them. It was the Lord who saved Israel that day (verse 23).

Then Jonathan and his armour bearer were missed. Saul made an attempt in consulting the Lord, which did not succeed. Saul's adjuration was unnecessary and made in self-will. His oath is but the working of the natural man. In his blindness he thinks he can help along the complete defeat of the enemy by his legal injunction. On account of this foolish oath the people were in distress; legalism always puts burdens and distress upon the people of God. His own son Jonathan, ignorant of his father's commandment, takes a little honey on the end of the rod and receives refreshment by it. Honey is the type of natural things and their sweetness. Their use in the right way is not forbidden. Like Jonathan we must touch them only with the end of the rod and take a little. If Jonathan had gone down on his knees and filled himself with all the honey he could eat, it would not have refreshed, but incapacitated him for the conflict. Jonathan was revived by the little honey he had taken, while the people fainted. But a worse result of Saul's commandment happened. The famished people ate meat with the blood. Thus Saul's restriction of a lawful thing led to the breaking of a divine commandment.

Saul erects his first altar, for he feels the need; perhaps less than that, he only fears the judgment of God. There is no answer from God when he inquired "Shall I go down after the Philistines?" What follows shows us again the impetuous and stubborn heart of Saul. Self-righteous and self-willed he is ready to slay his own son; the people rescued him from his own hands. What humiliation for King Saul!

8. War with Amalek: Saul's Disobedience and Rejection

CHAPTER 15

1. The commission to destroy Amalek (15:1-9)
2. Saul's disobedience and rejection (15:10-23)
3. Saul's confession (15:24-31)
4. The doom of Agag (15:32-35)

From verse 48 in the previous chapter we learn that Saul smote the Amalekites. Samuel is sent by Jehovah with a new message to Saul telling him to smite Amalek again and to destroy utterly all that they have. It involves another task for Saul. He had been fully established as king and is therefore called upon to discharge his responsibilities and prove that he is fit for the position which he held. Amalek is the great foe of God's people and typifies, as we have seen in our annotation on Exodus (chapter 17), the flesh and its lusts. Israel should have war with Amalek from generation to generation, and the remembrance of Amalek was to be completely blotted out. Even so the flesh is always the enemy of the children of God. "The flesh lusteth against the Spirit and the Spirit against the flesh." It is enmity against God. With this enemy Saul was to war and to destroy them utterly. But Saul at heart was nothing but an Amalekite. He gathers his army to do what Jehovah had demanded. The Lord gives Amalek into his hands. Then comes the significant "but."--"But Saul and his people spared Agag, and the best of the sheep, and of the oxen, and of the fatlings, and the lambs, and all that was good and would not utterly destroy them, but everything that was vile and refuse, that they destroyed utterly."

"The lesson is a deeply solemn one, and wider in application than perhaps we would easily allow. If Amalek stands here as elsewhere for the lusts of the flesh, alas, is it not true that we measure our judgment of these often more by our own tastes than by the simple letter of the Word of God? How easy it is to judge the multitude of things, and spare the worst of all, the Agag! And things which minister to the lusts of the flesh are unhesitatingly allowed, if only they are not what to common estimate would be considered vile. Our judgments, how apt are they to be those of the world at large rather than of God,--in the light of nature rather than of the sanctuary!" (Numerical Bible)

Then the Lord, who had been the silent witness of all this, told Samuel about it. A night of sorrow and of prayer followed for the man of God. How he must have pleaded with the Lord for unhappy Saul! Samuel and Saul meet. Strange words which came from the lips of disobedient Saul: "Blessed be thou of the LORD! I have performed the commandment of the LORD." It was a falsehood. He then hears the sentence. "When thou wast little in thine own sight thou becamest the head of the tribes of Israel, and the LORD anointed thee King over Israel!" And now he had become great in his own sight and little in the sight of the Lord. Solemn are the prophet's words to him. "Behold to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams. For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because thou hast rejected the word of the LORD, He hath also rejected thee from being king." This was the irrevocable sentence of Jehovah. Alas! Saul's confession but reveals his true character once more. He sinned and transgressed against the voice of the Lord, because he feared the people and hearkened to their voice. Such a one was unworthy to be king over the Lord's people. It is a sad spectacle, the unrelenting Samuel and the deposed king. And Samuel deals with Agag in judgment as he deserved it.

The statement "and Samuel saw Saul no more until the days of his death" is taken by critics in connection with chapter 19:24 as an indication of the diversity of the sources from which the books of Samuel have been derived. But it is incorrect. Samuel did not come to see Saul again, though Saul prophesied before Samuel. However chapter 28:11-19 must be connected with Samuel's final word to Saul in this chapter.

III. DAVID, THE KING AFTER GOD'S HEART--His EXILE AND SUFFERING

1. David Anointed King and the Departure of the Spirit from Saul

CHAPTER 16

1. David anointed king (16:1-13)
2. The Spirit departs from Saul and David with Saul (16:14-23)

The king after the people's heart has failed and is set aside, and now Jehovah brings forth His king after His own heart. That king like Jonathan, a man of faith, is devoted to Jehovah and in perfect subjection unto Him. Furthermore, from the tribe of Judah (Judah means "praise") he is a worshipper through whom the Spirit of God pours forth the sweetest strains of praise and worship. He prospers into a great kingdom and Jehovah makes an oathbound covenant with him (2 Sam. 7). That covenant points us to the true King, who according to the flesh is of the seed of David. Saul could not foreshadow that King. There is absolutely nothing in Saul which could remind us of the King who is yet to rule over this earth in righteousness. It is different with the life and reign of David. Everywhere we may discover most blessed types of our Lord Jesus Christ, the son of David. Because this king after God's own heart is to give a typical vision of the coming true King, David had to pass through suffering first before he could receive the kingdom and its glory. From now on in this book we shall follow the sufferings of the king after God's heart.

Samuel is interrupted in his mourning for Saul by a new command to fill his horn with oil for the anointing of another king. That king is to be chosen from the sons of Jesse the Bethlehemite. A sacrificial feast is appointed in connection with the approaching anointing of the son of Jesse, and Samuel is obedient and went to Bethlehem. Then he called Jesse and his sons to the feast. Then the seven sons of Jesse pass by, but the chosen one is not among them. Only one was left, the youngest who kept the sheep. He is brought in. "Now he was ruddy (literally, "reddish," perhaps referring to auburn hair) and withal of a beautiful countenance and goodly to look upon; and the LORD said, Arise, anoint him, for this is he." David the son of Jesse was anointed and the Spirit of the Lord came upon him. And so David became the Lord's anointed. David means "beloved"; he is a shepherd, typifying the Beloved One, the good, the great and the chief Shepherd. What a contrast with Saul!

An evil spirit from the Lord began then to trouble Saul after the Spirit of the Lord had departed from him. What a sad spectacle he now presents! When he had been anointed, the Spirit also came upon him and he became another man. His pride, self-will, disobedience and stubbornness we have followed, and now the Spirit departs and in judgment upon the deposed King an evil spirit was permitted to come upon Saul. "Evil as well as good has its commission from God,--not its existence, but its liberty to act, and the limits of its action." It was no doubt a case of demon possession. He had rejected the Word of God and was given over into the hands of a demon. Such is also the case in the days of apostasy which are now upon Christendom. They depart from the faith and follow seducing spirits and doctrines of demons. Doctrinal apostasy and the moral evils following such an apostasy is the work of demons. God still permits as an act of judgment that demons possess those who are disobedient and rebel against Him. Then David is called in to sing to the afflicted King and to soothe him. And he loved him greatly and David became his armour bearer. "And it came to pass, when the evil spirit from God was upon Saul, that David took an harp, and played with his hand; so Saul was refreshed, and was well, and the evil spirit departed from him." Here we have a beautiful type of the Lord Jesus Christ. His sweet words, the ministrations of His Spirit refresh the soul and drive out the evil spirit. When the unhappy king had been quieted and the ministry of the young shepherd-king was no longer needed, he returned to his home and to his shepherd life; to feed his father's sheep (17:15).

No discrepancy exists between 1 Sam. 16:19-23 and the question which Saul subsequently asks: "Whose son is this youth?" (17:55-58) The king had not been previously anxious to become intimately acquainted with the origin and family-connections of one who merely bore his arms and served as his harper, but when the latter is on the point of becoming his

son-in-law, it is naturally a matter of interest to him to acquire a more accurate knowledge of the personal history of David.

2. David and Goliath

CHAPTER 17

1. Goliath of Gath, the Philistine (17:1-11)
2. David's errand and inquiry (17:12-30)
3. David's offer to fight Goliath (17:31-40)
4. David's victory (17:41-54)
5. Saul's inquiry (17:55-58)

Modern critics are practically unanimous in regarding the story of this chapter as unhistorical. One of the leading arguments they advance is the statement found in 2 Sam. 21:19 that the slayer of Goliath was Elhanan the son of Jair-oregim, a Bethlehemite. But if we consult still another passage we find that Elhanan slew the brother of Goliath. "And Elhanan the son of Jair smote Lahmi the brother of Goliath the Gittite" (1 Chron. 20:5). It is therefore no discrepancy at all. A closer examination into this matter we cannot undertake here. If the account in 1 Sam. 17 were unhistorical the jealousy of Saul against David would be inexplicable.

David, the Lord's anointed, in his great deed, is constituted the deliverer of Israel. The deed of the young shepherd is one of the greatest recorded in the Bible. It was simple trust in the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, which won the overthrow of the boasting Philistine. In typical application the story of David and Goliath is especially rich; we can pass on but a little of it. A prayerful and diligent search will reveal much more. Goliath, the giant, is the type of Satan, the prince of this world, who has the power of death. He also typifies that which is connected with the enemy of God, which is under the leadership of Satan. This is suggested by the number "six." Six is in Bible numerics the number of man in opposition to God. His height was six cubits. He had also six pieces of armour (verses 5-7). The number six is also prominent in another giant, who was slain by Jonathan, the son of Shimeah. He had six fingers on each hand and six toes on each foot (2 Sam. 21:20). Nebuchadnezzar's image of gold also has the number six connected with it (Dan. 3:1). In Revelation we find the number of the beast, that coming man of sin, and his number is 666; it represents the utmost defiance of God, the fullest manifestation of sin. The bold and defiant language Goliath used, the terror he inspired among the people of God, find easy application to Satan and his power.

And David is the type of our Lord Jesus Christ. His father sent David on a mission to his brethren. It reminds us of Joseph who was sent to seek for his lost brethren. Both are types of Him whom the Father sent into the world. (Jesse means "Jehovah is living.") He came to the camp in lowliness and then was misunderstood and wrongly accused by his own brethren. And thus our Lord was treated by His own. We must not overlook the prominence given to the reward which he is to receive who slays Goliath. "The King will enrich him with great riches, and will give him his daughter, and make his father's house free in Israel." Well may we see here a type of the reward of Him who became poor for our sake. And David took the stones from the brook, out of the water, the type of death. Then after he struck the giant with the stone, he took Goliath's sword and slew him and cut off his head. Even so our Lord Jesus Christ by death destroyed him that had the power of death, that is, the devil (Heb. 2:14). And now Israel and Judah, the types of the true people of God, can arise and shout for joy and gain a complete victory over the conquered foe (verse 52). And this took place at Ephesdammim (the boundary of blood) and the valley of Elah (the mighty one). It speaks of the blood and the power, death and resurrection. What evidences we have in these historical events and their typical application of the inspiration of the Bible! And David had said to Goliath that the victory Jehovah would give him should bring about "that all the earth may know there is a God in Israel." All the earth will yet see and know His salvation.

The alleged difficulty of verses 55-58 we have already explained at the close of the previous chapter.

Note objections made by critics to verse 54. They say it is "curious anachronism, since David's future capital was still

in the hands of the Jebusites." However, Jerusalem, west of Moriah, had been taken by Judah. The Jebusites only held Jebus, or Zion, south of Moriah. See Judges 1:7-8. Higher criticism abounds in misstatements of the Scriptures.

3. Jonathan and David--Saul's jealousy

CHAPTER 18

1. Jonathan's love for David (18:1-4)
2. The beginning of Saul's jealousy (18:5-16)
3. David's marriage (18:17-30)

A beautiful scene opens this chapter. Jonathan, the man of faith, loves David. He was about 40 years old and David about 17. Jonathan made a covenant with David and loved him as his own soul. He showed also his great devotion by giving to David, his robe, his garments, his sword, his bow and his girdle. Thus he stripped himself of all for David's sake. Such devotion and love should we manifest towards Him, who is greater than David. No doubt Jonathan's devotion was kindled by the deed young David had done in slaying Goliath. And when we think of what our Lord has done for us the devotion to Him increases.

And David the anointed is the obedient servant and conducts himself wisely. The days of suffering and exile are now rapidly approaching. The song of the women, "Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands," angers the rejected King. Again the demon possesses him because he gave way to his temper. He nourished the feeling of hatred against David. "He eyed David from that day forward." When the evil spirit came upon him he prophesied. This has been hard to understand to some. Several translators have translated "raved"; but that cannot be done, for the word prophesy is the same as in chapter 5:5. Prophesying means to speak by inspiration; it does not always mean the prediction of future events. Now there is besides a divine inspiration, also a satanic inspiration. Certain cults which claim restoration of certain gifts claim inspiration, which has often been traced to the influence of demons. Saul uttered words which were the result of the indwelling evil spirit. Then he attempted twice to kill David with the javelin. This was no doubt an attempt from the side of Satan to do away with him from whose loins the promised seed, the Redeemer, was to come. The Lord shielded David and Saul was afraid of him, because the Lord was with him.

And now David has also gained the love of all Israel and Judah. Saul then offers to make David his son-in-law. Underneath it all was the mad King's plotting to get rid of David and have the Philistines kill him. How blinded Saul had become! The Lord's anointed was in the Lord's own hands and his life was precious in His sight. It has its precious lessons for us likewise.

Merab is promised to him to become his wife, but Achiel receives her instead. (See 2 Sam. 21:8 and read "Merab" instead of "Michal.") Then he received Michal, who loved David. We shall meet her again later when she was restored to the King by Abner and later mocked the King of Israel. And Saul, after his scheme failed, became David's enemy continually.

4. Saul's Renewed Attempt and David's Escape

CHAPTER 19

1. Saul and Jonathan (19:1-7)
2. Saul's new attempt to kill David (19:8-10)
3. David's escape (19:11-18)
4. Saul's pursuit and his helplessness (19:19-24)

The lost King goes from bad to worse. First he tried to spear David; then he attempted to take his life through having

him killed by the Philistines, and now he speaks openly to his own son and to all his servants that David must be killed. Therefore loving Jonathan warned David and he hid himself. Then Jonathan persuades his father to desist and Saul uttered a meaningless oath "As the Lord liveth, he shall not be slain." And Jonathan brought David to Saul.

Thus Jonathan is seen as a peacemaker.

But David's great victory (verse 8) starts the king's hatred again and the javelin flies once more, but only strikes the wall from where he had slipped away. Then David fled and when he comes to his house his faithful wife tells him of the great danger and let him down through a window. They watched the house to kill him. The fifty-ninth Psalm throws interesting light upon this part of David's history and has of course prophetically a wider application.

And Michal practised a deception. Like Rachel she possessed teraphim, the idol-images in so much use among the Chaldeans and other nations. These were forbidden by Jehovah and yet they were secretly used (Judges 17:5; 18:14). Michal's image must have been of considerable size; she arranged it in the bed and then said to messengers "he is sick." When the deception is discovered she lies again and said that David threatened her life. That the Scriptures record these misdeeds is but an evidence of their genuineness, however the Holy Scriptures never sanction these things. In all these attempts on David we see a foreshadowing also of the attempts which were made on the life of our Lord.

And David fled to Samuel, who had a kind of a school for prophets at Naioth in Ramah. Saul's pursuit is in vain and he is helpless to touch the Lord's anointed. Divine power was engaged in behalf of David, and Saul himself, stripped and naked, lying down all night and all day has to bear witness to it.

"The 'schools of the prophets,' which were placed under the direction of experienced and approved prophets, afforded to younger men an opportunity of becoming qualified to perform the duties of the prophetic calling. The selection and the admission of individuals who were suited for the prophetic office by their personal character, and who had a divine call, undoubtedly depended on the prophetic judgment of those who presided over these institutions. As prophecy was a gift and not an art, the instructions which were imparted probably referred merely to the study of the law, and were intended to awaken and cultivate theocratical sentiments, as well as promote a growth in spiritual life, for herein a suitable preparation for the prophetic office necessarily consisted. There are also indications found which authorize us to conclude that the revival of sacred poetry, as an art, and that theocratico-historical composition also, are to be ascribed to these religious communities as their source. Such schools existed in Ramah, Jericho, Beth-el, and Gilgal (1 Sam. 19:18; 2 Kings 2:3, 5; 4:38)" (J.H. Kurtz)

5. Jonathan Protects David and Their Separation

CHAPTER 20

1. David with Jonathan (20:1-10)
2. The strengthened bonds and the token (20:11-23)
3. Saul's attempt to kill Jonathan (20:24-34)
4. David separated from Jonathan (20:35-42)

We do not need to enlarge upon this beautiful story of the further devotion of Jonathan to David. What friendship and affection is here! Indeed the chapter contains one of the most charming incidents in this book. When David told Jonathan of his great danger, Jonathan refused to believe it. But David knew there was but a step between him and death. The conversation which took place in the field is most pathetic. Both were men of faith putting their trust in Jehovah and hence this great affection. Jonathan also was deeply conscious of David's destiny as the Lord's anointed. Verses 14 and 15 bear witness to this. "And thou shalt not only while I live show me the kindness of the LORD, that I die not. But also thou shalt not cut off thy kindness from my house for ever, no, not when the LORD hath cut off the enemies of David every one from the face of the earth." Then Jonathan caused David to make a covenant with him, for he loved him as he loved his own

soul. And Jonathan had to taste his father's anger. Vicious are Saul's words to his own son, and in wrath he threw a javelin at him to smite him. How this illustrates Satan's hatred, both against Christ and those who are one with Him, as David and Jonathan were one.

Then comes the parting. They kissed one another, and wept one with another till David's weeping exceeded (literally, "till David wept loudly"). Jonathan went into the city and David into the suffering of the exile. They met but once more (23:16-18).

6. David's Varied Experiences

CHAPTER 21

1. David at Nob with Ahimelech (21:1-9)
2. David's flight to Achish, King of Gath (21:10-15)

With this chapter begins the record of David's wanderings as an exile. A number of Psalms were written by him during this period of the rejection of the Lord's anointed. We shall point out some of them. These Psalms are prophetic also foreshadowing the rejection and the sufferings of Christ as well as the tribulations of the pious remnant of Israel during the closing years of the age, preceding the coming and enthronement of the King of Israel, our Lord. He reached Nob after his separation from Jonathan. At Nob the tabernacle of the Lord had been established and Ahimelech (my brother is King) the son of Ahitub (22:9) and great-grandson of Eli, was now exercising the priesthood. Nob was not far from Jerusalem, north of the city (Isaiah 10:32).

He appeared before Ahimelech in a deplorable condition. It was on a Sabbath when the King's son-in-law appeared unarmed and hungry. Ahimelech became afraid and suspicious, but David invented a falsehood to allay the suspicions of the high priest. The truthfulness of the Word of God is demonstrated in this faithful report of David's failure. He was not fully trusting in his God and the result was the exercise of an endeavour to protect himself which led to the deception. How different the actions of Him who according to the flesh was the son of David! "Who did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth; who when He was reviled, reviled not again" (1 Pet. 2:22-23). Then he and his companions ate the hallowed bread. Our Lord called the attention of the Pharisees to this when they murmured because His disciples had plucked the ears of corn on the Sabbath (Matthew 12:1-8; Mark 2:23-28; Luke 6:1-5). There are no discrepancies between the account in Samuel and the words of our Lord. Our Lord speaks of David and they that were with him, while in the record here we read that Ahimelech asked David "Why art thou alone, and no man with thee?" The young men who are mentioned later (verses 4 and 5) may have at first kept out of sight. In Mark 2:26 our Lord mentions Abiathar as high priest. This is not a discrepancy, for Abiathar was the son of Ahimelech and exercised priestly function and also was high priest (1 Sam. 30:7). The story of eating the shewbread which was not lawful for him to eat is full of interest if compared with the words of our Lord. There was an inquiry of the Lord and then Ahimelech gave him the hallowed bread. (See 22:10.) On account of the ruin in Israel everything had become common and David and his companions did not sin in eating the shewbread; the "bread of presence" as it is called. And so our Lord was rejected, as David was, and justifies the conduct of His disciples by referring the Pharisees to David's action. (For a complete exposition see the annotations on Matthew, chapter 12.) "We can see in David rejected the type of a greater, who as such has abrogated Jewish and legal ordinances in order to give to His, people the true communion with Himself of which the shewbread speaks." Thus the shewbread typifies the true bread, which we use for our sustenance, as David needed it for his physical keeping.

Then Doeg (the fearful) is mentioned. He was an Edomite and a prominent servant of Saul. David knew with the presence of Doeg that his secret was now discovered and Doeg later told Saul about it (22:9). He also received the sword of Goliath. With it he had slain the giant and, as we showed before, it is the type of Him who by death has destroyed him who has the power of death. The victory our Lord has won through death is the weapon against all our enemies.

Then we find David in Gath among the Philistines. Strange place he had selected for his protection! Why should he

have gone to the strongest enemies of God and of His people? He had acted in unbelief and unbelief was dragging him down lower and lower. Instead of fleeing to God, he turned to Gath. And then for self preservation, because he had been discovered, he feigned madness. The King of Gath drove him away. The Lord was far better than his fears. The gracious deliverance set his heartstrings vibrating with praise. Here we would ask the reader to turn to Psalm 34, which David wrote, according to the inscription, when Ahimelech drove him away and when he departed. (There is no discrepancy here. The Philistine kings were called "Abimelech" as the rulers of Russia are called "Czar," the rulers of Turkey, "Sultan." Achish was Abimelech of the Philistines.)

CHAPTER 22

1. In the cave of Adullam (22:1-2)
2. In Moab and Gad's message (22:3-5)
3. Saul's discovery of David's visit to Nob (22:6-10)
4. The murder of the priests (22:11-19)
5. David and Abiathar (22:20-23)

Next we find him in the cave of Adullam (a witness). Here a strange company gathers around the rejected king. It consisted of 400 men. He became their captain. Some of them were in distress, others in debt, and discontented. Such were attracted to the rejected David. It was a blessed scene foreshadowing Him to whom all can gather who are in distress, who feel their debt, their sinfulness, their sorrow and their need. And a greater One than David is here. Our Lord rejected, but owned by those who acknowledge their need, has power to meet it all in the riches of His grace. They with their captain, the Lord's anointed were "outside of the camp." Such a place there is today for all who know Him, who is rejected of men and so much dishonored in that which claims and bears His name. "Let us go forth therefore unto Him without the camp, bearing His reproach" (Heb. 13:13). And later those who had gathered around David in the cave, and suffered with him, were specially remembered (2 Sam. 23:8-39). "If we suffer we shall reign with Him" (2 Tim. 2:12). Psalm 57 was written by David when he fled to the cave. And when he was in the cave he prayed. This prayer is embodied in Psalm 142. It was answered too when the Lord sent to him the 400 men. What food for meditation and reflection is here!

Then he came to Moab. His father and mother were there with him. He thought of making his nest there, yea, more than a nest, a hold; it was not according to the mind of the Lord. His ancestress of blessed memory, Ruth, the Moabitess, had left the land of Moab to dwell in Israel; her great-grandson David leaves the land to dwell in Moab. Again it was unbelief. He tried to escape the troubles which were in store for him. He had to learn patience and endurance. Therefore the Lord sent the prophet Gad with the message to depart. In all his unbelief and failures the Lord did not forsake him, but His watchful, loving eye followed His rejected servant. He cared and provided for him. No harm could reach him. He was not in Saul's hands but in the hands of the Lord. And this is our happy lot. In a psalm he saith "Thou tellest all my wanderings."

A frightful scene follows. Doeg the Edomite tells Saul of what happened at Nob. Saul, demonized Saul, orders the slaughter of the priests and while the servants of Saul refused the bloody work, the Edomite executed the command. Abiathar the son of murdered Ahimelech told David. He knew of Doeg's words to Saul about the shelter Ahimelech had given him. At that time David wrote Psalm 52. Prophetically Doeg, the Edomite, is the type of that cunning man of sin.

Beautiful are David's words to Abiathar (verse 23). They suggest the blessed assurance of salvation and preservation all receive who in faith turn to the Lord Jesus Christ.

CHAPTER 23

1. The victory over the Philistines at Keilah (23:1-13)
2. In the wilderness of Ziph (23:14-26)
3. Saul's return (23:27-29)

Keilah was about six miles southeast of Adullam. David heard of the invasion of the Philistines that they were fighting against this walled city. And he inquired of the Lord, through Abiathar, who had an ephod (verse 6). David's inquiry of the Lord shows the man of faith in his submission to the Lord. He had his lapses, but at heart he owned the Lord and wanted to glorify Him. Twice he asked the Lord; the second time evidently to quiet the fears of the six hundred men who were now with him. The Lord gave him the victory. Then poor, blinded Saul thought David was now shut up in Keilah and could not escape. He knew not the Lord and His power to protect His own. While Saul plotted, David prayed and depended on the Lord, who told him that Saul would come to Keilah and that the men of Keilah would deal treacherously with him and his men. In the wilderness of Ziph Saul sought him every day, but God did not deliver him into his hands. And David learned by experience what the name of Ziph means; it means "refining." In the refining process of suffering and endurance the shepherd-king was fitted for his coming exaltation. In this he is not a type of our Lord, but we can read our own experience here. For the last time Jonathan and David met. He came to strengthen David's hand in God. This is the true purpose of the fellowship of the Saints. What a noble character was Jonathan!

"It is difficult to form an adequate conception of the courage, the spiritual faith, and the moral grandeur of this act. Never did man more completely clear himself from all complicity in guilt than Jonathan from that of his father. And yet not an undutiful word escaped the lips of this brave man. And how truly human is his fond hope that in the days to come, when David would be king, he should stand next to his throne, his trusted adviser, as in the days of sorrow he had been the true and steadfast friend of the outlaw! As we think of what it must have cost Jonathan to speak thus, or again of the sad fate which was so soon to overtake him, there is a deep pathos about this brief interview, almost unequalled in Holy Scripture, to which the ambitious hopes of the sons of Zebedee form not a parallel but a contrast" (A. Edersheim).

The Ziphites after Jonathan's visit discovered David's hiding place to Saul but Saul could not reach him nor touch the Lord's anointed. But David at that time cried mightily to God, "Save me, O God"--"Hear my prayer, O God; give ear to the words of my mouth"; these were some of his utterances recorded in Psalm 54, which was written at that time.

CHAPTER 24

1. In the wilderness of En-gedi (24:1-8)
2. David's words to Saul (24:9-15)
3. Saul's answer to David (24:16-22)

Saul continues in the pursuit of David and with 3000 chosen men he sought David at the rocks of the wild goats. It was in En-gedi, which means "the fountain of the young goat." There were wild rocks and the fountains of water and here David had found his refuge and strongholds. God trained him also amidst the hardships and difficulties suggested by the rocks, while the fountain suggests the refreshing which was also his blessed portion. Perhaps in that trying wilderness he poured out his heart in the way as recorded in Psalm 63. It is certain that he developed constantly in his faith and trust in God. And a test is now permitted to come upon him. Saul had entered a cave. David and his men were in the sides of the cave. But a few steps between him and the unsuspecting Saul! An uplifted sword, one stroke and Saul's career would have been ended. Is he going to do it? Will he take his case out of the hands of the Lord and become his own avenger? And his men remind him of an unrecorded word, which the Lord had spoken to David (verse 4) which David might have used to justify the slaying of Saul. Faith conquers. He looks upon Saul as being still the Lord's anointed and only cut off a part of the skirt of Saul's garment. What magnanimity it was! And even for this his tender conscience smote him. A marvellous, eloquent address to King Saul was delivered by David. He tells him all what he had done and what is in his heart and thus shows the purpose of his soul to leave it all with the Lord. This is faith's language. The Man of God who walks by faith can await the Lord's own time. And thus the case was not Saul against David, but Saul fighting David's Lord. The outcome is obvious. And Saul? His reply, given in the voice of weeping, acknowledged the wrong he had done and the righteous cause of David as well as the future of David, that he would receive the Kingdom of Israel. He also made David swear not to cut off his seed. He is broken down and deeply moved. Yet his heart is unchanged.

CHAPTER 25

1. The death of Samuel (25:1)
2. Nabal and his refusal (25:2-13)
3. Abigail's deed and her prayer (25:14-31)
4. David's answer to Abigail (25:32-35)
5. Nabal's death (25:36-38)
6. Abigail becomes David's wife (25:39-44)

After the death of Samuel, briefly mentioned in the beginning of this chapter, David went still further south into the wilderness of Paran. An interesting story, the story of Nabal and Abigail, is told in this chapter. David had won a great victory over himself and over Saul. The next event records a great failure. He loses his self-control completely, and instead of manifesting the magnanimity he showed towards Saul, he breaks out in a rage and in the violence of his temper he was ready to kill Nabal and his entire household. God alone in His gracious intervention saved him from committing a crime as heinous as the one Saul committed when he slew Ahimelech, his fellow-priests and the inhabitants of Nob. How he failed! How different He was, whose rejection and suffering David foreshadowed, our Lord! What a contrast with His meekness! David was out of touch with the Lord and we read nothing here of David asking the Lord about sending the ten young men to Carmel, nor did he enquire of the Lord, when in the heat of his spirit he ordered the four hundred men to proceed on their dreadful errand.

It is true the provocation was great. He had sent the young men with a message of peace to Nabal, requesting the rich man for a little help. David had regarded the property of Nabal and his shepherds were not molested. The exiled king had a right to expect the little help he asked. And Nabal was an unbeliever. He did not believe in David as the Lord's anointed King, but looked upon him as a slave who had left his master. He refused and insulted the King's messengers. Nabal means "fool." He is a type of natural man and especially those who reject the Lord and His message of peace. His words "my bread"--"my water"--"my flesh"--"my shearers" and the whole story reminds us of that other fool of whom our Lord spoke. He also spoke of "my barns"--"my fruits"--"my goods" (Luke 12:16-21).

David was restrained from his evil purpose by the intervention of beautiful Abigail, the wife of Nabal. When she heard what her husband had done she at once prepared a magnificent present for David and his men. It was a princely gift, including two skins filled with wine. All this she did without consulting her husband. And the place she takes before David, her supplications, her confession, her humble prayer for forgiveness, her delicate reference to the king's sinful haste to shed blood, her faith in David's coming exaltation and her concluding request, "then remember thine handmaid"--all is so rich and beautiful. Abigail the woman with understanding and of a beautiful countenance typifies the true believer and may also be taken as a type of the church. Nabal to whom she is bound as wife is typical of the old nature, the flesh. But Nabal died and Abigail was married to David; even as the believer is dead to sin, dead to the law and is now married to another, even to Christ (Rom. 7:4). We leave it to the reader to follow these hints in their application.

CHAPTER 26

1. The Ziphites and Saul's pursuit (26:1-4)
2. David again spares Saul (26:5-12)
3. David's words to Abner (26:13-16)
4. David's words to Saul (26:17-20)
5. Saul's confession and David's reply (26:21-25)

Hachilah, where we find David now, was six miles east of Ziph and about halfway to En-gedi. The Ziphites once more reveal his hiding place to Saul. And Saul was rushing forward to his doom when with his three thousand chosen men he took up the hunt again. The two, the rejected king and God's true king, are close together and David finds Saul in the trench and the people round about. With David were Ahimelech, the Hittite and Abishai, the son of Zeruah, the sister of David. They creep up to sleeping Saul. Once more his enemy is given into his hands and once more David does not want to take his case out of the Lord's hands. He is true to his own words (24:15). Abishai, David's own nephew, counsels the

smiting of Saul. But David does not want to touch the Lord's anointed. He declares "the Lord shall smite him" or "his day shall come to die." He leaves him in the Lord's hands to deal with him as it pleases Him. He acts in faith. Would to God that all the Lord's people would act at all times in the same manner, when they suffer persecution. The sleep which had fallen upon the company was of the Lord. He can keep awake (Esther 6:1) and He can put to sleep, to suit His own will and purpose. Then David took Saul's spear, perhaps the same he had cast at him and his water-cruise. Alas! poor, apostate Saul had been deprived before of what these two things mean spiritually; he had lost his weapon to fight in faith and righteousness, he knew no longer the water, which refreshes the soul. How the spear and the water-cruise are lost today to nominal, disobedient, apostate Christendom!

The sleeping company is aroused. He ridicules and chides Abner for his unwatchfulness. Saul recognized David's voice and the last discourse between the two kings follows. We call attention to two statements. David witnesses to his faith and trust in the Lord. He trusts Him that He will deliver him out of all tribulation. Saul's last words to David are prophetic. "Thou shalt both do great things, and also shall prevail." David did not hear Saul's voice again after this, nor did Saul see David again. The sad history of poor, lost Saul will soon be consummated in his visit to the witch at Endor and his miserable end.

CHAPTER 27

1. David's unbelief (27:1-2)
2. With Achish, King of Gath (27:3-7)
3. His slaughter and deception 27:8-12)

David became despondent. After all the gracious evidences that the Lord was with him, shielded him and guarded his very footsteps, he relapses in unbelief. Such is the heart of man! He fears for his life and then takes once more his case out of the Lord's hands and flees to Achish the king of Gath. He had been there before and at that former visit he feigned insanity and the Philistinian Achish of Gath had driven him away. Now he is welcomed by Achish, for he brings a small army of 600 young men with him and receives Ziklag to dwell in with his two wives and his household. And Saul after this sought him no more.

David abode there one year and four months; a long time to be away from the Lord. And at the same time he made raids upon the enemies of God and His people. He invaded the Geshurites, the Girzites and the Amalekites. It was not a real work for God, but the result of a self-centered heart and its aim was selfishness. It shows how a person whose heart is out of touch with God may outwardly be engaged in fighting evil for selfish reasons. David shared in the spoils, yet he deceived the King of the Philistines. And the road leads down. Unbelief drags down, lower and lower. David, as we learn from the beginning of the next chapter, became the body guard of Achish and with his men is to fight Israel. A sad record it is. How often God's people followed the same road.

7. Saul and the Witch at Endor

CHAPTER 28

1. David fully joined to Achish (28:1-2)
2. Forsaken Saul (28:3-6)
3. The command to seek a witch (28:7)
4. Saul's visit to Endor (28:8-14)
5. Samuel's solemn message (28:15-20)
6. Saul's despair and departure (28:21-23)

Saul's final plunge towards his awful end is the main topic of this chapter. Israel had adopted necromancy, asking the dead, and other occult and wicked practices of the Canaanitish nations. They had those who were possessed by demons;

the so-called mediums of spiritism and the modern day Psychical research endeavors follow the same paths. Saul had cleared the land of these necromancers. Saul became frightened by the advancing Philistines. But when he asked the Lord there was no answer. Then in despair he sought the woman with the familiar spirit at Endor. Disguised he sneaked away to the woman. And he swears unto her in the Lord's name to exempt her from all punishment in breaking the law. What presumption! He demands to see Samuel. The woman no doubt had the power to communicate with wicked spirits, who represented themselves as those who had died. It is the same in spiritualism. The messages which are transmitted through the women mediums in that cult do not emanate from the dead at all, but from lying spirits, who impersonate the dead. More than once has this been practically demonstrated. When this woman at Endor saw Samuel, she cried out in fear and at the same time she recognized the king, who told her not to be afraid. (It has been suggested that the word "Samuel" should be Saul in verse 12. The woman, it is said, recognized Saul, which would explain the second half of that verse. However, there is no reason why such a change should be made.) She had not expected the return of Samuel from the realms of death. Was it really Samuel or only an apparition? There can be no doubt whatever that it was Samuel who came up. It was by God's own power and permission that he appeared to pronounce the final doom upon Saul. And what a message it was! "The LORD is departed from thee and become thine enemy;"--"the LORD hath rent the kingdom out of thine hand;"--"the LORD will deliver Israel with thee into the hands of the Philistines." Then came the announcement of his death and the death of his sons. "Tomorrow shalt thou and thy sons be with me." This means that they were to die. Perhaps the more correct rendering is given in the Septuagint version, which reads: "Tomorrow shalt thou and thy sons with thee be fallen."

Solemn is the record of Saul as given in 1 Chronicles 10:13. "So Saul died for his transgressions which he committed against the LORD, even against the Word of the LORD, which he kept not, and also for asking counsel of one that had a familiar spirit, to enquire of it." Such was the condition and doom of the people's king, before God's king came into power. Here is a striking and significant type of the conditions on the earth before God's King, our Lord Jesus Christ, the son of David and Israel's King is enthroned. The kings of the earth and nominal Christendom are disobedient to the Word of God. They like Saul commit transgressions against the Lord and follow seducing spirits and doctrines of demons (1 Tim. 4:1). It is said that a number of European rulers have their own mediums and necromancers. But the kings of the earth defying God and His laws will be dragged lower still. The spirits of demons, working miracles, will yet go forth, during the closing years of this present age, and possess the kings of the earth and the whole world and gather them together to the battle of that great day of God Almighty, the battle of Armageddon (Rev. 16:13-16). This is foreshadowed in Saul's apostasy and in Saul's end.

8. David and Achish and Ziklag Destroyed and Avenged

CHAPTER 29

1. The objections of the Philistine lords (29:1-5)
2. Achish dismisses David (29:6-11)

While David's enemy, Saul, heard his coming doom, David was still with the enemies of God's people. The Philistines were gathered against Israel and David was with Achish ready to fight against the Lord's people. The lords of the Philistines however object to his presence. They still remember the song of bygone days and fear treachery. Then follows the description of how Achish and David parted. David's words expressing his great willingness to stay with the enemies of God show how deep a believer may fall when he has wandered away from God. He calls wicked Achish "my lord the King" and his own people Israel, whose anointed king he was, "the enemies." God's mercy kept him from plunging deeper than that.

CHAPTER 30

1. The Amalekites destroy Ziklag (30:1-5)
2. David's distress and return unto the Lord (30:6-8)

3. David pursues the Amalekites (30:9-10)
4. The young Egyptian and the defeat of the enemy (30:11-20)
5. The threatening dissension and David's decision (30:21-25)
6. The spoil sent to Judah (30:26-31)

The chastening hand of the Lord now rests heavily upon wayward, backsliding David. The Amalekites had destroyed Ziklag. The entire city was burned to the ground and the women and children were taken away captive by the Amalekites. The people rose up against David and were ready to stone him. He reaps the fruit of his sowing. He had gone into an alliance with the enemies of God and His people, and now he finds that the Lord permitted the enemy to touch his possessions. The Lord through affliction, loss and sorrow spoke to the heart of David. How humiliating that his followers were ready to stone him! They understood that his behaviour had brought upon them the disaster, that he was another Achan (Joshua 7). It was then that he turned to the Lord. "David encouraged himself in the LORD his God." Here we see the difference between him and Saul. Affliction and sorrow, the chastenings of the Lord, recall the true believer and bring him back to the Lord. He sought the presence of the Lord and once more through Abiathar, who had the ephod, enquired of the Lord. And here graciously the Lord met His servant who had failed Him! There is no word of rebuke on account of the 16 months David had wandered from the Lord, but instead the Lord assures His servant that he would recover all.

The incident of the young Egyptian is very interesting. David appears now once more as a type of our Lord. He did not foreshadow the Lord Jesus during the months he was with the Philistines. The Egyptian is a type of the unsaved. He is an Egyptian (the type of the world); he was found in the field ("the field is the world" Matt. 13). He was the slave of an Amalekite. Amalek as we have seen in the annotations of Exodus (chapter 17) and in Judges, is a type of the flesh. Behind it stands Satan. Thus the unsaved, the one who is not born again, is of the world and a slave of Amalek, serving the flesh under Satan's dominion. The physical condition of this young Egyptian also typifies the spiritual condition of the unsaved. And David in showing him mercy is a type of Christ. The young man's confession, the bread and water given to him, can easily be applied in the gospel. The story of the Egyptian reminds us of the parable of the good Samaritan in the Gospel of Luke. The young Egyptian is assured of his safety; the slave of the Amalekite becomes the servant of the king. The company to which he belonged is eating and drinking and dancing. They rest secure dreaming of no danger, when all at once the battle cry of the king is upon them. It is the picture of the world. Thus sudden destruction will come upon them. And David recovered all.

How differently the dissension, which threatened among David's men, would have turned out had he still been away from the Lord. But now he acts in the sweetness of grace. The great spoil is distributed among the different cities of Judah. Well may we think here of the victory of our coming King in which His people will share through His infinite grace.

9. The Death of Saul

CHAPTER 31

1. Saul wounded in battle (31:1-3)
2. Saul a suicide (31:4-6)
3. The victorious Philistines (31:7-10)
4. The bodies recovered and burnt (31:11-13)

A sad ending to one of the saddest stories of the Bible. Jonathan, Abinadab and Melchi-shua, Saul's sons, fall first. Then Saul is wounded. He asks his armour bearer to make an end of his sufferings. There is no evidence whatever of his repentance and turning unto the Lord. He died as he had lived in rebellion against Jehovah. The armour-bearer refused to kill Saul; then he fell upon his own sword and committed suicide. He is the first suicide mentioned in the Bible. Ahithophel (2 Sam. 17:23); Zimri (1 Kings 16:18) and Judas Iscariot (Matt. 27:5) are other suicides recorded in the Word. The first chapter of the second book of Samuel tells us of an Amalekite who slew Saul. This is not a contradiction at all as some have declared. First Saul asked his armour-bearer to slay him; he refused. Then he fell upon his sword but was not

wholly successful. In anguish he leaned upon his spear and when the Amalekite came along, he told him that his life was still in him (2 Sam. 1:9) and he slew him. His end is sad and has its solemn lessons. His sin was the sparing of Amalek, we say again, the type of the flesh. Of this sin Samuel had reminded him in his message of doom (28:18). His disobedience ended in self-destruction. Such is sin. And an Amalekite made the end of him. Sin allowed and followed will do its dreadful work in the end, as this Amalekite, spared by Saul, ends his life.

The triumph of the Philistines is complete. Saul's body is held up to scorn in the idol-house of the Philistines and afterward his body and the bodies of his sons are recovered and buried by Jabesh. The people's choice, King Saul, has gone down in ruin and shame. All looks hopeless now. Israel's hope centers now in the coming king after God's own heart, David the son of Jesse. How he foreshadows the true King and his coming kingdom, He who is the hope of Israel, the hope of the world, as well as the hope of the church, we shall find in the second book of Samuel.

THE BOOK OF SECOND SAMUEL

The Annotated Bible

Arno Clement Gaebelein

THE SECOND BOOK OF SAMUEL

The Division of Second Samuel

The second book of Samuel contains the history of David after Saul's death, his reign over Judah and over all Israel, as well as the great events which transpired during his reign. The center of the book is the record of his fall, the chastisements which he had to pass through as a result of his sin and his subsequent restoration after the rebellion of his son Absalom. The last four chapters form an appendix in which various episodes in David's life are recorded; it tells us of the victories of the King. Much in this book, even more so than in the previous history, has a typical meaning, which we shall follow as far as the purpose of our annotations permits. We make the following division:

I. DAVID KING OF JUDAH AND THE EVENTS OF HIS REIGN

1. David's Lamentation for Saul and Jonathan (1:1-2)
2. David Anointed King over Judah (2:1-7)
3. Abner's Revolt and the War which Followed (2:8-32)
4. Abner's Deeds and End (3:1-39)
5. The Death of Ish-bosheth (4:1-12)

II. DAVID KING OVER ALL ISRAEL AND THE EVENTS OF HIS REIGN

1. David Anointed King Over All Israel (5:1-5)
2. David's Conquest of Zion and Victory Over the Philistines (5:6-25)
3. The Ark Brought to Zion (6:1-23)
4. The Lord's Promise to David and the Covenant (7:1-29)
5. The Extension of His Kingdom (8:1-18)
6. David and Mephibosheth (9:1-13)
7. The War with Ammon and Syria (10:1-19)

III. DAVID'S SIN, CHASTISEMENTS AND RESTORATION

1. David's Great Sin (11:1-27)
2. The Message of God and David's Confession. The Beginning of the Chastisements (12:1-31)
3. Further Chastisement: Amnon, Tamar and Absalom (13:1-39)
4. David and Absalom (14:1-33)
5. Absalom's Conspiracy and David's Flight (15:1-37)
6. The Sorrows and Testings of the King (16:1-23)
7. Absalom, Ahitophel and Hushai (17:1-29)
8. The Civil War and Absalom's Death (18:1-33)
9. The Return of the King (19:1-43)

10. The Revolt of Sheba (20:1-26)

IV. THE APPENDIX TO THE HISTORY OF DAVID

1. The Famine and the Wars with the Philistines (21:1-22)
2. David's Song of Deliverance (22:1-51)
3. The Last Words of David and the Record of the Mighty Men (23:1-39)
4. David's Failure: the Altar on the Threshing Floor of Araunah (24:1-25)

Analysis and Annotations

I. DAVID KING OF JUDAH AND THE EVENTS OF HIS REIGN

1. David's Lamentation for Saul and Jonathan

CHAPTER 1

1. The Death of Saul and Jonathan announced to David (1:1-10)
2. David's great Grief (1:11-12)
3. The Amalekite slain (1:13-16)
4. David's Lamentation (1:17-27)

David heard of the death of Saul and Jonathan from the lips of the Amalekite, who also brought him the crown and the bracelet of the dead king. The story of this young man has been branded by some as a falsehood, invented to gain favor from David. It is not necessary to reconcile the supposed contradiction of the Amalekite's story with the account of Saul's death in the last chapter of the preceding book, by saying the Amalekite lied to David. We have explained this in the annotations of chapter 31. When the Amalekite said to David, "So I stood upon him, and slew him, because I was sure that he could not live after that he was fallen," he referred to the fact that Saul had fallen upon his own sword, in committing suicide and was in great suffering. And great was David's grief when he hears the sad news. He and his companions wept and fasted in mourning over Saul, Jonathan and the people of the Lord. Then he commanded the Amalekite to be slain because he had smitten the Lord's anointed; thus he honored Saul in his death, while the Amalekite received the punishment for his deed. Then David broke out in his great lamentation over Saul and Jonathan. The eighteenth verse as given in the authorized version is unintelligible. The Hebrew reads "and he bade them teach the children of Judah the bow;" the words "the use of" are supplied. Others read instead "the song of the bow" and claim it has reference to this lamentation, which David taught Judah. (See verse 22.) The book of Jasher (the upright) is never mentioned again (Joshua 10:12-14). The lamentation of David is a wonderful outpouring of soul. First he speaks of the calamity which has come to Israel in the death of Saul and Jonathan (verses 19-22); then he extols the virtues of both. What grace this manifests if we consider that Saul had hunted David and put upon him so many afflictions! He does not refer to it in a single word. Beautiful beyond description are his loving words on Jonathan.

I am distressed for thee, my brother Jonathan:
Very pleasant hast thou been unto me.
Thy love to me was wonderful,
Passing the love of women.

But there is one whose love is greater than David's love for Jonathan, even our Lord Jesus Christ.

2. David Anointed King over Judah

CHAPTER 2:1-7

1. David's inquiry of the Lord (2:1-3)
2. Anointed king over Judah (2:4)
3. His message to the men of Jabesh-gilead (2:5-7)

The first thing mentioned of David after his lamentation over Saul and Jonathan is that he inquired of the Lord. He would not do a single step towards claiming the rights which belonged to him without consulting the Lord. It shows how David, with all his faults, was in submission to the Lord. He waits on the Lord ready to follow His guidance and in this David acknowledged his complete dependence on Him who had chosen him as His King over His people. In this he is a type also of our Lord Jesus. The answer came to him at once that he was to go up into the cities of Judah. Then the men of Judah came and anointed him king over the house of Judah. There is nothing ostentatious about it nor does he take any steps whatever to extend his God-given rights beyond the tribe of Judah. His first act as king was to thank the men of Jabesh-gilead for the kindness they had done in the burial of Saul. He also exhorted them to be strong and announced his kingship over Judah.

3. Abner's Revolt and the War which Followed**CHAPTER 2:8-32**

1. Abner makes Ish-bosheth king over Israel (2:8-11)
2. The defeat of Abner (2:12-17)
3. Abner and Joab and Joab's victory (2:18-32)

God's king began his reign in quietness, and opposition and open revolt followed at once. Abner, who had been the captain of Saul's host, took a son of Saul by the name of Ish-bosheth and made him king in Gilead. The original name of this son was "Esh-baal," which means "the fire of Baal" (1 Chronicles 8:33). "Ish-bosheth" was his other name; it means "man of shame." He seems to have been a weakling and a tool in Abner's hand. Ish-bosheth's influence was soon extended over all Israel and the false King ruled, while David was only acknowledged by the faithful men of Judah. David's reign over Judah was seven years and six months. Here are faint hints of what will be repeated in the future history of Israel. Another Ish-bosheth, a pretender to the throne of Israel, the false king, will be in the earth. He comes in his own name, with no claim whatever to the throne. And the true King, like David, will only be acknowledged by a faithful remnant of his people. The seven years and a half remind us of the last period of Israel's history when these things come to pass. However, Ish-bosheth's weakness and especially his end makes a fuller application on these lines impossible.

The other prominent person is Joab, the son of Zeruiah, who went out with the servants of David. (Joab was David's nephew. See 1 Sam. 26:6; 1 Chronicles 2:16.) They met Abner's force about six miles northwest of Jerusalem by the pool of Gibeon. Then followed at Abner's suggestion a conflict between twelve young men of Benjamin, the subjects of Ish-bosheth, and twelve of David's servants. A wicked scene followed. They slaughtered each other at Helkathazzurim, "the field of sharp swords," after which there was a severe battle which ended with the defeat of Abner. All this shows the sorrowful conditions which existed among Israel, foreshadowing again the worse conditions throughout this age and especially at the close of it. Then follows the record of the three sons of Zeruiah, Joab, Abishai and Asahel. Asahel followed hard after Abner and though repeatedly warned by Abner, continued in his pursuit till Abner in self-defense slew him. The battle ended with the loss of nineteen servants of David and Asahel, while Abner lost 360 men. "Shall the sword devour forever?" was Abner's question. As long as God's true King does not occupy the throne, ruling in righteousness and in peace, wars and bloodshed will continue. The sword cannot be stopped till He reigns. In His coming kingdom nations will learn war no more and beat their swords into plowshares.

4. Abner's Deeds and End

CHAPTER 3

1. The long war and its results (3:1)
2. David's family (3:2-5)
3. Abner's defiant deed (3:6-7)
4. Abner and Ish-bosheth (3:8-11)
5. Abner's defection to David (3:12)
6. David's request (3:13-16)
7. Abner with David (3:17-22)
8. Abner's end (3:23-30)
9. David's lamentation over Abner (3:31-39)

The first verse speaks of the long war between the house of Saul and the house of David. And David waxed stronger and stronger. The weakness of the king in giving way to the flesh is next faithfully recorded; his self-indulgence in his different marriages. Alas! he began his sowing in the flesh from which later he was to reap such a sad harvest. Six sons are mentioned, born to David by his six wives. Three of these sons became a source of sorrow and grief to him. Ammon's vile deed is found in chapter 13. Absalom was a still greater trial to him, Adonijah became the rival of Solomon (1 Kings 1:5). In this record of taking these different women as wives, in this gross indulgence of the flesh, he prepared himself for the great sin of his life. Disorder and much confusion followed. Abner's deed in taking Rizpah insulted Saul's house and Ish-bosheth protested and Abner's fury came upon the weakling whom he had made king. Then suddenly Abner professed belief in David's God-given kingdom. His arrogant pride is seen in verse 10; as if it was in his power to set up the throne of David over all Israel, from Dan to Beer-sheba. The poor counterfeit king was silenced. Then we see Abner entering negotiations with David. Had David again relapsed that he fell in with Abner? We do not hear a word that he inquired of the Lord. He makes a condition under which Abner is to see his face. Michal, Saul's daughter, the first wife he had, who was now the wife of Phaltiell is to be brought to him. He then received her after his request to Ish-bosheth, while her husband accompanied her as far as the border of Judah. The subsequent history, Michal's mockery, shows that it was a mistake for David to take her back. How different all would have been if David had inquired of the Lord.

Abner, the shrewd schemer, was then entertained by David in a great banquet at which occasion he offered to make David ruler over all Israel. And David listened and sent him away in peace. But was it God's way and God's plan to have His anointed made king through such an instrument? Abner's death frustrating his plans gives the answer. Joab, moved by envy, jealousy and bitter hatred, slew Abner in the same way as he had slain his brother Asahel. He died for the blood of Asahel he had shed. An insinuation is made as if Joab's deed was justified as the avenger. This however could not be sustained by the law for Abner's death in slaying Asahel was in self-defence. But David cleared himself from so abominable a deed. "I and my kingdom are guiltless before the LORD forever from the blood of Abner." A public mourning is instituted in which Joab is forced to partake and the king lamented over Abner. "And all the people took notice of it, and it pleased them, as whatsoever the king did pleased all the people." The king's wise behaviour had its effect upon the people and thus his kingdom was strengthened.

5. The Death of Ish-bosheth

CHAPTER 4

1. Ish-bosheth in despair (4:1-3)
2. Mephibosheth, the lame son (4:4)
3. The end of Ish-bosheth (4:5-8)
4. The punishment of the murderers (4:9-12)

Abner's death meant the speedy end of Ish-bosheth's pretentious reign. Baanah and Rechab were his captains and became his murderers. While Ish-bosheth was resting in the heat of the day they sneaked in and murdered the sleeping son

of Saul, then brought the head to David. They claimed to be instruments of God in the execution of the wicked deed, expecting approval and a reward from David. But the king received them in a different way. Here David's trust in Jehovah breaks through the dark clouds and the King's heart is revealed. "As the LORD liveth, who hath redeemed my soul out of all adversity." He acknowledges the Lord's gracious help in the past and his present confidence in Him. His case had rested in Jehovah's hands and in the ghastly deed of the two captains the King did not see Jehovah's intervention in his behalf, but he looked upon them as murderers. Swift judgment was executed upon them. David is now through these circumstances the sole and undisputed claimant of the throne of Israel and his anointing as king over all Israel must speedily follow. Through all the sad occurrences since Abner had made Ish-bosheth king, David had maintained his integrity. In all the evil deeds, the bloodshed and cold-blooded murders he had no part. He acted in justice. In this at least he is a type of Him who will reign over the earth in righteousness.

We must not overlook verse 4 in which Jonathan's son Mephibosheth is mentioned for the first time. He was the only representative of Saul's line, a helpless cripple. His story and David's kindness to him we shall soon follow.

II. DAVID KING OVER ALL ISRAEL AND THE EVENTS OF HIS REIGN

1. David Anointed King over all Israel

CHAPTER 5:1-5

1. David anointed king over all Israel (5:1-3)
2. Duration of his reign (5:4-5)

The events of the reign of David over Judah had a beneficial effect upon all Israel. After Ish-bosheth's death all the tribes of Israel came to David at Hebron. It is a blessed scene when they appear to anoint him King over all Israel. 1 Chronicles 12 should here be consulted. In that chapter the names of those are given who stood by David. In verse 38 we read: "All these men of war, that could keep rank, came with a perfect heart to Hebron, to make David king over all Israel; and all the rest also of Israel were of one heart to make David king." The coming of all Israel to Hebron was one of the most magnificent spectacles in the history of the nation. One only needs to take a pencil and add the numbers mentioned in 1 Chron. 12:24- 37 to find what a great army had gathered to make David king. There were 1222 chiefs and 339,600 men. Here we see a united Israel swept by a tremendous enthusiasm. Now they own him as their own bone and flesh; the victories of the past are remembered as well as the divine promise that he, David the Bethlehemite, should be the shepherd of Israel as well as their captain.

But there is coming for Israel a greater day than the day in Hebron, when they anointed David king. It foreshadows but faintly the glorious day when their long rejected King-Messiah, the Son of David, comes again. Then they will own Him and He will own them. They will also know and remember all God has done through Him. He will then indeed be the Shepherd and King of Israel. All this and much more is foreshadowed in David's coronation and his reign. David is the type of the coming reign of our Lord as "King of Righteousness" while Solomon and his reign typify Him as "King of Peace." And David made a covenant with them in Hebron as the Lord Jesus will enter into covenant with the nation in the day of His return.

Then the duration of David's reign is given. Seven years and six months he reigned over Judah and over all Israel and Judah 33 years. The record here does not speak of the great feast which was made at Hebron. We find this also mentioned in 1 Chronicles 12:39-40. It is typical of the time of joy and rejoicing in Israel and throughout the world, when the true King has come. Then the great feast of which Isaiah speaks will take place (Is. 25:6-10).

2. David's Conquest of Zion and Victory over the Philistines

CHAPTER 5:6-25

1. David's conquest of Zion (5:6-10)
2. Hiram King of Tyre (5:11-12)
3. David's additional concubines and wives (5:13-15)
4. The victory over the Philistines (5:17-25)

Zion is closely linked with David's anointing as king over all Israel. Here 1 Chronicles 11 must be read for a more complete account of what took place. Jerusalem is now to become the capital of the great kingdom. The oldest name was Salem; the name of Jebus was given to it by the Jebusites (Judges 19:10). After David's conquest the ancient name was restored and it became known as Jerusalem ("habitation of peace"). The town had previously been taken (Judges 1:8) but the stronghold of the upper city, Mount Zion, remained in the hands of the Jebusites. David took the stronghold. Jebusite means "the one who treads down." It reminds us of the words of our Lord, "Jerusalem shall be trodden down by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled" (Luke 21:24). Jerusalem and Zion are still trodden down by the Gentiles. The day is coming when the King will end all this. Jerusalem is yet to be "the city of the great King." (Ps. 48). Here we have once more a prophetic foreshadowing of what will take place, only on a larger scale, when He, who is greater than David, begins His long promised reign in the midst of His people. After this we shall find much more about Zion, especially in the prophets and in the psalms. It is the place Jehovah has chosen (Ps. 132:13-14). To this place, where his throne was, David also brought the ark. When our Lord establishes His kingdom, Zion will be the glorious and the beautiful Place. "This is my rest forever; here will I dwell; I have desired it" (Ps. 132:14). Then He will bless out of Zion (Ps. 128:5); and out of Zion shall go forth the law (Is. 2:3). He will be enthroned upon the holy hill of Zion (Ps. 2:6); the rod of His strength cometh out of Zion (Ps. 110:2); Zion will be the joy of the whole earth (Ps 48:2).

Then Hiram, the King of Tyre, is mentioned. He sent messengers to David, as well as cedar trees, carpenters and masons, and they built David a house. It must be understood that we have in this and the events which follow not a strict chronology. The children mentioned here were born at a later period. All is put in here to show how David grew great and that the Lord was with him. Hiram, the Gentile king, and the messengers he sent, are typical of that day, when our Lord reigns in Zion and "the Kings of Tarshish and the isles shall bring presents"--when all nations shall serve Him (Ps. 72:10-11).

The Hebrew names of the eleven sons of David are of deep significance. It seems the story of the redemption which is in Him, whom David foreshadows, is made known in these names. Shammuah (heard); Shobab (returning); Nathan (he is given); Solomon (peace); Ibhar (the Lord chooses); Elishua (my God is salvation); Nepheg (budding); Japhia (glorious); Elishama (God heareth); Eliada (whom God knoweth); Eliphalet (my God is escape). This is a most blessed revelation contained in those names; and some Christians can say there is no meaning in names! Read them in their meaning and ponder over each as telling forth the very gospel story from start to finish.

Twice David enquired of the Lord concerning the Philistines. Once he is told to go up and the Lord gave him the victory and he burned the images of the Philistines. It is another picture of how the coming King will make an end of idolatry. Again he asked the Lord and was told not to go up. Then the Lord smote the Philistines Himself. In all David was obedient.

3. The Ark Brought to Zion

CHAPTER 6

1. The ark fetched by David (6:1-5)
2. Uzzah: his error and death (6:6-9)
3. The ark in the house of Obed-edom (6:10-11)
4. The ark brought into David's city (6:12-19)
5. Michal's mockery of David (6:20-23)

It is of importance to read 1 Chronicles 13 for a better understanding of how the ark was brought from Kirjathjearim to David's city. The book of Chronicles contains these larger records because in that book these events are described in their theocratic character, while in Samuel the outward aspect of David's kingdom is followed. David issued the call that the people with the priests and the Levites should gather to bring again the ark of God (1 Chron. 12:2-3). However we do not read anything more about the Levites, who alone were commissioned to carry the ark. It is evident that David neglected to follow the divine instructions given in the law concerning the handling of the ark. (See Numbers 4.) This neglect may be traced to the fact that David did not inquire of the Lord. The way they transported the ark was the way of the Philistines (1 Sam. 6:7). When Uzzah put forth his hand to steady the ark, he was smitten for his error and died. God had spoken to His people and taught them the lesson that the ways of the Philistines and disobedience to His Word in holy things demands His judgment. How many in the past and more so today act like Uzzah when in service for God they employ the methods of the world and disregard entirely His Word. Godly fear and faithful submission to the Word of God are essentials in true service for God. Service without these is often a snare and results in dishonour.

Then the progress of the ark was arrested, because David filled with fear would not remove it to his city. The ark found a resting place for three months in the house of Obed-edom (servant of Edom); he was a Levite and therefore authorized to care for the ark (1 Chron. 26:1-5). Blessing rested upon his house. The judgment of Uzzah and the blessing of Obed-edom had a great effect upon David. "So David went and brought up the ark of God from the house of Obed-edom into the city of David with gladness." This is all we find in our chapter. But how did he bring the ark up? 1 Chronicles 15 gives the answer. "Then David said, none ought to carry the ark of God but the Levites; for them hath the LORD chosen to carry the ark of God, and to minister unto Him for ever." The sons of Kohath, Merari, Gershon, etc., are given there. All is now done in accordance with the Word of God and blessing follows. And David filled with divine joy danced, girded with a linen ephod, before the Lord. After the ark had been set in its proper place in the tabernacle which David had pitched and the burnt offerings and peace offerings had been brought, he blessed the people in the name of the Lord. In his dancing the king had taken a place amidst the people. And Michal, who is called here not the wife of the king, but "the daughter of Saul," despised David. She looked upon David's holy joy as an indecent humiliation, while the king declared he would even be more vile than thus and base in his own sight. What a contrast with the pride of Saul which is now manifested in his daughter Michal. And what happened when the ark had been put into the tabernacle? 1 Chronicles 16:4-36 tells us how David appointed Levites to minister and then he delivered into the hands of Asaph and his brethren a great Psalm of praise. And that sublime utterance looks forward to a far more glorious day, when the Lord dwells in Zion in the midst of an obedient people. Then the heavens will be glad and the earth rejoice and among all the nations it will be said "Jehovah reigneth"; and even nature will sing in the presence of the Lord (1 Chron. 16:31-36).

4. The Lord's Promise to David and the Covenant

CHAPTER 7

1. David's desire (7:1-3)
2. Nathan receives the message for David (7:4-17)
3. David in the presence of Jehovah (7:18-29)

We reach now a climax. The Lord speaks and reveals His great purposes He had in His eternal councils for David, the king after His own heart. We behold the king in peace sitting in his own house; he had rest from all his enemies. In pious meditation the heart of the king had but one great thought, one great ambition. The prophet Nathan is in his presence and to him he speaks. "See now, I dwell in an house of cedar, but the ark of God dwelleth within curtains." And Nathan told him to do all that was in his heart. But he had spoken without divine authority. God knew all David planned and what was in his heart. While His prophet encouraged David to carry out his wishes, God meant otherwise.

That night Nathan received an important message. The Lord told Nathan that David thought of building Him a house, but that the Lord would build David a house. Then He promises him a son. "He shall build an house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom for ever." Solomon is first in view, but he is only a type of Him, who said while on

earth "a greater than Solomon is here." In Christ alone this great covenant-promise is to be fulfilled. Chastening for his offspring is announced, but a disannulment of the covenant is impossible, for God's gifts and calling are without repentance. "But my mercy shall not depart away from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away before thee. And thine house and thy kingdom shall be established forever before thee, thy throne shall be established forever." More than that, this great covenant was confirmed by the oath of Jehovah. "Once I have sworn by My holiness that I will not lie unto David. His seed shall endure forever, and his throne as the sun before Me" (Ps. 89:35-36). And when He was about to come, the Son of David according to the flesh, but also David's Lord, He who spoke these words to Nathan, it was divinely announced "the Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of His father David. And He shall reign forever and of His kingdom there shall be no end" (Luke 1:32-33). That throne and that kingdom He has not yet received. He fills the Father's throne in the highest heaven, but all heaven and earth wait for the appointed time when He will come again to claim His crown-rights and receive the world-wide kingdom, which David in inspired songs of praise so often beheld (Ps. 72).

"And this prophecy refers neither only to Solomon nor only to Christ; nor has it a twofold application, but it is a covenant-promise which, extending along the whole line, culminates in the Son of David, and in all its fulness applies only to Him. These three things did God join in it, of which one necessarily implies the other, alike in the promise and in the fulfilment: a unique relationship, a unique kingdom, and a unique fellowship and service resulting from both. The unique relationship was that of Father and Son, which in all its fulness only came true in Christ (Heb. 1:5). The unique kingdom was that of Christ, which would have no end (Luke 1:32, 33; John 3:35). And the unique sequence of it was that brought about through the temple of His body (John 2:19), which will appear in its full proportions when the New Jerusalem comes down out of heaven (Rev. 21:1-3).

"Such was the glorious hope opening up wider and wider, till at its termination David could see 'afar off' the dawn of the bright morning of eternal glory; such was the destiny and the mission which, in His infinite goodness, God assigned to His chosen servant. Much there was still in him that was weak, faltering, and even sinful; nor was he, whose was the inheritance of such promises, even to build an earthly temple. Many were his failings and sins, and those of his successors; and heavy rods and sore stripes were to fall upon them. But that promise never failed." (A. Edersheim, Bible History)

And to this we add, nor will the promise ever fail in the future. Even now all is preparing for Him who alone is the Hope of the world. "Thy Kingdom come" is still the prayer, nor will it ever come till the King's coronation day arrives. And Nathan delivered faithfully the great covenant message. David's response is beautiful, yea it measures up to the fullness of grace the gracious Lord had bestowed upon him. He does not seek the fellowship of Nathan to talk over this unspeakably Wonderful promise. He sat before the Lord. All the thoughts in him, planning to work and to build the Lord a house, were forever hushed. He is in His presence as a worshipper, pouring out his grateful heart. Jehovah's grace has touched the innermost cords of his soul; they give forth their sweet vibrations, which ascend in a holy melody to the courts above. He is humbled, bowed in the dust. "Who am I, Lord God? and what is my house that thou hast brought me hitherto?"--He believes all he has heard; he trusts in every word. His prayer is "do as thou hast said." What an hour it was when the king with the message of grace and mercy was in the presence of the Lord! May we who are the Recipients of even greater grace in our Lord Jesus Christ respond to that grace as David did.

5. The Extension of His Kingdom

CHAPTER 8

1. The Philistines and Moab smitten (8:1-2)
2. Hadadezer overthrown (8:3-8)
3. Further conquests and triumphs (8:9-14)
4. David's reign and his associates (8:15-18)

Great conquests and victories follow. David arose from the presence of the Lord to go forth to conquer. With such a message he had heard, assuring him of the Lord's presence and power, of the success of his kingdom, he began to extend

his kingdom over the different nations which surrounded the land. The Lord was with him and preserved him withersoever he went. The history of these wars for the enlargement of the kingdom of David we shall have occasion to follow a little closer in our annotations of the first book of Chronicles. The extension of the kingdom of our Lord when He comes and begins His kingly work among the nations, to rule them with a rod of iron, is foreshadowed in these events.

When we read in verse 15 of David's reign executing judgment and justice we have another faint picture of the rule of the coming King. The leading officers of the kingdom are mentioned. Joab was the general over his army; Jehosaphat the recorder. Zadok and Ahimelech were the priests; Seraiah the scribe. Benaiah had charge of the Cherethites and Pelethites; these two names mean "executioners and runners, while David's sons were also ruling with him. Order prevailed in all things. When that true kingdom will be established on earth there will also be those who rule under the King, who have charge over five or ten cities (Luke 19:17- 18). David's sons who ruled with him may represent typically believers who are sons of God in Christ and fellow heirs with Him.

6. David and Mephibosheth

CHAPTER 9

1. Mephibosheth brought to David (9:1-6)
2. Grace and mercy shown to him (9:7-13)

The story of Mephibosheth is the first thing mentioned after the government of David had been fully established. Typically it reveals the gospel in a beautiful way, and dispensationally the kindness of God which will be manifested in the coming kingdom. Mephibosheth is a type of the sinner and the condition which he is in. He was helpless, being lame of both feet. How he became lame is found in chapter 4:4. He fell and became lame, a helpless cripple. It reminds us of the fall of man and the helpless condition into which sin has put man. Therefore he could not come to David. He had to be carried into the king's presence. The sinner cannot come of himself to the Saviour; He has to seek him out. And David wanted to show him "the kindness of God" for Jonathan's sake. "Thus the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man hath appeared" (Titus 3:4). God for Christ's sake shows His great kindness to sinful man. Mephibosheth means "shame out of the mouth"; when he hears from David's lips what kindness was prepared for him he confessed with his mouth his own shame and nothingness. "What is thy servant that thou shouldst look upon such a dead dog as I am?" And what words of grace came from David's lips! Surely the kindness of God is here fully made known. He is lifted from his low place of shame to take a place at the King's table "as one of the King's sons." It is the kindness of God as made known in the gospel of His Son our Lord Jesus Christ. He takes us out of our shame and makes us one of His sons. "So Mephibosheth dwelt in Jerusalem; for he did eat continually at the king's table; and was lame on both feet." When the kingdom has come the King will show such grace and kindness to the poor and needy (Isaiah 11:1-5; Ps. 72:1-4).

7. The War with Ammon and the Syrians

CHAPTER 10

1. David and Hanun (10:1-5)
2. Ammon and the Syrians smitten (10:6-19)

The chapter with the war against Ammon and the Syrians is the prelude to the great sin of David. While Joab is carrying on the siege of Rabbah, the last city of the Ammonites, David, no doubt flushed with the great victory and prosperity, remained in his house and committed his awful sin. The war with Ammon originated through the insults which Hanun the King of Ammon had heaped upon David's ambassadors. David wanted to show kindness also to Hanun as his father Nahash had shown kindness to David. We have no record of this kindness. In this endeavour David did certainly not follow the right course, for Ammon was an enemy, and while Nahash showed some kindness to David during his exile, he also had reproached Israel and was ready to thrust out the right eyes of the men of Jabesh-gilead (1 Sam. 11:1-3). Hanun's

deed in treating David's peaceful messengers in so shameful a way showed that he was a wicked man like his father and not worthy of David's kindness. Had he inquired of the Lord the messengers would have been spared these indignities. Ammon then formed an alliance with the Syrians, but Joab smote them. The greatest victory is recorded in verses 15-19. The king appeared himself to lead his hosts against the mighty foe and their overthrow followed. It foreshadows the day of final victory over the rebellious nations, led by the beast (Rev. 19:19-20) when the true King comes to fight against those nations.

III. DAVID'S SIN, CHASTISEMENT AND RESTORATION

1. David's Great Sin

CHAPTER 11

1. David's great sin (11:1-5)
2. David sends for Uriah (11:6-13)
3. The murder of Uriah (11:14-25)
4. David makes Bath-sheba his wife (11:26-27)

We see the king once more in his house. He sent Joab, his servants and all Israel to battle again against Ammon. Was it not his business as king to go forth with Israel as he had done before? Instead he remains in ease and comfort at home. Evidently he rested all day on his couch, during the heat of the day, and when the cool evening came he walked upon the roof of his house. He had been in self-indulgence and was self-satisfied with his great achievements. The spirit which characterized later Nebuchadnezzar when he walked in his palace (Dan 4:4) puffed up with pride, which preceded his great humiliation, was no doubt David's spirit also. Had he remained in the presence of the Lord, humble and depending on Him, as we saw him after the Lord had spoken through Nathan (7:18) this awful sin would not have happened. How often it has been repeated in the experiences of God's people! Nor did this great sin like a mighty giant ensnare him suddenly. The way for it had been prepared. He had given way to the flesh before in taking wives and concubines. We read nothing of self-restraint or self-judgment in his life up to his fall. And had he not disobeyed the law in multiplying wives unto himself? It is written: "Neither shall he multiply wives to himself, that his heart turn not away" (Deut. 17:17). Had he really walked constantly in the presence of the Lord he would have heeded the warning of His law. What warning there is for all believers! The flesh is the same today as it ever was; it does not change. We are told "to make no provision for the flesh" (Rom. 13:14). Paraphrased this means, do not nourish the flesh by the indulgence of it; flee fleshly, youthful lusts. And now the culmination is reached. "I made a covenant with mine eyes; How then should I look upon a maid;" thus spake job (job 31:1). David knew no such covenant. He looks where he should not have looked and sin soon follows. It is a solemn illustration of James 1:14-15. "But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin, and sin when it is finished, bringeth forth death." The king of all Israel had become another Achan. "I saw--I coveted--I took" (Joshua 7:20.)

"It need scarcely be pointed out, how this truthful account of the sins of Biblical heroes evinces the authenticity and credibility of the Scriptural narratives. Far different are the legendary accounts which seek to palliate the sins of Biblical personages, or even to deny their guilt. Thus the Talmud denies the adultery of David on the ground that every warrior had, before going to the field, to give his wife a divorce, so that Bathsheba was free. We should, however, add, that this view was controverted" (A. Edersheim.)

And sin follows sin. The offspring of sin is sin. What cunningness and deception followed. But honest Uriah frustrates his wicked plan. Did not David's conscience smart under it? No doubt it was deadened. Then he becomes actually the murderer of Uriah the Hittite. When the news of the death of Uriah is announced to David, hypocrisy is crowned in the words of the King, "Let not this thing displease thee, for the sword devoureth one as another." And here we read still the dreadful record, the sin of David and how God dealt with it.

"David, too, has faced that ever since, and faces it still: he will face it ever. It is put away, that sin, yet it remains, and will remain, type of all sins of his people, and of God's dealing with them: out of the holy light of eternity they will never pass,--out of our memories never! Here is man, here is his condemnation,--redeemed, saved, justified man! Thyself, reader; myself Cease ye from man forever!--from ourselves, sinner or saint! Turn we to God forever, and let us ascribe greatness and salvation to Him alone.

"This is what an unexercised conscience can bring a David to. This is what lack of self-judgment, with temptation and opportunity, may make a saint! Shall we not cry afresh, with David himself, 'Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts; and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting?'" (Numerical Bible)

And seven days later the equally guilty woman becomes David's wife. And she became the mother of Solomon. We find her mentioned in the genealogy of Matthew 1. Surely grace and mercy covered their sin. Yet what a trail of sorrow, misery and unrest follows, We shall find in chapters which follow the awful results. Incest, fratricide, rebellion, civil war and the king a fugitive! What a man soweth that he will also reap.

2. The Message of God and David's Confession and the Beginning of the Chastisement

CHAPTER 12

1. The Lord's message through Nathan (12:1-4)
2. David's anger (12:5-6)
3. Thou art the man! (12:7-9)
4. The chastisement (12:10-12)
5. David's confession (12:13)
6. The death of the child announced (12:14)
7. The death of the child and David's grief (12:15-23)
8. Solomon born (12:24-25)
9. Rabbah taken (12:26-31)

The Lord was displeased with what David had done. Nathan comes with his message in the form of a parable. His outburst of anger and condemnation of the injustice done to the poor man shows that he did not think of his own case. Yet sorrow and unrest were his portion; he tried to cover up his sin and as a result was in the deepest agony. Psalms like the sixth, the thirty-eighth, the thirty-second and others tell us of the deep soul exercise through which he passed. Then Nathan pointed at him with his soul piercing, "Thou art the man!" First the prophet tells him all the Lord had done for him; he reminds him of all God's kindness. What had David done? He had despised the Lord's commandment; had killed Uriah the Hittite with the sword and taken his wife. Then the chastisement is announced. He had slain Uriah with the sword of the children of Ammon--the sword should now never depart from his house. He had taken Uriah's wife--others should take his wives. He had done it secretly--but, said Jehovah, I will do this thing before all Israel, and before the sun. We shall find the sentence executed in chapters 13:28-39; 16:21-22; 18:14.

Then the King's heart broke. "I have sinned against the LORD." It was at that time that, his soul filled with deepest sorrow, and yet illumined with the light from above, he uttered that wonderful penitential Psalm, the fifty-first. "Against Thee, Thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in Thy sight, that Thou mightest be justified when Thou speakest, and be clear when Thou judgest." All the inward corruption now is revealed to him, as many a saint after him has found out by bitter experience that in our flesh there dwelleth no good thing. "Behold I was shapen in iniquity and in sin did my mother conceive me" (Ps. 51:5). And when he prayed "take not Thy Holy Spirit from me"--he must have had a vision of Saul, the mad King, when the Spirit had left him and an evil one possessed his heart. But David knew God and God knew David. He is in the light and uncovers all in His presence. Then Nathan announced the divine mercy, "the LORD hath also taken away thy sin." And Nathan added "because by this deed thou hast given great occasion to the enemies of the LORD to

blaspheme, the child also that is born unto thee shall surely die." That was the bitterness of it. Up to the present time infidels and rejectors of the Word of God point to David's sin and blaspheme, though the very things they sneer at are the things which they practice. The child died and David's grief was great. All his fasting and night long prayer did not change the divine sentence. But he also knew the comfort of hope and expresses it beautifully. "I shall go to him, but he shall not return unto me."

And has it no meaning that Solomon's birth is recorded immediately after these sad and solemn incidents? Solomon means "peaceful." Peace had come to his heart; the divine favour was restored unto him, yet the chastisement grievous and sore would follow him in the future. And then the Lord named also Solomon. He called him "Jedediah." This means "beloved of Jehovah." He is the blessed type of God's own Son. For us He is "peace"--He who hath made peace and our sin is covered by His precious blood. To God He is "the Beloved." The record of the fall of Rabbah closes this chapter. What is recorded in verse 31 was cruel and barbarous. (However, there is a doubt about the translation. It has been rendered in the following way: "And he set them to saws and iron picks and iron axes and made them labor at the brick kiln.") Ammon did horrible things to the women of Israel. (See Amos 1:13.) A fearful retribution came upon them. How often it has been repeated in history, even down to the 20th century with all its boasted civilization, now collapsed in the greatest and most awful war the world has ever witnessed. And thus it will continue to the end, till the true King comes.

3. Further Chastisement: Amnon, Tamar, and Absalom

CHAPTER 13

1. Amnon's wicked desire (13:1-5)
2. The incest (13:6-14)
3. His hatred (13:15-18)
4. Amnon murdered (13:19-36)
5. Absalom's flight (13:37-39)

"Behold I will raise up evil against thee out of thine own house." This was Jehovah's sentence and it is now carried out. The evil which he had nourished in his heart, the passion which he had fed now breaks out in his own family. His oldest sons and Tamar, a daughter of David, half sister to Amnon, are the chief actors in the first tragedy. Amnon means "faithful." Thus he should have been, but he is the very opposite. Brought up in the midst of scenes of license, as it must have been in David's harem, the lust of the flesh gets the upper hand and the awful deed, a positive transgression of the law (Lev. 20:17) is committed. The deed had been precipitated by a satanic adviser, Jonadab, a subtle man, and when it was done violent hate gave way to the violent passion of Amnon. Unhappy Tamar, outraged, insulted and hated, appears with her virgin-princess gown torn, ashes on her head, her hand on top of her head (the oriental way of expressing a heavy burden) and crying, and her brother Absalom discovers the reason of her sorrow. He then hated his brother Amnon. David heard of it also and was very wroth, but he made no attempt to deal with his son. We do not read a word that he even rebuked him. "The gloss of the Septuagint is likely to be correct, that David left unpunished the incest of Amnon with Tamar, although committed under peculiarly aggravating circumstances, on account of his partiality to him as being his first born son. This indulgence on the part of his father may also account for the daring recklessness which marked Amnon's crime. But a doting father, smitten with moral weakness, might find in the remembrance of his own past sin an excuse for delay, if not a barrier to action; for it is difficult to wield a heavy sword with a maimed arm" (History of Judah and Israel).

After two years the reckoning day comes. Absalom (the father of peace) becomes the murderer of his brother. It was an awful deed. In the midst of merrymaking, Amnon filled with wine, with no chance to repent, is cruelly slain. The sword is unsheathed and fell upon David's house. The harvest is on. What a man soweth that he will reap--murder for murder. It was an awful blow to David, for Amnon, his beloved first-born, the son of Ahinoam, was dead. Exaggerated tidings reach the court of David. "Absalom hath slain all the King's sons and there is not one of them left." And wicked Jonadab, the instigator of Amnon's crime, appears again and acts as comforter of the king. Jonadab is one of the most abominable

characters in Bible history. We do not read of him again. Absalom, the fratricide, fled to Talmai, his maternal grandfather. He remained there three years; so this chapter covers a period of five years. Alas! who was responsible for it all? The scenes of lust and murder, outrage and bloodshed, revolt and rebellion, sorrow upon sorrow, grief upon grief, start with David's great sin. Pardoned he was, restored in every sense of the word, yet God maintains His holiness and chastised His servant.

4. David and Absalom

CHAPTER 14

1. Joab's scheme (14:1-3)
2. The woman of Tekoah before the king (14:4-20)
3. Joab brings Absalom to Jerusalem (14:21-24)
4. Absalom's beauty (14:25-27)
5. Absalom sees his father (14:28-33)

In all these records of those sad events we hear not a word that David inquired of the Lord. Joab now appears upon the scene again and that for evil, though he did not mean to do evil to the king. He concocts a scheme by which Absalom is to be brought back into the favor of the king. This he must have tried many times before, for verses 19 and 22 indicate this. It seems almost as if Joab imitated Nathan, when he came with his message to David. But God had not sent him and David's conscience was not touched. The wisdom he used was not the wisdom from above, but the wisdom of a cunning man. The whole story was deception and "the wise woman" of Tekoah lent herself as a willing instrument. And David finds out that it is all a plot and, blinded by a mere love for Absalom, without thinking of the claims of God in this case, he becomes a willing victim to the scheme of Joab. And so Absalom was brought back. The King commands, "Let him turn to his own house, and let him not see my face." It was an evil hour when it happened. Absalom's rebellion and the king's exile were the fruit of the unscrupulous plot of Joab.

Absalom's physical beauty was great with magnificent hair. (The statement that his hair weighed 200 shekels is undoubtedly the error of a scribe who copied the manuscript. The Hebrew letters which stand for 20 and for 200 are similar. It should no doubt be 20 shekels.) He was thus fitted to do the work of winning the people to himself and became the leader of a rebellion. The deed he had done in avenging the crime against his sister was most likely looked upon by the mass of the people as a noble and heroic deed. That behind the beautiful exterior there was a proud, violent and evil spirit may be seen in his deed, when after Joab's refusal to come to him, he set the barley field of Joab on fire. Then a reconciliation between David and Absalom followed: "Once more we notice here the consequences of David's fatal weakness, as manifested in his irresolution and half measures. Morally paralysed, so to speak, in consequence of his own guilt, his position sensibly and increasingly weakened in popular estimation, that series of disasters, which had formed the burden of God's predicted judgments, now followed in the natural sequence of events. If ever before his return from Geshur Absalom had been a kind of popular hero, his presence in Jerusalem for two years in semi-banishment must have increased the general sympathy."

5. Absalom's Conspiracy and David's Flight

CHAPTER 15

1. Absalom steals the hearts of the men of Israel (15:1-6)
2. His conspiracy (15:7-12)
3. The flight of the king (15:13-37)

The beautiful prince gradually prepared for the great conspiracy of which we read now and which made of his own father the Lord's anointed, an exile. Chariots and horses with fifty men to run before him won no doubt the admiration of

the people. His evident interest in their welfare, kissing those who sought his presence and advice, endeared him still more to the men of Israel. To this must be added his open words, which must have quickly circulated among the people, "Oh, that I were made judge in the land, that every man which hath any suit or cause might come unto me, and I would do him justice."

This continued for about four years. ("Forty" is incorrect. Ancient versions have "four years" which we take is the correct number. Others have suggested that the 40 years should be reckoned from David's anointing (1 Sam. 16:13). This, however, is unlikely.) During this time he stole the hearts of the men of Israel. All is now ripe for the great rebellion. He lies to his father about an alleged vow he had made at Geshur. The unsuspecting King said, "Go in peace." So he arose and went to Hebron. The signal is given at which all the tribes of Israel were to say, "Absalom reigneth in Hebron." Then he sent for David's counsellor, Ahitophel. He was away from Jerusalem at Giloh, a short distance from Hebron, which would seem that he also was in league with Absalom. Ahitophel (the brother of folly) was the grandfather of Bath-sheba. As his name so was his deed in joining the revolution, through which he may have thought of avenging the shame which had been put upon his family by David's sin.

When David hears the news he said to his servants who were with him in Jerusalem, "Arise and let us flee." Fear now takes hold on him. He feared for himself and for his city. Yet he passed through the deepest soul-exercise and clung to the Lord in all the chastisement which followed, stroke after stroke, upon him. The third Psalm gives the culmination of this. It bears the inscription, "A Psalm of David when he fled from Absalom his son." In spite of his fears he trusted the Lord. "But Thou, Oh LORD, art a shield for me; my glory and the lifter up of mine head" (Ps. 3:3). It is claimed that Psalm 49 also refers to this period of his life. If that is correct then David was sick at the time of Absalom's rebellion. Verse 9 in that Psalm would have a meaning in connection with Ahitophel, the traitor. John 13:18 makes it clear that Judas Iscariot is predicted; but Ahitophel is a type of Judas, like him he was a suicide. Another Psalm which was probably written during the rebellion of Absalom and which speaks of Ahitophel's treachery is Psalm 55. The king and his household left the city and all the people after him. All the Cherethites and Pelethites (executioners and runners) and six hundred which came after him from Gath accompanied the King. And not all was bitterness. Ittai (with Jehovah) the Gittite, and his devotion to the King, must have greatly comforted David's heart. He was a stranger and an exile, who had come but yesterday to David. He told him to return to abide with the king (that is, Absalom). Beautiful is his answer, which strongly reminds us of the blessed words of Ruth, the Moabitess (Ruth 1:16). What noble purpose he expresses! He wants to be with the king in life or in death. Grace has linked us even closer with our Lord. Ittai in his devotion and attachment to the king is a blessed type of those who are true to the Lord in the days of His rejection.

And there was much weeping as David passed over Kidron. Our Lord passed over that brook also to enter the garden (John 18:1) where He offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears. The ark had been carried along, but now the king directed Zadok to carry it back to the city. "if I shall find favour in the eyes of the LORD, He will bring me again, and show me both it and his habitation." Beautiful it is to see that in all his great sorrow, conscious that it was the hand of the Lord which chastised him, in all his affliction he does not forget the Lord. He trusts in His mercy. Deep submission breathes in these words.

What a sight the weeping king, barefooted, his head covered, ascending Olivet! A type of Him who also ascended Olivet and wept (Luke 19:41). Then Hushai (hasty) met David. Alas! for the evidence of unbelief in the king, in planning to have Hushai return to the city and feign friendship for Absalom so as to defeat the counsel of Ahitophel.

6. The Sorrows and Testings of the King

CHAPTER 16

1. Lying Ziba (16:1-4)
2. Shimei curses and stones David (16:5-14)
3. Absalom enters Jerusalem (16:15-19)

4. Ahitophel's wicked counsel (16:20-23)

Ziba in great craftiness meets the exiled king with provisions and acts as the false accuser of Mephibosheth. And David hastily puts all that belongs to Mephibosheth into his hands. Strange that David could believe in the falsehood of Ziba. How could one who was a helpless cripple aspire to possess a kingdom? Mephibosheth had been deceived (19:26) by Ziba and David readily believed the lying story.

Shimei (my fame) appeared, cursing David, stoning him and his servants. His accusation that he was responsible for "all the blood of the house of Saul" was unfounded and unjust. He was not responsible for the death of Saul and Jonathan, and equally guiltless of the death of Abner and Ish-bosheth. And yet David saw something else in the curses of Shimei and in calling him a bloody man. The blood of Uriah which he had shed must have suddenly come to his mind. And when Abishai offers to kill Shimei, David rebuked him. (See Luke 9:52-56.) "Let him curse, because the LORD hath said to him, Curse David"--"Let him alone, and let him curse; for the LORD hath bidden him." He realizes Shimei is but an instrument in the Lord's hands; He had permitted it and David acknowledges thus that he had deserved the curses. "It may be that the LORD will look on mine affliction, and that the LORD will requite me good for his cursing this day." His eyes now look to the Lord whose chastening hand rested so heavily upon him.

Absalom is now in Jerusalem and Hushai succeeds in his commission given to him by David. He deceives Absalom. Whom did Hushai mean, when he said, "Whom the LORD and this people, and all the men of Israel choose, his will I be, and with him will I be"? They can only be applied to David; most likely in his heart he meant David. But it was flattery which wicked Absalom gladly accepted. Absalom followed the vile counsel of Ahitophel and committed the unnatural crime to show to all Israel that the breach between him and his father David was beyond remedy. God's predicted judgment upon David had come literally true. (See chapter 12:11-12.) The world will yet find out that God's judgments, though long delayed, will find ultimately their literal fulfilment.

7. Absalom, Ahitophel, and Hushai

CHAPTER 17

1. The counsel of Ahitophel and Hushai (17:1-14)
2. The counsel made known to David (17:15-22)
3. Ahitophel commits suicide (17:23)
4. Absalom pitched in Gilead (17:24-26)
5. The kindness of Shobi, Machir and Barzillai (17:27-29)

Ahitophel's counsel was aimed at the person of David only. He wanted to have him killed and thus by the death of the one man bring all Israel back. But Ahitophel had not reckoned with David's Lord, who loved him and in all the chastisement through which he had to pass, was still his Lord and his Keeper. It was not Hushai who defeated the counsel of Ahitophel, but the Lord. "For the LORD had appointed to defeat the good counsel of Ahitophel, to the intent that the LORD might bring evil upon Absalom." Hushai was evidently not present when Ahitophel spoke. When he came to Absalom and he asked his opinion he gave a different advice which Absalom and all the men of Israel adopted. The Lord gave the counsel through Hushai and then made Absalom and his men to follow the advice of Hushai. Hushai then communicated with Zadok and Abiathar as David had advised him. We do not follow the interesting story in its details. David heard of the counsel and the uncertainty of Absalom's movement and passed over Jordan into safety. Thus through Hushai's conspiracy, acting as a spy for David, the king had been saved. But would he have been lost if Hushai had not been acting the spy? The Lord would not have forsaken the king and though He used Hushai's counsel yet David was the loser after all. He lost the opportunity of seeing the Lord's power and intervention in his behalf. And how much we also lose by want of faith in Him, with whom nothing is too hard.

Ahitophel seeing his counsel defeated and unable to slay the king set his house in order and committed suicide. As

stated before he is a type of Judas Iscariot, the betrayer of our Lord, as Ahitophel was the betrayer of David. Like Ahitophel Judas hanged himself (Matt. 27:5).

8. The Civil War and Absalom's Death

CHAPTER 18

1. The battle in the forest of Ephraim (18:1-8)
2. The death of Absalom (18:9-18)
3. The tidings of his death and David's grief (18:19-33)

And now everything is ready for the battle and the victory. The army of David consisted of three divisions, Joab, Abishai and the faithful Ittai had the command. David was ready to go forth with his warriors, but the people refused to let him go. What a testimony they gave concerning him! "Thou art worth ten thousand of us. But of Him, who according to the flesh is the Son of David, we say, "He alone is worthy." The king then stood by the gate of Mahanaim to see the departure of his troops. As his generals Joab, Abishai and Ittai left him he gave them the message, "Deal gently with the young man, even with Absalom." The battle took place in a wild jungle forest, most likely with many steep rocks and gulches. Absalom lost 20,000 men "and the forest (on account of rocks and gulches) devoured more people that day than the sword devoured."

Absalom fled, but his flight was arrested when his head caught in the bough of an oak, as Josephus states, entangled by his hair. "And he was taken up between the heaven and the earth and the mule that was under him went away." The first one who saw him would not smite him, not for a thousand shekels of silver, for he had heard the king's request. Then Joab, unscrupulous Joab, whose scheme had brought Absalom back into the presence of the king, took three darts (literally "staves") and thrust them through the heart of Absalom while he was yet alive. Most likely the unfortunate rebel son was unconscious through the impact with the tree. The armour bearers made a complete end of him. Joab's deed was unjustifiable in view of the king's command to deal gently with Absalom. Absalom's body was cast into a pit and covered with a very great heap of stones, a criminal's monument. He had looked for a more honorable death, for he had reared a pillar in his lifetime, which he called after his own name, "for he said, I have no son to keep my name in remembrance." Those who claim that the books of Samuel are a patchwork of a number of writers who made use of different sources, refer us to chapter 14:27 and point out the discrepancy. But why should there be? Absalom may have put up this monument before he had any sons, or he may have lost his two sons.

And then comes the record of how the tidings were carried to David. The watchman announces that he recognizeth in the swift runner Ahimaaz the son of Zadok. "And the King said, He is a good man, and cometh with good tidings." All is well--is his message, while the anxious father-heart but paying little attention to the victory won, inquired for the young man Absalom. Cushi the second runner makes his appearance and he carries the tidings of Absalom's death, which he transmits to David in a tender and cautious manner. And then that grief. How pathetic! The weeping King, crying out over and over again: "O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! Would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!"

"The conduct of David in reference to his profligate son, is certainly extraordinary, but is not occasioned by weakness of character, which would be inconsistent with the judicial severity with which he banished him from his presence during five years. The shameful and sinful conduct of Absalom may be viewed in two aspects: it exhibits, on the one hand, the operation of the curse which David's sin brought upon his house (2 Sam. 12:10), and the influence of the iniquity of the fathers, which is visited upon the children (Exod. 20:5); it exhibits, on the other hand, Absalom's own degeneracy and profligacy, which fit him to be the bearer of the family-curse. It was not in the latter, but in the former aspect, that David regarded the conduct of Absalom, for his own guilt is so grievous in his eyes, that, in comparison with it, he deems Absalom's wickedness to be inconsiderable. Hence arises the deep and boundless compassion with which he surveys his reprobate son. David's treatment of Shimei may be regarded in the same light; his consciousness of his own great guilt

causes him to overlook the guilt of that criminal." (J.H. Kurtz, Sacred History.)

9. The Return of the King

CHAPTER 19

1. The continued grief of the king (19:1-8)
2. The return of the king (19:9-16)
3. Mercy shown to Shimei (19:17-23)
4. Mephibosheth's joy (19:24-30)
5. Barzillai and Chimham (19:31-40)
6. Strife between Judah and Israel (19:41-43)

What grief must have been David's that "the victory of that day was turned into mourning"? And the people went about on tip-toe, like people ashamed after defeat. A great stillness pervaded everything, only broken by the loud and wailing voice of David: "O, my son Absalom, O, Absalom my son, my son!" All mourned with him. But what a man must this David have been to endear himself to his men, that his personal grief became so completely theirs?

Then Joab acted. He speaks as a wise statesman. It was a bold rebuke, but well deserved, for David's continued mourning was more than weakness; it was selfishness. That he greatly resented the words of condemnation of Joab may be learned from the fact that immediately after he appointed Amasa as commander in chief of his army instead of Joab. The word was also spoken to bring the king back to Jerusalem from exile and he returned.

Once more Shimei appears upon the scene; he brings with him a thousand men of Benjamin and Ziba also. Shimei fell down before the King and implored his forgiveness. Though Abishai suggested his death, the mercy Shimei craved was readily granted and the King swore unto him. But the mercy shown was at the expense of righteousness. The ultimate fate of Shimei we shall find recorded in 1 Kings 2.

Mephibosheth appears next with undressed feet, untrimmed hair and unwashed clothes; he had been thus since the flight of the King. Ziba's deception practised on the King is now discovered. But David's conduct towards lame Mephibosheth cannot be justified. The impatience David showed when Mephibosheth speaks is proof that he felt guilty at the rash word he spoke to Ziba. Then he tells Mephibosheth that he and Ziba should divide the land. This was injustice. The deception of Ziba had deserved punishment. Beautiful is Mephibosheth's answer. It shows a love and devotion which is almost unsurpassed in the Bible. "Yea, let him take all, forasmuch as my lord the King is come again in peace to his own house." It was a sweet echo of Jonathan's love for David. It hardly needs to be pointed out that in all this David still acts as a natural man and not as guided by Jehovah and His Spirit. His object was to make himself still more attractive with the people and conciliate the different factions. If he had acted in faith, remembering that the Lord had called him into the kingdom and that He was able to keep him, he would not have tried to gain his end by such means. The bright picture in this chapter is aged and unselfish Barzillai. And the strife between Judah and Israel on account of the King is the first indication of the great division and the internal strifes, which many years later broke out among the people. Thus failure is seen on all sides.

10. The Revolt of Sheba

CHAPTER 20

1. Sheba's revolt (20:1-2)
2. The ten concubines shut up (20:3)
3. Amasa's failure (20:4-6)
4. Joab and the death of Amasa (20:7-13)

5. Joab, the wise woman and the death of Sheba (20:14-22)

6. David's officials (20:23-26)

The final revolt in David's reign was headed by a wicked man, whose name was Sheba. Israel sided with him, probably as the result of the dissension recorded at the close of the previous chapter. Judah remained loyal to David. The act of David in shutting up unto the day of their death the ten concubines to live in widowhood was necessitated on account of what had taken place (16:21). Amasa being now the leader of the hosts of David (19:13) is called to subdue the revolt; but he proves a failure and could not mobilize the army. Abishai is commissioned then and with him is also Joab. All the mighty men, including the executioners and runners (Cherethites and Pelethites) pursued after Sheba. Then Amasa appeared on the scene. Joab was girded around his loins with a sword which was in the scabbard and the sword fell out. Joab picked up the sword but Amasa did not see the sword in his hand. Then Joab took Amasa by the beard with his right hand, while he held the sword in his left. Then he smote Amasa deliberately so that he died. He might have lied himself out of the accusation that he murdered Amasa by saying he fell into the sword and that it was an accident. But 1 Kings 2:32 gives the reckoning with unscrupulous Joab for the innocent blood he had shed. Jealousy had led Joab to murder Amasa. And Sheba was killed in Abel, the city in which he sought shelter. On the advice of the woman mentioned in the story, he was beheaded. The revolt ended.

IV. THE APPENDIX TO THE HISTORY OF DAVID

1. The Famines and the Wars with the Philistines

CHAPTER 21

1. The Famine and the Gibeonites (21:1-14)

2. The Wars with the Philistines (21:15-22)

The fourth section of the second book of Samuel is an appendix to the history of David. When the great famine happened in the days of David we do not know. After the famine had returned year after year, for three years, David inquired of the Lord. Why did he not inquire in the first year? It is an evidence of the low spiritual state which prevailed at that time. The answer which David received revealed the cause of the judgment which rested upon the land. It was Saul and the blood-guilt in having slain the Gibeonites. The story of the Gibeonites is recorded in Joshua 9. They got in among Israel through deception and Joshua had made peace and a league with them. Though they belonged to the nations doomed to death they were permitted to live and became the hewers of wood and the drawers of water (Josh. 9:26-27). Jehovah's name and an oath assured them of their safety. Saul had violated this covenant and slain some of them. This wrong is now to be righted--David did not inquire again of the Lord what he should do but consulted the Gibeonites instead. And the Gibeonites demand not silver nor gold of Saul and of his house, "neither for us shalt thou kill any man in Israel." After that they asked that seven men of his sons be delivered unto them and they would hang them up unto the Lord in Gibeah. And again in haste the king promised to do so. Their demand, though piously worded, was not according to the law of God. Children were not to be put to death for the sins of their fathers (Deut. 24:16). Saul was the guilty one and he had died. How atonement for the broken covenant and the blood guilt was to be made remained for the Lord to say. David, not asking direction from Him, but turning to the Gibeonites, had failed again. And still the Gibeonites in their awful demand shared the bloodthirsty cruel character of the Canaanites. David carried out the awful request. He spared Mephibosheth. Two sons of Rizpah, a concubine of Saul, and five sons of Merab (Michal in the Authorized Version is incorrect), Saul's eldest daughter, are the victims. They were hanged by the Gibeonites and then left hanging. Sad it is to think that the horrible deed might have been averted if but David had again turned to the Lord and inquired of Him. And another law is broken, when these bodies were kept hanging for months. "And if a man have committed a sin worthy of death, and he be put to death, and thou hang him on a tree, his body shall not remain all night upon the tree, but thou shalt in any wise bury him that day." Surely the Lord could not sanction the deed so opposite to His own law. One of the most terrible scenes recorded in the Bible follows. Rizpah, the concubine of Saul, watched by her dead from April till fall, when it began to rain again. Six months she abode there, the only resting place the coarse sackcloth, above her the putrefying corpses of the

seven men, including her two sons. While the hot oriental summer lasted she kept her awful watch and chased away by day the screeching birds of prey, while her nights were disturbed by the hungry howls of wolves and jackals. Could there be a more pathetic picture! And she gained something by it. When David hears of it he is stirred to action. The bones of Saul and Jonathan and the seven men who had been hanged were buried. And after that God was entreated for the land. It seems then that David turned to God and He was favorable to the land.

In the record of the battles with the Philistines four giants are mentioned. They represent the power of darkness, which the people of God must overcome. (For a full typical application we refer the reader to the Numerical Bible.)

2. David's Song of Deliverance

CHAPTER 22

1. The praise of Jehovah (22:1-4)
2. The sorrows of the past (22:5-7)
3. God's presence and intervention (22:8-20)
4. Reward and approval (22:21-28)
5. The judgment of the enemies (22:29-43)
6. The exaltation above the adversaries (22:44-49)
7. The praise of Jehovah (22:50-51)

It would take many pages to give an exposition of this great song which in the Book of Psalms, with a few changes, is known as Psalm 18. He uttered these words through the Spirit of the Lord. "The Spirit of the LORD spake by me and His word was in my tongue" (23:2). It is therefore a great prophetic utterance. The song takes us beyond David and his experience. His sufferings and deliverances are indicated, but they are but prophetic of Him, whose sufferings and whose victory are foreshadowed in David's life and experience. The great deliverance psalm includes therefore prophetically the story of David's greater Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. In verses 5-7 we have David's suffering when an exile, persecuted by Saul; prophetically the suffering of Christ, who was compassed by the waves of death and who was plunged beneath these dark waves and saved out of death. Verses 8-20 describe the intervention. Nothing in the life of David could be made to fit this; but being a prophetic utterance there is no difficulty to trace here the resurrection of Christ, who was brought forth into a large place (verse 20). "He delivered me, for He delighted in Me" can only be truthfully applied to Christ. And all looks forward to a still greater intervention and manifestation of God. Verses 21-28 equally can only be true of our Lord. "For I have kept the ways of the Lord, and have not wickedly departed from my God." It is impossible to say that David spoke of himself. The history we have traced gives a far different story. But every word is true if we think of David's Son, our Lord. And the judgment and exaltation described in the closing stanzas of this song will be realized in Him into whose hands the Father has committed all judgment. He will be "the head of the nations" and a people will serve Him (verses 44-45). That David had before his heart the great covenant-promise (chapter 7) and that his vision was enlarged so that he beheld "His Anointed" and His coming manifestation and kingdom becomes sufficiently clear in the last two verses of the song.

3. The Last Words of David and the Record of the Mighty Men

CHAPTER 23

1. His last words (23:1-7)
2. The names and records of David's mighty men (23:8-39)

In his last words an even greater and clearer vision is given to King David. "If Psalm 18 was a grand Hallelujah, with which David quitted the scene of life, these 'his last words' are the divine attestation of all that he had sung and prophesied in the Psalms concerning the spiritual import of the kingdom which he was to found in accordance with the divine message

that Nathan had been commissioned to bring to him. Hence these 'last words' must be regarded as an inspired prophetic utterance by David, before his death, about the King and kingdom of God in their full and real meaning" (History of Judah and Israel). And this King is Christ and the kingdom that which will be set up with the second coming of Christ. As the translation in the authorized version is weak we give here a corrected translation:

David the son of Jesse saith,
 And the man who was raised on high saith,
 The anointed of the God of Jacob,
 And the sweet Psalmist in Israel:
 The Spirit of the Lord spake by me,
 And His word was on my tongue.
 The God of Israel said,
 The Rock of Israel spake to me:
 A righteous ruler over men.
 A Ruler in the fear of God,
 Like the light of the morning when the sun riseth,
 A morning without clouds;
 When the tender grass cometh forth out of the earth,
 Through the clear shining after the rain.
 But my house is not so with God.
 Yet He has made me an everlasting covenant
 Ordered in all and sure;
 For this is all my salvation--all my delight,
 Although He maketh it not to grow.
 But the wicked shall be all of them as thorns thrust away,
 For they cannot be taken with the hand;
 And the man that toucheth them,
 Must have iron and the staff of a spear
 And they shall be utterly burned with fire in their dwelling.

Little comment is needed; just a little help to open up the words of the dying King. The righteous ruler over men, a ruler in the fear of God is our Lord. Thus He will yet rule over the earth in righteousness. And when He comes to rule, there cometh the morning without clouds when the earth will be refreshed, through the clear shining, the brightness of His glory, after the rain; after judgment is passed. Then David confesseth that his house is not so with God. His hope, his salvation, all his delight is in the covenant made with him; it centers in the fulfilment of the Davidic covenant. And the wicked will suffer the fire of His wrath.

In blessed keeping with this last great prophetic utterance of the King are the records and the names of the mighty men of David. They were the men who loved David, stood by him, showed their loyalty and devotion to the King. And others are given, of whom we read no definite deeds. The last name is Uriah the Hittite. The spiritual meaning is not hard to find. Before the judgment seat of Christ all will be made manifest. When He comes to be the righteous Ruler, to usher in the morning without clouds, those will be remembered who were loyal and devoted to Him in His rejection. No name and no deed, even the smallest, will then be forgotten. What an incentive this should be, especially in the solemn days in which we live, when we see the day approaching, to serve Him and be as devoted to our absent, but coming Lord, as David's mighty men were to him. In our annotation on 1 Chronicles where we find these records also we hope to point out some of the details of the deeds of David's mighty men (1 Chronicles 11).

4. David's Failure: the Altar on the Threshing Floor of Araunah

CHAPTER 24

1. The numbering of the people (24:1-9)
2. The sin acknowledged and Gad's message (24:10-14)
3. The pestilence (24:15-17)
4. The altar on the threshing floor of Araunah (24:18-25)

The final chapter of the books of Samuel is of much interest and importance. "And again the anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel, and He moved David against them to say, Go, number Israel and Judah." In 1 Chronicles 21:1 we read "And Satan stood up against Israel, and provoked David to number Israel." This has often been pointed out as a discrepancy and contradiction. Criticism has explained it in the following way: "Of surpassing interest for the study of the progressiveness of revelation in the Old Testament period is the form which the chronicler has given to this verse. To his more developed religious sense the idea was abhorrent that God could be subject to moods, and incite men to a course of action for which He afterwards calls them to account. Accordingly he writes: 'And Satan stood up against Israel and moved David to number Israel.'" There is no contradiction here nor do the two accounts need an explanation as the above. Israel had committed some sin which brought upon them the displeasure of Jehovah. Satan the accuser was then permitted to influence David. The statement, "He (God) moved David," also means in Hebrew, "He suffered him to be moved." He permitted Satan to do his work. In 1 Tim. 3:6 we read that pride is the condemnation (or as it is literally "the crime") of the devil. And Satan the accuser moves David with national pride to number the people. It is significant that preceding this record are the names and achievements of the mighty men of David. No doubt his heart swelled with much elation over his victories and great achievements. While David's eyes were blinded by Satan, Joab saw the danger. In 1 Chron. 21:3 we read that he said to David: "The LORD make His people an hundred times so many more as they be; but, my lord the King, are they not all my lord's servants? Why doth my lord require this thing? Why will he be a cause of guilt to Israel?" The King's word prevailed and reluctantly Joab and the captains went forth to carry out the King's command. It was altogether a military census. But the census was not completed (1 Chronicles 27:24).

David's heart then smote him and we see him coming to the Lord and confessing his sin. "I have sinned greatly in that I have done; and now I beseech thee, LORD, take away the iniquity of Thy servant; for I have done very foolishly." It was a true confession he made that night. Then the Lord sent the answer through the prophet Gad. The Lord leaves the choice to David. Either three years of famine, three months of flight or three days of pestilence. (This is according to 1 Chron. 21:12; 2 Sam. 24:13 records seven years, which must be the error of some copyist.) And here the man of faith asserts himself "Let us now fall into the hand of the LORD; for His mercies are great, and let me not fall into the hand of man." And the Lord did not disappoint His servant's faith in His mercy. When the angel stretched out his hand upon Jerusalem to destroy it the Lord said, It is enough; stay now thine hand. And the angel of the Lord, the same who appeared to the patriarchs, to Moses, Joshua and others, was by the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite. Once more David's voice is heard in confession. "I have sinned, and I have done wickedly; but these sheep, what have they done? Let Thy hand, I pray thee, be against me, and against my father's house." He was willing to be the one sufferer for his people; in this he is a type again of our Lord, the sinbearer. He is commanded to rear an altar upon the threshing floor of Araunah. "It was a fitting spot for mercy upon Israel, this place where of old faithful Abraham had been ready to offer his only son unto God; fitting also as still outside the city; but chiefly in order that the pardoning and sparing mercy now shown, might indicate the site where, on the great altar of burnt-offering, abundant mercy in pardon and acceptance would in the future be dispensed to Israel" (A. Edersheim). It was the place upon which the temple was built (1 Chron. 21:28-22:1). And Araunah the Jebusite offered willingly the threshing floor and the sacrificial animals. But David would not consent. "Neither will I offer burnt offerings unto the LORD my God of that which doth cost me nothing." For fifty shekels of silver he bought the oxen and the threshing floor. Then the burnt offerings and peace offerings ascended unto Jehovah as a sweet savour. And Jehovah answered by fire (1 Chron. 21:26). And David before that altar, who buys and offers, thus meeting the claim of God, is a type of our Lord who bought us with the great price and offered Himself And even so as this book closes with the Lord being merciful to His land and people, the plague stayed, so will Israel in the future receive and enjoy His mercy. It will be the result of the one sacrifice.

THE BOOK OF FIRST KINGS

The Annotated Bible

Arno Clement Gaebelein

THE FIRST BOOK OF THE KINGS

Introduction

In the introduction to the books of Samuel we stated that the first and second books of the Kings are called in the Greek version of the Old Testament the third and fourth books of Kingdoms and in the Latin version the third and fourth books of the Kings. The two books, which were originally undivided and formed one book, contain the history of Israel under the government of the kings. The same period of history is also covered in the two books of the Chronicles. However there is a great difference between the books of the Kings and the books of the Chronicles. The books of the Kings were written before the captivity; the books of the Chronicles after that event (1 Chron. 6:15). The books of the Kings trace the history of the kings from the prophetic viewpoint; the books of the Chronicles from the priestly. Kings gives the history from a human point of view, Chronicles from the divine standpoint. After Solomon's wonderful reign and the division of the kingdom the history of the kings of Israel is mostly given while much less is said of the kings of Judah. The books of the Chronicles are characterized by an almost entire absence of the history of the kings of Israel; they are mentioned only in case of absolute necessity. After the genealogical tracings the history of the kingdom of David is followed in detail down to the Babylonian captivity. The blessing and grace of God as manifested towards the house of David is beautifully given in Chronicles. The story centers around the temple. In the introduction to Chronicles and more so in the annotations we shall point out more fully these interesting and striking differences, the blessed marks of inspiration.

The Authorship of Kings

Much has been written on the possible instrument who was used in putting these records together as we have them now. Critics have much to say on the different compilers, redactors, editors, etc., who all had a hand in putting these histories together. They speak of proximate sources and primary sources and later additions and redactions. To say the least it is bewildering and unprofitable to follow, what they term, their scientific method. That the author of these two books had certain sources or documents, besides traditional accounts at his disposal, cannot be denied. But we maintain that he was chosen by the Lord to write these records of the kings and was guided by the Holy Spirit as he wrote. The books of the Kings have the mark in every way of being the work of one person and not a number of persons, followed by others who edited their writings. Unity of style can be clearly followed throughout the books; there is uniform mode of expression which would be quite impossible with a number of authors or compilers. See and compare 1 Kings 22:43 with 2 Kings 14:3-4; 1 Kings 12:31 with 2 Kings 17:32; 1 Kings 11:43 with 2 Kings 13:13. Jewish tradition declares that the prophet Jeremiah was the instrument chosen to write the two books of the Kings. While no one can say with certainty that this is true, much is in favor of this view. There is a striking similarity of style and idiom between the language of Kings and the language employed by Jeremiah. Perhaps no one was better fitted to write the wonderful history of Solomon's failure, the division of the Kingdom, the apostasy of Israel, the chastisements of the Lord, than the prophet of tears, the man of God whose loving messages were to a backslidden Israel.

Spiritual And Prophetic Truths

There is much spiritual and prophetic truth to be found in these records. Solomon's wonderful reign, and the building of

the house of the Lord contains great foreshadowings of the coming kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ. Solomon's reign of peace marks the climax of the history of Israel. In him the promise made unto David (2 Sam. 7) found its first fulfillment. As head over the people, as king of righteousness ruling in righteousness, as king of peace, exercising also priestly functions, furthermore, in taking Pharaoh's daughter and the Gentiles seeking after him and much else he is a type of the coming King in whom the covenant promises made to David will be fully realized. There are many spiritual lessons to be found in the decline among Israel. Elijah's and Elisha's ministries, their messages and miracles, have a deeper prophetic and spiritual meaning. To write a large volume on these two great historical books and trace in them God's way in government as well as the prophetic foreshadowings would be a far easier work than to condense them in brief annotations. However we hope and pray that even these few hints we could give will be used by our Lord to help His people into a better knowledge of His Word. The chronological table of the kings of Judah and Israel, and of contemporary events, which follows this introduction should be freely consulted in the study of the text.

The Division of the First Book of the Kings

The first book of the Kings contains the record of the reign of Solomon and the glory of his great kingdom of peace. But that glory soon passed away through the failure of Solomon and the great united kingdom becomes a divided kingdom. In the last six chapters we read of Elijah, the Tishbite, the great prophet of God and his activity during the reign of wicked Ahab. We make the following division:

I. DAVID'S LAST DAYS AND THE CROWNING OF SOLOMON

1. Adonijah's Exaltation to be King (1:1-27)
2. The Anointing of Solomon and Adonijah's Submission (1:28-53)
3. David's Charge to Solomon and David's End (2:1-11)

II. SOLOMON'S GLORIOUS REIGN, HIS FAILURE AND END

1. The Righteous judgment of Solomon (2:12-46)
2. Jehovah Appears to Solomon-His Prayer and the Answer (3:1-28)
3. Solomon's Princes and Officers: The Prosperous Kingdom and the King's Great Wisdom (4:1-34)
4. The Building of the Temple and Its Dedication (5-8)
5. Jehovah Appears unto Solomon and the Greatness of the King (9:1-28)
6. Solomon and the Queen of Sheba: His great Riches and Splendour (10:1-29)
7. Solomon's Failure: judgment Announced and the Beginning of the Disruption (11:1-43)

III. THE DIVIDED KINGDOM

1. Rehoboam and the Revolt of the Ten Tribes (12:1-33)
2. Jeroboam and Rehoboam and their Reign (13-14)
3. Abijam and Asa: Kings of Judah (15:1-24)
4. Kings of Israel (15:25-16)

IV. THE PROPHET ELIJAH AND KING AHAB

1. Elijah's Prediction and His Miracles (17:1-24)
2. Elijah on Mount Carmel: The Answered Prayer (18:1-46)
3. Elijah in the Wilderness and on Mount Horeb (19:1-21)
4. King Ahab, His Wicked Reign and Downfall (20-22)

| Verse from the Authorized Version | Kind of Verse | Kind of Verse | Kind of Verse | Contemporary Events | Date of Verse | | | |
|-----------------------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|--|---------------|-------|-----|------|
| | | | | | Year | Month | Day | Year |
| 242 | 2 Kings 18:18 | 2 Kings 18:18 | 2 Kings 18:18 | Isaiah of Samaria by Egypt, Alliance of Samaria with Assyria, Victory of Sennacherib over Sennacherib, Sennacherib's death | 701 | 2 | 18 | 701 |
| 243 | 2 Kings 18:19 | 2 Kings 18:19 | 2 Kings 18:19 | Isaiah, sent on the throne by the King of Assyria, Sennacherib's death | 701 | 2 | 19 | 701 |
| 244 | 2 Kings 18:20 | 2 Kings 18:20 | 2 Kings 18:20 | The Assyrians return to the Assyria by the King of Assyria, Sennacherib's death | 701 | 2 | 20 | 701 |
| 245 | 2 Kings 18:21 | 2 Kings 18:21 | 2 Kings 18:21 | Isaiah and the Assyrians, Sennacherib's death | 701 | 2 | 21 | 701 |
| 246 | 2 Kings 18:22 | 2 Kings 18:22 | 2 Kings 18:22 | Isaiah, sent on the throne by the King of Assyria, Sennacherib's death | 701 | 2 | 22 | 701 |
| 247 | 2 Kings 18:23 | 2 Kings 18:23 | 2 Kings 18:23 | Isaiah, sent on the throne by the King of Assyria, Sennacherib's death | 701 | 2 | 23 | 701 |
| 248 | 2 Kings 18:24 | 2 Kings 18:24 | 2 Kings 18:24 | Isaiah, sent on the throne by the King of Assyria, Sennacherib's death | 701 | 2 | 24 | 701 |
| 249 | 2 Kings 18:25 | 2 Kings 18:25 | 2 Kings 18:25 | Isaiah, sent on the throne by the King of Assyria, Sennacherib's death | 701 | 2 | 25 | 701 |

| Verse from the Authorized Version | Kind of Verse | Kind of Verse | Kind of Verse | Contemporary Events | Date of Verse | | | |
|-----------------------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|--|---------------|-------|-----|------|
| | | | | | Year | Month | Day | Year |
| 250 | 2 Kings 18:26 | 2 Kings 18:26 | 2 Kings 18:26 | Isaiah, sent on the throne by the King of Assyria, Sennacherib's death | 701 | 2 | 26 | 701 |
| 251 | 2 Kings 18:27 | 2 Kings 18:27 | 2 Kings 18:27 | Isaiah, sent on the throne by the King of Assyria, Sennacherib's death | 701 | 2 | 27 | 701 |
| 252 | 2 Kings 18:28 | 2 Kings 18:28 | 2 Kings 18:28 | Isaiah, sent on the throne by the King of Assyria, Sennacherib's death | 701 | 2 | 28 | 701 |
| 253 | 2 Kings 18:29 | 2 Kings 18:29 | 2 Kings 18:29 | Isaiah, sent on the throne by the King of Assyria, Sennacherib's death | 701 | 2 | 29 | 701 |
| 254 | 2 Kings 18:30 | 2 Kings 18:30 | 2 Kings 18:30 | Isaiah, sent on the throne by the King of Assyria, Sennacherib's death | 701 | 2 | 30 | 701 |
| 255 | 2 Kings 18:31 | 2 Kings 18:31 | 2 Kings 18:31 | Isaiah, sent on the throne by the King of Assyria, Sennacherib's death | 701 | 2 | 31 | 701 |
| 256 | 2 Kings 18:32 | 2 Kings 18:32 | 2 Kings 18:32 | Isaiah, sent on the throne by the King of Assyria, Sennacherib's death | 701 | 2 | 32 | 701 |
| 257 | 2 Kings 18:33 | 2 Kings 18:33 | 2 Kings 18:33 | Isaiah, sent on the throne by the King of Assyria, Sennacherib's death | 701 | 2 | 33 | 701 |
| 258 | 2 Kings 18:34 | 2 Kings 18:34 | 2 Kings 18:34 | Isaiah, sent on the throne by the King of Assyria, Sennacherib's death | 701 | 2 | 34 | 701 |
| 259 | 2 Kings 18:35 | 2 Kings 18:35 | 2 Kings 18:35 | Isaiah, sent on the throne by the King of Assyria, Sennacherib's death | 701 | 2 | 35 | 701 |

| Verse from the Authorized Version | Kind of Verse | Kind of Verse | Kind of Verse | Contemporary Events | Date of Verse | | | |
|-----------------------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|--|---------------|-------|-----|------|
| | | | | | Year | Month | Day | Year |
| 260 | 2 Kings 18:36 | 2 Kings 18:36 | 2 Kings 18:36 | Isaiah, sent on the throne by the King of Assyria, Sennacherib's death | 701 | 2 | 36 | 701 |
| 261 | 2 Kings 18:37 | 2 Kings 18:37 | 2 Kings 18:37 | Isaiah, sent on the throne by the King of Assyria, Sennacherib's death | 701 | 2 | 37 | 701 |
| 262 | 2 Kings 18:38 | 2 Kings 18:38 | 2 Kings 18:38 | Isaiah, sent on the throne by the King of Assyria, Sennacherib's death | 701 | 2 | 38 | 701 |
| 263 | 2 Kings 18:39 | 2 Kings 18:39 | 2 Kings 18:39 | Isaiah, sent on the throne by the King of Assyria, Sennacherib's death | 701 | 2 | 39 | 701 |
| 264 | 2 Kings 18:40 | 2 Kings 18:40 | 2 Kings 18:40 | Isaiah, sent on the throne by the King of Assyria, Sennacherib's death | 701 | 2 | 40 | 701 |
| 265 | 2 Kings 18:41 | 2 Kings 18:41 | 2 Kings 18:41 | Isaiah, sent on the throne by the King of Assyria, Sennacherib's death | 701 | 2 | 41 | 701 |
| 266 | 2 Kings 18:42 | 2 Kings 18:42 | 2 Kings 18:42 | Isaiah, sent on the throne by the King of Assyria, Sennacherib's death | 701 | 2 | 42 | 701 |
| 267 | 2 Kings 18:43 | 2 Kings 18:43 | 2 Kings 18:43 | Isaiah, sent on the throne by the King of Assyria, Sennacherib's death | 701 | 2 | 43 | 701 |
| 268 | 2 Kings 18:44 | 2 Kings 18:44 | 2 Kings 18:44 | Isaiah, sent on the throne by the King of Assyria, Sennacherib's death | 701 | 2 | 44 | 701 |

| Chapter and Verse | Kings of Israel | Kings of Judah | Kings of Edom | Kings of Moab | Kings of Ammon | Kings of the Philistines | | | |
|-------------------|-----------------|----------------|---------------|---------------|----------------|--------------------------|----------|--------|-----|
| | | | | | | Asa | Benhadad | Tadmor | Asa |
| 1:1-4 | David | | | | | Asa | Benhadad | Tadmor | Asa |
| 1:5-9 | David | | | | | Asa | Benhadad | Tadmor | Asa |
| 1:10-14 | David | | | | | Asa | Benhadad | Tadmor | Asa |
| 1:15-27 | David | | | | | Asa | Benhadad | Tadmor | Asa |

Analysis and Annotations

I. DAVID'S LAST DAYS AND THE CROWNING OF SOLOMON

1. Adonijah's Exaltation to be King

CHAPTER 1:1-27

1. David's decrepitude (1:1-4)
2. Adonijah's self-exaltation (1:5-9)
3. The plot of Nathan and Bath-sheba (1:10-14)
4. Bath-sheba and Nathan before the king (1:15-27)

David was about 70 years old and extremely feeble. The strenuous life he had led, the exposures and hardships of his youth, the cares and anxieties of his reign, and the chastenings through which he passed on account of his great sin, and much else were responsible for this enfeebled condition. It is but another illustration of that rigid law, What a man soweth that shall he reap. It was a premature decay with the complete loss of natural heat. While the king was in this helpless condition Adonijah (My Lord is Jehovah) exalted himself to be king and like his unhappy brother Absalom he prepared chariots and horsemen and fifty men to run before him. Like Absalom he also was of great physical beauty. There is a significant sentence which reveals the weakness of David towards his favorite children, a weakness which has borne its sad fruits in many families. "And his father had not displeased him at any time in saying, Why hast thou done so?" There had been no discipline in David's family; he had spared the rod. By right of primogeniture he thought of claiming the throne. However, he must have known that his younger brother Solomon had been selected by David to fill the throne after him. But Adonijah knew not the Lord nor was he subject to His will. In his selfish ambition he was upheld by Joab and Abiathar, the priest. No doubt but both of these men sought their own interests; Joab to continue in his position he held with David; Abiathar to get supremacy over Zadok his rival in the priesthood. But Zadok the priest, who ministered at Gibeon (1 Chron. 16:39), Benaiah, who had charge of the Cherethites and Pelethites (2 Sam. 8:18), Nathan, the faithful prophet, Shimei (not the one who cursed David), Rei and David's mighty men kept aloof from the revolt. They remained true to Jehovah and to His anointed. Then Adonijah made a sacrificial feast to give his self-exaltation a religious air. He invited all the king's sons, his brethren, and the men of Judah; but Nathan, Benaiah, David's mighty men and his brother Solomon were not called. It was meant to be his coronation. In this revolt, preceding the enthronement of God's king, Solomon, the king of peace, we have another foreshadowing of what will precede the reign of the Prince of Peace, our Lord. It seemed as if Adonijah might succeed. But Nathan, the prophet, begins to act. In agreement with the mother of Solomon the plan is made to discover what Adonijah had done to the aged King. Bath-sheba goes in first and after a while

Nathan appeared to tell the King the same story he had heard from the lips of his wife. She reminded David of his oath, that Solomon her son was to be the successor to the throne, and after telling him of Adonijah's act, she appealed to him to proclaim now who was to sit upon the throne. She speaks to him repeatedly as "My lord the King." And when Nathan appeared before David he also said, "My lord O King." Some have gathered from this that aged David had become filled with the pride of life. However, the honour done to him may have been true reverence for the Lord's anointed King.

2. The Anointing of Solomon and Adonijah's Submission

CHAPTER 1:28-53

1. The renewed promise to Bath-sheba (1:28-31)
2. The anointing of Solomon commanded (1:32-37)
3. Solomon made king (1:38-40)
4. The consternation of Adonijah (1:41-49)
5. Adonijah's fear and submission (1:50-53)

Bath-sheba had withdrawn while Nathan was before the king. She is called back and David once more assures her that Solomon her son should reign after him. Then David commands that Solomon be anointed king without further delay. His instructions are at once carried out. Zadok the priest, Nathan the prophet, and Benaiah caused Solomon to ride upon King David's mule and brought him to Gihon. The priest anointed him king and the people rejoiced with great joy. But what joy will come to this earth when He who is greater than Solomon will be enthroned and receive His great kingdom, which is only faintly foreshadowed in Solomon's glorious reign! All David did was according to Jehovah's will and purpose. Solomon was a mere youth when he was anointed. In 1 Chronicles 28 and 29 where the most impressive scene is fully described which followed Solomon's anointing, we find David's own words concerning him, "Solomon my son, whom alone God hath chosen is yet young and tender, and the work is great" (1 Chron. 29:1). We shall follow the remarkable utterances of King David at that occasion when we reach the Chronicles. Like Saul and David, King Solomon was likewise anointed a second time. "And they made Solomon the son of David king the second time, and anointed him unto the LORD to be the chief governor, and Zadok to be priest" (1 Chronicles 29:22). And while the people were rejoicing in Gihon over God's true King, Adonijah's feast was about ended. Abiathar's son Jonathan appeared on the scene. Adonijah said, "Come in; for thou art a valiant man, and bringest good tidings." And the tidings he brought were good tidings for God's people: "Solomon sitteth on the throne of the Kingdom." Fear and consternation took hold on Adonijah and his guests and while the people gathered around Solomon, Adonijah and his company scattered. When another One, the greater Son of David, is enthroned and the glad tidings flash forth, He has taken His throne, all His enemies will be scattered and be made the footstool of His feet. Adonijah took hold of the horns of the altar (Exodus 21:12-14). Solomon promises him that his life would be spared, "but if wickedness shall be found in him, he shall die." Mercy shown and righteousness demanded were the first acts of King Solomon. In this he is a type of Him who will reign in peace and execute mercy and righteousness on the earth. Righteousness will reign in the millennial Kingdom and evil doers will be cut off.

3. David's Charge to Solomon and David's End

CHAPTER 2:1-11

1. David's charge (2:1-9)
2. David's end (2:10-11)

We call attention again to 1 Chronicles 28 and 29 where we find the record of the great assembly of all the princes of Israel and David's great address to them. He then made known to all Israel that the LORD had chosen Solomon to occupy the throne. He speaks there of the covenant promise, that his son should build the house of the LORD and His courts. He exhorted the people to keep the commandments and then spoke in tenderest words to young Solomon. "And thou,

Solomon my son, know thou the God of thy father, and serve him with a perfect heart and with a willing mind ... take heed now; for the LORD hath chosen thee to build an house for the sanctuary; be strong and do it" (1 Chron. 28:1-10). Then he gave to his son Solomon the patterns for the temple. These had been made under the guidance of the Spirit of God. The immense treasures are mentioned which David had dedicated for the temple worship. Of all this we find nothing in the record of the first book of the Kings. Here only the general history of God's government in Israel is given from the prophetic point of view. What Chronicles represents we shall state in our annotations on those books.

The charge of David to Solomon recorded in the opening verses of this chapter was given privately. Its main purpose was to exhort his son to punish Joab and Shimei and to show kindness unto the sons of Barzillai. Critics have attacked David's character on account of this charge. Renan in his history of the people Israel goes so far as to say that the incident is "a revelation of the black perfidy of his hypocritical soul." However, the charge to Solomon to execute vengeance upon these two men is not a stain upon King David. The punishment was well deserved. Joab had killed Abner and Amasa. Shimei had in great vileness cursed God's King. Both were wicked men. David's own guilt had no doubt compelled him to neglect the solemn duty demanded by justice. He therefore asked Solomon to vindicate divine justice and raise it up from the defeat it had sustained by punishing Joab and Shimei with death, while kindness is to be bestowed upon the righteous. From the prophetic viewpoint we get a glimpse of the coming righteous judgment of the King, our Lord Jesus Christ, who will execute the vengeance of God and punish the evil doers, and reward the righteous in His kingdom. Then David passed away and was buried after his forty-year reign in the city of David. He died in good old age, full of days, riches and honour (1 Chron. 29:28). His memory was always cherished by the nation. Peter on the day of Pentecost spoke of his burial place: "His sepulchre is with us unto this day" (Acts 2:29). In the coming day of the glorious manifestation of the Son of Man, who also bears the title Son of David, when He shall receive the throne of His father David, King David in resurrection glory will have a great share in that Kingdom.

II. SOLOMON'S GLORIOUS REIGN. HIS FAILURE AND END

1. The Righteous judgment of Solomon

CHAPTER 2:12-46)

1. Solomon upon the throne (2:12)
2. Adonijah's request (2:13-18)
3. Bath-sheba before Solomon (2:19-21)
4. Solomon's answer and sentence upon Adonijah (2:22-24)
5. Adonijah executed (2:25)
6. Abiathar thrust out (2:26-27)
7. Joab and Shimei executed (2:28-46)

"Then sat Solomon upon the throne of David his father; and his kingdom was established greatly." Solomon and his glorious reign foreshadows the reign of that greater Son of David, our Lord, in whom the covenant promise made to David will be fully accomplished. The section which begins with the statement of Solomon's enthronement is deeply interesting and full of the richest typical and prophetic meaning. Solomon's righteous judgments, his wisdom, his reign in peace, but especially the building of the temple foreshadow Him who will ere long receive the throne and build the temple of the LORD (Zech 6:13). Inasmuch as the critics reject the literal fulfilment of the oath-bound Davidic covenant and the prophetic foreshadowing of the recorded events, they also condemn Solomon's righteous judgment which occupies the foreground of his reign. We quote from one of these critics: "The reign of Solomon began with a threefold deed of blood. An eastern King surrounded by the many princes of a polygamous family, and liable to endless jealousies and plots, is always in a condition of unstable equilibrium; the death of a rival is regarded as his only safe imprisonment" (Canon Farrar). In such statements God's governmental ways in righteousness and retribution are entirely ignored.

Adonijah the wicked rebel on probation visits Bath-sheba. He acknowledges freely that the Lord had given the

Kingdom to his brother. Then he desired that Bath-sheba should ask her son Solomon to give Abishag the Shunammite to him as wife (1:3). Bath-sheba was completely won by the pathetic plea of Adonijah and did not discover the wicked plot which was hidden beneath his request. Beautiful is the reverence which Solomon showed to his mother. He arose from his throne, he bowed himself unto her, (the Septuagint version reads "he kissed her") and he made her sit on his right hand. How he honored and loved her! It may foreshadow the love of Him for the believing remnant of Israel, His beloved people, who will have a share in His coming Kingdom. When Bath-sheba states Adonijah's request the keen discernment and wisdom of Solomon are at once apparent. "And why dost thou ask Abishag the Shunammite for Adonijah? ask for him the kingdom also; for he is mine elder brother; even for him, and for Abiathar the priest, and for Joab the son of Zeruiah." Adonijah's request was a scheme to obtain the kingdom. Most likely it was concocted by Abiathar and Joab. To many a deceased king's wife or concubine was, according to Oriental customs, paramount with claiming the rights of the king (2 Sam. 12:8; 16:21-22). Now Abishag was not the wife of David in the sense of the word, yet she must have been considered as belonging to the departed king. Had Solomon granted the request he would have hopelessly degraded himself in the eyes of the people (2 Sam. 2:7). Adonijah aimed by this cunning scheme at the throne of Solomon and attempted to obtain the kingdom. Then Solomon pronounced judgment, which Adonijah fully deserved. He was put to death that day. It has been suggested by certain critics that Solomon had a more selfish, carnal reason for putting his elder brother to death. "If, as seems almost certain," declares a higher critic, "Abishag is the fair Shulamite of the Song of Songs, there can be little doubt that Solomon himself loved her, and that she was the jewel of his seraglio." But there is absolutely no evidence that Abishag is identical with Shulamite; nor does Jewish tradition sustain such a theory. It is a mere supposition.

Abiathar is next dealt with. His life is spared but Solomon thrusts him out of the priesthood, thus fulfilling the word of the Lord concerning the house of Eli (1 Sam. 2:31-36). Zadok becomes exclusively priest (verse 35). Joab and Shimei are both executed. Though Joab caught hold of the horns of the altar it did not save him; he paid now by a just retribution for the wicked deeds he had done. Shimei was commanded to remain in Jerusalem; disobedience would mean certain death. When he disobeyed, the sentence of death was executed upon him. And here we have another glimpse of the government of the kingdom in the coming age. In the present age grace reigns through righteousness; in the kingdom age, when the Lord rules over all, righteousness reigns. Disobedience will be swiftly met by judgment as it was with Shimei.

2. Jehovah Appears to Solomon His Prayer and the Answer

CHAPTER 3

1. Affinity with Pharaoh and Pharaoh's daughter (3:1)
2. Solomon loved the LORD (3:2-4)
3. Jehovah appears to Solomon (3:5-15)
4. The wisdom granted and exemplified (3:16-28)

We shall now see how the Lord kept His promise He made unto David in the establishment of his kingdom. After the execution of the demanded judgment Solomon entered into affinity with Pharaoh King of Egypt (probably the last King of the 21 Tanitic dynasty) and married his daughter. She was with him in David's city until he made an end of building his own house, the house of the LORD and the wall of Jerusalem round about." She was a Gentile and Jewish tradition states that she became a Jewish proselyte. This union was prophetic of the blessing Gentiles were to receive in union with Him whom Solomon typifies. It was grace which took up Pharaoh's daughter and made her share the riches and honors of Solomon. And Solomon loved the LORD. At Gibeon he offered a thousand burnt offerings. Gibeon was one of the high places where the priests performed their functions (1 Chron. 16:36-40). The tabernacle and the brazen altar were there, but not the ark of the covenant. However, he also approached the ark and stood before it to render thanks unto Jehovah. (Another application may be made to the Jewish remnant of the end of the age the same way as Ruth typified that remnant. See Annotations on Ruth. That remnant is called through grace; the Jews through unbelief are in the same place as the Gentiles. The grace which saved and called the Gentiles will draw and call them and bring them into union with the King.)

A most blessed incident followed. As stated before Solomon was a youth when he was anointed king. Eusebius states

that he was only 12 years old; Josephus gives his age as 15 years. He was probably not yet 20 years old when he became King. He felt deeply two things, his own littleness and his great responsibility in governing the multitude of people. It was while still at Gibeon that Jehovah appeared unto him in a dream and said: "Ask what I shall give you." What grace this was, but it also searched his inner-most soul. And this offer was not made exclusively to Solomon. He who appeared unto Solomon and put this gracious question to him, when He was on earth clothed in the garb of a servant, yet greater than Solomon in all his glory, said: "Ask, and it shall be given you" (Matt. 7:7). And again He said: "Whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do" (John 14:13). It is faith's prerogative to hear Him speak thus to our hearts and to make use of His great offer. Solomon's answer is beautiful. He acknowledged God's great mercy and kindness. Then he confessed his own weakness and helplessness. "I am but a little child; I know not how to go out or come in." He speaks of his responsibility and duty towards God's people and then utters his request: "Give therefore Thy servant an understanding heart to judge Thy people, that I may discern between good and bad, for who is able to judge this Thy so great a people?" It pleased the Lord as it always pleases Him when His people confess their littleness and expect help from Him. The request is granted. "So there was none like thee before thee, neither shall any arise like unto thee." Wisdom from above filled his soul. The book of Proverbs bears witness to this great understanding the Lord gave to him. But He added much more; He gave him riches and honour. "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God, and His righteousness and all things shall be added unto you" (Matthew 6:33). And the same Lord does still, to all who put their trust in Him, exceeding abundantly above all they ask or think. "He giveth us richly all things to enjoy" (1 Tim. 6:17). Then there was a conditional promise. "And if thou wilt walk in My ways, to keep My statutes, and My commandments, as thy father David did walk, then I will lengthen thy days" (verse 14). Alas! Solomon did not fulfill the condition. He forsook the Lord and died when he was not quite 60 years of age. He awoke and behold it was a dream. But it was more than a dream. That the prayer had been answered and that the wisdom of God was in him to do judgment is evidenced in the incident which follows and which needs no further comment. In his wisdom he is a type of our Lord Jesus who is the wisdom of God. And the justice he administered in his kingdom is typical of the righteous judgment of our Lord when He rules as king over the earth. "He shall not judge after the sight of His eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of His ears, but with righteousness shall He judge the poor" (Is. 11:1-4).

3. Solomon's Princes and Officers The Prosperous Kingdom and the King's Great Wisdom

CHAPTER 4

1. The Princes (4:1-6)
2. The Officers (4:7-19)
3. The prosperous kingdom (4:20-28)
4. Solomon's great wisdom (4:29-34)

"So King Solomon was king over all Israel." A list of the princes and the twelve officers is given first. Their names fit in perfectly with the character of the kingdom, foreshadowing the coming and better kingdom of our Lord. We give the names of the princes with their meaning. Azariah, "Jehovah is help"; Elihoreph, "my God is reward"; Ahiah, "Brother of Jehovah"; Jehoshaphat, "Jehovah judges"; Benaiah, "Built up by Jehovah"; Zabud, "Gift bestowed"; Ahishar, "Brother of ability"; Adoniram, "Lord of Heights."

Then we have here the record of a remarkable increase of Judah and Israel "as the sand which is by the sea in multitude." It reminds us of the promise made to Abraham, "in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven and as the sand which is upon the sea shore" (Gen. 22:17). Such an increase will come during the reign of God's appointed King, the Prince of Peace. His kingdom reached from the river (Euphrates) to the border of Egypt. Even so had Jehovah spoken to Abraham that his seed should possess the territory from Egypt unto Euphrates. This was realized in Solomon's kingdom. Now the Jews hold not even the little land called Palestine. When the true King comes the promised territory will be given once more to the seed of Abraham. It was a time of great prosperity. Another prophetic hint we find in the fact that the great multitude were in peace, "eating and drinking and making merry." Such will be the universal state of the people in the coming Kingdom when "every man shall call his neighbor under the vine and the fig tree" (Zech 3:10),

as under Solomon's reign Judah and Israel dwelt safely every man under his vine and fig tree (verse 25). Solomon had also great stables full of horses and many chariots. He had 4000 horses; the number 40,000 in verse 26 is evidently the error of a copyist. (See 2 Chron. 9:25.) There was much to be supplied for the provision of the court of the King. See the daily need; but they lacked nothing. How great the need there is in the world during the absence of the true King! But when He comes to reign "He will satisfy the poor with bread" (Ps. 132:15).

And how marvellously the Lord answered the King's petition! The greatness of Solomon's wisdom, the many-sidedness of its character as well as the world-wide impression this wisdom made is recorded in verses 29-34. "Happy is the man who findeth wisdom, and the man who causeth understanding to go forth; for merchandise with it is better than merchandise of silver, and the gain from it than the most fine gold" (Prov. 3:13-14). The King expressed in these words his own experience. His wisdom was greater than the wisdom of the wise men of the East and greater than Egypt. (Compare 1 Chron. 2:6. Ethan, 1 Chron. 6:44; 15:17, 19. Ps. 89 [Inscription]; Heman see 1 Chron. 6:33; 25:5. Psalm 88 [Inscription].) He spake 3000 proverbs and made 1005 songs. The book of Proverbs contains hundreds of his sayings. But not all these proverbs were preserved and only a few of his songs (Song of Solomon and a few Psalms). Creation itself was known by the great King. (See verse 33.) According to an apocryphal book (Wisdom of Solomon) he had knowledge of cosmogony, astronomy, the alteration of solstices, the cycles of years, the natures of wild beasts, the forces of spirits, the thoughts of men, the qualities of plants and roots. Jewish tradition even declares that he could converse with the wild beasts. This knowledge of creation was not a perfect knowledge. However, it also reminds us of the glorious time when the secrets of nature, lost through the fall of man, will be restored through Him, who will deliver groaning creation (Rom. 8:21).

4. The Building of the Temple and its Dedication

CHAPTER 5 Hiram King of Tyre

1. Hiram sends servants to Solomon (5:1)
2. The message of Solomon (5:2-6)
3. Hiram's answer and league with Solomon (5:7-12)
4. Solomon's workmen (5:13-18)

In connection with 1 Kings 5-8 the chapters in 2 Chronicles should be read which give a more extensive account (2 Chronicles 2-5:11). Solomon now begins the great work, which may be called his life work, the building of the house of the LORD. Hiram heard of Solomon's enthronement, and sent messengers to Solomon. This Gentile king was a lover of David. David had made before his death abundant material for the building of the house and Hiram had supplied much of it (1 Chron. 22:4). Solomon requested that Hiram furnish cedar trees from Lebanon for the building of the house and Hiram agrees to float them down the coast. According to the request of Hiram, Solomon supplied Hiram's household with 20,000 measures of wheat and twenty measures of oil. Hiram also sent a master-workman by name of Hiram whose mother was a Jewess (2 Chron. 2:13-14; 1 Kings 7:14). This cooperation of the Gentiles in building the temple is also prophetic, for the riches of the Gentiles are promised to Israel (Is. 40:6; 54:3). Jews and Gentiles will unite to manifest His glory. A large number of workmen were needed. Two classes were employed. First there were 30,000 men out of Israel raised by a levy; 10,000 worked by relays of 10,000 a month. The second class was composed of strangers (1 Kings 5:15; 2 Chron. 2:17-18), 150,000 in number; 70,000 were burden bearers and 80,000 hewers in stone. Over all were 3300 officers (verse 16) with 550 chiefs (1 Kings 9:23), of whom 250 were native Israelites (2 Chron. 8:10). The great stones and the costly (splendid) stones and hewed stones are especially mentioned. They were for the foundation of the house. These stones may illustrate all those who as "living stones" are built up a spiritual house (1 Pet. 2:5). Through Grace all those are taken out of nature's place and prepared to fit into that marvellous temple of the Lord "fitly framed together--an holy temple in the Lord" (Eph. 2:21).

CHAPTER 6 The Description of the Temple

1. The date of the beginning of the building (6:1)

2. The house, the porches and side chambers (6:2-10)
3. The divine charge (6:11-14)
4. The internal arrangements (6:15-22)
5. The cherubim (6:23-30)
6. The doors (6:31-35)
7. The inner court and the temple finished (6:36-38)

Three chapters are taken up with the description of the temple, its contents, Solomon's house of the forest of Lebanon and with the dedication of the house of the LORD. Rich foreshadowings are here which we must pass over in greater part. Books could be written on these three chapters. However, we hope to point out the way for a closer study of the temple. The building of the temple commenced in the month of Zif (splendour), the second month when nature bursts forth in all her splendour. There comes a morning without clouds (2 Sam. 23:4) with glorious splendour, when He, for whose coming all is waiting, will build the temple (Zech. 6:12). It took seven years to finish the house. The temple was erected on Mount Moriah. There was an immense foundation of great hewn and splendid stones, a platform upon which the temple was built. This great foundation remains to the present day, known by the name "Haram-esh-Sheraf," and upon it there stands now the Mosque of Omar. One stone alone is thirty-eight feet and nine inches long. "This great stone is one of the most interesting stones of the world, for it is the chief corner stone of the temple's massive wall. Among the ancient Jews, the foundation corner stone of their great sanctuary on Moriah was regarded as the emblem of moral and spiritual truths. It had two functions to perform; first, like the other foundation stones, it was a support for the masonry above, but it had also to face both ways, and was thus a bond of union between the two walls.... The engineers, in order to ascertain the dimensions of this foundation stone, worked round it, and report that it is three feet eight inches high, and fourteen feet in length. At the angle it is let down into the rock to a depth of fourteen inches, but, as the rock rises towards the north, the depth at four feet north of the angle is increased to thirty-two inches, while the northern end seems entirely embedded in the rock. The block is further described as squared and polished, with a finely dressed face.... Fixed in its abiding position three thousand years ago, it still stands sure and steadfast" (from report, "Recent Discoveries in the Temple Hill").

Still more interesting is the fact that the men who made an exploration of this temple wall, some 3000 years old, discovered certain marks. We quote from the Palestine Exploration report: "I must now speak somewhat fully on a subject which has engaged public attention for some time, and has already given rise to many conjectures, namely, the 'writings,' either painted on or cut into the stones, discovered lately on the bottom rows of the wall, at the south-east corner of the Haram, at a depth of about eighty feet there, where the foundations lie on the live rock itself. I have examined them carefully in their places--by no means an easy task. The ventilation at that depth is unfavourable to free breathing; nor is the pale glimmer of the taper, or the sudden glare of the magnesium wire, calculated materially to assist epigraphical studies.... I have come to the following conclusions:--First: The signs cut, or painted, were on the stones when they were first laid in their present places. Secondly: They do not represent any inscription. Thirdly: They are Phoenician. I consider them to be partly letters, partly numerals, and partly special mason's, or quarry, signs. Some of them were recognisable at once as well-known Phoenician characters; others, hitherto unknown in Phoenician epigraphy, I had the rare satisfaction of being able to identify on absolutely undoubted antique Phoenician structures in Syria, such as the primitive substructures of the harbour at Sidon. No less did I observe them on the bevelled stones taken from ancient edifices and built into later work throughout Phoenicia. For a striking and obvious instance of this, the stones of which (old Phoenician stones to wit) immured in their present place at subsequent periods, teem with peculiar marks identical with those at Jerusalem." Thus the stones testify to the fact that strangers, Phoenicians and others were employed. This rock foundation, which has remained unshaken, is an illustration of Him, the rock of ages, upon whom everything rests.

The dimensions of the house were twice the size of those adopted in the tabernacle; the whole length was 60 cubits, the breadth 20 cubits, and the height also 20 cubits. The interior was lined with boards of cedar, the house was overlaid with gold, and a wall surrounded the whole. The upper chambers were 10 cubits high, on which account the height of the whole building is stated to have been 30 cubits. The porch before the entrance of the temple was 10 cubits in length and as many in breadth, and here were placed two massive pillars of brass, named Jachin (he shall establish, or, steadfastness) and Boaz (in Him is strength). On the other three sides a building was erected three stories in height, which rose to two-thirds of the height of the house of the temple. The sanctuary, 40 cubits in length, contained the golden altar of incense, ten candlesticks

of gold, and ten tables of gold. The holiest of all was a cube of 20 cubits; it contained two cherubim made of the wood of the olive-tree, overlaid with gold, and 10 cubits in height, whose expanded wings touched in the middle, and, on the opposite sides, touched the walls.

In verse 7 we find a remarkable statement: "And the house when it was building, was built of stone made ready before it was brought thither, so that there was neither hammer nor axe nor any tool of iron heard in the house, while it was in building." Thus orderly and quietly proceeds the erection of that spiritual house, the Church, destined to be the holy temple in eternity. However, the temple itself does not exactly prefigure the Church. It is a type of the Father's house above where God dwells. The chambers or dwellings round about remind us of the words of our Lord: "In my Father's house are many mansions" (literally: abodes, dwellings). It is a blessed hint that God will have His people dwelling with Him. But the temple is also prophetic of another temple which will yet stand on the earth when our Lord reigns. His glory will cover and fill that house, which will be a house of prayer and worship for all nations.

After the description of the dimensions of the house, and after he had built it and built the chambers, the word of the Lord came to Solomon telling him that His dwelling among the children of Israel depended upon Solomon's faithfulness. Soon the failure came in and Ezekiel saw later the departure of the glory of the Lord from the temple and from Jerusalem.

And in the house gold was the prominent feature. The word "gold" occurs eleven times in this chapter. All was overlaid with gold. Besides this there were "glistening stones, and of divers colours" (1 Chron. 29:2). Everything was of pure gold; the sanctuary might have been called the golden house. The floor was overlaid with gold, the walls, the doors and ceiling were covered with pure gold, and the walls had inlaid precious stones (2 Chron. 3:6). Gold is the emblem of divine righteousness and divine glory. Therefore the whole sanctuary witnessed to the glory of righteousness which is in keeping with the prophetic foreshadowing of this house. How much greater will be the glory and the manifestation of divine righteousness when the true King builds the house and manifests His glory!

Another interesting feature present was the cherubim. While the cherubim which belonged to the ark of the covenant remained unchanged, for it was the same ark which was in the tabernacle, Solomon put on either side of it the big figure of a cherub carved of olive wood and overlaid with gold. Each was ten cubits high. The two with their wings met over the mercy seat, while the wing of the one touched the wall on the south and the wing of the other touched the wall on the north. Then instead of these cherubim, like those on the ark, looking downwards towards the mercy seat, they looked outwards (2 Chron. 3:13). "Inwards" really means "towards the house" or "outwards." And this is in harmony with the reign of righteousness which is foreshadowed in Solomon and the temple. "At that time, righteousness reigning and being established, these symbols of God's power can look outwards in blessing, instead of having their eyes fixed on the covenant alone. During the time there was nothing but the covenant, they gazed upon it; but when God has established His throne in righteousness, He can turn towards the world to bless it according to that righteousness."

CHAPTER 7 The House of Solomon and Pharaoh's Daughter The Furnishings of the Temple

1. The house of the forest of Lebanon (7:1-7)
2. The royal palace and the house of Pharaoh's daughter (7:8-12)
3. The master workman (7:13-14)
4. The great pillars and chapiters (7:15-22)
5. The brazen sea (7:23-26)
6. The ten lavers with their carriages (7:27-40)
7. Hiram's work (7:41-47)
8. The golden utensils for the interior (7:48-51)

The description of the palace buildings come next. These buildings are called "Solomon's own house" (verse 1). The buildings consisted of the following: The house of the forest of Lebanon (verses 2-5). The porch of pillars (verse 6). The porch of judgment, where the king judged (verse 7). The house where the king dwelt (verse 8). The house where Pharaoh's

daughter dwelt "like unto his house" (verse 8). The wall which surrounded the great court. Seven things are mentioned in connection with the palace buildings. While the temple was God's dwelling place the palace buildings were the dwelling place of the king and his wife, Pharaoh's daughter. From there the king executed judgment. Here we have prefigured the glorious administration of the kingdom, when our Lord judges in righteousness. The house of the forest of Lebanon is the type of His glory among the Gentiles. And inasmuch as the house of Pharaoh's daughter was closely connected with Solomon's house it is written "we are his house" (Hebrews 3:6), we have here foreshadowed the association of the Church with Christ in His coming reign of glory. Everything in the temple and in the palace buildings was glorious and revealed the immense riches of the great king. What a day it will be when the riches and glory of Christ will be manifested and when the saints of God will share it all!

Then Solomon sent and fetched Hiram out of Tyre. This was not the king, but a master workman. His father was a Tyrian and his mother by birth of the tribe of Dan was a widow and had married a man of Naphtali. This reconciles an alleged discrepancy. (See 1 Kings 7:14 and 2 Chron. 2:13.) In Chronicles he is called Hiram. (Probably Hiram-abi (Abi--meaning "my father") was his correct name.) His mother belonged to the same tribe to which Aholiab the coworker of Bezaleel belonged. (See Exodus 31:1-6.) The two pillars of solid brass Jachin (he will establish) and Boaz (in him is Strength) are first described. They were a new thing for the house of the Lord. The outward support these pillars afforded speak of Him who is the support of everything and whose power upholdeth all things. Read Jeremiah's words concerning these pillars (Jer. 27:19, etc.) and the fulfilment (2 Kings 25:13-17; Jer. 52:17). All the vessels mentioned were made on a much larger scale, and greater in number, than those of the tabernacle. The great molten sea supported by twelve oxen which looked towards the North, South, East and West, the river wrought like a cup, like lilies, contained two thousand baths (about 16,250 gallons of water). (2 Chron. 4:5 has 3000 baths: this must mean the actual capacity of this colossal vessel, while the 2000 measures in 1 Kings gives the usual contents of the laver.) Here the priests and Levites performed their ablutions. The water was drawn from the big reservoir. There was a large supply. Living waters in abundance will flow forth from Jerusalem in the coming kingdom ages. The oxen (the burden bearing beast) are typical of service. Of all this we shall find more in Chronicles. Then all the things which David had dedicated, the silver, the gold and the vessels were put by Solomon among the treasures of the house of the Lord.

CHAPTER 8 The Dedication of the Temple

1. The great assembly (8:1-2)
2. The transportation of the ark (8:3-9)
3. The glory of the LORD filling the house (8:10-11)
4. Solomon's opening words (8:12-21)
5. Solomon's great prayer (8:22-53)
6. Solomon's benediction (8:54-61)
7. The sacrifices and the feast (8:62-66)

The ark of the covenant is now to be transported out of David's city to be put into the most holy place, under the wings of the great cherubim. The ark was carried, according to the instructions in the law, by the priests. A great sacrificial ceremony also took place; so many sheep and oxen were sacrificed that "they could not be numbered for multitude." The ark now had found a resting place (Ps. 132:8). The staves by which the ark had been carried were now drawn out. They were not to be removed (Ex. 25:15); but now they were pulled out, but remained there as a memorial of their journeys and the Lord's faithfulness in bringing them into the promised rest. But in the ark nothing was found but the two tables of stone; Aaron's rod and the pot of manna were missing. (Hebrews 9:4 has reference to the ark in the Tabernacle). The rod of Aaron was the emblem of the priestly grace which had accompanied them on their journey and the manna was their food in the wilderness. Both Aaron's rod and the pot of manna were provisions for the wilderness; they would not have been in keeping with the reign of glory and peace, as well as the rest they now enjoyed. Thus when we are brought into glory we have no more need of priestly intercession and help, nor do we need the manna any longer. But the law was not missing, for as regards that earthly kingdom over which our Lord will yet reign, its foundation and administration will be the law of righteousness.

When the ark had been placed the glory-cloud filled the house. Jehovah had appeared in His glory to dwell in the house. And when that future temple will be on the earth as seen by Ezekiel in his great temple-vision, the glory will return and fill the house, and more than that, the whole earth will be filled with His glory (Ezek. 43:1-5; Num. 14:21).

Then Solomon spoke. A great and marvellous dedicatory and intercessory prayer follows. It must be noticed that in all, especially in the bringing of the sacrifices, Solomon assumes the full character of priest. He acts as the king-priest, another Melchizedek, King of Salem. And this he was, king of righteousness in his judgments and king of peace. In all this he foreshadows Him, who is a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek. "He shall be a priest upon His throne" (Zech. 6:13) is the still unfulfilled prediction. Now He is upon the Father's throne as the priest and advocate of His people. When He comes again He will have His own throne and be also a priest. We have therefore in Solomon's functions in dedicating the temple and in the bringing of the sacrifices a prophetic type of our Lord in His future royal priesthood. First, Solomon turned towards the Most Holy filled with the glory of the Lord and said: "I have surely built Thee an house to dwell in, a settled place for Thee to abide in forever." Then he blessed the congregation. He mentions once more David, his illustrious father, and the covenant-promise. "And the LORD hath performed His word that He spake, and I am risen up in the room of David my father, and sit upon the throne of Israel as the LORD promised, and have built an house for the name of the LORD God of Israel" (verse 20). And yet the covenant-promise had not seen its accomplishment; the failure of Solomon and the passing of the glory witnesses to that. Yet Solomon, his reign of peace and prosperity and especially his great work in the building of the temple foreshadows the great coming fulfillment of the Davidic covenant in the enthroned Christ upon the throne of his father David. A closer study of the great prayer we must leave with the reader. The different petitions are of deep interest and the kingdom characteristics are prominent. "The prayer sets the people under the form of a righteous government, abounding indeed in kindness and forgiveness, yet one which will not hold the guilty innocent; and it presents God as the people's resource, when the consequences of their sin fall upon them according to the principles laid down by Moses in Deuteronomy and elsewhere" (Synopsis of the Bible). And in the prayer mention is made "that all people of the earth may know Thy name, to fear Thee, as do Thy people Israel; and that they may know that this house, which I have builded, is called by Thy name" (verse 43). This looks forward to the ingathering of the nations into the kingdom, when nations will be joined to a God-fearing Israel. (See Zech. 2:11; 8:23.) The feast mentioned which followed the dedication feast is the feast of tabernacles. And this is again highly typical, for the feast of tabernacles is as a type unfulfilled. While it pointed back to the time when they were in the wilderness, living in tents and journeying towards the land of promise, it also pointed to the future, when the name of Jehovah was to be known among all the nations of the earth, when the nations would come to worship the Lord of Hosts (Zech. 14). The conjunction of the dedication of the temple with the feast of tabernacles was more than significant, it was prophetic. It is only when the Lord Jesus Christ occupies the throne and He builds the Temple of glory, that the nations will seek after Him and be converted. (See our annotations on Leviticus 23.) And while the king prayed and blessed the people, the people full of happiness and joy blessed the king. Heaven and earth rejoiced. It is the climax of Israel's history in the land.

5. Jehovah Appears unto Solomon and the Greatness of the King

CHAPTER 9

1. The second appearance of the LORD to Solomon (9:1-9)
2. Transactions with Hiram (9:10-14)
3. The levy of the king (9:15-23)
4. Pharaoh's daughter occupies the house (9:24)
5. The king's offerings (9:25)
6. Solomon's navy (9:26-28)

Jehovah's righteous government in the midst of His people Israel had now been established. This government was given and entrusted to Solomon the son of David, so that, in a sense, Solomon occupied the throne of the Lord. All depended upon the faithfulness of Solomon. Therefore the LORD appeared unto him the second time, not to say once more: "Ask what I shall give thee," but to assure him that He would keep His promise made to David and if he would be faithful his

throne would be established. Then He warns against disobedience. If he serves other gods, Israel was to be cut off from the land and the house would be forsaken. How all this came to pass, Solomon's idolatry, disobedience, the subsequent shameful history of Israel's apostasy, we shall soon have to follow. Then God used Nebuchadnezzar to carry out the judgment upon Jerusalem and the temple. Another son of David will receive some day the throne and the government will rest in His hands. In Him all will be accomplished which the prophets have spoken and which was foreshadowed in Solomon.

The transaction with Hiram is interesting. Besides furnishing Solomon with timber he also gave him gold; this amounted to 120 talents of gold. Solomon gave to Hiram twenty cities in Galilee. When he came to look at them, he was displeased with them and called them Cabul, which probably means "as nothing." These cities may have been given to King Hiram for the gold Solomon had received from him. The cities were later restored to Solomon by Hiram, most likely after Solomon had paid back the gold Hiram had furnished.

The activity of the great King in building fortresses and cities is described in this chapter. Hazor became under him a stronghold in defence of Syria. The plain of Jezreel had for a protection Megiddo. Gezer and Baalath were other strongholds. Tadmor is Palmyra, called so by the Greeks and Romans, while it is called still today Tadmor. In this chapter (verse 18) the name is given in Hebrew as "Tamar"; in 2 Chron. 8:4 it is "Tadmor." Tamor means "palm tree," the same as Palmyra. Chronicles uses Tadmor because it was known by that name after the exile.

And Solomon had a fleet of ships, manned mostly by the experienced shipmen of King Hiram. Another fleet is mentioned in 10:22, a navy of Tharshish, which, with Hiram's navy, sailed every three years to fetch gold, silver, ivory and apes and peacocks. Ophir has been variously located. Peru, the Molucca Islands, Armenia, Arabia and parts of Africa have been suggested. All these statements show the great prosperity of the kingdom.

6. Solomon and the Queen of Sheba: His great Riches and Splendour

CHAPTER 10

1. The visit of the Queen (10:1-13)
2. Solomon's enormous wealth (10:14-15)
3. the targets and shields (10:16-17)
4. The ivory throne (10:18-20)
5. The abundance of gold and the depreciation of silver (10:21-22)
6. The greatest living monarch (10:23-26)
7. His chariots and horsemen (10:27-29)

The visit of the Queen of Sheba, who had heard of Solomon's wisdom, is the next recorded event of much interest and significance. It illustrates what was previously stated in chapter 4:34. Sheba was known to such ancient writers as Strabo and Pliny. It was the center of a vast commercial empire in the southwestern part of the Arabian peninsula. The mines which are still to be seen testify of a great civilization. (See Isaiah 60:6; Psalm 72:15; Jeremiah 6:20; Ezekiel 27:22; 38:13.) She heard and came; she communed with Solomon and brought presents; she was filled with wonder at all she heard and saw and declared: "Behold the half was not told me." Then she uttered her praise: "Happy are thy men, happy are these thy servants, which stand continually before thee, and that hear thy wisdom. Blessed be the LORD thy God, who delighteth in thee, to set thee on the throne of Israel, because the LORD loved Israel forever, therefore made He thee King, to do judgment and justice." Then she gave gold, spices and precious stones of an enormous value. In all this glory which came to Solomon we have a prophetic type of the glory which will come to Him, who is greater than Solomon. When He occupies the throne, the Gentiles will seek Him and praise the King as the Queen of Sheba praised Solomon. "The kings of Tarshish and of the isles shall bring presents; the kings of Sheba and Seba shall offer gifts. Yea, all the kings shall fall down before Him, all nations shall serve Him.... And He shall live, and to Him shall be given of the gold of Sheba; prayer also shall be made for Him continually, and daily shall He be praised" (Ps. 72:10-15). This great Kingdom Psalm will be

fulfilled when our Lord comes again. "The abundance of the sea shall be converted unto Thee, the forces of the Gentiles shall come unto Thee. The multitude of camels shall cover Thee, the dromedaries of Midian and Ephah; all they from Sheba shall come, they shall bring gold and incense; and they shall shew forth the praises of the LORD" (Is. 60:5-6). All these and many other prophecies will be fulfilled in the future kingdom of our Lord. The visit of the Queen of Sheba foreshadows all this. See also the warning of our Lord in Matt. 12:42.

And what riches and glory the king possessed! Everything was of gold. His throne was of solid ivory overlaid with gold. Twelve wonderful lions stood on the one side and on the other. All the drinking vessels were of gold. Silver depreciated in his days; it was worth next to nothing. "The King made silver to be in Jerusalem as stones, and cedars made he to be as sycamore trees" (verse 27). Compare this with what will take place in the coming kingdom of our Lord. "Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir tree, and instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle tree" (Is. 55:13). "For brass I will bring gold, and for iron I will bring silver, and for wood, brass, and for stone, iron" (Is. 60:17).

7. Solomon's Failure: judgment Announced and the beginning of Disruption

CHAPTER 11

1. Solomon's polygamy and departure from God (11:1-13)
2. Hadad the Edomite (11:14-22)
3. Rezon the second adversary (11:23-25)
4. Jeroboam (11:26-40)
5. Solomon's reign and death (11:41-43)

"But--." An ominous word with which this chapter begins. It introduces us to the sad picture of Solomon's great apostasy. "He shall not multiply horses to himself, nor cause the people to return to Egypt, to the end that he should multiply horses, for as much as the Lord hath said unto you, ye shall henceforth return no more that way. Neither shall he multiply wives to himself, that his heart turn not away, neither shall he greatly multiply to himself silver and gold" (Deut. 17:16-17). The Lord anticipated a royal form of government for Israel and gave these instructions concerning the King. The first failure is seen in the previous chapter. He multiplied horses and brought them out of Egypt. Egypt is the type of the world. God had answered his prayer and then added riches and everything else. But his heart was captivated by riches and luxuries. No doubt he loved these things and multiplied silver and gold. The Devil's crime, pride, was found in him. His heart was lifted up (Deut. 17:20). But worse than all he multiplied wives. The sad record is found in the opening verses of this chapter. Then his heart was turned away by his wives and concubines after other gods. David, though his trouble also originated in polygamy, had always, in all his sin and failure, clung to Jehovah. In this sense David's heart was perfect with the Lord his God. He did not turn away from the Lord, nor did David go after strange gods. Solomon's guilt was great. The Lord had appeared twice to him; He never appeared to David. And with all the Lord had done for Solomon, the evidences of His grace towards him, the house he could build, the superior wisdom he had, the great king departed from the Lord. Such is the heart of man, desperately wicked. It becomes now evident that the oathbound covenant concerning a man to sit upon the throne of David with a glorious kingdom established, must be fulfilled in another son of David. Solomon fails. The kingdom is rent from him. The glory departs. Never again were the scenes of glory repeated in the kingdom of Israel. But when David's Lord and David's Son appears, the King of Righteousness, the Prince of Peace, the kingdom and the glory will be restored to Israel.

It has been stated that Solomon himself was not actually guilty of idolatry. If he built the places of idolatrous worship for his many wives only, he was guilty of the sin of idolatry. The abominations were then introduced. Luxuries, wealth, self-indulgence, the lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh and the pride of life led into idolatry. It is the same in the closing days of the present age. Ashtoreth, a Phoenician goddess, was worshipped with impure rites. Milcom (Molech) was the idol-god of the Ammonites. Chemosh was the sun-god and war-god of the Moabites.

And the Lord who had appeared twice unto Solomon, the Lord who had commanded him not to go after other gods,

was now angry with Solomon. Judgment is announced. Two adversaries were stirred up at once against Solomon, Hadad the Edomite and Rezon of Syria, who abhorred Israel.

Jeroboam, a servant of King Solomon (verse 11) lifted up his hand against the king. Ahijah the prophet, attired in a new garment, meets the future king of the ten tribe division and tore his garment into twelve pieces. "And he said to Jeroboam, Take thee ten pieces, for thus saith the LORD, the God of Israel, Behold I will rend the kingdom out of the hand of Solomon, and will give ten tribes to thee." But the message of the Lord through Ahijah also declared His faithfulness to David. Jehovah still speaks of "David my servant"; he is "to have a light always before Me in Jerusalem, the city which I have chosen to put My name there." The house of David in the midst of all the evil is not forgotten. There will be affliction, "but not forever" (verse 39). And Jeroboam also has the opportunity of having a house "as I built for David" on the condition of obedience. But ambitious Jeroboam did not keep the statutes and commandments of the Lord.

And Solomon? Not a word of repentance! No tears like those his father wept. No confession as it came from David's lips. Only one thing is stated. Only one act is mentioned of apostatized Solomon. He sought to kill Jeroboam. After a reign of 40 years, Solomon passed away not quite 60 years old.

III. THE DIVIDED KINGDOM

1. Rehoboam and the Revolt of the Ten Tribes

CHAPTER 12

1. The revolt of the northern tribes (12:1-20)
2. The threatening war averted (12:21-24)
3. Jeroboam's wicked schemes (12:25-33)

Rehoboam (enlarger of the people) is the only son of Solomon mentioned in the Bible (1 Chron. 3:10). Ecclesiastes 2:18-19 and 4:13-16 seem to give a hint that his father was fearful about his reign in his stead. In 2 Chronicles 10:13 we find the history of Rehoboam more fully, which we follow in the annotations of that book. He was the son of the Ammonitess Naamah. During the first three years he was outwardly faithful, but after that he drifted like his father into idolatry and its moral evils (1 Kings 14:23-24; 2 Chron. 11:13-17). He forsook the law of the Lord and the people followed him (2 Chron. 12:1). The polygamous tendency of his father and grandfather were also indulged by him (2 Chron. 11:21). Jeroboam who had fled into Egypt (11:40) was recalled and the history of the revolt follows. Jeroboam was made king over the ten tribes, while Rehoboam reigned over Judah. What took place was from the Lord "that He might perform His saying, which the LORD spake by Ahijah the Shilonite unto Jeroboam the son of Nebat" (12:15). The disruption of the kingdom had taken place. Up to the deportation of the ten tribes under Shalmaneser (722 B.C.) covers 253 years. During that time thirteen kings reigned over Judah and twenty over the ten tribes; there were also two periods of lawlessness. The apostasy of the ten-tribe kingdom was complete; none of their kings served the Lord. Under Ahab and his two sons Ahaziah and Joram the Baal worship became universal. It was different with the kings of Judah. A number of them were God-fearing (Asa, Jehoshaphat, Uzziah, Jotham, Hezekiah and Josiah). Others were wicked blasphemers as we shall see from their history. It is also noteworthy that the reign of the wicked kings was shorter than the reign of those who feared the Lord.

After the stoning of Adoram, Rehoboam's collector, Rehoboam fled to Jerusalem and gathered an army from Judah and Benjamin to fight against Israel to bring back the kingdom to the son of Solomon. Shemaiah (heard of Jehovah), a man of God, brought the message from the Lord not to fight against Israel. They were obedient and the war was averted. Many Israelites, who were true to Jehovah, as well as all the priests and Levites remained in the Kingdom of Judah. (As failure had come in, prophecy at once reappears. Shemaiah must have been a very courageous man to stand in face of a gathered army of 180,000 men, an angry king and an angry people and declare a message which must have been decidedly unwelcome. And one cannot but admire the gracious submission of king and people.)

Jeroboam made Shechem his capital. He also built the ancient Penuel (the face of God, Gen. 32:30; judges 8:8), but he did not meet the Lord there like Jacob. Then the step was done which precipitated idolatry. To protect his kingdom and keep the people back from the true worship of Jehovah, he placed, with the consent of the people, in Dan and Beth-el on the northern and southern boundaries of his kingdom, two calves of gold. Thus with an unspeakable blasphemy he said: "It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem; behold thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt." The lowest class of the people were chosen as priests. Then he also offered sacrifices unto the calves that he had made. All was devised of his own heart and God's Word was completely set aside. It corresponds to the great apostasy of Romanism with its wicked, blasphemous rites.

2. Jeroboam and Rehoboam and their Reign

CHAPTER 13 The Man of God from Judah

1. The man of God and Jeroboam (13:1-10)
2. The temptation and lying message (13:11-19)
3. Judgment announced (13:20-22)
4. The fate of the man of Judah (13:23-32)
5. Jeroboam's impenitence (13:33-34)

A dramatic scene opens this chapter. The idolatrous King is engaged in his religious ceremony when an unnamed man of God interrupted him. He did not rebuke Jeroboam, but addressed himself to the altar, uttering a remarkable prophecy: "Behold, a child shall be born unto the house of David, Josiah by name; and upon thee shall he offer the priests of the high places that burn incense upon thee, and men's bones shall be burned upon thee." More than 300 years later, and nearly a century after the ten tribes had been carried away captive, this prophecy was fulfilled (2 Kings 23:15-18). The man of God announced the unborn king by name and also what he would do, just as Isaiah announced the unborn King Cyrus and his work. Higher criticism has labored in vain to destroy this great evidence of prophecy. Then the man of God added a sign which happened literally in the presence of the king. The angry king commanded the seizure of the prophet, but the outstretched arm withered. The withered arm was restored in answer to the prophet's prayer. Jehovah was seeking in mercy even Jeroboam in all his wickedness. It was unsuccessful, for it is written: "After this King Jeroboam returned not from his evil way." The man of God and what happened to him occupies the greater part of the chapter. The King invited him to a feast, probably an idol feast, and wanted to give him a reward. He refused both because the Lord had charged him not to eat bread nor drink water, nor return the same way he came. The man of God was to have no fellowship with the works of darkness. The same principle is laid down for God's people in the New Testament (2 Cor. 6:14-18; Eph. 5:11; 2 John 9-11). Then comes his great failure, showing that while he was a messenger of God, his heart was not altogether right with God. It was through the old prophet that a lying spirit induced him to disobey the Word of the Lord. And when the old prophet announced his coming judgment we read not a word that he turned to the Lord with confession and prayer. Then the predicted fate overtook him. It is a solemn lesson which teaches us obedience to the Word of God. "It teaches us that, whenever God has made His will known to us, we are not to allow any after thought whatever to call it in question, even although the latter may take the form of the Word of God, If we were nearer to the Lord, we would feel that the only true and right position is to follow that which He told us at first. In every case our part is to obey what He has said." The lion who had killed the disobedient prophet remained for a time with the body without touching it. It was to show the divine character of the judgment. If we look upon Jeroboam's departure from God and idolatrous worship as typical of the corruption of Romanism, we may see in the Man of God from Judah, who rebuked the false altar, a type of Protestantism. Like the prophet who delivered the message faithfully but became disobedient, Protestantism is disobedient to the Word of God and the judgment of God will overtake it in the end.

CHAPTER 14 The Passing of Jeroboam and Rehoboam

1. Sickness and death of Jeroboam's son (14:1-18)

2. Jeroboam's reign and death (14:19-20)
3. Rehoboam's apostasy, punishment and death (14:21-31)

We come now to the passing of both kings, Jeroboam of Israel and Rehoboam of Judah. Abijah (Jehovah is my father), the son of wicked Jeroboam, was sick. "That child was the one green spot in Jeroboam's life and home; the one germ of hope. And as his father loved him truly, so all Israel had set their hopes on him. Upon the inner life of this child, its struggles and its victories, lies the veil of Scripture silence; and best that it should be so. But now his pulses were beating quick and weak, and that life of love and hope seemed fast ebbing. None with the father in those hours of darkness, neither counsellor, courtier, prophet nor priest, save the child's mother." (A. Edersheim, Bible History) Then the unhappy king remembered Ahijah, who had first announced his exaltation to be king (11:31). Disguised the wife of Jeroboam proceeds to Shiloh not to ask prayer for the sick son but to find out (as if consulting a fortune teller) what should become of the child. Ahijah was blind. What need was there for Jeroboam's wife to feign to be another? And the Lord saw her coming and announced her approach to blind Ahijah. She hears from his lips not good tidings, but a message of judgment. Judgment upon the house of Jeroboam is announced and when the feet of the mother entered Tirzah once more the child would die. Concerning the child, Ahijah, the prophet, said: "In him there is found some good thing toward the LORD God of Israel in the house of Jeroboam." Thus the little one was saved and removed from the evil to come upon the house of Jeroboam. Then Jeroboam died. In 2 Chronicles 13:20 we read "the LORD struck him and he died." Nadab reigned after him for only two years.

Then follows the passing of Rehoboam. (in 2 Chronicles 11 we find the fuller record. He had 18 wives and 60 concubines. His family consisted of 28 sons and 60 daughters.) His reign was begun well, but he also turned against the Lord, and Judah did evil in the sight of the Lord. Idolatry and immorality flourished. A corrupted worship led to a corrupted life. Departure from God and His Word leads always to moral decline. Our times bear witness to this. Then the punishment came in the fifth year of his reign. Shishak, King of Egypt, took Jerusalem and carried away the treasures of the house of the LORD and of the King. He took away the golden shields of Solomon so that Rehoboam had to substitute shields of brass. Shishak was the founder of the twenty-second dynasty. Jeroboam had been with him (11:40), and it is not improbable that at his instigation Shishak made his expedition to Jerusalem. In the temple ruins of Amon at Karnak, near Thebes, are recorded more than sixty Ephraimitic cities that paid tribute to Shishak, also the names of many more Judean cities; there also is a picture of Rehoboam. The detailed description of Shishak and his invasion, the work of Shemaiah the prophet in averting a greater disaster, we find in 2 Chronicles 12.

3. Abijam and Asa, Kings of Judah

CHAPTER 15

1. Abijam of Judah (15:1-8; 2 Chronicles 13)
2. Asa of Judah (15:9-24; 2 Chronicles 14-16)

Abijam is called in Chronicles Abijah; in 2 Chron. 13:21 he is called Abijahu. Abijam was undoubtedly the older form. It is possible that on account of his great address of rebuke to Jeroboam (2 Chron. 13:4-12) they may have called him Abijah (Jehovah is my father). He ascended the throne in the eighteenth year of Jeroboam's reign and was king for three years. Here we find the statement that he walked in all the sins of his father and that his heart was not perfect with the Lord as the heart of David his father. The statement in chapter 11:36 is repeated, that for David's sake did the LORD his God give him a lamp in Jerusalem. It was a custom (and is still so among the Fellaheen in Palestine) to keep a lamp constantly burning in the tent. The extinction of the lamp signified the removal of the family. The Lord remembered the house of David and his covenant and on account of that covenant the deserved judgment was held back. The war he fought with Jeroboam is not given in Kings but in Chronicles. We shall follow his history with the text in Chronicles.

Then his son Asa (who will heal), a mere boy, began to reign. During the first ten years of his reign the land had rest (2 Chron. 14:1). He is the first King of Judah of whom it is said, he did right in the eyes of the LORD, as did David his

father. A great reformation took place. The Sodomites with their abominations, the result of idolatry, he ended; the idols were removed. His grandmother, Maachah, was removed by him from being a queen because she had made an idol, which Asa destroyed and burnt. (Most likely on account of his youth Maachah was regent during Asa's minority.) And in Chronicles we read more of his good work. He was faithful to Jehovah, though he also failed in the end. The war with Zerah the Ethiopian is recorded in 2 Chronicles 14, as well as other deeply interesting events during his reign. We do not touch those at this time. Our book here only records the war with Baasha, King of Israel, and Asa's strange alliance with Ben-hadad, King of Syria, to whom he presented the silver and gold which Shishak had left in the house of the LORD, and also the treasures of the King's house. Baasha had fortified Ramah, which meant the complete isolation and domination of Jerusalem. Asa, forgetful of his experience with Zerah and the manner of getting the victory (see his beautiful prayer, 2 Chron. 14:11), and that the Lord who had smitten Zerah could also smite Baasha, feared the rival king and renewed the God-dishonoring league with Syria which his father Abijah had made. What followed after this league, the divine exhortation and judgment delivered through Hanani the prophet and Asa's end, we shall follow in Chronicles. Asa's sin and failure consisted in not trusting the Lord wholly, but using other means for deliverance. Hanani told him "thou hast relied on the King of Syria, and not on the LORD thy God,... For the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show Himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward Him. Herein thou hast done foolishly; therefore from henceforth thou shalt have wars" (2 Chron. 16:7-9). Then Asa imprisoned the faithful messenger. Alas! how often the failure of Asa has been repeated among God's people! Many begin well but lose the freshness of their faith. In our own days we behold on all sides Asa-movements, no perfect confidence in the Lord, but reliance upon all kinds of world schemes and alliances which make it impossible for the Lord to manifest the fullness of His power.

4. Kings of Israel

CHAPTERS 15:25-16

1. Nadab, King of Israel (15:25-32)
2. Baasha, King of Israel (15:34-16:7)
3. Elah, King of Israel (16:8-14)
4. Zimri, King of Israel (16:15-20)
5. Divisions (16:21-22)
6. Omri, King of Israel (16:23-28)
7. Ahab (16:29-34)

Six kings of Israel are now mentioned. Asa saw them all ascending the throne of Israel. The first mentioned is Nadab, the son of Jeroboam, who followed in his father's footsteps. His reign was cut short by an uprising of one of the house of Issachar, Baasha. He smote Nadab at Gibbethon (Josh. 19:44; 21:23). Baasha then smote all the house of Jeroboam. Thus was the prediction of Ahijah, the prophet of Shiloh, fulfilled. "Because of the sins of Jeroboam which he sinned, and which he made Israel sin, by his provocation wherewith he provoked the LORD God of Israel to anger." God's predicted judgments never fail in the end. The judgments written over against our own age, this evil age, will some day be executed by the Lord as all other judgments which were threatened against Israel.

The new dynasty headed by Baasha began in the third year of Asa's reign. Baasha reigned twenty-four years. He sinned as Jeroboam did, though he had been the executer of God's judgment upon the descendants of the wicked king. He had not heard Jehovah's voice speaking in the events of the past. Then came the message of the Lord to Baasha through Jehu, the son of Hanani (2 Chronicles 19:2; 20:34). He reminds him that the Lord had raised him out of the dust (his family was unknown) and He had made him prince over Israel. He followed Jeroboam and Rehoboam's fate, and the fate of his house would now also be the fate of Baasha, who had executed the divine sentence. "I will make thy house like the house of Jeroboam, the son of Nebat." Such is divine justice.

Elah his son followed. His rule lasted not quite two years. He was in Tirzah. While the army was away fighting the Philistines, Elah in the house of his steward Arza ("earthliness") became drunk and was killed by his captain, Zimri, who

at once began to reign in his place. He only reigned seven days and the only deed mentioned, besides his awful death, is the slaying of all the house of Baasha "according to the Word of the LORD, which He spake against Baasha by Jehu the prophet." Omri was made king by all Israel and with him began another dynasty. His first act was to besiege Tirzah where Zimri was, who set the king's palace on fire and perished in the flames. A division followed, but Omri prevailed. In all these sad records the fruits of the departure from God and from His Word are seen. They can easily be traced in the history of other nations down to our own times, the days which have brought the most awful bloodshed in the world's blood drenched history. It is all the result of sin. And Omri was worse than all that were before him, and his son Ahab was the climax of all wickedness in the Kingdom of Israel. There was no improvement, but a steady decline till God's hand smote them in judgment. Ahab introduced Baal-worship in Israel. This was the result of his marriage to Jezebel (dunghill), the daughter of Ethbaal (with Baal), King of Zidonians. "Ahab did more to provoke the LORD God of Israel to anger than all the Kings of Israel that were before him." The last verse of this chapter records a presumptuous action. Hiel (God liveth) built Jericho. He found out that the word of God spoken 500 years before (Josh. 6:26) was true.

IV. THE PROPHET ELIJAH AND KING AHAB

1. Elijah's Prediction and Miracles

CHAPTER 17

1. Elijah's message to Ahab (17:1)
2. At the brook Cherith (17:2-7)
3. With the widow of Zarephath (17:8-16)
4. The widow's son restored to life (17:17-24)

Upon this scene of complete departure of God, when Ahab and his heathen wife worshipped Baal and all the vileness connected with that cult flourished in Israel, there appeared suddenly one of the greatest of God's prophets, Elijah (my God is Jehovah) the Tishbite. "A grander figure never stood out even against the Old Testament sky than that of Elijah. As Israel's apostasy had reached its highest point in the time of Ahab, so the Old Testament antagonism to it in the person and mission of Elijah."--"He was the impersonation of the Old Testament in one of its aspects: that of grandeur and judgment" (A. Edersheim). His miracles, like those of Moses, have a judicial character. Heaven is shut in answer to his prayer and fire falls from heaven at his word. The last promise in the Old Testament is concerning Elijah the prophet who is to appear before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord, to turn the heart of the fathers to the children and the heart of the children to their fathers (Mal. 4:5-6). See also the Lord's words concerning the coming of Elijah (Matt. 17:10-13). He appeared with Moses on the transfiguration mountain. In the book of Revelation two witnesses are mentioned who witness among Israel before the great day of the Lord comes. Though their names are not given, the miracles they perform clearly show that these witnesses will be like Moses and Elijah. "These have power to shut heaven, that it rain not in the days of their prophecy (Elijah), and have power over waters to turn them to blood and to smite the earth with all plagues, as often as they will (Moses)." "And if any man will hurt them fire proceedeth out of their mouth and devoureth their enemies (Elijah)" Rev. 11:5-6. James speaks of Elijah also and tells us he was a great man of prayer.

He appeared suddenly upon the scene and said to wicked Ahab, "As the LORD God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word." He had, no doubt, like other great servants of God, his training in secret.

The passage in James gives us the key: "Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain" (James 5:17). It was in secret that he sought God's presence and wrestled in prayer till the Lord sent him forth with the message of judgment. Prayer, persevering prayer, is the one great need in the days of declension and departure from God, and it is the one resource of God's faithful ones. And how little true and continued waiting upon God there is in the days of apostasy! When Elijah delivered the message to Ahab and said "according to my word" he did not speak presumptuously, but as standing in the Lord's own presence as his mouthpiece he had a perfect right to speak thus

with divine authority.

As soon as he had delivered the message the Lord told him to hide himself by the brook Cherith. There he was miraculously fed by the ravens. He was in the appointed place and the Lord took care of him in His own way. Rationalistic critics have made the absurd statement that the word "orebim"--ravens--should be arabim, which means Arabs. (Thus Canon Farrar in the Expositor's Bible: "The word (orebim) may equally well mean people of the city Oreb, or of the rock Oreb; or merchants as in Ezek. 27:27; or Arabians.) But the Lord had commanded the birds, so shy in their nature, to supply His servant with the needed food. Twice every day they ministered to his wants. How this shows the omnipotence of the Lord. There is nothing too hard for Him. If we are in the right place, the place He assigns to us, we shall find that He still provides for those who trust and obey. The brook dried up. Surely his faith was being tested. Then he was sent to a destitute Gentile widow, who faced starvation. And concerning her the Lord said: "I have commanded a widow woman there to sustain thee." The Lord who commanded the ravens, commanded the widow. The Lord delights to take the weak things and use them for His glory. And how did Elijah find her? Preparing the last meal for herself and her child. Her faith was tested. She was to make first a little cake for Elijah and bring it unto him and afterwards to do the same for herself and her son. She obeyed and "the barrel of meal wasted not neither did the cruse of oil fail, according to the Word of the LORD." Here was greater faith than in Israel. See also Luke 4:26. The story foreshadows the bringing in of the Gentiles to know the Lord. And when the widow's son fell ill and died and was restored by Elijah and he delivered him to the mother saying: See, thy son liveth--she made the blessed confession: "Now by this I know that thou art a man of God and that the Word of the LORD in thy mouth is truth." The truth of resurrection both physical and spiritual is here foreshadowed.

2. Elijah on Carmel: The Answered Prayer

CHAPTER 18

1. The command to see Ahab (18:1)
2. Elijah's response (18:2)
3. Ahab and Obadiah (18:3-6)
4. Elijah and Obadiah (18:7-15)
5. Elijah meets Ahab (18:16-18)
6. Elijah's demand (18:19-20)
7. The events on Carmel (18:20-40)
8. The answered prayer (18:41-46)

The judgment of God as announced by Elijah continued its allotted time. A Greek historian, Menander of Ephesus, in his account of the acts of Ethbaal (the father of Jezebel, Ahab's wife), says: "Under him there was a want of rain from a certain month till the same month the following year." And Josephus, the Jewish historian who quotes this, adds, "by these words he designed the want of rain that was in the days of Ahab." It was in the third year of the drought that Elijah is commanded to show himself to Ahab. Elijah obeys. Great distress and famine were everywhere. Then we see Ahab and Obadiah, the governor or steward of his house, looking for a little pasture so that they might save the horses and mules alive. Obadiah (servant of Jehovah), holding a high position with Ahab, feared the Lord greatly. He belonged to the faithful remnant who did not bow the knee to Baal (1 Kings 19:18). He must have had severe tests of faith and much courage. It showed faith and devotion in hiding the Lord's prophets. Jezebel, the wicked idolatrous woman, used the civil power to kill off the true prophets. Her aim was to exterminate completely the men of God who stood for the truth. We find her mentioned in Revelation 2:20. There she is used to represent Rome, the harlot, and her spiritual fornication and idolatry. Rome, like Jezebel, has persecuted the Lord's servants and killed them (Rev. 18:24). Jezebel had evidently left the palace of Samaria and was at Jezreel, but Ahab and Obadiah were still in Samaria making a survey of the land. Then Obadiah met Elijah. The prophet requests Obadiah to announce his presence to Ahab. But Obadiah feared that such a message might cost him his life. Had not the whole country been searched for Elijah? And what if the Spirit should carry Elijah away? Then he pleads his kindness to the hundred prophets whom he saved when murderous Jezebel slew the prophets. From all this we learn that Obadiah, pious and faithful, was full of fear and trembling. He and the other faithful

ones in Israel during the dark days of Ahab and Jezebel typify that faithful remnant of Israel during the end of the present age, suffering and persecuted during the great tribulation.

Ahab and Elijah met, and the prophet, clothed with power, rebuked the apostate King: "I have not troubled Israel; but thou and thy father's house, in that ye have forsaken the commandments of the LORD, and thou hast followed Baalim." What would have happened if the daughter of Ethbaal, demon-possessed Jezebel, had been present? The great gathering suggested by Elijah would hardly have taken place. But she was in Jezreel and was ignorant of what was taking place. Ahab gathers all Israel and the 450 prophets of Baal upon Mount Carmel as demanded by Elijah. It is said that upon that mountain there stood two altars, one dedicated to Jehovah and another altar of Baal. This place Elijah chose for the vindication of Jehovah. To describe the scene, one of the grandest in the history of Israel, would take many pages. To his solid statement demanding decision--"How long halt ye between two opinions? If Jehovah is God, follow Him; but if Baal, then follow him"--the people had no answer. Then follows his great declaration as the only prophet of Jehovah, while 450 prophets of Baal stood over against him. Then the sacrifices are suggested "and the God that answereth by fire, let him be God." And all the people answered, it is well spoken. Then follows the wild crying of the prophets of Baal from early morning till noon; Elijah's sarcasm and the greater frenzy of the Baal worshippers. A wild scene followed. Crying louder and louder, they cut themselves with knives and lancers till the blood flowed. But there was no answer and no voice. Then Elijah repaired the altar of Jehovah, that was broken down. What a reminder the twelve stones were with which he built the altar! The sacrifice had been put upon the altar with the wood. Three times the altar had been drenched with water, so that the trench was filled with water. And now the time for the evening sacrifice, that significant time had come. A simple prayer follows. Jehovah's vindication is demanded and that he is Jehovah's servant. "Hear me, O LORD, hear me, that this people may know that Thou art the LORD God, and that Thou hast turned their heart back again." Then Jehovah answered by fire and everything was consumed. The people who witnessed the indescribable scene fell on their faces and cried: "The LORD He is God--the LORD He is God." Thus Jehovah manifested His power in the vindication of His name and in answer to His servant's prayer, and the people were brought back to the confession of the name of the LORD. His great mission to which the Lord had called him had been accomplished and the prophets of Baal, wicked and guilty as they were, received their deserved judgment. And here we have a foreshadowing of events to come.

Apostasy from the Lord and from His Word is increasing. Before the age closes it will be universal, though the Lord will have a faithful remnant even in the dark days of the age. His name is dishonored and rejected. But that blessed name will be vindicated by a manifestation of His power in judgment. "For behold, the LORD will come with fire, and with His chariots like a whirlwind, to render His anger with fury, and His rebuke with flames of fires. For by fire and by His sword will the LORD plead with all flesh; and the slain of the LORD shall be many" (Is. 66:15-16).

Higher criticism has not left these records unattacked. They speak of "the legendary narratives in which Elijah's history is enshrined." All is done to discredit these records and to make them appear doubtful. But the verdict given by these men who sit in judgment upon the Word of God, that the scene on Carmel is unhistorical, is a false verdict which shows lack of real research. Nothing whatever can be brought forward to question the historicity of this great scene, while much confirms it.

Then follows Elijah's word to Ahab: "Get thee up, eat and drink, for there is a sound of abundance of rain." It was spoken in faith. The Lord had said to him: "I will send rain upon the earth" (18:1). And then came his prayer. He knew the Lord's will and the Lord's promise, and then persevered in prayer, and when the answer was in sight then he exercised faith once more by sending a message to Ahab. Then the heaven was black with clouds and wind and there was a great rain. The hand of the Lord was also upon Elijah and he ran before Ahab's chariot to the entrance of Jezreel. It was supernatural power which sustained him (is. 60:31).

3. Elijah in the Wilderness and upon Mount Horeb

CHAPTER 19

1. Elijah's flight and despondency (19:1-8)
2. Upon Mount Horeb (19:9-18)
3. Elisha called (19:10-21)

Elijah perhaps stopped at the very door of the palace where wicked Jezebel dwelt. He would remain with Ahab to the very last before he went in to face the queen. Should not Elijah have remained and gone even before Jezebel to bear his testimony? Instead he becomes terrified of wicked Jezebel. Had he hoped that what had taken place on Carmel would result in bringing not alone Ahab back to Jehovah, but also influence Jezebel? If such was his expectation he must have been bitterly disappointed. Jezebel seeks to kill him and he flees for his life. All what follows is the result of unbelief. This verifies James' statement in his Epistle: "Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are." Then in despair and unbelief he requested to die. He is altogether occupied with himself and did not look to God. Instead of seeking the wilderness, his training school, to pour out his heart before God, to get new strength in communion with the Lord, "he requested for himself that he might die."

"The heart of Elijah and the hand of God led the prophet into the wilderness, where, overwhelmed perhaps, yet precious in Jehovah's sight, he will be alone with God. Elijah's forty days journey in the wilderness has only a partial resemblance to the forty days which Moses spent with God, in the same Horeb to which the prophet was going, or to those which Jesus spent in the wilderness for conflict with the enemy of God and man. In the two latter cases nature was set aside. Neither Moses nor the Lord ate or drank. As for Elijah, the goodness of God sustains the weakness of tried nature, makes manifest that He considers it with all tenderness and thoughtfulness, and gives the strength needed for such a journey. This should have touched him, and made him feel what he ought to be in the midst of the people, since he had to do with such a God. His heart was far from such a state. Impossible, when we think of ourselves, to be witnesses to others of what God is! Our poor hearts are too far from such a position" (Synopsis of the Bible).

In Mount Horeb the Lord spoke to him: "What doest thou here, Elijah?" It was the gentle rebuke of a loving God. He was not in the place where the Lord wanted him as His servant. It is a great contrast--Elijah on Mount Carmel and Elijah on Mount Horeb in a cave. On Carmel he stands the man of faith, filled with a holy zeal for Jehovah. On Horeb hidden in the cave because he fled from Jezebel. And how many children of God may learn something from this question: "What doest thou here?" They are drifting into the world while others have left the sphere of service into which the Lord called them. And Elijah's answer shows his self occupation. It is what he had done; what he was and the threatening danger to lose his life. But that danger was far greater when they searched countrywide for him and when the Lord preserved his life by the ministry of the ravens and by the widow-woman.

His answer has in it the spirit of bitterness and accusation. Then the Lord passed by. The storm, the earthquake and the fire preceded His coming; these are always connected with Jehovah's presence and manifestation. Then came "a still small voice" Elijah knew so well. He wrapped his face in his mantle and then he answered the question once more, but in an humbled spirit. He receives the commission to anoint Hazael, King of Syria; Jehu (Jehovah is he), the son of Nimshi (Jehovah reveals), he is to anoint King of Israel and Elisha is to be his successor. All three are called as instruments of judgment upon Israel's idolatry and the house of Ahab. Then the Lord announced that He had a faithful remnant of 7000 in Israel who had not bowed the knee unto Baal. (See its prophetic meaning in Romans 11:3-6.)

4. King Ahab: His Wicked Reign and End

CHAPTER 20 Ahab's War with the Syrians and His Victory

1. The siege and relief of Samaria (20:1-21)
2. The victory at Aphek (20:22-34)
3. A prophet's symbolical action and his message (20:35-43)

Two expeditions of Ben-hadad (son of the Sun) against Israel are recorded in this chapter. When Ben-hadad forced the

war and insulted the King of Israel, Ahab prepared for the battle. Then a prophet came to Ahab, most likely one of those who had been hidden by Obadiah. He brought a message from the Lord. "Thus saith Jehovah, Hast thou seen all this great multitude? behold I will deliver it into thine hand this day; and thou shalt know that I am Jehovah." From this we may gather that a spiritual revival must have taken place in Israel after the manifestation of Jehovah on Carmel. Jezebel, after her rage on account of Elijah's deed, is not mentioned again till after Ahab's failure. The Lord in graciousness gave to Ahab another evidence that He is the Lord and can smite the enemies of Israel. The Syrians were defeated. Another message came to Ahab through the prophet. A year later Ben-hadad made another expedition against Israel. "And there came a man of God, and spake unto the King of Israel, and said, Thus saith Jehovah, because the Syrians have said, The LORD is the God of the hills but not the God of the valleys, therefore will I deliver all this great multitude into their hand, and ye shall know that I am the LORD." A great victory followed at Aphek. But Ahab let Ben-hadad, who had defied Jehovah, live. More than that, he treated him like a friend and brother, had him come into his chariot, and made a covenant with him. In showing such clemency to the enemy of God, Ahab revealed the state of his soul. He had no heart for the Lord and was bound to follow his wicked ways.

Then one of the sons of the prophets (Josephus saith it was Micaiah; 22:8) was commanded by the Lord to ask another prophet to smite him. The prophet refused the unquestioning obedience demanded from a prophet and therefore the judgment of God overtook him. The purpose of God in bringing the judgment message home to Ahab is carried out nevertheless. Then Ahab pronounced his own doom for showing leniency to Ben-hadad.

CHAPTER 21 Naboth's Vineyard

1. Naboth's refusal (21:1-4)
2. Jezebel's wicked deed (21:5-16)
3. Elijah pronounces divine judgment (21:17-24)
4. Ahab's wickedness and confession (21:25-27)
5. The LORD's mercy (21:28-29)

No comment is needed on the story of Naboth's vineyard. Jezebel, the wicked, and Ahab's submission to her was his ruination. On her Satanic suggestion one of the most wicked deeds recorded in Bible history is done. Naboth is murdered to obtain his vineyard. The measure of Ahab's apostasy and wickedness is now filled to overflowing. For the wicked king the tidings of Naboth's death were welcome tidings. No inquiry follows, but in self-satisfaction he goes to take possession of the beautified vineyard of Naboth. But his enjoyment, as it is always with the enjoyment of sin, did not last very long. No sooner had the innocent blood been spilt, than Jehovah, who saw and knew the foul deed, sent Elijah with the final message of doom and judgment for the guilty pair. Ahab was still in the vineyard. His eyes still feasted on the beautiful scene before him. His thoughts were occupied with the pleasures of sin when suddenly Elijah appeared. "I have found thee," were the prophet's first utterances. "Be sure your sin will find you out." Then follows the sentence already indicated in the words of the disguised prophet in the previous chapter. "I will make thine house like the house of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, and like the house of Baasha the son of Abijah, for the provocation wherewith thou hast provoked Me to anger, and made Israel to sin. And of Jezebel also spake the LORD, saying, The dogs shall eat Jezebel by the wall of Jezreel. Him that dieth of Ahab in the city the dogs shall eat; and him that dieth in the field shall the fowls of the air eat." How literally this sentence was carried out we shall find in the subsequent history. But Ahab having humbled himself hears a merciful message from Elijah's lips. "Because he humbled himself before Me, I will not bring evil in his days, but in his son's days will I bring evil upon his house." How merciful the Lord is to all who humble themselves!

CHAPTER 22 The Death of Ahab

1. Jehoshaphat and Ahab (22:1-12)
2. The prophet Micaiah (22:13-28)
3. The battle and Ahab's death (22:29-40)
4. Jehoshaphat of Judah (22:41-50; 2 Chron. 19-20)

5. Ahaziah, King of Israel (22:51-53)

Three years passed without war between Syria and Israel. In the third year Jehoshaphat of Judah came down to Ahab. Jehoshaphat's son and heir-apparent had married Athaliah the daughter of Ahab. An unholy alliance had therefore been formed between the royal families. Jehoshaphat, who knew better, was in this very unfaithful, and though the Lord did not forsake him chastisements came upon him and his house. The prophet Jehu, son of Hanani, met him after he came back from the battle of Ramoth-Gilead and said to him: "Shouldst thou help the ungodly, and love them that hate the LORD? Therefore is wrath upon thee from before the LORD" (2 Chron. 19:2). Ahab, under the predicted judgment of God, asked Jehoshaphat: "Wilt thou go with me to battle to Ramoth-Gilead?" And gladly the good King of Judah answers: "I am as thou art, my people as thy people, my horses as thy horses." And Ahab in all his wicked apostasy had prophets, four hundred of them. Jehoshaphat was, no doubt, troubled in his conscience, and demanded that Ahab inquire of the LORD. The prophets he had, used no longer the name of Baal, but the name of Jehovah. And they all prophesied success. Jehoshaphat, however, was suspicious and asked for a prophet of the LORD. From this we may gather that there was something about them by which the King of Judah knew that they were not Jehovah's prophets. Ahab then sent for Micaiah the son of Imlah. Both kings occupied thrones and were clad in their robes in the entrance of the gate of Samaria. All the false prophets prophesied and one Zedekiah made horns of iron to produce a vivid impression of the coming victory. Then Micaiah appeared. The faithful prophet tells the kings what he had seen. It is a revelation he had. Jehovah permitted a lying spirit to possess Ahab's false prophets and they were prophesying lies. And Micaiah predicted the defeat of Israel. The words of Micaiah are of much importance. What happened in Ahab's day, when the Lord permitted a lying spirit to deceive and lead the wicked into ruin, will happen again at the close of this present age. God will send a strong delusion that they should believe a lie (2 Thess. 2). Unclean spirits will then be on the earth, even as they begin already and by lying words, lying miracles and signs, lead the Christ-rejecting masses into judgment.

Then the battle. Ahab disguised himself and Jehoshaphat wore his robes. It was more than cowardice in Ahab; he feared the judgment which was hovering over him and tried to avert the coming fatal stroke. Jehoshaphat was almost miraculously saved, but Ahab was miraculously killed. A soldier drew a bow at venture. That arrow was guided by a higher hand. It found the disguised King of Israel. It found the small opening in the King's harness. A little while later the dogs were licking his blood as they washed his blood stained chariot. Thus the word of the Lord was fulfilled. Jehoshaphat's full record we shall consider in Chronicles and Azariah's in the beginning of the second book of the Kings.

THE BOOK OF SECOND KINGS

The Annotated Bible

Arno Clement Gaebelein

THE SECOND BOOK OF THE KINGS

The Division of the Second Book of the Kings

The second book of the Kings is a continuation of the history of the kingdoms of Israel and Judah up to the time of the captivities. As stated in the introduction to the book of Kings, both books were originally undivided. In the opening chapters Elijah the prophet is seen once more in his final ministrations, followed by his translation. Then Elisha comes upon the scene. In and through his ministry and miracles Jehovah manifested His power in behalf of His people. It was Jehovah's gracious appeal to Israel to return unto Him. The history of decline and apostasy in Israel and Judah follows after that. The house of Israel was first carried into captivity through Assyria. In the Kingdom of Judah a revival took place under Hezekiah, which was followed by a reaction under Manasseh and Amon. After Josiah's reform and death Judah's doom was sealed. The book ends with the record of the siege of Jerusalem and the captivity. Hosea and Amos exercised their prophetic offices in the northern Kingdom, while Isaiah, Jeremiah, Joel, Obadiah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk and Zephaniah were the prophets of Judah. Ezekiel prophesied among the captives, while Daniel was in Babylon. The division of this second part of the book of the Kings is therefore easily made.

I. ELIJAH'S FINAL MINISTRY AND TRANSLATION

1. Elijah and Ahaziah (1:1-18)
2. Elijah's Translation (2:1-11)

II. THE PROPHET ELISHA

1. The Beginning of His Ministry (2:12-25)
2. Jehoram, Moab and Elisha (3:1-27)
3. The Miracles (4:1-44)
4. Naaman and His Healing (5:1-27)
5. Elisha and the Syrians (6:1-33)
6. Elisha's Prediction and its Fulfilment (7:1-20)
7. The Famine Predicted and Further Events (8:1-29)
8. The Anointing of Jehu (9:1-10)

III. THE PERIOD OF DECLENSION AND APOSTASY

1. Jehu, King of Israel and His deeds (9:11-37)
2. Jehu's Judgments, the Baal-worship Destroyed, and Jehu's Death (10:1-36)
3. Athaliah and Jehoida's Revival (11:1-21)
4. Jehoash, the Temple Repairs, and the Death of Jehoash (12:1-21)
5. Jehoahaz and Jehoash, the Death of Elisha (13:1-25)
6. Kings of Israel and Judah (14-15)

7. King Ahaz and Assyria (16:1-20)
8. Assyria Conquers Israel and the Captivity (17:1-41)

IV. THE REIGN OF HEZEKIAH, MANASSEH AND AMON

1. Hezekiah and Sennacherib's Invasion (18:1-37)
2. Hezekiah and Isaiah and the Deliverance (19:1-37)
3. Hezekiah's Illness, Recovery, Failure and Death (20:1-21)
4. Manasseh and Amon (21:1-26)

V. THE REIGN OF JOSIAH

1. The Revival (22:1-20)
2. The Results of the Revival and the Death of Josiah (23:1-30)

VI. THE FINAL APOSTASY OF JUDAH AND THE CAPTIVITY

1. Jehoahaz and Jehoiakim (23:31-37)
2. Jehoiachin and Zedekiah: The Beginning of Judah's Captivity (24:1-20)
3. The Siege of Jerusalem and Judah's Complete Overthrow (25:1-30)

Analysis and Annotations

I. ELIJAH'S FINAL MINISTRY AND TRANSLATION

1. Elijah and Ahaziah

CHAPTER 1

1. Moab's rebellion (1:1)
2. The illness of Ahaziah (1:2)
3. Elijah's message (1:3-8)
4. Ahaziah's messengers and their fate (1:9-15)
5. Elijah before the king and Ahaziah's Death (1:16-17)
6. Jehoram becomes king (1:18)

The rebellion of Moab is here briefly mentioned. Both Omri and Ahab had oppressed Moab, and after Ahab's death this rebellion took place. The complete report is found in the third chapter. That ancient monument known by the name of the Moabite stone contains a most interesting record of this revolt and the oppression by Omri and his son Ahab. This record is as follows: "Omri (was) King of Israel, and he oppressed Moab many days, for Chemosh (Moab's idol-god) was angry with his land. His son (Ahab) followed him, and he also said, I will oppress Moab." (See Appendix for a complete translation of the record on this monument.) However, if it were not for the Bible no one would know that the inscription on the Moabite stone is truthful. The Bible proves the record genuine, and not the record the genuineness of the Biblical account. The Bible does not need such confirmation.

Ahaziah, the wicked son of a wicked father, had an accident and sent his messenger to inquire of Baal-zebub, the god of Ekron. Baal-zebub means "lord of flies." According to rabbinical tradition, he was worshipped in the form of a fly; and so addicted were the Jews to this cult that they carried a small image in their pockets, kissing it from time to time. Vile practices were also connected with its worship. What awful blasphemy the Pharisees uttered when they accused our Lord

of using Beelzebub, the prince of demons! (Matt. 12:24. _Beelzebub is given in the Greek as _Beelzebul, which means "lord of idolatrous sacrificing.")

The messengers of Ahaziah never reached Ekron. The Lord had heard the charge to the king's messengers and He sent a messenger (angel means in Hebrew "a messenger") to Elijah the Tishbite. The angel of the LORD commanded the prophet to meet the men the king had sent forth to inquire of Baal-zebub and to announce the coming death of Ahaziah. The message is faithfully delivered; the messengers return to Ahaziah and he heard the words of Elijah from their lips. He knew at once who the mysterious person was who had turned back his messengers. The king sent therefore a captain with his fifty men to arrest the prophet. The captain addressed Elijah as a "Man of God" and commanded him in the name of the king to come down from the hill. But Elijah, fearless as he was, took up the word of the captain and appealed to his God to let fire come down from heaven. It was at once carried out and the captain with his fifty men were consumed by fire. The same fate overtook the second expedition, whose captain urged the prophet's obedience more than the first, for he said, "Come down quickly." The judicial character of Elijah's ministry is here once more in evidence. Critics have more than once condemned his action and called him "arrogant and merciless," while others deny the historicity of the event altogether. "Terrible as this answer was, we can perceive its suitableness, nay, its necessity, since it was to decide, and that publicly and by the way of judgment (and no other decision would have been suitable in a contest between man and God), whose was the power and the kingdom--and this at the great critical epoch of Israel's history" (History of Israel). Compare this fire judgment with Luke 9:54-56. When this present dispensation of grace is ended, judgment by fire will be meted out to the enemies of God (Rev. 11:5). During the great tribulation (Matt. 24:22) the fiery judgments will be on the earth (Rev. 8:5), preceding the visible manifestation of the Lord, who shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ (2 Thess. 1:7-8).

Elijah could consistently command fire to come down from heaven and consume those who dishonored and despised in him the prophet and servant of God. But when the disciples of Jesus, in a similar case (Luke 9:54-56) desired to imitate that example, the Lord restrained them, and said: "Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of." Elijah here acted as the representative of the law, which showed no indulgence, but the disciples of Christ were the representatives of the gospel which proclaims the remission of sins. The old covenant necessarily alarmed and subdued the enemies of the kingdom of God by minatory language and punitive measures, while the new covenant designed to disarm and, if possible, to win them by forgiving love (J.H. Kurts).

A third company was sent out by Ahaziah. Mercy was shown to this captain and his fifty men, for the captain feared God and honored Elijah as His representative. His words breathe humility and his prayer showed that he owned the power of God. Such mercy is also in store for those who humble themselves when the coming judgments are in the earth. Then Elijah appeared before Ahaziah in person and delivered the God-given message and the wicked King died according to the Word of the LORD.

2. Elijah's Translation

CHAPTER 2:1-11

1. From Gilgal to Jordan (2:1-6)
2. The divided Jordan (2:7-8)
3. Elisha's request (2:9-10)
4. Elijah goes up to heaven in a whirlwind (2:11)

The time for Elijah's departure had now come, and the LORD, whom he had served so faithfully, "would take up Elijah into heaven by a whirlwind." As Lord He graciously orders the time and the manner of the departure of His servants (John 21:18-22). His coming translation was known to him, to Elisha and to the sons of the prophets. The latter belonged to the schools of the prophets.

The "schools of the prophets," which were placed under the direction of experienced and approved prophets, afforded to younger men an opportunity of becoming qualified to perform the duties of the prophetic calling. The selection and the admission of individuals who were suited for the prophetic office by their personal character, and who had a divine call, undoubtedly depended on the prophetic judgment of those who presided over these institutions. As prophecy was a gift and not an art, the instructions which were imparted, probably referred merely to the study of the law, and were intended to awaken and cultivate theocratical sentiments, as well as promote a growth in spiritual life, for herein a suitable preparation for the prophetic office necessarily consisted. There are also indications found which authorize us to conclude that the revival of sacred poetry, as an art, and that theocratic-historical composition also, are to be ascribed to these religious communities as their source. Such schools existed in Ramah, Jericho, Beth-el, and Gilgal (1 Sam. 19:18; 2 Kings 2:3, 5; 4:38). Those who frequented them, had, usually, reached the age of manhood already, and in some cases, were married men. They lived together in a society or community, which often embraced a large number of members, and were occasionally employed as prophetic messengers by their teachers (2 Kings 9:1). However, the prophets were not invariably trained in these schools; several are named who were taken at once from civil life and invested with the prophetic office (Sacred History).

The goodness and power of God was now to be manifested in taking him into heaven without passing through death. The Jewish synagogue and the church have always believed the record of his departure, but it has been reserved to the destructive criticism to deny the translation of Elijah. The following statements are taken from Canon F.W. Farrar's exposition of the second book of Kings. "Knowing that he was on his way to death, Elijah felt the imperious instinct which leads the soul to seek solitude at the supreme crisis of life." "His death, like that of Moses, was surrounded by mystery and miracles, and we can say nothing further about it." How strange that a scholar and expositor can speak twice of the death of Elijah, when the record so dearly establishes the fact that he was taken up into heaven in a whirlwind and that he did not die at all!

He appeared with Moses when our Lord was transfigured. According to Peter's inspired comment the transfiguration scene foreshadows the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ (2 Peter 1:16-21). As He stood in glorious majesty upon that mountain so will He come to this earth once more and bring His saints with Him. Moses is the representative of those saints, who died and are raised from the dead; Elijah represents that company, who will be caught in clouds to meet the Lord in the air, departing from the earth without dying (1 Cor. 15:51-53; 1 Thess. 4:13-18).

Elisha clings close to Elijah. He had previously cast his mantle (the symbol of the prophetic office) upon Elisha, and he was then not quite ready to follow him fully. (See 1 Kings 19:19-20. Compare with Luke 9:62.) But now we see Elisha following Elijah from Gilgal to Bethel, from Bethel to Jericho, and from Jericho to Jordan. He proves himself worthy of the mantle, to exercise the holy office as the prophet of the LORD. He covets in answer to Elijah's request a double portion of the spirit which was upon Elijah to rest upon him. (According to the marginal reading, "the portion of the first born son," which was twice as much as that of the other sons. See Deut. 21:17.) Elijah's answer is conditional. If Elisha saw Elijah taken up into heaven, it should be so, and if not, then his request was not to be granted. And while they yet talked the chariot of fire, and horses of fire appeared and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven. The chariot of fire with its horses of fire were the symbol of the presence of the LORD of Hosts (Psalm 104:3-4; Isa. 66:15; Hab. 3:8), but Elijah went up by the whirlwind. We know he was translated; he passed on without dying, but the details of it are not made known.

Elisha following Elijah, his request and the vision of glory, are suggestive about true service for God. Only as we follow the Lord wholly, as Elisha followed Elijah, and look to the coming glory, are we fit and fitted for service.

II. THE PROPHET ELISHA

1. The Beginning of His Ministry

CHAPTER 2:12-25

1. The mantle used (2:12-14)
2. The sons of the prophets (2:15-18)
3. The healing of Jericho's waters (2:19-22)
4. Judgment upon the scoffers (2:23-25)

Both Elijah and Elisha are types of our Lord Jesus Christ. Their names indicate this. Elijah means "my God is Jehovah," and Elisha, "my God is salvation." Suffering, affliction and rejection are prominent in the life of Elijah, but it ended for him by being taken into heaven. It foreshadows the path of Him who was rejected by His own, cast out by the world and who has gone to heaven. In Elisha and his ministry, sovereign grace towards Israel in apostasy and ripening for judgment, is the predominant feature, foreshadowing Him who appeared in the midst of His people, ministering grace and truth (John 1:14, 18). (Another typical application is to look upon Elisha's ministry as typifying what will be bestowed upon Israel and upon the Gentiles with the return of our Lord Jesus Christ.)

Elisha had seen Elijah's departure into heaven, and when he saw him no more "he took hold of his own clothes, and rent them in two pieces." He thus expressed his grief, but at the same time he took Elijah's mantle (symbolical of the prophetic ministry, which had fallen upon him) and used it at once. He smites with it the waters of Jordan and the Lord God of Elijah answers faith by parting the river. It was the first miracle of his administration. "So shall the waters of difficulty, nay, the cold flood of death itself, part, if we smite in faith with the heaven given garment; so shall the promise of God ever stand sure, and God be true to His Word; and so may we go forward undauntedly, though humbly and prayerfully, to whatever work He gives us to do" (A. Edersheim).

The sons of the prophets then acknowledged Elisha. They are seen ever after in close fellowship with the prophet; they belonged to the faithful remnant in Israel. However, not having witnessed Elijah's translation they were unbelieving and thought that the Spirit might have transported the prophet (1 Kings 18:12; Ezek. 3:14; 8:3). They were not obedient to Elisha's command and urged him to send, till he was ashamed and yielded to their request. After a three days' unsuccessful search they returned and now they had to be ashamed, when their master told them, "Did I not say unto you, Go not?" They were like the disciples of our Lord "slow to believe."

The second miracle is one of mercy, followed by a miracle of judgment. The healing of Jericho's waters is a miracle of much significance. Jericho is a type of the world under the curse (Joshua 6). The water was naught and the ground barren. A new cruse with salt is brought. The salt is put into the waters and the prophet said: "Thus saith the LORD, I have healed these waters; there shall not be from thence any more death or barren land." When He, who is greater than Elisha, comes back to this earth again, now under the curse and death reigning upon it, the curse will be removed; there will be healing as it was for Jericho. The other miracles of grace and mercy teach the same lesson.

The third miracle is one of judgment. Judgment well deserved fell upon those who despised the chosen messenger of God. The mockers were not "little children," but young men. They were of Bethel, and no doubt associated with the wicked worship established there (1 Kings 7:25-33). They were infidels and scoffers. They mocked the translation of Elijah and taunted Elisha. The curse of the Lord fell upon them. Forty-two of their number were torn by she-bears. The punishment has been declared by critics "disproportionate to the offence." It certainly is not when the offence is considered as an insult to the man of God, who had gone to heaven and to the prophet who had taken his place; besides, these young men had scoffed at the power of God. And we must not overlook the fact that present day mockers and rejecters of the ministry of the gospel and grace of God will also receive their punishment in due time (2 Peter 3:3-7).

2. Jehoram, Moab, and Elisha

CHAPTER 3

1. Jehoram, King of Israel (3:1-3)

2. Moab's rebellion (3:4-9)
3. Elisha's message and prediction (3:10-20)
4. The defeat of Moab (3:21-27)

In chapter 1:17 we read, "And Jehoram reigned in his stead (Ahaziah) in the second year of Jehoram, the son of Jehoshaphat, King of Judah." (He was associated with his father in the government of the kingdom. See 2 Kings 8:27; 2 Chronicles 21:6.) There was, therefore, a Jehoram, king over Judah, as well as a king of Israel by the same name. They are also known by the name Joram. Joram and Jehoram are used interchangeably. In 2 Kings 1:17 and 2 Chron. 22:6 both kings are called Jehoram; in 2 Kings 9:15, 17, the King of Israel is called Joram; in 2 Kings 8:21, etc., the King of Judah is called Joram; comparing 2 Kings 8:16 and verse 29 we find these two names inverted. We mention this to clear up a possible difficulty some may find here. Jehoram was another son of Ahab, the brother of Ahaziah. A partial reformation was attempted by him, but he continued in the sins of Jeroboam, the son of Nebat (1 Kings 12:25-33).

The full record of Moab's rebellion is now given. Jehoram formed an alliance with Jehoshaphat, the King of Judah and the King of Edom. Jehoshaphat had been in league with Ahab (1 Kings 22) and now we see him in a similar alliance with Ahab's second son. It was an alliance displeasing to the LORD and Jehoshaphat was troubled in his conscience about it. The same question he had put to Ahab, he now puts to Ahab's son, "Is there not here a prophet of the LORD, that we may inquire of the LORD by him?" (cf. 1 Kings 22:7). Jehoshaphat knew the LORD, but was in evil company. When the three kings met in Elisha's tent, the prophet manifests the boldness of Elijah in rebuking the wicked King of Israel. But he honors the King of Judah. "As the LORD of hosts liveth, before whom I stand, surely, were it not that I regard the presence of Jehoshaphat the King of Judah, I would not look toward thee, nor see thee." But there was also a rebuke for the good King of Judah. The Spirit of God was grieved and Elisha had not the power of prophecy. He needed a minstrel first to calm his own agitated spirit and get into the condition of soul to utter the needed message. How it should have humbled the king, who served Jehovah, that after calling for a prophet of the LORD, the divine mouthpiece was unable to prophesy at once! Unholy alliances hindered the manifestation of the Spirit of God. Such is the case almost everywhere in our days of departure from the truth of God.

Then the ditches which had been made in obedience to the command given through Elisha were miraculously filled with water. On the next morning the Moabites saw the water and imagined that it was blood, on account of the reflection from the rising sun. "And they said, This is blood; the kings are surely slain, and they have smitten one another, now therefore Moab to the spoil." The onrushing Moabites were met by the Israelites and Elisha's prediction was fulfilled in the defeat of the Moabites and the devastation of their own land. It was the supernatural gift of water "when the meal-offering was offered" which led to the defeat of the enemy and the victory for Israel. And God has supplied the water of life through Him who is the true meal offering.

Kir-hareseth alone was left intact, all other cities were razed, all wells stopped up and every good tree cut down. (Kir-hareseth is repeatedly mentioned as the stronghold of Moab. See Isaiah 16:7.) On the devastation of Moab remarks a commentator, that the spirit of the times must be considered and that the half barbaric nations of that time all did this. But could the devastation of Moab hundreds of years before Christ have been any worse than the devastation of Belgium, Poland and Galicia in the twentieth century after Christ?

Then in despair the King of Moab did the horrible thing of sacrificing his eldest son, the one to reign after him. He offered him upon the wall, in plain sight of Israel, as a burnt offering, to conciliate his god Chemosh, who is mentioned on the Moabite stone. (See Appendix.)

3. The Miracles

CHAPTER 4

1. The widow's oil multiplied (4:1-7)

2. The Shunammite and her reward (4:8-17)
3. The son of the Shunammite raised from the dead (4:18-37)
4. The deadly pottage healed (4:38-41)
5. The multitude fed (4:42-44)

In the previous chapter Elisha appeared as the saviour of Israel, and now he acts in behalf of the widow of one of the sons of the prophets. His name is not given. Elisha had known him as one who feared the Lord. And now the widow deeply in debt, about to lose her two sons, appealed to the prophet. In answer to Elisha's question what she had in her house she told him that her whole possession consisted in a pot of oil (in Hebrew, anointing oil). She then was told to borrow empty vessels, not a few. Behind closed doors she was to pour out. All the borrowed vessels were soon filled and when the empty vessels were all filled and no other to be filled, the oil stayed. The oil was to be sold to satisfy the creditor and the rest to be used to sustain the widow and her sons. The Lord is the father of the widows and heareth their cry; this is beautifully illustrated in this miracle. Then there is the lesson for faith. The vessels had to be produced to be filled; if there had been more vessels the oil would have filled them all. The limitation was not in the supply of oil, but in the empty vessels to receive the oil. There is an abundance of grace and in faith we can always come with our empty vessels to receive out of His fulness grace upon grace.

Then the great woman of Shunem is introduced for the first time. She belonged to the godly in Israel and did not know the prophet, but it did not take her long to discover that he was a holy man of God. It is a blessed picture to see this man of God walking through the land, possessing nothing and acting in grace in the midst of Israel's ruin. In the words of another, "Poor indeed, while making many rich; seeming to possess all things, yet really having nothing. Receiving bounty and care in the ordinary need of life from those in whose behalf he, at the same time, is opening resources which were altogether beyond man. And, besides, he walks alone in the world, and yet all wait on him.

"All this gives us a strong expression of the ways of One who could call Himself Master and Lord, receiving the homage of faith, even while He had not where to lay His head. In all this our prophet is marking out for us, as in a reflection, the path of the Lord Jesus in one of its most striking, remarkable characters" (J. Bellett).

The pious Shunammite prepared for the lonely pilgrim a little chamber with its simple furnishings in her own house. And the man of God appreciated the kindness shown to him, and, learning that she had no son, Elisha told her "about this season, according to the time of life, thou shalt embrace a son." Like Sarah she believed and received her son. And when the child died, what faith the Shunammite exhibited! The son of promise was dead, yet in the midst of her great sorrow she could say, "It is well." Like Abraham, when he put the son of promise upon the altar, the Shunammite counted on resurrection and believed on Him who can raise the dead. She had lost her son for a while, but not her faith.

And how her faith clings to Elisha! Not Gehazi with the staff can help, but Elisha is needed. And her faith is rewarded. Her child is raised from the dead. The Holy Spirit mentions her in the New Testament. "Women received their dead raised to life again" (Heb. 11:35).

We see in her a true and faithful Israelitish woman, who, in a time of general apostasy, owned Jehovah alike in her life and her home. Receiving a prophet, because of Him who had sent him, because he was a holy man of God--and with humility and entire self-forgetfulness--she received a prophet's reward in the gift most precious to a Jewish mother, which she had not dared to hope for, even when announced to her. Then, when severely tried, she still held fast to her trust in the promise--strong even when weakest--once more self-forgetful, and following deepest spiritual impulse. And, in the end, her faith appears victorious--crowned by Divine mercy, and shining out the more brightly from its contrast to the felt weakness of the prophet. As we think of this, it seems as if a fuller light were shed on the history of the trials of an Abraham, an Isaac, or a Jacob; on the inner life of those heroes of faith to whom the Epistle of the Hebrews points us for example and learning (Heb. 11), and on such Scripture sayings as these: "Jehovah killeth, and maketh alive: He bringeth down to the grave, and bringeth up" (1 Sam. 2:6); "Know that Jehovah hath set apart him that is godly for Himself. Jehovah will hear when I call unto Him" (Psalm 4:3); or this: "All the paths of Jehovah are mercy and truth unto such as

keep His covenant and His testimonies" (Psalm 25:10). (Bible History).

And here we must also think of Him, whom Elisha but faintly foreshadows. He raises the spiritually dead now, all who hear His voice, as He will raise the physically dead in the future.

In Gilgal the eighth miracle of Elisha took place. The humble pottage which was being prepared for the sons of the prophets had been spoiled by the addition of a wild and poisonous gourd. Then Elisha cast meal into the pot and the pottage became eatable--"there was no harm in the pot." The meal is typical of our Lord, who was cast into the scene of death and through His death hath brought healing.

The miraculous feeding of the multitude was Elisha's ninth miracle and prefigures the miracles of our Lord (Matt. 14:19-21, etc.).

4. Naaman and His Healing

CHAPTER 5

1. Naaman, the leper (5:1)
2. The testimony of the maid of Israel (5:2-4)
3. The message to the king of Israel (5:5-8)
4. Naaman and Elisha (5:9-19)
5. Gehazi; His sin and punishment (5:20-27)

The story of this chapter is peculiarly rich in its spiritual and dispensational meaning. Naaman, captain of Ben-hadad, the King of Syria, was a Gentile. He was no common man. In all his greatness and might, with all the honors heaped upon him and wealth at his command, he was an unhappy and doomed man, for he was a leper. Leprosy is a type of sin. Here, then, is a picture of the natural man, enjoying the highest and the best--but withal a leper. And then the little captive, taken from Israel's land, away from her home and family--what a contrast with the great Naaman! In her captivity she was happy, for she knew the Lord and knew that the prophet in Samaria, the great representative of Jehovah, could heal leprosy. She knew and she believed. The grace which filled the heart gave her also a desire to see the mighty Naaman healed; the same grace gave her power to bear witness.

And how the Lord used the simple testimony! The King of Syria heard of it and addressed a letter to the King of Israel demanding that he should recover Naaman from his leprosy. And Naaman departed with "ten talents of silver and six thousand pieces of gold besides ten changes of raiment." And the King of Israel, Jehoram, no doubt, was filled with fear, for he thought the King of Syria was seeking a pretext to quarrel with him. While he readily acknowledged that God alone has the power to heal, he did not look to the Lord nor did he think of the mighty prophet, whose very name declared that God is salvation. In helpless and hopeless terror, in the despair of unbelief he rent his clothes.

It was then that the man of God spoke reproving the King, asking that Naaman come to him. Then Naaman, with his horses and chariot, laden with the treasures, stood at the door of the house of Elisha. The prophet through a messenger told the leper, "Go and wash in Jordan seven times, and thy flesh shall come again to thee, and thou shalt be clean." Well may we think here of our Lord Jesus, who cleansed the leper, and in doing so manifested Himself as Jehovah. But how He shines above all!

When the leper comes to Him, it is not as with the king, "Am I God, that I should heal a man of his leprosy?" nor is it as with the prophet, "Go wash in Jordan, and be clean." No; but He reveals Himself at once in the place and power of God. "I will, be thou clean." Elisha was but a preacher of Jesus to Naaman; the Lord Jesus was the lepers' cleansing, the healing God. Elisha did not venture to touch the leper. This would have defiled him. But our Lord "put forth His hand and touched him;" for He, with the rights of the God of Israel, was above the leper, and could consume and not contract the defilement

(J.G. Bellett).

And Naaman's wrath and indignation were stirred by Elisha's command. The great and mighty captain with his treasures expected a different reception from the prophet. He expected him at least to do what heathen priests with their enchantments did, to call on the name of the Lord his God and strike his hand over the place of leprosy. He rejects the remedy which grace had provided because it humbled him into dust and stripped him of his pride. It is just this the sinner needs. Naaman had to learn that he was nothing but a poor, lost leper. All his silver and gold could not purchase cleansing for him. He needed humiliation and the obedience of faith. And so he learned as his servants reasoned with him, and instead of returning in a rage to Damascus as the helpless leper, he obeyed the given command and dipped himself seven times in Jordan--"and his flesh came again like unto the flesh of a little child, and he was clean." Jordan is the type of death, as we saw in the study of Joshua. Our Lord was baptized by John in that river, for He had come to take the sinners' place in death. Naaman bathing in Jordan typifies death and resurrection in which there is cleansing and healing for the spiritual leper, but it is the death and resurrection of our blessed Lord. As we believe on Him who died for our sins according to Scripture, and was raised for our justification, we are born again and made clean. It is the one way of salvation, the only way, revealed in every portion of God's holy Word. "Saved by grace through faith (in Him who died for our sins), it is the gift of God, not of works, lest any man should boast."

And the blessed results of true salvation are seen at once in Naaman the Syrian. He is fully restored and healed. He stands now before the man of God, no longer the proud, self-trusting Naaman, but an humble believer. He confesses the Lord with his lips. He offers also a gift to Elisha. ("A blessing" means a gift.) He could not give anything to effect his cleansing, but after the healing he offered willingly. But Elisha refused the reward offered to him. He had freely received and freely he gave (Matt. 10:8). Then he requested "two mules' burden of earth." This was to be used to build an altar unto Jehovah in Syria. It was an outward expression of his faith and would be a testimony among the heathen that there is but one Lord to be worshipped. And there was the tender conscience (verse 18). Finally he departed in peace. "Go in peace"; the same words our blessed Lord used repeatedly. And Gehazi's covetousness earned him the leprosy from which grace had delivered the Syrian Gentile. The story is full of solemn lessons.

Dispensationally Naaman stands for the Gentiles. Through Him who is greater than Elisha salvation has been extended to the Gentiles, while Gehazi, who was closely connected with Elisha, but who had hardened his heart, is a type of Israel.

5. Elisha and the Syrians

CHAPTER 6

1. The lost axe-head recovered (6:1-7)
2. Elisha makes known Ben-hadad's plans (6:8-12)
3. Elisha's arrest planned (6:13-17)
4. The blinded Syrians led to Samaria (6:18-23)
5. Samaria besieged (6:24-30)
6. The king's wrath against Elisha (6:31-33)

It has been truly said that the miracle of the swimming axe-head reveals the condescension of divine power and the grace of benevolence. We see the great man of God in fellowship with the sons of the prophets. He goes with them and when they are in distress the power of God is manifested through him. Rationalistic critics have always ridiculed the miracle of the swimming iron. "The story is perhaps an imaginative reproduction of some unwonted incident," saith Farrar, the higher critic. Then he adds, all the eternal laws of nature are here superseded at a word, as though it were an every day matter, without even any recorded invocation of Jehovah, to restore an axe-head, which could obviously have been recovered or resupplied in some less stupendous way than by making iron swim on the surface of a swift-flowing river" (Expositor's Bible). And Ewald, the German critic, explains, "he threw on to the spot where it had sunk a piece of wood cut to fit it, which caught it up"! These men all aim at the denial of miracles of any kind. They delight in making an

omnipotent God, in whom they profess to believe, a helpless slave to the laws of nature, a God who has neither power nor inclination to set aside these laws in behalf of His trusting people. We say it again, the rationalistic critic is an unbeliever of the worst type.

There is much comfort for God's trusting children in the miracle of the swimming iron. The mighty power of God condescends to help those who trust even in the smallest things of life. Our Lord fills the throne in glory and is the upholder of all things, yet as the sympathizing priest, He enters into the lives of His people. His power answers faith, if we but learn to bring our little troubles to Him as the man came in distress to Elisha.

When war broke out between Ben-hadad and the King of Israel, Elisha made known the secret counsels of the King of Syria. The man of God, walking in constant fellowship with Jehovah, received this supernatural information, and thereby an additional evidence was given to apostate Israel that the Lord is for His people and a very present help in time of trouble. Then one of Ben-hadad's servants suggested that it was Elisha's work, and the king in his blindness sent a great host to capture Elisha. (Certainly not Naaman as some have surmised. Yet the knowledge that Elisha had been the instrument of healing the Syrian captain moved some unknown servant of Ben-hadad to suggest that Elisha was responsible for the revelation of the king's plans.) What Ahaziah attempted with Elijah (chapter 1), Ben-hadad now undertakes with Elisha. But Elisha, who acts in grace, does not call down fire from heaven to devour the men who compassed Dothan. Elisha's servant (not Gehazi) is terror stricken when he beheld the besieging host. Elisha knows no fear, for he knows "they that are with us are more than they that be with them." He had seen the chariots of Israel and the horsemen thereof before (2:12). He knew that the Lord's hosts compassed him about. He did not need to pray for himself, that he might see, for he saw, because he believed. He prayed for his servant that his eyes might be opened. Then the servant saw, "and behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots round about Elisha." Angelic ministry and protection may be termed one of the lost comforts which God's people have. They are still "ministering spirits to minister unto the heirs of salvation."

"I doubt not, a host or constellation of angels, those heavenly creatures, which, excelling in strength, stand in the presence of God, or go forth to minister on account of those who are heirs of salvation. For of them we read that 'God maketh His angels spirits (winds) and His ministers a flame of fire'; and again, 'The chariots of God are twenty thousand, even thousands of angels.' At the divine behest, they get ready to serve in whatever the exigency of the saint, or the occasion under the throne of God, may require. They formed a travelling chariot to convey Elijah to heaven, and to carry Lazarus to Abraham's bosom. They now form chariots of war, when Elisha is beleaguered by the hostile bands of Syria. Either singly or in company they visit the elect on earth, and either alone or in concert celebrate the joy of heaven in the audience of the earth. They have drawn the sword to smite a guilty city, or with the strong hand of love dragged the too reluctant one forth from the doomed city. They are either as winds or as fire. They are messengers of mercy, and executors of judgment, as 'the Lord' who 'is among them' may command. They attended on Mount Sinai when the law was published, and they hovered over the fields of Bethlehem when Jesus was born. And here, in their order and strength, they are as a wall of fire, a wall of salvation, round about the prophet.

Very blessed all this is. And still more blessed to know, that ere long, the hidden glories, which are now only known to such faith as Elisha's, will become the manifested things; and the threatenings of the enemy, the noise and the din and clang of arms, which are the present apparent things, all of fears and sorrows for the heart, shall have rolled by, like the past thunder-storm, but to leave the sunshine the brighter (Meditations on Elisha).

Elisha then prayed that the besieging host should be smitten with blindness. The prayer was at once answered. He led on the Syrian forces into Samaria. But was it not deception when the man of God said to the blinded enemies, "I will bring you to the man whom ye seek," leading them into Samaria? It was not. Samaria was the home of the prophet and he was then on his way there. His object was to demonstrate to the Syrians, as well as to the King of Israel, that Jehovah is the God and all-sufficient helper of His people. What mercy he then showed to his captives. Jehoram would have smitten them, but Elisha fed them and had them sent away in peace. In this he is a type of Him who taught, "Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbor, and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them

that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you" (Matt. 5:43-44).

Some time after Ben-hadad besieged Samaria and a great famine followed, and there was such a distress that women ate their own offspring. It was but a fulfilment of the threatened judgments upon an apostate people (Lev. 26:29; Deut. 28:53). The same horror occurred during the siege of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar (Lam. 4:10) and also, according to Josephus, during the siege by Titus 70 A.D. The wicked nature of the king asserted itself in blaming Elisha for the misfortune which had fallen upon his kingdom. He seeks to slay the man of God. After all the mighty miracles God had wrought by the hands of Elisha, the representative of Israel, wants to kill the prophet. This also foreshadows our Lord, when they sought to kill Him after His gracious ministry. But Elisha knew the murderous purpose of the long ere the messengers came. He called the king by the right name "this son of a murderer," for such Ahab was. And when the king appeared in person he said, "Behold this evil is of the LORD, what should I wait for the LORD any longer?" He realizes the impending judgment on account of Israel's sin.

6. Elisha's Prediction and Its Fulfilment

CHAPTER 7

1. Elisha's prediction (7:1)
2. The unbelieving lord (7:2)
3. The four lepers and their discovery (7:3-8)
4. The day of good tidings (7:9-15)
5. The prediction fulfilled (7:16-18)
6. The death of the unbelieving lord (7:19-20)

When the worst had come, Samaria starving to death, the king in despondency, Elisha's life threatened, then the mercy and kindness of God is revealed once more. The prophet announces the good news of salvation and deliverance. All is typical of the gospel of grace. The unbelieving lord who rejected the good news and refused to believe it represents those who reject the gospel. All in this chapter is intensely interesting and suggestive.

The great victory was accomplished by the Lord alone. His chariots had frightened the Syrian camp and put them to flight. The bread and the water, the silver and gold and raiment, all was His provision for a starving, dying people, and the four lepers in despair, facing certain death, were the first to discover God's victory for them and the people. Their great need led them to find the needed salvation. Well may all this be applied to our Lord's work for us and to the provision of the gospel. He alone worked out the great salvation and provided all, that sinners dying and lost (represented by the lepers) may come to eat and drink, without money and without price. It was a day of good tidings. Such is the still lasting day of salvation, the day of grace. The lepers who had their fill first and had tasted God's great salvation, could not hold their peace. Through them the whole city hears of the provision made. And the people went out to see how wonderfully the prediction of Elisha had been accomplished. All enjoyed it. But the unbelieving lord perished, a warning that he that believeth not must die in his sins. The repetition at the close of this chapter of the words of the unbeliever recorded in the beginning of this story, is of solemn meaning. God is true to His Word, the Word which promises life to all who believe and which threatens eternal punishment to all who believe not. "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life, and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him."

7. The Famine Predicted and Further Events

CHAPTER 8

1. The famine predicted (8:1-2)
2. The Shunammite's land restored (8:3-6)

3. Elisha with Ben-hadad and Hazael (8:7-15)
4. Jehoram King of Judah (8:16-19; 2 Chronicles 21:5)
5. The Revolt of Edom (8:20-21; 2 Chronicles 21:8-10)
6. The Revolt of Libnah (8:22-23; 2 Chronicles 21:10)
7. Death of Jehoram (8:24; 2 Chronicles 21:19-20)
8. Ahaziah and Jehoram (8:25-29; 2 Chronicles 22)

The threatened judgment upon the house of Ahab is now rapidly approaching. Elisha, knowing the secrets of the Lord, predicts the seven years famine. "Surely the Lord GOD will do nothing, but He revealeth His secrets unto His servants the prophets" (Amos 3:7). The Shunammite, that godly woman, is here introduced once more. As her husband is not mentioned she may have been a widow. Elisha warns her of the coming famine, and she heeded the warning and sojourned for seven years in the land of the Philistines. After her return all was restored unto her by the King. The introduction here of Gehazi, the servant of Elisha, has drawn the fire of the critics. "As it is unlikely that the king would converse long with a leper, and as Gehazi is still called 'the servant of the man of God,' the incident may here be narrated out of order" (Expositor's Bible). But not so. It is fully in order. Gehazi was known as the servant of Elisha and is mentioned by his former position so that all doubt about his personality might be removed. That the deposed servant was with the apostate king is of much interest and has its lessons.

"It seems to me that Gehazi stands here in a grievous position. Smitten by the hand of God, because his heart clung to earth, even in the presence of Jehovah's mighty and long-suffering testimony, he is now a parasite in the king's court, relating the wonderful things in which he no longer took part. This poor world grows weary enough of itself to lead it to take some pleasure in hearing anything spoken of that has reality and power. Provided that it does not reach the conscience, they will listen to it for their amusement, taking credit to themselves perhaps for an enlarged and a liberal mind, which is not enslaved by that which can yet recognize philosophically in its place. But that is a sad position, which makes it evident that formerly we were connected with a testimony, whilst now we only relate its marvels at court. Nevertheless God makes use of it; and it does not follow that there was no truth in Gehazi. But to rise in the world, and entertain the world with the mighty works of God, is to fall very deep" (Synopsis of the Bible).

Elisha after this went outside of Israel's land to Damascus. Guided by the Lord, whom he served so faithfully, he paid a visit to the sick King of Syria. By referring to 1 Kings 19:15 we find that the commission to anoint Hazael, King over Syria, had been given to Elijah. There is no record from which we learn that Elijah had done so. And now Elisha meets Hazael, who came to him as the messenger of the sick King Ben-hadad, bringing costly presents. And the king asked the question, "Shall I recover of this disease?" The prophet's answer was brief. The sickness itself was not fatal, he would certainly recover and yet the Lord had shown to him that the king should surely die. This meant while the sickness in itself would not result in Ben-hadad's death, he should nevertheless die by other means.

Then Elisha's countenance fell and the man of God wept. Then Elisha told Hazael he wept on account of the horrible atrocities which he would commit against the children of Israel. The fulfillment of Elisha's prediction is found in chapters 10:32, 12:17, 13:3. Weeping Elisha foreshadows our Lord weeping over Jerusalem when He saw what was to come upon the city He loved so well. And Hazael, with a mock humility, expressed surprise. But the prophet revealed the innermost thoughts of his wicked heart by telling him he would be king over Syria; this was his aim. And so he returned to Ben-hadad, bringing a mutilated message and murdered the king immediately after.

The record of the kings of Judah and Israel is now briefly given. All is fast ripening for the long threatened judgment. After the death of Jehoshaphat, his son Jehoram became sole ruler over Judah. He walked in the evil ways of the kings of Israel and the record tells the reason, "for the daughter of Ahab was his wife." After him came his son Ahaziah. Again wicked Athaliah, his mother, is mentioned. (The marginal reading "grand-daughter" is correct. She was Ahab's daughter and Omri's grand-daughter.) His connection with Ahab is made prominent. He did evil also in the sight of the Lord and made an alliance with the son of Ahab, Joram (or Jehoram), who was still king in Israel. Joram was wounded by the Syrians and Ahaziah, King of Judah, visited him in Jezreel. Alas! the unholy alliance of Jehoshaphat, King of Judah, with

the wicked murderer, Ahab, King of Israel (1 Kings 22) had resulted in the marriage of his son with Athaliah, the wicked daughter of a wicked father. And Jehoram, Jehoshaphat's son, was dragged down by her and she became the ruination of her son Ahaziah. A dreadful harvest!

8. The Anointing of Jehu

CHAPTER 9:1-10

1. The commission (9:1-3)
2. Jehu anointed (9:4-10)

The hour of judgment for the house of Ahab has come. The instrument for it, mentioned long ago to Elijah (1 Kings 19:16-17), appears now upon the scene. The army of Joram, King of Israel, besieged Ramoth-gilead and Jehu was the captain of the forces. Joram was recovering from his wounds in Jezreel. Then Elisha called one of the sons of the prophets. Handing him a box of oil he sent him to Ramoth-gilead. He was to look out for Jehu, the son of Jehoshaphat, the son of Nimshi, and anoint him King over Israel. Then he was not to tarry, but to flee. Jehu means "Jehovah is He"; Jehoshaphat, "Jehovah judges"; Nimshi, "Jehovah reveals." Significant names!

The messenger carried out the commission and at the same time states the judgment work into which God had called him. He was to execute judgment on the house of Ahab, to avenge the blood of the prophets and the Lord's servants at the hand of Jezebel. The whole house of Ahab was to perish like Jeroboam (1 Kings 14:10) and that of Baasha (1 Kings 16:3). "And the dogs shall eat Jezebel in the portion of Jezreel, and there shall be none to bury her." More than fifteen years had passed since Jehovah through Elijah had announced the doom of the house of Ahab and the doom of Jezebel. And now the hour of execution had come. God will judge in the end, though He is never in haste to execute His threatened judgments. The day is surely coming when the Lord will judge this world, when especially Jezebel (Rev. 2:20), Babylon the Great, the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth, drunken with the blood of the saints, the Romish apostate "church," will receive her judgment. "And in her was found the blood of the prophets, and of saints, and of all that were slain on the earth" (Rev. 17:5-6, 18:24).

III. THE PERIOD OF DECLENSION AND APOSTASY

1. Jehu, King of Israel and His Deeds

CHAPTER 9:11-37

1. Jehu is king (9:11-13)
2. Jehoram, King of Israel slain (9:14-26)
3. Ahaziah slain (2 Chronicles 22:9)
4. Jezebel and her end (9:30-37)

Jehu revealed the secret anointing as King over Israel, and under the blare of the trumpets the army hails him as King. "Jehu is King!" Oh! for that day when our Lord Jesus will be hailed as King to begin His righteous judgment over the earth.

The Assyrian monuments bear interesting testimony to a good deal of the history contained in 2 Kings. Our space forbids a fuller mention of this. The name of Jehu has a place in the obelisk of black marble which Layard discovered at Nimrood. The Assyrian form of his name is "Yahua." Shalmaneser II (860- 825 B.C.) erected this obelisk and inscribed on it the annals of his reign in 190 lines in cuneiform characters. Five rows of bas-relief illustrate the annals. The second row pictures the bearers of the tribute of Jehu to the Assyrian King. The obelisk is in the British Museum.

He begins at once his awful judgment-work. He is just an instrument used by a holy and righteous God to execute His vengeance. Of real communion with the Lord he knew nothing. Nothing of the fear of the Lord or exercise of soul towards Him is recorded, nor do we read that he ever worshipped or called upon the name of the Lord. There was zeal and obedience in the execution of the judgments of the Lord.

"But how awful in its character! On what a fearful journey does it send this sword of the Lord! From Ramoth to the vineyard of Naboth, from thence to the going up to Gur, from thence to Jezreel, from thence to the shearinghouse, and from thence to Samaria, and all the road marked by blood!--blood, too, appointed in righteousness to be shed! For though the sword that shed it cared not for righteousness, yet in its action the Lord was pleading with the flesh of Ahab and his house--as, by and by, He will have a greater pleading, even with all flesh, and the slain of the Lord shall be many. And what shall be the rapidity and the stretch of the divine judgment then! What will be the journey of the sword of the Lord, or the 'grounded staff' in that day, when 'as the lightning cometh out of the east and shineth even unto the west, so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be!'"

The record itself of how Joram and Ahaziah fell under the judgment executed by Jehu needs but little comment. Jehoram sent messengers from Jezreel, which Jehu detained, while he drove on furiously. Then Joram, with his nephew Ahaziah, King of Judah, went to meet Jehu. When they met, the arrow of Jehu, pierced Joram's heart and his body was cast into the field of Naboth, the Jezreelite, "according to the word of the LORD." Ahaziah fled, but was smitten "at the going up of Gur." He tried to reach Megiddo and there he died.

Then comes Jezebel, the wicked. She died as she had lived, in wickedness and pride. She knew she had to die. The evil tidings had reached Jezreel, where once in younger days she was queen and mistress. She painted her face to make herself look beautiful. Did she attempt to attract Jehu? Hardly that, for she was an old woman, having a grandson twenty-two years old (2 Kings 8:26). It was a proud defiance--she would meet death like a queen. The miserable, doomed woman, the dunghill of all vileness (Jezebel means "dunghill"), the instigator of crimes, looked out of the window, while Jehu's chariot came thundering on. Then she spoke, "Is it peace--Zimri! murderer of his master?" It was a bold taunt. Zimri had murdered his master, but reigned only seven days (1 Kings 16:9-19). She reminds him of Zimri's deed and Zimri's fate. Eunuchs threw her out of the window. The blood bespattered the wall and the prancing horses. The chariot of Jehu rushed on over her body. He did not pay any attention to her mangled body. Jehu entered the royal palace to feast and afterwards gave command to bury the cursed woman. But little was left of her. And Jehu said, "This is the word of the LORD, which He spake by His servant Elijah the Tishbite, saying, In the portion of Jezreel shall dogs eat the flesh of Jezebel." God's judgments are often slow, but they are sure.

2. Jehu's Judgments, Baal-worship Destroyed, and His Death

CHAPTER 10

1. The judgment upon the house of Ahab (10:1-11)
2. The relations of Ahaziah slain (10:12-14; 2 Chron. 22:8)
3. Jehonadab spared (10:15-17)
4. The Baal worship destroyed (10:18-28)
5. Jehu's record (10:29-31)
6. Israel cut short (10:32-33)
7. Jehu's death (10:34-36)

And now Jehu, the instrument, chosen for judgment, continued his judgment work without showing mercy. The long threatened national judgment upon Israel had begun.

The hint which Jezebel had given him concerning Zimri and the possibility of a rebellion may have influenced Jehu to put away the descendants of Ahab. There were seventy sons, which, according to Hebrew phraseology, means his

grandsons and their offspring. He concocts a clever scheme by which the elders of Samaria and the guardians of the grandsons of Ahab were forced to kill the seventy. This was done probably to head off a rebellion against him. Then, according to the custom of those days, the ghastly evidence of the deed was piled in two heaps at the entering in of the gate. Then he addressed the people, showing that while he had slain his master, they were also guilty in slaying these seventy persons, and finally he added the justification of the deeds. "Know now that there shall fall unto the earth nothing of the Word of the LORD, which the LORD spake concerning the house of Ahab, for the LORD hath done that which He spake by His servant Elijah.' So Jehu slew all that remained of the house of Ahab in Jezreel, and all his great men, and his kinsfolks, and his priests, until he left him none remaining."

Then forty-two princes and the sons of the brethren of Ahaziah (2 Chron. 22:8) were slain. They were on the way to Jezreel, which showed their guilty affiliation with the wickedness of Jezebel. They were taken alive and then were slain at the pit of the shearing house, probably a cistern called Beth Eged.

Next he met Jehonadab, the son of Rechab. The Rechabites belonged to the Kenites (1 Chron. 2:55). They are first mentioned in Gen. 15:19. A part of this tribe had followed Israel (Num. 10:29-32) and settled in the south of Judah (Judges 1:16), where they became attached to the Amalekites (1 Sam. 15:6). Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, was a Kenite (Judges 1:16) and so was Jael, who slew Sisera (Judges 4:17). See the record of Jehonadab and his work for the tribe in Jeremiah 35:1-16. Jehu recognized him as a friend and took him into his chariot. He may have been acquainted with Elijah; and the great work he did, as made known by Jeremiah, in separating them unto the Lord may have been brought about by the threatened judgment by Elijah and its execution through Jehu, of which Jehonadab knew and part of which he witnessed.

Then in great subtlety Jehu destroyed the worshippers of Baal who appeared at his summons in their festive vestments. Thus Jehu destroyed Baal out of Israel. But the summary of Jehu's reign gives a mournful picture. Like Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, Jehu did not depart from the golden calves at Beth-el and at Dan. Nor did he take heed to walk in the law of the LORD God of Israel with all his heart. He is a sad illustration of a man who may be used of God and yet is disobedient in his own life; executing God's plans, yet knowing nothing of real communion. But the LORD did not forget even this imperfect service (verse 30).

3. Athaliah and Jehoiada's Revival

CHAPTER 11

1. Athaliah's wicked reign (11:1-3; 2 Chron. 22:10-12)
2. Joash (Jehoash) proclaimed king (11:4-12; 2 Chron. 23:1-11)
3. The death of Athaliah (11:13-16; 2 Chron. 23:12-15)
4. Jehoiada's revival (11:17-21; 2 Chron. 23:16-21)

Athaliah, the wicked daughter of a wicked pair (Ahab and Jezebel), the widow of Joram, King of Judah, Jehoshaphat's son and the mother of Ahaziah, who had been slain by Jehu, destroyed the seed royal. She did so because she wanted the authority herself. It was an awful deed, inspired by him who is the murderer from the beginning. And Satan aimed through her at something of which his instrument was ignorant. It was one of the many attempts Satan made to exterminate the male offspring to make the coming One, the promised saviour, the seed of the woman, impossible. Had he succeeded through Athaliah in the destruction of the royal seed of David, the promise made to David would have become impossible. Notice the first little word in the second verse, "But." Satan's attempt failed. The watchful eye of Jehovah and His power frustrated it all. A wicked woman killed her own children and a godly woman was used to keep one of the royal seed alive.

Jehosheba ("the LORD's oath" is the meaning of her name), through whom the covenant-oath was sustained, was the wife of Jehoiada (meaning "the LORD knows"), the high-priest (2 Chron. 22:11); he was brother-in-law to Ahaziah (2 Chron. 22:11) and Jehosheba was probably a half sister of Ahaziah. She took the young child from among the King's sons and hid him first in the bed-chamber and then in the house of the LORD till the seventh year. Well may we see here a most

beautiful type of our Lord Jesus Christ. Like Joash He was doomed to death, yea, He died. But He was raised from the dead and is now hidden in the house of God above, the heavens having received Him. Joash, the heir of the throne of David, was hidden till the seventh year even as the true heir to the throne of David is now hidden in the presence of God till the six years (six the number of man's day, the present age) are passed. And when the seventh year comes--the beginning of the coming age, He will be brought forth as Joash was brought from his hiding place and be crowned king.

A remnant selected by Jehoiada saw the king first. It is a great scene this chapter describes. The company brought together, armed with King David's shields and spears, the king's son brought into the midst, Jehoiada putting the crown upon his head, anointing him with oil, they clapped with their hands and shouted "God save the King." Greater will be the scene when He will be crowned King of Kings, whose right it is to reign. Athaliah, the usurper, appears on the scene, attracted by the noise. She is face to face with the crowned king and receives now her well-deserved punishment outside of the house of the LORD. A great revival followed. A covenant was made by Jehoiada between the LORD and the king and people "that they should be the LORD's people." Baal's altars and images are broken. The king sits upon his throne. All the people of the land rejoiced and there was peace. All these blessed results are faint foreshadowings of what is yet to be when the usurper is cast out, when the true King is crowned. Then Israel will be in truth the LORD's people, idolatry will cease, the land and the people will rejoice and the city be quiet.

4. Jehoash, the Temple Repaired, and the Death of Jehoash

CHAPTER 12

1. Jehoash's (Joash) Reign (12:1-3; 2 Chron. 24:2)
2. The Failure of the Priests (12:4-8; 2 Chron. 24:4-5)
3. The Temple Repaired (12:9-16; 2 Chron. 24:8-14)
4. Hazael and Jehoash (12:17-18)
5. The Death of Joash (12:19-21; 2 Chron. 24:25-27)

Great things had the Lord done both in Israel and in Judah. As we have seen there were numerous divine interpositions in the downward course, but all led to the final judgments upon both. Revivals took place, but they were not lasting and the reactions which followed produced a greater apostasy. This also is the course of the present age, which will end in a greater departure from God and in a corresponding greater judgment than Israel's. "The people had fallen away from the divine purpose of their national calling, and become untrue to the meaning of their national history. From this point of view the temporary success of these reform movements may be regarded as a divine protest against the past. But they ultimately failed because all deeper spiritual elements had passed away from rulers and people." "And still deeper lessons come to us. There is not a more common, nor can there be a more fatal mistake in religion or in religious movements than to put confidence in mere negations, or to expect from them lasting results for good. A negation without a corresponding affirmation is of no avail for spiritual purposes. We must speak because we believe; we deny that which is false only because we affirm and cherish the opposite truth. Otherwise we may resist; and enlist unspiritual men, but we shall not work any deliverance in the land" (A. Edersheim).

The reign of Jehoash had begun well. The record tells us that he did that which was right in the sight of the LORD as long as Jehoiada was priest. But what happened after the departure of Jehoiada? The answer is indicated in verse 3 and fully given in 2 Chron. 24:17-22. The king, who had received such kindness from Jehoiada, ordered the stoning of Zechariah, the son of Jehoiada, because he delivered a faithful message to the king against his idolatry.

The leading work of Jehoash's reign was the repairing of the temple. This had become necessary because the family of Athaliah had broken it up and used the dedicated things in the worship of Baal (2 Chron. 24:7). The king took the initiative, but the neglect of the priests made the work practically impossible. Then the work was taken up in earnest by Jehoiada, and voluntary contributions received. A large sum was collected which was exclusively used for the repairing of the temple. When this was completed the balance was used for the purchase of the sacred vessels (2 Chron. 24:14).

Then Hazael began his wicked work and threatened Jerusalem. Joash bought him off by turning over to him all the hallowed things of the temple and the treasures of the palace. Not a word is said that Jehoash sought the Lord or prayed. It shows only too clearly that Jehovah, the present help in time of trouble, had been forgotten. The death of the king, murdered in the house of Millo followed soon. In our annotations of Chronicles we shall hear more of his history. Then Amaziah reigned in his stead.

5. Jehoahaz and Jehoash of Israel, Elisha's Death

CHAPTER 13

1. The reign of Jehoahaz and his death (13:1-9)
2. Jehoash King of Israel (13:10-13)
3. Elisha and Joash (13:14-19)
4. The death of Elisha (13:20-21)
5. Hazael and his death (13:22-25)

Jehoahaz, the son of Jehu, reigned after the death of his father (10:35) and here we learn that he also followed in the abominable worship which Jeroboam had instituted in Bethel and in Dan. The Lord delivered therefore Israel into the hands of Hazael of Syria and into his son's hand. Jehoahaz prayed to the LORD and the LORD, so abundant in mercy, hearkened, for He saw the oppression of Israel, because the King of Syria oppressed them. Verses 5 and 6 form a parenthesis. The seventh verse tells of the havoc which the King of Syria had wrought among Israel. The prayer of Jehoahaz, though heard, was not fully answered at once. The parenthetical verses (5 and 6) must be looked upon as giving a summary of the entire history; God sent a saviour and yet they continued in their sins. Joash, the son of Jehoahaz, was the first one through whom a partial deliverance was wrought (verse 25) and the full deliverance came under the grandson Jeroboam II (14:25-27). We have here a good illustration of how the Lord hears prayer and how in His sovereignty and all-wise purposes He may delay the answer for many years. It should be enough for God's people to know that prayer is heard and to leave the answer with Him, who does all things well. And so Jehoahaz saw nothing but oppression (verse 22) though he had turned unto the LORD and had prayed. It was a trial of faith.

After his death his son Jehoash (also called Joash, distinguished from the King of Judah of the same name) reigned. There was no change for the better. Verses 10-13 are another brief summary giving briefly the character of his reign, his death and his successor.

The deathbed scene of Elisha and Joash's visit follows. Over sixty years Elisha had been the prophet of God. The last we heard of this great man of God was when he sent his messenger to anoint Jehu. Forty-five years had passed and no ministry of Elisha is recorded. He was quite forgotten and neglected. The same was the case with Daniel in Babylon. When apostasy advances, the Lord's true prophets are not wanted; they share the rejection of the Lord and His Truth. Joash then visited the dying prophet. From this we may gather that his abode was known and that Joash realized that Elisha's death would be a great loss. He utters the same words which Elisha spoke when Elijah went to heaven. He wept and still his words were the words of unbelief, as if with Elisha's death "the chariot of Israel and the horsemen thereof," the protection and blessing for Israel would have an end. Then follows the symbolical shooting of the arrows and the smiting of the ground. Halfheartedly the unbelieving king enters into that which Elisha had made so plain. It was Joash's lack of faith, indicated by smiting the ground but thrice, which made the complete victory over the Syrians impossible. Only "three times did Joash beat him (Hazael's son Ben-hadad) and recovered the cities of Israel" (verse 25). If he had faith it would have been five and six times.

Elisha had died. A corpse about to be buried was hastily cast into the sepulchre of Elisha, where his bones rested. "And when the man was let down, and touched the bones of Elisha, he revived and stood on his feet." This final miracle bears a great and blessed testimony. Here an application must be made concerning Him who is foreshadowed in Elisha's ministry

of grace. It is by faith in Him who died that sinners receive life and are raised up from the dead. To touch Him in faith means to live. And Israel, moreover, is typically represented by the dead man and through Him who died for that nation, Israel is yet to live.

6. Kings of Israel and Judah

CHAPTER 14

1. Amaziah's reign over Judah (14:1-7; 2 Chron. 25)
2. The conflict between Israel and Judah (14:8-11; 2 Chron. 25:17-24)
3. Judah's defeat and Jerusalem taken (14:12-14)
4. Jehoash and his successor (14:15-16)
5. Death of Amaziah (14:17-20; 2 Chron. 25:26-28)
6. Azariah, King of Judah (14:21-22)
7. Jeroboam II (14:23-29)

Amaziah, a son of Joash, began his reign over Judah. His mother was Jehoaddan (LORD is pleased) of Jerusalem. He did right in the sight of the LORD and yet he followed the errors of his father. His first deed was to deal in judgment with the two servants who had murdered his father in Millo, both of whom were sons of Gentile women (2 Kings 12:19-21; 2 Chron. 24:26). He feared, however, the Word of God. The additional record which is found in Chronicles we shall not follow here, but do so in the annotations of that book. He raised a large army and hired besides 100,000 Israelitish mercenaries at a tremendous cost. He gained a victory over Edom. All the cruelties practised then we shall find recorded in Chronicles. He became lifted up by his victories and then challenged Jehoash, the King of Israel. That King answered by a parable. The thistle in Lebanon is Amaziah; the cedar is Jehoash, King of Israel. The wild beast that was in Lebanon overcoming the thistle (Amaziah) is Jehoash's army. And the King of Israel gave him a solemn warning to desist. But proud Amaziah paid no attention to Jehoash's words. God was behind it all. "It came of God, that He might deliver them into the hand of their enemies, because they sought after the gods of Edom" (2 Chron. 25:20). A complete defeat of Amaziah followed and Jerusalem was taken. And Jehoash "took all the gold and silver, and all the vessels that were found in the house of God with Obed-Edom, and the treasures of the King's house, the hostages also and returned unto Samaria." After this humiliating defeat there followed a revolution in Jerusalem and the unhappy King fled to Lachish, where he was slain. His body was brought back to Jerusalem for burial.

The brief record of the reign of Jeroboam II concludes this chapter. The Prophet Jonah, the son of Amittai is here mentioned. This same Jonah made later the experience which the book of Jonah relates and to which our Lord refers as a historic fact. Hosea and Amos also prophesied at that time in Israel.

(The books of Hosea and Amos, especially the latter, shed much light upon the history of the Kingdom of Israel under Jeroboam and his son. This will be pointed out in annotations of both books.)

CHAPTER 15

1. Reign and death of Azariah (Uzziah) (15:1-2; 2 Chron. 26).
2. Reign and death of Zachariah (15:8-12)
3. Reign and death of Shallum (15:13-15)
4. Menahem, King of Israel (15:16-18)
5. Pul of Assyria and Menahem (15:19-20; 1 Chron. 5:26)
6. Death of Menahem (15:21-22)
7. Pekahiah and his death (15:23-26)
8. Pekah and his death. Hoshea (15:27-31)
9. Jotham, King of Judah (15:32-38; 2 Chron. 27)

Eight kings are mentioned in this chapter. Of five it is said they did evil in the sight of the Lord. One was a leper; four were murdered; one committed unspeakable cruelties.

Azariah is first mentioned. In 2 Chronicles his name is Uzziah; but he is also called by this name in the present chapter (verses 13, 30, 32 and 34). Different explanations of the use of this double name have been given. We insert here the one advanced by Edersheim as the most satisfactory.

"The usual explanation either of a clerical error through the confusion of similar letters, or that he bore two names seem equally unsatisfactory. Nor is the meaning of the two names precisely the same--Azariah being 'Jehovah helps,' Uzziah, 'My strength is Jehovah.' May it not be that Azariah was his real name, and that when after his daring intrusion into the sanctuary (2 Chron. 26:16-20), he was smitten with lifelong leprosy, his name was significantly altered into the cognate Uzziah--'My strength is Jehovah'--in order to mark that the 'help' which he had received had been dependent on his relation to the LORD. This would accord with the persistent use of the latter name in 2 Chronicles--considering the view-point of the writer--and with its occurrence in the prophetic writings (Hosea 1:1; Amos 1:1; Isa. 1:1, 6:1, 7:11). And the explanation just suggested seems confirmed by the circumstance that although this king is always called Uzziah in 2 Chronicles, yet the Hebrew word for 'help,' which forms the first part of the name Azariah, recurs with marked emphasis in the account of the divine help accorded in his expeditions (2 Chron. 26:7, 13, 15)."

As his intrusion into the priestly office and his punishment for it is found in full in the second book of Chronicles, we shall follow it there.

Then follows the brief record of Zachariah (The LORD remembers), King of Israel. He became king of Israel in the thirty-eighth year of Uzziah, King of Judah. He was the son of Jeroboam II and the fourth and last ruler of the dynasty of Jehu. Thus was literally fulfilled the Word of The LORD (2 Kings 10:30). His reign lasted only six months. Shallum assassinated him in public. The murderer occupied the throne only one month. Shallum means "requital." As he did to Zachariah so Menahem did to him. All was now lawlessness in apostate Israel. Departure from God and the true worship came first and that opened the way for moral corruption and lawlessness. The same is true of this present Christian age. It also ends in apostasy, moral corruption and lawlessness. Hosea testified faithfully to these conditions. "And the revolvers are profound to make slaughter, though I have been a rebuker of them all"--"They will not frame their doings to turn unto their God, for the spirit of whoredoms is in the midst of them and they have not known the LORD. And the pride of Israel doth testify to his face; therefore shall Israel and Ephraim fall in their iniquity, Judah also shall fall with them" (Hosea 5:2-5).

Josephus here informs us that Menahem was the military leader of Zachariah, the murdered King. When Tiphshah refused his authority he executed a terrible, barbaric punishment. "All the women therein that were with child be ripped up." And God in His eternal justice permitted the same punishment to fall upon Samaria (Hosea 13:16; Amos 1:13).

And now for the first time the Assyrian is mentioned, the power used by God to execute judgment upon the Kingdom of Israel. The meaning of the Assyrian in prophecy we shall point out later. Pul, King of Assyria, came against the land. In verse 29 Tiglath-pileser is mentioned as king of Assyria. Are these two different kings or are they the same person under different names? The identity of Pul with Tiglath-pileser II has been proved, after the most painstaking research, beyond the possibility of a doubt. The Assyrian monuments bear witness to this fact. (Assyrian Echoes of the Word by Laurie and Fresh Light from the Ancient Monuments by Prof Sayce, are helpful books on these and other questions.) In the annals of Tiglath-pileser the record is found that he received tribute from "Minikhimmi Samirina"--this is Menahem the Samaritan. Pul was evidently one name of the Assyrian ruler and later he assumed the title of Tiglath-pileser II. This does not clash at all with the statement in 1 Chron. 5:26. Through paying an immense amount of tribute (almost two million dollars) the Assyrian was kept back. Menahem's son, Pekahiah, after his father's death, ruled two years in Israel. He also was assassinated. Pekah headed the conspiracy and killed him. Under his reign, doing evil in the sight of the Lord, Tiglath-pileser came again and devastated a part of the land "and carried them captive to Assyria." This marks the beginning of the

end. This invasion took place after his wicked attack upon Jerusalem with Rezin of Damascus during the reign of Ahaz, King of Judah. He tried to overthrow the house of David (2 Kings 16:1-8; 2 Chron. 28; Isa. 7:4-8). Wicked Pekah, who had killed so many Jews (2 Chron. 28:6) was murdered by Hoshea, who reigned in his stead. His death had been predicted by Isaiah (Isaiah 7:16).

The full record of Jotham, King of Israel, is given in the book of Chronicles. It was "in those days that the LORD began to send against Judah Rezin, the King of Syria, and Pekah, the son of Remaliah." Judah, like Israel, was degenerating fast and the LORD chastised them by judgments.

7. King Ahaz and Assyria

CHAPTER 16

1. King Ahaz and his reign (16:1-4; 2 Chron. 28)
2. The invasion by the two kings (16:5-6)
3. Ahaz appeals to Assyria (16:7-8)
4. Ahaz in Damascus and the idolatrous altar (16:9-18)
5. Death of Ahaz (16:19-20; 2 Chron. 28:26-27)

Righteous Jotham had for his successor a wicked son. Ahaz "walked in the way of the Kings of Israel, yea, and made his son pass through the fire according to the abominations of the heathen, whom the LORD cast out from before the children of Israel." (This refers to the horrible rite of child-sacrifice. Ahaz was the first among the kings who did this. As the apostasy increased this awful ceremony became more frequent. 2 Kings 17:17; 21:6; 23:10; See Micah 6:7; Jer. 7:31; 19:5.) For additional wickedness he committed see 2 Chron. 28:2, 21-25. He burnt incense in the valley of the son of Hinnom and burnt his children in the fire.

"But this was to revive the old Canaanitish and Phoenician worship, with all its abominations and all its defilements. The valley of Gihon, which bounds Jerusalem on the west, descends at its southern extremity into that of Hinnom, which in turn joins at the ancient royal gardens the valley of Kidron, that runs along the eastern declivity of the Holy City. There, at the junction of the valleys of Hinnom and Kidron, in these gardens, was Topheth--'the spitting out,' or place of abomination--where an Ahaz, a Manasseh, and an Amon, sacrificed their sons and daughters to Baal-Moloch, and burnt incense to foul idols. Truly was Hinnom, 'moaning,' and rightly was its name Gehinnom (valley of Hinnom--Geheena), adopted as that for the place of final suffering. And it is one of those strange coincidences that the hill which rises on the south side of this spot was that 'potter's field,' the 'field of blood,' which Judas bought with the wages of his betrayal, and where with his own hands he executed judgment on himself. History is full of such coincidences, as men call them; nor can we forget in this connection that it was on the boundary-line between the reigns of Jotham and Ahaz that Rome was founded (in 752 B.C.), which was destined to execute final judgment on apostate Israel" (A. Edersheim).

Isaiah, Micah, Hosea and Oded then exercised their prophetic offices. When Rezin, King of Syria, and Pekah, the son of Remaliah, King of Israel, came against Jerusalem and besieged Ahaz, he appealed to Tiglath-pileser to save him out of their hands, instead of crying to Jehovah for the deliverance He had promised to His people. The king also took the silver and gold from the LORD's house and presented it to Tiglath-pileser. Then after Ahaz had declared himself the vassal of Assyria ("I am thy servant"), Tiglath-pileser conquered Damascus. The inscriptions of Tiglath-pileser mention this fact. We refer again to Isaiah 7. The alliance with the Assyrian was opposed by Isaiah. He told Ahaz "at the end of the conduit of the upper pool" to ask a sign of any kind of the LORD God, to allay the fears of the king and give an evidence that the LORD would preserve the house of David. And furthermore Isaiah had taken with him his son Shear-jashub, which means "the remnant shall return," prophetic also of the preservation of a remnant. When wicked Ahaz refused, the prophet uttered that great sign which was to take place over seven hundred years after, that the virgin should conceive and bring forth a son, even Immanuel. The house of David might be punished and chastised, but there could be no full end of the royal family, for the promised One had to come from David and receive in due time the promised kingdom. And Isaiah also

predicted that the Assyrian, in whom Ahaz had put his trust, should come upon them (Isa. 7:17). What Pekah did to Judah and Oded's testimony against Pekah we shall learn from the Chronicles.

The erection of a new altar in the Temple by Ahaz according to the pattern of the idol-altar, opened the door wide for the unlawful worship in the Temple of God. He found a willing helper in Urijah (the LORD is light), who conducted the worship "according to all that King Ahaz commanded." And greater profanation followed. He even shut up the doors of the house of the Lord (2 Chron. 28:24), which probably meant a complete cessation of the services in the Holy Place. The gods of Damascus were worshipped by him in connection with this altar (2 Chron. 28:23). And in Christendom an even greater profanation of worship has come to pass. True Christian worship is in spirit and in truth. Roman Catholicism has erected altars patterned more or less after the ancient Babylonish worship.

7. Assyria Conquers Israel and the Captivity

CHAPTER 17

1. Hoshea, Israel's last king (17:1-2)
2. Shalmaneser imprisons Hoshea (17:3-4)
3. Israel carried into captivity (17:5-6)
4. Retrospect and Israel's sins (17:7-23)
5. The colonization of Samaria (17:24-41)

Israel's last king was Hoshea. His name means "deliverance." It indicates what might have been had he and the people repented of their sins. The record of his character is brief. "And he did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD, but not as the kings of Israel before him." This does not mean that he improved. The golden calves had been taken away by the Assyrian from Bethel and Dan, so that he could no longer sin like Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, and the other kings of Israel. Hosea had predicted this (Hosea 10:5-8).

Shalmaneser, King of Assyria, then came against him, and Hoshea became his servant. The Biblical account is meager, but the Assyrian inscriptions have a great deal to say about this period. Shalmaneser's name is given in these inscriptions as "Salmanu-ussir" and Hoshea's as "A-usi." From these inscriptions we learn that after the siege of Samaria had lasted two years Shalmaneser was succeeded by Sargon, who took Samaria in the first year of his reign. While Sargon is not mentioned in the record here it is significant that the capture of Samaria is not attributed to Shalmaneser. Both passages, 2 Kings 17:6 and 18:10-11, speak only of the king of Assyria. These inscriptions declare that Sargon captured Samaria, led away 27,290 of its inhabitants and appointed a governor over Samaria. There is also a record of the deportation of Israel and the colonization of the land. What would these interesting ancient inscriptions mean if it were not for the Bible? Again we say they are proven true because the Word of God confirms them.

Hoshea had, after he had become the vassal of the king of Assyria, made a conspiracy against the king by sending messengers to So, king of Egypt, and then he refused to pay the tribute. (The proper reading of "So" is given as "Seve" or "Sava." By the Greeks he is called "Saba Kon" on the monuments "Shabaka," in cuneiform inscriptions "Shabi-i.") He was imprisoned and we hear nothing whatever of his fate. (Hosea 10:7 tells of his death.) Samaria completely in the hands of the king of Assyria, the people were carried away captives into Assyria. The places are given, but beyond this little is known. Nor do we know anything about their subsequent history. They did not return from the captivity. Various attempts have been made to locate them. The American Indians, the Afghans, Armenians, Nestorians and others have been mentioned as the descendants of the ten tribes, but no substantial evidence can be given to verify this supposition. The so-called "Anglo-Israel theory" is so full of unreasonable speculations and inventions that it does not deserve any consideration. God knows where they are located, and in His own time He will surely gather them and together with the remnant of the house of Judah bring them back to their land. At that time the many unfulfilled promises made to Israel and to Judah will all be literally fulfilled.

There is next given a solemn retrospect of the history of the house of Israel. Judah is also mentioned. The record shows the awful apostasy and the great patience of Jehovah in delaying the threatened judgment.

The account of the colonization of Samaria by the King of Assyria is interesting. It gives the history of the Samaritans, which emanated from this mixture of races and religions and which were responsible for much trouble after the return of the Jewish remnant from the exile. The priest who was returned from Assyria to teach religious rites to the colonists settled in Bethel, where Jeroboam had instituted the idolatrous worship, which had dragged Israel down, produced a new religion, partly Israelitish and partly heathenish, like the mixed multitude which dwelt in the land.

Thus ended the Kingdom of Israel. Out of the nineteen kings which reigned seven were murdered, one died from wounds received on the battlefield, one died from a fall out of the window, one was struck down by the judgment of God and one committed suicide.

IV. THE REIGN OF HEZEKIAH, MANASSEH AND AMON

1. Hezekiah and Sennacherib's Invasion

CHAPTER 18

1. Hezekiah, King of Judah (18:1-3; 2 Chron. 29-32)
2. The Revival (18:4-7)
3. Victory over the Philistines (18:8)
4. Israel's captivity (18:9-12)
5. Sennacherib's invasion (18:13-16)
6. Sennacherib's messengers and message (18:17-25; 2 Chron. 32:9-19)
7. The request of Hilkiah, Shebna and Joah (18:26)
8. Rabshakeh's insulting answer (18:27-37)

Hezekiah (strength of Jehovah) was the pious son of a very wicked father. It is refreshing to read now after the long list of kings who did evil in God's sight that Hezekiah "did that which was right in the sight of the LORD, according to all that his father David did." According to the book of Chronicles, the first thing he did was to open the doors of the house of the LORD (which Ahaz his father had closed) and repair them (2 Chron. 29:3). This was a true beginning. We shall find in Chronicles the details of the great revival and the restoration of the temple-worship, the keeping of the Passover, as well as the other reforms which took place under his reign. All these will be considered in the annotations on Second Chronicles. He destroyed also all forms of idolatry. Especially mentioned is the brazen serpent which Moses had made. This interesting object had been preserved since the days when Moses had lifted it up in the wilderness, the wonderful type of Him who knew no sin and who was made sin for us on the cross. The children of Israel in their apostasy had made the brazen serpent an object of worship. He broke it in pieces and called it Nehushtan, which means "brazen." Thus negatively and positively a great reformation was accomplished. The secret of it all we find tersely stated in one sentence. "He trusted in the LORD God of Israel." Because he trusted Jehovah, Jehovah was with him. "And the LORD was with him, and he prospered whithersoever he went forth." This is the way of A true recovery and the way to blessing.

The evil alliance with the king of Assyria, which his father had made, the God-fearing king refused to own. "He rebelled against the king of Assyria and served him not." Immediately after he smote the ancient enemy of God's people, the Philistine. (The fate of Samaria, the Kingdom of Israel, is once more mentioned in verses 9-12 obviously because chronologically it followed Hezekiah's victory over the Philistines.) In annotations of Judges we learned the typical significance of the Philistines. They represent ritualistic Christendom. After Hezekiah's restoration of the true worship of Jehovah and after the breaking down of all false altars and idol worship, a complete victory over the Philistines has a special meaning. Ritualism, the deadly foe of true worship, can only be overcome by a return to that true worship and trust in the Lord. Protestantism attempted this, but it has failed.

The rebellion of Hezekiah against Assyria may have been under the reign of Shalmaneser. Then followed Sargon, who was succeeded by his son Sennacherib. In all probability Sennacherib was co-regent with his father Sargon. The Assyrian inscriptions concerning Sennacherib covering this period are very interesting though not always correct and often mixed and confusing. In the fourteenth year of Hezekiah, Sennacherib came against the fenced cities of Judah and they fell before him. Isaiah 10 gives us additional information on this invasion. True, Hezekiah's faith was severely tested. Sennacherib had not yet come near to Jerusalem and Hezekiah sent to him at Lachish, saying "I have offended; return from me; that which thou puttest on me will I bear." It was not according to faith, but the godly king had acted in fear and unbelief. No mention is made by Isaiah of this occurrence, nor do we find a record of it in the Chronicles. The tribute was very heavy, amounting to over one million and a half dollars. Hezekiah had to use the silver and the gold of the Temple and the palace to meet this obligation.

Then Sennacherib decided to attack Jerusalem. Here we have three accounts of what took place: 2 Kings 18-19; 2 Chron. 32 and Isaiah 36-37. These Scriptures should be carefully read and compared. From 2 Chron. 32:1-8 we learn the wise preparations Hezekiah made in anticipation of the coming attack. The water supply for the invading army was cut off; he made strong fortifications; he reorganized the army. But the best of all are the words he addressed to the people. "Be strong and courageous, be not afraid nor discouraged for the king of Assyria, nor for all the multitude that is with him; for there be more with us than with him. With him is an arm of flesh, but with us is the LORD our God to help us, and to fight our battles." These were noble words. No wonder the people leaned upon them in that hour of trial. We hear in them an echo of Isaiah's faithful ministry. The head of the expedition and negotiations for the surrender of Jerusalem were entrusted to the "Tartan," the commander-in-chief of the army: "Rabsaris," which has been explained to mean "chief of the eunuchs" and Rabshakeh, the Assyrian title of "chief captain." The message which Rabshakeh brought was delivered from the same spot where Isaiah stood when he gave his message to Ahaz (Isa. 7:3). The words of the emissary of Sennacherib were coarse; they reveal the blindness of a heathen, who thought of Jehovah having been offended by Hezekiah's great reformation (verse 22). Politically and religiously it was misrepresentation. He ended up with a lie, "The LORD said to me, Go up against this land and destroy it."

When the representatives of Hezekiah requested for the sake of the populace not to speak in Hebrew, but in Aramean, which the common people did not understand, Rabshakeh became very abusive and shouted a vulgar appeal to the people. It needs no further commentations. The people were obedient to the king. They answered not a word. And the king's representatives return to the king with clothes rent.

2. Hezekiah and Isaiah and the Deliverance

CHAPTER 19

1. Hezekiah's message to Isaiah (19:1-5)
2. Isaiah's answer. (19:6-7)
3. Sennacherib's message to Hezekiah (19:8-13; 2 Chron. 32:17)
4. Hezekiah's Prayer (19:14-19; 2 Chron. 32:20)
5. Jehovah's answer through Isaiah (19:20-34)
6. The deliverance (19:35; 2 Chron. 32:21-22)
7. Sennacherib's death (19:30-37)

And Hezekiah also rent his clothes. In deep humiliation and sorrow the pious man went to the house of the Lord and sent messengers to Isaiah. This is most blessed. He did not call a counsel of his advisers, a meeting of the captains to talk the matter over; nor did he send first to the prophet. Faith knows a better way than that. He went straight into the presence of the LORD and the sending to Isaiah was secondary. Many of our failures as His people are due to the fact that we do not go to the LORD first.

And equally beautiful is his message to God's prophet. He mentions not himself in the danger of Jerusalem. It is the honor of Jehovah which is at stake; the honor of the living God is at stake. The Assyrian had defied the God of Israel. Yea, Hezekiah's comfort was that Jehovah had heard it all and knew it all. What lessons and what comforts are here for us also! Then he requests prayer.

The divine answer through Isaiah was brief. Be not afraid. The blessed assurance for faith first--Fear not! The promise of deliverance is the second thing in Isaiah's answer.

Another message in the form of a letter is sent by Sennacherib to the king. Again Hezekiah goes with it straight to the LORD. He read it and went up into the house of the LORD and spread it before the LORD. What blessing there would be in the lives of all God's people; what wonderful evidences of His power and His love we might have if all things which happened unto us were at once taken into the presence of God and spread before Him!

And the beautiful answer to Hezekiah's prayer sent through the prophet! The LORD had heard, He had seen. All what had taken place He knew and any word which had been spoken. The message ends with the assuring word, "I will defend this city, to save it, for Mine own sake, and for my servant David's sake."

That night the judgment stroke fell. The whole Assyrian army of 185,000 men was smitten by the angel of the LORD. Prophetically it stands for the end of the Assyrian who will enter Israel's land during the great tribulation and who will perish like Sennacherib's army.

Sennacherib dwelt after that in Nineveh. There he was murdered by his own sons. An Assyrian cylinder in the British Museum contains a record of this deed.

3. Hezekiah's Illness, Recovery, Failure, and Death

CHAPTER 20

1. Hezekiah's illness and recovery (20:1-11; 2 Chron. 32:24)
2. Hezekiah's failure (20:12-19; 2 Chron. 32:25-31)
3. The death of Hezekiah (20:20-21; 2 Chron. 32:32-33)

Hezekiah's sickness must have occurred about the second invasion of the Assyrian. Then the prophet Isaiah delivered to him the message of approaching death. "Thus saith the LORD, Set thine house in order, for thou shalt die, and not live." The message made a deep impression on the sick king. He turned his face to the wall; he prayed and wept sore. Though he was a pious man he was greatly agitated and deeply moved when he heard the announcement of his coming departure. The meager knowledge God's saints had in Old Testament times on the things beyond the grave, as well as the conception that an untimely death denoted divine disfavor produced no doubt much of this grief. How differently saints in New Testament times can face death! Life and immortality is now brought to life by the gospel, and we know that absent from the body means to be present with the Lord, and to depart and be with Christ is "far better."

Hezekiah's prayer was at once heard and answered. It is one of the most striking answers to prayer. Isaiah had not gone very far, he had just reached the middle of the court, when he was commanded to turn back and bring to Hezekiah the answer. Seven things are contained in this new message to the weeping king. "I have heard thy prayer"; "I have seen thy tears"; "I will heal thee"; "Thou shalt go up to the house of the LORD"; "I will add unto thy days fifteen years"; "I will deliver thee"; "I will defend the city." And Isaiah was also commanded to use means. "Take a lump of figs. And they took and laid it on the boil and he recovered." If this simple remedy had been neglected, if there had been disobedience, the recovery would not have taken place. The third day is mentioned on which he should go up to the house of the LORD. For Israel there is also in store the third day, when they will be raised up nationally and worship the LORD (Hosea 6:2). Then there was the sign of the shadow turning backward ten degrees on the dial of Ahaz. Hezekiah's experience is a great

encouragement for God's people to pray.

"It is interesting to learn that Ahaz had--probably on his visit to Damascus (2 Kings 16:10)--seen and brought to Jerusalem some of the scientific appliances of the great empire of the East. It is impossible to determine whether this mode of measuring the progress of time (not strictly hours) was by a sun-dial, the invention of which Herodotus ascribed to the Babylonians. According to Ideler it was a gnomon, or index, surrounded by concentric circles, by which the time of the day was marked by the lengthening shadow. But the term "steps" seems rather to indicate an obelisk surrounded by steps, the shadow on which marked the hours, so that the shadow falling in the morning westwards first on the lowest step, gradually ascended to the plane on the top, and after midday again descended the steps eastwards. As the text seems to imply that there were twenty such "steps," they must have marked the quarters of an hour, and in that case the event has happened about half-past two o'clock p.m." (Bible History)

And the promise the LORD had given, "I will deliver thee and this city out of the hand of the king of Assyria; and I will defend this city for Mine own sake, and for my servant David's sake," was wonderfully fulfilled in the complete destruction of Sennacherib's army. The last we hear of this great king is the failure when he was lifted up with pride and did not give the glory to God. Merodach-baladan, (Berodach is the error of some scribe. See Isaiah 39:1.), King of Babylon, sent letters and a present to Hezekiah when he heard of his sickness and his miraculous recovery. This is the first time we hear of a king of Babylon. The ambassadors came possibly to form with Hezekiah a league against Assyria. Hezekiah was favorably impressed, "he hearkened unto them," and then he made a display of all his possessions. He had hearkened unto them and pleased with the attention shown to him and the presents the king of Babylon had sent to him, he became lifted up in his heart, he boasted of his wealth and his possessions. Then Isaiah had another message for him. The Babylonian captivity is announced; remarkable in itself. How verses 17 and 18 were fulfilled is well known.

4. Manasseh and Amon

CHAPTER 21

1. Manasseh's reign of wickedness (21:1-9; 2 Chron. 33:1-9)
2. The word of the LORD against it (21:10-15)
3. Manasseh's end (21:16-18; 2 Chron. 33:18-20)
4. Reign and death of Amon (21:19-26; 2 Chron. 33:20-25)

Hezekiah had a wicked father and his son Manasseh did not follow the example of his father, but became even more wicked than Ahaz, his grandfather. Manasseh means "forgetting." No doubt Hezekiah named him thus because the LORD had delivered him and thus made him forget his troubles and trials. He was born three years after Hezekiah's recovery from sickness. And now Manasseh forgot all the goodness and mercy of the LORD and plunged headlong into the worst apostasy. All the vile practices of the Canaanites and the Sodomites were revived by him. The Moloch-worship flourished, sorcery and the practice of demonism as well. The corruption was more vile than the corruption of Samaria. It was even worse than the corruption of the Canaanites. "Manasseh seduced them to do more evil than did the nations whom the LORD destroyed before the children of Israel." And still more evil is recorded of this king. "Moreover Manasseh shed innocent blood very much, till he had filled Jerusalem from one end to another" (verse 16). Josephus declares that he killed all the righteous in Jerusalem and it is not unlikely that the tradition of aged Isaiah's violent death under Manasseh's reign is correct. Then the LORD sent to him His judgment message, announcing the coming doom of Jerusalem. Of his conversion and subsequent reign nothing is said in Kings. We find the record of these interesting events in Chronicles. His conversion was indeed a miracle of grace.

After his death Amon ruled as king and followed all the wickedness of his father Manasseh. Terrible is the record of this lost soul. "And he humbled not himself before the LORD as Manasseh his father had humbled himself, but Amon trespassed more and more" (2 Chron. 33:23). He was murdered by his servants.

V. THE REIGN OF JOSIAH

1. The Revival

CHAPTER 22

1. Josiah begins to reign (22:1-2; 2 Chron. 34:1-2)
2. The temple repaired (22:3-7; 2 Chron. 34:8-13)
3. The law discovered (22:8-9; 2 Chron. 34:14-21)
4. The reading of the law and its results (22:10-14)
5. The words of Huldah, the prophetess (22:15-20)

After the violent death of Amon his eight-year-old son Josiah (sustained by Jehovah) began to reign. Under him the greatest reformation and revival took place. While he was yet young he began to seek after the God of David, his father. Afterward he began to purge Judah and Jerusalem. The carved images and molten images as well as the altars of Baal were destroyed by him. "And he burnt the bones of the priests upon the altars, and cleansed Judah and Jerusalem" (2 Chron. 34:5). Thus was fulfilled the prophecy uttered more than three hundred years before by the man of God from Judah (1 Kings 13:2). Perhaps the prophecy had been forgotten, the unbelievers may have ridiculed its fulfillment. But when God's time came He saw to the literal fulfillment of His own Word. It is so today. Rationalists scoff at the Word of God. Others spiritualize the predictions of the Bible and do not believe that they will ever be fulfilled. This is one of the characteristics of the last days of the age (2 Peter 3:3-7).

We must leave it to the reader to study the details of the great reformation-revival which took place under Josiah. In the annotations on Second Chronicles we point out some of its lessons. After the breaking down of the idols and idol-altars the temple was repaired. The law was also found by Hilkiah the high-priest. The Word of the Lord written by Moses in the Pentateuch had most likely been hidden away by Manasseh. It was the accusing voice of God against the wickedness of the king. Strange it is that it is not mentioned in connection with the repentance and conversion of Manasseh. And when the law was read to the king by Shaphan, the king rent his clothes.

"Here we have a tender conscience bowing under the action of the Word of God. This was one special charm in the character of Josiah. He was, in truth, a man of an humble and contrite Spirit, who trembled at the Word of God. Would that we all knew more of this! It is a most valuable feature of the Christian character. We certainly do need to feel, much more deeply, the weight, authority, and seriousness of Scripture. Josiah had no question whatever in his mind as to the genuineness and authenticity of the words which Shaphan had read in his hearing. We do not read of his asking, 'How am I to know that this is the Word of God?' No; he trembled at it. He bowed before it. He was smitten down under it. He rent his garments. He did not presume to sit in judgment upon the Word of God, but, as was meet and right, he allowed that word to judge him. "Thus it should ever be. If man is to judge Scripture, then Scripture is not the Word of God at all. But if Scripture is, in very truth, the Word of God, then it must judge man. And so it is, and so it does. Scripture is the Word Of God and it judges man thoroughly. It lays bare the very roots of his nature--it opens up the foundations of his moral being. It holds up before him the only faithful mirror in which he can see himself perfectly reflected. This is the reason why man does not like Scripture--cannot bear it--seeks to set it aside--delights to pick holes in it--dares to sit in judgment upon it. It is not so in reference to other books. Men do not trouble themselves so much to discover and point out flaws and discrepancies in Homer or Herodotus, Aristotle or Shakespeare. No; but Scripture judges them--judges their ways--their lusts. Hence the enmity of the natural mind to that most precious and marvellous book which carries its own credentials to every divinely prepared heart" (Things New and Old).

The direct result of reading the Word of God was more than outward grief and repentance. The king gave the command, "Go ye, inquire of the LORD for me, and for the people and for all Judah." Jeremiah and Zephaniah were then upon the scene, but we do not read anything of them in the record. It is Huldah the prophetess, the wife of Shallum (retribution), the son of Tikvah (meaning "hope") the son of Harhas (meaning "extremely poor"). That he had to inquire of

a woman, the weaker vessel, must have been humiliating to the king. And Huldah's message is one of judgment. To Josiah personally good is promised. He was not to see the evil. In spite of the great reformation-revival, judgment would fall upon Judah and upon Jerusalem (verses 15-17).

And here is an important lesson for our own times. Reformations and revivals cannot keep back the decreed judgments of God. Often it is thought that great waves of reformation and revival movements are evidences that the world is getting better and that only good is in store for this age. It is forgotten that this age is an age marked by departure from God, by the rejection of His own blessed Son and by the perversion of the truth of God. It will culminate in the great apostasy and the manifestation of the man of sin--the son of perdition. Christendom has been even more unfaithful than Israel in Old Testament times. Judgment is in store for this age and for that which claims to be the church. The Lord has announced this long ago and it will surely come as judgment came upon Judah for all the abominable things they did. Reformation-revival movements are evidences, too, that the threatened judgment is not far away. As the end approaches God warns us and His Spirit presses home the truth once more to awaken the consciences of men. In 2 Chron. 36:15 we read the following words: "And the LORD God of their fathers sent to them by His messengers, rising up betimes, and sending; because He had compassion on His people, and on His dwelling place." But the next verse declares the failure of what the Lord had done in His compassion. "But they mocked the messengers of God, and despised His words, and misused His prophets, until the wrath of the Lord arose against His people, till there was no remedy." No remedy! an awful word it is. Judah in spite of the gracious revival under Josiah hastened on to the predicted doom, and so does this present age.

2. The Results of the Revival and the Death of Josiah

CHAPTER 23:1-30

1. The People hear the law (23:1-2; 2 Chron. 34)
2. Josiah makes a covenant (23:3)
3. The great reformations (23:4-20)
4. The Passover celebrated (23:21-23; 2 Chron. 35)
5. Further statements concerning Josiah (23:24-27)
6. The death of Josiah (23:29-30)

It is a great scene with which this chapter opens. The king feels now his responsibility towards the people. All the elders of Judah and Jerusalem were called together by him. Then there was a great procession of people headed by the king, followed by the elders, the priests and the prophets and all the people both small and great. The king read before this vast assembly all the words of the book of the covenant. The king standing on a pillar, or Platform, made a solemn covenant to walk after the LORD and to keep His commandments. All the people stood by it. But it did not last very long. As far as the king was concerned there can be no question that it was real with him. However, if we read the opening chapters of Jeremiah we find that the people's consecration was but skin-deep. They did not turn unto the LORD with the whole heart, but in falsehood (Jer. 3:10).

The description of the cleansing of Judah and Jerusalem of all the abominable things (verses 4-20) shows the awful depths of vileness and wickedness into which the professing people of God had sunk. All the abominations of the flesh connected with the worship of Baal and Ashera and a host of other things flourished in the land. "And he slew all the priests of the high places that were there upon the altars, and burned men's bones upon them and returned to Jerusalem" (verse 20).

The keeping of the Passover, the blessed feast of remembrance of what Jehovah had done, follows immediately after the cleansing of the land. The full account we find in Chronicles where we give further comment (2 Chron. 35:1-19). But the record declares that "there was not holden such a passover from the days of the judges that judged Israel, nor in all the days of the kings of Israel, nor of the kings of Judah." The same was said of Hezekiah's passover (2 Chron. 30:26). Hezekiah's passover was greater than any previous one and Josiah's feast was even greater than that of his great-

grandfather.

And all the workers with familiar spirits (the demon possessed mediums) and other wickedness he cut off. In all this Josiah pleased Jehovah and the Spirit of God testifies to it. "And like unto him was there no king before him, that turned to the Lord with all his heart and with all his soul, and with all his might, according to all the law of Moses; neither after him arose there any like him." Yet after these words there stands written once more the judgment message so soon to be accomplished upon Judah and Jerusalem.

Josiah died, having been shot on the battlefield at Megiddo. The Chronicles contains the details of his death (2 Chron. 35:20-27).

VI. FINAL APOSTASY OF JUDAH AND THE CAPTIVITY

1. Jehoahaz and Jehoiakim

CHAPTER 23:31-37

1. The three months' reign of Jehoahaz (23:31-33; 2 Chron. 36:1-2)
2. Jehoiakim made king (23:34-37; 2 Chron. 36:4-5)

Chronicles tells us that immediately after the death of Josiah, the people of the land took Jehoahaz (which means "Jehovah holds up") and made him king. He was not the LORD's choice, but the people's choice. He was not the eldest son and therefore the action of the people was an unlawful and a lawless one. He was an evil-doer; Josephus speaks of him as having been vile. In the brief period he reigned he may have attempted to restore the immoral rites which his father had so completely crushed. He may have opposed Pharaoh-necho, King of Egypt.

As Josephus explains it, "Necho had, after the battle of Megiddo, continued his march towards Syria. Thither, at Riblah, 'in the land of Hamath,' the victor summoned the new Jewish King. On his arrival, Jehoahaz, who had been crowned without the leave of Necho, was put in bonds. Necho does not seem, on this occasion, to have pursued his expedition against Assyria. The great battle at Carchemish, to which the chronicler refers by anticipation (2 Chron. 35:20), was fought on a second expedition, three years later, when the Egyptian army under Necho was defeated with great slaughter by Nebuchadnezzar, the son of Nabopolassar. This was after the fall of Nineveh, and when the Babylonian or Chaldean empire had taken the place of the Assyrian. But on the present occasion Necho seems to have returned, before encountering the Assyrians, into Egypt, whither 'he brought' with him Jehoahaz, who died in captivity." (See Jeremiah 22:11-12.)

Then the king of Egypt took the oldest son of Josiah, Eliakim, changed his name to Jehoiakim and made him King over Judah. Jehoiakim means "Jehovah raiseth up"; this name was probably selected to impress the people. He reigned eleven years. It was a most disastrous time and the beginning of the end. God's mighty prophets Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Habakkuk, Zephaniah and also Urijah were then warning and delivering their great messages.

"The reformatory work of Josiah gave place to a restoration of the former idolatry (compare 2 Chron. 36:8). As in previous reigns, it was connected with complete demoralization of the people (compare Jer. 7:9-15; 17:2, 19:4-9; Ezek. 8:9-18). And this not only among the laity, high and low, but equally among the priests and prophets (compare Jer. 23:9-14). All the louder rose the voices of the prophets Jeremiah, Urijah and Habakkuk. But their warnings were either unheeded and scorned, or brought on them persecution and martyrdom (2 Kings 24:4; Jer. 26:10, 11, and especially verses 20-23). Otherwise, also, it was a wretched government, characterized by public wrong, violence, oppression and covetousness. While the land was impoverished, the king indulged in luxury and built magnificent palaces, or adorned towns, by means of forced labor, which remained unpaid, and at the cost of the lives of a miserable enslaved people (Jer. 22:13-18; Hab. 2:9-17)" (A. Edersheim).

The book of Jeremiah will give us much more of the history of this wicked king and our annotations will lead us back to the ending days of Judah and Jerusalem. He tried to put Urijah to death because he prophesied against Jerusalem. The prophet fled to Egypt. Jehoiakim sent for him and slew him with the sword and threw his body into the graves of the common people (Jer. 26). He himself was buried with the burial of an ass (Jer. 22:18-19). Another infamous deed he committed was the cutting with the penknife of the scroll upon which Jeremiah had written the Word of God, casting it into the fire (Jer. 36).

2. Jehoiachin and Zedekiah: The Beginning of Judah's Captivity

CHAPTER 24

1. Jehoiakim, Servant of Nebuchadnezzar, and His Death (24:1-5; 2 Chron. 36:6-7)
2. Jehoiachin (24:6-10; 2 Chron. 36:8-9)
3. The first deportation to Babylon (24:11-16)
4. Zedekiah, the last king, and his rebellion (24:17-20)

The foe of Judah, the chosen instrument of the Lord to execute His wrath upon the people and the city, now comes to the front. Jeremiah had predicted the coming judgment; Isaiah and the other prophets did the same. Then Jehoiakim proclaimed a fast (Jer. 36:9). It was nothing but hypocrisy. Immediately after, he cut the scroll to pieces and cast it into the fire. Jeremiah and his secretary Baruch hardly escaped with their lives. Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon, bound Jehoiakim in fetters to carry him to Babylon (2 Chron. 36:6). This was not done because Nebuchadnezzar was suddenly called to Babylon. The book of Daniel introduces us more fully to this great monarch, the head of the times of the Gentiles; we give in the annotations on that book more information about his character and history.

Nabopolassar, founded the new Babylonian empire, which began the period of the Chaldees--as they are chiefly known to us in Scripture. Here we may at once indicate that he was succeeded by his son, Nebuchadrezzar (or Nebuchadnezzar), and he in turn by his son, Evil-merodach, who, after two years' reign, was dethroned by his brother-in-law, Neriglissar. After four years (559-556 B.C.) Neriglissar was succeeded by his youthful son, Laborosoarchod. After his murder, Nabonidos (Nabunit, Nabuna'id) acceded to the government, but after seventeen years' reign (555-539 B.C.) was dethroned by Cyrus. The eldest son of Nabonidos, and heir to the throne, was Belshazzar whom we know from the book of Daniel, where, in a not unusual manner, he is designated as the son, that is, the descendant of Nebuchadrezzar (Dan. 5:2, 11, 18). We infer that, while his father, Nabonidos, went to meet Cyrus, to whom he surrendered, thereby preserving his life, Belshazzar had been left as "king" in Babylon at the taking of which he perished in the night of his feast, described in Holy Scripture. (See *The Prophet Daniel*, by A.C. Gaebelein.)

Jehoiakim became a vassal of Nebuchadnezzar. Three years later he rebelled. Punishment followed swiftly. It was "at the commandment of the LORD."

After the death of Jehoiakim, buried with the burial of an ass (Jer. 22:1-19), his son Jehoiachin reigned in his stead. He was eighteen years old when he ascended the throne and reigned only three months and ten days (2 Chron. 36:9). (2 Chronicles 36:9 gives his age as eight years, evidently the error of a scribe.) He is also known by the names of Joiachin (Ezek. 1:2) and Coniah (Jer. 22:24, 28, 37:1). Then Nebuchadnezzar besieged Jerusalem. The city surrendered and the long predicted punishment was executed. At the first invasion under the reign of Jehoiakim, when Nebuchadnezzar besieged Jerusalem, a part of the vessels of the house of God were transported to Babylon, as well as the noble children, among whom were Daniel and his companions (Dan. 1:1-6). With the second siege and conquest of Jerusalem all was taken and the people were taken away captives, among them was the prophet Ezekiel (Jer. 52:28; Ezek. 1:1-2; Jer. 29:1).

A remnant, however, was left behind; Jehoiachin was carried into captivity. The last chapter of this book gives his fate. He never returned. Important is to note the curse which was pronounced upon him. Jeremiah pronounced it upon Coniah

Jehoiachin). "Write ye this man childless, a man that shall not prosper in his days; for no man of his seed shall prosper sitting upon the throne of David and ruling any more in Judah" (Jer. 22:28-30). He had children; no offspring of the line of Solomon was ever to occupy the throne of David. But there were the descendants of David through another line, that is, Nathan's; no curse rested upon that line. The virgin Mary, the mother of our Lord, was of David through Nathan (Luke 3:31). Joseph, to whom Mary the virgin was espoused was a son of David through Solomon's line.

Nebuchadnezzar made Mattaniah, the youngest son of Josiah, King over Judah (compare verse 18 with chapter 23:31). His name means "the gift of Jehovah" and he changed it into Zedekiah, "the righteousness of Jehovah." Here is no doubt a prophetic hint. When Judah and Jerusalem went down in judgment, in unspeakable ruin and shame, God indicated in thievery names of the last king that there would yet come from David's line He, who is His own precious gift and in whom righteousness will be given and established. Zedekiah filled full the measure of wickedness and finally rebelled against the king of Babylon.

3. The Siege of Jerusalem and Judah's Complete Overthrow

CHAPTER 25

1. The last siege and complete overthrow (25:1-21; 2 Chron. 36:17-20)
2. Gedaliah (25:22-26)
3. Jehoiachin's captivity and release (25:27-30)

Zedekiah's rebellion was a great offence. He had sworn in Jehovah's name to be loyal to Nebuchadnezzar (2 Chron. 36:13; Ezek. 17:13). We find more light thrown upon this king and his rebellion in the book of Jeremiah. Ambassadors from Edom, Moab, Ammon, Tyre and Sidon came to Jerusalem to see Zedekiah (Jer. 27). A combined revolution was probably contemplated. Zedekiah sent at the same time a message to Nebuchadnezzar in Babylon (Jer. 29:3); the prophet Jeremiah used this opportunity to send a God-given communication to the exiles in Babylon (Jer. 29:1, etc.). The news of Zedekiah's schemes must have reached the captives, for they expected an early return. (The prophet Ezekiel was especially used to warn against these false hopes. See annotations on Ezekiel.) False prophets, Satan's instruments, gave them their lying messages. Prominent among them was Hananiah who received his deserved punishment for his lying words (Jer. 28). Once more the city was besieged. A great famine prevailed. What happened in the doomed city and Jeremiah's great ministry as well as suffering may be learned from his prophecies. Consult especially the following passages: Jer. 21:1-2; 37:3; 34:2-6; 38. Jeremiah charged with treacherous designs had been cast into a dungeon, but was later delivered out of the miry pit and brought before the king, who declared himself willing to follow Jeremiah's advice. What followed we give from Edersheim's Bible History:

Meantime the siege was continuing, without hope of relief. Tyre suffered straits similar to those of Jerusalem, while Ammon, Moab, Edom and the Philistines had not only withdrawn from the alliance, but were waiting to share in the spoil of Judah (Ezek. 25). At length a gleam of hope appeared. An Egyptian army, under their King Hophra, the grandson of Necho, advanced through Phoenicia, and obliged the Chaldeans to raise the siege of Jerusalem (Jer. 37:5-7). The exultation and reaction in Jerusalem may be imagined--and it was probably in consequence of it that Jeremiah, who still predicted calamity, was cast into prison (Jer. 37:4). But the relief of Jerusalem was brief. The Egyptian army had to retire, and the siege of Jerusalem by the Chaldeans was resumed, and that under even more disadvantageous circumstances to the besieged.

To the other calamities that of famine was now added (2 Kings 25:3). Of the horrors of that time Jeremiah has left a record in the Book of Lamentations (comp. 1:19, 2:11, 12, 20; 4:3-10). The last resistance was soon overcome. On the ninth day of the fourth month (Tammuz), in the eleventh year of Zedekiah, the enemy gained possession of the northern suburb (2 Kings 25:4; Jer. 39:2, 3; 52:6, 7). Before the middle gate the Babylonian captains held a council of war (Jer. 39:2, 3). Then the king and all the regular army sought safety in flight during the darkness of the night (Jer. 39:4). As the Chaldeans held the northern part of the city, they fled southwards. Between the two walls, through the Tyropoeon, then out

of the "fountain-gate," and through the king's garden, they made haste to gain the Jordan.

But their flight could not remain unobserved. They were pursued and overtaken in the plains of Jericho. The soldiers dispersed in various directions. But the king himself and his household were taken captives, and carried to the headquarters at Riblah, where Nebuchadnezzar himself was at the time. Here Zedekiah was formally arraigned and sentence given against him. His daughters were set free, but his sons were slain before him. It was the last sight the king saw. His eyes were put out; he was bound hand and feet with double fetters of brass, and so carried to Babylon. There he died in ward (Jer. 52:11).

The remainder of this mournful tale is soon told. After the flight and capture of the king, the city could not long hold out. A month later, and on the seventh day of the fifth month (Ab) Nebuzar-adan ('Nebo gave posterity') penetrated into the city. The temple was set on fire, as well as the king's palace. The whole city was reduced to ruins and ashes, and the walls which had defended it were broken down (2 Kings 25:9, 10). After three days the work of destruction was completed; and ever afterwards was the 10th (9th) of Ab mourned as the fatal day of Jerusalem's fall (Jer. 52:12; Zech. 7:3, 5, 8:19). The rest of the people left in the city, and those who had previously passed to the enemy, together with the remnant of the multitude, were carried away (2 Kings 25:11). We can scarcely be mistaken in regarding these captives as the chief part of the non-combatant population of Jerusalem and Judah.

Jeremiah's history and how he was found in prison when Jerusalem fell we shall learn from his book.

The administration of the conquered country was then entrusted by Nebuchadnezzar to Gedaliah, the son of Ahikam (2 Kings 22:12; Jer. 26:24). Gedaliah dwelt on Mizpah. He held his office only two months and was murdered by Ishmael, the son of Nethaniah (Jer. 40:8-16 and 41:1-9).

Jehoiachin's release needs no further comment. In the second book of Chronicles we shall follow again this mournful history. The seventy year captivity was on. The Word of the LORD through Jeremiah that "the land should enjoy her Sabbaths, for as long as she lay desolate she kept Sabbath, to fulfill three score and ten years" (2 Chron. 36:21).

We add the words of another:

Again is the land keeping Sabbath, And again is it "stillness unto God," till His voice shall waken land and people, Whose are land and people, dominion and peace: till He shall come who is alike the goal and the fulfillment of all past history and prophecy--"a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of Thy people Israel."

Appendix

THE MOABITE STONE

This ancient monument was discovered by R.F. Klein in 1868 at Diban in Moab.

The inscription consists of thirty-four lines (the last two being undecipherable), and was written by Mesha, King of Moab to commemorate his successful revolt from the yoke of Israel, recorded in 2 Kings 1:1 and chapter 3; and to honor his god Chemosh, to whom he ascribed his successes.

The writing is in the ancient Hebrew characters, which continued in use down to 139 B.C., but was gradually replaced by the modern square Hebrew characters which are in use today.

1. "I, Mesha son of Chemosh-Melech King of Moab, the Di-

2. bonite. My father reigned over Moab thirty years and I reign-
3. ed after my father. I made this monument to Chemosh at Korkhah. A monument of sal-
4. vation, for he saved me from all invaders, and let me see my desire upon all my enemies. Om-
5. ri [was] king of Israel, and he oppressed Moab many days, for Chemosh was angry with his
6. land. His son followed him, and he also said: I will oppress Moab. In my days Che[mosh] said;
7. I will see my desire on him and his house. And Israel surely perished for ever. Omri took the land of
8. Medeba and [Israel] dwelt in it during his days and half the days of his son, altogether forty years. But there dwelt in
it
9. Chemosh in my days. I built Baal-Meon and made therein the ditches; I built
10. Kirjathaim. The men of Gad dwelt in the land of Ataroth from of old, and built there the king of
11. Israel Ataroth; and I made war against the town and seized it. And I slew all the [people of]
12. the town, for the pleasure of Chemosh and Moab: I captured from thence the Arel of Dodah and tore
13. him before Chemosh in Kerioth: And I placed Therein the men of Sh(a)r(o)n, and the men
14. of M(e)kh(e)rth. And Chemosh said to me: Go, seize Nebo upon Israel; and
15. I went in the night and fought against it from the break of dawn till noon: and I took
16. it, and slew all, 7,000 men, [boys?], women, [girls?]
17. and female slaves, for to Ashtar-Chemosh I devoted them. And I took from it the Arels of Yahveh, and tore them
before Chemosh. And the king of Israel built
18. Jahaz, and dwelt in it, while he waged war against me; Chemosh drove him out before me. And
19. I took from Moab 200 men, all chiefs, and transported them to Jahaz, which I took,
20. to add it to Dibon. I built Korkhah, the wall of the forests and the wall
21. of the citadel: I built its gates, and I built its towers. And
22. I built the house of Moloch, and I made sluices of the water-ditches in the middle
23. of the town. And there was no cistern in the middle of the town of Korkhah, and I said to all the people, Make for
24. yourselves every man a cistern in his house. And I dug the canals for Korkhah by means of the prisoners

25. of Israel. I built Aroer, and I made the road in [the province of] the Amon. [And]
26. I built Beth-Bamoth, for it was destroyed. I built Bezer, for in ruins
27. [it was. And all the chiefs] of Dibon were 50, for all Dibon is subject; and I placed
28. one hundred [chiefs] in the towns which I added to the land: I built
29. Beth-Medeba and Beth-diblathaim and Beth-Baal-Meon, and transported thereto the [shepherds]? ...
30. and the pastors) of the flocks of the land. And at Horonaim dwelt there
31. ... And Chemosh said to me, Go down, make war upon Horonaim. I went down [and made war]
32. ... And Chemosh dwelt in it during my days. I went up from thence..."

Translation by Dr. Neubauer

THE BOOK OF FIRST CHRONICLES

The Annotated Bible

Arno Clement Gaebelein

THE FIRST BOOK OF THE CHRONICLES

Introduction

The books of the Chronicles are called in the Hebrew "Dbri-Hayyomim" which means "words of the days," that is the events of the times. In the Greek translation they are known by the name "Paraleipomena," that is "things omitted." Our English title "Chronicles" is adopted from the Latin translation, the Vulgate, because the title there is "Liber Chronicorum."

In the English Bible the Chronicles occupy a different place from that in the original Hebrew Bible. As stated before, the Hebrew Scriptures are divided into three main divisions; the law, the prophets and the writings. This last section of the Hebrew Scriptures contains the following books: Psalms, Proverbs, Job; the five books known as Megilloth, Canticles, Ruth, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes and Esther. These are followed by Daniel, Ezra, Nehemiah and Chronicles. The Chronicles therefore stand at the close of the Hebrew Scriptures. That this arrangement is not without meaning in connection with the New Testament, has been pointed out by others. "The genealogies with which Chronicles begins lead up to the genealogy of Matthew 1 and the commencement of the New Testament. They end with the ending of the kingdom, and the question of Cyrus, 'who is there?' (2 Chron. 36:23) is followed by another 'Where is He?' (Matthew 2:2) and the proclamation of the kingdom by the true King and His forerunner. Chronicles begins with the first Adam and leads on to the last Adam."

Authorship and Date

Ezra has been mentioned as the possible author of Chronicles, which, however, cannot be proven. Nothing whatever is known of the instrument who was used to write these historical books. From the prominence which is given to the history and organization of the Levitic priesthood and the deep interest shown in the minor officials of the temple, especially the singers, it has been surmised that the author may have been a Levite. Beyond this nothing definite can be said. The author used by the Spirit of God must remain unknown to man, but he is known to God. In the books are mentioned repeatedly other books and histories to which the author of Chronicles refers. These include the following: a book of the kings of Israel and Judah, (2 Chron. 27:7; 35:27; 36:8); a book of the kings of Judah and Israel (2 Chron. 16:11; 25:26; 28:26; 32:32); a book of the kings of Israel (2 Chron. 24:27); a commentary of the books of Kings (2 Chron. 24:27); a history of the prophets Samuel, Nathan and Gad (1 Chron. 29:29); a history of the prophets Nathan, Abijah, the Shilonite, and Iddo (2 Chron. 9:29); a history of the prophets, Shemaiah and Iddo (2 Chron. 12:15); a history of the prophet Jehu (2 Chron. 20:34); a commentary of the prophet Iddo (2 Chron. 13:22); Isaiah's history of Uzziah (2 Chron. 26:22); a history of the prophet Isaiah (2 Chron. 32:32) and a history of the prophet of Manasseh's day (2 Chron. 33:19). It will be seen that there are just twelve sources mentioned. It will be seen that the first four are historical and the remaining eight are prophetic. While some of these references must have been books and histories now unknown to us, the main references are to the preceding books of the kings and to the first part of the prophet Isaiah.

The date of Chronicles is fixed by the first book. 1 Chron. 6:15 shows that the book was written after the captivity. We find also the names of the descendants of Zerubbabel given in 1 Chron. 3:19-24. Inasmuch as Zerubbabel was one of the leaders of the exile, who returned from the captivity, and his descendants are given, Chronicles must have been written

some time after the return from Babylon. The diction of the books of Chronicles also bears witness to this. The Hebrew is substantially the same which is employed in the books of Ezra, Nehemiah and Esther, which were written immediately after the captivity. It is mixed with Aramaeisms, which marks the corruption of the pure Hebrew by the Chaldaean language which the captives learned in Babylon. The pure Hebrew had been lost in Babylon. Even the orthography bears witness to it as every Hebrew scholar knows.

Rationalistic Objections

Rationalists, the so-called higher critics, speak much of the discrepancies and contradictions contained in Chronicles. That there are variations from previous records cannot be denied, but variations are not contradictions. That there are certain corruptions in the text must be acknowledged, and some of them will be pointed out in the annotations. But the charge that the writer of Chronicles contradicts himself, is wholly unfounded. The following passages have been used to demonstrate this supposed contradiction: 2 Chron. 14:1 and 2 Chron. 15:19; 2 Chron. 14:2 and 2 Chron. 15:17; 2 Chron. 17:6 and 2 Chron. 20:33; 2 Chron. 30:26 and 35:18. A careful perusal will show that there is nothing contradictory between these passages. Higher criticism is often superficial and we fear just as often wilfully blind and even ready to cast doubt upon the inspired records.

The Marks of Inspiration

The omissions and additions we find in the Chronicles in comparison with the books of Samuel and Kings are not the marks of an imperfect human hand. They are the marks of inspiration. We found that the books of Kings contained the history of God's government in Israel. Kings omits much of the history of the house of Judah and only touches upon that which relates to the connection of Judah with the house of Israel during that period.

"The books of the Chronicles give us the history of the same period under another aspect, that is, that of blessing and of the grace of God: and, more particularly, they give us the history of the house of David with respect to which this grace was manifested. We shall see this verified in a multitude of instances.

"These books preserve God's history of His people, recorded by the Holy Ghost, as He loved to remember it, exhibiting only such faults as require to be known in order to understand the instructions of His grace" (Synopsis of the Bible).

It is in these distinctions we discover the supernatural guidance of the penman.

Parallel Passages

A comparison with the books of Samuel, Kings and certain chapters in Isaiah is necessary in the study of Chronicles. To assist in this, we give a complete list of the parallel passages with which Chronicles should be studied.

1 Sam. 27 - 1 Chron. 12:1-7
 1 Sam. 29:1-3 - 1 Chron. 12:19-22
 1 Sam. 31 - 1 Chron. 10

2 Sam. 5:1-5 - 1 Chron. 11:1-3
 2 Sam. 5:6-10 - 1 Chron. 11:4-9
 2 Sam. 5:11-16 - 1 Chron. 14:1-7
 2 Sam. 5:17-25 - 1 Chron. 14:8-17
 2 Sam. 6:1-11 - 1 Chron. 13
 2 Sam. 6:12-23 - 1 Chron. 15 and 16
 2 Sam. 7 - 1 Chron. 17
 2 Sam. 8 - 1 Chron. 18

2 Sam. 10 - 1 Chron. 19
 2 Sam. 11:1-27 - 1 Chron. 20:1
 2 Sam. 12:29-31 - 1 Chron. 20:1-3
 2 Sam. 23:8-39 - 1 Chron. 11:10-47
 2 Sam. 24:1-9 - 1 Chron 21:1-6
 2 Sam. 24:1-9 - 1 Chron. 27:23, 24
 2 Sam. 24:10-17 - 1 Chron. 21:7-17
 2 Sam. 24:18-24 - 1 Chron. 21:18-22:1

1 Kings 2:1 - 1 Chron. 23:1
 1 Kings 2:1 - 1 Chron. 28:20, 21
 1 Kings 2:10-12 - 1 Chron. 29:23-30
 1 Kings 2:46 - 2 Chron. 1:1
 1 Kings 3:4-15 - 2 Chron. 1:2-13
 1 Kings 5 - 2 Chron. 2
 1 Kings 6 - 2 Chron. 3:1-14; 4:9
 1 Kings 7:15-21 - 2 Chron. 3:15-17
 1 Kings 7:23-26 - 2 Chron. 4:2-5
 1 Kings 7:38-46 - 2 Chron. 4:6, 10, 17
 1 Kings 7:47-50 - 2 Chron. 4:18-22
 1 Kings 7:51 - 2 Chron. 5:1
 1 Kings 8 - 2 Chron. 5:2; 7:10
 1 Kings 9:1-9 - 2 Chron. 7:11-22
 1 Kings 9:10-28 - 2 Chron. 8
 1 Kings 10:1-13 - 2 Chron. 9:1-12
 1 Kings 10:14-25 - 2 Chron. 9:13-24
 1 Kings 10:26-29 - 2 Chron. 9:25-28; 1:14-17
 1 Kings 11:41-43 - 2 Chron. 9:29-31
 1 Kings 12:1-19 - 2 Chron. 10
 1 Kings 12:21-24 - 2 Chron. 11:1-4
 1 Kings 12:25 - 2 Chron. 11:5-12
 1 Kings 12:26-31 - 2 Chron. 11:13-17
 1 Kings 14:22-24 - 2 Chron. 12:1
 1 Kings 14:25-28 - 2 Chron. 12:2-12
 1 Kings 14:21, 29-31 - 2 Chron. 12:13-16
 1 Kings 15:1 - 2 Chron. 13:1, 2
 1 Kings 15:6 - 2 Chron. 13:2-31
 1 Kings 15:7, 8 - 2 Chron. 13:22; 14:1
 1 Kings 15:11, 12 - 2 Chron. 14:1-5
 1 Kings 15:13-15 - 2 Chron. 15:16-18
 1 Kings 15:16-22 - 2 Chron. 16:1-6
 1 Kings 15:23, 24 - 2 Chron. 16:11-14
 1 Kings 22:1-40, 44 - 2 Chron. 18
 1 Kings 22:41-43 - 2 Chron. 17:1; 20:31-33
 1 Kings 22:45 - 2 Chron. 20:34
 1 Kings 22:47-49 - 2 Chron. 20:35-37
 1 Kings 22:50 - 2 Chron. 21:1

2 Kings 1:1; 3:4, 5 - 2 Chron. 20:1-3
 2 Kings 8:16-19 - 2 Chron. 21:2-7
 2 Kings 8:20-22 - 2 Chron. 21:8-15

2 Kings 8:23, 24 - 2 Chron. 21:18-20
 2 Kings 8:25-27 - 2 Chron. 22:1-4
 2 Kings 8:28, 29; 9:1-28 - 2 Chron. 22:5-7, 9
 2 Kings 10:11-14 - 2 Chron. 22:8
 2 Kings 11:1-3 - 2 Chron. 22:10-12
 2 Kings 11:4-20 - 2 Chron. 23
 2 Kings 11:21; 12:1-3 - 2 Chron. 24:1-3
 2 Kings 12:6-16 - 2 Chron. 24:4-14
 2 Kings 12:17, 18 - 2 Chron. 24:23, 24
 2 Kings 12:19-21 - 2 Chron. 24:25-27
 2 Kings 14:1-6 - 2 Chron. 25:1-4
 2 Kings 14:7 - 2 Chron. 25:11-16
 2 Kings 14:8-14 - 2 Chron. 25:17-24
 2 Kings 14:17-20 - 2 Chron. 25:25-28
 2 Kings 14:21, 22; 15:1-4 - 2 Chron. 26:1-15
 2 Kings 15:6, 7, 27, 28 - 2 Chron. 26:22, 23
 2 Kings 15:32-35 - 2 Chron. 27:1-8
 2 Kings 15:38 - 2 Chron. 27:9
 2 Kings 16:1, 2 - 2 Chron. 28:1, 2
 2 Kings 16:3, 4, 6 - 2 Chron. 28:3-8
 2 Kings 16:7 - 2 Chron. 28:16-19
 2 Kings 15:29 - 2 Chron. 28:20
 2 Kings 16:8-18 - 2 Chron. 28:21-25
 2 Kings 16:19, 20 - 2 Chron. 28:26, 27
 2 Kings 18:1-3 - 2 Chron. 29:1, 2
 2 Kings 18:13 - Isa. 36:1
 2 Kings 18:14-16 - 2 Chron. 32:2-8
 2 Kings 20:1-11 - 2 Chron. 32:24; Isa. 38
 2 Kings 20:12-19 - Isa. 39:1-8
 2 Kings 18:17-37 - 2 Chron. 32:9-19; Isa. 36:2-22
 2 Kings 19:1-5 - 2 Chron. 32:20; Isa. 37:1-4
 2 Kings 19:6, 7 - Isa. 37:6, 7
 2 Kings 19:8-19 - 2 Chron. 32:17; Isa. 37:8-20
 2 Kings 19:20-37 - 2 Chron. 32:21; Isa. 37:21-38
 2 Kings 20:20, 21 - 2 Chron. 32:32, 33
 2 Kings 21:1-16 - 2 Chron. 33:1-9
 2 Kings 21:17, 18 - 2 Chron. 33:18-20
 2 Kings 21:19-26 - 2 Chron. 33:21-25
 2 Kings 22:1, 2 - 2 Chron. 34:1-7
 2 Kings 22:3-20 - 2 Chron. 34:8-28
 2 Kings 23:1-3 - 2 Chron. 34:29-32
 2 Kings 23:21-23 - 2 Chron. 35:1-19
 2 Kings 23:24-26 - 2 Chron. 34:33
 2 Kings 23:28-30 - 2 Chron. 35:20-27
 2 Kings 23:30-33 - 2 Chron. 36:1-3
 2 Kings 23:34-37 - 2 Chron. 36:4, 5
 2 Kings 24:8, 9 - 2 Chron. 36:9
 2 Kings 24:15-17 - 2 Chron. 36:10
 2 Kings 24:18, 19 - 2 Chron. 36:11, 12
 2 Kings 24:20 - 2 Chron. 36:13-16
 2 Kings 25:8-21 - 2 Chron. 36:18-21

The reader should look up these parallel passages. Especially should the previous annotations in Samuel and Kings be read in connection with Chronicles.

The Division of the First Book of the Chronicles

The first book of the Chronicles begins with genealogies which start with Adam and lead up to the time of the restoration from the captivity and sometime after. The tables do not mention all the names; many are omitted. This makes clear at once the object of these long lists of names. Only those are recorded who were related to the accomplishment of the purpose of God and who were the divinely chosen channels through whom the Lord carried out His purpose. Many lessons may be gathered from these genealogies, so often considered unprofitable. Even to those opening chapters of Chronicles, applies the statement in 2 Timothy 3:16, "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness." The main part of the book begins with the miserable end of Saul, the crowning of David at Hebron and the establishment of his kingdom. Especially is that made prominent which is passed over in the books of the Kings, David's relation to the public worship of God and to the building of the temple, which his son Solomon built after him.

We divide the first book of the Chronicles into four parts:

I. THE GENEALOGIES

1. From Adam to the Edomites (1: 1-54)
2. The Sons of Israel and the Tribe of Judah (2:1-4:23)
3. Simeon, Reuben, Gad and Manasseh (4:24-5:26)
4. Levi (6:1-81)
5. Issachar, Naphtali, half Manasseh, Ephraim and Asher (7:1-40)
6. Benjamin (8:1-40)
7. The Record of the Inhabitants of Jerusalem after the Return (9:1-44)

II. THE OVERTHROW AND END OF SAUL (10:1-14)

III. THE CROWNING OF DAVID AND ESTABLISHMENT OF HIS KINGDOM

1. David in Hebron (11:1-47)
2. David's Warriors and Friends (12:1-40)
3. The Ark removed from Kirjath-jearim (13:1-14)
4. David's Increase and Blessing (14:1-17)
5. The Ark Brought to Jerusalem (15:1-16:3)
6. The Great Celebration (16:4-43)
7. The Covenant and the Promise (17:1-27)
8. David's Wars and Successful Reign (18:1-17)
9. The Wars with Ammon, Syria and the Philistines (19-20)
10. The Numbering of the People and the Punishment (21:1-30)

IV. PREPARATIONS FOR THE BUILDING OF THE TEMPLE AND DAVID'S DEATH

1. The Preparations and Charge to Solomon (22:1-19)
2. The Numbering and Arrangement of the Levites (23:1-32)
3. The Twenty-four Courses of the Priests (24:1-31)
4. The Singers and Musicians of the Temple (25:1-31)

5. The Porters and other Temple Officers (26:1-32)
6. The Captains, Princes, and Various Officers and Counsellors (27:1-34)
7. The Last Acts of David and His Death (28-29)

Analysis and Annotations

I. THE GENEALOGIES

1. From Adam to the Edomites

CHAPTER 1

1. Adam to Noah (1:1-4)
2. The sons of Japheth (1:5-7)
3. The sons of Ham (1:8-16)
4. The sons of Shem (1:17-23)
5. From Shem to Abraham (1:24-27)
6. Ishmael and his sons (1:28-31)
7. Abraham's sons from Keturah (1:32-33)
8. The sons of Isaac (1:34)
9. The sons of Esau (1:35-42)
10. The kings and dukes of Edom (1:43-54)

The nine chapters of genealogical tables is the largest collection of Hebrew names in the Bible. These names are full of the deepest interest, as they often bear in their meaning a message. We have pointed out this fact many times in the annotations of the preceding books. Here is unquestionably a mine of great wealth for the diligent searcher: many lessons connected with these names have been but little understood. (A good concordance or dictionary of these names and their meaning is needed for such research.) The names given in this chapter are all found in the book of Genesis (chapters 5, 10, 11, 25 and 36.) The ten generations before the flood, ending with Noah begin the list. The descendants of Cain are not mentioned. Then follow the names of the offspring of Noah's sons, Japheth, Ham and Shem. Fourteen nations descended from Japheth; thirty-one from Ham and twenty-six from Shem. No person is able to trace all these races in history, but He who has recorded their names knows also their history and their wanderings. And so He knows all His creatures. But above all does He know His own people by name.

Shem's line is followed to Abraham, the father of the nation. The sons of Abraham are mentioned first as Isaac and Ishmael, not in their right order, Ishmael preceding Isaac. The sons of Ishmael are therefore given first, as well as the sons which Abraham had from Keturah. Then follows the statement, "And Abraham begat Isaac. The sons of Isaac: Esau and Israel" (verse 34). Esau's sons and descendants are given before the sons of Israel; those we find in the second chapter. Then follows the list of the kings and dukes (or chiefs) of Edom. King Jobab (verse 44) is considered by some to be Job and that he ruled in Dinhabah (Genesis 36:32).

2. The Sons of Israel and the Descendants of Judah (2:1-4:23)

CHAPTER 2 From Israel to Caleb

1. The sons of Israel (2:1-2)
2. The sons of Judah (2:3-12)
3. The offspring of Jesse (2:13-17)
4. The descendants of Caleb (2:18-24)
5. The descendants of Jerahmeel (2:25-41)

6. Other descendants of Caleb (2:42-55)

After the twelve sons of Israel (Jacob) are named, Judah and his sons are mentioned. The entire chapter is devoted to the descendants of Judah. Judah is given the prominent place, because from this tribe the promised Messiah was to come (Gen. 49:8-12). The sons of Jesse (verses 13-17) are given, seven in number. In 1 Sam. 16:5-11 and 17:12-14 eight are mentioned. This is not a discrepancy. One of these sons probably died childless and his name would therefore have no place in this genealogy. Prominent in this chapter are the sons of Hezron, Jerahmeel, Ram (the Aram of Matt. 1:3) and Chelubai. The latter is Caleb. Caleb is here given as a son of Hezron. Is this the same Caleb who was one of the spies, the son of Jephunneh (Num. 13:6, 30; 14:6, 24, etc)? Critics claim that he is the son of Jephunneh and pointed this out as one of the inaccuracies. However, it is impossible that Caleb the son of Hezron, could be identical with Caleb, the son of Jephunneh. Caleb the son of Hezron was the great-grandfather of Bezaleel (verses 19-20), who was selected with Aholiab to do the work in connection with the tabernacle (Exod. 31:2). He must therefore have been the ancestor of Caleb the son of Jephunneh. And furthermore, Caleb the son of Jephunneh is mentioned in Chapter 4:15. That in verse 49 a daughter of Caleb (Achsah) is mentioned is not sufficient proof that the son of Jephunneh is meant.

CHAPTER 3 From David to Zedekiah

1. The sons of David (3:1-9)
2. David's line to Zedekiah (3:10-15)
3. The sons of Jeconiah (3:16-24)

Six sons were born to David during his reign in Hebron. Four are mentioned as the offspring from Bath-shua, another name for Bath-sheba (2 Sam. 11:3). Then follow the names of other nine sons. As the name Elishama appears twice, it has been suggested that one is Elishua (2 Sam. 5:15). Eglah is called David's wife. Some claim that it is Michal, who became childless after her mockery when David danced before the ark. Then the line of Solomon is traced up to Zedekiah. The usurping Queen Athaliah (2 Kings 11:3) is omitted, for she was not of the house of David. Then follows the list of the sons of Jeconiah. The name "Assir" which follows Jeconiah in verse 17 means "the captive." "Jeconiah, the captive," is the proper rendering. His son Salathiel was therefore born in the captivity (Matt. 1:12). Jeconiah was written "childless," which does not mean that he was to have no sons, but that no son of his should sit upon the throne of David (Jer. 22:30). The son of Salathiel was Zerubbabel (Matt. 1:12; Ezra 3:2, 5:2; Hag. 1:1, 12). It seems that, in some way, the different names as they appear in the Hebrew text were dislocated. The following arrangement has been suggested to remove the difficulty.

"And the sons of Jeconiah, the captive, Salathiel, his son. And the sons of Salathiel; Zerubbabel and Shimei; and the sons of Zerubbabel; Meshullam, Hananiah and Shelomith their sister. And Hashubah, and Ohel, and Berechiah, and Hasadiah, jushab-hezed. And Malchiram, and Rephaiah, and Shenazar, Jecamiah, Hoshama, and Nedabiah. The sons of Hananiah; Pelatiah and Jesiah; the sons of Rephaiah; his son Arnan, his son Obadiah, his son Shecaniah."

CHAPTER 4:1-23 Additional Genealogies of Judah

1. The sons of Judah (4:1-8)
2. Jabez more honorable (4:9-10)
3. Further descendants of Judah (4:11-20)
4. Descendants of Shelah (4:21-23)

Hur and Shobal, mentioned in the first verse, were the sons of Caleb the son of Hezron. The families of the Zorathites sprang from Reaiah, the son of Shobal. Jabez is especially mentioned. Jabez means "He causes pain." "And Jabez called on the God of Israel, saying, Oh that Thou wouldest bless me indeed, and enlarge my coast, and that Thine hand might be with me, and that Thou wouldest keep me from evil, that it may not grieve me! And God granted him that which he requested." The occasion when this prayer-vow was uttered is not given; probably it was made in connection with the

expulsion of the Canaanites from the land and the acquisition of their territory. It was a simple prayer of childlike faith. For blessing, for increase, for companionship and for preservation Jabez cast himself upon the God of Israel, and He granted him his request. Blessing came to Jabez's soul; his coast was enlarged; the hand of the Lord was with him and kept him from evil. God never disappoints faith.

Then we have mentioned in this chapter the craftsmen; Geharashim (verse 14) means "valley of the craftsmen"; the workers in fine linen (verse 21); and those who were potters (verse 23).

3. Simeon, Reuben, Gad, and Manasseh

CHAPTERS 4:24-5:26

1. The sons of Simeon (4:24-43)
2. The sons of Reuben (5:1-10)
3. The children of Gad and half Manasseh (5:11-26)

The account of the Simeonites is interesting. Some of their families had increased so much that they had no pasture for their flocks. Some went then to Gedor and found fat pasture and quietness. Others went to Mount Seir, and five hundred of them smote the Amalekites.

Reuben was the firstborn, and the Chronicles state briefly why Reuben was not mentioned first in these genealogies. His birthright was given to the sons of Joseph. Judah, however, had the preeminence, "of him came the prince." This refers to David and to Him who came from him after the flesh, Messiah the Prince. The Syriac version makes this paraphrase, "of Judah is the King, the Messiah." In verse 6 Tiglath-pileser is mentioned. (Not Tiglath-pilneser; it is an erroneous spelling.) He carried away Beerah, the Prince of the Reubenites.

The Hagarites, mentioned in verse 10, were no doubt the descendants of Hagar through Ishmael. They were nomads, who wandered over the desert lands of the trans-Jordan territory. The tribe of Gad occupied the lands north of Reuben and eastward from the Jordan to the desert. The genealogies of the chiefs mentioned here were compiled during the reign of Jotham of Judah and Jeroboam of Israel (verse 17). Another war with the Hagarites is recorded in verses 18-22. (Some take that this is the same war mentioned in verse 10.) Here prayer is mentioned again. "They cried to God in the battle, and He was entreated of them; because they put their trust in Him." The Lord delights to record those who trust in Him.

4. Levi

CHAPTER 6

1. The high-priestly line (6:1-15)
2. Levitical genealogies (6:16-30)
3. David's chief musicians (6:31-48)

The high-priestly line is first given, starting with Levi, and followed down to the exile. From Eleazar the son of Aaron, twenty-two generations are named. Moses is not mentioned in this list. With Aaron his brother he is called a priest (Psalm 99:6), yet he was chosen as the great leader of the people before the consecration of the levitical priesthood. This is the reason why his name is not found here. The last priest named before the captivity is Jehozadak (also called Jozadak). He was carried into captivity and was the father of Joshua, the high-priest, who returned from Babylon (Ezra 3:2; 5:2; Neh. 12:26; Hag. 1:1, 12; Zech. 6).

After the genealogies of the sons of Levi, who were not priests, the list of the names of David's singers and musicians is

given. "These are they whom David set over the service of song in the house of the LORD, after that the ark had rest. And they ministered before the dwelling place of the tabernacle of the congregation with singing, until Solomon had built the house of the LORD in Jerusalem, and then they waited on their office according to their order." Heman stands first. He was Samuel's grandson. Psalm 88 is by Heman, the Ezralite. Asaph, the son of Berachiah (verse 39), was the poet-prophet. Psalms 50 and 73-88 bear his name. The sons of Asaph are later mentioned as choristers of the temple (1 Chron. 25:1-2; 2 Chron. 5:12; Ezra 2:41, etc.). Two other prominent persons bore the name of Asaph; Asaph, the recorder to King Hezekiah (2 Kings 18:18; Isaiah 36:3), and Asaph, the forester under Artaxerxes (Neh. 2:8). Ethan or Jeduthun (1 Chron. 9:16, 16:41, 25:1; 2 Chron. 35:15) is the author of Psalm 89.

5. Issachar, Naphtali, half Manasseh, Ephraim, and Asher

CHAPTER 7

1. Issachar (7:1-5)
2. Of Benjamin (7:6-12)
3. Naphtali (7:13)
4. Half Manasseh (7:14-19)
5. Ephraim (7:20-29)
6. Asher (7:30-40)

The other tribes are given except Dan and Zebulun, which are missing. Issachar's had the territory between the highlands and the Jordan valley. Their warriors numbered 87,000 taken most likely from David's census. Only three sons of Benjamin are mentioned in verse 6; five are given in chapter 8:1. What became of the other five? In Genesis 46:21 we find ten names. The others had most likely become extinct in the awful slaughter recorded in Judges (Judges 20). All these tables are more or less imperfect. This does not in any way affect the question of inspiration. No doubt there are deeper lessons connected with many of these names and arrangement of them, which we do not know.

"These genealogies were imperfect. The condition of Israel bore the impress of the ruin which had befallen them; but also that of the goodness of God who had brought back a remnant, and who had preserved all that was needful to place those who formed it in the record of His people. If the needful proof to give them a title to this were wanting, such as were of the people ceased to enjoy their proper privileges, and the priests their sacerdotal position, until a priest stood up with Urim and with Thummim. For these genealogies served as a means to recognize the people. Happy he who had preserved his own, and who had so appreciated the heritage of Jehovah as to attach value to it! It was a proof of faith; for it might have been said, Of what use are these genealogies in Babylon?" (Synopsis of the Bible)

6. Benjamin

CHAPTER 8

1. The genealogies of Benjamin (8:1-28)
2. The house of Saul (8:29-40)

In comparing this list with Gen. 46:21 we find some differences. The names of Benjamites include many who were born in the captivity and who returned to the land and dwelt in Jerusalem. Twice we read "those dwelt in Jerusalem" (verses 28, 32). Some of the names are found in the list of restored exiles in Ezra (chapter 2). Benjamin being brought back from the exile, their loyalty to Judah and the temple was rewarded by God. The following passages will give further light on Benjamin's connection with Judah and sharing the blessing of the return from Babylon (Ezra 1:5; chapter 2; 4:1; Neh. 7; 11:4, 7, 31; 12:34).

The genealogy of Saul stands last in this chapter. The overthrow of Saul in chapter 10 forms the beginning of the

historical records in Chronicles. The son of Jonathan mentioned in verse 34 as Merib-baal is Mephibosheth (2 Sam. 4:4).

7. The Record of the Inhabitants of Jerusalem after the Return

CHAPTER 9

1. The restoration (9:1-2)
2. Different residents in Jerusalem (9:3-9)
3. The priests (9:10-13)
4. The Levites (9:14-16)
5. Porters and Levites; their duties (9:17-34)
6. The house of Saul (9:35-44)

All Israel was reckoned by genealogies, which means that from the beginning of the nation, public records were kept. The name of every individual and the family and tribe to which they belonged were carefully registered. This complete registry was contained in the book of the kings of Israel and Judah, which does not mean the two books of Kings. The genealogies contained in the preceding chapters were condensed from the larger registry in the archives of Israel and Judah. Such genealogical registers were likewise kept during the captivity. The names registered in the rest of this chapter are the names of the inhabitants of Jerusalem after the exile. Almost all the names are also found in Nehemiah 11 with some marked differences. The genealogy of the house of Saul is repeated once more (see 8:29-38), evidently, as the connecting link with the next chapter.

It is beyond the scope of our work to follow these genealogical registries at greater length, or to attempt the solution of many supposed difficulties.

II. THE OVERTHROW AND END OF SAUL

CHAPTER 10

1. The overthrow and death of Saul (10:1-7)
2. The burial of Saul and his sons (10:8-12)
3. The cause of Saul's failure (10:13-14)

1 Samuel 31 contains the same record of Saul's miserable end and trial. The writer of Chronicles uses the departure of Saul to introduce the history of the king after God's own heart, why God had dealt with Saul in judgment, and that the kingdom was turned unto David, the son of Jesse. The fatal battle between the Philistines and Israel took place in Mount Gilboa. Gilboa is south-east of the plain of Esdraelon which runs from Carmel to the Jordan valley. The cause of this war is unknown. Saul suffered a great defeat and many were the slain of Israel which fell in Gilboa. Among them were Saul's three sons, Jonathan, Abinadab, also called Ishui (1 Sam. 14:49), and Melchi-shua. Then Saul himself was hit by an archer and wounded. Fearing abuse and insults from the Philistines, he requested his armor bearer to draw his sword and to kill him, but he was afraid, because Saul was the Lord's anointed. Then the unhappy king took his own sword and fell upon it. The armor bearer also committed suicide. The reader will find in annotations on 2 Samuel 1 the story of the Amalekite explained.

The victory of the Philistines was complete. The people forsook their cities and these were occupied by the Philistines. When the plunderers came searching for the slain, in order to strip them of their belongings, the bodies of Saul and his sons were found. Then the body of Saul was stripped and beheaded and the armor was brought into the house of their gods, (Ashtaroth, the Phoenician Venus) and the gory head fastened as a trophy in the house of Dagon. 1 Sam. 31:10 tells us that the body was fastened to the wall of Beth-shan, but here we read that only the head was fastened in the house of Dagon. Beth-shan was a mountain fortress, and here the bodies of Saul and his unfortunate sons were fastened.

"And now night with her dark mantle once more covered these horrible trophies. Shall the eagles and vultures complete the work which, no doubt, they had already begun? The tidings had been carried across the Jordan, and wakened echoes in one of Israel's cities. It was to Jabesh-gilead that Saul, when only named but not yet acknowledged king, had by a forced night-march brought help, delivering it from utter destruction (1 Sam. 11). That had been the morning of Saul's life, bright, and promising as none other; his first glorious victory, which had made him king by acclamation, and drawn Israel's thousands to that gathering in Gilgal, when, amidst the jubilee of an exultant people, the new kingdom was inaugurated. And now it was night; and the headless bodies of Saul and his sons, deserted by all, swung in the wind on the walls of Beth-shan, amid the hoarse music of vultures and jackals.

"But it must not be so; it cannot be so. There was still truth, gratitude, and courage in Israel. And the brave men of Jabesh-gilead marched all the weary night; they crossed Jordan; they climbed that steep brow, and silently detached the dead bodies from the walls. Reverently they bore them across the river, and ere the morning light were far out of reach of the Philistines. Though it had always been the custom in Israel to bury the dead, they would not do so to these mangled remains, that they might not, as it were, perpetuate their disgrace. They burned them just sufficiently to destroy all traces of insult, and the bones they reverently laid under their great tamarisk tree, themselves fasting for seven days in token of public mourning. All honor to the brave men of Jabesh-gilead, whose deed Holy Scripture has preserved to all generations!" (Bible History).

Sad and solemn is the final record of King Saul in these historical books. "So Saul died for his transgression which he committed against the LORD, even against the Word of the LORD, which he kept not, and also for asking counsel of one that had a familiar spirit, to inquire of it" (1 Sam. 28:6-7). He had disobeyed God, rejected His Word and then turned to the agency of Satan, to a demon instrument for help and advice. This is the road of apostasy. The road of the apostasy in Christendom so prominent in the closing days of our age is the same. It is departure from the faith and giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of demons (1 Tim. 4:1). It is a turning away from the truth, the Word of God, and turning to fables (2 Tim. 4:4).

III. THE CROWNING OF DAVID AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF HIS KINGDOM

1. David at Hebron

CHAPTER 11

1. David crowned king (11:1-3)
2. Jerusalem becomes David's capital (11:4-9)
3. The record of David's mighty men (11:10-47)

From the second book of Samuel we learned that the crowning of David in Hebron occurred after the death of Ishbosheth (2 Sam. 5). The previous reign of David for seven and a half years and his failures are here omitted. We shall find that Chronicles does not record all the failures and sins of David and Solomon. The blessing and the grace of God toward the house of David are made prominent throughout. Acknowledged by all Israel as belonging to them, a great leader, Jehovah's choice to feed His people Israel and to be their prince, all the elders came to Hebron before the Lord and anointed David king.

The conquest of Jerusalem (Jebus) followed. It was still in the hands of the Jebusites, but David took the stronghold of Zion. Joab distinguished himself and became chief. This is unmentioned in 2 Sam. 5. He built the city from Millo. Millo means "filling up" so that it may have been a big embankment which connected the city of David with the Temple mount. See 1 Kings 9:15 and 2 Chron. 32:5.

The record of David's mighty men are mentioned here in the beginning of his reign. In Second Samuel we read of them

at the end (2 Sam. 23:8-39), preceding Solomon's reign. When the true King begins His reign, typified by both David and Solomon, those who were loyal to the Lord and faithful to Him will be remembered. The first name mentioned is Jashobeam, a Hachmonite. In Samuel his name is given as Josheb-basshebeth, the Tachmonite. They were probably alternative names for the same person. Jashobeam means "the people shall return" and his other name in Samuel means "one who sits in a seat." Hachmonite means translated "the wise." According to Samuel he slew 800 and here in Chronicles he slew 300 at one time. Probably these are both correct; he slew 800 at one occasion and 300 at another. The second name is Eleazar (help of God) the son of Dodo (his beloved). His deed is more fully given in 2 Sam. 23:9. Shammah, the third one of the three mighties is omitted here (2 Sam. 23:11).

Bethlehem shows the deepest devotion to David from the three who broke through the line in response to David's wish. It was not a command but only a desire expressed, yet they were ready to give their lives, for they were ambitious to please David. May we think here of Him who is greater than David. He, who sat on Sychar's well said to the woman "give me to drink." He longs for the refreshment from His own and we must be ambitious to please Him. It means to break through the hostile ranks of our enemies, as the three men did.

Abishai (father of gift) the younger brother of Joab and nephew of David slew 300 men. Benaiah's deeds include the slaying of an Egyptian giant almost eight feet tall. In the list of the mighty men Uriah, the Hittite (verse 41) is included. He was a brave and devoted warrior which makes David's deed so much more abhorrent (2 Sam. 11).

2. David's Warriors and Friends

CHAPTER 12

1. The Benjamite warriors with David at Ziklag (12:1-7)
2. The other warriors (12:8-22)
3. Those who came to make him king (12:23-40)

And now those are given by name who stood by David, when he was an outcast, rejected and persecuted by Saul. They were mighty men, his helpers in war. The leading company were of Benjamin, the tribe to which Saul belonged. These joined him when he was at Ziklag. In the wilderness of Judah certain of the Gadites separated themselves unto him, "whose faces were like the faces of lions and they were as swift as the roes upon the mountains." May we remember again that all this is written for our learning. Our Lord is rejected and we can stand by Him, as these mighty men stood by David. Men with faces like lions, bold and courageous, are needed, as well as those as swift as the roes upon the mountains, in doing His bidding in true service. They braved the floods of Jordan and swept all hindrances out of the way to reach David, and when David spoke to them to ascertain why they had come, the Spirit of God sent through Amasai a message which must have greatly cheered his heart. "Thine are we, David, and on thy side, thou son of Jesse." May we say to Him whose we are and whom we serve, "Thine we are, O Lord, and on Thy side, Thou Son of God." Other valiant men of Manasseh also joined him and helped him greatly.

Then a wonderful gathering took place. From everywhere they gathered to make David king. Even from the most northern parts of the land, from Issachar, Zebulun and Naphtali they came for one of the greatest events which happened in Israel's history. If we tabulate the figures given in verses 23-37 we have the following results:

| | |
|--|-----------|
| Of Judah | 6,800 Men |
| Of Simeon | 7,100 Men |
| Of Levi | 4,600 Men |
| With Jehoiada, the "prince" (not high-priest of Aaron) | 3,700 Men |

| | | |
|------------------------------------|-------------|--------------------|
| Zadok and his father's house | | 22 chiefs. |
| Of Benjamin | 3,000 Men | |
| Of Ephraim | 20,800 Men | |
| Of half Manasseh | 18,000 Men | |
| Of Issachar | | 200 leaders. |
| Of Zebulun | 50,000 Men | |
| Of Naphtali | 37,000 Men | 1,000 chiefs. |
| Of Dan | 28,600 Men | |
| Of Asher | 40,000 Men | |
| Of the 2-1/2 tribes east of Jordan | 120,000 Men | |
| Total | 339,600 Men | 1,222 chiefs. etc. |

This immense company of people came and they had all one desire and one thought, "to make David king." They were not of a double heart. There was no dissenting voice; they were of one heart, they came with a perfect heart to make David king.

A great feast was kept. They brought bread on asses and on camels and on mules and on oxen, and meat, meal, cakes of figs, and bunches of raisins, and wine and oil and oxen and sheep abundantly. There was joy in Israel. But how much greater will be the joy, and what a feast will be made, when He is made King, not alone over Israel, but when He will be enthroned as King of kings and Lord of lords!

3. The Ark Removed from Kirjath-jearim

CHAPTER 13

1. The consultation about the ark (13:1-5)
2. The attempt and the failure (13:6-14)

The first thing after the coronation which concerned David was the ark. This reveals the fact that the king had the things of the Lord upon his heart. He at once consulted with the captains about bringing the ark from Kirjath-jearim. The ark is mentioned forty-six times in the two books of Chronicles. (The titles are the following: ark, 15 times; the ark of God, 12 times; the ark of the Covenant of the LORD, 11 times; the ark of the LORD, 4 times; the ark of the Covenant of God, of Thy Strength, of our God and Thy holy ark, each once.)

In Chronicles David's gracious words are recorded, which he addressed to the assembly of Israel, "if it seem good unto you and that it be of the LORD our God ... let us bring again the ark of our God to us; for we inquired not at it in the days of Saul." The whole scene manifests a true religious enthusiasm and deep concern to follow the ways of Jehovah. David and all Israel went up to Kirjath-jearim and carried the ark upon a new cart. David and all Israel played before God with all their might, even with songs and with harps and with psalteries, with cymbals and trumpets. But in all this great and human rejoicing, David did not conform to Jehovah's ways. According to God's laws covering the handling of the ark, only the Levites were to touch it. They were to carry it on their shoulders and not to place it in a cart (Num. 4:5, 15). All this had been violated. The divine displeasure was fully manifested when Uzza put forth his hands to hold the ark, because the oxen had stumbled. Uzza was stricken with sudden death. He forgot that the ark was the emblem of Jehovah's presence in the midst of His people. See annotations on 2 Samuel 6.

4. David's Increase and Blessing

CHAPTER 14

1. Hiram (14:1-2)
2. David's family (14:3-7)
3. The Philistines defeated (14:8-17)

The reader is referred to 2 Sam. 5:11-16 for the comment on verses 1-7. Beeliada is called in 2 Sam. 5:16 Eliada. Beeliada was probably changed to Eliada. David's great victory over the Philistines is also recorded in 2 Sam. 5:17- 25. He inquired of God and being permitted to go, he smote them at Baal-perazim, where also the idol images were burned with fire (in obedience to Deut. 7:5, 25). It was a great victory. Baal-perazim means "possessor of breaches." In Isaiah the victory over the Philistines is used as a prophecy of the coming future judgment of the earth. "For the LORD shall rise up as in mount Perazim, He shall be wroth as in the valley of Gibeon, that He may do His work, His strange work, and bring to pass His act, his strange act" (Isaiah 28:21). A second time the Philistines came, and David, obedient to the divine instructions, gained another great victory. His fame went into all lands and the fear of him was brought by the LORD upon all nations.

5. The Ark Brought to Jerusalem

CHAPTER 15:1-16:3

1. The true preparation to fetch the ark (15:1-15)
2. The great procession (15:16-24)
3. The ark brought back (15:25-16:3)

The ark rested in the house of Obed-edom for three months. During that time David prepared a place for the ark of God and pitched a tent. Warned by what had happened, his conscience aroused, David said, "None ought to carry the ark of God but the Levites: for them hath the LORD chosen to carry the ark of God, and to minister unto Him forever."

It is to be observed, that, although the death of Uzza had its origin in the guilty forgetfulness of David, it nevertheless gave occasion through grace to his being set in his true position for the regulation and appointment of all that concerned the Levites' service. It is always thus with regard to faith, for the purposes of God are fulfilled in favor of it. Man in his zeal may depart from the will of God, and God will chasten him, but only to bring him into more honor, by setting him more completely in the position which God has purposed, and in the understanding of His ways, according to which He will magnify His servant (Synopsis of the Bible).

All Israel and especially the Levites were gathered together. All is now done according to the divine directions. The former failure was owned and the priests and Levites sanctified themselves to bring up the ark. They carried the ark of God upon their shoulders with the staves as God had commanded.

A great procession was also requested by David and arranged by the Levites. David loved singing and music as the expression of praise unto the Lord. The instruments mentioned are the psaltery, which was like a long box with a convex sounding board, over which wire strings were stretched; the harp and the cymbal. The latter was a brass instrument with a ball attached. The great procession was headed by a choir of singers and musicians under the leadership of Heman, Asaph and Ethan. In the middle of the procession was the ark, preceded by Chenaniah (established by the LORD), the chief of the Levites. Then there were the two door-keepers of the ark, Berechiah (blessed of the LORD) and Elkanah (God has purchased) and seven priests, who sounded the trumpets before the ark, and two more door-keepers. "Alamoth" in verse 20 must have been a choir of virgins (Alamoth means virgins). Such is the meaning of the word in the inscription of Psalm 46. In Psalm 58, where a great procession is mentioned in connection with the removing of the ark (no doubt commemorating the return of the ark to Jerusalem) we read of women publishing the tidings (verse 11 marginal reading) and there we hear also of the damsels in the procession. (Read also Psalm 132 and notice its connection with the event of this chapter.) "The singers went before; the players of the instruments followed after, among them were the damsels playing with timbrels" (Psalm 68:25). But the sixty-eighth Psalm describes prophetically another great procession and

celebration, when He comes in great power and glory. "Sing unto God, ye kingdoms of the earth; O sing praises unto the Lord--to Him that rideth upon the heaven of heavens" (Psalm 68:32-33).

And so the ark was brought to Jerusalem and set in the midst of the tent. It was a time of great rejoicing and feasting. But what will it be when not an ark, the symbol only of the divine presence, is in the midst of the people, but when the once rejected King appears in the midst and receives the homage and praise of Israel!

(Comment on Michal and her mockery is made in the parallel passage in 2 Samuel. We omit in annotation in Chronicles all which has been previously mentioned in Samuel and Kings.)

6. The Great Thanksgiving Psalm

CHAPTER 16:4-43

1. David's appointment (16:4-6)
2. The Psalm of praise and thanksgiving (16:7-36)
3. The Levites and the public worship (16:37-43)

A great thanksgiving Psalm was then delivered by David into the hand of Asaph and his brethren. The view of modern critics, that this Psalm is post-exilic, does not call for any refutation, for the text declares that David himself delivered the hymn to Asaph. The Psalm is made up of portions of different Psalms. See Psalm 105:1-15; 96:1-13; 106:47-48; 107:1; 136. A careful study will show the far reaching meaning of this composite Psalm. It is a great prophecy. It begins with the celebration and praise of what Jehovah has done. Israel is called to remember His covenant. It is not the covenant at Sinai, with its conditional promises, but the unconditional, the grace-covenant, made with Abraham, an everlasting covenant that his seed is to have the land. But prophetically the Psalm points to the time when "His judgments are in all the earth"; it is at that time when the covenant made with Abraham will be remembered. Such a time will come according to the prophetic Word. Verse 22, "Touch not Mine anointed, and do My prophets no harm," speaks of Israel's preservation; for Israel is His anointed, a kingdom of kings and priests. The day must come when the covenant made with Abraham will be realized and when Israel shall possess the land, after their wanderings from nation to nation (verse 20). Then there will be a throne in Zion and a King shall reign in righteousness, even Christ (Psalm 2).

Then Psalm 96 is quoted. It is a Psalm which looks forward to the kingdom on earth, when the nations acknowledge Jehovah and bow in His presence. The blessed age of glory, of which the prophets have so much to say, the unreached goal of the glorious future of the earth, the millennium, is pictured in this Psalm.

Fear before Him, all the earth
 The World is established, it cannot be moved,
 Let the heavens be glad,
 And let the earth rejoice.
 And let them say among the nations,
 The LORD reigneth.
 Let the sea roar, and the fulness thereof,
 Let the fields rejoice and all there is therein;
 Then shall the trees of the wood sing out,
 At the Presence of the LORD,
 Because He cometh to judge the earth.

The praise of Israel concludes the thanksgiving Psalm. We repeat, it is prophetic. It looks onward to the time when the Lord will deliver His people, when the promises made to the fathers will all be fulfilled, when the nations of the earth will know the Lord and when He will reign over all. Such is Israel's future. When He has been merciful to His land and to His

people, the nations will rejoice (Deut. 32:43).

At the close of this chapter we notice how King David regulates everything that was to be done before the ark.

"The placing of the ark in the capital of Israel, thus making it 'the city of God,' was an event not only of deep national, but of such typical importance, that it is frequently referred to in the sacred songs of the sanctuary. No one will have any difficulty in recognizing Psalm 24 as the hymn composed for this occasion. But other Psalms also refer to it, amongst which, without entering on details that may be profitably studied by each reader, we may mention Psalms 15, 68, 78, and especially Psalm 101, as indicating, so to speak, the moral bearing of the nearness of God's ark upon the king and his kingdom."

"Faith, apprehending the counsels and the work of God, could see in the establishment of the ark in Zion, the progress of God's power and intervention towards the peaceful and glorious reign of the Son of David. The sure mercies of David were as bright to the eye of faith as the dawn of day, in that the ark of the covenant had been set up by David in the mountain which God had chosen for His everlasting rest" (Synopsis of the Bible).

7. The Covenant and the Promise

CHAPTER 17

1. David's plan to build a house (17:1-6)
2. The covenant and the promise (17:7-15)
3. David's praise and prayer (17:16-27)

After the ark had found its resting place in a tent the king became deeply concerned about the building of a house. He contrasted his own house of cedars with the humble dwelling place of the ark of the covenant. The desire to build a house for the Lord was expressed to Nathan, who told David, without having consulted the Lord, "Do all that is in thine heart, for God is with thee." That night the message came to Nathan, "Go and tell David my servant, Thus saith the LORD, Thou shalt not build Me a house to dwell in, for I have not dwelt in a house since the day that I brought up Israel unto this day, but have gone from tent to tent, and from one tabernacle unto another. Wheresoever I have walked with all Israel, spake I a word to any of the judges of Israel, whom I commanded to feed My people, saying, Why have ye not built Me a house of cedars?" What condescension and what identification with His people these words reveal!

When Israel was a slave, God became his Redeemer; when he dwelt in tents, God abode in one also; when in conflict, God presented Himself as captain of Jehovah's host; when settled in peace, God establishes Himself in the house of His glory. The interval was the probation of His people on earth. God abode in the tent, and even His ark is taken. He interposes in grace for deliverance.

"Christ also, since we were born of woman, is born of a woman; since His people were under the law, He is born under the law; now that He will have a heavenly people, He is on high for us; when He comes in glory, we shall come with Him, and reign when He reigns, but in these last we are with Him." (Synopsis of the Bible).

As we have already considered the great Davidic covenant and its meaning (2 Sam. 7) as well as David's worship and prayer, we refer the reader to the annotations of that chapter. Solomon, David's son, is first in view, but he is only a type of Christ, David's greater Son and David's Lord as well. In Christ alone, this great covenant-promise is to be fulfilled. It is still all future, for the Son of David, rejected of His own, does not sit and rule upon the throne of His father David. He has gone to heaven, occupying the throne of God, sitting at His right hand up to the time when His enemies will be made His footstool. Then, when He appears the second time, the angelic announcement will come true, "and the Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of His father David."

And what words David spoke to Him, whose grace had made such promises! Humility, faith and confidence answered grace.

8. David's Wars and Successful Reign

CHAPTER 18

1. War with the Philistines (18:1)
2. War with Moab (18:2)
3. War with Zobah (18:3-4)
4. War with Damascus (18:5-11)
5. Wars with Edom (18:12-13)
6. David's administration (18:14-17)

After such glorious experiences David went forth as the victorious warrior-king to conquer the enemies of Israel. He first smote the Philistines, subdued them and took Gath and her towns. Gath, the chief city of the Philistines, is called in 2 Sam. 8:1 "Metheg-aminah," which means "the bridle of the mother city." Then he smote Moab and they became his servants and brought presents. Great are the conquests and victories of David recorded in this chapter. From Hadarezer, King of Zobah, he took 1,000 chariots, 7,000 horsemen and 20,000 footmen. (2 Sam. 8:4 has 700, which is a copyist's error.) Then the Syrians came to help the King of Zobah and lost 22,000 men. Then the Syrians also became his servants and brought presents. "And the LORD gave victory to David whithersoever he went." In all this we see foreshadowed the triumphs of our Lord Jesus Christ, when He comes as the victorious King and His enemies shall all be subdued.

All the spoil taken, the shields of gold, were brought to Jerusalem. From Tibhath and from Chun, cities which belonged to Hadarezer, David took very much brass. The brazen sea, the pillars and the vessels of brass for the temple were made by Solomon out of this material. Silver and gold which he carried away from all the conquered nations were all dedicated unto the Lord. And in a future day shall the silver and the gold of the Gentiles be brought to Jerusalem (Isa. 60:6, 17; Psalm 72:10). So David reigned over all Israel, and executed judgment and justice among all his people.

9. The Wars with Ammon, Syria and the Philistines (19-20)

CHAPTER 19

1. Hanun's insult to David's servants (19:1-5)
2. Joab's victory (19:6-16)
3. David's victorious campaign (19:17-19)

See annotations on 2 Samuel chapter 10. The occasion of the war with the Ammonites was the insult to the messengers of David whom he had sent to the son of King Nahash. Nahash had died and David sent the messengers to comfort Hanun concerning his father. It gives a little glimpse of the tenderness of David. "But the princes of the children of Ammon said to Hanun, Thinkest thou that David doth honor thy father, that he hath sent comforters unto thee? Are not his servants come unto thee for to search and to overthrow and to spy out the land?" When the Ammonites realized the insult to David's messengers, they spent 1,000 talents of silver (about \$375,000) to hire chariots and horsemen. Joab was victorious. Then the king himself took charge and gathered all Israel. A great victory was the result.

In 2 Samuel the great sin of David follows the victory over the Syrians. In our comment on the fall of David, we have pointed out the connection between the victory of David and his sin. David's fall is omitted in Chronicles because the grace of God is the prominent feature and grace had completely covered David's great sin.

CHAPTER 20 Joab and David take Rabbah

1. Rabbah destroyed (20:1-3)
2. The Philistine giants slain (20:4-8)

Rabbah was the capital of Ammon (Deut. 3:11; Josh. 13:25) and was taken by Joab. David tarried in Jerusalem (so fatal to him, 2 Sam. 11:1) and Joab smote Rabbah and destroyed it. Then David appeared also upon the scene. Joab had summoned David to help in the overthrow of the city (2 Sam. 12:27, etc). The crown mentioned was probably the crown of Milcom, their idol-king. It was of solid gold set with precious stones. David received the crown and precious stones, even as our Lord Jesus receives the glory and will appear crowned with many crowns (Rev. 19:12). On verse 3 see annotations 2 Sam. 2:31. The overthrow of the giants followed. First Sibbechai slew Sippai of the children of the giants; in 2 Sam. 21 his name is given as Saph. Elhanan slew Lahmi of Goliath. (The words "the brother of" are in italics and must be omitted. It was another giant who had the same name as the giant of 1 Sam. 17.) Then David's nephew Jonathan, the son of Shimea, David's brother, slew the last of the giants. He had six fingers on each hand and six toes on each foot and was of great stature. These giants were the special instruments of the power of darkness. They have a typical significance.

The notion of a giant in Scripture is always connected with evil, the lifting up of man against God, the symbol of pride and self-sufficiency, as well as of oppressive power. He is the opposite of the little and the lowly, the humble in heart, with whom God delights to dwell; but thus may stand for the tyranny of a lust, as in the case of Og, or of a Satanic delusion, as with Goliath himself. In those before us we must see, what we have seen in their kinsman, the monstrous delusions which abide in a system of error such as Philistinism depicts, the ecclesiastical "mystery of lawlessness" of Christian times (Numerical Bible).

And in the last one overcome by Jonathan (gift of the LORD), we see a type of the final ecclesiastical leader of the apostasy, the man of sin. The number "six" points to this (Rev. 13:11-18).

10. The Numbering of the People and the Punishment

CHAPTER 21

1. David's failure in numbering the people (21:1-7)
2. David's confession and the message of God (21:8-12)
3. David's answer and the punishment (21:13-17)
4. The altar in the threshing floor of Ornan (21:18-30)

On the alleged discrepancy between the statement in 2 Sam. 24:1 "And again the anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel, and He moved (literal: He suffered him to be moved) David against them to say, Go, number Israel and Judah," and 1 Chron. 21:1 "And Satan stood up against Israel and provoked David to number Israel"; see annotations on 2 Sam. 24. Israel had committed some sin and deserved punishment. This is clear from the statement in 2 Sam. 24:1. The direct cause of the visitation, however, was David's pride, and may have been connected with the desire of constituting his kingdom as a great military power. He wanted to know the strength of the nation and glory in it, and the king forgot that the Lord had increased Israel and all he was and had was of God. What a difference between David here and David sitting in the presence of the Lord after hearing Nathan's message! (17:16). Nothing humbles so as being in the presence of the Lord. The lust of the flesh in self-indulgence had led to his awful sin with Bathsheba, and now the lust of the eyes and the pride of life had entangled him. Satan stood behind it all and the sin committed, pride and self-exaltation, was according to Satan's character. Then David confessed (verse 8) and the Lord sent the prophet Gad to him announcing the modes of punishment from which he was to make his choice. The recovery of David, his real knowledge of God and the working of His grace in his heart are manifested by the fact that he committed himself to God, choosing rather to fall into the hands of God than into the hands of his enemies. The Lord sent the pestilence. David saw the angel of the Lord. Then David and the elders clothed in sack cloth were on their faces. At the sight of the angel with his drawn sword stretched over Jerusalem, David confessed again, but his prayer becomes an intercession; he takes the sin upon himself and prays "let Thine hand, be

on me, and on my father's house; but not on Thy people that they should be plagued." This prayer was speedily followed by mercy. The site of the future house of the Lord was then acquired. (See comment on 2 Sam. 24.) Ornan and his four sons had also seen the angel and they were afraid (verse 20). And the Jebusite was willing to give the threshing-floor and all within it. And when the site had been acquired by purchase and the altar was built, burnt-offerings and peace-offerings were brought. Heaven answered by fire. "And the LORD commanded the angel; and he put up his sword again into the sheath thereof." All is blessedly typical of Him who is the true burnt-offering, as well as the peace-offering.

It is interesting to see the order unfolded here in the establishment of the sovereign grace: first of all, the heart of God and His sovereign grace in election, suspending the execution of the deserved and pronounced judgment (verse 15); next, the revelation of this judgment, a revelation which produces humiliation before God and a full confession of sin before His face. David, and the elders of Israel, clothed in sackcloth, fall upon their faces, and David presents himself as the guilty one. Then, instruction comes from God, as to that which must be done to cause the pestilence judicially and definitively to cease, namely, the sacrifice in Ornan's threshing-floor. God accepts the sacrifice, sending fire to consume it, and then He commands the angel to sheathe his sword. And sovereign grace, thus carried out in righteousness through sacrifice, becomes the means of Israel's approach to their God, and establishes the place of their access to Him.

IV. PREPARATIONS FOR THE BUILDING OF THE TEMPLE

1. The Preparations and Charge to Solomon

CHAPTER 22

1. The material (22:1-5)
2. The charge to Solomon (22:6-16)
3. The charge to the princes (22:17-19)

God had accepted the sacrifice. The judgment had passed. Prayer had been answered and David, therefore, could truthfully say "this is the house of the LORD God, and this is the altar of the burnt-offering for Israel." The place had therefore been pointed out on which the temple was to be reared. And from now on up to the twenty-eighth verse of chapter 26 all concerns the house which is to be built. The temple is from now on prominently in the foreground and that which the book of Kings does not mention, David's great interest in making preparations for it, is recorded in these chapters. And so we see David with great energy making vast preparations. It shows again how grace had worked in his heart. All else seems to have been forgotten by him. Only one desire controls the king, to make provision of everything necessary for the construction of the Temple. And the house, according to David's conception "must be exceeding magnificent, of fame and of glory throughout all countries." His heart burned with zeal to glorify Jehovah, whose mercy and grace he knew so well and who had kept and prospered him in all his ways. "I will therefore now make preparation for it," David said. Then he prepared abundantly before his death. David, making preparation for the temple his son was to put up, is not without a very striking typical meaning. Both David and Solomon are types of our Lord Jesus Christ. David typifies Him in His humiliation and suffering, Solomon in His exaltation and glory. What Christ has done in His grace results in the coming glory. This is foreshadowed in the preparations David made for the house and the glorious reign of his son. If this is kept in mind these historical statements will take on a blessed meaning.

He gathered the strangers (the descendants of the Canaanites) and he set them at work. Stones, iron and timber all were prepared before hand on a large scale. Then he called for Solomon, young and tender in years, and addressed him. First he restated the reason why he had been barred from building the house. Then he recited the promise made to him that his son should have rest and build a house for His name. "For his name shall be Solomon, and I will give peace and quietness unto Israel in his days. He shall build a house for my name." David believed all the Lord had spoken through Nathan, and, believing the promise, he had made all preparations and was telling his son about it.

Then he exhorted him to build the house, to keep the law of the Lord and to take heed. "Be strong, and of good courage

and dread not nor be dismayed." Once more he speaks of all he had done in preparation of the house of the Lord. Even in the days of trouble and adversity he had prepared for the house and remembered the claims of Jehovah. Immense amounts of gold and silver, the spoils of wars, had been stored up by him. Many millions of dollars in gold and silver were in his possession and devoted for the one object. And Solomon was to add unto it. Then he told him to arise and to be doing. In the same way he commanded the princes of Israel to help his son Solomon.

May this teach us who know the riches of the grace of God in Christ Jesus our Lord, to be as devoted to Him, as zealous to glorify Him, as David was in making these preparations for the building of the temple.

2. The Numbering and Arrangement of the Levites

CHAPTER 23

1. Solomon made king (23:1)
2. The number of the Levites (23:2-6)
3. The Gershonites (23:7-11)
4. The sons of Kohath (23:12-20)
5. The sons of Merari (23:21-23)
6. The service of the Levites (23:24-32)

David, in his seventieth year, made Solomon king. It is the first time, and afterwards (29:22) he was made king the second time.

"The first time Solomon was made king, when grace was fully established in the altar built on the threshing-floor of Ornan, where the son of David, as the prince of peace, was to build the temple. Solomon is introduced as the head of all that was being established, and as holding the first and supreme place in the mind of God--the one on whom all the rest depended, which could not even exist now without him. The house, the whole order of the house, and its government, all referred to Solomon; and thus his identification with David, in that both were on the throne at the same time, makes it much easier to understand the type of Christ in this. It is one person, whom His sufferings and victories place on the throne of glory and of peace. For at this moment, although the result of the glory was not yet manifested, God had given rest unto His people, that they might dwell at Jerusalem" (Synopsis of the Bible).

After he had made Solomon king, David devoted himself still more to the house of the Lord. He ordered and arranged everything. So when the temple was built, Solomon had only to carry out the plans his father in divine wisdom had made. All is typical of Him who has ordered all things in His infinite grace.

The census of the Levites gave their number from thirty years and upwards, at 38,000. Of these 24,000 were appointed to attend, set forward the work of the house of the Lord; 6,000 were officers and judges; 4,000 were porters and 4,000 praised the Lord with the instruments David had made to praise therewith (Amos 6:5).

3. The Twenty-four Courses of the Priests

CHAPTER 24

1. The twenty-four courses (24:1-19)
2. The organization of other Levites (24:20-31)

In the previous chapter we read of 24,000 Levites set apart for the service. In the next chapter we find twenty-four leaders of song and music appointed, and here David instituted twenty-four courses of priests. Each of these ministered a

full week, from one sabbath to the next. These courses were not only continued by Solomon, but also by Hezekiah and Josiah. From Luke 1:5, we learn the same order was still followed in the days our Lord was born. Zecharias belonged to the eighth course, that of Abijah.

In the book of Revelation (chapter 4, etc.) we read of twenty-four elders clothed in white raiment, crowned and seated upon twenty-four thrones. They represent symbolically all the redeemed brought into glory. This number is obviously an allusion to the arrangement of the priesthood made by David for the service of the temple under the glorious reign of Solomon, the blessed type of the reign of Christ in glory. As these twenty-four courses of Priests were to minister during Solomon's glorious reign, they are typical of the redeemed, the holy and royal priesthood, associated with the Lord Jesus Christ when He occupies His throne of glory.

4. The Singers and Musicians of the Temple

CHAPTER 25

1. Sons of Asaph, Jeduthun and Heman (25:1-7)
2. Their division by Lot into twenty-four (25:8-31)

As we have seen before, Asaph, Jeduthun (Ethan) and Heman were the master leaders in song and music; their service was eminently spiritual, for we read "they should prophesy." Heman especially is called the king's seer in the words of God. This is a significant expression. How much there is in what is termed "worship", which has nothing whatever of the words of God in it. In most of the songs used in our times there is little of the words of God and many contain unscriptural and sentimental phrases. Israel's worship in song and music was to be spiritual, prophesying and in the words of God. Christian worship is not less. It is to be in spirit and in truth. "Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord" (Col. 3:16). Asaph had four sons, Jeduthun six, and Heman fourteen, equal to twenty-four. They were divided into twenty-four courses of twelve men each, equal to 288, who served a week in turn. The names of six of the sons of Heman form, in the Hebrew, a complete sentence. Giddalti, Romamti-ezer, joshbekashah, Mallothi, Hothir and Mahazioth (verse 4) may be rendered in English:

I have magnified and I have raised up help;
Sitting in trouble, I have spoken oracles plentiful.

This fact has aroused the suspicion of the critics regarding the genuineness of this entire list of names. "Now this sentence," saith a critic, "is either an obscure and ancient prayer which hath been mistaken for a list of names by the compiler, or else the compiler has purposely strung together those significant names in such order as to form a sentence" (W.R. Harvey-Jellic). But it is not the mistake of the compiler or an invention. We read that God gave to Heman these sons and the pious Israelite named his sons so as to produce this meaning. There are many such messages in names throughout the Bible. (See annotations on Genesis 5.)

5. The Porters and other Temple Officers

CHAPTER 26

1. The porters (26:1-12)
2. The keepers of the gates (26:13-19)
3. The Levites over the treasures (26:20-28)
4. Officers and judges (26:29-32)

Ninety-three porters are mentioned, which held the position of chiefs. The whole number of porters was 4,000 (23:5).

Asaph in verse 1 must be changed to Ebiasaph (9:19), for Asaph was not a Korahite, but a Gershonite. Obed-edom is especially mentioned. God blessed him (verse 5). He had sheltered the ark (8:14), "and the LORD blessed the house of Obed-edom, and all that he had." And here the blessing is seen in a remarkable increase. "All these of the sons of Obed-edom; they and their sons and their brethren, able men for strength for the service, were three score and two of Obed-edom" (Psalm 127:3). How faithful the Lord is. He did not forget Obed-edom's service and rewarded him richly.

Then there were the gate keepers. The temple was still unbuilt, no plans had been drawn by man, but the Lord had revealed the plan to David (28:11-13), and he ordered the keepers of the gates according to the divine plan. Then follows the appointment of the Levites who had charge over the treasures and the appointment of officers and judges. Their number was 6,000 (Chap. 23:4). They were divided into three classes: 1. For the outward business of Israel (verse 29). 2. Those who had the oversight of Israel beyond Jordan westward, 1,700 persons, for all the business of the Lord, and for service of the King (verse 30). 3. The third class consisted of 2,700 who were rulers for every matter pertaining to God, and affairs of the king (verses 31-32). All was divinely planned and arranged through David in anticipation of the glorious reign of his son. And even so all is planned and appointed for the coming reign of the King of Righteousness and the King of Peace.

6. The Captains, Princes, and Various Officials

CHAPTER 27

1. The twelve captains (27:1-15)
2. The princes of the twelve tribes (27:16-22)
3. The unfinished numbering (27:23-24)
4. Various officers (27:25-34)

We have here the military organization of David's kingdom. The army comprised all males over twenty years of age. The host had twelve divisions each of 24,000. It is remarkable how the number twenty-four occurs again and again. Twelve is the governmental number and twice twelve, that is, twenty-four, would indicate a perfect and complete government such as will be established when Heaven's King of Glory is enthroned. In the list of the Princes of Israel the tribe of Dan is numbered last. There is something significant about this. Dan, as we have seen, is not mentioned in the chronological register, nor is this tribe mentioned in Rev. 7. Dan is called a serpent (Genesis 49:17); it may be that the coming false Messiah will come out of Dan. Gad and Asher are not mentioned in the list.

7. The Last Acts of David and His Death

CHAPTER 28 The Great Assembly

1. The Address of David to the assembly (28:1-10)
2. The patterns, the gold and the silver delivered to Solomon (28:11-19)
3. His encouraging words to Solomon (28:20-21)

The events in this chapter connect with Chapter 23:1. There we find the brief statement that David was old and full of years and that Solomon his son was made king over Israel. Then follow the chapters which acquaint us with the preparations David had made for the building of the temple and the arrangements of the Levites, etc., for the temple service. And now the threads of the narrative which were dropped are taken up again. A great and representative audience was called by David when he made Solomon king. All the princes of Israel and the captains and mighty men in Jerusalem came together. As we know from the book of Kings the aged monarch was weak in his body. But when the hour came to address the great assembly he arose and stood upon his feet. The three attitudes of David are suggestive. He was, on his face, a penitent, (2 Sam. 1:12; 1 Chron. 21:16); he sat in His presence as a worshipper (1 Chron. 17:16), and now he stood on his feet as a servant. The words he spoke before the assembly are similar to those he addressed to his son Solomon in

private (1 Chron. 22). After he had spoken all these words, in which he once more traced the gracious dealings of the Lord with him, he admonished his son to know the God of his father, to serve Him with a perfect heart and a willing mind. "If thou, seek Him, He will be found of thee; but if thou forsake Him, He will cast thee off forever." Then he exhorted him again to build the house. "Be strong and do it."

After this David handed over the patterns of the porch, the temple houses, the treasuries, the upper chambers and the inner rooms and of the place of the mercy seat. How did the king obtain these patterns? He had them by the Spirit. The authorized version prints Spirit with a small "s." It was not his own spirit who planned it. A certain commentator says it means that these patterns had been "floating in his mind." The sentence "the pattern of all that he had by the Spirit" means that the Holy Spirit had revealed it all to him. It was given to him by inspiration as the pattern of the tabernacle and all belonging to it had been given to Moses also by revelation. Then he turned over to Solomon the immense quantities of gold and silver and other materials he had so faithfully collected for the construction of the Temple.

CHAPTER 29 The Final Words and Actions of David and His Death

1. The exhortation (29:1-5)
2. The response (29:6-9)
3. David's praise and prayer (29:10-20)
4. The sacrifices and enthronement of Solomon (29:21-25)
5. The reign of David and his death (29:26-30)

Then David spoke once more to the assembled princes and captains. What tenderness and concern as well as devotion his words reveal! "Solomon my son, whom alone God hath chosen, is yet young, and tender, and the work is great, for the palace is not for man, but for the LORD God." Once more the aged king speaks of the vast preparations he had made for the house of God. He would also contribute largely from his own treasures. The gold and silver, precious and glistening stones amounted in value to many million dollars. The gold of Ophir mentioned was the purest and finest known in that day (Job 22:24; 28:16; Isaiah 13:12). And all he had done was "because I have set my affection to the house of my God." He loved it so much and therefore he gave and consecrated such vast treasures. And here we may remember Him who was richer than David, who gave more than David ever could give. "For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor that ye through His poverty might be rich" (2 Cor. 8:9). After he had told of his own devotion he said, "And who then is willing to consecrate his service this day unto the LORD?" The Hebrew is "to fill his hand today to Jehovah." It means that whosoever gave willingly, as he himself had done, would fill his hand with a free will offering unto the Lord. Christian giving should always be looked upon in this light. It is giving unto the Lord. And David's great liberality and example brought a great response. An immense offering was given.

"Drams" is in Hebrew "daric," a Persian gold coin weighing about 130 grains. The word is found also in Ezra 8:27. It was probably called "daric" after Darius and therefore shows that Chronicles was written after the captivity.

"Then the people rejoiced, for that they offered willingly, because with perfect heart they offered willingly to the LORD, and David, the King, also rejoiced with great joy." The joy of giving took hold of all. "It is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts 20:35). How great must have been the joy of the king as he beheld the fruits of his own devotion in the willingness of his people! And here again we must think once more of our Lord. It is His gracious example in giving Himself for us, His people, which will lead us on to sacrifice, to give, to spend and be spent. And how great His joy if His people follow thus after Him.

It is a great inspired outburst of David which follows. How He praises! Verses 10-13 are one of the greatest outbursts of praise and worship found in the Old Testament. Then what humility! "But who am I, and what is my people that we should be able to offer so willingly after this sort? for all things come of thee, and of thine own have we given thee ... all this store that we have prepared to build thee a house for thine holy name cometh of thine hand, and is all thine own." A most beautiful sight is an aged saint whom God hath used and honored and who is humble. Alas! how many become lifted up

and walk in pride. Then David prayed for the people and for his son Solomon. "And all the congregation blessed the LORD God of their fathers, and bowed down their heads, and worshipped the LORD, and the King" (verse 20). All foreshadows that day of which we read in Psalm 110:3, "Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power." That will be when the King, the Prince of Peace, will take His glorious throne, when He begins to rule.

After the large number of sacrifices had been brought and they had eaten before the Lord on that day with great gladness, Solomon was made king the second time, even as his father David passed through the same experience. This double event has no doubt a definite typical meaning in connection with our Lord in as much as both, David and Solomon, are types of the Lord Jesus Christ. When Solomon was made king the first time he was but anointed with oil (1 Kings 1:39) and acclaimed as king, but he did not occupy the kingly throne. But when he was made king the second time he sat upon the throne "and all Israel obeyed him." "The LORD magnified Solomon exceedingly in the sight of all Israel and bestowed upon him such royal majesty as had not been on any king before him in Israel." We see therefore (though no commentaries mention it) that these two occasions are typical of the first and the second coming of our Lord. Our Lord was anointed king when He came the first time, but He received not the throne. When He comes the second time He receives the throne and God will bestow upon Him "royal majesty" and "all Israel" will obey Him.

Then follows the record of the reign and death of David. There is no clash between the account of David's last days in the closing chapters of the second book of Samuel and the opening chapters of First Kings. The record in Chronicles is in fullest keeping with the purpose and object of this book. Blessing and grace is manifested to the end, and David's failings are passed over.

THE FIRST BOOK OF CHRONICLES 433

Appendix.

CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE,
ACCORDING TO PROBABLY TRUE, FROM THE BEGINNING TO THE BUILDING OF THE TEMPLE BY SOLOMON.
(Comp. Judges 1:1 and 1 Kings 1:1.)

| PRINCIPAL EVENTS. | Years of Israel. | Years before Christ. |
|---|---------------------------------------|----------------------|
| The Exodus | .. | 2488 |
| Giving of the Law to Moses | .. | 2488 to 2463 |
| Death of Moses and Aaron | to the 40th year | 2463 |
| Compact of Covenant to Joshua | 1 | 2459 " 2453 |
| Division of Canaan to the Israelites of Joshua's Generation | 10 | 2449 " 2439 |
| Death of Joshua | .. | about 2440 |
| Wars of Israel against the Canaanites | .. | about 2438 |
| Expulsion against Hebronite (Abimelech) | 9 | 2435 to 2427 |
| Oppression by Goliath Gittai | 40 | 2421 " 2381 |
| Deliverance and time of Isaac | 18 | 2387 " 2369 |
| Oppression by the Midianites | 20 | 2369 " 2349 |
| Blood and rent of Isaac | .. | .. |
| Visions of Isaac upon the Philistines | .. | .. |
| Oppression by Philistines | 30 | 2339 " 2309 |
| Deliverance and death of Goliath | 40 | 2309 " 2269 |
| Oppression by the Midianites | 7 | 2299 " 2292 |
| Deliverance and rent | 40 | 2259 " 2219 |
| Abimelech | 3 | 2188 " 2185 |
| Isaac | 27 | 2179 " 2152 |
| Isaac for forty years | .. | 2134 " 2114 |
| Isaac in the East | 7 to 40th year | .. |
| Oppression by the Amorites, 18 years | 40 | 2134 " 2094 |
| 1174-1110 | By the Philistines Loss of the Ark | .. |
| Jephthah, 8 years | Samuel's Birth | .. |
| 1116-1110 | Samuel at Bethel | .. |
| Isaac, 7 years: 1110-1108 | Samuel judge | 20 |
| Isaac 10 years: 1104-1094 | David King | 45 |
| Abimech, 8 years: 1085-1087 | Death at Hebron | 3 |
| 1069 | David at Jerusalem | 55 |
| | Deliverance to David | .. |
| | Building of Temple | 3 |
| | .. | 2076 " 2073 |
| | .. | 2076 " 2073 |
| | .. | .. |
| | .. | 450 years. |

THE BOOK OF SECOND CHRONICLES

The Annotated Bible

Arno Clement Gaebelein

THE SECOND BOOK OF THE CHRONICLES

The Division of the Second Book of the Chronicles

Originally the two books of the Chronicles formed one book and were undivided. The period of the history of the people, Israel, covered in this book is the same as in the books of the Kings. It begins with the Solomonic reign, the building and dedication of the temple, and ends with the captivity of Judah. The closing of Chronicles proves the post-exilic time of its composition, for it mentions Cyrus the King of Persia and his restoration proclamation. The history, however, is almost exclusively the history of the house of Judah. Israel's history is very briefly touched upon. Inasmuch as Chronicles is written from the priestly and the divine viewpoint, everything centers around the temple of Jehovah. There are most interesting descriptions of Solomon's reign, the temple and the worship, which we do not find in the parallel chapters in the first book of Kings. The reader should make use of the parallel passages given in connection with the introduction to the Chronicles and then read the annotations in Kings, as we shall not repeat, in the annotations of this second book of the Chronicles, what has already been given. We shall point out what is peculiar to Chronicles. We divide the book into four sections.

I. THE REIGN OF SOLOMON (1-9)

1. The Beginning of His Reign and the First Vision (1:1-17)
2. The Building of the Temple (2-4)
3. The Dedication of the Temple (5:1-7:10)
4. The Second Vision (7:11-22)
5. Solomon's Prosperity and Activities (8:1-18)
6. The Queen of Sheba and Solomon's Death (9:1-31)

II. THE REBELLION OF THE TEN TRIBES (10:1-19)

III. THE HISTORY OF THE KINGS OF JUDAH AND EVENTS LEADING UP TO THE CAPTIVITY (11-36:14)

1. Decline and Apostasy under Rehoboam and Abijah; Asa and his Reformation and Failure (11-16)
2. Reformation under Jehoshaphat (17-20)
3. Decline and Apostasy under Jehoram, Ahaziah and Athaliah (21-22)
4. Reformation under Joash, and Joash's Apostasy (23-24)
5. Decline and Apostasy under Amaziah, Uzziah, Jotham and Ahaz (25-28)
6. Reformation under Hezekiah (29-32)
7. Decline and Apostasy under Manasseh and Amon (33:1-25)
8. Reformation under Josiah (34-35)
9. The Final Decline and Apostasy (36:1-14)

IV. THE CAPTIVITY AND THE EPILOGUE (36:15-23)

Analysis and Annotations

I. THE REIGN OF SOLOMON

1. The Beginning of Solomon's Reign and the First Vision

CHAPTER 1

1. The Lord was with him (1:1)
2. At Gibeon (1:2-6)
3. The first vision (1:7-12)
4. His riches and prosperity (1:13-17)

The events connected with the beginning of Solomon's reign and recorded in 1 Kings 1-3:3 are omitted in Chronicles. Second Chronicles begins with the statement that Solomon was strengthened in his kingdom, and the Lord his God was with him, and magnified him exceedingly. This shows the keynote of Chronicles. It is Jehovah's gracious dealing with the house of David and the bestowal of the promised blessing. In 1 Kings 3:3 we read that Solomon loved the Lord.

Here more of Gibeon is mentioned than in Kings. "Gibeon was a great city, as one of the royal cities" (Joshua 10:2). Later Gibeon became the possession of the tribe of Benjamin and was made a priest-city. It was about two hours from Jerusalem. When Saul had destroyed Nob, the tabernacle was removed to Gibeon, where it remained till Solomon built the house of the LORD (1 Chron. 16:39, 21:29; 1 Kings 3:4; 2 Chron. 1:3). The ark had been brought from Kirjath-jearim, not far from Gibeon, to the tent which David had pitched for it in Jerusalem (2 Sam. 6:2; 1 Chron. 13:5-6), but the tabernacle and the brazen altar, that Bezaleel, the son of Uri, the son of Hur, had made remained at Gibeon. The high place at Gibeon means the elevation upon which the tabernacle and the altar stood. Originally there was at the same spot a Canaanitish place for the worship of idols. As long as the temple, that central place for worship chosen by God (Deut. 12:11), was not standing, the worship of Jehovah in the Gibeon high place was not sinful. After the temple was built the high places became centers of idolatrous practices. Solomon and all the congregation with him gathered at Gibeon and sought the brazen altar and offered a thousand burnt offerings upon it. He began with this act of worship and it was the same night that God appeared unto Solomon. The Lord drew graciously near to him as the result of the sacrifices upon the brazen altar. The burnt-offering is the type of the perfect devotion and sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ, and it is this which makes us nigh. On the meaning of the great vision, God's offer to Solomon, the King's answer, see 1 Kings 3.

After the vision and the Lord's promise, "I will give thee riches and wealth and honor," we hear of Solomon's horses, horsemen and chariots. In 1 Kings, we find the same paragraph in another setting, that is, in chapter 10:26-29. He had 1,400 chariots and 12,000 horsemen and 4,000 stalls for horses. A great commerce seems to have been fostered by Solomon. While this showed the promise fulfilled, in that the Lord gave him riches and wealth, it also showed an unlawful desire for increase which was forbidden (Deut. 17:16). Read comment on 1 Kings 10:26-29.

2. The Building of the Temple

The Beginning and Appeal to Hiram

CHAPTER 2

1. Solomon's purpose (2:1)
2. The workmen (2:2)
3. The message to Hiram, King of Tyre (2:3-10)

4. Hiram's answer (2:11-16)
5. Solomon numbers the strangers (2:17-18)

In 1 Kings 5, Solomon purposed to begin the great work to which he had been called, to build an house for the name of the LORD and an house for his kingdom (1 Kings 7:1; 2 Chron. 8:1). Then he levied a very large body of men from among the people to labor in cutting the timber and hewing stone for the temple and the palace of Solomon. Of these 70,000 were carriers; 80,000 were quarry men and 3,600 overseers. In 1 Kings 5:13, we read of a levy of 30,000 men. These must be considered additional workmen, for they were sent to Lebanon.

Solomon then sent a message to Hiram (the same as Hiram), the King of Tyre. Hiram had sent before messages to Solomon, when he heard of his enthronement. They of Tyre had already brought cedar trees in abundance to David for the building of the Temple (1 Chron. 22:4). He loved Solomon as much as he loved his father David, for when Hiram heard the words of Solomon he rejoiced greatly and said, "Blessed be the LORD this day, who hath given unto David a wise son over this great people." To him Solomon sent a message. He reminded him of the dealings his father David had with him, and requested "even so deal with me." He acquainted him with his work, "Behold I build an house for the name of the LORD my God," and that it would be a great house, "for great is our God above all gods." Then he requested that Hiram would send him a master-workman and more material, cedar trees, fir trees and algum trees or almuq trees (1 Kings 10:11), the red sandalwood, highly valued among the ancient nations, out of Lebanon. In return he offered to Hiram's servant wheat, barley, wine and oil, twenty thousand measures of each. 1 Kings 5:11 tells us that besides this gift to the workers in timber, twenty thousand measures of wheat and oil were yearly given by Solomon to the household of Hiram.

And Hiram's answer reveals that he was a believer in Jehovah, for he acknowledged Him as the Creator and as the lover of His people (verses 11-12). The King sent Hiram, a skilful worker whose mother was a Jewess (1 Kings 7:14). This Gentile co-operation in the construction of the temple is interesting, and also prophetic. Jews and Gentiles, Israel and the nations will yet unite to glorify the Lord. And the strangers who were in Israel, also Gentiles, were the servants of the King.

CHAPTER 3 The Building of the Temple

1. The place (3:1-2)
2. The dimensions (3:3)
3. The porch and holy place (3:4-7)
4. The most holy (3:4-18)
5. The brazen pillars (3:15-17)

First, the place is mentioned where the house of the LORD was built, "in Mount Moriah (Gen. 22), where [the LORD] appeared unto David his father, in the place that David had prepared in the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite." The building began in the second day of the second month in the fourth year of Solomon's reign. From 1 Kings 6:1 we learn that this was the 480th year from the Exodus. Counting forty years to one generation we have exactly twelve generations. This figure can be chronologically verified. The internal measurement given in verse 3 is sixty cubits long (about ninety feet), twenty cubits wide (about thirty feet), and thirty cubits high (about forty-five feet). Then there was the porch. The height of the porch is given as 120 cubits, which is evidently the error of a copyist; it should be twenty cubits, or perhaps thirty. For the full description see annotations on 1 Kings 6. Notice again the description of the cherubim overlaid with gold. These are not the cherubim upon the ark, but they were great figures made by Solomon. Each was ten cubits high. Their great wings met over the mercy seat upon which were the cherubim, which look down upon the mercy-seat. The Solomonic cherubim looked outwards. The word "inward" in verse 13 is a wrong translation. On the meaning of this attitude of these gigantic cherubim, see comment on 1 Kings 6:23-30. In verse 14, the veil is mentioned, of which we read nothing in 1 Kings 6. This veil was woven of the same material and in the same manner as the one in the tabernacle (Exod. 26:31).

The two pillars called Jachin (He will establish) and Boaz (In Him is strength) are the symbols of the stability of the government of this earth in the glorious reign of Christ, which is typified by the reign of Solomon and the house he built.

CHAPTER 4 The Vessels that were for the House

1. The altar of brass (4:1)
2. The molten sea (4:2-5)
3. The ten loaves (4:6)
4. The ten candlesticks (4:7)
5. The ten tables (4:8)
6. The court (4:9-10)
7. The work of Hiram (4:11-17)
8. The work of Solomon (4:18-22)

The altar of brass, twenty cubits long, twenty cubits broad and ten cubits high, is not mentioned in the book of Kings. In the south-east of the court of the temple, stood the molten sea, which rested upon twelve oxen, three looking northward, three looking westward, three southward and three eastward. It received and held 3,000 measures of water. (3,000 measures was the full amount it could contain; the usual contents, however, were 2,000 measures [1 Kings 7:26].) The molten sea was for the priests and the Levites to perform their ablutions. It is typical of that cleansing which His people need and which is so graciously provided by the Lord Himself. The immense quantity of water contained in the molten sea suggests the unlimited provision grace has made. In Revelation 4:6, we read that before the throne was a sea of glass like crystal. This sea of glass is an allusion to the molten sea in Solomon's temple. But it is not a sea of water, but of glass like crystal, because the redeemed (symbolically seen in the twenty-four elders) in glory do no longer need cleansing. They have entered upon a perfect and fixed state of holiness. The ten lavers with their bases were for the washing of the sacrifices. We see that instead of one laver there were ten; and there were also ten candlesticks and ten tables. Everything was an increase and on a large scale, while the whole house and its contents represented an untold wealth. It all foreshadows that coming glorious Kingdom of Christ. Then there will be the increase and the blessing typified by the ten lavers, the ten candlesticks and the ten tables. The brazen scaffold, five cubits long, five cubits broad and three cubits high which Solomon had made upon which he stood and kneeled in prayer (2 Chron. 6:13) is not mentioned in this chapter.

The Priest's court was enclosed by a wall of hewn stones and a row of cedar beams (1 Kings 6:36). It had massive gates covered with brass. What Hiram had worked for Solomon and Solomon's own work concludes this chapter and the account of the building the temple.

3. The Dedication of the Temple

CHAPTER 5 The Ark Brought in the Temple

1. The completion of the temple (5:1)
2. The assembly called by Solomon (5:2-3)
3. The ark carried to its place (5:4-9)
4. The contents of the ark (5:10)
5. The praise and the glory (5:11-14)

The reader will find the comments on the dedication of the temple in the book of Kings (1 Kings 8). Verses 11-13 are not given in the record of the first book of Kings. The Levites exercised their holy office. What a sight it must have been when Asaph, Heman and Jeduthun in the lead with their sons and brethren, all clothed in white linen, with cymbals, psalteries and harps, stood at the east end of the altar, and with them an hundred and twenty priests sounding the trumpets! And they were as one, to make one sound. It expresses the unity of God's people. The one supreme thought and aim was to praise and thank the Lord. This was the one mind in which they all were as one. Then the mighty volume of many voices,

the sound of the trumpets, cymbals and instruments of music broke forth. The one note in praise was "He is good; for His mercy endureth forever." When the foundation of the second house was laid this praise was again uttered (Ezra 3:11). It must be remembered that David in his great prophetic psalm of praise ended with this note of praise "O give thanks unto the LORD; for He is good; for His mercy endureth forever.... Blessed be the LORD God of Israel for ever and ever. And all the people said, Amen, and praised the LORD" (1 Chron. 16:34-36). In Psalm 136 we find twenty-six times "His mercy endureth." How rich was that mercy towards Israel! He had graciously guided and kept them. He brought them into the land and all their enemies had been subdued. The house had been built and all had been accomplished. And greater mercy is for Israel in the future. He will regather them. All their enemies will be silenced. Another house will once more stand in Jerusalem and the covenant-promise made to David will be completely realized in the enthronement of the coming King upon the hill of Zion (Psalm 2). What praises His redeemed and restored people will then utter, when the Lord has been gracious to His people and to His land! (Psalm 65:1, 147:12) The scene here at the dedication of the temple foreshadows the future praise of Israel in the Kingdom which our Lord will bring and establish when He comes again.

And when this mighty praise ascended to Jehovah, when they made but one sound, heaven answered. The house was filled with the cloud. The visible symbol presence of Jehovah had come, as it came at the consecration of the tabernacle (Exod. 40:34-35). "Whoso offereth praise glorifieth me" (Psalm 50:23). "As an holy priesthood we are to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ" (1 Peter 2:5). "By him therefore let us offer praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to His name" (Heb. 8:15). And if Israel had but one thought and made but one sound, how much more should we, His heavenly people, enjoying greater riches and a greater nearness than Israel ever had, be of one mind in praising His name!

CHAPTER 6 Solomon's Address and Dedicatory Prayer

1. Solomon's address to the congregation (6:1-11)
2. Solomon's dedicatory prayer (6:12-42)

The report of Solomon's address is the same as recorded in 1 Kings 8:12-21. The opening statement of this chapter has been well characterized as a pregnant expression of the king's realization of the mystery of the Being of Jehovah, the all-creative God, as well as the condescension displayed in His self-limitation to dwell amongst men. (See Exodus 19:9; 20:21; Lev. 16:2; Deut. 4:10; 5:22.) The prayer is nearly the same as in Kings (1 Kings 8:22-50). However, 1 Kings 8:51-61 is omitted and a few additional verses are added. The opening words of his great prayer are in acknowledgment of the greatness of Jehovah and the fulfillment of what God had promised to David, that is, the promise as it relates to him as David's son and the building of the house. He asks next that his prayers and the prayers of God's people may be heard as they ascend from the place where His Name is honored. Sin is acknowledged in connection with this request. "And when Thou hearest, forgive." In what follows, the different troubles are mentioned and Jehovah is implored to hear and to forgive. It is the model prayer for Israel. Confession of sin and prayer for forgiveness is linked with all petitions. Sin is acknowledged as the one cause of all troubles and disaster. Israel was thus taught in the prayer of Solomon to cast itself with supplication and repentance for sin upon Jehovah, and to find that the Lord heareth and delivereth His people. The subsequent history of Judah gives numerous instances of answered prayer. Note the omissions from the prayer report in 1 Kings 8 and the different closing of the prayer in the account in Chronicles. It is explained by the prophetic character of Kings and the priestly character of Chronicles. Psalm 132:8-10 is touched upon in verses 41-42.

CHAPTER 7:1-10 The Answer by Fire-the Sacrifices and the Feast

1. The answer by fire (7:1-3)
2. The sacrifices (7:4-7)
3. The feast of tabernacles (7:8-10)

A fuller manifestation of Jehovah's favor and presence followed the great prayer of the king. First the cloud had appeared and now the fire came down from heaven and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices; and the glory of

the Lord filled the house. This is complementary to 1 Kings 8:63-64. Nothing is mentioned of this answer by fire upon the sacrifices in the book of Kings. And now all the children of Israel saw the fire and the glory of the Lord; and they bowed themselves and worshipped, praising the Lord and saying, as the Levites had said before, "He is good, for His mercy endureth forever." So all Israel will see in a future day the glory of the Lord and the coming Lord in glory and worship Him (Zech. 12:10). The house was dedicated by the King and all the people. (The Hebrew word used for dedicate is the word "channuka." The Jews keep a feast called by that name.) The feast which followed was the feast of tabernacles. Its prophetic significance is mentioned in previous annotations.

4. The Second Vision

CHAPTER 7:11-22

1. All finished by Solomon (7:11)
2. The divine answer and the warning (7:12-22)

A second time the Lord appeared unto Solomon. At this time He did not say again "Ask what shall I give thee," but He assured him that Solomon's prayer had been heard and He had chosen the dedicated place for Himself. He graciously assures the king that if He has chastised His people by sending drought, locusts or pestilence and they humble themselves, and seek His face, turning away from their wicked ways, that He will forgive and heal their land. There can be no recovery apart from the conditions mentioned in these verses. His people who have failed must first humble themselves, pray, seek His face, and turn away from their evil ways. The warning given in verses 19-22 had passed into history and found its literal fulfillment.

5. Solomon's Prosperity and Activities

CHAPTER 8

1. The fortifications of cities (8:1-6)
2. The subjection of the strangers (8:7-10)
3. The removal of the daughter of Pharaoh (8:11)
4. The perfected service (8:12-16)
5. The expedition to Ophir (8:17-18)

The activities of the King included the fortification of certain cities. (See 1 Kings 9.) First the cities are mentioned which Hiram restored to Solomon. These are the cities which Solomon had previously given to him for security. 1 Kings 9:10-14 explains this statement which otherwise would be obscure. All the strangers, the Canaanites, dwelling in the land were put into subjection and had to pay tribute to Solomon. They were the servants. "But of the children of Israel did Solomon make no servants for his work; but they were men of war, and chief of his captains and captains of his horsemen and chariots." it foreshadows the age in which all will be put in subjection under Him who will be King to rule in righteousness (Isaiah 32:1; Heb. 2:8). Then His own people will serve Him, for they "shall be willing in the day of His power" (Psalm 110:3). The only mention made of the daughter of Pharaoh in Chronicles is in this chapter (verse 11). He married her in the beginning of the reign. Her removal to the house Solomon had built for her now took place. On the typical meaning of Pharaoh's daughter see 1 Kings 3:1. The worship in the house was then carried on in a perfect way. At the appointed times all was done and all David, the man of God, had commanded was carried out (verse 14). There was no departure from the commandment of the king, so the house of the Lord was perfected. It foreshadows a perfect obedience and worship which the earth will see when the true King has come. Then, as it was in Solomon's day, the King's commandment will be the absolute rule for everything (verse 15).

6. The Queen of Sheba, Solomon's Riches and Honors, and Solomon's Death

CHAPTER 9

1. The visit of the Queen (9:1-12)
2. The riches of Solomon (9:13-16)
3. The ivory throne (9:17-19)
4. Further riches and honors of Solomon (9:20-29)
5. The death of Solomon (9:30-31)

The account of the visit of the Queen of Sheba is the same as it appears in 1 Kings 10. The fame of Solomon had spread far and wide, and the Queen of Sheba comes to bring her tribute to admire and praise his wisdom and to give him presents of glorious things and of great value. And more than that. "King Solomon passed all the kings of the earth in riches and wisdom." A type of the coming King who will be head of all. "And all the kings of the earth sought the presence of Solomon, to hear his wisdom that God had put in his heart. And they brought every man his present, vessels of silver, and vessels of gold, and raiment, harness and spices, horses and mules, a rate year by year" (verses 23-24). In annotations on 1 Kings 10, we have pointed out how all this glory and the wealth of Solomon and Jerusalem foreshadows the fulfillment of many prophecies concerning the glorious reign of our Lord Jesus Christ. Greater splendor and glory will rest upon Him and come to Jerusalem than in Solomon's reign. Many beautiful descriptions of that coming glory, foreshadowed in this chapter, we find in different parts of the prophetic Word (Isa. 60:3-14, 66:10-13; Psalm 72).

As nothing is said in the first part of Chronicles on David's sin, so the sin and failure of Solomon is passed over in this part of Chronicles. His reign is described as unmarred by failure, a reign of undimmed glory. Such will be the reign of Him who is greater than Solomon. Solomon's failure, however, is indicated in this chapter. The horses out of Egypt mentioned in verse 28, and the fact that he multiplied horses and sought the gold of Ophir, shows that he became lifted up.

Solomon enjoyed the sure promises of God. He sins in the means by which he seeks to satisfy his own lusts; and although the result was the accomplishment of the promise, yet he bears the consequences of so doing. Outwardly only the fulfillment of the promise was seen. In fact there was something else. Without sending for horses from Egypt, and gold from Ophir, Solomon would have been rich and glorious, for God had promised it. By doing this he enriched himself, but he departs from God and from His word. Having given himself up to his desires after riches and glory, he had multiplied the number of his wives, and in his old age they turned away his heart. This neglect of the word, which at first appeared to have no bad effect (for he grew rich, as though it had been but the fulfillment of God's promise), soon led to a departure more serious in its nature and in its consequences, to influence more powerful, and more immediately opposed to the commands of God's word, and at last to flagrant disobedience of its most positive and essential requirements. The slippery path of sin is always trodden with accelerated steps, because the first sin tends to weaken in the soul the authority and power of that which alone can prevent our committing still greater sins--that is, the word of God, as well as the consciousness of His presence, which imparts to the word all its practical power over us (Synopsis of the Bible).

II. THE REBELLION OF THE TEN TRIBES

CHAPTER 10

1. Rehoboam made king (10:1)
2. Jeroboam's return from Egypt and his request (10:2-5)
3. Rehoboam's answer (10:6-15)
4. The revolt and Rehoboam's flight (10:16-19)

What followed Solomon's fall when he turned away from the Lord, who so graciously had appeared unto him twice, is unrecorded in the Chronicles. 1 Kings 11:9-43 contains these events. Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, had lifted up his hand against Solomon (1 Kings 11:27). He planned secretly a revolt against the king, and when he went out of Jerusalem, most likely to carry out his plans, the prophet Ahijah met him, and in renting his own garment into ten pieces announced that

God would take the kingdom out of the hand of Solomon and give to Jeroboam the ten tribes. Then Solomon sought to kill Jeroboam and he fled into Egypt, and was in Egypt until Solomon died. It is here where the account in Chronicles comes in. Rehoboam (enlarger of the people), the only son of Solomon mentioned in the Bible, went to Shechem, where all Israel had come together to make him king. Jeroboam had returned from Egypt and appeared on the scene, sent by the people to conduct negotiations in their behalf. Jeroboam demanded a lightening of the heavy burden of forced labor and taxation which Solomon had put upon them. If this request would be granted they were ready to serve Jeroboam. The King asked for three days to consider the demand. He first turned to the aged men and consulted those who had been closely associated with his father. They advised him to use kindness to avert the threatening rebellion. "A soft answer turneth away wrath, but grievous words stir up anger" (Prov. 15: 1). If Rehoboam had heeded this inspired saying of his father, he would have followed the advice which had been given. But instead he turned to the young men, "the young men (Hebrew: children) that had grown up with him." They readily gave advice how the peoples' demand, "Ease somewhat the yoke that thy father did put upon us," should be answered. It was foolish advice. The threat to increase their burdens, and that while his father had used whips he would use scorpions (a cruel whip to which pieces of sharp metal were attached) was to overawe the people and bring them into submission. It seems almost impossible that Rehoboam should follow such advice. If Eccles. 2:18-19 applies to this son of Solomon, the father's fears were well founded. He certainly showed that he was not a wise man, but a fool. Yet there was another reason why Rehoboam listened to the foolish counsel. "So the king hearkened not unto the people, for the cause was of God, that the Lord might perform His Word, which He spake by Ahijah, the Shilonite, to Jeroboam, the son of Nebat. And the offended people answered the king with the same spirit and declared their independence. In contempt they said, "And now David see to thine own house." Then foolishly Rehoboam sent one of the officials who were hated on account of their office, Hadoram, who was over the tribute. The people became infuriated and stoned him to death. King Rehoboam had to make haste to escape a similar fate. The revolt had come. "And Israel rebelled against the house of David." The words spoken to Solomon (I Kings 11:11-13) were now fulfilled.

III. THE HISTORY OF THE KINGS OF JUDAH: EVENTS LEADING UP TO THE CAPTIVITY

1. Decline and Apostasy under Rehoboam, Abijah and Asa

CHAPTER 11 Rehoboam's Reign

1. The forbidden war (11:1-4)
2. The national defence (11:5-12)
3. Jeroboam's wickedness and Rehoboam's strength (11:13-17)
4. Rehoboam's family (11:18-23)

The provocation to go to war with the tribes which had revolted was great. Rehoboam was ready to start the civil war. He gathered 180,000 men of Judah and Benjamin to fight against Israel and to restore the tribes to his kingdom. Shemaiah, the man of God, the prophet in Judah, received a message from the LORD, which he faithfully delivered. "Ye shall not go up, nor fight against your brethren; return every man to his house, for this thing is done of me." It required courage to deliver such a message in the midst of the great preparations for war. Rehoboam and the people obeyed and did not go to war. They must have realized that if they disobeyed they would have fought against God. And the LORD also blessed the king and his people for believing the Word and being obedient. He always blesses when there is obedience. He built and fortified fifteen cities. "He fortified the strongholds, and put captains in them and store of victuals and of oil and wine." In several places he put shields and spears. Thus he made ready for a possible invasion from the side of Egypt, for Jeroboam, his rival, had been there. Rehoboam's fears were well founded, as we shall find in the next chapter.

Then there was a great exodus of priests and Levites from the domain of Jeroboam. As we learned from 1 Kings 12:25-33, Jeroboam established a wicked worship, setting up two golden calves at Beth-el and Dan. The priests he made were taken, not from the sons of Levi, but from the lowest of the people (1 Kings 12:31). The true priest and Levites who had remained with him were cast off from executing their holy and God-given office. He also had priests "for the devils." The Hebrew word translated "devils" means "hairy ones" and "goats." In Egypt the sacred goat was worshipped and Jeroboam's

worship was patterned. The priests and Levites who were driven away by Jeroboam strengthened the Kingdom of Judah. They had a wholesome influence upon the otherwise weak son of Solomon. "They made Rehoboam, the son of Solomon, strong." They all walked in the way of David and Solomon for three years. Most likely fear had much to do with it. We read nothing of turning to the LORD and seeking His face.

His family record is given. Mahalath is mentioned as his wife, a daughter of Jerimoth, probably the son of one of David's concubines (1 Chron. 3:9). Then he took Maacah, a granddaughter of Absalom. According to Josephus, Maacah's mother was Tamar, the daughter of Absalom (2 Sam. 14:27). He had many wives and concubines. The polygamous tendencies of his father and grandfather were thus indulged by him, and in all probability his apostasy started from this sin. But he acted wisely and dispersed all his children throughout the whole country. Having twenty-eight sons and many more daughters, there were great possibilities of conspiracies, which he avoided by scattering them in different directions.

CHAPTER 12 Rehoboam's Apostasy, Punishment, and Death

1. Rehoboam's apostasy (12:1)
2. Punishment through Shishak (12:2-12)
3. Death of Rehoboam (12:13-16)

The kingdom had been established; Rehoboam had strengthened himself and lived in the indulgence of the flesh. Then followed the awful plunge into apostasy. "He forsook the law of the Lord and all Israel with him." Idolatry in the high places and under every green tree was established and fostered by him. "And there were also Sodomites in the land, and they did according to all the abominations of the nations which the LORD cast out before the children of Israel" (1 Kings 14:22-24).

Then Shishak came from Egypt against Jerusalem with an immense army. He was the first king of the twenty-second, or Bubastic dynasty. In his army were the Lubims (Libyans), Sukkims (desert tribes) and the Ethiopians. The cities which Rehoboam had built and fortified could not keep him out, for the LORD had brought him to punish Jerusalem. When Jerusalem was threatened and the Egyptian hordes were about to proceed against Jerusalem, Shemaiah, the man of God, appeared once more. He brought the solemn message from the LORD, "Ye have forsaken me, and therefore have I left you in the hand of Shishak." That for which the LORD always looks first of all, when His people have sinned and departed from Him, was done by the princes and the king. "They humbled themselves." And when the LORD saw that they humbled themselves and were returning to Him, He had compassion on them. Some deliverance was granted and the wrath was not poured out upon the city. And He is still the same gracious LORD, always ready to forgive His people, when they return unto Him. However, the pride of Rehoboam had to be dealt with and, therefore, Shishak was permitted to take away the immense riches which Solomon had stored up in the treasures of the house of the LORD and in the king's house. The shields of gold were also carried away. Sad is the record of this son of Solomon: "And he did evil, because he prepared not his heart to seek the LORD." Had he prepared his heart to seek the LORD, he would not have done the evil which he did. The only thing which can keep from evil is to seek the LORD and walk in obedience to His Word. Rehoboam's reign, with the exception of three years in which he walked in the way of David and Solomon, was a reign of trouble. Besides Shishak's invasion "there were wars between Rehoboam and Jeroboam continually" (verse 15).

CHAPTER 13 The Reign of Abijah

1. The beginning of his reign (13:1-2)
2. War with Jeroboam (13:3-19)
3. Death of Jeroboam (13:20)
4. Abijah's family (13:21-22)

Abijah is called in Kings, Abijam, and in 2 Chron. 13:21, Abijahu (Hebrew text). His reign was not of a long duration; he outlived his father Rehoboam only three years. His mother was Maachah (2 Chron. 11:20). She is called here Michaiiah,

probably because she was the queen-mother. There is no discrepancy between chapter 11:20 and the second verse of this chapter, in which she is called the daughter of Uriel of Gibeath. Josephus is probably correct when he states that Uriel was the husband of Tamar, the daughter of Absalom. In chapter 11:20, she is called a daughter of Absalom or rather grand-daughter, for one word is used in Hebrew for daughter and grand-daughter. (Abishalom in 1 Kings 15:2 is the same as Absalom.)

Of Abijah's evil walk, and that his heart was not perfect with the LORD, the Chronicles has nothing to say. That is found in Kings. That things went from bad to worse under Abijah's brief reign may be learned from the fact that his son Asa had to institute a reformation, and Maachah, the mother of Abijah and grandmother of Asa, had to be put away, because she had put up an Asherah, a vile idol-image in a grove (1 Kings 15:13; 2 Chron. 15:16). Chronicles gives an account of Abijah's war with Jeroboam. The two armies of Judah and Israel faced each other; Abijah had 400,000 men and Jeroboam 800,000. There is no reason to doubt the accuracy of these figures, as some critics have done. Both sides were confident of victory. Jeroboam had twice as many men as Abijah, and they were "mighty men of valor." He trusted in his superior number. It was different with Abijah, King of Judah. Before the battle began the king delivered a remarkable address in which he expressed his confidence in Jehovah. The LORD had given the kingdom to David and to his sons by a covenant of salt, said Abijah. The covenant of salt refers to a very ancient custom. When a guest had been entertained in a tent and partaken of salt with his host, the obligation of the latter towards his guest was one of inviolable sanctity. The covenant of Jehovah with David was like a covenant of salt, that is, inviolable. Abijah believed in that covenant. Then he mentioned Jeroboam, whom sarcastically he calls "the servant of Solomon," his revolt, his idolatry, his opposition to the priesthood. He closed his address with a confident statement. "Behold, God Himself is with us for our captain, and His priests with sounding trumpets to cry alarm against you." Then the warning: "O children of Israel, fight ye not against the LORD God of your fathers, for ye shall not prosper." Abijah won the battle. When they were encircled by the enemy they cried to Jehovah in their hour of need, and He was faithful to His own word (Numb. 10:9). When the priests sounded with the trumpets, when they shouted, no doubt in faith and anticipation of Jehovah's interference, then God smote Jeroboam and all Israel and delivered them into their hands. They had prevailed because they relied upon the LORD God, and so shall we prevail if we trust in the Lord. With that battle Jeroboam's strength was broken. The wicked king, whose awful idolatry was the ruin of Israel, never recovered his strength. The LORD struck him and he died.

CHAPTER 14 The Reign of Asa

1. The death of Abijah and Asa becomes king (14:1)
2. The good beginning (14:2-8)
3. His victory over Zerah (14:9-15)

Asa, (which means "healing" or "who will heal?"), the son of Abijah, began his reign well. He did what was right in the sight of the Lord. The strange altars, the high places and the images were taken away and the groves cut down. He was not satisfied with this work, but he also commanded Judah to seek the Lord. The land was quiet. The Lord blessed him and the land for the faithful work which had been done. "The land had rest, and he had no war in those years, because the LORD had given him rest." it was a remarkable work for one so young; probably Asa was not yet twelve years old when he became King. Maachah, his grandmother, most likely had some oversight as "queen-mother." (In 1 Kings 15:13 she is called the mother of Asa; the same is the case in our book 15:16. Mother in these passages has the meaning of grandmother.) Notice the great prosperity which followed the work he had done. "The Kingdom was quiet before him." Cities were built and fortified. They readily acknowledged that it was all of God. "Because we have sought the LORD our God, we have sought Him, and He hath given us rest on all sides." So they built and prospered.

But faith had to be tested. A powerful army under the leadership of Zerah, an Ethiopian, came against Judah. The battle was to take place in the open field, in the valley of Zephathah. Before the forces ever clashed Asa cried to the Lord. His prayer is most beautiful and simple. It still breathes freshness and has been a help to all God's trusting people in all ages. "LORD it is nothing with thee to help, whether with many, or with them that have no power; help us, O LORD our God; for we rest on thee, and in thy name we go against this multitude. O LORD, thou art our God, let not man prevail against

thee." What confidence and trust! He put the whole matter upon the LORD. Their enemies were His enemies. In His name, resting on Him, they went forth. May we know and practice the same confidence. Such a prayer could not remain unanswered. The LORD smote the Ethiopians and gave to His people a great victory.

CHAPTER 15 The Reign of Asa, Warning and Reformation

1. The warning message of Azariah (15:1-7)
2. Asa's response and reformation (15:8-19)

But the Lord knew the danger which threatened Asa. He had begun well. He was faithful to Jehovah, and he and the people had a wonderful demonstration that the Lord hears and answers prayer. Would he continue and end as well as he had begun? The Spirit of God came at this important time upon Azariah (whom the Lord helps). When victorious Asa returned the prophet met him and delivered his message. It was a needed and timely message, for the danger for God's people is always the greatest after a victory is won and outward success and prosperity is enjoyed. "The LORD is with you, while ye be with Him; and if ye seek Him, He will be found of you; but if ye forsake Him, He will forsake you." This has, of course, nothing to do with the question of salvation and the possession of eternal life, which the believer hath in Christ. To bear a real testimony, fruit unto God and have the victory at all times, a close walk with the Lord is needed. Apart from this, God's people are helpless and must needs dishonor their Lord. Verses 3-6 picture the results of departure from the Lord, such as were among Israel during the period of the judges. "Be ye strong therefore, and let not your hands be weak; for your work shall be rewarded."

And Asa hearing these words, believed what the prophet had said and then acted upon them. It is the true path to blessing, learning, believing and obeying. The abominable idols were removed and the altar before the porch of the LORD, which had fallen into disuse, was renewed by him. (2 Chron. 8:12). A great sacrificial scene followed. In connection with it they entered into a covenant to seek the LORD. The religious enthusiasm ran so high that they determined to put to death every person who did not seek the LORD. And when they sought Him with their whole desire He was found of them and gave them rest. These are precious and encouraging words. He is the LORD, who changeth not. It is still true today and ever will be true. He will be found by those who seek Him with their whole desire.

CHAPTER 16 Asa's Relapse and Death

1. War between Asa and Baasha (16:1-6)
2. Hanani's rebuke (16:7-9)
3. Hanani imprisoned (16:10-11)
4. Asa's illness and death (16:12-14)

Much has been made by critics of the supposed wrong date, the thirty-sixth year of the reign of Asa. Compare 1 Kings 15:33 with the first verse of this chapter to see the apparent discrepancy. If the invasion of Judah by Baasha occurred shortly after the events recorded in the previous chapter, it was in the thirty-sixth year after the revolt of the ten tribes. This presents a possible solution. Others think it is the error of a scribe.

As the dates in 2 Chron. 15:19; 16:1 are incompatible with that of Baasha's death (1 Kings 16:8), and consequently, of course, with that of Baasha's war against Asa, commentators have tried to obviate the difficulty, either by supposing that the numeral 35 refers, not to the date of Asa's accession, but to that of the separation of the kingdoms of Judah and Israel, or else by emendating the numeral in the book of the Chronicles. The latter is, evidently, the only satisfactory solution. There is manifestly here a copyist's mistake, and the numeral which we would substitute for 35 is not 15 but 25--and this for reasons too long to explain (Bible History).

Asa relapsed and failed when Baasha, King of Israel, came against Judah and built Ramah. (See annotations, 1 Kings 15 and 16.) In unbelief Asa made an alliance with the King of Syria. He feared Baasha very much. In Jeremiah 41:9, we

read of a pit which he made for fear of Baasha; probably to hide there. "The fear of man bringeth a snare." How this reveals the weakness of man! After all the evidences of the LORD's mercy and power Asa could forsake thus the LORD and enter into an unholy alliance with a heathen king. He gained the object he sought and Baasha was forced to abandon his plan. But God had been a witness of it all. He sent through Hanani (graciously given by the Lord the meaning of his name) and rebuked the king for what he had done. The LORD reminds him of the far greater host which threatened him (14:9-15) and the deliverance He had wrought. Beautiful are the final words of Hanani. "For the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show Himself strong in behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward Him." The Lord looks for faith, for confidence. Our hearts are perfect toward Him when we trust Him and are obedient to His Word. Then all His power is with us and for us.

Wars to the end was the punishment announced upon Asa. And Asa showed his true state of Soul, when, instead of saying, "I have sinned," he began to rage; when instead of beseeching Hanani to pray for him, he put him in prison. He was away from the LORD and his behavior made it known. Stricken by disease, no doubt to humble him and bring him back to the Lord, he sought not the LORD, but the physicians. These were in all probability magicians; who used enchantments. There was no return unto the LORD; no repentance.

2. Reformation under Jehoshaphat

CHAPTER 17 Jehoshaphat's Reformation and Increase

1. The Lord was with Jehoshaphat (17:1-5)
2. The revival under his reign (17:6-9)
3. His increase (17:10-19)

Jehoshaphat, the son of Asa, began his reign by strengthening himself against Israel. The Lord was with him, because he walked in the first ways of his father David, which means David's faithful walk before his great sin. The Lord greatly blessed him by establishing his kingdom and in giving him riches and honor in abundance. The Lord kept all His promises. When Jehoshaphat saw the evidences of divine blessing, his heart was lifted up in the ways of the Lord. This does not mean that he was puffed up, but that he became encouraged to go on in the good way he was following. The high places and groves were removed by him. In 1 Kings 22:43, we read that he did not take away the high places and that the people offered incense there. The work was not completely done. While he personally wanted to see it accomplished and commanded that it be done, the people failed in fully carrying out his wishes. "For as yet the people had not prepared their hearts unto the God of their fathers" (20:33). Another work he did, was the sending out of teachers to instruct in the knowledge of the LORD. Their names are interesting. Ben-hail, "son of strength"; Abadiah, "servant of the Lord"; Zechariah, "the Lord remembers"; Nethaneel, "gift of God"; Michariah, "Who is like the Lord?" He also sent priests and Levites. "And they taught in Judah and had the book of the law of the LORD with them and went about throughout all the cities of Judah and taught the people." It was a revival in teaching and in the study of the Word. No true revival can take place unless it is connected with the Word.

And the results soon came. The fear of the LORD fell upon the surrounding kingdoms. They feared to touch the people who were thus blessed. The Philistines brought presents and tribute silver; the Arabians immense herds of cattle. It was all a fulfillment of Deut. 11:22-25. Judah had a phenomenal increase. Without doubt this chapter presents one of the best scenes in the kingdom of Judah.

CHAPTER 18 Jehoshaphat's Sinful Alliance with Ahab

1. The alliance with Ahab (18:1-3)
2. Ahab's false prophets (18:4-11)
3. Micaiah's prophecy (18:12-27)
4. The fatal battle at Ramoth-Gilead (18:28-34)

The same record also appears in 1 Kings 22, to which the reader may turn for further annotations. Jehoshaphat's prosperity became a snare to him. Riches and honor he had in abundance. No doubt lifted up in his heart and self secure, saying perhaps, "I am increased in goods and have need of nothing," on a certain day he joined affinity with Ahab. Jehoshaphat's son Jehoram married Ahab's wicked daughter Athaliah (21:6). This was a fatal step for Jehoshaphat and the house of Judah. It brought him into alliance with Ahab, the wicked; he almost lost his life on account of it; only his prayer saved him (18:31); and Athaliah introduced the vile idolatries of Ahab into Judah (22:3) and became the murderess of the royal seed (22:10-12).

The historical account of Jehoshaphat's alliance with Ahab, the false prophets, the prophecy of Micaiah, the battle of Ramoth-Gilead, is commented upon in the record of the first book of the Kings.

That Jehoshaphat knew the Lord and was His is blessedly illustrated in verses 31-32. In the hour of need, the king in such bad company turned to the Lord and cried to Him. There was an immediate answer and the King of Judah was saved. What a power prayer is! May all God's people make use of it. As we have said previously, "Jehoshaphat was miraculously saved, but Ahab was miraculously killed."

CHAPTER 19 Rebuke and Restoration

1. The rebuke by the prophet (19:1-3)
2. Further revival and restoration (19:4-11)

At sun-down Ahab, the King of Israel died, while his ally Jehoshaphat, saved through the mercy of God, returned to his home in peace in Jerusalem. Then Jelin, the son of Hanani, met him. Asa, the father of Jehoshaphat, had been rebuked by Hanani, and had put him in prison for it. The son of Hanani rebukes Jehoshaphat. We read no answer from the king, but his actions show that the rebuke went home to his conscience. He must have repented of the unholy alliance with the enemy of the Lord. Jehu said to him, "Shouldest thou help the ungodly, and love them that hate the LORD? Therefore is wrath upon thee from before the LORD." This principle is the same in the New Testament. God's people are a separated people. "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers, for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?" (2 Cor. 6:14). And the Lord acknowledged the good Jehoshaphat had done and his attitude, a heart prepared to seek God.

Graciously had Jehovah restored the king who had failed and dishonored Him. He had returned in peace, bowed before the divine rebuke and dwelt in Jerusalem. Then he went out again to do service for the Lord. He became at once active in bearing testimony and helping God's people, bringing them back to the fear of the Lord. He caused judgment and righteousness to be executed in the land. Notice how in this revival the Lord is before Jehoshaphat; eight times in verses 4-11 the Lord is mentioned.

CHAPTER 20 Judah Invaded, Jehoshaphat's Prayer and Deliverance

1. The invasion (20:1-2)
2. Jehoshaphat's great prayer (20:3-13)
3. Jehovah's answer through Jahaziel (20:14-17)
4. Prostrated before the LORD (20:18-19)
5. The great deliverance (20:20-25)
6. In the valley of Berachah (20:26-30)
7. The record of Jehoshaphat (20:31-34)
8. Alliance with Ahaziah (20:35-37)

An invasion of Judah by Moab, Ammon and others followed. Then Jehoshaphat feared and set himself to seek the

LORD and proclaimed a fast throughout Judah. Though the enemy was nearing Jerusalem and the danger was great, there was no disorder or confusion. They all looked to Jehovah and that gave them calmness. In troubles and trials God's people must always look first to the Lord and seek His face. A great company gathered together, even from the cities in Judah, to seek the LORD. It was one of the most remarkable prayer meetings reported in the Bible. The king stood in the midst of the large congregation. And what a prayer it was he uttered! What earnestness and faith breathes in every word! He addressed God as in heaven and as the ruler over all the kingdoms of the nations. In His hand there is power and might; none is able to withstand Him. It is a good way in approaching God to remember what a wonderful and almighty God and Lord He is. Then Jehoshaphat speaks of His dealing with His people Israel and speaks of Abraham--"thy friend forever." The prayer of Solomon in dedicating the house is mentioned (verse 9). Then he tells the Lord of the invasion, and the object of Ammon and Moab "to cast us out of thy possession which thou hast given us to inherit." Most beautiful is the ending of his prayer. "O, our God, wilt Thou not judge them?" They were His enemies, for they came against His land and His people. "For we have no might against this great company that cometh against us; neither know we what to do; but our eyes are upon Thee." Here is the spirit and soul-attitude which pleases God. Whenever and wherever it is manifested God's answer and gracious help is not far away. But it is just this spirit of dependence and expectation from the Lord which is so little known among God's people.

In the midst of the congregation was a Levite by name of Jahaziel (he will be seen of God), of the sons of Asaph. Upon him came the Spirit of the LORD and through him there came the answer, "Ye shall not need to fight in this battle; set yourselves, stand ye still, and see the salvation of the LORD with you, O Judah and Jerusalem; fear not, nor be dismayed; tomorrow go out against them, for the LORD will be with you." And the heavenly answer was believed. The king took the lead in bowing his head with his face to the ground. The people did likewise. In anticipation of the coming victory the Levites praised the Lord with a loud voice.

The next morning the divine direction was obeyed. The king addressed the people to have faith in God. Then he appointed singers arrayed in their official garments to go before the army and sing as if it were a triumphal procession: "Praise the LORD; for His mercy endureth forever." (The expression, "beauty of holiness" is literally, "holy array.") We read nothing of swords or spears. They needed no weapons. Probably they left them at home, for the Lord had said, "Ye shall not need to fight in this battle." And when they began to sing and praise, trusting in the promise, the Lord began His work in overthrowing and destroying their enemies. The invading armies were annihilated and none escaped.

A great praise-service in the valley of Berachah (blessing) followed. Jehoshaphat in the forefront of them, with the people returned to Jerusalem with joy. They came to Jerusalem with psalteries and harps and trumpets unto the house of the LORD. And the kingdoms feared God when they heard what the Lord had done.

The prophetic application of all this is not difficult to make. Jehoshaphat and the people with him are typical of the remnant of God's earthly people, that God-fearing remnant which dwells in the land and in Jerusalem during the great tribulation. The prayer of Jehoshaphat, the divine answer and the great deliverance, foreshadows the cry for help and deliverance of that remnant, while the overthrow of their enemies, with the coming of the Lord, is foreshadowed in the deliverance of Jehoshaphat and the people. The praise will be great in Jerusalem, when the Lord acts in behalf of His believing remnant, at the close of the times of the Gentiles. Then the kingdoms of the earth will fear God.

It would be well if Jehoshaphat's life had ended with this beautiful scene. But it does not. He entered another unholy alliance, for commercial reasons, with wicked Ahaziah, King of Israel. The ships to go to Tarshish never reached their destination; they were broken. "Again had Jehoshaphat to learn in the destruction of his fleet at Ezion-Gaber that undertakings, however well planned and apparently unattended by outward danger, can only end in disappointment and failure, when they who are the children of God combine with those who walk in the ways of sin."

And how many Christians have made the same experience! God cannot bless the believer when he is in fellowship with an unbeliever.

3. Decline and Apostasy under Jehoram, Ahaziah and Athaliah

CHAPTER 21

The Reign of Jehoram

1. Jehoram's wicked reign (21:1-7)
2. Revolt of Edom (21:8-9)
3. Revolt of Libnah (21:10-11)
4. The message of Elijah (21:12-15)
5. Judah invaded (21:16-17)
6. Jehoram's sickness and death (21:18-20)

Jehoram was Jehoshaphat's firstborn. Jehoshaphat had six other sons to whom he gave great riches, but the kingdom was given to Jehoram. He walked in wickedness. "For he had the daughter of Ahab to wife and he wrought that which was evil in the sight of the LORD." When Jehoram was in power, he slew all his brethren with the sword and also princes in Israel. The daughter of the murderer Ahab may have instigated the horrible crime. Jehoshaphat had joined affinity with Ahab (18:1), and married his son Jehoram to Athaliah. "What a man sows that will he reap." His unholy alliance began to bear fruit. And how often have Christian parents seen their children depart from God and follow altogether the wicked ways of the world, because they themselves had set the example. Then the enemies of Judah came and different revolts took place.

The writing which came to Jehoram from the prophet Elijah is interesting and presents some difficulties. Elijah had been translated a number of years before. To solve the difficulty some say that the name Elijah should be Elisha, who was then living and ministering in connection with Samaria. There is no need of doing this. It does not say that Elijah sent that writing, but it says: "There came a writing from Elijah the prophet." Elijah knew Jehoshaphat and he knew his son Jehoram, who was for several years the co-regent of his father. The Lord showed him beforehand the evil course Jehoram would take, and how he would follow the wicked ways of Ahab, Elijah knew so well. Then he received the message exposing the wickedness of Jehoram, "like to the whoredoms of Ahab," and announcing the judgment to come upon Jehoram. This message was probably intrusted by Elijah to Elisha, and when the proper moment had come this man of God delivered the writing to Jehoram, telling him at the same time that it was from Elijah.

Fearful was the end of this murderous and idolatrous king. He died of sore diseases, unrepenting, and thus as a lost soul passed into the blackness of darkness forever (Jude 13). And his people made no burning for him (burning incense) like the burning of his fathers; neither was he buried in the sepulchres of the kings.

CHAPTER 22 Ahaziah and Athaliah

1. Ahaziah and his evil reign (22:1-4)
2. His alliance with Ahab's son (22:5)
3. At Jezreel (22:6-7)
4. Jehu's judgment and Ahaziah's end (22:8-9)
5. Athaliah (22:10-12)

When the Philistines and Arabians invaded Judah they carried away the treasures of Jehoram, and slew his sons. Only Jehoahaz the youngest son was left (21:17). He is also known as Ahaziah and Azariah. These names in Hebrew have the same meaning "upheld by Jehovah." Poor, young Ahaziah still reaps the harvest of the unfortunate alliance of his grandfather Jehoshaphat. The leaven is doing its dreadful work. His mother Athaliah, granddaughter of the wicked Omri and daughter of Ahab, was his counsellor to do wickedly. He therefore did evil in the sight of the LORD, like the house of Ahab, for they were his counsellors, after the death of his father, to his destruction. What might have been if his grandfather Jehoshaphat had not made affinity with Ahab and his house and marrying his son Jehoram to Athaliah! Ahaziah's end, after he went with his uncle Jehoram, the son of Ahab, and the circumstances connected with it we have

already annotated in Second Kings. Athaliah's awful crime in slaying the seed royal and the miraculous preservation of Joash, the reader will also find explained in 2 Kings.

4. Reformation Under Joash

CHAPTER 23 Joash King and Athaliah's Execution

1. Joash made king (23:1-11)
2. Athaliah slain (23:12-15)
3. Jehoiada and the revival (23:16-21)

The annotations to this interesting page in the history of Judah have already been made in connection with 2 Kings 11. We therefore pass over the preservation of the young child Joash and his hiding away in the LORD's house, on this account. However we call attention to the differences in the two accounts in 2 Kings 11 and 2 Chron. 23. As stated before the book of Chronicles is written from the priestly and Levitical view point; this explains the greater detail about Jehoiada, the priest, given in Chronicles. A careful study and comparison of the two chapters will show that there are no discrepancies.

"The differences, and even more the similarity, in the narratives of the event in the books of Kings and Chronicles have suggested what to some appear discrepancies of detail. It is well to know that, even if these were established, they would not in any way invalidate the narrative itself, since in any case they only concern some of its minor details, not its substance. The most notable difference is that in the book of Kings the plot and its execution seem entirely in the hands of the military; in Chronicles, exclusively in those of the priests and Levites. But in Chronicles also--and indeed, there alone--the five military leaders are named; while, on the other hand, the narrative in the book of Kings throughout admits the leadership of the priest Jehoiada. And even a superficial consideration must convince that both the priests and the military must have been engaged in the undertaking, and that neither party could have dispensed with the other. A revolution inaugurated by the high-priest in favor of his nephew, who for six years had been concealed in the Temple, and which was to be carried out within the precincts of the Sanctuary itself, could no more have taken place without the cooperation of the priesthood than a change in the occupancy of the throne could have been brought about without the support of the military power. And this leaves untouched the substance of the narrative in the two accounts (A. Edersheim).

Athaliah received her just recompense. The youthful Joash occupied the throne of David, and the faithful priest Jehoiada was the instrument who brought about the needed revival. The beginning was in a solemn covenant. It was a covenant which bound the young ruler and the people together to be true to Jehovah, as it is demanded of the LORD's people; there was also a covenant between the King and the people (2 Kings 11:17). And the revival under the priestly direction began by the destruction of the idols and false worship and a return to Jehovah and the true worship of His Name. Every true revival must needs begin the same way. Tested by this standard most of the present day revivals are found wanting. "And he set the porters at the gates of the house of the LORD, that none which was unclean in anything should enter in." The house of the LORD was guarded against all that is unclean. How different from the corruption which is tolerated in Christendom, in that which is "the house," the professing Church.

CHAPTER 24 The Temple Repaired, Apostasy and its Results

1. Joash's reign (24:1-3)
2. The failure of the priests (24:4-7)
3. The temple repaired (24:8-14)
4. Death of Jehoiada (24:15-16)
5. The apostasy (24:17-22)
6. The Syrian invasion (24:23-24)
7. The death of Joash (24:25-27)

Joash was seven years old when he began his reign and reigned forty years. As long as Jehoiada the priest lived, he did what was right in the sight of the Lord. The account of the repairing of the temple needs no further comment here. (See annotations on 2 Kings 12.) Jehoiada, the faithful priest, who had so much to do with these important events during this crisis, died 130 years old. Being connected by marriage with the royal house and in appreciation of the great work he had accomplished "because he had done good in Israel, both toward God, and toward His house," they buried him among the kings. After his death it became manifest that the revival which had taken place had its mainstay in the good priest; Joash's convictions and faithfulness to Jehovah were but skin-deep. A reaction set in, as it has been so often in the history of the Church. He listened to the evil counsel of the princes of Judah, and then they left the house of the LORD God and became idolaters. The result was wrath from God upon Judah and Jerusalem for this trespass. Such is man in his corrupt nature! But the gracious Lord did not give them up. His righteousness demanded judgment, yet in infinite mercy he sent prophets to bring them back. These unnamed prophets testified against them, but they would not give ear. They hardened their hearts against the Lord and His prophets.

A worse deed followed. Jehoiada had a son by name of Zechariah; he was the cousin of the king. Upon him came the Spirit of God and he announced the fact that because they had forsaken the LORD, He had also forsaken them (2 Chron. 15:2). Like Stephen, the first martyr of the church, Zechariah had touched the sore spot; when they heard these things, they were cut to the heart. Then they stoned Zechariah as their offspring later stoned Stephen. It was worse than base ingratitude from the side of Joash that he gave the commandment to murder the son of Jehoiada. The king remembered not the kindness which Jehoiada his father "had done him, but slew his son."

But there is a difference between the last words of this martyr-prophet and the last words of the first martyr of the Church. Stephen prayed: "Lord lay not this sin to their charge" (Acts 7:60). Zechariah said: "The LORD look upon it and require it." Typically he represents the tribulation martyrs of the Jewish remnant, who will give the testimony concerning righteousness and the coming King at the end of the present age, and whose blood will cry for vengeance to heaven (Rev. 6:9-11). There can be no doubt our Lord meant this Zechariah when He uttered the words in Matthew 23:35. It is true He speaks of him as the son of Barachias (blessed of Jehovah); but this is not a difficulty. Barachias was another name Jehoiada bore and well suited to his character. Our Lord informs us of the place where he was slain, "between the temple and the altar." Joash, completely forsaken by the LORD, was defeated by the Syrians. Great diseases came upon him and he was murdered by his own servants. Like Jehoram he was not buried in the sepulchres of the kings.

5. Decline and Apostasy under Amaziah, Uzziah, Jotham and Ahaz

CHAPTER 25 The Reign of Amaziah

1. The record of Amaziah's reign (25:1-4)
2. The war against Edom (25:5-13)
3. His idolatry and the divine rebuke (25:14-16)
4. The war between Judah and Israel (25:17-25)
5. The death of Amaziah (25:26-28)

Joash's son Amaziah (strength of the Lord) took up the government in Judah when he was twenty-five years old. His mother's name, Jehoaddan, means "Jehovah is pleased." Perhaps it was through her influence, as her name indicates godliness, that her son began the reign well. He did that which was right in the sight of the LORD. But the Lord, who looks deeper and knows the heart of man, knew that it was "not with a perfect heart." He dealt out justice to the murderers of his father, and also adhered closely to the law of God. In the account in 2 Kings 14 but a passing statement is given on the war with Edom. The details are recorded in the present chapter. He gathered a large army and hired 100,000 mighty men of the kingdom of Israel. It was a hasty deed and showed that Amaziah was not acting in faith. A man of God appeared next and warned him to have nothing to do with the 100,000 hirelings, "for the LORD is not with Israel." This is a good test still in all undertakings. Every believer should ask before he enters upon anything: Can the Lord approve of it?

Is the Lord with it? But Amaziah had already paid the hundred talents to the soldiers. So he asked about the money. And the man of God gave a beautiful answer. "The LORD is able to give thee much more than this." Whenever believers face pecuniary losses on account of being true to the Lord and to His Word, they should remember that the Lord, who is thus honored, is able to make up for it and give much more. How many have found out that this is true! He dismissed the hirelings and Israel was angry. Cruel was Amaziah's deed done to the Edomites. After smiting 10,000 of them he took another 10,000 captive and brought them unto the top of the rock and cast them down so that they were broken in pieces. It was a horrible crime. The deed was committed in the wild regions of Selah or Petra (2 Kings 14:7). Evidently Amaziah had become greatly impressed with the magnificent rock temples which he saw in Mount Seir. In their weird and grand temples the Edomites practised their abominable idol-worship with human sacrifices. Some of these "gods" of the children of Seir, Amaziah brought back from his expedition and set them up to be his gods. A prophet rebuked him with a statement of much force. And the king answered with a sneer and a threat, showing how hopeless was his case. Then the prophet became silent after he made the solemn declaration: "I know that God hath determined to destroy thee, because thou hast done this, and hast not hearkened to my counsel" (verses 15-16).

The comment on the war between Amaziah and the king of Israel is given in 2 Kings 14. Amaziah was slain in Lachish.

CHAPTER 26 The Reign of Uzziah

1. The beginning of his reign (26:1-5)
2. Uzziah's success and fortifications (26:6-15)
3. Uzziah's sin and leprosy (26:16-21)
4. The death of Uzziah (26:22-23)

The Son of Amaziah, Uzziah, in his sixteenth year, was made king by the people. In Second Kings 15 he is called Azariah. (In the annotations on 2 Kings 15:1-2 an explanation is given on this double name of Uzziah.) Isaiah was then prophet in Judah (Isaiah 1:1). Isaiah's name is mentioned in verse 22. Hosea (Hosea 1:1), Amos (Amos 1:1) and Zechariah (2 Chronicles 26:5) were also prophets during his reign. The latter is not, of course, the Zechariah whose wonderful visions are written in the book which bears his name. Uzziah built Eloth and restored that important harbor to Judah (2 Kings 14:22). From Eloth and Ezion-Geber Solomon's ships had gone to Ophir (1 Kings 9:26-28; 2 Chron. 8:17-18). Probably during the days of Joram (also called Jehoram) of Judah, when Edom revolted, Eloth also must have become independent. Uzziah did that which was right in the sight of the LORD. He sought God in the days of Zechariah, of whom we know nothing else but what is mentioned in verse 5. The Zechariah of Isaiah 8:2 cannot be identified with the Zechariah here, for the one mentioned by Isaiah lived much later. The better rendering of "who had understanding in the visions of God," is, "who was his (Uzziah's) instructor in the fear of God." Then follows the statement "as long as he sought the LORD, God made him prosper." And this is still true with all of God's people.

He waged a most successful warfare against the ancient foe of Israel, the Philistines. Previously, under the reign of Jehoram (2 Chron. 21:16-17), as so often before, God had used the Philistines to chastise His people, but now He used Uzziah to punish them for their wickedness. Then the Ammonites brought gifts and Uzziah's fame spread as far as Egypt. A great restoration work was, after that, carried on by him; he restored and fortified the northern wall of Jerusalem, which had been broken down under Amaziah (2 Chron 25:23). Then there was a marked reorganization of the army of Judah and the defense of Jerusalem was greatly strengthened. "And his name spread far abroad; for he was marvellously helped, till he was strong." Alas! for the next little word! How often we find it in Scripture. "But!" "But when he was strong, his heart was lifted up to his destruction, for he transgressed against the LORD his God, and went into the temple of the LORD to burn incense upon the altar of incense." How solemn these words are! What a warning they contain to all God's people! When the heart of man is lifted up, when pride is followed, transgression is not far behind. "Pride goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall" (Prov. 16:18). How well it is for God's children to be much on their faces and humble themselves before the Lord. To be little in one's own eyes and make nothing of self is true greatness and the place of safety, where Satan stands defeated. And the danger of success and prosperity!

Uzziah invaded the priestly office which did not belong to him. It was a small matter to put some incense upon the altar. It was done in self-will and in defiance of the LORD's order and ordinance. It was a rejection of that office which foreshadowed the work of the true priest, our Lord Jesus Christ. And today in Christendom we see much of the same spirit, and that which is far worse, the total rejection of the Lord Jesus as sin-bearer and the great high priest. Uzziah became a leper and died a leper. He was buried as an outcast in the field and not in the sepulchres of the kings. In the year he died Isaiah had his great vision (Isa. 6:1). Isaiah's opening chapters give a good description of the religious and moral condition of Judah at the close of Uzziah's reign.

CHAPTER 27 The Reign of Jotham

1. The reign of Jotham (2 7:1-6)
2. The death of Jotham (27:7-9)

The record of the reign of Jotham is brief in both 2 Kings and in Chronicles. He did also what was right in the sight of the LORD. The statement "howbeit he entered not into the temple of the LORD" means that he did not act as Uzziah, his father did, when he intruded into the functions of the priesthood. However, in spite of the good example of the king, the people continued in their departure from Jehovah. "And the people did yet corruptly." All the evils of a false worship continued and were not stopped. The state of the people is pictured by Isaiah in chapters 1-5 and also in the book of the prophet Micah. These portions of the Word of God are needed to get a better understanding of the conditions which prevailed during the reign of Jotham. Jotham was a godly man and in his reign of sixteen years did much good. All his wars were successful. "He became mighty, because he prepared his ways before the LORD his God." And this statement is the key of all his success and prosperity. He lived and walked in the presence of the Lord. He was guided, strengthened and kept by Him. And this is what all God's people need. It is still the way, the only way to blessing and success, to prepare our ways before the Lord. Jotham is one of the few Bible-characters of whom nothing evil is recorded. Yet the people over which he ruled continued in corruption and apostasy from God.

CHAPTER 28 The Reign of Ahaz

1. The record of his reign (28:1-4)
2. The punishment of Ahaz (28:5-8)
3. The message of Oded and its results (28:9-15)
4. Further punishments of Ahaz (28:16-25)
5. Death of Ahaz (28:26-27)

On Ahaz his wicked reign and apostasy, as well as the war with Syria and the invasion of Judah by Israel, see our annotations on 2 Kings 16. It was at that time that Isaiah ministered in Judah (Isa. 7). Pekah, the son of Remaliah, slew in one day 120,000 men "because they had forsaken the LORD their God." it was a terrible punishment which fell upon Ahaz. Zichri, a mighty man of Ephraim, slew the son of Ahaz, Maaseiah, also the governor and Elkanah, who was next to the king. A still larger number of Jews were taken captive. The interesting record of the prophet Oded is only given here in Chronicles. Who Oded was we do not know. He was a true and courageous prophet of Jehovah in the midst of idolatrous Samaria nearing so rapidly its predicted doom. Only a true prophet clothed with the Spirit of power could utter such a daring message, which in a time of victory and enthusiasm was calculated to humble the people. And he made the demand, "deliver the captives again, which ye have taken captive of your brethren, for the fierce wrath of the LORD is upon you." It was the Word of the Lord, and they knew only too well that every word spoken was true, and the heads of Ephraim (the northern kingdom) were deeply impressed and convicted. They said, "Ye shall not bring the captives hither." They acknowledged that Israel had transgressed. "For our trespass is great, and there is fierce wrath against Israel." Then follows one of the beautiful scenes in Chronicles. This dark chapter is relieved by the mercy which was shown. "And the men which were expressed by name rose up, and took the captives, and with the spoil clothed all that were naked among them, and arrayed them, and gave them to eat and to drink, and anointed them, and carried all the feeble of them upon asses and brought them to Jericho, the city of palm trees, to their brethren." it reminds us of two passages in the New Testament:

Luke 10:30-37, the parable of the good Samaritan, and Matthew 25:31-40. We leave the application which can be made with the reader. Ahaz and his alliance with Assyria as well as Ahaz's further idolatry are commented upon in Second Kings.

6. Reformation under Hezekiah

CHAPTER 29 Hezekiah and the Beginning of the Revival

1. The record of his reign (29:1-2)
2. The purification of the temple (29:3-19)
3. The restored worship (29:20-30)
4. The great offerings (29:31-36)

Compare chapters 29-32 with 2 Kings 18-20 and the annotations given there. The reformation which took place under the reign of the godly son of ungodly Ahaz was a thorough and remarkable one. He did right in the sight of the LORD, according to all his father David had done. In the records of most of the former kings this phrase is missing. It shows that Hezekiah followed the ways of the man after God's own heart. His father had shut up the doors of the house of the LORD (28:24). The first thing Hezekiah did was to open the doors and to repair them. And this was in the first year of his reign, in the first month. There was no delay; he began at once. He fully realized that, in order to have the LORD's presence and blessing, the work must begin at the sanctuary. It has been well said, that piety and the work of righteousness were manifested in Jehoshaphat; great energy and faith was displayed in Hezekiah; and we shall find in Josiah profound reverence for the Scriptures, for the book of the law. And such is the need of the professing Church in the days of decline and apostasy. A revival of profound reverence for the Scriptures, and a whole hearted turning to the law and the testimony, the Word of God, is specially needed. Hezekiah gathered the priests and the Levites. In his great address he acknowledged the sins of the nation. Confession, as it always must, stands in the foreground. "For our fathers have trespassed, and done that which was evil in the eyes of the LORD our God, and have forsaken Him, and have taken away their faces from the habitation Of the LORD, and turned their backs." For this reason the wrath of the LORD rested upon them. He called upon them to sanctify themselves and to carry forth the filth out of the holy place. As for himself, it was in his heart to make a covenant with the LORD. No doubt this had been made in secret in the presence of the LORD. Every true revival begins in this way.

The address and appeal found willing hearts among the servants of God. The Levites arose. The three leading families of Gershon, Kohath and Merari, were represented. Then there were two from the family of Elizaphan; two of the descendants of Asaph; two of Heman and two of Jeduthun. They gathered their brethren and went into the inner part to cleanse it. They did not begin on the outside to work towards the inner part. All true work must begin in the inner part.

The true worship was restored and great offerings were brought. The praises they sung were the Psalms, "the words of David and Asaph the singer." Consult 2 Kings 18 on the abolishment of the idols and the destruction of the brazen serpent. Chronicles emphasizes the great restoration work of the temple, in harmony with its priestly character.

CHAPTER 30 The Passover

1. Preparations for the great Passover (30:1-14)
2. The celebration of the Passover (30:15-22)
3. The concluding festive days (30:23-27)

The Passover is next celebrated. It was, so to speak, the birthday of the nation, and typified the great redemption by the blood of the true Passover-Lamb. It had not been kept for a long time and as the proper yearly time for its celebration had passed, the first month, they concluded to keep it in the second month. The law had made provision for that and therefore what they did was according to the Word. (See Num. 9:6-13 and the annotations given there.) And the king recognized the unity of the people of God and their need. Therefore he sent letters to all Israel and Judah, also to Ephraim and Manasseh,

that they should come to the house of the LORD, to keep the passover unto the LORD God of Israel. The posts went with the letters throughout the entire land. The letter in itself is beautiful and was addressed to the children of Israel, not mentioning the sad division which had taken place. A considerable part of the house of Israel, the ten tribes, had already been carried into captivity. The letter reached, therefore, only the remnant which escaped out of the hand of the Kings of Assyria (30:6; 2 Kings 15:19; 1 Chron. 5:26). It was the Spirit of God who would bring all the people of God together around the table of the great feast. He always unites God's people. And the posts passing along even unto Zebulun with the God-given message of the king, were treated by some of the remnant with mockery. But others humbled themselves and came to Jerusalem. Without such humbling a coming together of the people of God is not possible.

The great feast then was kept by the great multitude after they had taken away the false altars. They killed the passover. The priests sprinkled the blood, which they had received from the Levites. Many of them who had come were not cleansed; Hezekiah prayed for them. "The good LORD pardon every one." And the LORD hearkened and healed the people, so that the divine threat was not carried out (Lev. 15:31). The feast of unleavened bread was also kept for the appointed seven days with great gladness; yet throughout the days of gladness and remembering Jehovah confession was made to the LORD (verse 22). Everything shows that the Spirit of God was in the great revival. Other festive days followed with more gladness. The king gave great gifts and the princes did likewise, while a great number of priests gave their continued service. Not since the days of Solomon, when he had dedicated the house and reigned over Israel, had Jerusalem seen anything like it. The whole scene ended by the priests blessing the people (Num. 6:23-27). Heaven heard and rejoiced with His people.

Dispensationally the great revival foreshadows what will take place when the King of Israel will occupy the throne and reign, when all Israel is united and back in the land (Ezek. 37), when His people will worship and praise the Holy One of Israel.

CHAPTER 31 The Results of the Revival

1. The destruction of the false worship (31:1)
2. The king's appointments (31:2-21)

All was done by Hezekiah for the orderly continuance of the service in the house of the LORD. The order of the courses of the priests, after David's arrangement, which had been abandoned during the preceding apostasy, was once more settled. What was needed for the public sacrifices of the congregation was willingly given, as well as other things, by the king and the people.

"For the personal support of the ministering priests and Levites nothing more was required than the re-enactment of the ancient provision of firstfruits, tithes, and firstlings (Ex. 23:19; Num. 18:12, 21, etc.; Lev. 27:30-33). These together with 'the tithe of dedicated things' (Lev. 27:30; Deut. 14:28), were now offered in such quantity as not only to suffice for the wants of the priesthood, but to leave a large surplusage, to the thankful joy and surprise of Hezekiah and the princes. In answer to the king's inquiry the high-priest Azariah explained that the large store accumulated was due to the special blessing bestowed by the Lord on a willing and obedient people (2 Chron. 31:5-10). The collection of this store began in the third month--that of Pentecost--when the wheat harvest was completed, and it ended in the seventh month--that of Tabernacles, which marked the close of the fruit harvest and of the vintage. And these contributions, or dues, came not only from Judah, but also from 'the children of Israel' (verse 6); that is, from those in the northern kingdom who had joined their brethren in returning to the service and the law of their Lord.

"For the storage of these provisions, Hezekiah ordered that certain chambers in the temple should be prepared, and he appointed officials, who are named in the sacred text, alike for the supervision and the administration of these stores (verses 11-19). Again and again it is noted with what 'faithfulness' one and the other duty were discharged by each in the special department assigned to him (verses 12, 15, 18)."

Such were the results of the revival produced by the Spirit of God. A united people, the destruction of all false worship, the restoration of Jehovah's worship, great willingness in giving and much sacrifice, obedience to the Lord and to His Word. Such must be the results of every true revival among God's people. Great is the record of the good King Hezekiah: "He sought his God, he did it with all his heart, he prospered."

CHAPTER 32 Sennacherib's Invasion, the Deliverance, and the Passing of Hezekiah

1. Sennacherib's invasion (32:1-2)
2. The king's counsel and trust in God (32:3-8)
3. Sennacherib's threatening and arrogance (32:9-16)
4. Sennacherib's defiance of God (32:17-19)
5. Hezekiah's and Isaiah's prayer (32:20)
6. The deliverance (32:21-23)
7. Hezekiah's illness, pride and departure (32:24-33)

As this part of Hezekiah's history is also found in 2 Kings 20 and we have given already the necessary annotations in connection with these chapters, we do not repeat them here. His prayer and Isaiah's ministry are reported in Second Kings and omitted in Chronicles. So are the details of his illness, his prayer, Isaiah's comforting words, and the details of his failure when he exposed his wealth to the ambassadors. The account of the defiance of Sennacherib's servants is also very much condensed in Chronicles. Both 2 Kings 19-20 and 2 Chronicles 32 must be read together. But we find also additions here. Notably among these are the beautiful words of Hezekiah. After he had done all in his power in defence of the city, cutting off the water, building walls, raising up towers, making darts and shields, appointing captains, he uttered his comforting message. "Be strong and courageous, be not afraid or dismayed for the King of Assyria, nor for all the multitude that is with him, for there be more with us than with him. With him is an arm of flesh; but with us is the LORD our God to help us, and to fight our battles." (See 2 Kings 6:16. No doubt the king had a record of the events of Elisha's ministry and words.) No wonder the people rested themselves upon the words of Hezekiah. They are good and helpful words to rest upon in faith in all our warfare down here.

7. Decline and Apostasy under Manasseh and Amon

CHAPTER 33

1. Manasseh's wicked reign (33:1-10)
2. Manasseh's imprisonment and restoration (33:11-13)
3. His reign after restoration and his death (33:14-20)
4. The reign of Amon (33:21-25)

Manasseh, the twelve year old son of Hezekiah, did not follow the ways of his father, but did evil in the sight of the LORD. He had no godly Jehoiada, like Joash, to stand by him and guide him. He was surrounded, no doubt, by counsellors, but they were evil counsellors. Instead of following the example of his father, he followed that of his wicked grandfather Ahaz. In reading the record of his evil doings we get the impression that he hastened in undoing all his father had done. The corrupt worship on the heights was restored by him, and he added at the same time the Phoenician rites of Baal and Asherah, the Chaldean worship of the host of heaven (the sun and the stars). The altars for this wicked worship were placed in the outer and inner courts of the house of the LORD. More than that, he set a carved image in the house of God. This was an image of an idol; the vilest, unnameable practices were introduced into the place which was to be holy. "And he caused his children to pass through the fire in the valley of Hinnom." As we saw in Second Kings, his grandfather Ahaz was the first one to introduce this horrible Canaanitish custom in Judah. The sins of the Sodomites were openly practiced.

"Alike the extent and the shameless immorality of the idolatry now prevalent, may be inferred from the account of the later reformation by Josiah (2 Kings 23:4-8). For, whatever practices may have been introduced by previous kings, the

location, probably in the outer court of the temple, of a class of priests, who, in their unnaturalness of vice, combined a species of madness with deepest moral degradation, and by their side, and in fellowship with them, that of priestesses of Astarte, must have been the work of Manasseh" (A. Edersheim).

Then there were enchantments, witchcraft and wizards, and he dealt also with a familiar spirit. This was demon-power manifested as it is today in spiritualism and similar cults. So wicked was his work that he made Jerusalem to err, and to do worse than the heathen whom the Lord had destroyed before the children of Israel (verse 9). "Moreover Manasseh shed innocent blood very much till he filled Jerusalem from one end to another" (2 Kings 21:16). "And the LORD spake to Manasseh, and to his people, but they hearkened not" (verse 10). God's prophets bore faithful witness against these awful deeds. Isaiah, Jewish tradition claims, suffered martyrdom under Manasseh's reign. But though the LORD sent His messages, they did not hear. In 2 Kings 21:10-15, we have preserved the message which the LORD sent by His servants the prophets. But Second Kings has nothing to say of the conversion and restoration of this wicked man, one of the greatest miracles of grace on record. The king of Assyria came and bound Manasseh in fetters and carried him to Babylon. A certain class of higher critics, a number of years ago, used to sneer at this record, and denied its historicity because it is entirely missing in the book of Kings.

"It was called in question for this reason, that there was not ground for believing that the Assyrians exercised supremacy in Judah--far less that there had been a hostile expedition against Manasseh; and because, since the residence of the Assyrian kings was in Nineveh, the reported transportation of Manasseh to Babylon (verse 11) must be unhistorical. To these were added, as secondary objections, that the unlikely account of a king transported in iron bonds and fetters was proved to be untrustworthy by the still more incredible notice that such a captive had been again restored to his kingdom."

But these objections have been completely refuted by an Assyrian monument. On this monument the Assyrian king is pictured leading two captives with hooks and rings. The inscription runs as follows: "I transported to Assyria men and women ... innumerable." Among other names given is the name "Minasi sar matir Jaudi" which means "Manasseh, King of Judah." Then carried away, no doubt much disgrace and suffering put upon him, his conscience awakened. He humbled himself and prayed and found mercy. What a manifestation of divine mercy! Jewish tradition often refers to Manasseh's conversion as the greatest encouragement to repentant sinners. Such mercy will yet be shown to the remnant of Israel, when they turn unto the LORD "whose mercy endureth forever." And the evidences of the genuineness of the conversion of Manasseh are not lacking. He acted faithfully after his return and repaired the altar and commanded Judah to serve the LORD God.

The utter corruption of human nature is seen in the case of his son Amon. With the awful experience of his father before him, and no doubt exhorted by Manasseh to serve the LORD and be true to Him, he followed deliberately the bad example of his father's idolatry. He trespassed more and more and did not repent like his father Manasseh, but died in his sins. Under his reign the wickedness reached a higher mark than under any previous king.

8. Reformation under Josiah

CHAPTER 34 The Reign of Josiah and the Reformation

1. The record of his reign (34:1-2)
2. The beginning of the reformation (34:3-7)
3. The house of the LORD repaired (34:8-13)
4. The law of Moses found and read (34:14-21)
5. Hulda, the prophetess (34:22-28)
6. The law read and the covenant (34:29-33)

The contents of this chapter are found also in Second Kings, chapters 22:1-23:30. Inasmuch as this has been covered by our annotation, we do not need to repeat it here. However, we add a paragraph from the Synopsis of the Bible.

"We find in Josiah a tender heart, subject to the word, and a conscience that respected the mind and will of God: only at last he had too much confidence in the effect of this to secure blessing from God, without the possession of that faith which gives intelligence in His ways to understand the position of God's people. God, however, makes use of this confidence to take Josiah away from the evil He was preparing in the judgments which were to fall upon Judah, the knowledge of which should have made Josiah walk more humbly. At the age of sixteen he began by the grace of God to seek Jehovah; and at twenty he had acquired the moral strength necessary for acting with energy against idolatry, which he destroyed even unto Naphtali. We see here how sovereign grace came in; for both Hezekiah and Josiah were the sons of extremely wicked fathers.

"Having cleansed the land from idolatry, Josiah begins to repair the temple; and there the book of the law was found. The king's conscience, and his heart also, are bowed under the authority of the word of his God. He seeks for the prophetic testimony of God with respect to the state in which he sees Israel to be, and God makes known to him by Huldah the judgment about to fall upon Israel; but tells him at the same time that his eyes shall not see the evil."

CHAPTER 35 The Keeping of the Passover and Josiah's Death

1. The Passover kept (35:1-19)
2. The death of Josiah (35:20-27)

In the eighteenth year of his reign, Josiah, like his great-grandfather Hezekiah, kept the Passover. No doubt the reading of the law had made this feast once more an urgent necessity. Moreover they had made a solemn covenant "to walk after the LORD, to keep His commandments, His testimonies and His statutes, and to perform the words of the covenant written in the book." Therefore in the appointed time, on the fourteenth day of the first month, they kept the memorial feast, the last before the house of Judah was carried into captivity. (Hezekiah's Passover was kept in the second month. See 2 Chronicles 30:2-3.) And all was done by the godly king "according to the word of the LORD"--"as it is written in the book of Moses." It was obedience to the Word. And such an obedience is needed in the days of decline in the professing Church. It is this which pleases God. The Passover kept was even greater than that of Hezekiah (verse 18). All Judah and Israel (those who were still left) kept the great feast.

The death of this excellent man and king of Judah has its lessons. The king of Egypt, who was Necho, also called Pharaoh-Necho, came up to fight against Charchemish by Euphrates. Josiah went out against him. But did Josiah ask counsel of the LORD? Was the good man guided by the LORD when he went out against Necho, who did not intend to attack Judah? The evidence is conclusive that Josiah acted of himself and was not directed by the LORD. The Egyptian king rebuked him. Necho had not come against Judah. God had commanded him to make haste and fight against Assyria. Josiah should have known what the prophets had announced about Assyria and its overthrow. Thus Necho sent his ambassadors to give a warning. Necho was on a mission which he knew was of God. Josiah opposed him. "Forbear thee from meddling with God, who is with me, that He destroy thee not." But he gave no heed. The king who had cleansed Jerusalem and Judah, who had repaired the temple, obeyed the word and kept the Passover, neglected to ask the LORD in this matter and then continued in the wrong course. Perhaps pride played here also an important part. It would have greatly humbled him if he had desisted from his uncalled for warfare. How all this has been repeated and is being repeated in the individual experience of Christians needs hardly to be pointed out. Many who were much used like Josiah, stumbled and fell, when they ceased to depend on the Lord and acted in self will. Like Ahab (2 Chron. 18:29) he disguised himself. The arrow found him as it was with Ahab. He was pierced in the valley of Megiddo; he died in Jerusalem. There was great lamentation. The lamentations of Jeremiah are not the lamentations as we possess them in the book which bears that name. Jeremiah, however, refers to him (Jer. 22:10-13; Lam. 4:20). In Zechariah 12:10-14 the lamentation in the valley of Megiddo is mentioned. It is connected there prophetically with another lamentation for another son of David, who was pierced. And He, our Lord, was pierced and wounded for our transgression. When He comes again to fill the throne of His father David, the people shall mourn for Him, but in a different way as they mourned for Josiah. Josiah was the last good king of the house of David who reigned. But there is another one coming who shall rule in righteousness (Is. 32:1).

9. The Final Decline and Apostasy

CHAPTER 36:1-14

1. Jehoahaz's reign (36:1-7)
2. Jehoiachin's brief reign (36:8-10)
3. Zedekiah (36:11-14)

As the complete record of these three final rulers is given in the second book of Kings, the annotations are made there. Nothing needs to be added. It was the final plunge before the awful judgment overtook Jerusalem and Judah. And there will be a final plunge into apostasy in connection with the professing Church, before the predicted judgment with the coming of our blessed Lord will end this present evil age and usher in His glorious kingdom.

IV. THE CAPTIVITY AND THE EPILOGUE

CHAPTER 36:15-23

1. The captivity (36:15-21)
2. The epilogue (36:22-23)

In infinite patience the Lord still waited for the return of His people. Judgment is His strange work, but He delighteth in mercy. He sent them messengers who exhorted them and brought the messages of God, because He had compassion. But they mocked the messengers, despised God's gracious offers and misused His prophets, till there was no remedy. An awful statement. Apostasy and defiance of God increased to such an extent, till there was no remedy. The threatening clouds of judgment broke at last and the people were carried away into the captivity. "To fulfill the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah, until the land had enjoyed her sabbaths, for as long as she lay desolate she kept sabbath to fulfill three-score and ten years." And this age too is, with its rejection of God's best, approaching a day when there will be no remedy and the judgment will fall.

The epilogue takes us after the seventy year captivity. Cyrus had been named by Isaiah almost two hundred years before he was born (Is. 44:28). God accomplished His purpose through this Persian king. We shall follow his history in Ezra and his work and what it foreshadows in Isaiah.

THE BOOK OF EZRA

The Annotated Bible

Arno Clement Gaebelein

THE BOOK OF EZRA

Introduction

In the Hebrew Bible the books of Ezra and Nehemiah are placed at the close of the third division of the Jewish canon, which is called "Ketubim." In the Talmud, the Massorah, the Septuagint, and in the writings of Josephus, Ezra and Nehemiah are treated as one book. It is claimed that originally Chronicles with Ezra and Nehemiah formed one book. The last two verses with which Second Chronicles closes are repeated in the opening chapter of Ezra.

(The order of the books in the Hebrew Bible is as follows: I. Tora (the law) Genesis--2 Kings, except Ruth; II. Nevijin (the prophets) Isaiah--Malachi, except Lamentations and Daniel; III. Ketubim (the Writings) Psalms, Proverbs, Job, Song of Solomon, Ruth, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes, Esther, Daniel, Ezra, Nehemiah and Chronicles.)

Ezra, the Author of the Book

No valid proof can be given that the Jewish and early Christian view, that Ezra is the author of the book which bears his name, is incorrect. He was a pious, deeply spiritual man. His genealogy is found in chapter 7:1-6. We learn that he was a lineal descendant of Phineas, the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron; and therefore Ezra was a priest. (See chapter 7:11; 10:10, 16.) He was also a scribe--"a ready scribe in the law of Moses, which the LORD God of Israel had given" (7:6); "a scribe of the words of the commandments and of the statutes of Israel" (7:11). We find him first mentioned in the seventh chapter. The record is given that he went up to Babylon ... "and the king granted him all his request, according to the hand of the LORD God upon him." He received permission from King Artaxerxes I (Longimanus) in the seventh year of his reign (458 B.C.) to lead a number of the people back to Jerusalem. His beautiful, godly character may be seen in the three last chapters of the book, in which he is the principal actor. He was a great man of prayer and worship, with a childlike trust in the LORD, with great zeal for God and an intense interest in His people and their welfare. Much is said of Ezra in talmudical literature, where his greatness and worthiness is celebrated. According to these traditions he was in meekness and godliness like Moses. It is said that he first introduced the Hebrew alphabet in square characters, and that he made the Massorah and punctuation of the Scriptures. He is also considered to be the author of the Jewish canon, and to have rewritten the whole of the Old Testament from memory. most likely he wrote Chronicles besides the record contained in this book. It is more than likely that he collected the Psalms in a book and arranged them under the guidance of the Spirit of God in the order in which we possess them now. His great reformation work we shall point out in the annotations.

The Story of the Book

The book of Ezra records chronologically the return of the remnant to Jerusalem and the events which took place after their return. The rebuilding of the temple and its dedication are fully described, while Nehemiah records the rebuilding of the wall and the city. The edict of Cyrus permitting the Jews to return and urging the rebuilding of the temple is followed by the list of names of those who returned under Zerubbabel, a son of David, to Jerusalem. The given number is 42,360. After their reestablishment they proceeded with the building and dedication of the altar, after which the foundation of the temple was laid. Then the mongrel race, the Samaritans, came offering their fellowship in the building of the temple; their

cooperation was positively rejected. Then the adversaries troubled them, hired counsellors against them, and for a number of years the work stopped. A letter addressed to the king of Persia is inserted in chapter 4 and is written in Aramaic (Chaldean). (The Aramaic portions of Ezra are chapters 4:8-6:18 and 7:12-26.) Then appeared in the midst of the discouraged remnant, when the work had ceased, the two great post-exilic prophets, Haggai and Zechariah. As a result of the fiery exhortations of Haggai and the glorious visions of Zechariah, a revival took place and under Zerubbabel with Joshua the high priest, the prophets helping, the building of the house began. Next the governor Tatnai appeared, attempting to stop their work; but he did not succeed. He appealed to the king in a letter which is also given in full in Aramaic; he was confident that he would succeed in ending the work of the remnant. Ezra had access to these documents and reports them in the Chaldean language in which they were written. But when Darius the king instituted a search there was found in Achmetha, in the palace of Media, a roll with the record of Cyrus, which Tatnai the governor had insinuated was a falsehood, used by the remnant to continue the work. Then Darius made a decree by which Tatnai and his companions were commanded not to interfere any more with the work of the house of God, but that the Jews should build the house. The decree also appointed a generous contribution day by day from the king's goods for the Jews. The hostile governor was forced to carry out the decree of the king. After that the temple was completed and dedicated. They kept the feast of Passover and unleavened bread. This concludes the first section of the book.

Many years after these events had taken place, Ezra comes upon the scene. Ezra's work is described, and how, authorized by the decree of Artaxerxes, he headed an expedition of exiles, who returned to Jerusalem. Artaxerxes' letter is given in full in the language used by the Chaldeans (Aramaic). Ezra's outburst of praise follows the decree of the king. A list of all who joined Ezra in the return is found in the beginning of the eighth chapter. They gathered at the river Ahava, encamping there for three days. Ezra discovered that none of the sons of Levi were in the company. A number of these were soon added to the returning exiles. Before the journey was started there was a fast and humiliation before God; they looked to Him for a straight way and for protection. They departed from Ahava on the twelfth day of the first month and reached Jerusalem on the first day of the fifth month, the LORD graciously protecting them from robbers. After that follows the great reformation work in which Ezra dealt with the deplorable moral conditions into which the people had fallen.

The Spiritual and Dispensational Application

This interesting historical account of a return of a remnant from Babylon contains a message for us. Divine principles are revealed in this book, which find their application to God's people at all times. These spiritual and dispensational lessons will be pointed out in the annotations.

The Division of the Book of Ezra

This book is divided into two sections. After the edict of Cyrus there is a return to Jerusalem under Zerubbabel, the rebuilding of the temple and its dedication. Then after sixty years the return under Ezra took place.

I. THE RETURN UNDER ZERUBBABEL AND THE REBUILDING OF THE TEMPLE (1-6)

II. THE RETURN UNDER EZRA AND HIS REFORMATION (7-10)

Analysis and Annotations

I. THE RETURN UNDER ZERUBBABEL AND THE REBUILDING OF THE TEMPLE

CHAPTER 1

1. The proclamation of Cyrus (1:1-4)
2. The response of the chiefs of Judah and Benjamin (1:5-6)

3. The vessels of the house of the LORD restored (1:7-11)

Verses 1-4. Cyrus (meaning "the Sun") the King of Persia was, according to ancient historians, the son of Cambyses, Prince of Persia, and Mandam, daughter of Astyages, King of the Median Empire. The theory that he was the offspring of Ahasuerus and Esther, and was trained by Mordecai and Nehemiah, lacks all historical foundation. The heart of Cyrus in the beginning of his reign was stirred by the LORD, because the time had come that the Word of the LORD spoken by the mouth of the prophet Jeremiah might be fulfilled. And this was the Word of the LORD spoken by Jeremiah: "For thus saith the LORD, that after seventy years be accomplished at Babylon I will visit you, and perform my good word toward you, in causing you to return to this place" (Jer. 29:10). The seventy years were ended and God was about to act in behalf of His people Israel. Daniel was praying in Babylon after also having read the words of Jeremiah (Dan. 9:1-2). Cyrus was the chosen instrument of the LORD to bring about the return of the Jews and the rebuilding of the temple. Almost two hundred years before his birth the LORD had revealed his name and his work to the prophet Isaiah. Twice Isaiah mentions the name of this Persian King: "That saith of Cyrus, He is my shepherd, and shall perform all my pleasures, even saying to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be built, and the temple, Thy foundation shall be laid. Thus saith the LORD to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have holden, to subdue nations before him; and I will loose the loins of kings, to open before him the two leaved gates; and the gates shall not be shut" (Isa. 44:28, 45:1). "I have raised him up in righteousness, and I will direct all his ways; he shall build my city and he shall let go my captives, not for price nor reward, saith the LORD of Hosts" (Isa. 45:13). This was written by this prophet of God over a century before the temple was destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar. Previously in Isaiah Jehovah had spoken his challenge to the idol-gods to show their power: "Let them bring forth, and show us what shall happen, let them show the former things, what they be ... or declare us things for to come; show the things that are to come afterward" (Isa. 41:22-23). In naming Cyrus the king, and the great work he would do for the exiles and for Jerusalem, the LORD demonstrates His power to declare things to come and to make the future known. And who would doubt that an omniscient God, who knows all things, the end from the beginning, could do this? Only infidels and destructive critics. The latter have invented a Deutero-Isaiah who, it is claimed, wrote the above prophecies concerning Cyrus after he had come into existence and done the work.

It will be seen that the Spirit of God through Isaiah spoke of Cyrus as the shepherd, the anointed, the man of my counsel (Isa. 46:11); whom the LORD loveth (48:14); whose right hand the Lord upholdeth (45:1); who will perform the LORD's pleasure (44:28); and yet he is also called "a ravenous bird from the East" (46:11). Cyrus is, as the chosen instrument, a type of the Messiah, Christ. A comparison of Cyrus with Christ, the work Cyrus did for Israel and the work Christ will do in His second coming, is interesting.

The proclamation which Cyrus issued and sent in writing throughout his kingdom speaks of God as "the LORD God of heaven," and in his edict Cyrus declares, "He hath charged me to build Him a house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah." How did Cyrus receive this knowledge? Beyond question he knew Daniel, and may have heard from his lips the history of Nebuchadnezzar as well as the great prophecies. This prophet may also have acquainted Cyrus with the prophecies of Isaiah. According to Josephus, the great Jewish historian, Cyrus read the book of Isaiah himself. When he came to the place in which Isaiah mentioned him by name, an earnest desire and ambition seized upon him to fulfill what was written in these prophecies. From the record here we learn that it was the LORD who stirred him up to issue the proclamation. In it permission was granted to those Jewish exiles throughout his kingdom to return to Jerusalem to build the house of the LORD; and those who remained were to help with silver and gold, with goods and beasts, besides free-will offering for the house of God. Thus God's Word spoken over two hundred years before was fulfilled in this proclamation of Cyrus: "He shall let my captives go;" "Saying to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be built; and to the temple, Thy foundation shall be laid"; these were the two great prophetic statements of the work he was to do. And so it came literally to pass. All predictions of a future restoration of Israel to their land, not through a Gentile king, but through the coming of Heaven's King, the Shepherd of His sheep, will soon find all their literal fulfillment likewise.

Verses 5-6. There was at once a response from the heads of the fathers of Judah and Benjamin, and the priests and Levites. What joy must have filled their hearts when they read the proclamation of Cyrus. What they had longed and prayed for had come at last. God was acting in their behalf and His promises were about to come to pass. It was the LORD

who stirred them to action and to turn their faces towards Jerusalem. But not all were ready to go back; only a small remnant was willing. The great majority preferred to remain in Babylon. There was nothing to attract them to Jerusalem--the city of ruins, with the once magnificent temple in ruins. Those who returned, loved Jerusalem, the place the LORD had chosen, where alone the appointed offerings and sacrifices could be brought. They belonged to those who sat by the rivers of Babylon and wept when they remembered Zion and said, "If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning; if I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth, if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy" (Ps. 137:5-6). And the Jews who remained helped them generously in every way.

Verses 7-11. Then Cyrus restored the vessels of the house of the LORD, which Nebuchadnezzar had brought from Jerusalem and put into the house of his gods (Daniel 1:2). His grandson, Belshazzar, defiled them at his licentious feast (Dan. 5:2). In that night Belshazzar was slain and Babylon fell. No doubt Cyrus had these vessels collected and carefully guarded. Mithredath the treasurer handed them to Sheshbazzar the prince of Judah. This prince was Zerubbabel: Sheshbazzar was the name the Babylonians had given him. He was born in Babylon; his name Means "stranger in Babylon." He became the princely leader of the returning exiles. Besides being mentioned in Ezra we find his name also in the book of Zechariah. In all there were 5,400 vessels of gold and silver which were handed over to Zerubbabel to take back to Jerusalem. How it all shows that God had not forgotten His people, and when His appointed time came He manifested His power in their behalf. Nor has He forgotten His promise to bring a remnant back from the great dispersion among all the nations of the world. When that return comes, a greater than Zerubbabel the prince of Judah will be the leader. The Lord Jesus, the Son of David, will be their Deliverer.

CHAPTER 2

1. The leaders (2:1-2)
2. The names of the returning exiles (2:3-35)
3. The priests (2:36-39)
4. The Levites and singers (2:40)
5. The porters and Nethinim (2:42-54)
6. Solomon's servants (2:55-58)
7. Those of doubtful descent (2:59-63)
8. The number of the whole company (2:64-67)
9. The offering of the house of God (2:68-70)

Verses 1-2. This chapter contains the names of the returning remnant. It is a specimen page of the records which God keeps, and from which we may learn that He remembers His people, whom He knows by name and whose works are not forgotten by Him. In the book of Nehemiah this list is repeated (chapter 7) with an additional record of those who helped in building the wall. He has a book of remembrance (Mal. 3:16); and the apostle reminded the Hebrew believers of this fact when he wrote: "For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labor of love, which ye have showed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints and do minister" (Heb. 6:10). There were twelve leaders. Only eleven are given by Ezra; in Nehemiah's record we find an additional name (Nahamani), making twelve in all. Zerubbabel was the leader of the returning captives. His name means "seed of Babylon." He is called the son of Shealtiel, the son or grandson of Jeconiah, and was therefore a descendant of David. His name appears in the two genealogies of Matthew (1:12) and Luke (3:27). In 1 Chronicles 3:19 he is called the son of Pedaiah, who was Shealtiel's brother. This double ascription of parentage may probably be accounted for by Pedaiah having contracted a levirate marriage with Shealtiel's widow. The second leader was Jeshua, also called Joshua. He was a son of jehozadak and grandson of the high priest Seraiah. Zerubbabel, the princely leader, son of David, and Joshua, the high priest, are types of Christ. (See Zech. 4 and 6.) Nehemiah is not the Nehemiah who led the other expedition years later, nor is Mordecai the uncle of Queen Esther, who was an old man and evidently remained in Shushan (Esther 10:3). The names Nehemiah and Mordecai were quite common among the Jews. The names of some of the others appear in a slightly changed form in Nehemiah; it was a Jewish custom to call a person by different names.

Verses 3-35. The descendants of the different persons are now given. In all we find 24,144 descendants. Their individual names are not recorded but the Lord knows them all, and cared for each member and sustained them in the journey homeward. Even so He knows all His sheep and keeps every member of His body, leading them home to glory. If some of the numbers do not agree with Nehemiah's record, there is no doubt a good reason for it. For instance, the descendants of Arah are here 775 and in Nehemiah we find only 652 recorded. Probably 775 had enrolled their names but only 652 went. All the names recorded may be traced in other portions of the Scriptures.

Verses 36-39. The different temple officials are recorded next. These are priests, Levites, singers, porters and Nethinim. The priests are first mentioned. In 1 Chronicles 24 there are mentioned twenty-four courses. Jedaiah, Immer and Harim are found in the record of the Chronicles. In all there were 4,289 priests who went back. And these constituted four courses only.

Verses 40-41. Only seventy-four Levites returned. This was a very small number. (Hodaviah should be read Judah; chapter 3:9.) There were more singers than Levites. The children of Asaph, that sweet and blessed singer in Israel, were one hundred and twenty-eight. No doubt they encouraged the returning exiles in song, by the spirit of praise and worship. The Babylon experience, so beautifully expressed in Psalm 137, was passed. "By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, yea, we wept, when we remembered Zion. We hanged our harps upon the willows in the midst thereof. For there they that carried us away required of us a song; and they that wasted us required of us mirth, saying, Sing us one of the songs of Zion. How shall we sing the LORD's song in a strange land?" All was changed now. God was working. Deliverance had come and singing no doubt was heard again among the returning hosts. But why were so few Levites ready to go back? According to the divine instruction in the Law they were to have no inheritance save in the LORD. It was a test of faith to return under these circumstances, and for this reason many Levites must have tarried in Babylon, where things were abundant. Those who returned were tested (Neh. 13:10).

Verses 42-54. The names of the porters and Nethinim. There were in the company one hundred and thirty-nine porters. The Nethinim were temple servants. The word means "given" or "devoted," i.e., to God. We find this name in only one other passage (1 Chron. 9:2). According to Ezra 8:20 this order originated with King David. Jewish tradition identifies them with the Gibeonites, whom Joshua appointed as helpers to the Levites (Josh. 9:3-27). Whatever their origin, they were devoted servants of God assigned to certain duties in the temple.

Verses 55-58. Then comes the record of the children of Solomon's servants. These with the Nethinim were three hundred and ninety-two. Nothing certain is known of these additional servants, whose duty seems to have been similar to that of the Nethinim. Some regard them as the descendants of the strangers whom Solomon had enlisted in the building of the temple (1 Kings 5:13).

Verses 59-63. These verses tell us of the great caution exercised by the people not to tolerate one in their midst whose origin was in any way doubtful. They were determined that Israel should be an unmingled Israel. Therefore they were most careful in examining the genealogies to exclude all who could not be clearly established as true Israelites, for none but such should engage in the work. The true family of God was now marked out and all who could not clearly prove their connection were set aside. There were six hundred and fifty-two who had joined the company from the Babylonish places Tel-melah, Tel-harsa, Cherub, Addan and Immer. They were the children of Delaiah, of Tobiah and Nekoda. These could not show their descent. They were allowed to return with the rest, but their names are not found in Ezra 10:25-43 or in Nehemiah 10:15-28. And also children of priests sought their register among those that were reckoned by genealogy, but they were not found; they were therefore counted as polluted and put from the priesthood. Tirshatha is the governor (a Persian title meaning "your severity"); his name was Sheshbazzar, the official title of Zerubbabel, the prince (chapter 1:8). Nehemiah also had that title (Neh. 8:9). Zerubbabel, the governor, ruled that those uncertified priests should not eat of the most holy things, till there stood up a priest with Urim and Thummim. And how many are there today in the professing Church who are in the same uncertainty. While making an outward profession, they have no assurance, they have no clear title and do not know that they belong to the holy priesthood into which grace brings all who have been born again. The Church has become a great house (2 Tim. 2:20-21) in which we find the true children of God and those who are such only

in profession. If there is to be a return from the Babylon which Christendom is today, the same principle of separation must be maintained. Only those who are born again, who can "show their father's house," constitute the members of the body of Christ.

Verses 64-67. The number of the whole congregation was 42,360. There were also 7,337 servants and maids, among them two hundred singers; the latter must be distinguished from those mentioned in verses 41 and 70. Singing was evidently a very prominent occupation on the journey towards the homeland! Their groans were ended. The captivity was behind and freedom before. How beautiful the chanting of their great psalms must have been as they journeyed on. But greater still will be the time when the wandering remnant, so long scattered among the nations, turns homeward; when through the coming of their King their groans will end forever, and when they sing the Hallelujah chorus in the kingdom of righteousness and peace.

There were likewise 736 horses, 245 mules, 435 camels and 6,720 asses.

Verses 68-70. These last verses tell us of what happened when they came to Jerusalem. They must have sought at once the ruins of the former temple, for that is the spot they loved. Significant it is that though it was razed to the ground, it still existed in the mind of God, and also in the thoughts of the people. It does not say "when they came to the ruins," but "when they came to the house of the LORD." And then the hearts of the fathers were touched, and they gave after their ability unto the treasurer of the work 61,000 drams of gold and 5,000 pounds of silver and one hundred priests' garments. They were faithful in their giving, not according to the Law, the tenth part, but after their ability. And in the New Testament the rule for the Church as to giving is stated in 1 Cor. 16:2, "Upon the first day of the week, let each one of you lay by him in store as God hath prospered him."

CHAPTER 3

1. The altar set up (3:1-3)
2. The feast of tabernacles celebrated (3:4)
3. The sacrifices brought (3:5-7)
4. The foundation of the temple laid (3:8-13)

Verses 1-3. How long the journey lasted is not stated. The previous chapter in its close states that all dwelt in their cities--"and all Israel in their cities." The significant seventh month (Tishri) with its holy convocation (feast of trumpets, day of atonement and feast of tabernacles) having come, the remnant gathered "as one man to Jerusalem." It was the time for such a general gathering, for the feast of trumpets is typical of the restoration of Israel, a restoration which was not fulfilled in the return of this remnant; only foreshadowing it. This gathering "as one man to Jerusalem" reminds us of that other gathering in Jerusalem centuries later "when they were all with one accord in one place" (Acts 2:1) and the Holy Spirit came down from heaven and all were baptized into one body, the Church. There is only one body, and all true believers are put into that body by the same Spirit. This oneness was manifested in the beginning of the church on earth (Acts 2:41-47; 4:23, 32). While its outward expression is lost, yet still the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace can be kept. (Sectarianism is a denial of that unity.) Whenever the Spirit of God is permitted to manifest His power unhindered among God's people, the result is always in bringing them together. The Spirit of God never divides, but unites.

Then Jeshua the high priest with his brethren priests, also Zerubbabel and his brethren, built the altar of the God of Israel, to be enabled to bring the burnt offerings as commanded in the law. Obedience to the Word of God was their first concern. Fear was also upon them because of the people of those countries, therefore they felt the need of protection. They knew Jehovah is the Shield and the Refuge of His trusting people. First they were obedient to His Word by setting up the altar for worship and approach to God in the appointed way, and then they trusted Him that He would keep them in the midst of their enemies. The altar and the burnt offerings morning and evening are typical of Christ, who is the altar and the burnt offering. Whenever the Spirit of God sends a true recovery and revival He will make the Lord Jesus Christ and His blessed finished work the first thing. He leads His people together, and then in true worship around the Person of the Lord.

This worship centers for the true Church in the Lord's Supper, that precious feast of remembrance.

Verse 4. Next they kept the feast of tabernacles--as it is written (Lev. 23:33-36). They manifested a holy zeal in rendering a complete obedience to the law of their fathers. The feast of tabernacles typifies the consummation when the kingdom has come and the full harvest. Another remnant of Israel will return in the future, under different circumstances, and then when Messiah, the King, is in the midst of His people, the feast will find its fulfillment. We learn from this how exact the returned exiles were to be in obedience to the Word of God. Without having the house to worship in, destitute of almost everything, they earnestly tried to please God by leaving the ways of Babylon and submitting to the Word of God. This is another mark of the power and energy of the Spirit of God in His gracious work or recovery; He leads back to the Word of God and gives power to walk in obedience.

Verses 5-7. It was a complete return to the law of God. Continual burnt offerings were offered, new moons and the set feasts of Jehovah were kept. Then the spirit of sacrifice was also manifested--they offered a free-will offering unto the LORD. And though the foundation of the temple was not yet laid, they gave money to the masons and to the carpenters in anticipation of the laying of the foundation and building of the temple. Meat, drink and oil were given to them of Zidon and Tyre, to bring cedar trees from Lebanon to the sea of Joppa. Permission had been given to do this by King Cyrus.

Verses 8-13. We doubt not that their faith also was tested in the beginning, for nine months passed by before the work began. It was in the second month of the second year after their arrival in Jerusalem, when the Levites from twenty years and upward were appointed by Zerubbabel and Jeshua "to set forward the work of the house of the LORD." The leaders were foremost in the work, and associated the people with themselves in the blessed enterprise. They were "laborers together" (1 Cor. 3:9). They took hold of the work in earnest. The order in this chapter is the building of the altar-worship; obedience to the Word of God, and then whole-souled and united service for the Lord. This is the order still for God's people. And in that work God's order was not ignored but conscientiously followed, for the Levites are mentioned first (Numbers 4; 1 Chron. 23:24). In all things they adhered strictly to the Word of God. And when the work was actually begun a holy enthusiasm took hold of them, and all the people praised the LORD with a great shout. It was a great celebration, led by the priests in their apparel, with trumpets. Next came the sons of Asaph with cymbals. Their praise was after the ordinance of David, King of Israel. They sang together by courses in praising and giving thanks unto the LORD "because He is good, for His mercy endureth forever toward Israel." Then all the people shouted with a great shout. The Spirit of praise took hold upon their hearts. They celebrated the goodness and mercy of Jehovah towards His people, which are endless. But there were also tears. The old men, Priests and Levites, and others who still remembered the Solomonic temple in its great beauty, wept with a loud voice; while others shouted aloud for joy. The voice of the shouting and of the weeping was so mingled together that it could not be discerned. The tears were occasioned by remembering the glories of the former days, which had passed away.

Joy was in His presence and acceptable. Tears confessed the truth and testified a just sense of what God had been for His people, and of the blessing they had once enjoyed under His hand. Tears recognized, alas! that which the people of God had been for God; and these tears were acceptable to Him. The weeping could not be discerned from the shout of joy; this was a truthful result, natural and sad, yet becoming in the presence of God. For He rejoices in the joy of His people, and He understands their tears. It was, indeed, a true expression of the state of things (Synopsis of the Bible).

And when we too remember the former things and present conditions in the ruin and confusion all around us in that which professes His Name, we also weep. And yet we shout and praise Him when we remember His mercy, which endureth forever.

CHAPTER 4

1. The offer of the Samaritans refused (4:1-6)
2. The letter to King Artaxerxes (4:7-16)
3. The king's reply (4:17-22)

4. The work is stopped (4:23-24)

Verses 1-6. The adversaries were the Samaritans. (There is an interesting correspondence with the book of Acts. After the Spirit of God had begun His blessed work, the enemy from without and then within started his hindering work.) They had watched silently the work of restoration and then appeared before Zerubbabel and the chief of the fathers and said unto them, "Let us build with you, for we seek your God, as ye do, and we do sacrifice unto Him since the days of Esar-haddon, King of Assur, who brought us up hither." These words revealed their true origin. They were a mongrel race settled by heathen kings in the conquered territory of the house of Israel, the ten tribes. We find the history relating to them in 2 Kings 17:24. The king of Assyria brought men from Babylon, Cuthah, Ara, Hamath, and Sepharvaim and colonized them in Samaria. They were a wicked lot, and the LORD punished them by sending lions in their midst. Then they appealed to the Assyrian king and expressed a desire to get acquainted with the "manner of the God in the land." Priests of Jeroboam, who were captives, were then sent to them. One of these priests taught them in Beth-el the corrupt worship which had been the downfall of the ten tribes. The result was "they feared the LORD, and made unto themselves of the lowest of them priests of the high places." They served their own idols at the same time. The record saith, "Unto this day they do after the former manners, they fear not the LORD, neither do they after their statutes, or after their ordinances, or after the law and commandment which the LORD commanded the children of Jacob, whom He named Israel." These Assyrians married Israelitish women who had been left in the land. (In the British Museum is a cylinder containing the annals of Esar-haddon, giving the deportation of the Israelites and the settlement of colonists in their place.) These corrupt people with their well sounding words remind us of the Gibeonites in Joshua's day. They illustrate the wiles of the devil. The leaders of the remnant refused them participation in the building of the house of the LORD. They realized that they were a separated people and to permit these Samaritans to come in would have been disobedience to the Word of God, bringing His displeasure upon them. If they had been permitted to link themselves with the people of God, corruption and disaster would have been the result. But Zerubbabel and Jeshua endowed with divine wisdom knew that they were adversaries and had no call and no right to engage in the work of the LORD. It was a decisive reply they received. "Ye have nothing to do with us to build an house unto our God; but we ourselves together will build unto the LORD God of Israel, as King Cyrus, the King of Persia, hath commanded us." At once they were unmasked. They turned against them, molested them, and hired counsellors against them to frustrate their purpose. They also wrote an accusation against the inhabitants of Judah and Jerusalem. The Hebrew word (used only in this passage) is "sitnah," cognate with the noun "Satan." Satan was the power behind these Samaritans and their efforts to hinder the work. Their method was Satan's method. These Samaritans may well be compared with the large masses in Christendom who have a form of godliness and deny the power thereof. Like the Samaritans the unsaved multitudes in professing Christendom pretend to serve the Lord, but they are the enemies of the Cross, and their belly is their god, they mind earthly things. The New Testament demands separation from such (2 Cor. 6:14-18; 2 Tim. 3:5; 2 John 11). Fellowship with them is disastrous, for they are only natural men, not having the Spirit and are therefore unfit for Christian fellowship, for they are serving the world and its god.

Verses 7-16. Bishlam, Mithredath and Tabeel, Persians, and officials of the government, probably closely identified with the Samaritans and residents of Jerusalem, wrote a letter to King Artaxerxes. (Ahasuerus is a regal title, meaning "the venerable king"; Artaxerxes also is such a title, meaning "the great king.") With the eighth verse begins an Aramaic section of the book, which extends to chapter 6:18. The Syrian tongue was Aramaic. The letter is a very cunningly devised document, full of misrepresentation and falsehood, inspired by him who is "the liar, and the father of it." They accused the Jews of building Jerusalem and setting up the wall. This was a falsehood, for only the house was being built and not the wall or the city. What they said about the city, its former character of rebellion, was true, and the accuser made use of the past sins of the nation. But God had again been gracious to His people and turned their captivity. Reminding the king of the possible danger if the city were built again and fortified by a wall; and the loss of revenue, they inspired fear in the king's heart. The same accuser of the brethren, liar and falsifier, who stood behind these letter writers, is still at work and will continue till he is cast out (Rev. 12).

Verses 17-22. The king received the letter and instituted a search into the former history of Jerusalem, which verified what the letter claimed, and he commanded at once that the city should not be built. The falsehood that they were building the city and the wall was not discovered. The enemy was successful. Yet a faithful God watched over it all.

Verses 23-24. We can well imagine that when the letter was read before Rehum and Shimshai and their companions, with what a feverish haste they must have rushed up to Jerusalem, and made them cease from the work by force and power. "Then ceased the work of the house of God which is at Jerusalem. So it ceased unto the second year of the reign of Darius, King of Persia." The remnant was severely tested, and at that time there set in a decline. The former energy seems to have left them, as we find when we consider Haggai's message. Nor do we read anything at the close of this chapter about turning to the LORD in prayer.

CHAPTER 5

1. The prophetic ministry of Haggai and Zechariah (5: 1)
2. The result of their ministry (5:2)
3. Tatnai's interference (5:3-5)
4. The letter to Darius (5:6-17)

Verse 1. At that critical time when the enemy seemed to have triumphed, and they were losing their interest, God graciously intervened by sending them His two messengers the prophets Haggai and Zechariah. Their great prophetic messages will be more fully taken up in our annotations on the books which contain their prophecies. The voice of prophecy is always heard when the people of God are in decline. The greatest prophets appeared at the darkest period of Israel--Elijah, Elisha, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel. Two months before Zechariah began his prophetic ministry Haggai lifted up his voice and addressed Zerubbabel and Joshua (Jeshua). It was the Word of the LORD which he communicated to the princely and priestly leaders of the people. This first message gives an interesting light upon the situation of the remnant. (Read Haggai 1.) The people were saying "The time is not come, the time that the LORD's house should be built." This they must have said on account of their enemies; they were waiting for a more providential time, when they could pursue the building of the house. The next words of Haggai reveal the moral condition of the people: "is it time for you, O ye, to dwell in ceiled houses, and this house lie waste?" Then the exhortation, "Consider your ways." From these words we learn that they had settled down in comfort and were more occupied with building themselves houses than with finishing the house of the Lord. And God had dealt with them for this neglect; they had suffered on account of it (Hag. 1:6-11).

Verse 2. When the burning message of Haggai was delivered the LORD revived them again. They arose from their state of apathy and began to build the house of the LORD, the prophets of God helping them. The book of Haggai tells us that they all obeyed the voice of the LORD their God ... and the people did fear before the LORD. No sooner had they obeyed and feared the LORD than another message came through the prophet: "I am with you, saith the LORD." They no longer feared their enemies, nor the King's command, but they feared the LORD, and at once the work was vigorously resumed and the house finished (6:15). The Word of the LORD was used in their revival. Every true and genuine revival always started and always will start with the Word of God, hearing and believing what God has spoken.

Verses 3-5. This new start attracted at once the attention of their enemies. Tatnai, governor on this side of the river and Shethar-boznai with their companions appeared on the scene. (In cuneiform tablets of the first and third years of Darius Hystaspis, a governor Ustnai is mentioned. He is described in Assyrian as the governor of the province.) They asked the questions, "Who hath commanded you to build this house, and to make up the wall? What are the names of the men that make this building?" ("We" in verse 4 is "they," Tatnai and his companions, See verse 10.) Thus the enemy made another effort to hinder the work. He never fails to attack that which is done to the glory of God. But these enemies did not reckon with the Keeper of Israel who neither sleeps nor slumbers. Little did they know that what they were doing would lead to victory for God's people and would result in finishing the house of God. The eye of God was upon the elders of the Jews. He gave them strength, courage and assurance, so that they could persevere in the work. God was with them, and who then could be against them? God restrained Tatnai from giving order to suspend the work, so that they worked right on. Blessed are all the servants of the LORD who toil in the fear of the LORD, knowing that His eye is upon them and that He sustains all who put their trust in Him.

Verses 6-17. Then Tatnai and his associates sent a letter to King Darius, which gives the unreported details of their visit to Jerusalem. The letter tells us that the house was built with great stones and timber in the walls, and that all prospered in their hands. Zerubbabel and his companions had answered the inquiries to Tatnai as follows: "We are the servants of the God of heaven and earth." Thus they gave a witness of themselves and then related what had taken place, and how Cyrus had made the decree to build the house of God. The letter stated that Sheshbazzar (Zerubbabel) had laid the foundation and that the house was still unfinished. Then follows the request: "Now, therefore, if it seem good to the king, let there be search made in the king's treasure house, which is there at Babylon, whether it be so, that a decree was made of Cyrus the King to build this house of God at Jerusalem, and let the king send his pleasure to us concerning the matter." The builders must have had perfect peace about this letter, knowing that the LORD was with them.

CHAPTER 6

1. The search of the king and the result (6:1-5)
2. The command of Darius (6:6-12)
3. The king's command obeyed (6:13)
4. The house finished (6:14-15)
5. The dedication of the house (6:16-18)
6. The feast of Passover and unleavened bread (6:19-22)

Verses 1-5. King Darius had a search made in the place where the records of the empire were kept, "in the house of the rolls." The word "rolls" is "books" and these consisted of clay tablets on which the cuneiform inscriptions were preserved. Neither the Aramaic nor the Hebrew language has a word for clay tablets. Whole libraries of such clay tablets were found at Nineveh and elsewhere, and can now be seen in different museums. The searchers found the desired record at Achmetha (the Ecbatana of Greek writers, the capital city of Media, which is the modern Hamadan). Divine providence had preserved this interesting command of Cyrus, and the same providence guided the searchers to the place where it was kept. From it we learn interesting details. Cyrus gave instructions concerning the foundations, the height and the breadth of the building, the expenses were to be met from the King's house, i.e., the royal treasure house. Persian Kings controlled the religious affairs of the nation; but Cyrus acted under divine guidance of the LORD (1:1).

Verses 6-12. Darius answered the communication of Tatnai and Shethar-boznai at once. He commands, "Be ye far from hence," do not hinder the work, let the work of this house of God alone. And furthermore he directed that the Jews were to be assisted in the building of the house by the paying of the expenses. Darius was anxious that the house should be built and speedily completed. The material mentioned was for the sacrifices and offerings. Young bullocks, rams and lambs for the burnt offerings. Wheat, oil and salt for the meal offering, and wine for the drink offering. All these things were to be given to the priests without fail day by day. "That they may offer sacrifices of sweet savour unto the God of heaven, and pray for the life of the King and of his sons." God was working again, and used Darius as His instrument for the accomplishment of His own purposes. All the enemy was doing to hinder the work turned out to its furtherance. How often this has been in the history of Israel and the Church. The decree of Darius demanded the death penalty for all who altered the command he had given. "And the God that hath caused his name to dwell there destroy all kings and peoples that shall put their hand to alter and to destroy this house of God which is at Jerusalem. I Darius have made a decree; let it be done with speed." These words warrant a belief that Darius had knowledge of the God of heaven. The events which transpired during the reign of Nebuchadnezzar in the Babylonian Empire, when Daniel was there, as well as the things which happened under the reign of the other Darius (Daniel 6) may have been fully known to Darius Hystaspis who gave this decree. And solemn were his words that God would destroy all kings and people who alter or destroy this house of God. How this came repeatedly to pass history tells us. (Antiochus Epiphanes, Herod and the Romans defiled and destroyed the house, and God's wrath came upon them for it.)

Verse 13. What Darius commanded was speedily done. All opposition ended and the enemies were completely defeated. God had undertaken in behalf of His trusting people, whose faith had been revived through the messages of Haggai and Zechariah.

Verses 14-15. With revived zeal the elders builded, and they prospered, through the prophesying of Haggai the prophet, and Zechariah the son of Iddo. Haggai's ministry stirred up the conscience of the people, exhorting them to consider their ways, which must have led them to seek His face. Zechariah is the prophet of glory. The vision of glory, the ultimate victory of God's people, the coming of the King and setting up of His kingdom, the future overthrow of all their enemies--this vision of the coming glory became an inspiration for them. God's people need this twofold ministry which is so abundantly supplied in the Word of God. They builded and finished the house according to the commandment of the God of Israel, and according to the decree of the great Kings Cyrus and Darius. ("And Artaxerxes, King of Persia," some claim should be omitted from the text.) The house was finished on the third day of the month of Adar, which was in the sixth year of the reign of Darius the King.

Verses 16-18. Then the dedication of the house took place. It was a feast of great joy. "The feast of dedication" which the Jews keep (Chanukah) does not commemorate the dedication of this house, but the cleansing of the temple from the defilement of Antiochus Epiphanes. Tradition claims that Psalms 138, 146, and 148 were composed by Haggai and Zechariah, and used in the dedication ceremony. But what a contrast with the magnificent dedication of the Solomonic temple! Here they offered a hundred bullocks, two hundred rams, four hundred lambs, and for a sin offering twelve he-goats. At the dedication of the first temple Solomon offered 22,000 oxen and 120,000 sheep (2 Chron. 7:7). And the greatest contrast with Solomon's temple, the glory cloud; the visible sign of Jehovah's presence which filled the house; was absent. No glory came to manifest the fact that Jehovah dwelt in the midst of His people. In the future another temple will stand again in Jerusalem, and into that temple the glory of the LORD will enter once more (Ezek. 43:1-3). It is the millennial temple which will be erected by converted Israel after the King has come back. Of this glorious event Zechariah bore witness: "Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion, for, lo, I come, and I will dwell in the midst of thee, saith the LORD. And many nations shall be joined unto the LORD in that day, and shall be my people; and I will dwell in the midst of thee, and thou shalt know that the LORD of hosts hath sent me unto thee" (Zech. 2:10-11). These prophetic words were certainly not fulfilled in the dedication of the second temple, nor have they been fulfilled since. Perhaps this prophecy was the prophecy of hope and comfort for the godly then, as well as Haggai's prediction (Hag. 2:7-9). But note well the obedience to God's Word manifested in the dedication service--"as it is written in the book of Moses."

Verses 19-22. The feast of Passover and unleavened bread was kept also by the children of the captivity. Those who had separated themselves from the filthiness of the heathen were not proselytes, Gentiles who turned to Israel; they were Jews who had married heathen women (10:11). They were true to the written Word. As to the meaning of this feast see our annotations on Exodus 12, Leviticus 23 and 1 Corinthians 5.

The connection is exceedingly beautiful. The house of their God finished, His people celebrated the memorial of their redemption from the land of Egypt, and thus remind themselves, to the praise of Jehovah, of the ground on which they stood, and of the fact that the foundation of all their blessing, of all God's actings in grace towards them was the blood of the slain Lamb. This, according to the word of Moses, was "a night to be much observed unto the LORD for bringing them out from the land of Egypt: this is that night of the LORD to be observed of all the children of Israel in their generations" (Exodus 12:42). Nothing could show more distinctly that these children of the captivity were at this moment in possession of the mind of the LORD than their observance of the Passover. Passing by the glories of the kingdom, they travelled upward until they reached the charter of all they possessed, whether in title or in prospect, and there confessed God as the God of their salvation. They thus built on what God was for them on the ground of the blood of the Passover lamb, and they found in that, as individual souls ever find, a rock which is both immutable and immovable. Their hearts were in this feast; "for," as we read, "the priests and the Levites were purified together, all of them were pure." (See Numbers 9:10-14.) They discerned what was due to Him whose feast they kept (E. Dermett).

II. THE RETURN UNDER EZRA AND HIS REFORMATION

CHAPTER 7

1. The journey of Ezra to Jerusalem (7:1-10)

2. The decree of Artaxerxes (7:11-26)
3. Ezra's thanksgiving (7:27-28)

Verses 1-10. The record of the return under Zerubbabel and the rebuilding of the temple ends with the previous chapter. Many years passed after the temple had been built before the godly Ezra and his companions returned to Jerusalem. No record whatever is in existence covering the years which intervened between Zerubbabel's expedition and work, and Ezra's expedition. The critics claim that "it was in these apparently barren years that the priestly code was elaborated by the priests who had not left Babylon, and that part at least of the second half of Isaiah (chapter 40, etc.) was composed and put together in Babylon." But what historical foundation for their theory can they offer? There is nothing in existence which in any way warrants such claims. The evidence that Moses wrote the Pentateuch and that Isaiah is the author of the entire book which bears his name is overwhelming. The theory of a priestly code, that the priestly laws of Leviticus were collected in Babylon and brought back by Ezra, is an invention.

What became of Zerubbabel is not known. But we know that a sad decline among the returned remnant set in. Their moral and religious condition had suffered a severe relapse. Perhaps these very conditions moved Ezra to leave Babylon and go to Jerusalem.

It was in the seventh year of Artaxerxes, King of Persia, that Ezra went up. The genealogy of Ezra is given, showing that he was a direct descendant of Aaron, the chief priest. Ezra was "a ready scribe in the law of Moses, which the LORD God of Israel had given." A blessed testimony that the Law of Moses was given by God, and not put together piece-meal, corrected, revised and added to by different hands. Ezra, occupied with the Law and the Word of God, desired to go up to Jerusalem. God put it into his heart, and the Gentile King granted him all his request. In all this the hand of the Lord is acknowledged. "According to the hand of the Lord his God upon him." This phrase we meet a number of times (7:6, 9, 28; 8:18, 22, 31); and it shows how this man of God trusted in the LORD for guidance. He saw His hand in having all his request granted by Artaxerxes. It was the good hand of God who brought him to Jerusalem (7:9). His hand strengthened him (7:28). The good hand of the LORD is again acknowledged in bringing them ministers (8:18) and in deliverance (8:31). The same hand which was for good upon Ezra, which guided, kept and shielded him, is still upon all His people who trust Him and are obedient to His Word. (The character of our work forbids an attempt to enlarge upon the identity of the different rulers mentioned in Ezra and Nehemiah--which is a difficult matter, involving a careful examination of chronology. We suggest a good book on chronology *The Romance of Bible Chronology*, by M. Anstey.)

With Ezra a company of people went up to Jerusalem, 1,496 in all. They left on the first day of the first month, and arrived on the first day of the fifth month, corresponding to the end of July or beginning of August. The distance they travelled by way of Carchemish was over 800 miles.

In verse 10 we have the secret of Ezra's piety: "For Ezra had prepared his heart to seek the Law of the LORD, and to do it, and to teach in Israel statutes and judgments." Diligently and prayerfully he sought the truth and the will of God in the Word of God. The law of the LORD was his joy and delight. How he must have searched the Scriptures with deep exercise of soul. This is the foundation of godliness. The heart must enter into the things of God as revealed in His Word. And his aim was "to do it;" to live according to the truth God had given him. Finally, the third desire of Ezra was "to teach in Israel statutes and judgments." Heart preparation in the Word, obedience to the word, must be the marks of the true servant of the LORD.

Verses 11-26. The copy of the letter that Artaxerxes gave to Ezra is now recorded. This section is again in Aramaic. In the salutation of the letter Artaxerxes calls himself "king of kings" and addresses Ezra as the scribe of the law of the God of heaven. There can be no question that Artaxerxes was divinely moved in all he did. The decree states that all Israelites, priests and Levites in his realm who are minded of their own free will to go up to Jerusalem, may go with Ezra. The name of God, the law of God, the house of God are constantly used in this document. Then the King and his seven counsellors freely gave silver and gold "unto the God of Israel, whose habitation is in Jerusalem." In a future day, when all Israel is saved, when Christ comes again, the Gentiles and their kings will offer their silver and gold (Isaiah 60; Ps. 62:10-11).

Besides the silver and gold Artaxerxes and his counsellors gave, there were other offerings of non-Jews and of the Jewish residents of Babylon. The king had perfect confidence in Ezra. After buying bullocks, rams, lambs, etc., the king wrote, "And whatsoever shall seem good to thee, and to thy brethren, to do with the rest of the silver and the gold, that do after the will of your God."

Verses 27-28. Then Ezra broke out in a beautiful doxology. He blessed the LORD God of his fathers. He had put all this in the King's heart. And Ezra was strengthened as the hand of the LORD His God was upon him.

CHAPTER 8

1. Those who returned with Ezra (8:1-14)
2. The gathering at Ahava (8:15-20)
3. The fast proclaimed (8:21-23)
4. The appointment of guardians (8:24-30)
5. The departure and arrival in Jerusalem (8:31-36)

Verses 1-14. The names of those who gathered around Ezra and went up with him are here recorded. In view of the magnificent decree and liberality of Artaxerxes, the company was very small. The majority preferred Babylon, and remained there. The faithful ones are known to God, and their names are here forever written in His Word. Though the Gentile monarch had given the decree, and the people were abundantly supplied with all necessary means, the undertaking was one of faith. They came out of Babylon trusting the LORD; they marched on in faith. It must be especially noticed that only males are mentioned. The mixed marriages of which we read in the next chapter most likely were the result of the fact that no women had joined Ezra's expedition.

Verses 15-20. Ezra gathered them together at the river that runneth to Ahava, which probably was a branch of the Euphrates, near Babylon. There they dwelt in their tents for three days. They were pilgrims and strangers, and had gone forth like Abraham, the father of the nation. Ezra viewed the people and discovered the absence of the Levites. While a small number of Levites had gone up with Zerubbabel, none had joined Ezra. Only two priests were present, Gershon, son of Phinehas, and Daniel, son of Ithamar. What indifference this reveals! They had settled down in the enemy's land and were satisfied to remain there. They were minding earthly things, and the things of God were forgotten by them. Still they were Levites in their holy calling. It is so today with many who are no doubt saved, but they are worldly-minded, and have but little desire to live in the separation demanded by Him from His people. Ezra was not willing to leave the Levites behind, knowing how absolutely necessary they were for the house of God. How Ezra must have looked to God! Then he acted, and through the good hand of God, which he once more acknowledged, a number of Levites and Nethinim joined the party.

Verses 21-23. He proclaimed a fast. The man of God felt the need of seeking God's face and His gracious protection. The fasting was the outward sign of deep humiliation and an expression of their dependence, "to seek of Him a straight way, for us and for our little ones, and for all our substance." The need of guidance as well as protection was fully recognized by the gathered company, and they trusted the LORD for both. This is still the blessed way of faith for God's servant, and for the children of God. How great would be the success and the blessing if at all times and in all service God's people would first seek His face, humble themselves in His presence and trust Him fully. Ezra had told the king that he trusted the LORD, that His hand is upon all them for good that seek Him, and so he was ashamed to ask a military escort to protect them against robbers, who might waylay them and rob them of their possessions. He knew His God was the best shield, and His angels, the ministers used in guarding His people and keeping evil away from them, would be the unseen companions of the caravan. "So we fasted and besought our God for this, and He was entreated of us." Their prayers were answered. And He still answers faith.

Verses 24-30. Faith in God did not make Ezra careless. He felt his great responsibility and made the most careful preparations. He set apart twelve of the chief priests, Sherebiah, Hashabiah, and ten of their brethren with them. Levites

were also selected by him (8:30). To their custody he committed the holy vessels, as well as the silver and the gold which had been so freely given. Then he gave them the charge, "Ye are holy unto the LORD; the vessels are holy also and the silver and gold are a freewill offering unto the LORD God of your fathers. Watch ye and keep them, until ye weigh them before the chief of the priests and Levites, and chief of the fathers of Israel, at Jerusalem, in the chambers of the house of the LORD." He had weighed into their hand 650 talents of silver (about \$1,250,000) and of gold 100 talents (about \$3,000,000) besides the costly vessels of silver and gold. This careful weighing of everything when they received the costly treasures, and the weighing when they delivered the same in Jerusalem, does not mean that Ezra entertained any doubt as to the honesty of the priests and Levites. It was done to avoid all suspicion. The same principle is laid down in the New Testament for the Church: "Provide for honest things, not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of men" (2 Cor. 8:21).

Verses 31-36. Then the departure was made on the twelfth day of the first month. In faith and complete dependence on God they set out towards the land of their fathers. And the LORD honored their faith. "And the hand of our God was upon us, and He delivered us from the hand of the enemy, and of such as lay in wait by the way. And we came to Jerusalem, and abode there three days." They must have had many narrow escapes, but as they constantly trusted in the LORD, in His good hand of mercy and power, He delivered them from all dangers. The LORD who answered their faith and kept them is the same today, and never disappoints faith. His hand is the same as then, and we too can experience His gracious deliverance. The journey occupied not quite four months. The three days at the end of the journey correspond to the three days before the journey began at the river Ahava. (8:15). What praise they must have rendered to God during these three days in Jerusalem, when their eyes beheld once more the beloved city and the house of the LORD!

On the fourth day the treasures were turned over and were weighed in the house of God. This was done by Meremoth, the son of Uriah, the priest. He is mentioned by Nehemiah as one of the builders of the wall (Neh. 3:4, 21). With him was Eleazar, the son of Phinehas. Associated with them were Jozabad, the son of Jeshua (mentioned also in 10:23 and Neh. 7:7) and Noadiah, the son of Binnui. Thus in the house of God account was rendered, as all His people will have to give an account before the judgment seat of Christ.

Burnt offerings were then offered, twelve bullocks for all Israel, ninety-six rams, seventy-seven lambs and twelve he-goats for a sin offering. It is especially to be noticed that the small remnant which had returned embraced in their faith all Israel. "All Israel" will some day be saved and be brought back to the land, through Him who is the true burnt and sin offering. And as their faith included all their brethren, the whole house of Israel, though they were not with them, so our faith must include all the saints of God.

After having discharged their solemn obligation, giving God the first place, they "delivered the king's commissions unto the king's lieutenants, and to the governors on this side of the river; and they furthered the people and the house of God."

CHAPTER 9

1. Ezra's astonishment and grief (9:1-4)
2. Ezra's confession and prayer (9:5-15)

Verses 1-4. When all these things had been done (that are related in chapter 8:33-36) Ezra was confronted by a very sad condition of the people, and even the priests and the Levites. The princes (civil leaders) came to Ezra and told him that the demanded separation according to the law, between God's people and the Canaanitish inhabitants of the land, had not been obeyed. The people had taken of their daughters for themselves and of their sons "so that the holy seed have mingled themselves with the people of the lands; yea the hand of the princes and rulers hath been first in this trespass." Not alone had they intermarried, but they were also doing according to their abominations. Not alone had they fallen into the evil things of the former inhabitants of the land, the Canaanites, but they were also contaminated with the wicked things of the Ammonites, the Moabites, the Egyptians and the Amorites. In doing this they had wilfully broken the command of the

Lord as given in Exodus 34:12-16. God's people were to be holy, a separated people. Israel was married unto Jehovah; their marriage to the heathen was disobedience to the law and unfaithfulness to Jehovah. It was an alliance with the world. God demanded separation of Israel; He demands the same of His people in the New Testament. "But as He who hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; because it is written, Be ye holy, for I am holy" (1 Peter 1:15-16). Like Israel, believers in the New Testament are said to be married unto Christ (Romans 7:4; 2 Cor. 11:2). And therefore God's Spirit warns against alliance with the world. "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers" (2 Cor. 6:14). "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world" (1 John 2:15). "Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? Whosoever therefore would be a friend of the world, maketh himself an enemy of God" (James 4:4). That the returned remnant, after a few years of the completion of the temple and after the gracious and remarkable deliverance from Babylon, could plunge into such depths of degradation, shows what the heart of man is. As it has been said, when saints fall into sin, it is sometimes into worse and grosser forms of sin than those committed by the people of the world. It equally manifests the infinite patience and long-suffering of God, in bearing with His people and not dealing with them at once in judgment.

Let us listen to the words of pious Ezra, what he said and did after receiving this sad report. "And when I heard this thing, I rent my garment and my mantle, and plucked off the hair of my head and of my beard, and sat down astonished. Then were assembled unto me every one that trembled at the words of the God of Israel, because of the transgression of those that had been carried away; and I sat astonished until the evening sacrifice." He was seized with horror. The rending of his garments was the outward expression of his indignation and grief (Gen. 37:29; Lev. 10:6; Judges 11:35; Esther 4:1). The plucking of the hair is also a sign of sorrow (Job 1:20; Ezek. 7:18). But how his heart must have felt the dishonor done to Jehovah's holy Name! How he was deeply affected by the sins of the people. Would to God such a spirit of deep grief and humiliation were more manifested today over the sad and worldly conditions of those who profess that worthy Name! His grief and sorrow brought others, who were also trembling at the words of God, to his side, and he sat in their presence astonished till the evening sacrifice.

Verses 5-15. When the evening sacrifice came he arose from his deep affliction and sorrow, with his garments rent. It is the sacrifice, the burnt offering, which leads him to approach God; he trusted in the efficacy of the sacrifice as the ground on which he could appear before God. He knew by sacrifice he could come near to God and receive the answer. All this blessedly foreshadows the sacrifice of Christ and our approach to God through His finished work on the cross. The prayer which follows is like Daniel's great prayer (Daniel 9:4-19). Daniel also received his answer at the time of the evening sacrifice. Ezra fell upon his knees and spread out his hands unto the LORD. What a confession of sins and deepest humiliation breathe in the opening sentences of this remarkable prayer! He is ashamed and blushes to lift his face up to God. Iniquities are owned as covering the head of the people and "the guiltiness is grown unto the heavens." Not alone is the present guilt acknowledged, but he owns the guilt of the nation from its very start. Furthermore he declares God's righteousness and justice in dealing with them in judgment. "For our iniquities have we, our kings, and our priests, been delivered into the hands of the kings of the lands, to the sword, to captivity, and to spoiling, and to confusion of face, as it is today." He confessed the sins of the people and owned it all in His presence. Such humiliation and confession is always pleasing to God, for "God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble" (James 4:6).

Then, after having confessed and owned the sins of his brethren and justified God in His judgment upon them, he mentions the grace which had been manifested towards the people in bringing back the remnant from the captivity. The remnant through His mercy had escaped, and God had given them "a nail in His holy place" (Isaiah 22:23). Like a nail in the wall fixed and immovable, so God had established them in Jerusalem. And after the recital of all these mercies, he brings into the light of God's presence their sin, their disobedience and ingratitude once more (9:10-12).

It should also be observed that Ezra does not once pray for forgiveness. Nay, with any intelligence of the mind of God, it was impossible that he should do so. When there is known evil in our hearts or in the assembly, our first responsibility is to judge it, not to pray for forgiveness. Thus, when Joshua lay on his face before the LORD, after the defeat of Israel by the men of Ai, the LORD said, "Get thee up; wherefore liest thou thus upon thy face?" Israel hath sinned," etc. And yet how often does Satan beguile the LORD's people, in a time of manifested evil, by suggesting through one or another, Let us pray about it. Confess our sins we surely should, but even then only as seeking grace and strength to deal with the evil,

and to separate ourselves from it; for if Ezra lay before the LORD in this chapter owning his people's guilt, we shall see him in the next energetic in dealing with the sin he had confessed, and resting not until it had been put away. (E. Dennett, Exposition of Ezra.)

CHAPTER 10

1. The effect of Ezra's prayer on the people (10:1-4)
2. Ezra summons an assembly (10:5-8)
3. The gathering, confession and the evil judged (10:9-17)
4. The register of those who had married strange women (10:18-44)

Verses 1-4. Ezra's prayer, confession and humiliation were before the house of the LORD." The people saw his great sorrow and his tears, they heard his words confessing the nation's sins. It produced a wonderful effect among the people. "There assembled unto him out of Israel a great congregation of men and women and children, for the people wept very sore." Was this great weeping real contrition over their disobedience? or did they weep in anticipation of the separation from the wives they had taken? No doubt they thought of what the demanded separation would mean for them; yet it was an aroused conscience which produced the tears of repentance.

Schechaniah's voice is heard in behalf of the people. He was a son of Jehiel. His own father is mentioned among those who had taken strange wives (10:26). His words then must have condemned his own father. He said, "We have trespassed against our God, and have taken strange wives of the people of the land." He acknowledged the sin of the people violating the direct commandment of the LORD. But he also had confidence in the mercy of God, that not all was lost on account of their disobedience, "yet now there is hope in Israel concerning this thing." Yet this hope and mercy could only be realized by self-judgment and by putting away all the wives and such as were born of them. He therefore said, "Let us make a covenant with our God to put away all the wives, and such as are born of them, according to the counsel of my lord, and of those who tremble at the commandment of our God; and let it be done according to the law." The law demanded the dismissal of these wives and children, for they were unclean, and admission into the congregation of Israel had to be denied to them. How different it is under grace! In 1 Cor. 7:10, etc., we read what grace has done even for an unbelieving husband who is sanctified by the believing wife, and the unbelieving wife who is sanctified by the believing husband, and that their children are not unclean, but holy.

Then Schechaniah addressed weeping Ezra: "Arise! for this matter belongeth unto thee; we also will be with thee; be of good courage and do it." These words must have dried Ezra's tears, for they evidence the answer to his humiliation and prayer. Confession, humiliation, self-judgment and putting away the evil are always the condition of the restoration of God's people.

Verses 5-8. Ezra took hold at once. The priests, Levites and all Israel had to swear that they would act upon this word. But Ezra's grief was not ended. He arose and went into the chambers of Johanan, the son of Eliashib. He did not eat bread, nor did he drink water. He still mourned because of the transgression of the people. God's presence was sought by this deeply spiritual man of God, and in His holy presence he felt anew the sin of the people. What deep soul exercise Ezra passed through! This is what is so sadly lacking in our own days. So many make light of the sin and worldliness of those who profess the Name of Christ, there is but little heart searching, true humiliation and self-judgment to be seen. Such is the spirit of Laodicea.

A proclamation was then made. The time to act had come. All the returned captives were to gather themselves together in Jerusalem. It had to be within three days. Neglect of this commandment meant the confiscation of their substance and separation from the congregation of Israel.

Verses 9-17. The great gathering takes place. They all obeyed the Word. We see them sitting in the wide space before the house of the LORD. They were a trembling, Lightened company, on account of this matter and also the great rain, for

the cold and rainy season had started in. Ezra addresses the multitude in simple but firm words. Once more he mentions their sin and the guilt which rests upon them on account of it. He demands confession, and separation from the peoples of the land and from the strange women. There was an immediate response: "As thou hast said concerning us, so must we do." Then a plan is inaugurated to bring the separation about in as speedy a manner as possible. What self denial and heartaches this must have meant! In verse 15 we read of those "who were employed about this matter." But the translation of this sentence is more than doubtful. It has been rendered "they stood up against this." If there was opposition it was not opposition to the separation decree. They probably opposed the method which had been suggested; they may have demanded an immediate action. Verses 18-44. The examination of the whole matter as agreed upon began on the first day of the first month (Nisan-March-April), the time of the New Year, the new beginning according to Exodus 12:1. Then follows the list of the men who had married the strange women. God's record is again before us in these names. The names of the priests come first. Theirs was the greater responsibility and guilt. The sons of Joshua head the list. What an illustration of what man is, that the sons of the high priest, who, with Zerubbabel, had been such great instruments of the Lord to lead the first captives back, should corrupt themselves with these women! They gave their hand that they would put away their wives, and confessing themselves guilty, they brought a ram for an offering. In all, seventeen priests were guilty, and six Levites. The guilty singers and porters are given by name in verse 24. Then follow eighty-six more names who had all defiled themselves by strange women.

Ezra's great work was finished. In Nehemiah we read how he was still active, ministering to the people in spiritual things, in reading and expounding the Word of God (Neh. 8:8).

THE BOOK OF NEHEMIAH

The Annotated Bible

Arno Clement Gaebelein

THE BOOK OF NEHEMIAH

Introduction

The book of Nehemiah is the latest of the historical books of the Old Testament. It is the continuation of the history of the company of people which had returned under Zerubbabel and Ezra to the land. In Ezra we saw the remnant getting back and rebuilding the temple, the place of worship. In Nehemiah we have the record of the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem, and the restoration of the civil condition of the people, the partial and outward reestablishment of the Jews in the land. The book bears the name of Nehemiah, because he is the leading person in the recorded events, and likewise the inspired author of the main portion of this record. Two other persons by the name of Nehemiah are mentioned in the books of Ezra and Nehemiah. One was the son of Azbuk (Neh. 3:15) and the other belonged to the returning remnant under Zerubbabel (Ezra 2:2 and Neh. 7:7). From these, Nehemiah the son of Hachaliah must be distinguished. His genealogy is obscure. Besides being the son of Hachaliah, the only other mention of his family is found in chapter 7:2; there he speaks of his brother Hanani. Some class him as a priest for the reason that he heads the list of priests. But his name is given there as the princely leader of the people. As to his office, he carried two titles. He is called "Tirshatha" in chapter 8:9, which means ruler or governor. In chapter 12:26 his title is also governor; the word used is "pechah," the Turkish word "pasha."

There can be no doubt that this man of God wrote chapters 1 to 7:5; it is an autobiography. Chapter 7:6-73 is a quotation of a register of names, which differs in numerous places from the register in Ezra 2:1-70. Both were probably copied from public documents, perhaps from the book of Chronicles mentioned in chapter 7:23. The discrepancies between Ezra 2 and Nehemiah 7 show that Nehemiah did not copy from Ezra's record. Chapters 8 to 10, it is claimed by some, were not written by the hand of Nehemiah. It has been suggested that Ezra is the author. The remaining section, chapters 11 to 13, bears the clear mark of Nehemiah's pen.

The History it Contains

Nehemiah was the cupbearer in the palace of Shushan, serving Artaxerxes the King. When he learned the deplorable condition of the people in the land of his fathers, he sat down, wept and prayed. The king discovered the source of Nehemiah's sorrow, and permitted him to go, giving him full authority to rebuild the wall of Jerusalem and to help his people. This was in the year 445 B.C. Nehemiah reached the city the same year, and was for twelve years actively engaged in the welfare work of Jerusalem. The city wall was finished and the work done in spite of the many hindrances and obstacles the enemy put in the way. Sanballat, the Moabite, and Tobiah, the Ammonite, were Nehemiah's chief enemies. With them were allied the Arabians, Ammonites and Ashdodites. They tried to hinder the work by mocking the workmen, then by threatening them with violence. When their attempts failed to arrest the restoration of the wall, then they tried craft. Nehemiah came out victorious. And there were also internal troubles among the people, threatening disruption. Thus as Daniel the prophet had announced, the wall was rebuilt and the work finished in troublous times (Dan. 9:25).

After the city had been fortified, the wall built, religious reforms were inaugurated. At the Watergate the law was read and expounded by Ezra the priest. The feast of tabernacles was also celebrated, followed by a solemn fast, repentance and a prayer of humiliation and confession of sins. A covenant then was made. In all this Nehemiah was assisted by the pious

Ezra. About 432 B.C. Nehemiah returned to Babylon. His stay there does not seem to have been very long, and he went back to Jerusalem. After his return he demanded the separation of all the mixed multitude from among the people. He also expelled the Ammonite Tobiah from the chamber which the high priest Eliashib had prepared for him in the temple. Then he chased away the son-in-law of Sanballat, a son of Joiada the high priest. According to the Jewish historian Josephus, Nehemiah died at an advanced age.

Interesting light has been thrown on this book and the conditions of the Jews of that period by the recent discovery of Aramaic papyri near Assouan. These papers were written twenty-four years after Nehemiah's second visit to Jerusalem, and sixteen years after the death of King Artaxerxes; they were therefore probably written during the lifetime of Nehemiah. These papyri speak of the Jewish colony in the land, and the house of the LORD with its worship, as well as what the enemy did to the people.

The Spiritual Lessons

Nehemiah is a beautiful character well worth a close study. He was a man of prayer, who habitually turned to God, seeking His wisdom and His strength. The rebuilding of the wall, the different gates, and the men who toiled there, the attempts of the enemies and their defeat, all contain truths of much spiritual value and help. The reader will find the spiritual and dispensational lessons pointed out in the annotations of each chapter.

The Division of Nehemiah

The contents of the book are best divided into three sections.

I. HOW NEHEMIAH RETURNED TO JERUSALEM AND THE BUILDING OF THE WALL (1-7)

II. THE SPIRITUAL REVIVAL (8-10)

III. THE PEOPLE ESTABLISHED, THE DEDICATION OF THE WALL, AND NEHEMIAH'S FINAL ACTS (11-13)

Analysis and Annotations

I. HOW NEHEMIAH RETURNED TO JERUSALEM AND THE BUILDING OF THE WALL

CHAPTER 1

1. Nehemiah hears of the condition of Jerusalem (1:1-3)
2. His great sorrow, and prayer (1:4-11)

Verses 1-3. "The words of Nehemiah (the Lord is comfort) the son of Hachaliah." It is therefore the personal narrative of his experience which is before us in the first six chapters of this book, in which he describes his soul exercise, and how the Lord made it possible for him to return to Jerusalem, and how the wall was rebuilt. Nehemiah was a young man, born in captivity holding a position of nearness to the great Persian king and living in the beautiful palace of Shushan. He lived in luxuries, and was an honored servant of the king. It was in the month of Chisleu, in the twentieth year (445 B.C.) when Hanani his brother (7:2) visited him with certain men out of Judah. The question he asked them at once shows the deep interest he had in God's people. "I asked them concerning the Jews that had escaped, which were left of the captivity, and concerning Jerusalem." Though he had never seen Jerusalem, the city of his fathers, he loved Jerusalem and felt like all pious captives, so beautifully expressed in one of the Psalms--"If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning. If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth, if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy" (Ps. 137:5-6). Though he lived in prosperity his heart was with his people. It was bad news which they brought him.

The remnant was in great affliction and reproach, the wall of Jerusalem in a broken-down condition, and the gates burned with fire.

Verses 4-11. This sad news overwhelmed him with great sorrow. He sat down and wept; his mourning continued certain days. If Nehemiah was so affected by the temporal condition of Jerusalem and the affliction of the remnant, how much more should believers mourn and weep over the spiritual conditions among God's people. Yet how little of this sorrowing spirit over these conditions is known in our day! It is needed for humiliation and effectual prayer. Nehemiah did not rush at once into the presence of the king to utter his petitions. He waited and fasted certain days and then addressed the God of heaven (Ezra 6:9). He reveals in the opening words of his prayer familiarity with the Word of God. "I beseech thee, O LORD, the God of heaven, the great and terrible God (Deut. 7:21; 10:17; Dan. 9:4) that keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love Him and keep His commandments (Deut. 7:9; 1 Kings 8:23) let thine ear now be attentive (2 Chron. 6:40; Ps. 130:2) and thine eyes open (2 Chron. 6:40) that thou mayest hearken unto the prayer of thy servant." After these scriptural expressions, expressing confidence in the power and faithfulness of God, Nehemiah confessed his sin and the sins of his people. "Yea, I and my father's house have sinned. We have dealt very corruptly against thee, and have not kept thy commandments, nor thy statutes, nor the judgments, which thou commandest thy servant Moses." Ezra had prayed a similar prayer, and before him Daniel in Babylon (Dan. 9). There is no flaw revealed in Nehemiah's character, as there is none in Daniel's life, yet both of these men of God went on their faces and confessed their sins and the sins of the people. They realized that they had a share in the common failure of His people. And so are we all blameworthy of the spiritual decline and failure among God's people, and should humble ourselves on account of it. It is this which is pleasing to the Lord and which assures His mercy.

But Nehemiah was also trusting in the promise of God. He was a man of faith, and cast himself upon the word of God, knowing what the Lord had promised He is able to do. "Remember, I beseech thee, the word that Thou commandest thy servant Moses." The promise in Deut. 30:1-5 is especially upon his heart and mentioned by him in the presence of the Lord. In the near future this great national promise of the regathering of Israel from the ends of the earth will be fulfilled, in that day when the Lord returns. The exercise and prayer of Nehemiah will be repeated in the Jewish believing remnant during the time of Jacob's trouble, the great tribulation. Furthermore Nehemiah claims the blessing for the people on account of their covenant relation with Jehovah. They are His servants, His people, "whom thou hast redeemed by thy great power and by thy strong hand." And how he pleads for an answer. "O LORD, I beseech thee, let now thine ear be attentive to the prayer of thy servant, and to the prayer of thy servants, who delight to fear thy name"--others were also praying--"and prosper, I pray thee, thy servant this day and grant him mercy in the sight of this man." He meant the powerful monarch Artaxerxes. Yet in God's presence he looked upon him only as a man, and he knew God could use this man in behalf of His people, as He had used Cyrus.

CHAPTER 2

1. The King's question (2:1-2)
2. The King's permission (2:3-8)
3. The arrival in Jerusalem and the night-ride (2:9-16)
4. The resolution to build the wall (2:17-18)
5. The ridicule of the enemy, and Nehemiah's answer (2:19-20)

Verses 1-2. The last sentence of the previous chapter, "For I was the king's cupbearer," belongs to this chapter. Nehemiah is seen exercising the functions of the King's cupbearer to minister to the joy and pleasure of the monarch. Notice that it was four months after his prayer. Hanani had visited his brother Nehemiah in the month Chisleu, the ninth month, and Nisan is the first month of the Jewish year. How many prayers he must have offered up during these three months! How patiently he waited for the Lord's time! He carried a heavy burden upon his heart, expressed in a sad countenance, which was at last noticed by Artaxerxes. "Why is thy countenance sad, seeing that thou art not sick? this is nothing else but sorrow of heart," said the king. Then was Nehemiah sore afraid fearing the king's displeasure.

Verses 3-8. Nehemiah answered the king and acquainted him with the reason of his sadness, "why should not my countenance be sad, when the city, the place of my father's sepulchres, lieth waste, and the gates thereof are consumed with fire?" From the meek answer Nehemiah gave we learn that his forefathers were inhabitants of Jerusalem, and he belonged therefore to the tribe of Judah. Instead of the angry outburst Nehemiah feared, the king asked graciously, "For what dost thou make request?" How his heart must have been stirred when the king uttered these words! He had prayed four months before that the God of heaven grant him "mercy in the sight of this man." And now the answer to his prayer was at hand. When the king had asked for his request, Nehemiah prayed again to the God of heaven. He found time to pray between the words of the king and the answer he gave him. His lips did not speak, his knees were not bowed, nor did the king see any other sign that Nehemiah prayed. Yet there was earnest believing and prevailing prayer. It was an ejaculatory prayer, the soul's cry to God, carried swiftly by the Holy Spirit to the throne of God. This man of God every step of the way cast himself upon God; prayer was his constant resource. Such is our privilege. As we walk in His fellowship we too shall pray and look to the Lord as Nehemiah did. It is a blessed occupation to cultivate a prayerful mind; indeed it is the breathing of the new life. Whatever our experiences, the heart which is in touch with God will always turn to Him even in the smallest matters. After Nehemiah had stated his request the king granted what he had asked. His prayers were answered; God had touched the heart of the monarch. "So it pleased the king to send me; and I set him a time." The requested letters to the governors beyond the river to convey him till he came to Judah, and to Asaph the forester to furnish him with timber needed for the work, were granted to him. In this, like pious Ezra (Ezra 7:6; 8:18, 22) Nehemiah saw the power of God displayed--"according to the good hand of God upon me." Faith not only depends on God, but also sees, His gracious hand and gives the glory to Him. In faith Nehemiah could say "my God," like Paul in writing to the Philippians (Phil. 4:19).

Verses 9-16. He crossed the river Euphrates and traversed Transpotamia till he reached Samaria. He delivered the letters. Sanballat, the Horonite, and Tobiah, the servant, the Ammonite, Samaritans, are here mentioned for the first time. Sanballat may have been the governor of the Samaritan mongrel race. They were grieving exceedingly at Nehemiah's appearing, when they heard he had come "to seek the welfare of the children of Israel."

Sanballat (hate in disguise) is called the Horonite, an inhabitant of Horonaim, which was a southern Moabite city (Isa. 15:5; Jer. 48:3, 5, 34) and Tobiah, the servant, an Ammonite. They came from Moab and Ammon, blood-relations of Israel, being bastard offspring of Lot. The Moabite and Ammonite were not to come into the congregation of God forever; the curse rested upon them. They did not meet Israel with bread and water when they came forth from Egypt. They hated the people of God, and had hired Balaam the son of Beor to curse Israel (Deut. 23:3-6). They were the bitter enemies of Israel, which explains the displeasure of Sanballat and Tobiah when Nehemiah came with the king's credentials. They represented typically those who profess to be children of God, but are not born again; their profession is spurious and carnal, and as mere religionists, with a form of godliness but destitute of its power, they are the enemies of the cross of Christ and of the real people of God.

Nehemiah continues his narrative. "So I came to Jerusalem and was there three days." We can well imagine, though he does not inform us of it, that these three days were more than days of rest from the strenuous journey. They were days of waiting on God, renewed prayer for guidance and wisdom. He was alone with his God. When the three days of waiting were over he began a night ride to inspect the condition of the different gates and the wall. When all was quiet and people asleep, this servant of God went on this memorable night inspection, accompanied by a few men. No one knows what God had put in his heart; he kept it a secret. There was no boast that he had come to do a big work, and no heralding of his plans. The man of faith, who trusts God, can go and act without making known what the Lord has commissioned him to do. He alone rode on an animal; the others walked. It must have been a sad journey as he passed from gate to gate in the walls. Desolation and debris everywhere. The gates were burned to ashes, and finally the rubbish in the way was so great that the animal he rode could no longer pass through. And how he must have sighed when his eyes beheld the ruin and havoc, the results of the judgment of God on account of Israel's sin!

And how many other true servants of God have spent nights like this in considering the failure and ruin among God's people, burdened with sorrow and deep concern, sighing and groaning, with hearts touched like Nehemiah's, ready to do the Lord's will.

Verses 17-18. The rulers, the Jews, the priests and nobles were ignorant of all he had done. On the morning after that night journey, he called the people together to tell them what the Lord had put in his heart. But with what meekness and tenderness he speaks to them! He does not reproach them or charge them with unfaithfulness and neglect. He does not assume the role of a leader, but identifies himself with the people. "Ye see the distress that we are in"--he might have said, "You see the distress you are in." Then he told them of what God had done. But we find not a word of credit to himself, nor of the lonely hours spent during that sleepless night. Then the people resolved to rise up and build.

Verses 19-20. Sanballat, Tobiah and a third one, Geshem the Arabian (an Ishmaelite) were at hand with their sneers. "They laughed us to scorn, and despised us, and said, What is this thing that ye do? Will ye rebel against the king?" They realized that Nehemiah had come to build the wall of exclusion, and bring the people back to their God-given separation; therefore these outsiders began at once to antagonize the messenger of God. Magnificent is Nehemiah's answer. "The God of heaven, He will prosper us." He puts God first. Knowing that they were doing His will in rebuilding the wall, he had the confidence and assurance that God was on their side and none could hinder. "Therefore we His servants will arise and build." This was their determination to do the work. "But ye have no portion, nor right, nor memorial in Jerusalem." It is the refusal of their fellow help. Though they might have claimed a relationship with the people of God, yet did they not belong to Israel. Their help was not wanted. What a contrast with the unseparated condition which prevails in the professing church in what is termed "work for the Lord" in which the unsaved and ungodly are asked to participate!

CHAPTER 3

1. The builders of the sheep gate (3:1-2)
2. The builders of the fish gate (3:3-5)
3. The repairers of the old gate (3:6-12)
4. The repairers of the valley gate (3:13)
5. The repairers of the dung gate (3:14)
6. The repairers of the gate of the fountain (3:15-25)
7. The repairers of the water gate (3:26-27)
8. The repairers of the horse gate (3:28)
9. The builders of the east gate and the Gate Miphkad (3:29-32)

Verses 1-2. The work is begun at once. We shall not point out the location of these different gates, nor study the topography of Jerusalem in the days of Nehemiah, as others have done. There are most helpful, spiritual lessons to be learned from the building of the wall and the repairing of the gates. A wall is for protection and to keep out what does not belong in the city. In Ezra's work we saw the restoration of the true place of worship. The wall surrounding the place where the people gathered once more in the true worship of Jehovah typifies the guarding of that place of privilege and blessing. A wall of separation is needed to keep out that which is undesirable and which would hinder and mar the true worship. (Even in connection with the millennial temple a wall is mentioned, "to make a separation between the sanctuary and the profane place" Ezek. 42:20.) Even so a church, an assembly, composed of true believers who gather together in that worthy Name, and unto that Name, must be protected from the world and all which dishonors Christ, or that which is contrary to sound doctrine, must be excluded. This is the true New Testament principle in connection with the true Church, foreshadowed in the building of the wall surrounding the place where the Lord had set His Name.

The third chapter is a remarkable one. We see the people of God at work building and repairing, every one doing the work in a certain place. Here is the record of the names, where and how they labored. God keeps such a record of all His servants and their labors. When all His people appear before the judgment seat of Christ this book will be opened "and every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labor" (1 Cor. 3:8).

Ten gates are mentioned in this chapter. In chapter 8:16 we read of "the gate of Ephraim" and in chapter 12:39 of "the prison gate." If we add these two to the ten mentioned in this chapter we have twelve gates (Rev. 21:12). The first gate at

which the work started is the sheep gate. Through this gate the sacrificial animals were led to the altar, the constant witness to the fact that "without the shedding of blood there is no remission" and the types of Him who was "led as a lamb to the slaughter." The sheep gate at which the work started is typical of the blessed work of the Lamb of God, He who bore our sins in His body on the tree, the offering of His spotless, holy body by which we are sanctified. The lesson here is that the person and work of Christ is the starting point of a true restoration, and that the cross of Christ, the work of God's Son has accomplished, must be guarded above everything else. At the close of this chapter this sheep-gate is mentioned once more. After making the circuit of all the gates, we are led back to this first gate. It is with this great truth, the gospel of Christ, that all repairing of the inroads of the world and the flesh, must start and terminate. This gate suggests Him who said, "I am the door; by me if any man enter in he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture" (John 10:9). There is no other gate which leads to life and into God's presence.

Eliashib (God will restore) the high priest, with his brethren, builded the sheep gate, sanctified it and set it up. It was priestly work. The tower of Meah and the tower of Hananeel are mentioned. Meah means "a hundred" and it reminds us of the parable in which our Lord mentions the man who had a hundred sheep. Hananeel means "to whom God is gracious." Significant names. There is no doubt that this sheep gate is the same one mentioned in John 5:2, which affords still another application. The men of Jericho, once under the curse, but now in the place of nearness and blessing, toiled next to the high priest. What grace this reveals! Zaccur (well remembered) the son of Imri (the towering one) also was there.

Verses 3-5. Next was the fish gate. This was separated from the sheep gate by the portion of the wall which the men of Jericho and Zaccur repaired. Outside of that gate may have been a fish market, or it may have been the gate through which the fishermen passed to catch fish. It reminds us of the words of our Lord, "Come ye after me, and I will make you to become fishers of men" (Mark 1:17). After we have passed through the sheep gate we must go through the fish gate, to catch fish, to be soul-winners. In this way, leading others to Christ, bringing sinners to a knowledge of the Saviour, the Church is built up. Hassenaah (lifted up) was the builder there. Then Meremoth (strong), Meshullam (repaying a friend) and Zadok (just) repaired next to the fish gate. "And next unto them the Tekoites repaired; but their nobles did not put their necks to the work of their Lord." The prophet Amos was a Tekoite who had prophesied many years before, a simple herdsman and gatherer of sycamore figs. He was chosen of the Lord, and here other humble instruments of Tekoa, used in doing the work, are immortalized in this record. Their nobles were slackers. They had no interest in the work of their Lord. And so there are such who do not work for the Lord, and in that coming day will suffer loss, though they are saved.

Verses 6-12. The next gate is the old gate. This gate was probably the same which elsewhere is called "the corner gate" (2 Kings 14:13; Jer. 31:38). Jehoiada ("the Lord knows") and Meshullam repaired this gate. This gate may also remind us of Him "whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting," who is the cornerstone, upon whom all rests. Next repaired Melatiah, the Gibeonite, and Jadon, the Meronothite, the men of Gibeon and Mizpah. The Gibeonites, on account of their deception by which they had obtained a covenant of peace with Israel in Joshua's day, had been made "hewers of wood and drawers of water." Here we behold some of them participating in the great work. Of the others we mention Rephaiah, who was a wealthy man, who did not hire a substitute, but labored with his own hands, toiling with the rest. Shallum, the son of Halohesh, was another man of power and wealth; he and his daughters repaired like the rest. What a sight it must have been when these zealous men cleared away the debris and repaired the gates, and among them the daughters of Shallum!

Verse 13. The valley gate was repaired by Hanun (gracious) and the inhabitants of Zanoah (broken). The valley typifies the low place, humility. How needed this is in service for God, for "God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble."

Verse 14. The dung gate was repaired by Malchiah, and he was the ruler of Beth-haccerem (the place of the vineyard). This gate was used to carry out the refuse and filth from the city. This gate reminds of the exhortations that God's people must cleanse themselves from all filthiness of the flesh and the spirit "for God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness" (1 Thess. 4:7).

Verses 15-25. The gate of the fountain was next to the dung gate. The fountain, ever flowing, is a blessed type of the Holy Spirit, who indwells the believer and is in him, the well of living water springing up, like a fountain, into everlasting life (John 4:14). It is suggestive that the fountain gate came after the dung gate. If a believer cleanses himself from that which defiles, the Spirit of God will be unhindered, filling the believer and using him as a vessel meet for the Master's use. Shallun (recompense) the son of Colhozeh (wholly seer) the ruler of Mizpah (watchtower) repaired and built that gate. And these names fit in beautifully with the Spirit of God as the fountain of life and power. We cannot mention all the names which follow. (A good concordance like Strong's or Young's gives most of the Hebrew proper names in a reliable translation. We suggest the study of the names of those who repaired as interesting and helpful.) Nor do we know anything whatever of the individual history of those zealous Israelites, who reconstructed and restored the wall and gates of Jerusalem. God knows each one and has preserved their names, though unknown by the world, in His Word. Surely "the memory of the just is blessed" (Prov. 10:7) and some day they, with us and all His servants, will receive the reward.

Verses 26-27. The water gate is mentioned and the Nethinim, who were servants and dwelt in Ophel (the high place) are connected with this gate. This gate suggests the Word of God so frequently spoken of under the symbol of water (John 3:5, 13:1-16; Eph. 5:26; Ps. 119:136). It is very interesting to notice that while the servants are mentioned in connection with the water gate, it does not say that they repaired the gate. The Word of God needs no building up or improving; it builds up those who bow to its blessed authority.

Verse 28. The horse gate (2 Kings 11:6; Jer. 31:40) suggests warfare and victory. In a world of evil the people of God wage a warfare. We wrestle not with flesh and blood, but with the wicked spirits. Paul speaks of the believer as a soldier of Christ. Victory is on our side, though the forces of evil may threaten on all sides.

Verses 29-32. The east gate was repaired and kept by Shemaiah, the son of Shechaniah. From Ezekiel's prophecy we learn that the Shekina glory left from the east gate, and that when the glory returns to dwell once more in the temple, the great millennial temple of Ezekiel's vision, the glory of the Lord will enter through the east gate. The east gate faces the rising sun. It suggests the coming of the Lord for His people. And here the two names fit in beautifully. Shemaiah means "heard of the Lord"; even so He will hear His people and some day will answer their prayer for His coming. Shechaniah means "habitation of the Lord." We shall be with Him.

The Miphkad gate was repaired by Malchiah (the Lord is King) the goldsmith's son. Miphkad means "the appointed place" or "a place of visitation." It was probably the gate in which the judges sat to settle disputes and controversies. It suggests the judgment seat of Christ.

Thus we learn that the wall surrounding and protecting the gathered people suggests the cross as the starting point; service; Christ as Lord; humility; cleansing from defilement; filling with the Spirit; the Word of God and its power; warfare and victory; the coming of the Lord and the judgment seat of Christ.

CHAPTER 4

1. The indignation and sneers of the enemies (4:1-3)
2. Nehemiah's ejaculatory prayer (4:4-6)
3. Conspiracy, and more prayer (4:7-9)
4. Nehemiah's precautions and confidence (4:10-23)

Verses 1-3. Sanballat (hate in disguise) having heard of the successful building of the wall, became very angry and mocked the Jews. And Tobiah the Ammonite used sarcasm. He said that which they build will be so weak that one of the foxes, which infested the broken-down walls (Ps. 63:10) could break these newly built walls again.

Verses 4-6. The answer to these sneers was prayer. The language these two enemies used was provoking, but Nehemiah's refuge is prayer. Hezekiah did the same when the Assyrian taunted him and defiled the God of Israel. It is

another of the brief ejaculatory prayers of Nehemiah. There are seven of them in this book: chapters 2:4; 4:4-6; 5:19; 6:14; 13:14, 22, 29. He prayed, "Hear, our God, for we are despised, and turn their reproach upon their own head, and give them for a prey in the land of captivity; and cover not their iniquity, and let not their sin be blotted out from before thee; because they have provoked thee to anger before the builders." He cast himself wholly upon God and with this prayer Nehemiah and the people put the matter in the hands of the Lord. They were an object of contempt, as His people who were doing the work of the Lord wanted to have done. Sanballat and Tobiah were the enemies of God. This prayer reminds us of the many imprecatory prayers in the psalms. When in the future another remnant of the Jews returns to the land, they will face in the great tribulation more powerful enemies than this remnant had to contend with. The man of sin, the Antichrist, will be in control, and it is then that they will pray these prayers, some of them almost like Nehemiah's prayer (Ps. 109:14).

The work was not hindered by the taunts of the enemy. "So built we the wall; and all the wall was joined together unto the half thereof, for the people had a mind to work." If only God's people are in touch with God and cast themselves wholly upon Him, all the efforts of the enemy are unavailing.

Verses 7-9. As the work progressed and the Samaritan enemies saw that their taunts were unsuccessful, they became very wroth and conspired to use force and fight against Jerusalem. Sanballat and Tobiah had gathered others, the Arabians, Ammonites and Ashdodites, to hinder the work. Behind them stood the same enemy of God, Satan, who always hinders the work of God. His work of opposition is the same in every age. A very serious time had come to the builders of the wall. The enemy was threatening to fall upon them, and perhaps destroy what they had built. "Nevertheless we made our prayer unto our God." It was prayer, dependence on God, first. The next thing they did was to take precaution against the enemy--"and set a watch against them day and night, because of them." But was not prayer enough? Why the setting of a watch if they trusted the Lord? If they had not done this it would have been presumption on their part. Their action did not clash with their trust in God.

Verses 10-23. There was also discouragement in their midst. As the apostle wrote of himself, "without were fightings, within were fears" (2 Cor. 7:5), this was true of them. They became timid and fainthearted. It was Judah, the princely tribe, whose emblem was the lion, which showed discouragement and was ready to give up in despair. But Nehemiah made no answer to the complaint "we are not able to build the wall." The best remedy was to keep right on praying, working and watching. The adversaries intended to make a surprise attack and slay the workmen and cause the work to cease. That was their plan; but they did not reckon with God, who watched over His people. Ten times the Jews which were scattered among these adversaries warned them of the great danger of the coming attack. This was another discouragement. Then Nehemiah acted in the energy of faith. He knew God was on their side and that He would fight for them. He prepared the people for the threatening conflict and armed them with swords, spears and bows. Then he addressed them with inspiring words. "Be not afraid of them: Remember the Lord, great and terrible, and fight for your brethren, your sons and your daughters, your wives and your houses." All was at stake. No mercy could be expected from the wicked adversaries. It was a blessed battle-cry he gave to them: "Remember the Lord." If He is remembered and kept before the heart defeat is impossible. The great preparation was soon reported to the enemies, by which they knew that their attack had become known. Nehemiah saw in it all God's gracious and providential dealings, "God had brought their counsel to nought." Then he continued to work at their task of building the wall. But they did not become careless. They continued to be on their guard. "Every one with one of his hands wrought in the work and with the other hand held a weapon." A trumpeter stood at Nehemiah's side. If he sounded the alarm they were to gather together; then, said Nehemiah, "our God shall fight for us." "So we labored in the work, and half of them held the spears from the rising of the morning till the stars appeared." We leave it with the reader to apply all this to our spiritual warfare against our enemies. The Sword of the Spirit is the Word of God, and constant watching is needed for that.

CHAPTER 5

1. The complaint of oppression (5:1-5)
2. Nehemiah's rebuke and demands (5:6-13)
3. Nehemiah's generosity (5:14-19)

Verses 1-5. The internal conditions among the toiling people were serious. The work which was done in rebuilding the walls was a labor of love; no wages were paid. As the people were thus engaged their other occupations, including agriculture, had to be neglected. As a result the poor had been driven to mortgage their lands, vineyards and houses in order to buy corn, because of the dearth. The rich had taken advantage of this and had enslaved their sons and daughters, and there seemed to be no prospect of redeeming them. The rich Jews by usury oppressed the poor, who had lost their lands and houses. There was therefore a great cry of the people and of their wives against their brethren the Jews. It was a sad condition; the enemy was doing his work in the camp (Acts 6:1). Oppression of the poor is especially displeasing to God and His Spirit condemns and warns against it (Amos 2:6; 5:12, 8:4-8; Prov. 14:31; 22:16; 28:3; and James 5:1-6).

Verses 6-13. Righteous Nehemiah, when he heard all this, was moved with indignation and righteous anger took hold on him. Nehemiah, the Governor, writes, "I consulted with myself." No doubt much prayer was connected with this self consultation. He then rebuked the nobles and rulers for having done what the law of God forbids and condemns (Exod. 22:25; Lev. 25:36-37; Deut. 23:19; Ps. 15:5) to exact usury. A great assembly was called in which their conduct was denounced unsparingly. "We after our ability have redeemed our brethren the Jews, which were sold unto the heathen; and will ye even sell your brethren? or shall they be sold unto us?" When Nehemiah came to Jerusalem he had freed those Jews who were in bondage to the heathen on account of some debt, and these rich usurers were selling their own brethren. They had no answer to give but were convicted of their evil deeds. He then demanded full restitution, "Restore, I pray you, to them even this day, their lands, their vineyards, their olive yards, and their houses, also the hundredth part of the money, and of the corn, the wine and the oil, that ye exact of them." The appeal was effectual. They were at once ready to restore, to require nothing more of them, and to do all Nehemiah had demanded. It was a great victory. Had the oppression continued and the internal strife, it would have resulted in disaster. How often these internal strifes and acts of injustice have brought reproach upon the people of God, and dishonor to that worthy Name! (Gal. 5:15; James 3:16.) They had to give an oath to do this, and solemnly Nehemiah shook his lap and said, "So God shake out every man from his house, and from his labor, who performeth not this promise, even thus be he shaken out and emptied." An "Amen" from the great congregation followed, and they acted upon the promise.

Verses 14-19. The closing verses show the generosity and self-denying character of this man of God. It reminds us somewhat of the apostle Paul and his testimony concerning himself (1 Cor. 4:12; 2 Cor. 12:15-16; 1 Thess. 2:9-10). In all he had done as a servant of God he had the comfort that God knew and would be his Rewarder. "Think upon me, my God, for good, according to all that I have done for this people." He will have his reward, and so will all His people, who serve in behalf of God's people as Nehemiah did.

CHAPTER 6

1. The attempt to entice Nehemiah (6:1-4)
2. The attempt to intimidate him (6:5-9)
3. The attempt through a false prophet (6:10-14)
4. The wall finished (6:15-16)
5. The conspiracy between Jewish nobles and Tobiah (6:17-19)

Verses 1-4. Defeated in all previous efforts to hinder the work and to do harm to the builders of the wall, the enemies made new attempts to make them cease from the work. Sanballat, Tobiah, Geshem the Arabian, with the other enemies, had heard that the wall was about finished. Sanballat and Geshem sent the message to Nehemiah, "Come, let us meet together in one of the villages in the plain of Ono." Nehemiah knew their scheme, "they thought to do me mischief," probably to assassinate him, or make him a prisoner. He therefore answered, "I am doing a great work, so that I cannot come down; why should the work cease, whilst I leave it, and come down to you?" Four times they tried to entice him, and four times he gave the same answer. Apparently Sanballat and Geshem offered a friendly meeting on neutral ground, suggesting some kind of an alliance. But Nehemiah, whole-hearted as he was, refused to come down and stop the important God-given work. He would not turn aside from the place given to him by the Lord and the work which he had been called to do. Maintaining this separation was his safeguard. In our own days of worldly alliance and compromise,

when deceitful workers abound on all sides, who are like the Samaritans, who feared the Lord outwardly and served their own gods (2 Kings 17:33) the only way of escape is to act like Nehemiah did and have no fellowship with such.

Verses 5-9. After this failure they attempted to intimidate Nehemiah. Sanballat sent his servant the fifth time, and while the previous communications were sealed this one was in the form of an open letter. In this letter Nehemiah was slandered and a threat made to accuse him of treason to the king of Persia. Maliciousness breathed in every word of this open letter. With a clear conscience, knowing that all was a wicked invention, Nehemiah answered this new attack. "There are no such things done as thou sayest, but thou feignest them out of thine own heart." He recognized what they tried to do and afresh Nehemiah looked to his God. "Now therefore, O God, strengthen my hands." As it was in Nehemiah's day so it is still. Wherever the work of the Lord is done and God's servants labor to glorify Him, the enemy will rise up and hinder the work. When the Lord opens a door, then many adversaries will appear. The sneers, the hatred, the wiles and the lies of the world are the same today, because behind them stands the same person who acted through Sanballat, Tobiah and Geshem--Satan, the god of this age.

Verses 10-14. Shemaiah's message was the message of a false prophet. He told Nehemiah that they would come to slay him. He supposed that Nehemiah would flee after receiving this information in the form of a message from the Lord. But Nehemiah said, "Should such a man as I flee? and who is there, that, being such as I am, would go into the temple to save his life? I will not go in." He was a man of faith, in fellowship with God and he at once knew that the message was not from Him. He perceived God had not sent him. Shemaiah was the hireling of the adversaries. It was a cleverly laid plan, not only to frighten Nehemiah, but to make him sin, so that they might have something against him. It seems that Shemaiah was ceremonially unclean; that is probably the meaning of "shut up." He was not fit in that condition to be in the house of God, within the temple. And Nehemiah too, not being a priest, would have transgressed had he followed Shemaiah's suggestion. This was the cunning scheme. With this hireling prophet there were also other prophets and a prophetess, by the name of Noadiah.

Verses 15-16. "So the wall was finished in the twenty-fifth day of the month Elul, in fifty and two days." How grateful they must have been when their task was finished! Critics have remarked that fifty-two days is too short a time to accomplish that much work. But a large number of people as well as the servants of Nehemiah (5:16) worked incessantly. The material, too, was ready, for they probably had to dig out the old stones to put them back into the right place; no new stones needed to be hewed and transported. God had worked and given His blessing. The success of it, next to God, was due to persevering prayer, personal and united effort, constant watchfulness and unflinching courage. And their enemies were more cast down, "for they perceived that this work was wrought of our God."

Verses 17-19. The final paragraph of this chapter reveals another sad condition which resulted from disobedience to the law. Mixed marriages were responsible for it. Nehemiah only reports this serious fellowship of the nobles of the Jews and his enemy Tobiah. We shall read later how Nehemiah dealt with those who had allied themselves with this Ammonite (chapter 13).

CHAPTER 7

1. Provisions made for the defense of the city (7:1-4)
2. The genealogy (7:5-65)
3. Their whole number (7:66-69)
4. The gifts for the work (7:70-73)

Verses 1-4. The wall had been finished and the doors set up. Porters, singers and the Levites were appointed, and Nehemiah gave to his brother Hanani and Hananiah, the ruler of the castle, charge over Jerusalem. The porters were gate keepers. These gate keepers are named in Ezra 2:42, and here in this chapter in verse 45. Their duty was to open the gates and bar them at night. Nehemiah's instructions are given in the text, "Let not the gates of Jerusalem be opened until the sun be hot; and while they stand by, let them shut the doors, and bar them: and appoint watches of the inhabitants of Jerusalem,

every one in his watch, and every one to be over against his house." The city was carefully guarded. Every one who entered the city had to do so in broad daylight, and a system of watches was established for the purpose of watching the gates of the city day and night. It seems the Hebrews before the exile, and some time after, had three night watches of four hours each. Later, at the time our Lord was on earth, they had four night watches (Mark 13:35). It was wisdom to guard the entrances to the city so as to keep out those who had no right to enter. As there were many enemies who might sneak in and do harm, this scrutiny and these watches were of great importance and necessity.

This caution exercised by Nehemiah in regard to watching those who entered the gates gives a lesson concerning the Church. The New Testament teaches the same caution as to those who are to be admitted to Christian fellowship, and those who are to be refused. Unregenerated persons have no right in a true church or assembly, nor any one whose life is not right, nor who holds doctrines contrary to the faith delivered unto the saints. "If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: for he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds" (2 John 10-11). But if even in the Apostolic days "certain men crept in unawares," as Jude writes (Jude 4) how much greater is this evil in these Laodicean days.

Verses 5-65. This chapter corresponds to the second chapter in Ezra; the annotations given there need not be repeated here. But we notice Nehemiah's statement, "My God put it into my heart." As a godly man, he acknowledges the hand of the Lord and His guidance.

Verses 66-69. The number of the whole congregation is given as 42,360. If we turn to Ezra 2:64 we find the same statement. There are differences between these two lists which prove that they are not identical.

Verses 70-73. The gifts for the work are mentioned more fully by Nehemiah. See Ezra's record, chapter 2:68-70. The amounts in both records do not agree, and it is generally charged that it is due to different traditions, or copyists' errors. But there is no real discrepancy. Ezra mentions what some of the chiefs of the fathers offered. Nehemiah records what he himself gave (Tirshatha is Nehemiah's Persian title as governor) besides the chiefs and the rest of the people.

II. THE SPIRITUAL REVIVAL

CHAPTER 8

1. The reading of the law before the water gate (8:1-8)
2. A day of joy and not of mourning (8:9-12)
3. The keeping of the feast of tabernacles (8:13-18)

Verses 1-8. This interesting chapter gives the record of a gracious revival through the reading of the law. All the people gathered themselves together as one man in the street that was before the water gate, the place which suggests the cleansing and refreshing power of the Word. And as a united people they had but one desire, to hear the law of Moses, which the Lord had commanded, to Israel. They gave orders to Ezra that he should bring the book of the law. This the people knew was the Word of the Lord, and for this they hungered. Every true revival must begin with the Word, and in believing submission to what the Lord has said. So, it has been in all the great revivals of the past, and so it will be in the future. The great need today is "back to the Bible"; and to listen to its message as the message of God. How willingly and joyfully Ezra must have responded, and how it must have cheered the aged servant of the Lord! He brought the law before the congregation both of men and women, and those that understood in hearing (children of a certain age). Critics say that Ezra's law of Moses must not be understood as meaning the Pentateuch; they claim that it was a collection of different laws, and part of the so-called "priestly codex," which even then, according to the critical school, was not completely finished. Inasmuch as the destructive criticism denies that Moses is the author of the Pentateuch, they are obliged to resort to these arguments in order to sustain their theory. There is no valid reason to doubt when the book of the law of Moses was demanded and Ezra brought it before the people, that it was the Pentateuch, which the Jews call Torah, the law.

Then followed under great attention the reading, from the morning until the midday. Ezra stood upon a pulpit of wood, which was a raised platform which had been made for this purpose. Alongside of Ezra were thirteen men; in all, counting in Ezra, fourteen men faced the people. They probably took turns in reading from the law. Their names are interesting if we look at their meaning--Mattithiah (gift of the LORD); Shema (hearing); Anaiah (answer of the LORD); Uriah (the LORD is Light); Hilkiah (portion of the LORD); Maaseiah (work of the LORD); Mishael (who is as God is); Malchijah (King is the LORD); Hashum (wealthy); Hashbaddanah (esteemed by judging); Zechariah (the LORD remembers); Meshullam (reward). These names are suggestive of the Word itself. Then Ezra unrolled the parchment seen by all the people. Great reverence was manifested to the Word by all the people standing up. Then Ezra blessed the Lord, the great God. Amen, Amen was the people's answer, with the lifting up of their hands. Then they bowed their heads and worshipped the Lord with their faces to the ground. Ezra and the people believed that what they read is the Word of God. Hence this reverence, this praise and the attitude of submission. How little reverence for the Word of God our generation manifests. This too is a fruit of the destructive criticism, which has put the Bible on the same level with common literature. Thirteen others are mentioned who, with the Levites, caused the people to understand the law. Some think it means that the people did not understand Hebrew, and that the Hebrew text had to be translated into Aramaic. This is probably incorrect. Hebrew was not unknown after the captivity, for Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi spoke and wrote in that language. It rather means the interpretation of what had been read, that is, an exposition of it. The names of these thirteen expositors are also of interest. The first is Jeshua, which means "Jehovah is salvation"; this is the great truth which all Bible exposition must emphasize.

Verses 9-12. When the people heard the words of the Law they wept. They were conscience stricken on account of their individual and national sins; they judged themselves. The Word had been believed; their godly sorrow had been expressed by tears, and so they were ready for the words of comfort and cheer the Lord gave through Nehemiah, Ezra and the Levites. "This day is holy unto the LORD your God; mourn not nor weep ... go your way, eat the fat, and drink the sweet, and send portions to them for whom nothing is prepared; for this day is holy unto our Lord; neither be ye sorry; for the joy of the LORD is your strength." And this was done. They were the Lord's people, separated unto Himself, and as they remembered all His goodness, they rejoiced in Him. Refreshed themselves, they were to remember those "for whom nothing was prepared."

Verses 13-18. The feast of tabernacles was kept by them. They came in reading the law to the command of Moses that the children of Israel should "dwell in booths in the feast of the seventh month." Olive, pine, myrtle and palm tree branches were to be used to construct booths in commemoration of the wilderness journey. This was done at once by them in obedience to the Word. Thus we have three facts concerning the Word in this chapter; reading the Word, believing the Word, and obeying the Word. Hence there was great gladness in keeping the feast of tabernacles. The words, "for since the days of Joshua the son of Nun unto that day had not the children of Israel done so," present a difficulty. We read in Ezra 3:4 that the feast of tabernacles was celebrated immediately after the arrival of Zerubbabel; nor does it seem possible that God-fearing kings in the past overlooked this feast. 1 Kings 8:2 and 65 shows that Solomon kept this feast of the Lord. It therefore cannot mean that the people of Israel had neglected the keeping of the feast of tabernacles for a thousand years. The emphasis must be placed upon the word "so"--it means that never before had the feast of tabernacles been kept in such a manner. The reading of the Word and the revival which followed produced such a joyful and whole-hearted keeping of the feast, as had not been the case since the days of Joshua.

CHAPTER 9

1. The public humiliation and confession (9:1-5)
2. The great confession and prayer (9:6-38)

Verses 1-5. Two days after the feast of tabernacles had been concluded this humiliation and confession of sin took place. The assembled congregation fasted, with sackcloth and earth upon them. Separation was next. Evil confessed must mean evil put away. They separated themselves from all strangers, and after their confession they worshipped the Lord. Here again is the right order of a spiritual revival. Reading, hearing and believing the Word always comes first;

humiliation, self-judgment, confession and true worship follow.

Verses 6-38. The Levites who occupied the platform (called here stairs) called upon the people to stand up and to bless the Lord and His glorious Name. Then follows the prayer. It is the longest recorded prayer in the Bible and is much like Daniel's prayer (Dan. 9) and Ezra's prayer (Ezra 9). These three prayers deserve a careful comparison and study.

First there is a beautiful invocation and outburst of worship. "Thou art the LORD, even thou alone; thou hast made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth and all things that are thereon, the seas and all that is therein, and thou preservest them all; and the host of heaven worshippeth thee." Here is the praise of the Creator, whose power is acknowledged, as well as the Preserver of His creation. The covenant of God with Abraham and the seed of Abraham is next mentioned (9:7-8) and then follows the account of the deliverance of their fathers from Egypt. He was their Redeemer (9:9-11). The experience of the wilderness is stated in verses 12-21. The Creator-Redeemer led them in a pillar of cloud by day and in a pillar of fire by night; He spoke with them, gave them His commandments. He supplied them with bread from heaven and water from the rock. Then follows the story of their disobedience, and with what graciousness the Lord had dealt with their fathers. "Thou gavest also thy good Spirit to instruct them, and witheldest not thy manna from their mouth, and gavest them water for their thirst. Yea, forty years didst thou sustain them in the wilderness, and they lacked nothing; their clothes waxed not old, and their feet swelled not." The possession of the land of Canaan is given in verses 22-25, revealing God's faithfulness and His power in behalf of His redeemed people. Verses 26-30 cover the period of the judges and the prophets. In all the mercy of God is exalted. Then comes the prayer for mercy, with the acknowledgment of their sins as a nation.

CHAPTER 10

1. Those who sealed the covenant (10:1-27)
2. The obligations of the covenant (10:28-39)

Verses 1-27. The last verse of the preceding chapter mentions a covenant. "And yet for all this we make a sure covenant, and write it; and our princes, our Levites, and our priests, seal unto it." In this chapter we find the names of the heads of the different houses who sealed the covenant, which means they put their signature to it. According to talmudical tradition these signers constituted "the Great Synagogue." Originally it consisted of 120 members, but later only 70 belonged to it. Its covenants were as follows:

- (1) Not to marry heathen women;
- (2) to keep Sabbath;
- (3) to keep the Sabbatical year;
- (4) to pay every year a certain sum to the Temple;
- (5) to supply wood for the altar;
- (6) to pay the priestly dues;
- (7) to collect and to preserve the Holy Scriptures.

The list is headed by Nehemiah with his official title as Governor (Tirshatha). In verses 2-8 the priestly houses are given. The Levitical houses are recorded in verses 9-13. From the book of Ezra we learn that only four priestly houses and only two Levites had returned under Zerubbabel. Here we have twenty-one priestly and seventeen Levitical houses. This shows a marked increase. The chiefs of the people were forty-one houses; their names are given in verses 14-27.

Verses 28-39. Besides the heads of the houses recorded in this chapter there were the rest of the people, priests, Levites (the individuals), porters, singers and the Nethinim (Ezra 2:43); they all had separated themselves and entered into a curse, and into an oath. The word "curse" has the meaning of an imprecatory expression in the form of an oath. There must have been some formula in connection with signing the covenant, in which the signers declared that if they broke the covenant God would do something to them (the curse) and then by a direct oath swore to keep the covenant. The obligations of the

covenant are given in the rest of this chapter. These obligations may be summed up in one word, "obedience." They covenanted to obey the law of the Lord and to do all the commandments.

III. THE PEOPLE ESTABLISHED, THE DEDICATION OF THE WALL, AND NEHEMIAH'S FINAL ACTS

CHAPTER 11

1. The willing offerers (11:1-2)
2. The heads of the residents of Jerusalem (11:3-24)
3. The inhabitants outside of Jerusalem (11:25-36)

Verses 1-2. A splendid example of self-sacrifice is given in these two verses. Certain men willingly offered themselves to dwell in Jerusalem, and the people blest them for the willing sacrifice. It must be explained that Jerusalem was not then a very desirable place for residence. The enemies of the city seeking to destroy the fortifications and harm the inhabitants were constantly active. There was much danger for those who dwelt in the city itself. For this reason the great majority of the returned captives preferred to live outside of the walls of Jerusalem. It was decided to make every tenth man to dwell in Jerusalem. The decision was made by lot. But then these volunteers came to the front and displayed self denial and courage.

Verses 3-24. Here is another register of names recorded in God's book, and not forgotten by Him. The children of Judah, the children of Benjamin, the priests who acted as temple officials, the Levites, the Nethinim, and those with special callings are all named. Some day the Lord will be their Rewarder for their faithful service, as He will be the Rewarder of all His people.

Verses 25-36. Those who lived outside of Jerusalem, in villages, are tabulated in the closing verses of this chapter.

CHAPTER 12

1. Priests and Levites at the time of the return under Zerubbabel and Joshua (12:1-9)
2. The descendants of Joshua, the high priest (12:10-11)
3. The heads of the priestly houses in the time of Joiakim (12:12-21)
4. Heads of Levitical houses (12:22-26)
5. The dedication of the walls (12:27-43)
6. Provisions for the priests and Levites, and other temple officials (12:44-47)

Verses 1-9. The names of the priests and Levites, who went up under Zerubbabel, the son of Shealtiel, and Jeshua (or Joshua), the High Priest, are recorded first. Ezra, mentioned in the first verse, is not the Ezra of the book of Ezra. According to the seventh verse these persons "were the chiefs of the priests and of their brethren in the days of Jeshua." They constituted the heads of the twenty-four courses into which the priesthood was divided (1 Chron. 24:1-20). Only four heads of these courses had returned from the captivity; Jedaiah, Immer, Pasher and Harim. These were divided by Zerubbabel and Jeshua into the original twenty-four; but only twenty-two are mentioned in this record. The Abijah of verse 4 is one of the ancestors of John the Baptist (Luke 1:5).

Verses 10-11. This is the important register of the high priests, the descendants of Jeshua, or Joshua. From now on in the history of the Jewish people chronological reckonings were no longer made by means of the reign of kings, but by the successions of the high priests. Jaddua is unquestionably the same who is mentioned by Josephus, the Jewish historian. In his high priestly robes he met Alexander the Great as he besieged Jerusalem, and was the means of saving Jerusalem. Alexander fell on his face when he saw Jaddua, for the great king claimed to have seen this very scene in a dream vision. Inasmuch as Jaddua was not in office till a considerable time after the death of Nehemiah, the name Jaddua must have been added later, under the sanction of the Spirit of God, so that Jaddua's descent might be preserved.

Verses 12-26. The heads of the priestly houses in the time of Joiakim (the son of Jeshua, verse 10) are here recorded, as well as the heads of the Levitical houses. The sentence, "also the priests, in the reign of Darius the Persian" (Darius Codomannus 336-331), was probably added later, under the direction of the Holy Spirit. Further comment on the recorded names is not needed.

Verses 27-43. A full and interesting account of the dedication of the walls follows the register of the names. The singers are mentioned first (verse 27-30) for it was the occasion of praise and great rejoicing. They gathered from everywhere to celebrate the dedication with singing, with cymbals, psalteries and with harps. No doubt the Psalms were used by this multitude of singers, as they gave thanks in holy song. What singing and rejoicing there will be some day when "the ransomed of the Lord shall return and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads" (Isa. 35:10). A great procession was made around the walls. This was the main ceremony of the dedication. The procession was in two great companies, one going to the right, and the other to the left. The one company was headed by Nehemiah and the other probably by Ezra, the scribe. Hoshaiiah (set free of the LORD) and half of the princes of Judah are mentioned first in the one company. The two companies gave thanks, no doubt responding one to the other. Perhaps they used Psalms 145-147. Thus singing and praising the LORD they came to the house of the LORD. Here the greatest praise was heard, by the whole company. Seven priests blew the trumpets and eight others with them. The singers' chorus swelled louder and louder, so that the joyous sound was heard even afar off. Great sacrifices were offered and everybody rejoiced. It was God by His Spirit who produced this joy, "for God had made them rejoice with great joy."

Verses 44-47. The servants of the Lord, the priests and the Levites, were not forgotten. They brought their tithes and there was an abundant provision for all. Such were the blessed results under the spiritual revival of Nehemiah and Ezra. But when we turn to the last book of the Old Testament, to Malachi, we learn that declension must soon have set in, for we hear there the very opposite from what is recorded here. "Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings" (Mal. 3:8). Therefore a curse rested upon the nation (Mal. 3:9-12).

CHAPTER 13

1. The separation of the mixed multitude (13:1-3)
2. The unholy alliance repudiated (13:4-9)
3. Nehemiah's action in behalf of the Levites and singers (13:10-14)
4. Provision for Sabbath observance (13:15-22)
5. Nehemiah's protest (13:23-29)
6. His own testimony as to his work (13:30-31)

Verses 1-3. "On that day" does not mean the same day when the wall had been dedicated. It was a considerable time later, for we read in verse 10 that the Levites had not received their portion. It was different when the wall was dedicated. On a certain day when the law was read again, they came to the passage in Deuteronomy 23:3-5, where it is written that an Ammonite and a Moabite should not enter into the assembly of God forever. Obedience followed at once, "they separated from Israel all the mixed multitude."

Verses 4-9. Here we have the first indication of declension, which in Malachi's days reached a climax. Tobiah was an Ammonite, and with Sanballat and Geshem had strenuously opposed the building of the wall (chapter 6). Eliashib, the priest, who had the oversight of the chambers of the house of the Lord, had allied himself with the enemy of Jerusalem and prepared for this man a great chamber in the temple. There he had stored his household goods (verse 8). Nehemiah had been absent from the city, paying a visit to the Persian court, and during his absence all this happened. It was probably right after his return from King Artaxerxes in Babylon that the law was read that led to the separation from the mixed multitude, and this in time led to the discovery of the priest's alliance with Tobiah. Nehemiah acted quickly, being deeply grieved. He could not tolerate such an alliance and profanation of the house of the Lord. How much greater and more obnoxious are the unholy alliances in Christendom, and the profanation of God's best.

Verses 10-14. During Nehemiah's absence the tithes had not been given, and the Levites and singers had received nothing. In consequence they left the city and the house of God was forsaken. It is possible that the people had been outraged by Eliashib's alliance with Tobiah, and had refused the tithes. Nehemiah set all things in order, and he appointed also treasurers. On his prayer in verse 14 see chapter 5:19.

Verses 15-22. Another evidence of the declension which had set in after the spiritual revival was the laxity in observing the Sabbath. Nehemiah saw some on the Sabbath day treading winepresses; others brought all kinds of burdens on the Sabbath to Jerusalem; while still others sold victuals. And men of Tyre sold fish and other wares to the people on the Sabbath. We are sure that during Nehemiah's absence the law of God was no longer read, or they could not have fallen into this evil. All declension begins with the neglect of the Word of God. Then Nehemiah contended with the nobles. "What evil thing is this that ye do, and profane the Sabbath day? Did not your fathers thus, and did not our God bring all this evil upon us, and upon this city? Yet ye bring more wrath upon Israel by profaning the Sabbath."

Again, he not only rebuked the evil, but acted energetically, and the Sabbath day was sanctified.

Verses 23-29. Alas! the flesh is flesh, and will ever be the same. Some Jews turned back and deliberately married again women of Ashdod, Ammon and Moab. Their offspring talked a mongrel language. Nehemiah acted in holy zeal. He cursed them, smote them and plucked off their hair. And Joiada, the son of Eliashib the high priest, who had made an alliance with Tobiah, had married a daughter of Sanballat, the Horonite. Nehemiah refused to have anything to do with him--"I chased him from me."

Verses 30-31. The final thing we hear of Nehemiah is his testimony concerning himself and his prayer, "Remember me." In the day of Christ in glory, this great man of God will surely be rewarded for his earnest and faithful service.

THE BOOK OF ESTHER

The Annotated Bible

Arno Clement Gaebelein

THE BOOK OF ESTHER

Introduction

The book of Esther is one of the five books which the Jews call Megilloth (Rolls). They appear in the Hebrew Bible in the following order:

1. Canticles, that is, Solomon's Song, read in connection with Passover;
2. Ruth, read on the feast of weeks (Pentecost);
3. Lamentations, used on the ninth day of the month Ab, commemorating the destruction of the temple, which happened twice on the same day, first by Nebuchadnezzar and then afterwards by the Romans;
4. Ecclesiastes, which is read during the celebration of the feast of tabernacles;
5. The book of Esther, read on the feast of Purim.

The Jews hold this little book in the highest esteem; they call it "The Megillah" and thereby give it the place of pre-eminence among the other Megilloth. The ancient Rabbis give it a place next to the Torah, the law. Maimonides taught that when the Messiah comes every other book of the Jewish Scriptures will pass away, but the law and the book of Esther will remain forever.... Yet many objections have been made against this book. Its rightful place in the canon of the Old Testament has been hotly contested by Jews and Christians.

We mention the two leading objections. The first objection is that the name of God does not appear in this book. Some ancient teachers have tried to overcome this objection by the theory that the name of Jehovah is found a number of times in the initial letters of certain sentences, which letters spell the sacred name. Jehring, Bullinger and others have adopted this attempt to vindicate the book. But this is at best only a fanciful endeavour to do away with this objection. We believe the Holy Spirit is the author of the book of Esther and has given in it a correct report of this remarkable episode in Jewish history. He does not conceal things and to use initial letters of certain words to produce another word is an extremely unsafe method of Bible study. The Spirit of God had a valid reason why He omitted the name of God, which we state later.

Some have suggested that inasmuch as Esther was to be used in connection with the feast of Purim (a feast of merrymaking) the name of the Lord was omitted on purpose to avoid its irreverent use amid the scenes of feasting and drinking. Professor Cassel in his lengthy commentary on Esther states that the omission of the name of God was an act of prudence and caution from the side of the person who wrote this account. Others claim that the report was taken mostly from Persian records, which would explain the absence of the name.

It is true the name of God is absent, but God is nevertheless present in this little book. We find Him revealed on every

page, in His providence, in His overruling power, in the preservation and deliverance of His covenant people. God cared for His people and Watched over them, though they were unfaithful to Him. He frustrated the plan of the enemy. It is true they did not call on Him, but nevertheless His sovereignty in grace is displayed towards them. God's government is therefore revealed in this book though His name is unmentioned.

The second objection is that the canonicity of the book should be rejected because it is not quoted in the New Testament. But this objection also breaks down when we remember that seven other Old Testament books are unquoted in the New Testament Scriptures. Destructive criticism has made other objections of a minor character; we do not need to mention these. Amongst those who had no use for this book is found Martin Luther, who went so far as to say that he wished the book might not exist at all. The evidence that the book is true, with its remarkable story of the great deliverance of a part of God's people, is found by the celebration of the feast of Purim by the Jews. If such a thing as the book of Esther records had not occurred then the Purim feast could not be explained.

The author of the book of Esther is unknown. Some think of Mordecai, others mention Ezra and Nehemiah as possible authors; but this is only guesswork. It is certain that one person wrote the entire account with the exception of chapter 9:20-32, which probably was added by another hand. The style is extremely simple; the Hebrew used is much like that of Ezra and Nehemiah. It contains some Persian words.

The purpose of the book of Esther has admirably been stated by Professor Cassel: "It is a memoir written by a Jew to all his people who are scattered in the extensive countries of Persia, in which are recorded the wonderful interpositions of Providence in their deliverance from destruction, which appeared to be certain. It has no other purpose but to narrate this; it is not called upon to give information about other matters; albeit it gives a picture of Persian court life, the like of which is found nowhere else."

It brings out the great fact that the Jewish people out of their own land, and no longer in any outward relation to God, are nevertheless the objects of His gracious care. This broken relationship seems to be the reason why the name of God is avoided in the book. In spite of their unfaithfulness they are still His people, for God's gifts and calling are without repentance. He covers them with His protecting hand and watches over them and in His own way and His own time acts in their behalf, delivering them from their enemies.

Significant it is that the history in the book of Esther concludes the historical books of the Old Testament. The conditions described therein continue during the times of the Gentiles till finally the great deliverance comes for the people Israel. Jewish expositors have compared Esther to the dawn of the morning, that it is like the dawn which announces the end of the night.

It is a prophetic forecast of their history and is especially typical of the coming days of Jacob's trouble when they shall be delivered.

The typical-dispensational application is of much interest, for it illustrates some of the prophecies in a practical way. Vashti, the Gentile wife, may be looked upon as Christendom, to be set aside for her disobedience, and Esther, the Jewess, takes her place. This reminds us of the parable of the two olive trees in Romans 11 and the final execution of the divine threat that the grafted in branches, Gentile Christendom, are to be cut off and the broken off branches, Israel, put back upon their own olive tree.

Haman, the wicked enemy of the Jews, a descendant of Agag, the first enemy Israel met in the wilderness, is an illustration of the future enemy Israel will face. He is called "Haman the wicked" (chapter 7:6). The numerical value of the Hebrew letters composing the words "Haman the wicked" is exactly 666.

Mordecai is a type of the Lord Jesus Christ in His coming glorious exaltation. The complete triumph of the Jews over their enemies, the joy and peace, recorded at the close of this book, are typical of the time when Christ reigns on earth. We

give at the close of each chapter hints on the typical and dispensational application which can be made of this history.

Analysis and Annotations

THE BANQUETS AND QUEEN VASHTI DISOWNED

CHAPTER 1

1. The first feast of the king (1: 1-4)
2. The king's feast unto all the people (1:5-8)
3. The queen's feast for the women (1:9)
4. The queen's refusal to appear at the king's feast (1:10-12)
5. The queen put away (1:13-22)

Verses 1-4. King Ahasuerus, one of the leading characters of this book, is known in history as Xerxes I. The name Ahasuerus is an appellative, which means the chief king, or the king of all kings. Xerxes, the son of Darius Hystaspes, bore this title, king of kings. This title is also given to him in the cuneiform inscriptions. One of these reads as follows: "I, the mighty king, king of kings, king of populous countries, king of this great and mighty earth, far and near." His dominion extended from East to West, even from India unto Ethiopia. He had a universal kingdom. The capital of his empire was Shushan, which had a beautiful situation surrounded by high mountains, traversed by streams and abounding in a luxurious vegetation. Since the time of King Darius it became the residence of the Persian kings. The word "palace" is better translated by fortress or castle. And in the third year of his reign he made the great feast unto all his princes, and his servants, and all the nobles of Persia and Media were before him. He then showed the riches of his glorious kingdom and entertained the nobles and princes for six months.

Verses 5-8. This sumptuous feast was followed by a second banquet to which all the inhabitants of the capital were invited. It was held in the garden of the palace and lasted for seven days. The decorations were in white, green, blue, fastened with cords of fine linen and purple to rings of silver and pillars of marble. Upon a pavement of red, white, blue, and black marble (a mosaic floor) stood the couches of gold and silver. The royal wine was served out of vessels of gold not two of which were alike. The king displayed his enormous wealth and his abundant possessions. "And the wine of the kingdom was in abundance, according to the bounty of the king." And there was perfect freedom; each could drink to his heart's content. The king had instructed the officers "that they should do according to every man's pleasure."

Verse 9. Queen Vashti (Vashti means "beautiful woman") is now introduced. She made a separate feast for the women in the royal house which belonged to her husband, the king. Such feasts were frequently given by royal women of the East. Nothing is said how long her feast lasted.

Verses 10-12. The king's heart being merry with wine, he commanded his seven chamberlains to bring Vashti in her royal apparel to the feast, so that the peoples and the princes could admire her great beauty. The seven chamberlains were eunuchs who held important offices. Mehuman was the chief officer; Biztha, according to the meaning of his name, the treasurer; Harbona, the chief of the bodyguard; Bigath, who had charge over the female apartments; Abagtha, the chief baker; Zethar, the chief butler, and Carcas, the chief commander of the castle. These dignitaries were sent to accompany the queen to the feast of Ahasuerus. She refused to obey the king's command. Her refusal has been differently interpreted. According to Persian custom the Persian king held all for slaves except the legitimate wife. Was it in defiance of the king's order or out of self respect? She may have refused to show that she could not be dictated to by a drunken husband and that she was unwilling to show herself in the midst of revelry. Perhaps she did not care to come because she had a feast of her own. Then the king became extremely angry.

Verses 13-22. At once the wise men were called, the astrologers, the magi and sorcerers (Dan 2:2). His privy council consisted of seven princes, the princes of Persia and Media, who were next to the king, sat with him and the wise men to

take up this serious matter. The question is, "What shall we do unto the Queen Vashti according to law, because she had not done the bidding of the king Ahasuerus by the chamberlains?" The case is thus turned over by the king into the hands of the wise men and the seven princes. These decide that Vashti has wronged the king and furthermore by her refusal had set a dangerous example to all the subjects of the king. Much contempt and wrath would follow throughout the empire. They advise that Vashti is to lose her royal estate, that she be put away. The king sanctions it and issued at the same time a decree to be published throughout his great kingdom that all wives should honor their husbands. The Persian kings were great autocrats and ruled with an iron hand. Their laws were irrevocable. "It is certainly no fable which is told of Xerxes, viz., that when the inundation of the Hellespont had destroyed all bridges, he gave order that it should be beaten with rods for disobedience (Herodotus 7:35). But it was more easy for him to beat the sea than to obtain that which his edict demanded."

The letters were dispatched by the excellent postal service, which according to the historian Herodotus, Persia possessed. Memucan had brought about the downfall of the queen; she disappears completely. Jewish tradition gives several reasons why Memucan was so hostile to Vashti. One is that his own wife had not been invited to Vashti's feast and another, because he wanted his own daughter promoted and become the queen.

Typical Application

The Persian king claimed the title King of Kings, which belongs only to the Lord Himself. The great feast which he made reminds us of another feast which the Lord has spread. Ahasuerus' feast was on the third year of his reign and appointed to show the riches of his kingdom and the honor of his excellent majesty. The gospel feast to which God invites, is prepared in His Son, who died and was raised on the third day, and this feast shows forth exceeding riches of His grace in kindness towards us. And those who accept become partakers of the heavenly calling, nobles and princes, who shall reign with Him in His coming kingdom. The invitation is, "Come for all things are now ready." There is enough for all; enough to fill to overflowing. The wine is the symbol of joy; it cheereth God and man (judges 9:13). As the king had his joy with his subjects in this earthly feast, so God rejoices in those who come to the table of His love, and those who accept His invitation rejoice in Him. The couches of gold and silver at the King's feast were for rest. Gold and silver are symbolical of righteousness and redemption, and these are the couches, the resting places for the believer. And as Ahasuerus invited all to come to his feast, with no other conditions, but to come, so God wants all men to be saved and offers the riches of His grace without money and without price. While the Persian king displayed the glories of his great kingdom, God displays the glory of His grace.

In Vashti we see a type of the refusal of the invitation. She had been invited to come and grace the feast with her presence; she would not come. It reminds us of the parable of our Lord, in which He speaks of the great supper, a symbol of the gospel, and the bidden guests who made excuses for not coming. She had her own feast, which she probably would not leave. How many there are who refuse the gospel invitation because they love their own things best. And Vashti is banished. She is put away. And this is the sinner's fate who refuses to obey the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Vashti too may be taken as a type of professing Christendom, those who have the form of godliness and deny the power thereof, whose god is their belly and who are the enemies of the cross, disobedient to God. Some day Christendom will be disowned by the Lord; He will spew Laodicea out of His mouth. Then the King of Kings will call another to take the place of apostate Christendom.

ESTHER CHOSEN QUEEN AND MORDECAI'S DISCOVERY

CHAPTER 2

1. The suggestion (2:1-4)
2. Mordecai and Esther introduced (2:5-7)
3. Esther brought to the king's house (2:8-11)

4. Esther chosen as queen (2:12-18)

5. Mordecai's discovery and exposure of the plot (2:19-23)

Verses 1-4. This probably did not happen immediately after the feast. We learn this from verse 16 in this chapter. He took Esther in the place of Vashti in the seventh year of his reign, but the feast described in the opening chapter happened in the third year. About four years elapsed. During these years, profane history tells us, Ahasuerus (Xerxes I), undertook a campaign against Greece with which many misfortunes were connected. He must have returned exhausted and unhappy. Then his conscience spoke. He probably missed the companionship of Vashti and he remembered her and what was decreed against her. But why did the monarch not take Vashti back into favor and forgive her, if remorse troubled him? As nothing more is said of Vashti it is more than probable that she was put to death. Perhaps the unfortunate war, the great losses he had sustained, were looked upon by the king as being the punishment for his drunken wrath against the queen. Then the courtiers made their suggestions which is in fullest keeping with the customs of Persia and still practised by oriental sultans and shahs. Fair young virgins are to be brought to the harem, the house of the women, under the custody of Hegai, the king's chamberlain and keeper of the women. The king was well pleased with this suggestion.

"One cannot but admire the simple, quiet historical style of our narrative. Laying aside all the reports which only would prolong our way of coming to the essential part of the contents of the book, there is nothing omitted which would contribute to the historical and psychological introduction and illustration. How much is necessary to happen before Israel could have ready help in time of need! What great things, according to the external appearance, must precede, in order to make it possible that a Jewish girl by the influence of her charms ascend the throne of the Persian Empire! The great conference of all the officers of the state, the dreadful war with Greece, and the unfortunate issue of the same, were they not in the hands of Providence so many stepping stones in the path of Esther's ascendancy? in order to replace the loss of Vashti, a woman of equal endowments must be sought for the king, wherever and however it might be! How many things must subserve to the frustration of Haman's wicked plan! The wrath of Xerxes against Greece, and his wrath against his wife. Court intrigues against the powerful influences of a wife, and the vain conceit of offended sovereignty? First drunkenness, then homicidal passion, then new excited sensuality, were the sad instruments which preceded Israel's redemption.

"When the people were delivered, they could well be penitent when they considered the way in which Vashti--though not herself guiltless--was one of the main causes of their deliverance. And if deep penitence must have resulted from the reflection that a woman like Vashti had to die a violent death in order that the people of God should live,--what kind of penitence must the thought call forth when we remember that Christ gave His Life in order that Israel and the Gentiles might live" (Professor P. Cassel).

Verses 5-7. These verses introduce us now to the leading actors in this book. Mordecai, the Jew, was the son of Jair, the son of Shimei, the son of Kish, a Benjamite; who had been carried away from Jerusalem with the captives which had been carried away with Jechoniah king of Judah, whom Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon had carried away.

Here we face one of the inconsistencies charged by higher criticism. But their mistake is quite apparent. They claim that Mordecai belonged to the captives carried away by Nebuchadnezzar. Then they say, that being the case Mordecai must have been over 130 years old and Esther at least 70 years. But does it say that Mordecai was carried away at the time of King Jechoniah? It was not Mordecai who was carried away but his great-grandfather Kish. "The clear and instructive intentions of the historian in this genealogical passage are evident. He points out, through the enumeration of the four generations from Kish to Mordecai, the time which elapsed since the banishment of Jechoniah, which took place before the destruction of the temple. The period of about 120 or more years which since then elapsed to the sixth year of Xerxes are exactly expressed by the four generations. We have also some intimation concerning the period of the narrative, which is assigned to the reign of Xerxes I. That Kish was a Benjamite, is only told for the purpose of distinguishing him from other men with the same name who belonged to the tribe of Levi. One might have thought it impossible that Biblical expositors should commit the mistake of making the information concerning the exile of Jechoniah refer to Mordecai himself--an idea for which there is neither textual nor historical foundation, but rather both against it" (Professor Cassel).

Mordecai had brought up Hadassah. She was an orphan, fair of form and good of countenance, his uncle's daughter. Mordecai had adopted her. Hadassah means "myrtle" and Esther "star." Critics have identified the name Esther with Babylonian goddess Istar (similar to Ashtoreth), and they also claim that Hadassah was the Babylonian title for the same goddess. But such statements are mere inventions.

Verses 8-11. Esther on account of her great beauty was taken with the many other virgins in obedience to the King's command. Jewish tradition informs us that Mordecai, her guardian and second father, had kept her concealed, in order not to be obliged to deliver her to the royal agents, but people who knew her, and who had not seen her for some time drew the attention of the agents to the concealment. She with the others is placed in charge of Hegai the keeper of women. In all we see the hand of the Lord preparing step by step the help needed for the preservation and deliverance of His people during the approaching crisis. And Esther pleased Hegai; he showed her kindness. This kindness was expressed in furnishing her the means of improving her appearance, such as cosmetics and perfumes, according to Oriental customs. Then she received no doubt beautiful garments and jewelry to enhance her person still more. Then the best place in the house of the women was given to her and the seven maids who waited on her. (Very interesting and curious is the Jewish tradition concerning these seven servants. This tradition as preserved in the Targumim makes their names to correspond with the work of the six days of creation. Thus the fourth maid-servant's name was "Starlight" because on the fourth day the heavenly bodies came into view. Remarkable is the name of the maid who attended her on the sixth day--Friday; her name was "Lamb." On the seventh day, the Sabbath, the servant's name, who waited on her was "Rest" she reminded Esther of the Sabbath. And the Servant who attended her on the day after the Sabbath (Our Lord's day) bore the name of the mystical bird Phoenix, the symbol of light, rising out of the fire and out of death. It is certainly interesting, to say the least, to find such traditional statements.)

And Esther had not showed her people and her kindred. This was done on the advice of Mordecai. This has been characterized as deception, extraordinary adroitness, and cowardice. It was neither. Divine Providence ordered it thus. Inasmuch as Esther's parents were dead such concealment of nationality was not difficult; had her parents lived it would have been next to impossible. Had it been known that she belonged to the alien race, intrigues for her destruction would have soon been set afoot. Haman's wicked endeavour may even then have been in process of planning. Mordecai walking daily before the court of the women's house, proves his great concern for his adopted daughter.

Verses 12-18. The description of verses 12-14 is a perfect picture of Persian customs and the licentiousness of Persian and other Oriental rulers. In due time Esther's turn came to be presented to the king. "She required nothing." Professor Cassel in his exposition gives the best exposition of this statement. The other women could not find enough artificial means with which to make an impression upon the king. But Esther cared nothing about these things. She had no such ambitious desires. Her heart did not burn to become something illustrious, yet unbecoming to a Jewess. Reluctantly she must have left her home, and reluctantly she must have put on the ornaments. She was wanted, and was ordered to appear, and therefore she obeyed Hegai and allowed herself to be prepared for the occasion. She was compelled to be there, while no doubt in heart she detested the whole affair.

She was brought in to the king. Attracted by her beauty he set the royal crown upon her head and the Jewish maiden became queen in the place of Vashti. This took place in the month Tebeth in the seventh year of the reign of Ahasuerus.

Then a great feast was made, even Esther's feast, a release was made, probably a release of prisoners and taxes and gifts were bestowed. God in His providence.

Verses 19-23. This paragraph contains another important providential event which in the subsequent history plays a very leading part. The opening words of verse 19 have been pronounced obscure by critics. "And when the virgins were gathered together the second time." Jewish expositors have explained this as meaning a conspiracy, that the enemies of the new queen had collected more virgins so that in some way Esther might be eclipsed and placed into the background. It is claimed by others that the words "the second time" should be omitted from the text as there is some doubt about them. If this is done the statement would then refer to the gathering of the virgins mentioned in the eighth verse of the chapter. But

the suggestion that the second gathering was an act of conspiracy might be the true meaning; it would show the purpose of the unseen enemy and it also explains the watchfulness of Mordecai. He sat at the king's gate. It was according to oriental custom a place of public resort, where news was heard and conversation with friends and others were carried on. The suggestion by some that Mordecai sat in the king's gate because he was an official of the government must be dismissed as incorrect.

Verse 20 informs us of two interesting facts. Esther did not disclose her nationality and she continued in humble obedience to her foster father as if she were still under his roof and not the great queen. The royal glory and dignity which surrounded her on all sides had not affected her in the least. She had not forgotten that the whole royalty was not a matter of pleasure to her, but only an act of obedience, the providential purpose of which she did not know, but which she found out afterward. Her interest was with Mordecai outside and not with the royal splendour inside.

Let us note the providential leading in all this. If Esther had revealed her connection, if it had become known that Mordecai at the gate was her uncle and she his adopted daughter, he would not have remained in the obscure position before the gate. Then the conspirators would have been cautious and not spoken within the hearing of such a person so closely related to the queen. The knowledge of the planned attempt upon the life of the King Mordecai owed to the fact that nobody knew who he was and therefore paid no attention to him.

The conspirators were Bigthan and Teresh. They sought to lay hands on the king. According to Jewish tradition they intended to put a venomous reptile in the king's cup when he was about to drink. The plot was overheard by Mordecai who at once communicated the fact to Esther and she told the king of it in the name of Mordecai. She did so guided by the divine hand, which is so evident in this remarkable history. The plot is at once investigated and the report is found true. The conspirators were hanged and the event is historically recorded in the book of the Chronicles. (King Ahasuerus, Xerxes, lost his life by assassination in 465 B.C. Artaban, the commander of his cavalry, conspired with Mithridates, his confidential chamberlain, who admitted him into the king's bedroom, and Artaban stabbed him to death while he slept.)

Esther had saved the king's life by giving him the report of Mordecai. And Mordecai received no reward. His faithfulness was evidently forgotten; but God had ordered it all.

Typical Applications

Dispensationally Esther typifies the Jewish remnant, which will be called by the King of Israel, our Lord, when Gentile-Christendom has been disowned and set aside for its unfaithfulness, as Vashti was set aside. The parable of the good and the wild olive tree in Romans 11 is thus illustrated by Vashti and Esther. The branches of the wild olive tree--professing Christendom (but not the true Church) which were grafted in upon the root of the good olive tree (Israel and the Abrahamic covenant) on account of their failure will be cut out and cast aside. The broken off branches (the remnant of Israel) will be put back upon the root of the good olive tree. (See annotations on Romans 11, or for a fuller exposition read "The Jewish Question," an exposition of Romans 11 by A.C. Gaebelein.) This remnant will then be brought into definite relationship with the Lord, pass through the period of the great tribulation, foreshadowed in Haman's wicked Plot, and then receive the kingdom, be delivered and have part in the kingdom, as it was the case with Esther, Mordecai and the Jews at Shushan.

The gospel application is also of interest. The humble Jewish girl is raised to the place of a queen, to the place beside the King. She did not seek that place. It never entered into her mind to receive such a place. She was sought for. All this illustrates the gospel by which the beggar upon the dunghill is raised to sit amongst princes and to inherit the throne of glory (1 Samuel 2). She, who was a foreigner, becomes married to the king, to share his glory, his riches and his honors. And so the believing sinner becomes one spirit with the Lord, a member of His body "flesh of His flesh and bone of His bones," to share His eternal glory and His eternal riches.

HAMAN AND HIS WICKED PLOT

CHAPTER 3

1. The promotion of Haman and Mordecai's faithfulness (3:1-6)
2. Haman's proposal and the King's assent (3:7-11)
3. The proclamation of death (3:12-15)

Verses 1-6. How long after these things the history of this chapter came to pass is not definitely stated. It probably happened after a short interval. We are now introduced to Haman, the Son of Hammedatha the Agagite. Him the king promoted and set his seat above all the princes. The tracing of this man's name is of interest. Its meaning is "A magnificent one." Philologists derive it from the Persian god Haoma or Hom, who was thought to be a spirit, possessing life-giving power. There can be no doubt that his name has a religious sentiment connected with it and his activity shows zeal in religious things. What interests us the most is that he was a descendant of Agag, the king of Amalek (1 Sam. 15:8) who descended from Esau, Jacob's brother and enemy. Amalek is always the bitter enemy of Israel. His final overthrow will come with the second coming of Christ. Thus Balaam announced in his prophetic utterance. When the sceptre at last rises out of Israel to smite the nations, then Amalek will find his end. "And when he looked on Amalek, he took up his parable and said, Amalek was the first of the nations, but his latter end shall be that he perish forever" (Numbers 24:17-20). This Haman, the Amalekite, is later called "the Jew's enemy" (verse 10). He foreshadows that final enemy, who arises to trouble Israel and attempts their extermination before the King of Israel appears. The dispensational and typical applications at the close of this chapter deal more fully with this interesting character.

And all the king's servants bowed down and did him reverence. They paid to him the honor of a god. Nearly all these Oriental rulers claimed divinity. Artaban is saying to Themistodes, according to Plutarch "The important thing with us Persians is that a king is worshipped and looked upon as the very image of God." As the king's representative this worship was extended to Haman. But Mordecai did not bow down because such reverence involved the recognition of a false god and was against the commandment of God. Mordecai may have remembered Isaiah's great prediction, "To Me every knee shall bow and every tongue shall swear." According to Jewish tradition Haman wore on his coat the image of an idol and that this was the reason why Mordecai refused. The king's servants warned Mordecai and when this was not heeded they told Haman. What a noble figure! In the midst of the worshipping servants bowing deep before Haman stands erect Mordecai, the Jew. He manifested faith in God. He trusted in Him who had delivered Daniel's companions out of the fiery furnace, when they refused to worship the image set up by Nebuchadnezzar. He trusted the same God who had stopped the lion's mouths when Daniel would not pay divine honors to Darius, the Persian king.

And when Haman discovers that Mordecai was a Jew and that his refusal was not wilful disobedience but inspired by faith in God, in obedience to His law, the Amalekite hate is stirred up in his wicked heart, and he became full of wrath. An unseen being, he who is the murderer from the beginning, told him to make this occasion for destroying all the Jews in the Persian Empire.

Verses 7-11. And now Haman waits on his unseen master, the devil. They cast the lot before Haman, from day to day, and from month to month, to the twelfth month, which is the month Adar. He wanted to find out the month which would be best suited for the execution of his wicked plot. Soothsaying, familiar spirits, asking the dead, divining by the flight of birds or by the liver of a slain animal, prognosticators and astrologers, flourished among the Egyptians, the Babylonians, the Persians and all other pagan nations. Behind it all is the Devil and his fallen angels. And these things are still practised, not alone in China and India, but in the very midst of professing Christendom. Spiritism, the worst form of demonism, is ever on the increase. Astrology, asking the dead, consulting the demons, casting the lot, getting messages through the so-called "ouija board" (in use in China, the land of demon possessions, for over 2000 years) is made use of today by countless thousands among the supposedly "Christian nations." We see what kind of progress the world has made. The same superstitions, the same evils morally and in religious matters, the same demon powers whose fellowship the greater part of the race invites, as 3000 and more years ago.

Through the lot he imagines that the twelfth month, the Jewish month Adar, is the month to execute the plot. Jewish tradition explains this in the following way: "When he came to make observations in the month Adar, which comes under the zodiacal sign of the fish, Haman exclaimed, "Now they will be caught by me like the fish of the sea." But he did not notice that the children of Joseph are compared in the Scripture to the fish of the sea, as it is written: "And let them multiply as the fish in the midst of the earth" (Genesis 48:16; marginal reading).

And now he approacheth the king who was ignorant of Haman's dark counsel. He tells the king of a certain people which inhabit his kingdom. He avoids mentioning their names, if he had the plot would not have succeeded for Xerxes must have been well acquainted with the illustrious history of the Jews and he knew that ever since Cyrus the policy of the Persian Empire had been the protection of the Jews. Haman's accusation is twofold. First: Their laws are diverse from those of every people. Second: Neither keep they the king's laws. And then the verdict: It is not for the king's profit to suffer them. They were a separate people, following their God-given law. It was this religious side which stirred up the hatred of Satan and through Haman he urges now the wholesale murder of the race. And Haman Like his dark master, Satan, was cunning enough to anticipate an objection from the side of the king. Would not his kingdom suffer financially if a whole people is wiped out? To remove this financial consideration he offers to pay 10,000 talents of silver for the desired slaughter of the Jews (about 20 million dollars). With it he tempted the avarice of the king and at the same time tickled his pride by implying that it must be a trifle to him to lose a whole people who were only worth the price of 10,000 talents. And Haman probably speculated that this great sum he offered, the greater the sum was the more flattering it would appear to the fancy of the king to waive it. Oriental monarchs were known for doing such things in a boastful spirit. This Haman knew well.

Then the king gave him his ring. It was a ring to seal a document. Every ring had a seal. The transfer of the royal ring with the royal seal and denoted the transfer of kingly authority and power to the recipient. Haman was therefore invested with royal authority. The haughtiness of the king appears now. Not alone does he turn over his signet-ring but he also makes Haman a present of the enormous sum he had offered to the king. In cold blood Xerxes gives over to him the unknown people into the hands of this wicked enemy.

Verses 12-15. A great activity is here described. An Empire-wide proclamation, a veritable proclamation of death was issued. The king's scribes were called on the 13th day of the month. Research has established the fact that the 13th day of the month was called by the Persians Tir (the meaning of which is "lot"). All the king's satraps, the governors of every province, the princes of every people who had become identified with the Persian empire were notified in different languages of what should take place on the 13th day of the month Adar. The proclamation was written in the name of the king and sealed with his ring in Haman's possession. "And letters were sent by posts into all the king's provinces, to destroy, to slay, and to cause to perish, all Jews, both young and old, little children and women, in one day, even on the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, which is the month Adar, and to take the spoil of them for a prey." And this horrible decree was sent in haste throughout the land. The king and Haman sat down to a banquet, while the capital, Shushan, was perplexed and deeply stirred.

Typical Application

Haman illustrates the coming man of sin, the beast of Revelation 13. As remarked in the introduction, his title "Haman the wicked" (7:6) represents in the numerical value of the Hebrew letters which compose this title the number 666. (See Revelation 13:18.) This future coming one will be like Haman the enemy of the Jews and one of Satan's masterpieces. Haman was to be worshipped and revered. And the man of sin will demand divine worship and with the help of the first beast, the little horn of Daniel 7, he seeks to exterminate the Jews. He will manifest greater cunning than Haman and use the political power to accomplish his purpose. Mordecai in his refusal is a type of the godly Jewish remnant to worship the man of sin.

The proclamation of death pronounced upon a whole race of people, everyone doomed to death, none exempted, typifies the condition in which the whole race is spiritually. The law on account of sin is such a proclamation. "The soul

that sinneth shall die." "The wages of sin is death." The helpless condition in which the death doomed Jews found themselves is a picture of the helpless condition of man as a sinner. Nothing the Jews did could save them; no weeping nor pleading could change things. All this may be enlarged upon and helpfully applied to man's condition as a sinner.

THE CONSTERNATION OF THE JEWS -- MORDECAI AND ESTHER

CHAPTER 4

1. The great lamentations of the Jews (4:1-3)
2. Esther's discovery (4:4-9)
3. Esther's helplessness (4:10-12)
4. Mordecai's answer (4:13-14)
5. Esther's decision (4:15-17)

Verses 1-3. When Mordecai heard of what had been done and the plan to exterminate his people became known to him he rent his clothes. This and the putting on of sackcloth and ashes were the outward expressions of the most intense grief. The sackcloth was a coarse hair-cloth of a black color. Then his bitter cry and wailing was heard in the midst of the city. Because of the sackcloth, which was also used as a sign of mourning over the dead among the Persians, it was regarded as unclean, and inasmuch as the palace of the king was looked upon as a clean and holy place, Mordecai could not enter the king's gate. He had to stand outside the wall. And throughout the provinces as the proclamation became known and was read by the condemned race, there was the same weeping and wailing with fasting. Prayer unquestionably was also connected with this grief.

Verses 4-9. Esther in the secluded portion of the palace knew nothing of the great edict which had gone forth. Her maids and chamberlains, whom she may have used to keep in touch with her uncle, then informed her that Mordecai was missing inside of the gate and that he was sitting outside in a most pitiable condition, weeping and wailing. How this report must have shocked Esther! She was exceedingly grieved and then sent raiment to Mordecai. This was according to Persian custom in connection with mourning over the dead that the nearest relations should send the mourner new garments, to put these on instead of the sackcloth. The Jews must have conformed to some of these customs. Esther thought that some one of the family of Mordecai had died. But Mordecai refused the garments for he was not mourning over death. This must have mystified Esther still more. She therefore sent Hathach, one of the king's chamberlains, her personal attendant, to Mordecai to find out the cause of his mourning.

And Hathach went forth. Mordecai told him of Haman's plot. As he possessed a copy of the decree he gave it to Hathach to deliver to Esther and then Mordecai's message to Esther. "To charge her that she should go in unto the king, to make supplication unto him, and to make request before him, for her people." He did not say "for this people" but "for her people." This made known to Hathach Esther's Jewish origin. Mordecai knew the great favor Esther had found before the king and he hoped that her supplication would avert the doom of the race. There is nothing said of Mordecai calling upon God, no record of his supplications to the God of Abraham. Undoubtedly he did call on Him. This is in accord with the character of the people; they are seen as out of the land and out of touch with the Lord. Yet Jehovah in unchanging mercy watcheth over them. And Hathach delivered the message.

Verses 10-12. Esther sent the answer. Mordecai heard the alarming news that the king was unapproachable. Esther herself had not seen his face for a whole month. To enter the king's presence unbidden would mean sure death. Death to all "except such to whom the king shall hold out the golden sceptre, that he may live." Esther thus informed Mordecai that she is subject to the same law, and if she transgresseth it, no exception would be made, though she be the queen.

Verses 13-14. Mordecai's answer to Esther is a sublime one. It would have been quite natural for Mordecai to say "If thou canst not save all the people, at least save me, and the house of thy father, for thou belongest to the unassailable house of the king." He does not think of his personal interest and safety; it is the salvation of his people which is upon his heart.

He knows that Esther is in a position not only to be saved herself, but also to save her people. He gives her to understand if she does not act now and if she holds her peace deliverance for the Jews would be granted through another source. She would lose a great opportunity and she and her father's house would perish. In these words Mordecai expressed his deep conviction that the Jewish people cannot perish. He knew the history of the past and trusted God that He would find a way out at this time also. And he believed more than this, that Providence had put her on the throne just to effect the deliverance: "Who knoweth whether thou art not come to the kingdom for such a time as this?" "The answer of Mordecai is a masterpiece of eloquence. He who loved and cherished Esther as a daughter, seeks now that she should risk her life for the deliverance of Israel. He wills it, because he believes in the deliverance; because he draws from the history of Israel the assurance that as a race they cannot become extinct, and because he sees in the exaltation of Esther the divine purpose to use her in the deliverance. He encourages her to act and to risk her life and this he did by stimulating her faith in an overruling providence and that therefore she had nothing to fear."

Verses 15-17. She responded to this eloquent appeal; her believing heart had laid hold on the suggestion of her uncle. The Jews are to be gathered together in Shushan, she requests, for three days and three nights, neither to eat nor to drink. She would do the same with her maidens. "And so will I go in unto the king, which is not according to the law, and if I perish, I perish."

Fasting in the Old Testament is always the symbolic form of prayer; it cannot be disassociated from prayer. In giving this command she expressed her dependence on God and put Him first before attempting to go in to the king. And then her noble word--If I perish, I perish. Her faith measured up to Mordecai's expectation. She is ready to sacrifice herself in order to save her people. How it reminds us of Him who did more than say, "If I perish, I perish," who gave Himself and took upon Himself the curse of the law. And Mordecai did according to all that Esther had commanded him.

Typical Application

In the weeping, and wailing of Mordecai and the Jews, the rent clothes, the sackcloth and the ashes, we have a prophetic foreshadowing of the earnest turning to God of the Jewish remnant during the end of this age. How vividly Joel speaks of this man in the name of Jehovah. "Therefore also now saith the LORD, turn ye even to me with all your heart, and with fasting and with weeping, and with mourning" (Joel 2:12). And then comes for them the final deliverance as revealed by Joel and foreshadowed in the deliverance of the book of Esther. Mordecai's faith and Esther's noble decision are equally typical of the trust and confidence of that godly portion of the Jewish people who will pass through the time of Jacob's trouble (Jeremiah 30:4) and who will be delivered out of it.

As we pointed out in the previous chapter, the great proclamation typifies what God has said as to the race of sinners, that the wages of sin is death. "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things that are written in the book of the law to do them." The whole race is therefore under condemnation. And the Jews read this awful proclamation and reading they believed, and believing what was written they gave expression to their grief in fasting and turning to God. Alas! that God's proclamation telling the sinner of his dreadful condition, of the death and wrath which hangs over him is less believed than the proclamation of the Persian enemy of the Jews. Yet to know and to enjoy real salvation and deliverance, the realization of our real condition as lost sinners is eminently necessary.

As already stated, Esther is a faint type of our Lord in that she was willing to sacrifice herself in behalf of her people; while He gave that blessed life and died for that nation (John 12:27).

ESTHER AND THE KING AND HAMAN'S DELUSION

CHAPTER 5

1. Esther before the king and her request (5:1-8)
2. Haman's delusion (5:9-14)

Verses 1-8. On the third day Esther put on her royal apparel, a significant day in Scripture as we point out in the typical application of this chapter. The days of fasting and agony were passed and she is seen no longer attired in sackcloth but in royal garments. It is of great interest that Rabbinical exposition (Midrash) gives a tradition that in her great anxiety and anguish of soul she uttered the opening sentence of Psalm 22, "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?" She made use of the very words which the most ancient Jewish exponents understood as referring to the Messiah and which came from the lips of our Lord when He bore our sins in His body on the tree.

Clothed in her majestic robes, probably wearing the crown the king had placed upon her head, she entered in and stood in the inner court, which was the entrance gate to the pillared hall at the opposite end of which the king sat on his throne. The king saw her and she obtained favour--grace--in his sight.

And the king held out the golden sceptre which was in his hand. So Esther drew near, and touched the top of the sceptre. The beautiful typical meaning of this the reader will find at the close of this chapter. The royal sceptre, the emblem of royal power is extended towards her, the sign of the king's favour, and she touched the sceptre. (The Latin translation--the Vulgate--translates "she kissed the sceptre.") In touching the sceptre she expressed her need of it. She touched the royal sceptre of power and authority--because from this she seeks and expects deliverance. And it was the touch of faith. And so at once the king recognizing her action and what was behind it said, "What wilt thou, Queen Esther? And what is thy request? It will be given thee even to the half of the kingdom." instead of asking for a big gift she requests that the king and Haman be present at a banquet she had prepared. The initials in the Hebrew of the sentence "Let the king and Haman come" spell the word Yahweh, which is Jehovah. This the rabbis used to prove that the name of God is mentioned in this book. While this is merely fanciful, we know that Jehovah is revealed in the manifestation of His power in behalf of His people. It must have mystified the king that such a request came from Esther. But she made the petition for she wanted Haman to be present when she uncovered the plot to the king. And the king urged haste upon Haman. He was hurrying to his doom. At the banquet he repeated his question to find out what her petition was. It was customary among oriental kings that petitions were offered and then easily granted at banquets. He repeats his offer also that even if it is the half of the kingdom, it is to be performed. This benevolence of the king proved to the queen his affection for her and hence the success of her great mission. She still holds back her petition. She invites to another banquet on the next day when she promises to make known her petition. In this she exhibited great wisdom. She made the king curious and expectant.

Verses 9-14. Haman's pride produces delusion. He congratulates himself over the honour the Queen has done him. It was a day of joy and gladness of heart. And how he was moved with indignation when he beholds again Mordecai standing up and not doing him the honour which in his delusion he thinks is now more due him than before. Why did he not kill him at once? According to Persian law one who sat at the king's gate put himself under the protection of the king. As long as he was there he was safe. Now this being the case, if Haman had killed Mordecai, his enemies would have reported the matter to the king that he had murdered one who had placed himself under the protecting wings of the king, who had appealed for protection. Haman knew the possible consequences. Therefore he fetched his friends and his wife Zeresh. He gives a review of his riches and his honors including the latest of being invited by the queen. Then he tells of his vexation. "Yet all this availeth me nothing, so long as I see Mordecai the Jew sitting at the king's gate." Then comes from his friends and his wife the advice. The suggested gallows are made to hang Mordecai and Haman waits, perhaps impatiently, for the morrow when he would go in merrily to the king and request the execution of the Jew. In his delusion and pride he did not know that he built the gallows for himself.

Typical Application

This chapter is especially rich in its symbolical, typical and dispensational meaning. It was on the third day that Esther came forth to enter into the presence of the king. The third day throughout Scripture is the day of resurrection and life, the day of blessing and glory. On the third day in the first chapter of Genesis the submerged earth came out of the waters and brought forth its beautiful vegetation. This speaks of resurrection and it is the first time this type is found in the Word of God. Many times after that the third day in the history of Israel is mentioned, as well as the third time, and each time it

carries with it the same lesson. (See 2 Kings 20:5; Jonah and his experiences, etc.) All these passages are blessed types of Him who was raised on the third day after He finished the work the Father gave Him to do. And so is Esther a type. She passed typically through a death experience in her fasting, with deep anguish of soul. "If I perish, I perish," she had said; ready to sacrifice herself. When she stands in her royal garments before the king on the third day with her death experience behind she reminds us of Him who left the grave behind and is now garbed in resurrection glory. The golden sceptre tells of divine righteousness, power and grace. That sceptre is extended to all who come to God in that blessed and worthy Name. We can come with boldness to the throne of grace, obtaining mercy and finding grace to help in time of need. And there are other gospel applications which we can make. Esther's entering in to the king was not according to law. Law excluded her from the presence of the king. So we are excluded from being in God's presence, because we are sinners. But love has made a way through the Beloved One in whom we are accepted. And the banquet which Esther made for the king was for more than giving refreshment to him who loved her, as we can refresh Him also. It was a banquet to expose the enemy, to stop his accusation and take his power away from him. And all this is graciously accomplished in a spiritual way through the cross and the resurrection of Christ.

If we look upon Esther as a type of the Jewish remnant we see in her fasting and agony the tribulation through which this remnant passeth. But there comes a third day. This prophecy declares. "After two days will He revive us; on the third day He will raise us up, and we shall live before Him" (Hosea 6:1). The third day will surely come when Israel will rise out of the dust and when the golden sceptre will be extended to His earthly people.

In Haman we see the arrogant pride of the enemy of God and the final enemy of the Jewish people. "Pride goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall" (Prov. 16:18), was true of Haman, it is true of all who walk in pride and will finally be exemplified in the total defeat of him, who exalteth himself above all that is called God.

THE SLEEPLESS NIGHT AND MORDECAI'S EXALTATION

CHAPTER 6

1. The sleepless night (6:1-3)
2. The exaltation of Mordecai (6:4-11)
3. Haman anticipates his doom (6:12-14)

Verses 1-3. A sleepless night is the next event. The king wanted to sleep but sleep refused to come. What was the cause of his insomnia? Some say too much excitement and anxiety in connection with his kingdom; others that he was speculating on the petition the queen would make on the morrow. The ancient Jewish expositors say that God took his sleep away from him. And this is the correct answer. His wakefulness was ordered by God. Next God puts it into his heart to order the book of record of the chronicles to be brought so that they might be read to him, not to produce sleep but to spend the sleepless night in a profitable way. Once more we see the hand of God in directing the reading of the record of Mordecai's discovery of the plot against the king's life and how he had saved the king. The deed of Mordecai had been unrewarded through the wise purpose of the Lord; and now it is brought to light by the same providence. In that memorable, sleepless night the machinations of revenge, so finely spun in the dark, are suddenly arrested and their exposure becomes assured. And let us remember that the same providence still works, mysteriously and openly in the lives of God's people.

The king hears that Mordecai had not been rewarded. His pride and dignity were suddenly stirred up. He felt it was not just that such a deed should go unrewarded. It must also have come to his mind that this Mordecai had not reminded the king of his deed, by sending a petition for a reward or by requesting a favour, so common in oriental life. He had kept silent.

Verses 4-1 1. The king must have been indignant that such a matter had been overlooked and he wants to have the matter rectified at once. He asks "Who is in the court?" Whosoever would be there would have to carry out the king's

commission. He did not expect that Haman was waiting outside. Perhaps he also had a sleepless night, nervously excited as he thought that soon Mordecai would dangle from the gallows; and how he would enjoy the banquet of Esther on the same day. He was in a great hurry and desired that the execution of the despised Jew should take place in the early morning. All is working together and God's majestic hand is seen every step of the way! "Never was there exhibited a more frivolous and thoughtless judgment than that shown by many higher critics in their light estimation of the book of Esther. For surely there can be no more beautiful description of the impending dramatic catastrophe than that with which the whole of this book is full. At the moment when the mind of the king has but one thought, to compensate Mordecai with the long-merited honour and dignity, and so much the more because it ought to have been done long ago, at the very moment when he looks for a person to carry out his plans, just then, Haman appears on the scene" (Professor Cassel).

And the king asks Haman, "What shall be done unto the man whom the king delighteth to honour?" In his blind self-love, his deluded pride, Haman thought he was the man to whom the king would do still more honour. Well says a writer in the Talmud--"inasmuch as the writer of the book of Esther knew what was in Haman's heart, he must have been inspired in writing this account."

And pride fills his lips with an extraordinary demand. When his wicked lips spoke the words, he must have imagined himself clad in royal apparel riding the king's charger, wearing his crown, and thus led forth through the city, announced by the town-crier that he is the man whom the king delighteth to honour.

The king speaks: "Make haste and take the apparel and the horse, as thou hast said and do even so to Mordecai the Jew, that sitteth at the king's gate, let nothing fail of all thou hast spoken." What a thunderbolt this must have been for Haman! While he dreamt of his own honour and greatness he is suddenly awakened by the unalterable command of the king, whose word is law, to do all he had spoken to the man whom he hated and despised, whose death warrant he expected to have signed by the king. He could not tarry in the king's presence for the king demanded haste. He could not parley with the king; that would have been an insult. All that was left to Haman was to make haste and take the apparel and the horse to Mordecai. He arrayed him and then led him through the city and proclaimed before him the king's message. And Mordecai? His mouth must have been filled with laughter and with praises to his God, when his deadly enemy came to do him honour. How great was his triumph in the marvellous exaltation brought about by the keeper of Israel, who neither sleeps nor slumbers! The Jews read the entire book of Esther on the Purim feast. When the reader reaches this passage he reads the record with a raised and triumphant voice.

Verses 12-14. Mordecai is back at the gate; Haman in bitter disappointment, with evil forebodings, his head covered, the sign of grief, returns to his wife and friends. When they hear what happened they told him that his case would be hopeless. In the conflict between the Jew and the offspring of Amalek, victory is on the side of the Jew. (Ex. 17:16; Numb. 24:20; Deut. 25:17-19) And then the king's chamberlains knocked at the door to hurry Haman to Esther's banquet.

Typical Application

The great lesson of this chapter is the wonderful working of divine providence. Surely "God works in a mysterious way, His wonders to perform." And how He cares for His people and watcheth over them! He is still the same, for He is the Lord who changeth not.

And Mordecai stands out in this chapter as another type of our Lord. All the men of God in Old Testament history, in their humiliation and exaltation, like Joseph, Moses, David, etc., are types of the humiliation and exaltation of our Lord.

What was done to Mordecai will also be some future day the happy lot of Israel when they will be delivered out of the hand of their enemies.

THE SECOND BANQUET AND HAMAN'S MISERABLE END

CHAPTER 7

1. The second banquet and Esther's petition (7:1-4)
2. Haman's exposure (7:5-6)
3. Haman's miserable end (7:7-10)

Verses 1-4. Esther at this second feast knew that the God of her fathers was at work and that all the hatred against her race came not from the heart of the king, but centered in Haman. In the events of the sleepless night and what followed she must have seen the display of the hand of God. And now she utters her delayed petition. Her petition is that her life may be spared as well as her people. How astonished the king must have looked as he gazed upon his beautiful wife and learned from her lips that her life was in danger. And still greater must have been his surprise when he hears, "For we are sold, I and my people, to be destroyed, to be slain, and to perish." What a scene! The handsome queen, her marvelous earnestness and eloquence in pleading for her life and for her people; the darkening, astonished countenance of the king, the blanching face of Haman and the others in the banquet hall in great excitement.

And her heart-rendering plea, perhaps mingled with tears which coursed down her cheek, did not fail to produce the desired effect.

Verses 5-6. The king must have been more than astonished" he must have been angry. Who dared to plot against the life of the beautiful queen and deprive him of her? Who dared to sell her and her people for slaughter? Even then before he hears from Esther the name of the man, he must have realized, that the crouching Haman is the man. "Who is he, and where is he that durst presume in his heart to do so?" Her answer is brief but eloquent. With flashing eyes and pointing her finger to the guest at her side she said, "An adversary and an enemy, even this wicked Haman!" The scene is beyond comparison. Then Haman was afraid before the king and the queen. He anticipated the fearful storm which would break over his head.

Verses 7-10. The king arose in his wrath. Close to the banquet hall was the garden. There the king went in the heat of his wrath and the great excitement which had seized upon him and made him speechless. When an oriental king or sultan arises angry from his own table, then there is no mercy for him that causeth it. (See Rosenmueller Oriental Studies on Esther.) In the meantime Haman begs cowardly for his life. He must have fallen at her feet with weeping and wailing. And Esther did not open her lips. Then Haman in his agonizing plea falls upon the couch where Esther was. At that moment the king re-entered the banquet hall. He has regained his speech and when he beholds Haman on the couch he utters a word of bitter sarcasm, as if he had designs upon the honour of the queen. No sooner had the king spoken the word, the attending servants covered Haman's face. This was a Persian custom. The face of a criminal was covered to indicate that he was no longer worthy to behold the light and that darkness of death would be his lot.

The gallows which Haman had prepared for Mordecai is used for his own execution. Critics point out the statement that the gallows 50 cubits high (80 feet) stood in Haman's house and they raise the question "How could an 80 foot long pole be gotten into any one's house?" But the word gallows means in the Hebrew "tree." Probably a tree standing in the garden of Haman was made ready with a rope to hang the hated Jew. It is characteristic of the critics to take such minor things to discredit the accuracy of Scripture.

Typical Application

Haman illustrates the work and the ignominious end of the final Anti-christ who troubles Israel. Haman had almost succeeded. But when the proper moment came God acted in behalf of His people and Haman falls forever. So that coming man of sin will almost succeed, but in the end of the great tribulation, the final 1260 days or three years and a half, with which this age closes, the power of God will be displayed in the complete victory over this enemy of God and man. Haman's end came by the decree of the king and the Anti-christ will be destroyed by the coming of the King of kings and Lord of Lords.

MORDECAI'S EXALTATION AND THE SECOND PROCLAMATION

CHAPTER 8

1. Mordecai's exaltation (8:1-2)
2. Esther's second petition (8:3-8)
3. The second proclamation (8:9-14)
4. The joy of the Jews (8:15-17)

Verses 1-2. Esther the Queen receives from the king the possessions of Haman, the enemy of the Jews. Then she revealed what Mordecai was to her, her uncle and foster-father. The king had taken the signet-ring of authority from the hand of Haman. The same ring Mordecai received. Esther honoured her uncle by placing him over the house of Haman.

Verses 3-6. But while Mordecai had become the prime-minister of Persia, Haman the Agagite had been executed, and all his property given to the queen, the horrible decree still stood; the first proclamation was still in force. Something had to be done to complete the deliverance of her people. Her life and Mordecai's life had been spared, but what about her beloved people? It is true the fateful day was still in the future, but the evil decreed and not yet recalled had to be met in some way. Once more she enters into the presence of the king. Once more the king holds out the golden sceptre, from which we learn that his decree was still in force and that, therefore, Esther once more risked her life. But she knew he loved her. Knowing this she cast herself at his feet and besought him with tears to put away the mischief of Haman, and his devices he had devised against the Jews. Her pleading and her tears were not in vain. Her petition is that the letters of Haman, demanding the destruction of her people, should be reversed. "For how can I endure to see the evil that will come upon my people? or how can I endure the destruction of my kindred?" The king answers her. But the former decree cannot be revoked; it must stand. Laws made by Persian kings could not be altered or changed. (See Daniel 6:15.) A revocation of the edict is impossible and the former proclamation therefore stands. This Persian custom had for its foundation the idea that a "decree" must be looked upon in the light of an emanation from the king as a person with divine authority. But inasmuch as Mordecai had now the signet-ring, which authorized him to issue decrees in the name of the king, he could do anything he pleased and write to the Jews in the name of the king and this second proclamation would also be irrevocable.

Verses 7-14. Then followed a great activity. The scribes were called and Mordecai dictated the message. It was addressed to the governors and princes of the whole empire from India to Ethiopia and written in many languages. He wrote in the name of the king and sealed it with his ring. The letters were dispatched by posts on horseback, riding on swift steeds that were used in the king's service. The proclamation contained the following good news: "The king grants the Jews in every city to gather themselves together, and to stand for their life, to destroy, to slay, and to cause to perish, all the power of the people and province that would assault them, their little ones and women, and to take the spoil of them for a prey, upon one day in all the provinces of King Ahasuerus, that is upon the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, which is the month Adar." The proclamation of death stood, but alongside of it there was given a proclamation of life. They needed not to die. Their enemies were given into their hands. Acting upon this second proclamation, believing its contents, they learned that while the first decree stood and could not be revoked, the second decree set them free from death and gave them liberty.

Verses 15-17. How things had changed under God's merciful dealings with His people! When that first decree was issued Mordecai sat in sackcloth and ashes and all the Jews wept and wailed. But now when the second decree was announced Mordecai went forth from the presence of the king in royal apparel of blue, white and purple, the Persian colours. (They illustrate the ancient Persian view about the world. White the colour of light, blue, the sky, and purple was brought in connection with the sun.) On his head he had a great crown of gold. There was great joy in the city of Shushan. The Jews had light, and gladness, and joy, and glory. Throughout the vast kingdom there was nothing but joy. Furthermore many people became Jews.

Typical Application

In Mordecai's exaltation as given in this chapter, in Haman's possession handed over to the queen and her uncle, in the authority which both received, we have a fine foreshadowing of what will take place when the final Haman is overthrown. That will be when the times of the Gentiles are passed and the King, our Lord, has come back. Then Israel will get her great blessings, promised long ago by a covenant-keeping God.

Like it was in Mordecai's and Esther's day, the riches of the Gentiles will be given unto them. "Then thou shalt see, and flow together, and thine heart shall fear, and be enlarged; because the abundance of the sea shall be converted unto thee, the wealth of the Gentiles shall come unto thee" (Isaiah 60:5). Israel restored will then be the head of the nations and no longer the tail. As many people became Jews as recorded in the last verse of this chapter, so in that coming day, ten men out of all languages of the nations shall take hold of the skirt of a Jew and say, "we will go with you, for we have heard that God is with you" (Zech. 8:23). "And many nations shall be joined unto the LORD in that day" (Zech. 2:11). All this blessing for the Jews in Persia was brought about by the heroic deed of Esther, who passed through a great struggle, who risked her life that her people might be saved. And the promised blessings and glory can only come to the people Israel through Him who gave His life, the true King and Shepherd of Israel, the Lord Jesus Christ.

In gospel application the second decree or proclamation is of much interest. It typifies and illustrates the good news. As we saw, the first decree illustrates the sentence of death passed upon the whole race on account of sin. The second decree does not cancel the first, but declares that which liberates from death, sets free and gives power. And that is the good news as it is given in the cross of Christ. Death is met by death; the death of the Son of God in the sinner's place, bearing the curse, sets free from the law of sin and death. Thus the sinner's doom is fully met in the death of Christ. "This second decree has been nailed to the cross of Christ, it has been revealed in His sacrificial death, written with His blood, sealed by His bowed head, uttered by His expiring cry. It has a twofold effect. First, the sinner who avails himself of it, who believes, is saved. It arrays all the forces of righteousness on his side and enables him to find his surest protection in that which but for the work of Christ must have condemned him. Then it puts him in a position to rise up against his enemies by whom as a captive he was enslaved and to lead his captivity captive. From the condemnation of the law and from the cruel dominion of sin believing sinners are equally delivered by the proclamation of the gospel in the cross of Christ, as the Jews had righteous power given to them over their enemies.

But faith was necessary for the Jews. They had to believe the second proclamation as they believed the first. Woe unto the Jews when that thirteenth day of the month Adar came and they acted not upon the second decree. Then the first decree would have been carried out upon their heads and they would have suffered death. So must the sinner believe the first decree--that death is sentence as a sinner; then he must believe the second decree "Christ died for the sins of the ungodly"--there is life in a look to the crucified One. And as the Jews had light, gladness, joy, and glory because they believed, even so he who believes the good news has salvation, peace, joy and glory.

THE THIRTEENTH DAY OF ADAR AND THE FEAST OF PURIM

CHAPTER 9

1. The resistance and victory of the Jews (9:1-11)
2. Esther's petition (9:12-16)
3. The institution of Purim (9:17-19)
4. The messages of Mordecai and Esther (9:20-32)

Verses 1-11. The fateful day, the thirteenth day of Adar, came and with it the retribution for the enemies of the Jews. On that day they gathered together to withstand all who would assault them. The princes and governors and all other officials of the king helped the Jews, because they knew the influential position which Mordecai held and that he waxed greater and greater. Theirs was a great victory. In Shushan itself 500 were slain and 300 more in another part of the city;

there were 75,000 slain in the provinces. The ten sons of Haman were slain; their Persian names are given.

Verses 12-16. The king heard the report of the number of his subjects slain in Shushan the fortress and then asks the queen to make a petition. She requests that an additional day be given to continue the work in Shushan and that the ten sons of Haman be hanged on gallows. But had they not slain already 500 in Shushan? The 500 were killed in the palace, or, as that word should be rendered, citadel, fortress; the extra day was requested to continue the retributive work in the city itself. The request was granted and the ten sons of Haman were hanged. On the spoil, the goods and possessions of those slain, they did not touch, probably to avoid false accusations, though the decree gave them permission to spoil their enemies. When Jews read in orthodox synagogues the book of Esther they read the names of Haman's ten sons in one breath, as quickly as possible, intimating thereby that they all were exterminated at one and the same time.

Verses 17-19. With the fourteenth day of Adar they rested and made it a feast of rejoicing. The Jews in Shushan celebrated the thirteenth and fourteenth day and rested on the fifteenth day. This was the origin of the traditional feast of Purim still kept by the orthodox Jews in commemoration of the great deliverance and the wonderful history of Mordecai and Esther. It is mostly celebrated by public reading of this book and by the distribution of gifts.

Verses 20-32. The final section of this chapter gives the account of a message which Mordecai sent to the Jews in the provinces of the Persian kingdom enjoining them to observe these days, the feast of Purim. Queen Esther also wrote with all authority confirming this second letter of Purim.

Typical Application

What happened to the enemies of the Jews in Shushan and the Persian provinces will be the lot of all those who hate them. This is often made known in the prophetic Word. Thus spake Balaam: "His king (Israel's King) shall be higher than Agag, and His kingdom shall be exalted. God brought him forth out of Egypt; he hath as it were the strength of an unicorn; he shall eat of the nations his enemies and shall break their bones, and pierce them through with arrows" (Numbers 24:7-8). The Lord Himself will arise in behalf of His people and judge their enemies, for it is written, "I will render vengeance to mine enemies and will reward them that hate me" (Deut. 32:41). In this respect this little book with its history is a prophecy of the ultimate victory of God's chosen people over their enemies. In all their history it has been true, and will be finally true in the fullest sense of the word what Isaiah wrote: "No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn" (Isaiah 54:17).

The ten sons of Haman, so fully identified with the wicked father, are also not without meaning. The final form of the Gentile government in the close of the age was revealed to Daniel. It consists of ten kingdoms, seen in Nebuchadnezzar's dream image and in Daniel's ten-horned beast, forming once more the Roman empire. It will be domineered over by the little horn, who works together with the man of sin. The ten sons of Haman and their miserable end are another illustration of prophetic truth.

AHASUERUS AND MORDECAI: THE CONCLUSION

CHAPTER 10

The three verses with which this book closes tell us of the greatness of King Ahasuerus. Here also is the record of the increasing greatness of Mordecai. He was next unto King Ahasuerus, great among the Jews, accepted of the multitude of his brethren, seeking the wealth of his people and speaking peace to all his seed. A blessed type of Him who is greater than Mordecai and who will some day bring peace to His earthly people and who will speak peace to the nations. The precious little book ends with peace.

THE BOOK OF JOB

The Annotated Bible

Arno Clement Gaebelein

THE BOOK OF JOB

Introduction

The book of Job belongs to the poetical books of the Old Testament. The other poetical books are: The Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, The Song of Solomon and Lamentations. In the Hebrew Bible they are found in the third section, called Kethubim (the Writings, Hagiographa). The arrangement in the Hebrew Bible differs from that in our English version. It is as follows--Psalms, Proverbs, Job, Song of Solomon, Lamentations and Ecclesiastes.

It needs to be explained that Hebrew poetry is different from the poetry of Occidental languages. It knows nothing of rhymed verses, though a rhythmical arrangement is quite often noticeable. The fundamental law of Hebrew poetry is parallelism, which is also very frequently found in the other books which are not classed as poetical. This parallelism has been divided in a threefold form. The synonymous, in which the same sentiment is repeated in different but equivalent words, as in Ps. 25:4, "Show me Thy ways O LORD, Teach me Thy paths"; the antithetical, in which the parallel members express the opposite sides of the same thought as in Psalm 20:8.

They are brought down and fallen,
But we are risen and stand upright.

The synthetical or constructive, in which the two members contain two disparate ideas, which, however, are connected by a certain affinity between them, as in Proverbs 1:7:

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom
But fools despise wisdom and instruction.

The book of Job is in the form of a great dramatic poem, in which we have the following actors: Job of the land of Uz and his wife; his three friends Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar; Elihu the son of Barachel, and Jehovah and the accuser, Satan. The question arises at once, since this book is cast in the form of a drama, is it romantic fiction or history? The critical school declares that it must not be regarded as history at all, though it is claimed that the author may have had some traditional material of a righteous man who was a great sufferer and then the poet worked out the drama, adding fictitious matter. To show the mode of the reasoning of the critical school we quote from Dr. A.S. Peake, who says in his expository work on Job: "That this book must not be regarded as historical is shown by the account of the heavenly councils, by the symbolic numbers of Job's family and flocks, by the escape of one messenger and one only from each catastrophe, by the exact doubling of his possessions at the end of the trial. And even more obvious is that the speeches of Job and his friends cannot be literal reports of actual speeches, since they mark the highest point attained by Hebrew poetical genius, and since no such debate could be imagined in the patriarchal age." But if we believe that this book, like all the other books of the Bible, is given by inspiration, all these objections fall to the ground. Man knew not what was going on in heaven, but the Lord can reveal these unseen things and make known what happens in His own presence. If the record of the scenes in heaven in chapters 1 and 2 are not historical, not revelation, then they are mere human inventions, unworthy of our confidence. And why is it impossible that a controversy such as this book records could not have taken place in the

patriarchal age? Evidently the author believes that the patriarchal age was too unenlightened to produce such brilliant speeches. Such reasoning is the natural offspring of evolution.

The book of Job is real history. Job is not the creation of a great, unknown poetic genius, some ancient playwright, he was a real person, who lived; the book gives the great and remarkable experience of his life. The first statement with which the book opens is sufficient to show the historicity of Job. "There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job." Two other books in the Bible speak of him also as a historic person. Twice in the fourteenth chapter of Ezekiel we find him mentioned alongside of Noah and Daniel (Ezek. 14:14, 20). He is therefore not any more fictitious than Noah and the prophet Daniel. In the New Testament the apostle James mentions his name and calls attention to his patience.

Who Was Job?

Who was Job, when and where did he live? These questions cannot be definitely answered. According to rabbinical tradition he lived in Abraham's times, or, according to another tradition, he lived when Jacob's sons were grown up. If the latter view is true then he might be the Job who is mentioned as Issachar's son in Genesis 46:13. But there are also many other traditions which are very fanciful and mostly legendary. The land of Uz has been located somewhat east of Palestine, in the great fertile lands of North-eastern Idumea. That he must have lived in patriarchal days is proven by the contents of the book itself. We have no mention in this book of the law, nor of the levitical institutions, priesthood and sacrifices. (Sacrifices are mentioned in the beginning and the end of the book. But no priest is indicated. It is the primitive way of approaching God by a sacrifice.) Nothing is said of the history of Israel, nor is there a quotation from the writings of the prophets. We move evidently in this book in a time before the law was given and before Abraham's seed constituted a nation.

The Author and Date of the Book

Who wrote the book of Job cannot be determined. Some think it was Job himself to whom God by His Spirit dictated the book after he had passed through the suffering. Some suggest Elihu as the chosen instrument to preserve this experience of Job. Not a few believe that Moses wrote the book. It matters but little who the penman was; we know that behind that pen stood the Spirit of God, who after all is the real author of this and every other Bible book.

The critics have made havoc with the probable date when the book was written. We quote again Dr. Peake, who in discussing the date of Job weaves in a piece of pernicious Bible exegesis which strikes deeper than a late date for Job. "The problem (of the date when Job was written) is no longer in its elementary stage. It has been long pondered and discussed, and this agrees best with a date considerably later than that of Jeremiah. Several scholars have placed it towards the close of the Exile, contemporary with Isa. 40-55. A comparison of the two writers discloses correspondence which cannot be accidental. There are especially close points of contact between the figure of Job and that of the suffering servant of Jehovah. The servant is to be identified with the historical Israel, which had died in the Exile and was to be restored to life by a return from captivity and re-establishment in its old home. The meaning of its suffering and death is closely connected with its mission to the world. That mission was to bring to the Gentiles the knowledge of the true God.... The sufferings of Israel are accordingly interpreted as vicarious; by its stripes the nations are healed." Isaiah 53, that sublime prophecy of Christ the sin-bearer, is thus interpreted as meaning the nation and then by an involved argument the authorship of Job is put into the time when the imagined "Deutero-Isaiah" wrote his part, which the ancient Jews and the Church of the past always believed to have been the work of the one Isaiah, and being the divine prediction of the suffering Christ. In their antagonism to the Bible as the infallible Word of God, the critics declare also that Job must have been written in post-exilic times, on account of Satan being mentioned and "Satan (they say) occurs in no early literature, but only in Zechariah and Chronicles."

And this is called scholarship! The fact, however, is that the Hebrew of the book of Job is in style not the Hebrew of a later, but of very early times. Traces of the Chaldee language are found in the Hebrew of Job. Yet these peculiarities which are antagonistic to a pure Hebrew style are really an evidence to the very oldest date in which this book must have been

written. They are not in reality Chaldeisms, but rather Arabicisms, and are proof of a very great antiquity of the book, and show that its composition was made when Hebrew and Arabic had not diverged. That is why one of the greatest oriental scholars, Gensenius, wrote: "There is in this book much that is analogous to the Arabic language, or that may be explained by it." Inasmuch then as the book exhibits a fine picture of patriarchal times and its language also bears witness to a very early date all the objections of the critics are void.

The Story of the Book

The book begins with a prologue in which we are introduced to the central figure, Job. We hear of him as an excellent, God-fearing man, surrounded with great prosperity. Then the scene changes and the veil is drawn aside from the unseen world. We see what is going on in heaven and how Satan, the accuser of the brethren, when the Lord mentions His servant Job, sneers in Jehovah's face "Doth Job serve God for nought?" and then challenges God to put forth His hand and to touch all that he hath. Satan is confident that Job would curse Him to His face. How Satan is permitted to carry out his own suggestion, we read in the first chapter. Yet after Job is stripped of all, he did not sin nor did he charge God foolishly.

Again we are in heaven and the same scene is before us. Satan, defeated in his first attempt, demands that the Lord touch the body of Job, his bone and his flesh, and he is confident Job would curse God. The Lord again permits Satan to do what he demanded with one restriction, Satan cannot touch Job's life. And soon we see Job covered from head to foot with sore boils scraping himself with a potsherd, sitting among the ashes. Only once does his wife appear upon the scene. She said to him, what Satan put into her heart: "Dost thou still retain thine integrity? Curse God and die." Job answered her and in all this did not Job sin with his lips. After that the dark shadow disappears. He has lost the battle. God is victor.

Then begins the main portion of the book when the three friends of Job, having heard of his affliction, come to comfort him. Three times each delivers himself of an address, except Zophar who speaks only twice. And eight times Job answers. The subject of the controversy is the mystery of suffering. The result of this lengthy controversy is tersely stated in chapter 32:2-3. Job through it all justified himself rather than God; the three friends with all their fine orations had not found an answer and yet had condemned Job. Then comes the great testimony of Elihu; this is followed by the words which Jehovah speaks. Then after Job is in the dust and cries out "Behold I am vile, I abhor myself!" comes an epilogue. The storm is gone; the sun breaks through the receding storm clouds and the book ends with the Lord blessing the latter end of Job more than his beginning.

The Message of the Book

The message of the book of Job is concerning the suffering of the righteous. Why do the godly suffer? How can their suffering be harmonized with the righteousness of God? if God is love and He loveth His saints why have they afflictions? In one word the theme of the book is the mystery of suffering. The answer to these questions concerning the suffering of the godly is twofold. God permits their suffering for His own glory. This we learn in the first two chapters. God received glory to Himself when Job, enabled by His grace and by His power, sinned not in the midst of the fiery trials through which he passed. Then God permits the righteous to suffer for their own good. It was a wholesome experience for Job; the sufferings chastened him and he received great blessing. This is the double answer in the book of Job as to the suffering of God's people. And yet there is a mystery of suffering which will only be fully bared when God's saints are in His presence and "know as we are known." Till then we walk in faith, trusting Him who has told us "that all things must work together for good to them that love God."

The Division of the Book of Job

The division of the book of Job is not difficult to make. There is first a prologue, that is followed by the main portion of the book, and in conclusion we have an epilogue. We divide the book into seven parts which we shall follow in a closer analysis with the annotations on the most important truths.

I. THE INTRODUCTION (1:1-5)

II. THE CONTROVERSY BETWEEN JEHOVAH AND SATAN AND THE RESULTS (1:6-2:10)

III. THE CONTROVERSY BETWEEN JOB AND HIS FRIENDS

1. First Series of Controversies The Friend's Arrival (2:11-13)

Job's Lament (3:1-26)

Eliphaz's Address (4-5)

Job's Answer (6-7)

Bildad's Address (8:1-22)

Job's Answer (9-10)

Zophar's Address (11:1-20)

Job's Answer (12-14)

2. Second Series of Controversies Eliphaz's Address (15:1-35)

Job's Answer (16-17)

Bildad's Address (18:1-21)

Job's Answer (19:1-29)

Zophar's Address (20:1-29)

Job's Answer (21:1-34)

3. Third Series of Controversies Eliphaz's Address (22:1-30)

Job's Answer (23-24)

Bildad's Address (25:1-6)

Job's Answer (26-31)

IV. THE TESTIMONY OF ELIHU (32-37)

V. JEHOVAH'S TESTIMONY AND CONTROVERSY WITH JOB (38-41)

VI. THE CONFESSION OF JOB (42:1-6)

VII. THE EPILOGUE AND JOB'S RESTORATION AND BLESSING (42:7-17)

Analysis and Annotations

I. THE INTRODUCTION

We are at once introduced to the leading person of this book. "There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job and that man was perfect and upright, and one that feared God and eschewed evil." As already stated in the introduction, the land of Uz was east of Palestine and probably a part of Idumea, or in close proximity to the land of Edom. This seems to be confirmed by Lamentations 4:21: "Rejoice and be glad, O daughter of Edom, that dwellest in the land of Uz." Uz is also mentioned in Jeremiah 25:20. It must have been on the borderland of Edom, if it was not a part of it. In Genesis 22:20-21, we read of the sons of Abraham's brother Nahor; among them are two named Uz and Buz. (Elihu was of Buz, Job 32:2.)

The meaning of the name Job is "persecuted" or "afflicted." His character is described as most excellent. He was perfect, which of course does not mean that he was sinless, without any flaw in his character. He was a whole-hearted man with a well-balanced solid character. In his dealings with others he was righteous, always upright and doing the right thing. He feared God, walking in the fear of God, which proves that he was a child of God, born again; and therefore he shunned evil in every form. This brief description of Job shows that he was an unusual man. The Lord Himself bore witness to this

fact, for He said to Satan, "there is none like him in the earth."

Great blessing rested upon him and upon his house. His family consisted of seven sons and three daughters. Of cattle he had seven thousand sheep, three thousand camels, five hundred yoke of oxen and five hundred she-asses and a very great household. He was in every way, in his character, in his enormous wealth, the greatest man of the children of the east. His was the position of a prince among men with a princely household. Then follows a pleasing scene, a sample of how he conducted himself. His sons and daughters lacked nothing; they feasted and enjoyed life together in the midst of the great prosperity with which God had blessed them. There is nothing to indicate that it was sinful pleasure in which they indulged. But Job had a tender conscience. He wanted to make provision in case his children had sinned and "cursed God in their hearts." The Hebrew for "curse" is "bless" and the meaning is to renounce God, to forget and turn away from Him. Notice that Job feared some such thought of turning away from God might have entered their young hearts; and that is where all turning away from God starts. And therefore pious Job rose up early in the morning and besides sanctifying them he also offered burnt offerings according to the number of them all. He knew God's holiness and the true mode of approach, by a sacrifice, the shedding of blood "without which there is no remission of sins." How far he himself entered into the joys of his family we do not know; nor does he mention himself as needing a sacrifice.

II. THE CONTROVERSY BETWEEN JEHOVAH AND SATAN AND THE RESULTS

CHAPTER 1:6-22

1. A scene in heaven, Jehovah's challenge and Satan's, accusation (1:6-12)
2. Satan's power manifested (1:13-19)
3. Job's great grief and great victory (1:20-22)

Verses 6-12. Suddenly the scene changeth. We are no longer on earth but heaven is opened and we read what is going on before the throne of God. While Job on earth with his loved ones is enjoying himself something takes place in heaven in which he is prominently concerned and yet he is ignorant of all.

The whole scene is intensely interesting. It is not fiction but revelation, and what is here recorded actually took place, and something like it still goes on in heaven. A parallel passage is found in I Kings 22:19. The prophet Micaiah saw the Lord sitting on His throne and all the host of heaven standing by Him on His right hand and on His left. And then the Lord permitted as a judgment upon Ahab, that a lying spirit should enter Ahab's prophets to deceive Ahab.

Heaven as a place is not fiction. There is an uncreated heaven where God's throne and dwelling place have always been. From the passage here we may gather that there are certain times when all heavenly tenants, good and evil, have to assemble before the Lord. The sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord. The expression "sons of God" does not mean believers on earth (the sonship of a believer is a New Testament truth), but supernatural beings, the angels. According to this book these sons of God shouted for joy in the hour of creation (38:7). Other Scriptures speak of such heavenly gatherings. (See Psalm 89:5-7; Zech. 4, etc.) And Satan came also among them. He likewise must appear before the Lord. Satan means "adversary." In this character, as the accuser of the brethren he is seen in the last book of the Bible and according to Revelation 12 he is still active in the same capacity as in the days of Job, and has still access to the throne of God, till the hour comes when his doom begins with being cast out of heaven. Destructive criticism pronounceth Satan a Babylonian or Persian myth, a reproduction in Hebrew literature of the Persian fable of Ahriman. But even the French infidel Renan said of the Satan of the Scriptures, "This is quite a different person from the Ahriman of the Zend-Avesta. It is not the spirit of evil existing and acting for himself." He is not independent of God; as one has correctly stated it, "Satan can go only to the end of his chain." The critical assertion that the belief in a Satan originated after the exile is historically incorrect. The serpent in Genesis 3 is Satan. Originally he was Lucifer, the son of the morning (Isaiah 14), the cherub that covereth (Ezekiel 28) and this great creature of God fell by pride. (See "The History of Satan" in Studies in Prophecy Our Hope Press, and the larger work on Satan, His Person, Work Place and Destiny, by F.C. Jennings.)

He is forced to give an account to Jehovah. He walked to and fro in the earth and walked up and down in it. He therefore is not in hell. The New Testament tells us that he is "the god of this age" and that his throne is here on earth. He still walks up and down and to and fro. Then God calls his attention to Job and approves his character that there is none like Job. Satan knew Job and hated Job, as he still knows and hates every child of God and is moved with malice towards God's people. And so at once he sneers into the face of the Lord the challenge, "Doth Job fear God for nought?"--"Hast not Thou made an hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side? Thou hast blessed the work of his hands, and his substance is increased in the land. But put forth thine hand now, and touch all that he hath and he will renounce thee to thy face." Then the Lord delivers Job to Satan; gives him the permission to take all that he hath, only upon the person of Job he was not permitted to lay his vile hands. But let us notice that the accusation of Satan is the result of Jehovah's challenge. We quote another.

"It is carefully to be remarked here, that the spring and source of all these dealings is not Satan's accusations, but God Himself. God knew what His servant Job needed, and Himself brings forward his case and sets all in movement. If He demands of Satan if he had considered His servant Job, it is because He Himself had. Satan is but an instrument, and an ignorant though subtle instrument, to bring about God's purposes of grace. His accusations result really in nothing as against Job, save to disprove their truth by what he is allowed to do; but, for Job's good, he is left to his will up to a certain point, for the purpose of bringing Job to a knowledge of his own heart, and thus to a deeper ground of practical relationship with God. How blessed and perfect are God's ways! How vain in result the efforts of Satan's against those that are His!" (Synopsis of the Bible)

The controversy then is not between Satan and Job, but between Jehovah and Satan. Job is not so much on trial as the Lord Himself. Is God able to keep His servants loyal when the greatest afflictions pass over them? Has the Lord the power to sustain them? To manifest this power, to show forth His own glory, He permits the suffering of the saint. There are many blessed and comforting truths connected with all this. The best is that we learn that the Lord lovingly watches His people, as He watched Job and spoke well of him and that it is an honor not chastisement when He permits afflictions and sorrow to come.

Satan could not attack the righteousness of Job, but he impeacheth his motives in serving God. In this he only revealed his own character. He attributes the godliness of Job to the selfishness in Job. Then comes his challenge. The conflict is on and it is to be seen if one who is the Lord's, who trusts in Him, can be made by adversities to turn his back upon God and forsake Him; or is God able to keep?

Verses 13-19. "So Satan went forth from the presence of the LORD." The accuser now acts the roaring lion. And now his work against Job begins. But caution is needed here lest powers be ascribed to Satan which he in reality does not possess. Satan is only a creature and does not share the attributes of God. He is not omnipotent; nor is he omniscient, nor omnipresent. If he displays powers it is with divine permission only. Of course here are secrets which we cannot fathom nor fully understand. Questions upon questions might be asked on this subject which the finite mind cannot answer, problems are here which no human can solve. But we know that all God's ways are perfect, yet past finding out.

And so here he is permitted to use powers to carry out his purposes. If God had not said, "Behold all that he hath is in thy power," he would have had no power.

Four calamities overtake Job's possessions and household. Satan stirred up the Sabeans (Hebrew: Sheba), a nomadic people, probably robber tribes and under his direction they plunder Job of his most valuable cattle and murdered the servants. No sooner had this happened than another messenger announced that the fire of God, probably not lightning, had fallen from heaven and the sheep and servants who were there had been completely destroyed. Then came the third calamity. The Chaldeans robbed Job of his camels and killed his servants who had charge of them. And then the last affliction which is the greatest of them all. A hurricane tore down the house and his loved ones were killed. His wife is not mentioned. Satan did not touch her for he intended to use her as a tool and as his mouthpiece. Thus suddenly, without any warning whatever, in the midst of earthly happiness, yea, real piety, Job, the great and prosperous Job had been stripped of

all he had. Satan had done his work well. He knew how to be cruel and reserve the worst blow to the last. And all this happened not only under the all-seeing eye of God, but with His own permission.

Verses 20-22. And Job? Not a murmur escapes his lips. He arose; he expressed his great grief by renting his robe, shaving his head. But then he fell as a worshipper upon the ground and uttered the never to be forgotten words, "Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither; the LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD." It was a great victory. Satan had failed completely. The Lord remained the refuge of Job and underneath the everlasting arms.

CHAPTER 2:1-10

1. Jehovah's second challenge and Satan's answer (2:1-6)
2. Job stricken (2:7-8)
3. Job's wife, Job's answer and victory (2:9-10)

Verses 1-6. Once more the sons of God, and Satan among them, present themselves before the Lord. It must have been immediately after Job's afflictions had come upon him. Probably the Lord called the assembly. The victory is on the Lord's side. Satan is defeated and his defeat is known to the heavenly hosts, who undoubtedly watched the tragedies which had been enacted on earth and who, with joy, had listened to Job's marvellous words. Triumphantly the Lord said to Satan, "And still he holdeth fast his integrity, although thou movedst me against him, to destroy him without cause." Then comes Satan's sneer. He has not given up hope. "Skin for skin, yea, all that a man hath will he give for his life. But put forth Thine hand now and touch his bone and his flesh, and he will renounce thee to thy face." This is bold and horrible language; it shows Satan's knowledge of human nature. And God tells Satan, "Behold, he is in thine hands." What an evidence that Satan can do nothing against the saints of God without His permission. What a comfort this is! Satan is absolutely under the control of God. And if God permits him to do his evil work, he judiciously designs, God's own love and power are on the side of His afflicted people; His own gracious faithfulness will be demonstrated in the trial. The suffering saints still learn the lesson which Job had to learn, his own nothingness, and that God is all in all. But there is a gracious restriction. The Lord said, "Only spare his life." Satan might sift Job; his life he could not touch, for the lives of God's people are in the hand of the Lord.

Verses 6-8. Satan does not delay long. He carries out his commission and useth his power to the utmost. "He smote him with sore boils from the sole of his foot unto his crown." What was the disease? It may have been the disease known as Elephantiasis, a disease of a horrible nature. Other diseases are mentioned also which correspond with the symptoms given in the brief description. "The symptoms given agree better with those of the Biskra sores, an oriental disease, endemic along the southern shores of the Mediterranean and in Mesopotamia. It begins in the form of papular spots, which ulcerate and become covered with crusts, which are itchy and burning sores" (Professor Macalister). It must have been the most loathsome disease Satan could think of.

"And he took him a potsherd to scrape himself; and he sat among the ashes." What a sad transformation! The great eastern emir, who erstwhile was so rich and influential, stripped of all his possessions, reduced to the most abject poverty, afflicted with a vile and extremely painful disease, takes his place upon the dunghill, amidst the ashes of the burnt refuse. He considers himself an outcast, unfit for a human dwelling.

Verses 9-10. Then his wife makes her only appearing in this drama. She is seen but once and only once she speaks. She must have followed him with weeping and wailing outside to the ash-heap. And now she speaks, but not of herself. Satan uses her as his instrument. He speaks through her. "Dost thou still retain thine integrity? Renounce God and die." That is exactly what Satan had spoken in God's presence, that Job would do this very thing. And now he uses the woman to suggest suicide to Job.

But noble is the answer of the afflicted saint of God. He detects in her language impiety--"thou speaketh as one of the

impious (this is the meaning of foolish) women speaketh." Only those who do not know God can speak as you have spoken, is the meaning of his rebuke. What? shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil? The power of God it was which produced such wonderful submission. His grace enabled him to pass through it all without sinning. What a record! "in all this did not Job sin with his lips!" Satan's defeat is complete. His mouth is stopped. If he appears again before Jehovah he must stand in silence; the last word does not belong to him, but to God. And so is coming the day when Satan's defeat is complete, when he will be completely bruised under the feet of God's people.

III. THE CONTROVERSY BETWEEN JOB AND HIS FRIENDS

1. First Series of Controversies

CHAPTER 2:11-13 The Friends' Arrival

We now enter upon the main section of the book. The dark shadow of the accuser of the brethren has disappeared and in his place Job's three friends appear upon the scene. The news of the awful misfortunes had reached them; they made an appointment together to mourn with him and to comfort him. As they are now taking a prominent part in this drama we must examine their names and get some knowledge as to their personality. The first friend is Eliphaz the Temanite. Teman is in Idumea. He may have been the son of Esau (Genesis 36:10-11). His name means "my God is fine gold." Teman was noted for its wisdom. "is wisdom no more in Teman?" (Jeremiah 49:7). The second is Bildad the Shuhite. His name means "son of contention," which expresses the character he reveals in his speeches. His name can also be identified with the patriarchal age. Shuah was the sixth son of Abraham by Keturah (Genesis 25). He is also mentioned in connection with Esau, Edom and Teman. Shuah means "depression or prostration." The third friend is Zophar the Naamathite. Of his origin we know nothing. His name means "to twitter" like a bird chirps and twitters. And his addresses, consisting in violent utterances, reveal the senseless and harmless twittering of a bird.

There can be no question that all three were, like Job, God-fearing men. They formed with Job in the patriarchal age a kind of intellectual and religious aristocracy, in the midst of the surrounding idolators. How long their journey took after the news of Job's condition had reached them we do not know. It must have been months later after Job was first stricken, that they came to visit him. During that time the disease of Job developed fully; his misery did not become less. At last the friends arrived. And as they saw the ash-heap and the miserable figure upon it, they knew him not. He was so disfigured and distorted by the suffering and the disease that they failed to recognize him. They had known him in the days of his great prosperity, when young men were held by his personality in awe, when old men arose to do him honor, when princes refrained from talking and nobles held their peace (29:7-10). What a sad spectacle to see him in this deplorable condition. Their sympathy is expressed by weeping, the rending of their garments and the sprinkling of dust upon their heads toward heaven. What pain it must have given them when they saw that his grief and suffering were so great! Then follows an impressive silence of seven days and seven nights. They are stricken dumb and find no words to utter. But while their lips did not speak their minds were deeply engaged with the problem which ere long they would take up in controversy with the afflicted one. And the question uppermost must have been, "How can God, a righteous God, permit this good man to be in this condition?"--"Why is he stripped of all and in this horrible condition?"

CHAPTER 3 Job's Lament

1. Job curses the day of his birth (3:1-9)
2. He longs for death (3:10-23)
3. The reason why (3:24-26)

Verses 1-9. The silence is broken by Job. Alas! his lips do not utter praises now, but he cursed the day of his birth. It was a sore trial for Job to look into the faces of these pious friends, in perfect health and strength, and he, even more pious than they, stricken and smitten of God. It was an aggravation of Job's grief and sorrow.

But let us notice though Job gives way to his feelings in this passionate outburst, he did not renounce God, nor is there a word of rebellion against Him. All through his address in answer to the arguments of his friends he does not lose sight of God, and over and over again expresses confidence in the unseen One, as in that matchless utterance, "Though He slay me, yet will I trust" (13:15).

Unmanned by the presence of his friends he curses the day of his birth. The chapter, and in fact all the chapters which follow, should be read in a good metrical version.

Perish the day when I was born to be,
 And the night which said a man-child is conceived.
 That day! may it be darkness;
 Let not God regard it from above,
 Neither let the light shine upon it.
 Let darkness stain it and the shade of death.
 Let densest clouds upon it settle down.
 Let gathering darkness fill it with alarm.
 That night--let gloom seize upon it.
 Let it not rejoice among the days of the year.
 Let it not come into the number of the months.

We give this as a sample of a metrical version. As the full quotation of the text is beyond the compass of our work, we recommend to our readers the translation of the Old Testament made by John Nelson Darby. It is the best we know and all poetical sections are given in this metrical arrangement.

Jeremiah, the great weeping prophet, also broke out in the midst of sorrow and treachery, in a similar lament, which reminds us of Job's words.

Cursed be the day wherein I was born.
 Let not the day in which my mother bare me be blessed.
 Cursed be the man who brought tidings to my father,
 Saying, A man-child is born unto thee, making him glad.
 Wherefore came I forth out of the womb
 To see labour and sorrow
 That my days should be consumed with shame?

Such expressions are the failures of poor, frail man. And He who knoweth our frame and remembereth that we are but dust, is like a father who pitieth His children (Psalm 103:13-14). Since critics associate the sufferings of Job with the suffering Servant of the Lord in Isaiah's great prediction (Isaiah 53), we also can make this application, but not as meaning the nation, but our Lord Jesus Christ. What are Job's sufferings in comparison with the sufferings of our Lord! Job sat upon an ash-heap, but the Son of God was nailed to the cross and then He was forsaken of God. Never did a murmur escape those blessed lips.

(The correct translation of verse 8 is as follows:

Let those engaged in cursing days, curse this day,
 Who are ready to rouse Leviathan.
 It voices heathen superstitions and myths.)

Verses 10-23. He next wishes that he had died at the time of his birth and he looks upon death as a great relief and rest, saying:--

There the wicked cease from troubling
And there the wearied are at rest.

We see from these expressions that his mind turned to death as the great emancipator. Moses and Elijah exhibit the same trend of thought and weakness; so did disappointed Jonah when he said, "it is better for me to die."

Weighed in the light of the New Testament all these expressions are found wanting. Death is not a friend whose visit is to be desired, but an enemy. The hope of God's people in affliction and sorrow in the light of the gospel is not relief by death, but the coming of the Lord. The promise of the New Testament, "We shall not all sleep but be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye" (1 Cor. 15:52) is unknown in the Old Testament, for it is one of the mysteries hidden in former ages. Job's language is that of a man in despair; he seems to have quite forgotten the bright and blessed days of the past and fears a hopeless future.

Verses 24-26. In this final paragraph Job states the reasons for his lament and longing for death to release him. We quote the last two verses.

For the thing which I greatly feared is come upon me,
And that which I was afraid of is come unto me.
I was not careless, neither had I quietness
Neither was I at rest; yet trouble came.

He evidently in the days of his prosperity feared that just such calamities might overtake him. He knew the testing times would come and had no quietness. But now as they have come and the three anticipated evils overwhelmed him he would be glad to find the grave.

CHAPTERS 4-5 The First Address of Eliphaz

1. He rebukes Job (4:1-5)
2. The righteous are not cast off (4:6-11)
3. An awe-inspiring vision (4:12-21)
4. Experience and exhortation (5:1-16)
5. Happy is the man whom God correcteth (5:17-27)

With this chapter the long and tedious controversy between Job and his three visitors begins. His pitiful lamentation brings forth the addresses of his friends. Eliphaz and Bildad speak thrice, each answered by Job, and Zophar twice with corresponding rebuttals by Job. Job delivers his last word, the lengthy speech of chapters 27-31 in which he gives a summary of what he contended for, namely, his own integrity, but the problem of his suffering remains unexplained.

The controversy is progressive. The thought which the three friends follow is that all suffering is the result of the justice of God and therefore punitive. For this principle they contend in a dogmatic way. As the controversy continues they become more harsh, suspicious and finally almost abusive. Job's answers are first marked by despair; then hope enters in. In a measure he rises above his sufferings in answering his friends in a sharp way. He has the last word, but, as already stated, the mystery and problem of his suffering is not cleared up.

Eliphaz's address is first in the series of controversies in which each maintains the punitive character of suffering and each answer given by Job (chapters 6-7; 9-10; 12-14) is filled with despair reflecting the state of his mind. After these preliminary remarks we briefly examine each address and Job's answers.

Chapter 4:1-5. Eliphaz is the most dogmatic of the three friends and in his first address makes much of the greatness and justice of God. He had come to comfort; but little comfort could he bring to the afflicted one. He begins very politely.

"If one replied to thee (to Job's lament) wouldst thou be grieved? But who can refrain from speaking?" But at once he stabs Job to the heart.

Behold thou hast instructed many
 And thou hast strengthened the weak hands
 Thy words have upholden him that was stumbling;
 And thou hast strengthened oft the feeble knees.
 But now it is come upon thee and what grief?
 Because it toucheth thee, thou art troubled.
 Hath not thy piety been thy confidence,
 And the perfection of thy ways thy hope?

All this was of course perfectly true. But he did not understand what Job needed in his suffering. The words of Eliphaz, the wise man from Teman, must have acted upon Job like an application of an irritant to a bleeding wound. What Job needed was tender sympathy, a good Samaritan, to pour oil and to give him wine. But Eliphaz reveals in this at once the harshness of his nature, the lack of discernment between the suffering of the righteous and the wicked, and finally he develops into a false accuser.

Verses 7-11. Eliphaz had told Job he was a pious and righteous man (verse 6). And now he tells him: "Remember I pray thee, who ever perished, being innocent? Or when were any righteous ones cut off?" Only those that plow iniquity and sow wickedness reap what they have sown. God makes such to perish in His wrath. They are cut off even if they were like strong lions. What dogmatic logic! Job, if thou art righteous and suffering thus, then God is destitute of all justice; but if God is justice, then thou hast plowed iniquity and sown wickedness and all thy suffering is thine own harvest.

Verses 12-21. The words which follow, describing a vision which Eliphaz had, are so sublime that we must quote them.

Now a thing was brought secretly to me,
 Mine ear did catch a whispering thereof
 In thoughts from visions of the night
 When deep sleep falleth upon men:
 Great fear came upon me, and trembling too,
 It made my very bones to shake.
 Then a spirit passed before my face;
 The hair of my flesh stood up--
 I stopped--but nothing could I then discern--
 I looked, and lo, I saw a form
 Silence: and then I heard a voice--
 "Shall mortal man be more just than God?
 Shall a man be purer than his Maker?
 In His own servants He trusteth not,
 His angels He chargeth with folly.
 How much more than they that dwell in houses of clay
 Whose foundation is the dust,
 Who are crushed as the moth!
 From morning to evening are they smitten
 They perish utterly, without any regarding it.
 Is not their tent-cord plucked up within them?
 They die and without wisdom."

This vision describes the greatness and majesty of God and of course is again true. That it was a real vision cannot be

doubted. Man's punity, his utter nothingness, is thus made known in this vision. But did this meet the need of afflicted Job? It could not explain the reason of Job's suffering. And something like this is suggested by these words--Job, you are just like other men before God; your present experience of affliction testifies to this. You thought you were right with God and that He blessed and protected you, but as He is holy and just, your suffering shows, you are reaping the consequences of your sin, as others do.

Chapter 5:1-16. He gives Job next a bit of experience, which is very true indeed. But the insinuation is wrong. He reasons from experience that suffering is the lot of the wicked, and therefore Job must belong to that class. The advice he gives to Job is in full keeping with his dogmatic assertion.

For man is born to trouble, as the sparks fly upwards.

But as for me I will seek unto God,
And unto God commit my cause;
Who doeth great things and unsearchable,
Marvellous things without number.

But the advice, while good, is most subtle, for it is built upon wrong premises. He maintains his previous assertion that Job was an ungodly sinner, reaping what he had sown; with this in view he spoke these words.

Verses 17-27. The first address of Eliphaz closes with a marvellous climax upon the same wrong premises, that Job had sinned, that he must seek God, but Job had not renounced God; he had not left Him. Otherwise this final utterance of Eliphaz tells out the gracious power of the Almighty in a most blessed way. Read these verses and get the help and comfort which they breathe.

CHAPTERS 6-7 Job's Answer

1. His Despair justified by the greatness of his suffering (6:1-7)
2. He requests to be cut off (6:8-13)
3. He reproacheth his friends (6:14-30)
4. The misery of life (7:1-7)
5. Two questions: Why does God deal with me thus? Why does He not pardon? (7:8-21)

Chapter 6:1-7. He meets first of all the reproach and accusation of Eliphaz (4:1-5). Because his sufferings are so great his utterances are so desperately wild. If Eliphaz only would consider this he would find how enormous the Pressure is "heavier than the sand of the seas" which weighs him down and he would have shown the sympathy and tenderness for which Job longed. And then the description of what his agony is:

For the arrows of the Almighty are within me
The heat whereof my spirit drinketh up.
God's terrors now against me are arrayed.

This inward suffering of his soul was even greater than the loathsome disease which covered his body. He felt that God's hand in holy anger was upon him and he knew not what he learned afterward, that all was love and compassion from God's side. Satan must have had a share and part in these increasing soul-agonies of Job. But has he not a perfect right to complain? The animals in God's creation do not complain without reason. If the wild ass has grass and the ox fodder, they utter no sound. Nor would he complain if all was well with him. But his afflictions are like loathsome meat, and should he not murmur and complain. It is all the language of despairing grief.

Verses 8-13. And now he returns to his great lamentation:

Oh that I might have my request;
 And that God would grant me the thing I long for!
 Even that it would please God to crush me;
 That He would let loose His hand, and cut me off!

This is still greater despair. And that he looks upon as comfort; yea, he would exult in pain that spareth not. It would end his sufferings and then after death he need fear nothing. He was conscious that he was right with God. "For I have not denied the words of the Holy One." Here is the first note of self-righteousness, of justifying himself, which later on becomes more pronounced in his answers.

Verses 14-30. The sympathetic kindness he expected from his friends had not come. Eliphaz's address gave the evidence of it.

E'en to th' afflicted, love is due from friends;
 E'en though the fear of God he might forsake.
 But my brethren have dealt deceitfully, like a brook
 Like streams whose flowing waters disappear,
 And are hidden by reason of the ice
 And of the snow, which, falling, covers them. (Companion Bible.)

He had been bitterly disappointed in his friends. Their silence first, their wailing, and the outward signs of deepest grief, had led him to hope for comfort from their lips. They were like water brooks promising an abundant supply of refreshing water in winter time when not needed. But--

What time it waxeth warm, they disappear
 When it is hot they vanish from their place.
 The travelling caravans by the way turn aside
 They go up into the waste, and perish.

Such were his friends. They were like dried up brooks in the summer's heat. He had not asked them to give.

Did I say, Give unto me?
 Or, Offer a present for me of your substance?
 Or, Deliver me from the Adversary's power?
 Or, Redeem me from the Oppressor's hand?

Nothing like this he had asked of their hands; all he craved was kind and tender sympathy. He urges them to teach him, to show him in what he has sinned, if he suffers for his sins. He urges them to look straight into his face and see if he is lying. He solemnly assures his friends of his innocence.

If only Job had not looked to his friends but to Him whose goodness and mercy he knew so well, he would not have suffered such disappointment. And what a contrast with David's faith: "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for Thou art with me; Thy rod and Thy staff they comfort me."

Chapter 7:1-7. This section is one of great beauty, describing human existence and the misery connected with it, as it was so markedly in his own case.

As soon as I lie down to sleep, I say:

How long till I arise, and night be gone?
And I am full of tossings till the dawn.
My flesh is clothed with worms, and clods of earth;
My broken skin heals up, then runs afresh.
Swifter than weaver's shuttle are my days,
And they are spent without a gleam of hope.

It is the picture of despair. The dark shadow of the enemy who had so wrongfully accused him must have told him "without a gleam of hope" as if God had now forsaken him.

Verses 8-21. Why did God deal with him in this way? He thinks God must be his enemy and asks:

Am I a sea? or a monster of the deep;
That Thou settest a watch over me?

He had dreams too, not like the dreams of Eliphaz which reveal the greatness of God, but dreams of terrifying visions, so that he loatheth his life.

... I would not live always: Let me alone; for my days are vanity.

Poor, suffering, despairing Job! To think of Him whose love had been so fully demonstrated in the past, as his enemy and to pray to Him, "Let me alone," was indeed horrible despondency. And if he has sinned, why does not God pardon and take away his iniquity? But this is not confession of sin. A different thing it is when finally he cries out, "Behold I am vile, I abhor myself."

CHAPTER 8 Bildad's Address

1. How long, Job? (8:1-7)
2. Enquire of the former age (8:8-10)
3. God's dealing with the wicked and the righteous (8:11-22)

Verses 1-7. Bildad the Shuhite now speaks to Job. He is less dogmatic than Eliphaz, and less courteous, but more outspoken. He must have lost his patience listening to Job's reply. Especially does he resent what Job had said about God, the insinuations which had fallen from his lips. But we shall see he too follows the logic of Eliphaz, that God punishes Job for his sins. He starts in at once to rebuke Job for what he had said. "How long, Job, wilt thou speak these things? How long shall the words of thy mouth be like a mighty wind?" By the latter expression he insinuates that Job's speech was tempestuous like the wind, and as empty as the wind. He declares, what certainly is the truth, that God cannot be unrighteous. In this way Bildad called a decisive halt to the dangerous utterances Job had made, forced to it by Eliphaz's cold and dogmatic assertions. Job, inasmuch as he repudiated the accusation of being a sinner, and being punished for his sins, was rapidly approaching the verge of charging God with being unjust. Then Bildad deals a cruel blow to the man upon the ash-heap. He tries to illustrate the principle he defends, that God only punishes sinners, by the children of Job, that they sinned and were wicked and therefore God dealt with them in His righteousness. It has been freely rendered in this wise:

It may be thy sons 'gainst Him have sinned
And He, through their rebellion, cut them off.

How that must have pained Job! Then he exhorts Job to seek God diligently and it would not be in vain. He has his "ifs." "if thou wouldest seek unto God"--and--"If thou wert pure and upright."

Verses 8-10. But he is a traditionalist. He appeals to the past. "For inquire, I pray thee, of the former age, and apply thyself to that which their fathers have searched out." We, in our generation, are but of yesterday, and know nothing. Zophar also appealed to the fathers.

Verses 11-22. And here we have the wisdom of Bildad as he learned it from the past. It is all true and sublimely stated; the wicked cannot prosper; their doom is certain. On the other hand God will not cast off the perfect man. But Job is in the place of one who is cast off, therefore he must belong to the wicked who do not prosper. This is hidden beneath Bildad's rhetoric. Yet beautiful are the closing sentences of his first address, the truth of which was fully acknowledged by Job in his reply.

But perfect men God never casts away
Nor takes He evil-doers by the hand.
Wait! Then one day He fills thy mouth
With laughter and thy lips with joyous shouts.
And they who hate thee shall be clothed with shame,
And tents of wicked men exist no more.

CHAPTERS 9-10 Job Answers Bildad

1. The supremacy and power of God (9:1-10)
2. How then can Job meet Him? (9:11-21)
3. He destroyeth the perfect and the wicked (9:22-24)
4. Confession of weakness and the need of a daysman (9:25-35)
5. Murmuring against God (10:1-17)
6. Welcoming death (10:18-22)

Chapter 9:1-10. The final words of Bildad seemed to have had a momentary soothing effect upon Job. Of a truth it is so. But here is the question, How can a man be just with God? And what a God He is! If a man contend in argument with Him, of a thousand things he could not answer one. Even if it is the wisest among men, and strongest, who stood up against Him, he did not prosper. He moveth and overturneth mountains; He makes the earth to tremble, bids the sun and it does not shine. He made the mighty constellations in the sky, Arcturus, Orion and Pleiades--

Who doeth mighty things works, past finding out,
And wondrous things, in number infinite.

How then can a man be just with such a God of power and greatness?

Verses 11-21. And such a Being Job declares is for him inaccessible.

Behold, He passeth, but I see Him not,
He sweepeth by, but is invisible.
LO, He doth seize; who then can hold Him back?
Or who shall say to Him, What doest Thou?
Should God at length His anger not avert,
Helpers of pride must stoop beneath His hand
How then can I address and answer Him?
Or choose my words in argument with Him?

How can Job confront such a one? Should he attempt to justify himself, his own mouth and lips would instantly condemn him; and if he were to say, I am perfect and blameless, He would only prove his perverseness.

Verses 22-24. But the words which follow sound almost like the ravings of a madman. He speaks out, but not in the fear of God. He assumes indifference and says that it is all the same to him, whether he is right or wrong, for God destroyeth the perfect and the wicked alike; in other words He is an unjust God. When the pestilential scourge marcheth through the land and slays suddenly, He but mocks at the innocent who are taken away. The earth is given by Him into the hands of the wicked; injustice reigns everywhere. If God has not done all this, who then is it? Horrible words these which must have been whispered in his despairing soul by that being who is as much the accuser of God to the brethren, as the accuser of the brethren before God.

Verses 25-35. Then he confesseth his impotence. His days are swiftly passing. He cannot clear himself. He expresses his fear that God will not hold him innocent; He will account him guilty. If then he is wicked all his labours are in vain. Whatever he does cannot change matters. Even if he bathed himself in water pure as snow, and washed his hands with soap, so as to be as clean as he never was before, yet God would surely plunge him into the ditch. All self-help, and self-improvement is in vain. But then a ray of light. He needs another to help him, to bring him in touch with God, to make him just with God. He calls for a daysman, an umpire, one that might lay His hand on God and on him, the sinner, so that the rod be taken from him and he be freed from fear. The daysman we find later in this book foreshadowed. But He has come; Christ Jesus our Lord.

Chapter 10:1-17. And now the darkest of all. Not so much is it the physical agony, the boils and running sores, torturing him, as it is the bitter consciousness that he is losing hold on God, that he begins to look upon Him no longer as a loving friend, but as a harsh, unmovable tyrant. It is a death struggle through which he passeth. His soul is weary of his life and so he tells out the bitterness of his heart. What accusations are here! Bold language indeed for the creature of the dust, and such an afflicted creature as he was--"I will say unto God--Show me wherefore Thou contend with me." He charges God that He planned his calamity and destruction (verses 6-13). It is as if Job confesseth in his blindness by his words that he is in the hands of an all-powerful, merciless being, not a God of love and justice, but an enemy.

Verses 18-22. What then is the use of living? Oh, if he only had been carried from the womb to the grave!

CHAPTER 11 Zophar's First Address

1. Job's multitude of words rebuked (11:1-6)
2. The greatness and omniscience of God (11:7-12)
3. That Job repent and receive the Blessings (11:13-20)

Verses 1-6. The third friend of Job is in every way the weakest. Speaking last he must have been the youngest of the three. He lacks the dignity of Eliphaz and the gentleness of Bildad, nor does he possess the depths of either. Evidently Job's speech has taxed his patience and irritated him.

Should not thy mass of words be answered?
 And a man so full of talk, should he be justified?
 Can thy boastings make men hold their peace?
 And when thou mockest, shall no man make thee ashamed?
 For thou sayest 'My doctrine is pure
 And I am clean in His eyes.
 But Oh that God might speak
 And open His lips against thee.
 That He would show thee the secrets of wisdom,
 That is manifold in effectual working!
 Know therefore that God exacts not more
 than thine iniquity deserveth.

One can almost feel the boisterous spirit in which this rebuke must have been delivered.

Verses 7-12. He now reminds Job of the greatness and omniscience of the God whom he accused. Could he by searching find out God or find out the Almighty unto perfection? "It is high as heaven; what canst thou do? Deeper than Sheol; what canst thou know? The measure thereof is longer than the earth, and broader than the sea." But more than that He is an omniscient God, the searcher of hearts. He knoweth vain men and seeth iniquity also. So far it all seems well.

Verses 13-20. So far all sounds well, but now he follows the same argument as his friends. He too believes that Job is a wicked man who has hidden iniquity, and that this must explain his affliction. So he turns exhorter and calls on him to repent. Set thine heart aright, he tells Job; stretch out thy hands towards Him. Put iniquity away, do not permit iniquity to be in thy tents! He talks as if he is very sure, more so than Eliphaz and Bildad, that Job is guilty of much sin. Then he draws a charming picture of the blessed results if Job confesses and repents. He would forget his misery "as waters that are passed away."

Everything is painted by him in the rosiest colors as if he knew what God would do for Job. The time did come when Job got richer blessings than those outlined by Zophar. And what Zophar said, "Yea, many shall make suit unto thee" (marginal reading: entreat thee), came actually true when Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar had to humble themselves before this Servant of God. Zophar's final word is a warning of the fate of the wicked. It was meant for Job. The blunt, rough way of Zophar, who does not contribute anything new and fresh to the controversy, makes Job more confident that he is right and he gives a remarkable answer.

CHAPTERS 12-14 Job's Answer to Zophar

1. His sarcasm (12:1-6)
2. He describes God's power (12:7-25)
3. He denounces his friends (13:1-13)
4. He appeals to God (13:14-28)
5. The brevity and trouble of life (14:1-6)
6. The ray of light through hope of immortality (14:7-22)

Chapter 12:1-6. He answers not only Zophar but the others as well. Before this Job had expressed his disappointment in them, rebuked them for their unkindness, and assailed as worthless their arguments, but now he treats them in a very sarcastic manner.

No doubt but ye are the people
And wisdom shall die with you.

Was he then without any understanding or inferior to them? Do you think I am ignorant of the things you have spoken to me about? You mock me; I am nothing but a laughingstock. You as my neighbors come to me and say, "He calls on God, that He should answer him." Yet I am the just, the perfect man; you make sport of me. You are at ease and treat the one who is down, overwhelmed by misfortune, with contempt. But remember:

The tents of robbers prosper,
And they that provoke God are secure;
Abundance does He give unto them.

This is what Zophar had claimed in his address, that the wicked do not prosper. (See Job 11:2, 14, 19, 20.) Robbers often prosper and those who are secure are often those who provoke God. Perhaps his friends with their prosperity might belong to that class.

Verses 7-25. This is also in answer to Zophar's argument. Zophar had spoken of the greatness of God. The wisdom which Zophar had tried to impress upon him is so elementary that the beasts themselves know something about it.

But ask now the beasts, and they shall teach thee;
 And the fowls of the air, and they shall tell thee;
 Or speak to the earth, and it shall teach thee;
 And the fishes of the sea shall declare unto thee.
 Who knoweth not in all these,
 That the hand of the Lord hath wrought this?
 In whose hand is the soul of every living thing,
 And the breath of all mankind.

Job outstrips Zophar's speech in every way. He is ahead in the controversy. In verses 12-13 Job seems to have Bildad's statement in mind (8:8-9), and he declares now that with God is wisdom and might; He hath counsel and understanding. But what follows, while true in itself, is but the one side of God's doings, and the darkest pessimism, such as suited his mind. God spoils counsellors, maketh judges fools, looseth the bonds of kings, leadeth priests away spoiled, overthroweth the mighty, pours contempt on princes; He increaseth the nations and destroyeth them.

He taketh away the heart of the chiefs of the people in the earth,
 And causeth them to wander in a wilderness where there is no way.
 They grope in dark without light.
 And He maketh them stagger like a drunken man.

It is a dreadful picture Job has drawn of God by the one-sided description of His greatness. Not a word of His love and mercy. It is in full keeping with his despairing heart.

Chapter 13:1-5. He had told in the previous words that he was not an ignorant man. What his wise friends had told him he understood perfectly; both nature and history had taught him the greatness of God which they had emphasized. What ye know, I know; I am not inferior to you. I am just as good as you are. What he desires is not to speak with them but to the Almighty; he wants to reason with God. The parallelism of verses 4 and 5 is interesting and has been rendered as follows:

But as for ye, plastered with lies are ye,
 Physicians of no value are ye all
 Would ye but altogether hold your peace;
 That, of itself, would show that ye are wise.

Still stronger is his rebuke as found in verses 7-13. He warns them that their whole course is wrong. They are presumptuous in talking deceitfully for God. All this he speaks in self-defense, that he is innocent, and with it the subtle accusation against God once more, that He is unjust. He also warns them that "He will surely reprove you" and this came true.

Verses 14-28. Then his words addressed to God Himself. He dares to approach Him. Knowing the greatness and awfulness of God, and perhaps conscious too of not having Him honoured as he should have done, he says, this would be the meaning of the rather difficult verse (14), "Come what may I take my life in my hand and risk it." The paraphrase of the Companion Bible expresses it correctly.

Aye, come what may, I willingly the risk will take; and put my life into my hand.

But at that moment when he makes this resolve His faith breaks through and he utters one of the sublimest words which

ever came from human lips. "Yea, though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him." And thousands upon thousands have spoken it after him, thus honouring God with faith's sweetest song in the night.

He wants God to hear his speech diligently and have declaration come into His ear. He expresses his hope that God would yet declare him just, that is justify him, then who will dare to contend with him? And then that pleading of his with so much pathos! Relieve me from the sufferings, withdraw thine hand far from me, which rests upon me; and let not thy terror make me afraid. Then call Thou, and I will answer (verses 20-22). Or let me speak, he says, and answer Thou me. Then once more the right note, that note which finally must be sounded to the full in his wretched misery--"How many are mine iniquities and sins? Make me to know my transgression and my sins." But it was only momentarily. He breaks out in fresh charges against God. His self-righteousness has blinded him so that he asks, "wherefore hidest Thou Thy face, and holdest me for Thine enemy?" Horrible charges he brings against His Maker, the charges of injustice (verses 26-28). He wanted to listen to God, but He gives Him no chance to speak. When finally God speaks Job is in the dust.

Chapter 14:1-6. A true picture he has drawn in these words of man's frailty. Besides this unclean, for, who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? Not one. He requests that he might be let alone "till he shall accomplish as an hireling his day."

Verses 7-22. There is hope for a tree, he declares, though cut down, but it may sprout again. "But man that dieth, and wasteth away; Yea, man giveth up the ghost, and where is he?" He speaks of man "who lieth down and riseth not." That is the language of man apart from revelation. It is the expression of one who is in darkness and uncertainty. Frequently teachers of errors, like soul-sleep, the annihilation of the wicked, etc., in defense of their false teachings quote Job and the utterances of these friends as if these were true revelations from God, when their words are only the expressions of the human mind, and often false and misleading. What Job spoke and his friends is given in an unfailing inspired account, but revelation is a different matter altogether.

Then Job's desire is to be hidden in Sheol, until His wrath be past. "That Thou wouldest appoint me a set time, and remember me!" In this he expresseth the wish to believe that there is hope and that some one might give him the assurance about it--"If a man die, shall he live again?" But this ray of hope is only for a moment and once more he gives way to despair and continues his awful suspicions that God is his enemy. The first series of controversies are a complete failure. Job by justifying himself has dishonored God, and his friends by condemning him and not giving him the comfort he needed have sinned as well.

2. The Second Series of Controversies

CHAPTER 15 Eliphaz's Second Address

1. Tells Job that he is self-condemned (15:1-6)
2. Charges him with pride (15:7-16)
3. The wicked and their lot (15:17-35)

Verses 1-6. His second address is not as lofty as his first. Job's language has evidently annoyed him very much. He characterizes his words as vain, unprofitable, which can do no good. He charges him with having cast off fear and having become one who restrained devotion before God. He tells Job that what he has spoken only confirms their views of him, that he is a wicked man and suffers justly for his sins.

Thine own mouth condemneth thee and not I;
Yea, thine own lips testify against thee.

Verses 7-16. Wrong as Eliphaz's rebuke is, he adds still another charge. He tells him he is filled with pride. What Job knows they know also. "What knowest thou, that we do not know? What understandeth thou, which is not in us?"

And why does Thine heart carry thee away?
And why do thine eyes wink? (in pride)
That thou shouldest turn thine anger against God
And cause such words to issue from thy mouth.

Then, as he did in his first address, Eliphaz speaks once more of the holiness of God. "Behold He putteth no trust in His holy Ones. Yea, the heavens are not clean in His sight."

Verses 17-35. Here we have another description of the wicked, their miserable lot and what is in store for them. What he said was meant to terrify Job. Every word must have cut deep into Job's miserable soul, for he knew with Eliphaz he was a wicked, impious man. We see that Eliphaz said nothing new. He restated the former argument.

CHAPTERS 16-17 Job's Reply to Eliphaz

1. Miserable comforters are ye all (16:1-5)
2. Oh God! Thou hast done it! (16:6-14)
3. Yet I look to Thee (16:15-22)
4. Trouble upon trouble; self-pity (17:1-12)
5. Where is now my hope? (17:13-16)

Chapter 16:1-5. How masterfully he meets their wrong accusations and how he brings forth his suffering afresh, yet always with that horrible nightmare, God is not for me, but against me! Such things Eliphaz spoke he had heard before. What are you anyway? Nothing but miserable comforters. If they were in the condition in which he is, he would also speak. "But I would strengthen you with my mouth, and the solace of my lips should assuage your grief." I would never treat you as you treat me.

Verses 6-14. And now he charges God with being responsible for all. What does he say? "Thou hast made me desolate.... Thou hast laid fast hold on me.... He hath torn me in His wrath and persecuted me.... He has gnashed upon me with His teeth.... He hath delivered me to the ungodly." Remarkable is verse 10. "They have gaped upon me with their mouth; they have smitten me upon the cheek reproachfully; they gather themselves against me." This was done to another Sufferer, the Lord Jesus Christ. But He murmured not; He did not dishonour God as Job did, but glorified Him. It is interesting to make a contrast between these two sufferers. It brings out the perfection and loveliness of our Saviour.

Verses 15-22. But in all these ravings, faith, which slumbers in his breast, asserts itself, and tries to awake. He says "my witness is in heaven, and He that voucheth for me is on high." Thus he clings to God. How beautiful this word suits us, who know Him who has gone on high and who voucheth for us there, needs hardly to be pointed out. But Job knew Him not as we know Him. Once more he desires that daysman. "O that one might plead for man with God, as a man pleadeth for His neighbour!"

Chapter 17:1-12. What a pathetic description of his troubles! And he cannot deliver himself from the obsession that God is the author of it all.

Verses 13-16. And what is his hope now? How dark and evil his thoughts! The grave is to be his house, the darkness his bed. Corruption, his father, the worm his mother and his sister. He and his hope will go down to the bars of the pit, and rest together in the dust. But we shall soon hear another confession from his lips.

CHAPTER 18 Bildad's Second Address

1. New reproaches (18:1-4)

2. Once again, the wicked and what they deserve (18:5-21)

Verses 1-4. Bildad has the good sense in this second oration to be very brief. He, like Eliphaz, pays his compliments to Job and reproaches him. How long are you going to speak yet any way! You, you tell us that we are like the beasts, stupid and ignorant! Keep on with your nonsense, you but tear yourself in your anger, it is all unavailing and changes not things for thee. This is the meaning of his rebuke.

Verses 5-21. Then the favored theme, the wicked and what is in store for them. Apart from the falsity of the application of all Bildad says to Job, his words are certainly true and very poetic. Thus he speaks of the wicked and his fate:

Terrors make him afraid on every side,
 And chase him at his footsteps.
 Through pangs of hunger his strength declines,
 Calamity ever stands ready at his side,
 The members of his body to consume,
 Yea, death's firstborn his members shall destroy.
 His confidence be rooted out of his tent,
 It shall lead him away to the king of terrors.
 They that are none of his shall dwell in his tent,
 And upon it brimstone shall descend.

All his words, though true, were consummated cruelty. It must have been torture and agony unspeakable for suffering Job to hear himself thus portrayed as the wicked man, whose lot is well deserved.

CHAPTER 19 Job's Reply to Bildad

1. How long will ye vex my soul? (19:1-6)
2. And I am not heard! (19:7-12)
3. Forsaken of men he pleads to be pitied (19:13-24)
4. Faith supreme (19:25-27)
5. The warning to his friends (19:28-29)

Verses 1-6. Bildad's scathing speech did not bring Job into the dust. He acknowledges the words vexed his soul and broke him in pieces, but he does not change his viewpoint. He repudiates the guilt with which they charged him and continues to blame God.

Verses 7-12. Afresh he breaks forth in accusing God. He charges Him with not answering his prayers. "He hath stripped me of my glory, and taken the crown from my head. He hath broken me down on every side, and I am gone." He imagines that His wrath is kindled against him. But what a display of divine mercy and patience! God looked upon the worm in the dust and pities him, as He still pities His children.

Verses 13-24. Then the description of his forsaken condition. Read it in these verses. His brethren, his kinsfolk, his wife, all have turned against him. His servants look upon him as an outcast. Young children even despise him. Then the wail for pity: "Have pity upon me, have pity upon me, O, ye my friends."

Verses 25-27. But what a change! Suddenly light breaks in. He does not speak by himself, but the Spirit of God enlightens his soul and utters words which stand in striking contrast with all his previous wailings. The witness he bears is not without difficulties in point of translation. Darby's translation is as follows:

And as for me, I know that my Redeemer liveth

And at the Last, He shall stand upon the earth;
And if after my skin this shall be destroyed
Yet from out of my flesh I shall see God.
Whom I shall see for myself.
And mine eyes shall behold and not another.
Though mine eyes be consumed within me.

The Companion Bible paraphrases the text in an excellent way:

I know that my Redeemer ever liveth,
And in the latter day on earth shall stand;
And after worms this body have consumed,
Yet in my flesh I shall Eloah (God) see,
Whom I, e'en I, shall see upon my side,
Mine eyes shall see Him--stranger now no more:
For this my inmost soul with longing waits.

And the Redeemer of whom he speaks, enabled to utter these words of faith by the power of another, is the Lord Jesus Christ, the risen, living, coming Redeemer, the victor over death and the grave. Here is the testimony of the book of Job to the hope of the coming of the Lord, the resurrection of the body and the glorification of the saints.

verses 28-29. How astonished his friends must have been at this wonderful outburst from his lips, which but a few moments ago almost blasphemed God. He asks them why they persecute him, inasmuch as the root of true faith is in him. He warns them that there is judgment.

CHAPTER 20 The Second Address of Zophar

1. Zophar's swift reply (20:1-3)
2. Another description of the life and fate of the wicked (20:4-29)

Verses 1-3. Zophar, the twitterer, begins his reply to Job with impatient haste. Job's words, probably those found in chapter 19:2-3, and the last two verses, have made him angry. He boils over with indignation. He is ready now to confirm the testimony already given and wound the suffering servant of God still more.

Verses 4-29. He follows the same path and there is again nothing new in his argument. The description of the wicked is great; no fault can be found with what he says about those who are ungodly. The triumphing of the wicked, and the joy of the ungodly is for a moment only. He is bound to perish Swiftly; like a dream, like a vision he vanisheth away. His children remain poverty stricken. He may swallow down riches, but he vomits them up again. And so he continues in his portrayal of the ungodly. Wrath is finally coming upon him. Such is the portion of the wicked man from God. But the serious mistake Zophar made is twofold. Job had pleaded for pity. Not a word of pity comes from Zophar's lips. The whole address is meant to tell Job "Thou art that man!" And the second mistake, he does not consider for a moment Job's utterance which could not come from the lips of an ungodly person, but from one who knows God.

CHAPTER 21 Job's Reply

1. Hear my solemn words--then mock on (21:1-6)
2. His testimony concerning the experiences of the wicked (21:7-26)
3. Your answers are nothing but falsehoods (21:27-34)

Verses 1-6. This answer shows that Job gets the upper hand over his accusing friends in this controversy. In a masterly way he meets their arguments. He wants them to hear diligently, and if they choose, after he has spoken, they may mock on. He is not complaining to man, or making his appeal to these human friends. He begins to look for another helper, even to God.

Verses 7-26. Zophar's eloquent words concerning the wicked are taken up by Job and he proves that experience shows another side besides the one Zophar had made so prominent. The wicked often live to a ripe old age and possess great power. They have large families and their houses are safe from fear; nor is the chastening hand of God upon them. They prosper and all goes well with them; their cattle increase. They sing to the timbrel and to the harp and rejoice at the sound of the pipe. They love pleasure and have a good time. Then suddenly Job changeth the description. They spend their days in prosperity--but in a moment they go down to Sheol. It reminds us of Asaph's great Psalm (73) in which he describes the prosperity of the wicked: "When I thought to know this it was too painful for me; until I went into the sanctuary of God; then understood I their end. Surely Thou didst set them in slippery places; Thou castedst them down to destruction."

Job declares they reject and defy God; they laugh at the thought of praying to Him. Then he gives his own, personal testimony "the counsel of the wicked is far from me." In this he shows his friends that they are wrong in classing him with the wicked. Then he continues in unfolding the problem of the wicked and how God deals with them.

Verses 27-34. Without enlarging upon the final statements of his answer, we only remark that Job shows that his friends have not only failed to convince him, but their answers are insincere and nothing but falsehoods. The victory is on his side; yet the problem, "why do the righteous suffer and how can their suffering be harmonized with a righteous God," remains as unsolved as before.

5. The Third Series of Controversies

CHAPTER 22 The Third Address of Eliphaz

1. Is not thy wickedness great? (22:1-5)
2. In what Job had sinned (22:6-11)
3. The omniscience of God and the ways of the wicked (22:12-20)
4. Eliphaz's exhortation and promise (22:21-30)

Verses 1-5. The third cycle of addresses begins again with Eliphaz, the wise man from Teman. He tries to maintain his dignity and lofty conception, but he proves too well that Job's accusation of insincerity is well-founded. He starts out with reminding Job of the majesty of God. Can then a man be profitable to God? Is it any pleasure to the Almighty when thou art righteous? Or does He gain anything by it if thou art perfect in thy ways? Since then God has no interest in man's righteousness, and He cannot punish Job for his righteousness, he draws the conclusion that Job is a great sinner. Is not thy wickedness great? Neither is there an end to thine iniquities.

Verses 6-11. And now having made the assertion, according to his logical conclusions, he attempts to show that Job not alone must have sinned, but in what his sin consists. He charges him with avarice, with cruelty, with dealing in a heartless way with widows and with the fatherless. Then he tells Job that is "why these snares are around thee and thou art covered with darkness and with the waters of affliction." The astonishing thing is that every word of what Eliphaz says is a lying invention. Job later gives the most positive proof that all was a concoction of falsehoods. The Word of the Lord concerning Job shows up Eliphaz as a miserable liar, for the Lord had said concerning Job, "there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man." Would the Lord have spoken this if Job had outraged the laws of humanitarianism and withheld water and bread from the destitute or stripped the naked of their clothing? But how could Eliphaz ever stoop so low? It was but the result of his iniquitous logic. Job must be a sinner; he is a wicked man and without any real facts he draws his conclusions that Job must have done these things and charges him positively with it. The same fatal logic is still with us. Evil, for instance, comes upon a servant of the Lord Jesus Christ; he passeth through affliction, sorrow upon

sorrow comes upon him, then someone suggests that his life must be wrong and the slanderous tongue soon charges some specific evil.

Verses 12-20. Eliphaz speaks next of God's omniscience and then again brings in the favoured theme of himself and his friends, the wicked and their defiance of God. Then in self-righteousness he declares-- "But the counsel of the wicked is far from me." Strange it is this word which came from Job's lips first (21:16). Evidently Eliphaz repeats this phrase to mock and to insult Job.

Verses 21-30. Once more as before he turns exhorter. Acquaint now thyself with Him and be at peace, thereby good shall come unto thee. He gives him instruction what he is to do, and what God will do for him if he acts upon his advice. But while the exhortations are all proper, they are altogether out of place with Job. For if Job acted upon this advice and would repent according to Eliphaz's demand he would by doing so assent to the false and lying accusations of his three friends. He would acknowledge himself the wicked man they had made him out to be. What he says as to restoration is almost prophetic of what should come to Job in blessing at the close of his trial.

CHAPTERS 23-24 Job's Reply

1. O that I knew where I may find Him (23:1-8)
2. Trusting yet doubting (23:10-17)
3. Hath God failed? (24:1-12)
4. Job's further testimony as to the wicked (24:13-25)

Chapter 23:1-9. Job here does not disprove at once the false charges of Eliphaz. He can afford to wait till later, till their mouths are completely silenced. Then he speaks the final word. He acknowledgeth that he is still rebellious. His hand which is upon him is heavier than all his groanings. Then that outburst which reveals the longing of his tried and tempest-tossed soul-- "Oh, that I knew where I might find Him, that I might even come to His seat! I would order my cause before Him, and fill my mouth with arguments." Then in blinded self-righteousness he speaks a bold word: "I would know the words He would answer to me, and understand what He would say to me." He is so sure of it all that he declares "He would give heed to me." How different it was when the Lord did speak and Job's lips are sealed, only to open in expression of deepest self-aborrence. Yet even in the words he speaks here, still in the dark as to the reason of his suffering, he demonstrates that he is not the defiant wicked man, but one who longs for God.

Verses 10-17. Trusting yet doubting expresseth the sentiment of what he says next. Trust is expressed in the beautiful utterance, "But He knoweth the way that I take; when He hath tried me I shall come forth as gold." Yet it is self-vindication which speaks next, not in God's presence, but to clear himself before his friends. "My foot held fast to His steps." Doubt follows for he still considers God, not his friend, but his enemy.

Chapter 24:1-12. The rendering of the opening verse is difficult to make. It has been paraphrased in this wise: "Since, then, events from the Almighty are not hid, why do not they who love Him know His ways?" This perhaps expresseth the true meaning of his thought. He shows what so often happens on the earth and which seemingly indicates a failure of God in His righteous government. Why is it all? And never before in the history of the race has Job's charge of the failure of God been so prominent as in our evil days.

From city and from houses groans ascend;
With shrieks those being murdered cry for help
Yet God regards not this enormity.

Verses 13-25. He describes the paths of the wicked again and yet they seem to escape the retribution in this life which they so well deserve. They even have security. And Job still is haunted by the thought that in these facts there is found an evidence that God is favorable to them. Death surely comes to them "yet a little while and they are gone" but what comes

after death he does not mention. Then boldly he raiseth himself up and says, "And if it be not so now, who will prove me a liar, and make my speech of no account?" What an assertion that all he declared is infallibly true!

CHAPTER 25 The Third Address of Bildad

1. What God is (25:1-3)
2. What man is (25:4-6)

Verses 1-3. Bildad's arguments are exhausted. He has reached the end of his resources and Zophar does not open his lips again. Nevertheless Bildad's final word is of great force and beauty, with deep meaning. He gives a picture of what God is.

With Him dominion is reverence;
He maketh peace in His high places.
The number of His hosts who can count?
And upon whom doth not His light arise?

How pregnant with meaning these four sentences!

Verses 4-6. And what is man, man the creature of the dust, the earthworm.

How then can man be just with God?
Or he be pure who is of woman born?
Behold for Him the moon hath no brightness,
And even the stars are not pure in His sight.
How much less man, that is but a worm!
Or any mortal man-nothing but a worm!

CHAPTER 26 Job's Reply

1. A sarcastic beginning (26:1-4)
2. Job also knows and can speak of the greatness of God (26:5-14)

Verses 1-4. You have helped me greatly, Bildad, me, who am without power. Whom dost thou instruct anyway? And what kind of a spirit is it which speaks through thee? In other words he means to say, I have no more use for your argument at all.

Verses 5-14. But let me, Bildad, tell you something about the greatness of God before which your words pale into nothing. And so he utters a description of God's greatness which is indeed greater than Bildad's. And after this sublime unfolding of God's greatness and power, he truthfully says:

Lo, these are but the outlines of His ways
A whisper only do we hear of Him
But who can comprehend the thunder of His power?

CHAPTER 27 Job's Closing Words in Self-Vindication

1. My righteousness I hold fast (27:1-6)
2. The contrast between himself and the wicked (27:7-23)

Verses 1-6. Zophar, the third friend, no longer speaks. Perhaps Job paused after his remarks in answer to Bildad and waited for Zophar's criticism. Perhaps that young hot-head hid his inability of advancing another argument under an assumed disgust. Critics have assigned verses 7-10 and 13-23 to Zophar and claim that Job did not speak them at all. But other critics, like Wellhausen, Kuenen and Dillman say that these verses are a later insertion. We do not need to waste our time by examining these claims of the inventive genius of these scholars. There is nothing to them. Job now becomes bolder, knowing that his friends had spent their last arrow against him. He still accuseth God that He has taken away his right and wronged him. And he is determined, more so than ever before, not to give in to the abominable logic of his friends. "My righteousness I hold fast, and will not let it go; my heart does not condemn me as long as I live." It is the vindication of himself.

Verses 7-23. And this self-vindication he pursues when he pictures the godless and contrasts them with himself, showing that he cannot be identified with these. How could this description of the godless ever be applied to himself? True, he had suffered like the wicked suffer, but will his end be like theirs? Thus he tries to show them that they had done him an injustice, for he was an upright man, who in spite of his misery held on to God.

CHAPTER 28

1. The treasures of the earth (28:1-6)
2. The better treasures (28:7-22)
3. God knoweth the way and the true wisdom (28:23-28)

Verses 1-6. This part of the monologue of Job does not seem to have much relation, if any, to the controversial matter of the previous chapters. He speaks first of the treasures of the earth, the riches which man seeks after, but which do not last, and are so often man's undoing. Job shows that he had a good knowledge of mining operations. He knows of veins of silver and how gold is refined. Iron is taken out of the earth and copper molten out of stone. Then he describes how the miner with his mining lamp makes an end to the darkness when he digs into the mountains and then he sinks a shaft. They are so far down that the foot which passeth above knows nothing where they are. The dangers of mining he also mentions--"they hang (suspended by ropes) afar from men, they swing to and fro." All this man does, risking life and comfort, to get gold and the treasures of the earth.

Verses 7-22. But there are better treasures, truer riches than these. Job evidently aims at a contrast with what man seeks in earthly things and the better things which are for him. There is a better way than digging into the earth for gold and precious stones.

There is a path no bird of prey has ever known,
Nor has the eagle's eye discovered it.
A path which no proud beast hath ever trod;
Not e'en the lion ever passed that way.

But these paths are not for finding treasures of the earth; and so there is another way to get other riches, far better than silver and gold. Then he speaks again of what man does to bring hidden things to light, how he lays his hand on the flinty rock and overturns the mountains in his mining operations, stemming the subterranean waters, and all to bring the hidden treasures to light. Then he asks: "But where can wisdom be found? And where is the place of understanding?" Alas! man does not know the price of wisdom; it is not found in the deep, nor in the sea. Gold cannot buy it, nor silver. The price of wisdom is above rubies, the gold of Ophir, the precious onyx (beryl) or the sapphire. "Whence then cometh wisdom?"

Verses 23-28. Here is the answer: "God understandeth the way thereof. Yea, in all His creation, He knows the way and much more so in redemption He is in the person of His blessed son, the way to Himself, and in Him all the treasures of wisdom and of knowledge are hid." Then comes the revelation of true wisdom: "Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is

wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding." God has spoken to his heart and answered the question concerning wisdom and understanding. And ere long Job himself will demonstrate in his experience the meaning of this verse. In reverence and fear he then turns to Him, bowing in the dust; from evil, yea, from himself he turns, departs and finds the true wisdom and understanding.

CHAPTER 29

1. His past prosperity and honors (29:1-10)
2. The good works he did (29:11-25)

Verses 1-10. The words spoken by Job were wholesome words, showing that his mind was moving in another channel, but now he reverts to the old complaint in self-occupation, self-pity and self-vindication. What a horrible thing this old self? And before the sun can scatter his dark night, that self must be laid into the dust of self-abhorrence. And so we hear him review the past. Some 20 times he says "I" in this chapter. It reminds one of the man in Romans 7 with his "I." Retrospect is good if it is done with praise and in humility. Not once does Job utter a word of praise. It is all spoken to remind his friends, as well as himself, what a great man he was. How often it is with the Lord's servants, that they live in the past and then nourish a most subtle pride.

Verses 11-25. What a prominent place he used to occupy and the good works he did! The words need no further comment; what he means is on the surface. He glories in his good character and in his good works. Self is triumphant. His friends well knew that every word he spoke of his past greatness was true and not a lie.

CHAPTER 30

1. His present humiliation and shame (30:1-19)
2. No answer from God: completely forsaken (30:20-31)

Verses 1-19. He had spoken of his past greatness and now he describes his present misery. Ah! the bitterness if it--those younger than I have me in derision! Alas! through it all we hear nothing but pride. He scorns those who were so much beneath him. And those who were scourged out of the land, these children of fools and base men, mock him, the former prince among men. "I am become their song; I am a byword to them; they abhor me; they spit in my face." Then he describes his affliction. "Days of affliction have taken hold upon me--the pains that gnaw me take no rest." He is in the mire and has become like dust and ashes.

Verses 20-31. He brings in God again. Thou dost not answer me! Heaven had been silent to all his pleas. What a dreadful charge: "Thou art turned to be cruel to me; with the might of Thy hand Thou persecutest me"! He thinks himself completely forsaken, not knowing that God's thoughts towards him were thoughts of love and peace. His skin is black, he says, his bones are burned with heat. No joy for him, nothing but weeping.

CHAPTER 31

1. My chastity and righteousness (31:1-12)
2. My philanthropy (31:13-23)
3. My integrity and hospitality (31:24-34)
4. Let God and man disprove me (31:35-40)

Verses 1-12. His final word is the final word in his self-righteous vindication. He gives Eliphaz the lie. He gives a review of his life to prove that he is clean in the sight of God and of man. Even if after this outburst his friends would have an inclination to answer him they could not have done so. He silenced them for good. But what are his declarations after all? Nothing else but the filthy rags of his own righteousness, the vain boastings of a good, moral man, such as we hear on

all sides. He shows that in his character he was morally pure. The gross sins of the flesh he had avoided. He had even abstained from a look which might stir his passion. He knew that God watched him and therefore the sin of adultery was shunned by him; he did not sin against a neighbour's wife. If he had ever done that, then let the sanctity of his home and his own wife be violated. Then he enumerates his great philanthropy. He had respect of the widow; he shared his bread with orphans; those who were naked he had clothed.

Verses 24-34. He was not a worshipper of gold, a covetous man, nor had he worshipped like others about him, the sun and the moon, or what sun-worshippers did, kissing the hand and wafting it towards the sun. He was a hospitable, a kind hearted man; nor did he cover his transgressions as Adam did, nor did he hide his iniquity in his bosom. His was a walk in integrity.

Verses 35-40. "Lo, here is my signature, let the Almighty answer." I sign my name to all I have said; I swear to it. Let mine enemy also bring forth his accusations and sign them also. He challengeth God and man. And even to the land he appeals that all his transactions were just. Job's words are ended. One feels like saying, "Thank God!"

His final word may be condensed in one sentence: "I am clean." The next time he speaks and opens his lips, he says, "Behold I am vile." How he came to this the rest of the book will teach us.

IV. THE TESTIMONY OF ELIHU

If the book of Job were now ended the last word would be Job's. Furthermore the enigma of suffering would remain unexplained and God's character would stand impeached. Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar ceased answering Job because he was righteous in his own eyes. But suddenly another appears on the scene. Nothing is said how he came to be there; yet he must have listened to the controversy, for he sizeth up the whole situation and boils down the whole matter in a few terse statements. Critics and most expositors have spoken rather slightly of Elihu. We heard some years ago a prominent Bible teacher speak of him as "a young theologian who has just been ordained and who thinks he has a lot of knowledge." Others call him "a conceited young philosopher" and that his babbling should be treated with silent contempt. Such statements only prove that the men who make them have not gone deep into the meaning of this book and that they lack in spiritual discernment. Just such a one, sent by God, is needed to exercise a mediatorial function and to prepare the way for the Lord Himself to come upon the scene. It is generally pointed out that God rebukes him in the words of chapter 38:2. But God speaks to Job who applies it to himself. The vindication of Elihu from such criticism of man is found in the last chapter.

CHAPTERS 32--33:7

1. Elihu introduced (32:1-5)
2. I waited, but now must speak (32:6-22)
3. His address to Job (33:1-7)

Verses 1-5. As Elihu had listened to the different addresses his wrath was stirred up. His name is very suggestive. Elihu means "my God is He"; Barachel--"the Blessed God"; the Buzite, "the rejected One" of Ram, and Ram means "exalted." These are names which find their fullest application in the person of our Lord, whom Elihu in his mediatorial work represents. But why was his wrath kindled? Because Job justified himself rather than God and because Job's friends had found no solution of the problem, yet they condemned Job. This is indeed the result of the whole controversy in a nutshell. From the fourth verse we learn that he was a younger man; he maintained silence because they all were elder than he.

Verses 6-22. He tells them why he waited and did not speak before. He thought "days should speak, and multitude of years should teach wisdom," so he was not a froward, conceited young man. But he acknowledges the spirit and that the inspiration of the Almighty gives understanding. Depending on that he must speak. He tells the three friends in plain words that they did not convince Job, nor did one of them answer his words. With Job, Elihu says he has no controversy and he

does not intend to use the speeches of the three men. Verse 15 is a soliloquy in the third person, spoken by Elihu as he looked on the three men. Then he says that he must speak. He is filled with words and the mighty constraint of the spirit within him, makes him like wine which has no vent and is ready to burst like new bottles.

Chapter 33:1-7. The chapter division here is unfortunate. The opening verses belong properly to the preceding chapter. What a difference between Elihu's words in addressing Job and the way the three other men had acted. He is calm, gentle and kind. He assures him that what he is going to say comes from the Almighty. Now, Job, if thou canst answer me, arrange thy words and stand up. "Behold, I am according to thy wish in God's stead." We believe with this Elihu refers to Job's desire for a daysman. Now in the person of Elihu he has come. He encourages Job not to be afraid, for "I am also formed of clay." How beautifully all this may be applied to the true Daysman, our Lord, we leave to the meditation of the reader.

CHAPTER 33:8-33

1. Elihu rebukes Job (33:8-13)
2. How God deals with man (33:14-22)
3. How God in grace recovers (33:23-30)
4. Mark well, Job, hearken unto me (33:31-33)

Verses 8-13. Elihu treats Job in a dignified, yet firm manner. He speaks as one who is sure of the whole matter. He has heard Job's speeches; he knows the mistake Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar made, in treating Job as a suspicious character, a hypocrite and a godless man. No such wrong accusations are made by Elihu. He knows where Job's trouble lies and already spoke of it (32:2); it is his self-justification and pride stands behind it. But Elihu's zeal is for the honor of the name and character of God. What Job had said in charging God he must rebuke. He therefore quotes Job's utterances in his previous addresses. Without entering into a lengthy argument to disprove the charge of Job, or to explain the mystery of the sufferings Job underwent, he utters one masterly sentence. "Behold in this (his wrong charges against God) thou art not Just. I will answer thee, that God is greater than man." Well spoken! God is greater than man, therefore His ways are past finding out, yet all must be perfect and righteous. And because God is God--"Why dost thou strive against Him? for He giveth not account of any matter of His."

Verses 14-22. But God, though He is greater than man, does not pass by man or ignore him. Elihu speaks of two different ways in which God deals with man. The first is in a vision of the night, in a dream. When there was no Bible, the revelation of God, God spoke to man individually by dreams and visions. He does not do so any longer for we have His completed Word in which His will is made known unto us. The purpose of this way of dealing with man is to withdraw him from an evil way and to warn him so that he may leave the pride which man nourisheth in his bosom; to keep his soul from the pit and his life from perishing by the sword.

But there is another way in which God deals with man, the way of affliction and suffering. The description Elihu gives of a sufferer fits Job's case exactly. To understand this method of God in dealing with man there is need of a messenger from God, a mediator, one who comes in, a daysman to interpret the meaning of the affliction and God's object in it. It is not a common interpreter who can do this, but one of a thousand--yea, He is needed who is "the chiefest among ten thousand." This interpreter is to show unto man his uprightness. But whose uprightness, or righteousness, is meant? It has been translated by "to show unto man what is right for him"; and so most expositors explain that it means the interpreter tells the sufferer how to do right before God; and critics even suggest that the word "uprightness" should be changed to "fault." There is a deeper meaning here. The word "his" should be spelled with a capital "H"--not man'S, but God's righteousness, the interpreting messenger is to show to the afflicted one. The following paraphrastic translation puts it in the right way:

Then, then, He speaks to him by messenger
Who can interpret; One 'mong thousands chief,

Who will reveal to man HIS righteousness.
 Then He doth show him grace (divine and saith:)
 "Deliver him from going down to death;
 A ransom I have found--redemption's price."

In these words we have Him declared who is the revealer of God's love and righteousness, the Son of God, though His Name is not mentioned, yet He is the only One who reveals to sinful man His righteousness. He has paid redemption's price, He has made atonement and therefore He can deliver the sinner from going down to the pit. Here we have the gospel in the book of Job. Then the blessed results. His flesh becomes as fresh as a young child; this is the new birth. He prays to God as His redeemed child and He shows Him grace and beholds His face with joy, even the face of a loving Father. This is the way God bestows upon man His righteousness through Him, His well-beloved Son, who has found the ransom. He sings a new song. "I have sinned, and perverted that which was right, and it profited me not. He hath redeemed my soul from going into the pit, and my life shall behold the light."

Verses 31-33. After this glowing utterance in which Elihu brings in God in His grace, he turns to Job. "Hast thou anything to say, then answer me." But Elihu waits in vain. Job's lips are sealed.

CHAPTER 34

1. Hear my words ye wise men (34:1-4)
2. The refutation of Job's accusation of God (34:5-30)
3. Job needs testing to the end (34:31-37)

Verses 1-4. In beginning this part of the address, in which Elihu vindicates God's character against Job's insinuations, he addresses the friends of Job, and perhaps others who were gathered there. He wants them to pay the closest attention to what he will say.

Verses 5-30. This is the main burden of his address; it is taken up with refuting Job's charge against God. He treats Job with all fairness and quotes what he said before. The wrong Job had done in his words is found in verses 5-9. Then Elihu brings forth the refutation that God is unjust. He shows that God is righteous. He is God and the Almighty and He cannot do that which is evil and unrighteous. If sin or wickedness were in Him He would not be God. His creation bears witness to this. He sustains all in His goodness. Note verse 14 in its true rendering, "Should He set His heart upon Himself," what then would become of man? All flesh would then expire and man would turn to dust again. But He does not set His heart upon Himself. Finally Elihu demonstrates the righteousness of God from His greatness and his omniscience. His judgments also declare that He is righteous (verses 26-30).

Verses 31-37. And Job has not yet learned the lesson; he needs more testings. Did ever a word like the following come from his sinful lips? "I have borne chastisement, I will not offend any more." Has he asked in humility to be taught? Or has he said, "if I have done iniquity I will do it no more"? Alas! his spirit in spite of all affliction, was still unbroken. "Would that Job were tried unto the end, because he answered like wicked men, for he addeth rebellion unto his sin, He clappeth his hands among us, and multiplieth his words against God."

CHAPTER 35

1. Remember the greatness of God (35:1-8)
2. Why God is silent and does not answer (35:9-16)

Verses 1-8. Job having kept silence Elihu continues and asks him if this is sound judgment, what he had said, "My righteousness is greater than God's righteousness." This was the logical conclusion which Elihu drew from some of his words. Because God did not care for him the sufferer what profit was it to him if he had not sinned? Then Elihu answers

and his friends as well by following Job's unjustly charge. He points out the greatness of God and that cannot in any way be affected by what man does. That was Job's contention. Look at the heavens which are higher than the creature of the dust. If thou hast sinned by thy many sins, what canst thou do to Him? If thou are just, what givest thou to Him? Thy sin may hurt thee, and thy righteousness may profit thee; how canst thou claim that He has afflicted you in an unrighteous way? In all this Elihu had accommodated himself to Job's wrong reasoning.

Verses 9-16. Furthermore, Elihu shows that this reasoning of Job is utterly false. Job had contradicted himself. God takes notice of man. Then he gives the reasons why God does not answer the cry of the afflicted. It is not His indifference but man's sin and forgetfulness of Him. None saith, "Where is God my Maker, who giveth songs in the night?" The true reason is the evil-doer's pride. God will in nowise hear vanity. Pride, vanity, self-will and all that goes with it makes it impossible for a righteous God to hear. And therefore Job's contention that it does not matter with God whether a man sins or is righteous is disproven.

CHAPTER 36:1-21

1. God's care over the godly (36:1-7)
2. The purposes of affliction (36:8-18)
3. Job to consider this (36:19-21)

Verses 1-7. Elihu had told Job in the last verse of the preceding chapter that he had opened his mouth in vanity and had multiplied words without knowledge. That should have explained to Job the reason why God did not answer. There could be no reply from Job and so Elihu continues. He is not through yet with speaking in behalf of God. Sublimely he stands up for God. "I will ascribe righteousness to my Maker." He tells Job, "One that is perfect in knowledge is with thee." How could he say this? Because Elihu knew in speaking for God His Spirit would speak through him to Job. All Job had said was wrong. Though God is mighty, yet does He not despise any. He does not preserve the life of the wicked, nor does He withdraw His eyes from the righteous. But the day is coming when God will reward the righteous.

He seateth them with kings upon the throne
He makes them sit in glory; raised on high.

Beautiful truth! It is a glimpse of the gospel again, as expressed also in Hannah's song of praise (1 Samuel 2).

Verses 8-18. But what about the afflictions of the righteous? Here Elihu speaking in God's behalf lifts the veil. He permits them to be bound in fetters and in sorrow's bonds, so that He, the righteous God, may show to them their deeds, to uncover their transgressions which have for its source that which God hates, pride (the crime of the Devil; 1 Tim. 3:6). It is love and kindness, not his wrath and displeasure, which are revealed in the afflictions of the righteous. He wants to instruct them by suffering. And if they hearken and learn the lesson, they shall spend their days in prosperity, and end their earthly existence in peace and pleasantness. It was a call to Job to acknowledge this, it is a prophecy that ere long he would find it out, when God has accomplished His purpose with him, and his end would be peace and prosperity. The wicked do not heed this and therefore perish. Let any man refuse to hear Him and harden his heart against Him, they shall perish among the unclean. He would have led out Job in a broad place, but if Job continues in the argument of the wicked, reasoning and pleading as they do, charging God falsely, then let him beware. "Because there is wrath, beware lest He take thee away with His stroke, then a great ransom cannot deliver thee." We dare not meddle with this verse as others have done. Let it stand as it is, this solemn truth! There is wrath and if man does not hearken to God His wrath in judgment will be displayed and the great ransom, not even the great ransom, can deliver.

Verses 19-21. These verses contain wholesome words of exhortation addressed to Job to take heed and not to regard iniquity.

CHAPTERS 36:22--37:24

1. God's power and presence in nature (36:22-33)
2. The thunderstorm (37:1-5)
3. The snow and the rain (37:6-16)
4. Elihu's concluding remarks (37:17-24)

Chapter 36:22-33. The chapter division in the Authorized Version is at fault. These concluding verses of the thirty-sixth chapter begin the final section of Elihu's testimony. Unspeakably great in every way, in diction and reverence, is this man's witness to the ways of God in creation's work. They show that he speaks not of himself, but the One who is perfect in knowledge speaks through him. God's power is displayed in nature and man should extol His work and gaze in wonder upon it.

Lo! God is Great--greater than we can know;
 The number of His years past finding out.
 Tis He who draweth up the vapour clouds,
 And they distil from heaven in rain and mist,
 E'en that which from the low'ring skies does fall,
 And poureth down on man continually.
 Can any man explain the rain-clouds balancings,
 The rumbling thunders of His canopy?
 Behold He spreadeth out His light thereon
 While making dark the bottom of the sea.
 Yet He His judgment executes by these;
 By these He giveth food abundantly.
 He graspeth in His hand the lightning flash
 And giveth it commandment where to strike.
 Of this the noise thereof quick notice gives
 The frightened cattle warn of coming storm.

(Companion Bible)

How beautiful! It also proves the antiquity of the book. In early days man knew the Creator by His works and was fully occupied with them (Romans 1:20-21).

Chapter 37:1-5. And now the thunderstorm. His voice is heard in the thunder, His power displayed in the lightning and Elihu, in vivid description, trembles.

He thundereth with His voice of Majesty
 One cannot trace Him, though His voice be heard.
 God's voice is wondrous when He thundereth.
 Great things He doth; we comprehend them not.

And if He is so wonderful in nature, His ways there past finding out, how much more in His providential dealings. Yet whether in nature or in providence, His ways are perfect.

Verses 6-16. The description of God's perfect ways in nature are continued by Elihu. The snow and the rain, the hot blast of the summer, the biting frost of winter, the formation of ice by His breath and the storms, all is in His hands and controlled by Him. O Job! hearken, hearken! Stand still and consider the wondrous works of God.

Verses 17-24. And now the concluding words of his great, God-given testimony. They are to impress Job and all of us with the frailty, the nothingness of man. "Touching the Almighty, we cannot find Him out; He is excellent in power; and in

judgment and plenteous justice He will not afflict. Men do therefore fear Him; for none can know Him, be they ere so wise." This must be man's true attitude. This should have been Job's place before the Almighty. Surely the beautiful and powerful testimony of Elihu must have been a spiritual anaesthetic to Job. But more than that, it clears the way for the Almighty to speak.

V. THE LORD'S TESTIMONY TO JOB AND CONTROVERSY WITH Him

CHAPTER 38:1-38

1. The Lord speaks to Job (38:1-3)
2. The questions of the Lord (38:4-38)

Verses 1-3. The voice of man is hushed; the voice of the Lord begins to speak. The Almighty, the Creator, the Lord of All comes now upon the scene. He too, like Elihu, had been the silent listener; He heard Job's complaint and wailing and the babblings of his friends. Elihu's wonderful utterance, inspired by the Lord, was ended. The thunderstorm is on, no doubt a literal storm, the dark clouds gather--

Then from the North there comes a golden light.
God appears in wondrous Majesty (chapter 37:22).

The golden light of God's own presence and glory overshadows the scene. Out of the whirlwind His own voice is heard. It is that voice which David in the "thunderstorm-Psalm" (Psalm 29) so wonderfully describes. The voice which is upon the waters--full of majesty, the voice which breaketh the cedars; the voice which divideth the flames of fire. When David thus extolled the voice of the Lord, he shows the demands of that voice. "Give unto the LORD, O ye mighty, give unto the LORD glory and strength. Give unto the LORD the Glory due unto His Name; worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness." And that voice, though terrible in majesty, will bring peace. "The LORD will bless His people with peace." What a scene it must have been there in the land of Uz, when the voice of the LORD spoke out of the whirlwind! We can imagine how good Elihu stepped aside and covered his face. And Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar, terror-stricken, fell on their faces in the dust, while silent Job, awe-struck, dares not to look up. And what He speaks is for the one great purpose to humble Job, to bring him in the dust.

Job's last utterance was this: "Oh, that the Almighty would answer me" (31:35). He answers him now. "Who is this that darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge?" What a blunder expositors have made of speaking of Elihu's gentle words, and true words, as "a harsh judgment" and that God rebukes him in this verse. No; God does not rebuke Elihu who had exalted His Name and His works. He rebukes Job. He had darkened counsel by the multitude of his senseless words. God answers Job. He is going to ask him questions.

Verses 4-38. If we were to examine these questions minutely, which the compass of our work does not allow, we would have to write many pages. There are 40 questions which the Lord asks of Job, His creature, concerning His own works in creation. They relate to the earth and its foundations upon which all rests. the bounds of the sea--

When I decreed for it My boundary
And set its bars and doors and to it said,
Thus far-no farther, ocean, thou shalt come:
And here shall thy proud waves be stayed.

He asks about the morning light and the unknown depths, the unexplored depths of the sea, with their hidden secrets, and the gates of death. He questions as to the elements, the treasures of the snow, the storehouse of hail, the rain, the winds and the ice--

Whose is the womb whence cometh forth the ice?
 And heaven's hoar-frost, who gave it its birth?
 As turned to stone, the waters hide themselves;
 The surface of the deep, congeal'd, coheres.

And what about the things above, the stars and their wonderful constellations?

Canst thou bind fast the cluster Pleiades?
 Or canst thou loosen great Orion's bands?
 Canst thou lead forth the Zodiac's monthly signs?
 Or canst thou guide Arcturus and his sons?

And then the rain clouds, the lightnings and their control. What questions these are. They cover every department of what man terms "natural sciences"--geology, meteorology, geography, oceanography, astronomy, etc. Job had not a single answer to these questions and if he had spoken his words would have been folly. And we, 3000 years or more after, with all our boasted progress, scientific discoveries of the great laws of nature, are still unable to answer these questions in a satisfactory way. All the boastings of science of getting at the secrets of creation are nothing but foam. One breath of the Almighty and man's speculations, apart from Him and His Word, are scattered to the winds. But what is the aim of the Lord in putting these questions? To show that God is greater than man and to humble man, to bring Job to the needed true knowledge of himself and to deliver him from the pride of his heart.

CHAPTERS 38:39--39:30

1. The beasts of prey (38:39-41)
2. The wild goats, the ass, the unicorn and the ostrich (39:1-18)
3. The horse, the hawk and the eagle (39:19-30)

Chapter 38:39-41. God's own wisdom and power in nature, as witnessed to by Himself, is followed by His witness as to the sustenance of His creatures, how mercifully He provides for their need. This section begins with the query, "Knowest thou?" Could he hunt the prey of the lion, or fill the ravenous appetite of their young? God considers the young, even so unclean a bird as the raven has its food provided by God. Wonderful it is to read that the young ravens in their helplessness cry to God. The beasts acknowledge the Creator by their instincts and look to Him for food, though it be not the sweet song of a lark, but only the croak of a raven. How it reminds us of the witness of the same Creator who speaks here, when He was clothed in creature's form. "Consider the ravens; for they neither sow nor reap; which neither have storehouse nor barn; and God feedeth them. How much more are ye better than the fowls" (Luke 12:24). And striking it is that He begins by calling Job's attention to the wild beasts first, though they are now man's enemy through man's sin. God in His infinite wisdom and benevolence cares for them.

Chapter 39:1-18. Then what about the goats of the rock and their young? His omniscient eye beheld them out in the desert rocks and He watched over their young. Could He then not watch the footsteps of His higher creature, even His offspring, man? Then the wild ass, also a desert animal. He cannot be tamed. God made him so. The unicorn (the aurochs) with his strength is known to God also. He has the power to make him the willing slave; man cannot do it. And the peacock with its goodly wings and the ostrich, which leaveth her eggs in the earth, and warmeth them in dust. Who takes care of these hidden eggs, which the foot might crush and wild beasts break? It would be amusing, if it were not so sad, when critics declare that the author of "the poem" made a mistake when he speaks of the eggs of the ostrich. But it is not an "author" who speaks, but the Creator Himself and He knows more about His creatures than all the "scientists" in the world.

Verses 19-30. Next the description of the noble horse. Did Job give the war horse his strength or clothe the neck with the rustling mane, or make him leap like the locust? The picture of the war horse in battle is sublime also. God shows to

Job a glimpse of His works, and the wisdom which has created them, as well as His care in keeping them. Such a God is He whom Job has maligned.

The hawk too may teach him a lesson. Is it by Job's instructions that the hawk soars high into the air, and is it by his command that the eagle mounts and builds his nest in the dizzy heights, from where he spys his prey? No answer could Job give. His silence is assent. God is great and unsearchable and Job but the rebellious worm of the dust.

CHAPTER 40

1. The answer demanded (40:1-2)
2. Job's answer (40:3-5)
3. Jehovah's appeal to Job (40:6-14)
4. Behold behemoth! (40:15-24)

Verse 1-3. Now comes the direct word of Jehovah out of the storm-cloud to Job. He addresses him as "he that reproveth God." He had contended with the Almighty and now the Almighty Job had judged faces him and demands an answer. Let him answer.

Verses 3-5. And Job answers; and what an answer it is! It is the answer for which God was waiting. "Lo! I am vile; what shall I answer Thee? I will lay my hand upon my mouth." He acknowledges that he had spoken too much and that now he cannot answer and proceeds no further. He is completely silenced, acknowledges his own nothingness and vileness, that his words were wrong and that he has nothing else to say. He was convinced that such a God who had spoken to him of creation and His creatures, making known His power, wisdom and care, could never be unjust in His dealings with man.

Verses 6-14. But Jehovah, the searcher of hearts, has not yet finished. Job's abominable pride must be laid bare. Jehovah asks him the serious question, "Wilt thou disannul My judgment? Wilt thou condemn Me, that thou mayest be righteous? Hast thou an almighty arm like God, or canst thou thunder with a voice like His?" Then he tells him: "Deck thyself now with majesty and glory." Array thyself with majesty and power. Come and take My place and then thus arrayed let Job be in God's place, rule and deal with proud man and the evil-doers.

Send far and wide thy overflowing wrath;
 And on each proud one look, and bring him low;
 Each proud one single out, and humble him;
 Yea, crush the evildoers where they stand;
 Hide them away together in the dust;
 And in the deepest dungeon have them bound.

It is Divine irony, but needed in order to humble Job still more. He who was so proud and had so stubbornly defended his righteousness in self-justification and God-accusation, how could he do what Jehovah asked him to do?

But if he were to do it, then Jehovah would be ready to own to him "that thy right hand to save thee will suffice." It all strikes home to the proud, self righteous heart of Job.

Verses 15-24. The Lord asks Job to consider the behemoth; it is undoubtedly the hippopotamus (the Greek for river-horse). A description of this powerful beast follows. He calls the behemoth the "chief of the ways of God," one of His greatest works in animal creation. The behemoth is one of Job's fellow-creatures "which I made as thee." He eateth grass like an ox. He has tremendous strength in his loins and legs. He takes its rest under the shady trees and fears nothing:

Suppose the stream should swell, he will not blench

For he believes that Jordan he can drink.
 Shall any take him while he lies on watch?
 Or with a ring shall any pierce his nose?

Behemoth then is a powerful, uncontrollable beast which lives for itself. How weak then is man as contrasted with this beast in possession of such marvellous strength. Yet it is only a beast and Job is a man. How abominable then must Job's pride and boasting appear in the sight of the Lord.

CHAPTER 41

1. Leviathan, the untamable beast of power (41:1-11)
2. Its description (41:12-24)
3. His remarkable strength (41:25-34)

Verses 1-11. The leviathan has generally been identified with the crocodile. Like the behemoth, the leviathan is a strong and untamable beast. Jehovah asks, Canst thou draw up leviathan with a hook? Canst thou pierce his jaw with a reed? Will he make a covenant with thee? Wilt thou take him for a servant forever? Then He declares that he is fierce, and even at the sight of him one is cast down. And if a creature is so mighty and strong what must the One be who called this creature into existence? Verses 10 and 11 should be rendered as follows: "Who then is able to stand before Me (the Creator)? who did give to me first that I should repay him? since all beneath the heavens is mine."

Verses 12-24. A more detailed description of the leviathan follows. His frame is strong; his outer garment, so invulnerable, who can strip it off? His teeth are terrible, who can open the doors of his face (his mouth)? His scales, his armour, are his pride. Here is a good description of the crocodile's hide. The scales are so near each other that no air can come between them; they are joined one to another, they stick together, that they cannot be sundered. His sneezings flash forth light and his eyes are like the eyelids of the morning. The eyes of the crocodile are visible quite a distance under water. The Egyptians therefore used the crocodile's eyes in the hieroglyphics for the dawn of the morning. The entire description shows what a terrible beast it is.

Verses 25-34. Then his great strength is unfolded. If one lay at him with the sword, it cannot avail. The dart, the spear and the pointed shaft make no impression upon him. He counteth iron as straw and brass as rotten wood. The arrow cannot make him flee; clubs are counted as stubble. The final statement concerning leviathan is "He is king over all the sons of pride."

This last word is significant--"He is King over all the sons of pride." it has a deeper meaning. In Isaiah 27:1 we read: "In that day the LORD with His sore and strong sword shall punish leviathan the piercing serpent, even leviathan the crooked serpent; and He shall slay the dragon that is in the sea." Here leviathan typifies the power of darkness. Both the behemoth and the leviathan typify Satan, his character and his rule. He is king over all the sons of pride. These two beasts are likewise a good description of the beasts spoken of in Revelation, which at the end of this age will manifest their power and pride as Satan's masterpieces. And now the deduction which Job could easily make. If he is proud then he belongs to leviathan the king who rules over the sons of pride. Jehovah has touched the secret in Job's bosom. He has searched out the depths of his heart. Pride, the Devil's crime, has been cherished by him. And now with the heart laid bare by Jehovah's dealing we shall hear Job's voice once more.

VI. THE CONFESSION OF JOB

CHAPTER 42:1-6

Critics claim that Job's answer is misplaced and that it really ought to be put in connection with chapter 41:3-5. This is another evidence of the lack of spiritual discernment of these "great" scholars. They treat the Word of God as literature

only and criticise it as such. We have seen that the additional words of Jehovah were needed to bring Job completely into the dust and bring from his lips the confession which alone could satisfy Jehovah and be the great blessing for himself. This confession we have now before us.

Then Job answered the Lord and said:
 I know that Thou canst do all things,
 And that no purpose of Thine can be withstood.
 Who is this that hideth counsel without knowledge?
 Therefore have I uttered that which I understood not.
 Hear I beseech Thee and I will speak,
 I will demand of Thee, and I will speak and declare Thou unto Me.
 I heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear;
 But now mine eyes seeth Thee,
 Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.

Here we have his full answer, his complete prostration before Jehovah. He acknowledgeth first Jehovah's supreme power. He is omnipotent and can do all things. Then he quotes Jehovah's own words (38:2; 40:2). Thou hast asked me, "Who is this that hideth counsel without knowledge?" It is strange that some expositors can misapply these words as if the Lord again rebuked Elihu. No, as we have shown before, He rebukes Job for his wild and audacious charges he had made against the Lord. And now Job acknowledgeth that Jehovah's rebuke is right. It is all true, he saith, I uttered things I did not understand, things too wonderful for me, beyond my ken. Hear me now, Jehovah, I will speak. Once more he quotes Jehovah's word. Thou hast said (40:2), "I ask of thee, answer ME." Here then is MY answer, he replies--"I heard of Thee by hearing of the ear; but now mine eyes hath seen Thee--this is my answer now--I abhor myself in dust and ashes I repent."

Face to face with Jehovah, His power and His holiness prostrate Job in the dust. No creature can stand and boast in His presence. His plea of innocence, of righteousness, of philanthropy and all the boastings of his former greatness is gone. He seeth himself stripped of all; he stands in Jehovah's presence in nakedness and shame. Nor does he say that he abhors now what his mouth hath spoken, but it is himself, his wicked, proud self, which he abhors. He has taken the place of greatness. Now Jehovah can come forth and lift him up and raise him to blessing and glory. This great scene corresponds with the vision of Isaiah when he beheld the Lord and cried out "Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am of unclean lips" (Isaiah 6:5). And Daniel also! (Daniel 10). Peter on the Lake of Galilee was face to face with Him, who hath spoken to Job, the same and not another, and when he seeth His power and realizeth this is Jehovah, Peter falls at His feet and like Isaiah, Daniel and Job, acknowledges his nothingness. "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord."

The enigma of the book of Job is solved. God permitted the afflictions to come upon His servant Job, not only to manifest His power, but for Job's good, to draw him into the place of nearness and of blessing. And that place is the dust, "in dust and in ashes."

This is the place which all God's saints must own. And blessed are we, beloved reader, if we follow the wooings of grace, if we let His Spirit put us daily into that place, so that the Lord's hand may be prevented from putting us there by suffering and affliction.

VII. THE EPILOGUE: JOB'S RESTORATION AND BLESSING

CHAPTER 42:7-17

1. Jehovah's message to Job's friends (42:7-9)
2. Job's restoration (42:10-15)
3. The conclusion: Peace (42:16-17)

Verses 7-9. Like the beginning of the book, the prologue, the epilogue is not in a poetic measure, but in prose. The Lord addresseth Eliphaz as the most prominent one of the three friends of Job. His wrath is kindled against the three. Though they had apparently stood up for Him and defended His character, yet under the searchlight of the Omniscient One, who searcheth the hearts of men, they are found wanting. The charges they had brought against his servant Job, were false. They had wickedly accused Job, whom He had declared to be "a perfect and an upright man." In all their charges they had slandered God. Then the Lord said, "for ye have not spoken of Me the thing that is right, as My servant Job hath." Here is a beautiful lesson. Job hath confessed and Jehovah hath forgiven. He forgets all Job's sinful utterances; He remembers them no more. But in infinite grace He takes the few sentences scattered throughout Job's speeches in which he honoured the Lord and expressed trust in Him and with these He is well pleased. It must have been a sweet music in Jehovah's ear when Job said, "Though He slay me yet will I trust." And so He acknowledgeth Job as His servant. They must bring sacrifices--a burnt offering; and that blessedly shows us the cross.

"And my Servant Job shall pray for you; for him I will accept." Sweet scene now as Job prays for his humbled friends. How it again reminds us of Him, who ever liveth and maketh intercession for His people. Him God hath accepted in His great sacrificial work on the cross, and we are accepted in Him.

So Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite, and Zophar the Naamathite went, and did according as the Lord commanded them; and the Lord accepted Job. This is the last as to Job's friends.

Verses 10-15. And now Job's restoration and double blessing. All his kinfolks return with all his acquaintances and sit down to a meal in sweet communion. What about his bodily disease? Nothing is said of that. But assuredly the Lord touched his suffering body, and He who spoke to the leper, must have spoken to Job, "Be thou clean," and the loathsome disease vanished, and as Elihu had said, his flesh became like that of a young child. They also brought him money and rings of gold. They were not presents to enrich him, the Lord did that for Job, but simply to show how happy they were over Job's healing and restoration.

All his wealth becomes twice as large as before. The Lord blessed the latter end of Job more than his beginning. While his possessions are doubled, his sons and daughters are not. He gives him also seven sons and three daughters. This does not mean, as some suppose, that they were not new sons and daughters, but that the restoration is that in resurrection. Such a view is untenable. The sons and daughters were born to him. The names of the three daughters are given. Jemimah (a dove); Keziah (cassia); Keren-happuch (flashes of Glory). Such were the blessed results of Job's experience, expressed by these names. Purified and humble like the dove; cassia, which is fragrance, worship and adoration; and the flashes and splendour of glory.

Verses 16-17. We have reached the end. It is an end of peace, a perfect day. Four generations he beholds and at the ripe old age of 140 years he is gathered to his fathers. In consulting the Septuagint version we find a long addition to the last verse which begins with this statement: "and it is written that he will rise again with those whom the Lord raises up." Then follows Job's genealogy. It is taken from some apocryphal writing but it shows that the hope of the resurrection of the body was believed in ancient days. Surely Job will be there, "in that day" and his great utterance, "I know that my Redeemer liveth," and the hope of seeing Him will be realized.

"Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy" (James 5:11). And all His people know this matchless truth, that the Lord in all His dealings with His people "is very pitiful and of tender mercy." In our annotations we have pointed out repeatedly the comparison of Job in his sufferings with the Lord, our Saviour, and His holy sufferings in the sinner's place. It brings out the perfection of Him who is altogether lovely.

An application to Israel can also be made. If this is followed out it will prove of much interest. Israel, like Job, is suffering, self-righteous, but some day the nation will come face to face with Jehovah and be humbled in the dust. Then

their restoration when they will receive double of the Lord's hand for all their sins (Isaiah 11:2).

THE BOOK OF PSALMS

The Annotated Bible

Arno Clement Gaebelein

THE BOOK OF PSALMS

Introduction

"Although all Scripture breathes the grace of God, yet sweet beyond all others is the book of Psalms." This is the ancient witness of Ambrose. And Luther said "You might rightly call the Psalter a Bible in miniature." Hundreds of similar testimonies could be added. The Psalms have always been one of the choicest portions of the Word of God for all saints, Jewish and Christian. The ancient Jews used the Psalms in the temple worship. The so-called "Great Hallel," consisting of Psalms 113-118 was sung during the celebration of Passover, Pentecost and the feast of tabernacles. Daily in the temple Psalms were sung in a prescribed order, The Jews still use them in all their feast days and in the synagogue.

The Psalms are mentioned in connection with praise in the New Testament (Col. 3:16; James 5:13). The Church from the very start has used them in public and private devotion. All branches of Christendom use them today; Protestantism, Romish and Greek Catholicism make use of them in responsive reading or chanting. And even more so are they used and have always been used by individuals, because the heart finds in these songs and prayers, the different experiences of human life, and the different emotions. The sufferer steeped in sorrow finds in this book the experiences of suffering and sorrow; he finds more than that, encouragement to trust God and the assurance of deliverance. The penitent soul finds that which suits a broken and contrite heart. The lonely one, helpless and forsaken, reads of others who passed through the same experience. Then there is comfort, joy and peace, as well as hope. They stimulate faith and confidence in the Lord and are breathing a spirit of worship and praise which produce reverence and praise in the heart of the believer.

The Lord Jesus and the Psalms

But there is another reason why believers love the Psalms. The Lord Jesus is not only revealed in this book as nowhere else (as we shall show later) but He used the Psalms throughout His blessed life on earth and even in glory. Here are His own prayers prewritten by the Spirit of God. The expression of sorrow, loneliness, rejection and suffering describe what He passed through in His life of humiliation. The praise and worship, the trust and confidence in God, express likewise prophetically that life of obedience and trust. We believe when He spent nights in prayer to pour out His heart before His Father, on the mountain or in the desert, He must have done so by using the Psalms. He used the Psalms speaking to His disciples; with Psalm 110 He silenced His enemies. Gethsemane is mentioned in the Psalms; and in the suffering of the cross He fulfilled all that the Psalms predict. In resurrection He used the twenty-second Psalm: "Go and tell My brethren." He opened to His disciples the Scriptures "that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, in the prophets, and in the Psalms, concerning Me" (Luke 24:44) as He had before told the two on the way to Emmaus "Ought not Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into His glory?" And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, He expounded unto them in all the Scriptures concerning Himself. When He ascended on high and took the seat at God's right hand, and God welcomed Him to sit down and to be the priest after the order of Melchisedec it was according to the Psalms. And in His messages from the throne in speaking to the churches He uses the Psalms (Rev. 2:27). And when He comes again the Hallelujah chorus of the ending of this book will be sung by heaven and earth and all the predicted glory, as given in the Psalms, will come to pass. This book then ought to be precious to us, because it was precious to Him and makes Him known to our hearts. The Spirit of God also quotes the Psalms more frequently in the Epistles than any other

Old Testament book.

The Title of the Book

Our English word "psalms" is taken from the Greek word employed in the Septuagint translation--"psalmoi"; this means "songs." It is also frequently called Psalter. This word is also Greek, from "psalterion," a harp or any other stringed instrument.

The Hebrews call this book "Tehillim," which means to make a joyful sound, or praises. It is in the Hebrew Bible in the third division, the "Kethubim" section. It is the great poetical book of the Old Testament. We refer the reader to our remarks on Hebrew poetry in the introduction to the book of Job. The poetry of the Psalms is of a lyric character. The real great beginning of lyric poetry is with King David. He was remarkably gifted and yet it was not natural gift which produced these wonderful utterances but it was the Spirit of God who tuned his harp. Our space is too valuable to pay much attention to the critical school with their denials of the Davidic authorship of different Psalms, and that which is worse, the denial of the Messianic predictions of the Psalms. If these critics were but seekers after the fine gold, the precious gems of truth and divine knowledge, so richly stored in this mine, they would cease criticising and become worshippers.

The Authorship of the Different Psalms

Nearly one-half of the Psalms, seventy-three in all, were given by the Holy Spirit through the Shepherd King of Israel, David, who is rightly called the sweet singer of Israel.

The following are the Davidic Psalms: 3--9; 11---41 (except Psalm 33); 51-70; 86; 101; 103; 108; 109; 110; 122; 124; 131; 133; 138--145.

Asaph has twelve Psalms: Psalm 1 and Psalms 73--83.

The children of Korah composed eleven Psalms: Psalms 43, 44--49, 84, 85, 87 and 88.

One by Heman the Ezrahite Psalm 88 and one by Ethan the Ezrahite Psalm 89; one by Moses, Psalm 90.

That makes 99 Psalms whose authors are known; the remaining 51 have no inscription.

The Collection and Arrangement of the Psalms in the Present Form

From the foregoing paragraphs we learn that the known authors of the Psalms are: David, Asaph, the Children of Korah, Moses, Heman, and Ethan. If we take into consideration that other Psalms were written during the exile we see that the authors are centuries apart. The people Israel possessed these Psalms in an uncollected form; they laid about loose, so to speak. Someone at some time collected them in a book, in the form we have them now.

Who did this valuable collecting and arranging of these Psalms we do not know for it is not revealed. But this we can say of certainty that the Hebrew saint who did it was called to do it by the Spirit of God and the very arrangement of these Psalms in the book as we have it now is the perfect work of the Holy Spirit.

Here we clash with the critics who speak of "different editors arranging and re-arranging at different occasions." They claim, for instance, that the statement at the close of Psalm 72 "The prayers of David the son of Jesse are ended," shows that it is misplaced because other Davidic Psalms come later, and that probably this is the work of some editor, etc. But the phrase at the close of Psalm 72 rather means something different, as we take it. The Seventy-second Psalm reveals the

glories of the coming kingdom of Him who is greater than Solomon, and David, getting a glimpse of it, declares: "The prayers of David, my prayers are ended; I have nothing greater to ask, than what this Psalm reveals."

The work the unknown collector has done shows that it is the work of one person guided by the Spirit of God.

Let us suppose that we had in our possession a basket containing 150 precious stones, diamonds, rubies, sapphires, emeralds and pearls and we went with this basket to some jeweler with the request to arrange these gems in a necklace. How would he go about it? Would he take out a stone at random and put it on a string, and then take another, and another till he had strung them all? Certainly not. He would examine each stone. He would study the value of every emerald and sapphire, the brilliancy of each diamond and the lustre of every pearl. Then he would continue to study where each belongs on that chain so as to tell out its own value in relation to the other.

And here were 150 gems of greater value than earthly gems, gems of divine inspiration. They are to be arranged in perfect order so that each gem has the right place, to tell out its own story, in this book. Who else could do this but He who knows the value and meaning of these Psalms! The Spirit of God through His chosen instrument put these Psalms together and therefore we have in the arrangement a most wonderful, consecutive revelation. It is this knowledge which so many readers of the Psalms have missed. Generally one Psalm is read without considering that this Psalm stands in some relationship to the preceding one and to those which follow, that it is only a link in a chain. Just as Romans 6 leads to Romans 7 and Romans 7 to Romans 8, so it is with the Psalms. And here we shall discover the divine wisdom. These Psalms come in clusters and must be treated as belonging together to get the real spiritual and especially prophetic message. We give the most simple illustration of this fact found in the book known to many readers of the Psalms: Psalm 22 is a prophecy of Christ in His suffering, or the good Shepherd who gives His life for the sheep. Psalm 23 shows Him as the great Shepherd of the sheep and Psalm 24 reveals Him as the coming, chief Shepherd in glory. The many other most interesting interrelation of the Psalms the annotations will point out. Before we give the great message of the book of Psalms we call attention to other matters of importance in the study of this remarkable book.

The Hebrew Terms in Connection with the Psalms

In many of the Psalms we find the beginning a Hebrew word. For instance in Psalm 8 "To the Chief Musician upon the Gittith," or in Psalm 16 "Michtam of David." It is now a question whether these terms belong to the Psalm with which they are connected in our English Bibles, or to the preceding Psalm. When we read the last chapter of Habakkuk we find a psalmodic phrase at the close, "To the chief singer upon Neginoth." Upon this the interesting theory has been advanced that the different titles in the Psalms should be the subscription of the preceding one. In other words, to give an illustration, the words standing at the beginning of Psalm 8 "To the chief musician upon the Gittith," belongs to Psalm 7. Our work does not permit a minute examination of this. Such a misplacement could of course easily happen when we remember that the Hebrew manuscripts were written without a break. (Dr. J.W. Thirtle of England, to whom we are indebted for this suggestion, has written a volume on it, *The Titles of the Psalms*. We recommend it to those who desire to follow it more closely.)

We give in alphabetical arrangement the Hebrew titles and their English meaning.

Ayeleth-Shahar. Psalm 22. "The hind of the dawn." The early light preceding the dawn of the morning, whose first rays are likened to the shining horns of a hind. (Delitzsch)

Alamoth. It means "concerning maidens." It is found in the beginning of Psalm 46.

Al-Tashcheth. "Destroy not," in Psalms 57- 59 and in Psalm 75.

Gittith. "Winepresses," in Psalms 7, 80 and 83.

Jeduthun. "Praise giver," in Psalms 39, 62, and 77.

Mahalath. "Sickness." Delitzsch says on the meaning the following: "Upon Mahalath signifies after a sad tone or manner, whether it be that Mahalath itself is a name for such an elegiac kind of melody, or that it was thereby designed to indicate the initial word of some popular song. So that we may regard 'Mahalath' as equivalent to piano or andante." This would correspond to Psalm 53 where this word is found.

Mahalath Leannoth. It means "sickness unto humiliation." It stands connected with Psalm 88.

Maschil. "Instruction," found in Psalms 32, 42, 44, 52-55, 74, 78, 88, 89, 142.

Michtam. "Engraven," in Psalms 16, 56-60.

Muth-Labben. "Death for the son." It is found as the superscription of Psalm 9.

Neginoth. "Smitings," in Psalms 4, 6, 54, 55, 61, 67 and 76.

Nehiloth. "Possessions," in Psalm 5.

Sheminith. "The Eighth Division" or "upon the Octave, in Psalms 6 and 7.

Shiggaion. "Loud Crying," Psalm 7.

Shoshannim. "Lilies," in Psalms 45 and 69.

Shoshannim-Eduth. "Lilies of testimony," Psalm 53. Eduth (testimony) is found in Psalm 60.

The word Selah occurs 71 times in the Psalms. It means "To pause," with a secondary meaning to "lift up." We can take it as an indication that in reading we should pause, meditate and then lift up our hearts in praise and prayer.

The Alphabetical Psalms

A number of the Psalms in the Hebrew are in an alphabetical arrangement; that is, certain verses begin with a letter of the Hebrew alphabet. This arrangement is not always perfect. Psalms 9 and 10 contain (the two together) the letters of the alphabet with several missing. Psalms 25 and 26 are also incomplete in the alphabetical scope. Psalm 37 has a perfect alphabetical character. Other alphabetical Psalms are Psalms 111 and 112. The most perfect Psalm in this respect is the longest in the book, Psalm 119.

The Psalms and the New Testament Scriptures

As already stated the Psalms are quoted by the Spirit of God more than any other Old Testament book. This is significant and a divine indication of the great importance of these inspired gems. We give now a list of quotations as found in the New Testament and also those passages where the Psalms are alluded to.

Matthew 4:6 (Psalm 91:11). This first quotation is by the Devil. By this he showed his great knowledge of the Word and its meaning. Matthew 13:35 (Psalm 78:2). Matthew 21:42 (Psalm 118:22). Matthew 27:43 (Psalm 110). John 2:17 (Psalm 69:9). John 6:31 (Psalm 78:24, 25). John 7:42 (Psalm 132:11). John 10:34 (Psalm 82:6). John 13:18 (Psalm 41:9). John 15:25 (Psalm 35:19; 49:4). John 19:24 (Psalm 22:18). John 19:28 (Psalm 69:21). John 19:36 (Psalm 34:20). John 20:17 (Psalm 22:17). Acts 1:20 (Psalm 69:25). Acts 1:16 (Psalm 41:9). Acts 2:25 (Psalm 16:8). Acts 2:34 (Psalm 110:1).

Acts 4:25 (Psalm 2:1, 2). Acts 13:33 (Psalm 2:7). Acts 13:35 (Psalm 16:10). Romans 3:4 (Psalm 51:4). Romans 3:12 (Psalm 14:2). Romans 3:13 (Psalm 140:3). Romans 4:6 (Psalm 32:1, 2). Romans 11:9, 10 (Psalm 69:22, 23). Romans 15:10 (Psalm 117:1). Eph. 4:8 (Psalm 68:18). 2 Cor. 4:13 (Psalm 116:10). Hebrews 1:10-12 (Psalm 102:25-27). Hebrews 1:8-9 (Psalm 45:6-7). Hebrews 1:13 (Psalm 110:1). Hebrews 2:6 (Psalm 8:4). Hebrews 4:3 (Psalm 95:11). Hebrews 4:7 (Psalm 95:7). Hebrews 5:6 (Psalm 110:4). Hebrews 7:17 (Psalm 110:4). Rev. 2:27 (Psalm 2:9).

This is not by any means a complete list of quotations, for there are many more passages. We have quoted only the most prominent. See also Psalm 2:7-9 in Hebrews 1:5 and Rev. 2:27. Psalm 4:4 in Ephesians 4:26. Psalm 6:8 [in Matthew 7:23]. Psalm 8:2 in Matthew 21:16. Psalm 7:6 in 1 Cor. 15:25-27. Psalm 9:8 in Acts 17:31. Psalm 19:4 in Romans 10:18. Psalm 22:1 in Matthew 27:46. Psalm 22:21 in 2 Tim. 4:17. Psalm 24:1 in 1 Cor. 10:26. Psalm 27:1 in Hebrew 13:6. Psalm 34:8 in 1 Peter 2:3. Psalm 40:6-8 in Hebrews 10:5-7. Psalm 41:9 in Mark 14:18 and John 13:18. Psalm 48:2 in Matthew 5:35. Psalm 50:14 in Hebrews 13:15. Psalm 55:22 in 1 Peter 5:7. Psalm 56:4 in Hebrews 13:6. Psalm 69:21 in Mark 15:36. Psalm 79:6 in 2 Thess. 1:8. Psalm 89:27, 37 in Rev. 1:5 and 3:14. Psalm 97:6 in Hebrews 1:6. Psalm 104:4 in Hebrews 1:7, etc.

In all about 50 Psalms are directly and indirectly quoted and alluded to in the books of the New Testament.

The Message of the Psalms

It would be impossible to give a complete review of the great message contained in the Psalms. A close study of each Psalm only can bring this out fully and even then we probably touch but the surface of this marvellous mine of wisdom and knowledge. That a part of the message is the experience of the saint in the world, his trials, sorrows, the persecutions he suffers, his dependence on God, his deliverance and much else, is known to all readers of this book. Yet it must be remembered that the experiences are those of Jewish saints; true Christian experience is higher! In the midst of persecutions from the enemies, these Jewish saints call to God to destroy their enemies, to burn them up like stubble. The New Testament demands that saints should love their enemies. What these imprecatory Psalms mean and how perfectly in order they are in the message of this book we shall show in the annotations. Nor do we find in these experiences salvation made known as it is in the gospel dispensation. While the writers of the Psalms call on the Lord and use different names by which they call Him, as rock, fortress, shepherd, shield, etc., nowhere do we find that one ever utters the word "Father," nor is there a declaration of the sonship of the saint nor do we find anything of the blessed hope of glory to be with Him in the Father's house. The message of praise, giving thanks, adoration and worship is another prominent feature. But true Christian worship and praise is of a higher note and order. No such doxology like the doxology of Eph. 1:3 is found anywhere in the Psalms. Yet the Christian believer, with the light of the full gospel revelation, indwelt by the same Spirit who gave the Psalms, can get the sweetest comfort and encouragement from the experiences recorded in these songs.

While this is part of the message of this book, the great message is the message of prophecy. The book of Psalms is preeminently a prophetic book. The New Testament warrants us to say this for the quotations from the Psalms are overwhelmingly on prophetic lines. It is not saying too much when we say that all the great prophetic messages of the prophets of God, and their visions concerning the future are wonderfully given by the Psalms and many of them are enlarged. The prophetic scope of the Psalms is truly marvellous. Yet this feature of it is the most neglected in the study of the book. It is rarely ever studied as a prophetic book; the devotional study has always been in the lead.

What then is the prophetic message of the Psalms? The prophecies of the Psalms comprise the following three themes:

1. The prophetic message concerning the Messiah, His humiliation and His exaltation. There are more prophetic statements on this theme of all themes in the Psalms, than in the book of Isaiah or in any of the other prophetic books. As already stated in the paragraph of this introduction relating to the Lord Jesus and the Psalms, we have in many of them the prewritten prayers of our Lord, as well as the expressions of His sorrow and grief. The story of His life of loneliness down here, the hatred which He met, the rejection from the side of the nation; the betrayal and other features of His humiliation are found over and over again in the Psalms. While the chosen instruments passed through experiences of sorrow and trial,

the Spirit of God pictures in them Him who could say "Behold and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow which is done unto me" (Lamentations 1:12). But the application of these Psalms to the person of our Lord needs great caution. Some teachers have erred grievously in this matter. We heard several years ago of a Bible teacher applying Psalm 38:7 to our Lord: "For my lions are filled with a loathsome disease, and there is no soundness in my flesh." And this teacher declared that the Lord suffered thus because He took upon Himself our sickness and diseases. Such teaching must be severely condemned for it is positively false. Nor must other similar expressions be put into the mouth of our Lord. He had no need to complain of sins for He had no sin. He had no need to use the Fifty-first Psalm.

The sufferings of the cross are prophetically revealed in the twenty-second Psalm and in others as well. Then the glory which is to follow, the kingship of Christ, His kingdom is wonderfully predicted in many Psalms. His first coming in humiliation, to be rejected and to die; His second coming to be accepted and to reign over the earth, these are the two great prophetic messages of the Psalms. It is of much interest to note the order of the four great Messianic Psalms which we find in the first section of the book. The Spirit of God calls our attention to them in the New Testament. The Second Psalm is the first; here the divine sonship of our Lord is made known. The Eighth Psalm is next quoted; there He is the Son of Man. In Psalm 16 we see Him as the Obedient One and in Psalm 22 obedient unto death, the death of the cross. Son of God--Son of Man, obedient, obedient unto death, the death of the cross. And with each of these Psalms His glory is connected.

2. The second prophetic theme of the Psalms we mention are the sorrows, trials and suffering of Israel and their coming deliverance, restoration, blessing and glory. We do not mean by this the prediction of their present wanderings and the afflictions which are upon the nation as a result of having rejected the Christ, but the experiences through which a godly Jewish remnant will have to pass when this present age closes in its predicted darkness and apostasy. Of this time Jeremiah speaks as the time of Jacob's trouble. "Alas! for that day is great, so that none is like it; it is even the time of Jacob's trouble; but he shall be saved out of it." That remnant will appear when the purpose of this present dispensation, the out calling of the people for His Name (the Church) is accomplished. A remnant of His earthly people, energized by the Spirit of God, will turn to the Lord and pass through that time of trouble, of which our Lord speaks as the great tribulation. It will be the travail time for them. They suffer from the side of ungodly nations and pray for deliverance. (See Isaiah 63:15-64.) The Psalms give us the completest picture of their harrowing experiences. Here we read their sorrows, their afflictions. We hear their prayers, their cry "How long, O Lord, how long!" We Year them plead that the Lord might intervene and come down to save them. The nations about them persecute them. The land, which is partially restored, is invaded again. Then we read in the Psalms of a wicked man who domineers over them; one who breaks the covenant. This is the man of sin, the final Anti-christ. And as they pray for deliverance, they cry to God for vengeance, to deal with their enemies and with His enemies according to His righteousness. This will explain perfectly the imprecatory prayers we find here and there in this book.

Suddenly the scene changeth. Their prayers are answered. Heaven opens and the long expected King returns. Their tears are wiped away; their moans are changed to songs, their agonizing cries are turned to laughter. They are delivered and receive the blessing as His people, their land is blest and they become the channel of blessing and mercy to the nations of the earth. It is all intensely interesting and fascinating.

3. The third prophetic theme shows the future glories in store for His redeemed people, for the nations of the earth and for creation itself. In other words we have prophecies relating to the coming kingdom. The prophetic teaching of the Psalms annihilates postmillennialism. These prophecies show conclusively that there can be no blessing for Israel, for the nations, for the earth, no peace and prosperity, no world conversion, till the King comes back. The book ends with the mighty hallelujahs, the glorious consummation when heaven and earth will sing His praises. How well Handel caught this message when in his Oratorio, "The Messiah," he concludes all with a mighty hallelujah chorus. Our annotations will adhere to this threefold prophetic message. The task is difficult to condense these great truths. Far easier it would be to write a book of a thousand pages than one of a hundred. It is all so rich and glorious.

The Division of the Psalms

The unknown collector of these Psalms has divided the book into five sections, which we must maintain and follow. These five sections correspond in a remarkable manner with the five books with which the Bible opens, the Pentateuch. This was known to the ancient Jews, for they call the Psalter "the Pentateuch of David." The Aramaic comment (Midrash) on Psalm 1:1 declares that "Moses gave to the Israelites the five books of the law and corresponding with these David gave them the five books of the Psalms."

I. THE GENESIS SECTION -- Psalms 1-41. This section has the same character as the book of Genesis in that it has much to say about man. We have first a contrast between the righteous and the ungodly. After that a contrast between the first man, Adam, and the second Man who was made a little lower than the angels (Psalm 8). Here also is a description of the wicked one, in whom in some future day the defiance of the ungodly will culminate. This man of sin, the Anti-christ, is revealed in Psalms 9 and 10; the tribulation which is yet to come for man is revealed in the Psalms which follow. The Christ, the last Adam, in His obedience, even the obedience unto the death of the cross, His salvation and His glory are unfolded (Psalms 16-41). The first book ends with a blessing and a double Amen.

II. THE EXODUS SECTION -- Psalms 42-72. Like in the book of Exodus, where the story is written how God redeems by blood and by power, we see a people groaning and moaning. The opening Psalms show a people oppressed and longing for God. This is the godly Jewish remnant. Then we find their prayers answered by the coming of the King (Psalm 45). Redemption by power then takes place and the blessings of the kingdom, when Christ has returned, are revealed in a number of Psalms. The Seventy-second Psalm, the conclusion of this second book gives the reign and the kingly glory of Christ. This book also ends with a double Amen and the statement, so very appropriate to this book, "And let the whole earth be filled with His glory." The book of Exodus ends with the glory of the Lord filling the tabernacle, the Exodus portion of the Psalms ends with His glory filling the whole earth.

III. THE LEVITICUS SECTION -- Psalms 73-89. This is the briefest section. The theme of Leviticus is "holiness unto the Lord." In this section we are brought into the sanctuary and we behold the holiness of the Lord in dealing with His people. The Asaph Psalms are put into this section and nearly every Psalm has something about the sanctuary, the congregation, Zion and approaching the Lord. It also closes with a benediction and a double amen.

IV. THE NUMBERS SECTION -- Psalms 90-106. The first Psalm of this section is the Psalm Moses wrote, in all probability when he saw the people dying in the wilderness. The second Man is seen in Psalm 91. Here we have the prophetic Psalms which show that the times of unrest and wanderings will cease, when the Lord reigneth and when the nations will worship Him. No rest and no peace till then. This section ends with an amen and a hallelujah.

V. THE DEUTERONOMY SECTION -- Psalms 107-150. In this section, as it is in Deuteronomy, the Word is magnified. The Lord Jesus Christ quoted this book of Deuteronomy exclusively in His conflict with the devil. Christ is seen as the Living Word in the beginning of this section. His rejection, His exaltation, His return and the hallelujah times which follow are once more revealed in a cluster of Psalms (109-113). Then follows the consummation, deliverances, the end-ways of God, His praise and His glory. This section ends with five hallelujah Psalms. It is the hallelujah chorus of completed redemption.

Analysis and Annotations

I. THE GENESIS SECTION: BOOK ONE: PSALMS 1-41

Psalms 1-8

PSALM 1 The Godly and the Ungodly

1. The godly, his character and his fruit (1:1-3)
2. The ungodly in comparison with the godly (1:4-6)

The first eight Psalms are the Psalms in embryo, just as the opening chapters of the book of Genesis are the Bible in a nutshell. Throughout the Psalms we can trace the subjects of these eight Psalms, the godly and the ungodly; but especially the great theme of the Psalms, Christ, the Perfect Man, the King rejected, the suffering of the righteous during the time of His rejection, the King enthroned and all things put under His feet. These are the leading themes of Psalms 1-8.

Psalms 1 and 2 are introductory to the entire collection, put there by the Holy Spirit. In some ancient manuscripts the first Psalm is not numbered, in others the First and Second Psalms are put into one. The First Psalm begins with a beatitude and the second ends with a beatitude. The righteous man, negative and positive, nothing evil in him, no fellowship with sinners, and positive, obedience and entire devotedness to God, does not mean the natural man. The godly One is the perfect One who walked down here separated from sinners, and devoted to God. He walked in obedience, in dependence on God and in communion with Him, and therefore the blessing, honor and glory are His. But the godly man is also the believer, born of God, separated, a saint, who delights in the things of God, meditates in His Word day and night. It is still more, a description of what the true believing remnant of Israel will be some day, "like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season." Such is converted, redeemed Israel's future as revealed here and also by Isaiah: "Thy people shall all be righteous, they shall inherit the land forever, the branch of My planting, the work of My hands, that I may be glorified" (Isaiah 60:21). We behold then in these opening verses of the Psalms the Lord Jesus Christ as the perfect Man, the individual believer in his separation and devotion, and what Israel, saved and converted, will be in the future.

(The Romish church has a volume called "The Psalter of the Virgin Mary compiled by Doctor St. Bonaventura." It is in Latin and contains the 150 Psalms, greatly abridged, and each addressed to Mary. Psalm 1 begins as follows: "Happy is the man that loves thy Name, O Virgin Mary, thy grace will comfort his soul. Ave Maria." Psalm 19: "The Heavens declare thy glory, O Virgin Mary." Horrible blasphemy!)

Then the ungodly: "Like the chaff which the wind driveth away" is a prophecy of the time when the ungodly are dealt with in judgment, when "He will thoroughly purge His floor, and gather His wheat into the garner, but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire" (Matt. 3:12). Then the ungodly will forever disappear and cease troubling the righteous. They will have no place in the assembly of the righteous in millennial times.

PSALM 2 The Rejected King

1. The rejection and the coming confederacy (2:1-3)
2. Jehovah's attitude and interference (2:4-6)
3. The coming of the King and his inheritance (2:7-9)
4. Warning and exhortation (2:10-12)

Verses 1-3. The rejection of the perfect Man, the Son of God, by man, is here revealed. It is the first psalm quoted in the New Testament. See Acts 4:25-28. In this quotation it is applied to the Jews and Gentiles gathered together against the Lord, and against His Christ. This rejection continues throughout this present age; it becomes more marked as the age draws to its close. Finally the nations with their kings and also apostate Israel will form a great confederacy, they will form a tumultuous throng, taking counsel together for one great purpose, Satanically conceived and executed, to defy God and His Christ. The generalissimo will be Satan through the beast. It is the gathered confederacy as seen in Revelation. "And he gathered them together in a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon" (Rev. 16:16). "And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against Him that sat on the horse (Christ) and His army" (Rev. 19:19).

Verses 4-6. Heaven is silent till the appointed time comes. Here we have, as in Psalm 110, the exalted position of the rejected Christ: He sitteth in the heavens; His place is at the right hand of God. He shares the Father's throne. In infinite patience He is waiting, silent to all what wicked men do in dishonouring His Name. But when on earth the final rebellion

takes place, then He will laugh at them and hold them in derision. (The Jewish comment contained in the ancient "Yalkut Shimoni" is interesting. "Like a robber who was standing and expressing his contempt behind the palace of the king, and saying, If I find the son of the king, I will seize him, kill him, and crucify him, and put him to a terrible death; but the lord mocks at it.") Then He who has so long spoken in love, will speak in wrath and begin the execution of God's judgments which are committed into His hand. Then will He be established as God's King upon the holy hill of Zion.

Verses 7-9. And now we hear Him speak; He proclaims God's counsel concerning Himself. He declares who He is, "the Son of God"--"Thou art My Son, this day have I begotten thee." (See the New Testament comment, Acts 13:33, 34.) It is not a declaration of His eternal Sonship (though that is implied), but speaks of Him as the Incarnate One and the Risen One. And His second coming will be the completest vindication of His Sonship. It will demonstrate that He whom the nations rejected is the Son of God, who walked on the earth, who died, rose from the dead, ascended upon high and is manifested in power and glory. Then every mouth will be stopped and every knee must bow. He asks the Father and He gives Him the nations for His inheritance and the uttermost parts of the earth for His possession. In His prayer in John 17 (the model of His priestly intercession throughout this age of grace), He said, "I pray not for the world." When His present priestly ministrations cease, that is, when His own have been received by Him in glory, then will He ask for the world and receive the kingdoms of this world, to shepherd the nations with a rod of iron and execute judgment among them.

Verses 10-12. The exhortation and warning closes this perfect and beautiful Psalm. It is meant especially for that time when the final revolt takes place. The appeal goes forth then to turn to the Lord, to kiss the Son--"for in a little will His anger kindle," So even at that time mercy still is waiting. Critics object to the use of the Aramaic word "bar"--son--and give as the correct translation "receive instruction" or "do homage." The word "bar" is used in place of the Hebrew "ben" for the sake of euphony. "Blessed are they that put their trust in Him." That is true of all at all times. It is our blessedness.

Sorrows and Trials of the Godly Remnant (3-7)

PSALM 3

1. Persecution and comfort (3:1-4)
2. Arise Jehovah! Save me, O my God (3:5-8)

The five Psalms which follow bring before us the godly remnant of Israel, their sorrows and trials during the end of the age, while the expected Redeemer and King has not yet come. While this is the dispensational aspect, the application is wider. The trials and sorrows are common to all saints, who live in accordance with their calling apart from the world which rejects Christ; and the comfort belongs to them likewise.

Verses 1-4. The Psalm was written by David when he fled from the face of Absalom. Persecution is mentioned first. The remnant is suffering persecution and that from their own unbelieving brethren, who sneer at them and mock. "There is no salvation (deliverance) for him from God." But the godly trust in Jehovah as a shield about them, giving protection; He is my glory and the lifter up of mine head. Thus David encouraged himself in the Lord and so do all saints in persecution and the remnant when they are persecuted in the time of Jacob's trouble.

Verses 5-8. The simple faith produces peace and quietness. He has slept in peace even if myriads of people should set themselves around him. He cries to Jehovah to arise and to save. Then faith looks back and remembers that God hath smitten the enemies in the past, and broken the teeth of the ungodly. He acknowledgeth that salvation belongeth to the Lord, it is of Him and that His blessing rests upon His people who trust in Him. Viewed in connection with the remnant of Israel in the coming tribulation all this takes on an interesting meaning. It is called a morning hymn.

PSALM 4

1. The cry to Jehovah (4:1-3)

2. The warning to the enemies (4:4-5)
3. The assurance of faith (4:6-8)

Verses 1-3. The fourth Psalm is closely connected with the third; the third is "a Morning Psalm" and the fourth "an Evening Hymn." He calls God "God of my righteousness" and He knows that He will act in righteousness toward him, be gracious and hear prayer. Then the appeal to the sons of men, who love emptiness and seek after a lie. They should know that the Lord hath set apart the godly for Himself and therefore He will hear.

Verses 4-5. This expresseth the concern of the godly for those who reject the Lord, it is a warning appeal to turn from their evil ways, to offer the sacrifices of righteousness and to trust Jehovah.

Verses 6-8. The mocking words "who will show us any good?" the challenge of unbelief, is met by prayer and the assurance of faith. "Lift upon us the light of Thy countenance, Jehovah." This we shall find later is a choice prayer of the Jewish saints in the tribulation. (See Psalm 80.) His heart is filled with joy; he knows he is safe. "For Thou, LORD, only makest me dwell in safety." Such is the experience of the godly, who trust the Lord. Their hearts are filled with gladness; their safety is the Lord.

PSALM 5

1. The cry to God the King (5:1-3)
2. Hating iniquity and trusting in mercy (5:4-7)
3. Prayer for guidance and judgment (5:8-12)

Verses 1-3. In the third Psalm trust is expressed in God as shield; in the fourth the prayer is to the God of righteousness. "Hearken unto the voice of my cry, my King and my God." It is a fresh and more intense prayer, because evil increaseth and abounds. The cry is to God as King. David calls Him King, as the Jewish remnant will pray to the King and look for the coming of the King. The Church looks for the Lord, for the Bridegroom. Nowhere is the Lord Jesus Christ spoken of as the King of the Church.

Verses 4-7. The holiness of God is recognized and shared by the godly in hating iniquity. His confidence is in a sin--and iniquity--hating God, a holy God. He has no pleasure in wickedness or in folly. Falsehood He hates and liars He will destroy. Such are the enemies of God and his enemies also. The bloody and deceitful man mentioned in verse 6 is the first mention of the man of sin, the false Christ, who will persecute Jewish saints in the future. And how beautiful it is to see faith breaking through the gathering storm clouds again--"But as for me I will come into Thy house in the multitude of Thy mercy, in Thy fear I will worship toward Thy holy temple." The final victory is seen by faith.

Verses 8-12. Prayer for guidance stands first. "Lead me, Jehovah, in Thy righteousness because of mine enemies." What these enemies, especially the future enemies of Israel will be, their character, is described and this is followed by prayer for judgment. Here is the first imprecatory prayer (verse 10). This and the other imprecatory prayers will be prayed during the final days of this age, when the wicked are ripe for judgment. It will be answered and then the righteous will be delivered and have joy (verses 11, 12). All this we shall find very much more prominent in the Exodus section of the Psalms.

PSALM 6

1. The cry of repentance (6:1-3)
2. In deep distress (6:4-7)
3. Jehovah has heard (6:8-10)

Verses 1-3. Here we have the deep soul exercise of the godly expressed. In the midst of the trials and sorrows they

search their hearts. The persecution of the enemies is used under God to bring His people in the dust. And so they feel the trial and sorrow which passeth over them as divine displeasure against sin. They feel it is the chastening hand of God which rests heavily upon them. Perhaps bodily sickness is also indicated. They cry, Jehovah how long? It is a night experience, of deepest woe and agony. We know that all things must work together for good to them that love God and that our loving Father does not chasten in the heat of wrath.

Verses 4-7. But there is deeper distress. There is groaning, the couch is covered with tears, the eyes are sunken in because of grief. The remnant is put into the place of dust, and that is the place of blessing and deliverance.

Verses 8-10. Faith again is victorious. The Lord hath heard the voice of my weeping; heard the voice of my supplication; He will receive my prayer. The last verse is prophetic. All the enemies will be ashamed, they shall be suddenly ashamed. That will be when the Lord returns to save His people.

PSALM 7

1. Confidence and prayer (7:1-2)
2. Unjust persecution (7:3-5)
3. Arise Jehovah! (7:6-10)
4. God's dealings in government (7:11-16)
5. Thanksgiving (7:17)

Verses 1-2. It has been suggested that over this Psalm should be written the sentence, "Shall not the judge of all the earth do right?" David appealed to God to judge His cause, that a righteous God cannot but save the righteous and judge the wicked. David sang this unto the Lord concerning the words of Cush, the Benjamite. Who Cush was we do not know. He must be a type of the man of sin. David appeals to God who is his refuge, to save and rescue him. The lion stands ready to tear him to pieces.

Verses 3-5. He knows it is unjust persecution he is suffering. If he had done evil to others he might well be treated in this way.

Verses 6-10. Then follows the appeal to Jehovah to arise in His anger, and to awake for him the judgment He has commanded, when the peoples are assembled for judgment. This appeal from the lips of the remnant will be answered by the manifestation of the Lord.

Verses 11-16. God's judgments in righteousness will overtake the wicked. It is a prophetic description of that day when the wickedness of the wicked comes to an end and the righteous are established. Verses 14-16 are another description of the man of sin, the wicked one.

Verse 17. A word of praise closes this series of Psalms in which the millennial name of Jehovah is given: "The Most High." We see that the overthrow of the wicked brings the praise of Jehovah, as it will be heard on earth when He has come back. In reviewing these Psalms, beginning with the Third, we have a morning hymn (3), followed by an evening hymn (4); then a night experience (5), followed by the deepest night (6) and the breaking of the morning, when the Judge ariseth and the wickedness of the wicked comes to an end (7).

PSALM 8 The Son of Man: All Things Put Under His Feet

1. A little lower than the angels; crowned with glory (8:1-5)
2. All things put under Him (8:6-8)
3. How excellent is Thy Name over all the earth (8:9)

Verses 1-5. In this Psalm we behold Christ again, and here as Son of Man. Three times this Psalm is quoted in the New Testament; in Matthew 21:16, 1 Cor. 15:27 and Hebrews 2:6-9. The latter passage shows clearly who the Son of Man is who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death, to taste death for everything and who is now crowned with glory and honor.

(The inscription of this Psalm is "upon Gittith"--the winepress. If the theory is correct that the titles of the Psalms were misplaced, then "Gittith" should belong to the preceding Psalm, where it would find a good application. But it is equally in place in the beginning of this Psalm, for the Son of Man went into the winepress, the suffering of death when He shed His precious blood.)

The Psalm begins with praise; it will be His praise in that coming day when all things are put under His feet as the second Man, the last Adam, then His Name will be excellent in all the earth and His glory will be set in the heavens (the New Jerusalem). The little children in the temple who sang their Hosannahs when the Lord Jesus was there foreshadow this coming praise. Many expositors have made of "the son of Man" Adam, the first man; but he is the type of the last Adam; the Lord Jesus is meant as Hebrews 2:6-9 tells us so clearly.

Verses 6-8. The first man lost his dominion through sin, the second Man has bought it back by His death. When He comes again then all things will be put under His feet. During His absence "we see not yet all things put under Him." He must reign till all enemies are put under His feet.

Verse 9. The Psalm closes with the same praise with which it begins. It is the future praise of Him, who was made a little lower than the angels and whose Name in that day will be excellent in all the earth. We beheld Him as the perfect Man, as the King, rejected by men, enthroned by God, with the nations for His inheritance, in the opening Psalms. Then followed (Psalms 3-7) the experiences of the godly during His absence, especially the Jewish remnant and the Eighth Psalm shows Him as Son of Man, who comes for the deliverance of His people and receives the dominion over all the earth.

The Godly Remnant. The Wicked One and His Followers (9-15)

PSALM 9

1. The praise of the Most High (9:1-2)
2. Millennial deliverances and glories (9:3-12)
3. Prayer for divine intervention: Faith's Vision (9:12-18)

Verses 1-2. Psalms 9-15 continue the great prophetic story. Once more the godly remnant is before us and in this section the wicked one, the man of sin, is also revealed. The first part of this Psalm is a prophetic vision of what will be on earth, when the Son of Man has come and when all things are put under Him. His triumph is celebrated. We doubt not what is written here will be the comfort of that company of believing Jews at the end of the age as they anticipate in faith what will be when the King comes. But how much more we His heavenly people should praise Him, and declare His wondrous works in grace.

Verses 3-12. What it will mean when the Lord reigns is told out in these verses. His enemies will be defeated; He rebukes the nations and destroys the wicked; He judgeth the world in righteousness, and He is a refuge for His people. The Lord will dwell in Zion, Israel will sing praises and become the witness amongst the nations.

Verses 13-20. Up to the previous verse we saw the glorious results for Israel when the Son of Man comes. But that has not yet come. Faith realizeth it. In verse 13 we hear the voice of supplication of those who in faith look forward to the promises, but who suffer in the midst of the trials of the ending days of the age. They are hated and suffer and long to shew forth praises in Zion. Then once more the vision of faith what must happen ere long to the nations and to the wicked (15-

18). The plea "Arise, O LORD," is the prayer for His glorious manifestation.

This Psalm and the next are linked together by the letters of the Alphabet (in Hebrew). Ten letters are used in this Psalm and five in the next. Six letters are dropped out in this alphabetical composition. The irregularity may be explained as in harmony with the time of tribulation when everything on earth is broken and out of joint.

PSALM 10

1. The cry of Jehovah and what causeth it (10:1-2)
2. That wicked one (10:3-11)
3. Prayer for divine Intervention: Faith's Vision (10:12-18)

Verses 1-2. Here is a renewed cry to Jehovah and why? Because the wicked in his pride persecutes the poor. The wicked is that coming man of sin.

Verses 3-11. That persecutor of the saints of God is now prophetically revealed in his arrogant pride, defiance of God and oppression of the poor and needy. Such will be the character of the beast out of the earth, the man of sin and son of perdition (2 Thes. 2). We shall get other photographs of the same person in other Psalms.

Verses 12-18. Significant prayers these. And they will be prayed by that future remnant. Arise--lift up Thy hand--forget not--Thou hast seen it--break Thou the arm of the wicked! And then faith seeth the answer. "The LORD is King forever and ever." The prayer of the humble has been heard. The man of the earth no more oppresseseth.

PSALM 11

1. Faith's resources in the day of trouble (11:1-4)
2. The recompense for the righteous and the wicked (11:5-7)

Verses 1-4. Their refuge is the Lord, in Him they trust as we, His heavenly people, know Him as our hiding place in the time of trouble. That coming day of trouble is the time "when the foundations are destroyed." It is the time of apostasy and confusion. But their comfort is "Jehovah is in His holy temple, the Throne of Jehovah is in heaven."

Verses 5-7. But faith also reckons with the day of retribution and judgment, when the days of tribulation are ended. Then the wicked receive their punishment. But the righteous shall behold His face.

PSALM 12

1. The arrogance of the wicked in the last days (12:1-4)
2. Then Jehovah will act and deliver His people (12:5-8)

Verses 1-4. It is the time of departure from the Lord; the godly and faithful have ceased. It is a mass of corruption, lying lips, flattering lips, proud lips. They reject the Lord. "Who is lord over us?"

Verses 5-8. Then faith sees the coming intervention. The Lord will speak. "Now will I arise, saith Jehovah, I will set him in safety whom they would puff." Jehovah will keep His people in these coming dark days, "when the wicked walk on all sides and the vilest men are exalted.

PSALM 13

1. How long? Answer me, Jehovah (13:1-4)
2. The victory of faith (13:5-6)

Verses 1-4. Four times "How long?" The trial of faith becomes more severe. Sorrow is in the heart and an enemy is outside. Has then Jehovah forgotten? The hearts begin to despair; an answer is demanded, it must come "lest I sleep the sleep of death."

Verses 5-6. But here comes the change. Faith triumphs and is victorious. "I have trusted in Thy mercy; my heart shall rejoice in Thy salvation. I will sing unto Jehovah, for He hath dealt bountifully with me."

PSALM 14

1. The days of Noah repeated (14:1-6)
2. Salvation and glory (14:7)

Verses 1-6. As it was in the days of Noah so shall it be when the Son of Man cometh. Here we have a prophetic forecast of these coming days of corruption and violence. Iniquity abounds, wickedness is on all sides. None doeth good, none seeketh after God. While all this is used by the Spirit of God in the Epistle to the Romans to describe the condition of the race at large, here dispensationally it describes the moral conditions in the end of the age.

Verse 7. Will this end? Is there to be a better day than violence and wickedness? When will that day come? It comes when the salvation comes out of Zion (Romans 11:26), when the Lord bringeth back the captivity of His people, when Israel is restored. That will be when the Lord returns.

PSALM 15

1. The question (15:1)
2. The answer (15:2-5)

Verse 1. The connection with the previous Psalm is obvious. When He comes and that promised salvation becomes reality, who then shall sojourn in His tabernacle? Who shall dwell in His holy hill? Who will become a partaker of that kingdom, when the King is set upon the holy hill of Zion?

Verses 2-5. The answer is given. The character here described is impossible for the natural man. To walk uprightly, to work righteousness, to speak the truth in the heart and practise righteousness in life is only possible if man is born again. So Israel will be born again, receive the new heart and the Spirit and thus enter the kingdom.

A Revelation of the Christ of God (16-24)

PSALM 16

1. The obedient One (16:1-3)
2. The path He went (16:4-8)
3. Death and resurrection (16:9-11)

In the nine Psalms which compose this section Christ is marvellously revealed. We notice an interesting progress in the messianic message of this section, culminating in the manifestation of the King, the Lord of Glory in Psalm 24. In the Sixteenth Psalm we behold Christ in His obedience on earth. See also Paul's testimony in Acts 13:35.

Verses 1-3. Here we hear Him speak, it is not David who speaks of himself. This we learn from Acts 2:25, when Peter quoted this Psalm and states that David spoke concerning Him (Christ). As the all obedient One, in humiliation He lived the life of faith and dependence on God. He took the place of lowliness in which He said to Jehovah, "Thou art my Lord." And this humiliation was for the saints and the excellent, His own people in whom is all His delight.

Verses 4-8. In that path the Lord was His portion and His cup, He was His All, nor did He want anything beside Him. "Thou maintainest my lot." Thus He could say "the lines are fallen to me in pleasant places, yea, I have a goodly inheritance." And so He walked in obedience, learning obedience though He was the Son, with the Lord always set before Him.

Verses 9-11. These last three verses show that He went into death, the death of the cross as seen in Psalm 22, with the assurance that His soul should not be left in sheol and that His body should not see corruption. It is the promise of resurrection and after that glory, the way of life through death into the presence of God, to the right hand of God, where there is fullness of joy and pleasures for evermore. It is a beautiful prophecy of Him who walked on earth in obedience, devoted to God, dying the sinner's death, His resurrection and His presence in glory. We shall find these precious prophecies concerning Himself more fully revealed in this section.

PSALM 17 The Prayer of Christ Against the Enemy

1. The Righteous Intercessor (17:1-5)
2. Prayer for deliverance (17:6-12)
3. The deliverance (17:13-15)

Verses 1-5. This Psalm is blessedly linked with the foregoing one. We hear Christ interceding for the saints in whom is His delight (16:3). He pleads His own perfection. He is righteous; His prayer does not come from feigned lips. Not David, but Christ alone could truly say, "Thou hast proved my heart; Thou hast visited me in the night; Thou hast tried me. Thou findest nothing." By the Word of God He had walked and was kept from the paths of the destroyer. What a grand testimony to inspiration we have in verse 4 when the Spirit of Christ declares beforehand that Christ would walk in obedience to the Word and that Word is called here "the Word of Thy lips," which came from the mouth and heart of God.

Verses 6-12. It is a marvellous prayer for His own with whom He so perfectly identifies Himself. The seventh verse is the key, for He prays, "Show Thy marvellous loving-kindness, delivering those who put their trust in Thee by Thy right hand from those rising up against them." He pleads for His beloved saints that they may be kept as the apple of the eye, and hidden under the shadow of His wings. He speaks as for Himself, but it is for the saints, those that trust God, and God hears Him and answers. The enemy threatens His people on earth and therefore we find the plural in verse 11, "they have now compassed us in our steps."

Verses 13-15. The final prayer is to the Lord to arise and to rescue His suffering people from the wicked one, who is the sword in the hand of the Lord. Then when the Lord ariseth His people will behold His face in righteousness and in awakening shall be satisfied with His likeness. Oh, blessed Hope! which is ours too, when shall it be!

PSALM 18 The Story of God's Power in Behalf of Christ

1. In the jaws of death (18:1-6)
2. God appearing and delivering (18:7-18)
3. God gave Him glory (18:19-27)
4. His enemies subdued (18:28-42)
5. The head of the nations (18:43-45)

Verses 1-6. This is another remarkable Psalm. Though David wrote it not everything could be his experience. He was a

prophet (Acts 2:30) and prophesied; much in this Psalm is prophecy describing the deliverance of Christ from the jaws of death and the glory God has given Him, and this deliverance and glory also concerns the remnant of His earthly people in "that day." The Psalm begins with an outburst of praise and it ends with His praise among the nations. Hebrew authorities tell us that the proper translation of "The LORD is my Rock" is "Jehovah, my cleft of the rock." It is Christ the rock, cleft for us, in whom the believer has found His refuge. And He Himself was saved from His enemies and in Him His people are saved and will be saved from their enemies (verse 3). It is His own death experience which is described in verses 4-6. "The sorrows of death compassed me, and the floods of Belial (marginal reading) made me afraid." Then in His distress He called and cried unto God and was heard.

Verses 7-18. In these verses we have the answer in behalf of Christ. It is a wonderful description of God's power and His appearing. It is the manifestation and glory of Jehovah in deliverance. "He sent from above, He took me, He drew me from great waters. He delivered me from my strong enemy, and from them which hate me for they were too strong for me." This describes His resurrection.

At the same time while all this shows His experience as the author and finisher of the faith, it is also the experience of His trusting people, and the deliverance of that remnant living during the tribulation period.

Verses 19-27. The Lord has recompensed Him for His righteousness. He not only raised Him from the dead "but gave Him glory." He was brought forth into a large place. He was delivered because God delighted in Him and He has rewarded Him. Verse 23 as it stands in the authorized version can not apply to Christ. It is in fact a poor translation. The translation in the Numerical Bible is very satisfactory. "I was also perfect with Him and kept myself from perverseness being mine."

Verses 28-42. He will save an humble people and all His enemies will be conquered by Him. While much in this section was David's experience, who overcame all his enemies, in its prophetic meaning it must apply to the Lord Jesus. Verses 37-42 speak prophetically of this coming great victory when all His enemies will be made the footstool of His feet.

Verses 43-45. He becomes the head of the nations. "Thou hast made me the head of the nations" cannot apply to David and his experience, but it is David's Son and David's Lord who will head the nations of the earth. It is the coming kingdom which is described in verse 44. "As soon as they hear of me they shall obey me, the strangers (Gentiles) shall submit themselves unto me." The marginal reading is suggestive, "they shall yield feigned obedience unto Me," which tells us that the obedience of many during the kingdom reign of our Lord will not be whole-hearted and therefore the revolt at the end of the thousand years (Rev. 20). His praise will then be heard among the nations (Verses 49-50).

PSALM 19 Christ in Creation and in Revelation

1. In creation (19:1-6)
2. In revelation (19:7-11)

Verses 1-6. This Psalm also bears witness to Christ as Creator and as revealing Himself through the Word. The two great books, Creation and Revelation, bear witness to Him. The Heavens which declare the glory of God were created by Him (Col. 1:16; John 1:3). And there is a testimony to Him in creation which is continuous. "Day unto day uttereth speech and night unto night showeth knowledge." (See Romans 1:20) The sun is especially mentioned, for the sun is the type of Christ. "As a bridegroom coming out of His chamber he rejoiceth as a strong man to run his course. His going forth is from the end of the heavens, and his circuits unto the end of it and nothing is hid from the heat thereof." He is the Sun of Righteousness, who will arise some day with healing beneath his wings.

Verses 7-11. The second witness to Him is the Law of Jehovah, the testimony and the precepts of the Lord. It is His written Word. This Word comes from Himself and speaks of Himself. What this Word is and what it produces and the practical use of the testimony of the Lord as well as prayer are mentioned in these verses.

The nineteenth Psalm is an introduction to the next five Psalms, which tells us more fully of the person of Christ, the Creator and Revealer, in His great work as Redeemer.

PSALM 20 Christ and His Salvation as Contemplated by His People

1. What God has done for Christ (20:1-4)
2. The salvation His people enjoy (20:5-9)

Verses 1-4. "My Redeemer" was the last word of the previous Psalm. Christ the Redeemer of His people is revealed in this Psalm. His death and sacrificial work, revealed in Psalm 22, are here anticipated. He who humbled Himself has been heard by Jehovah, He has set Him upon high (marginal reading), He has sent Him help, He has accepted His great offering, the whole burnt offering which typifies the death of the cross. All the desires of His heart are given to Him and all His counsels will be fulfilled. The believing remnant is contemplating the Redeemer and His salvation. Because He has been heard, because His offering is accepted, because He is set on high, they possess salvation.

Verses 5-9. This salvation is now celebrated in inspired song. It is anticipatory of that coming salvation. They will rejoice in His salvation, His heavenly people, now rejoice in it. Banners, the symbol of victory won, will be set up. The intercessions of His Anointed (Christ) will be answered, all enemies are bowed down and fallen. "But we are risen and stand upright" refers to the day of Israel's national and spiritual resurrection. In anticipation of the trouble of the last days we read the prayer of this godly remnant. "Save LORD! Let the King hear us when we call."

PSALM 21 The King's Glory Anticipated and Contemplated

1. The King's power, glory and salvation (21:1-6)
2. His victory over the enemies (21:7-13)

Verses 1-6. This is another Messianic Psalm in anticipation of the glory of the King. The prayers He offered up are all answered. (See Ps. 20:4) He shares the strength of Jehovah as the Risen and Exalted One. The desire of His heart is fulfilled, as it will be when the kingly crown of pure gold is set upon His head, the head which was once crowned with thorns. He had gone down into the jaws of death and then received life, yea, eternal life, as the head of the new creation, which shares this life He has received. And His glory is great in Jehovah's salvation, the salvation which the Lord has planned and which He has accomplished, which is His glory.

Verses 7-13. Here once more the downfall and complete overthrow of the enemies, when the King reigns, is prophetically anticipated. Then we hear in the last verse a prophetic prayer, that all this might be accomplished. "Be Thou exalted, LORD, in Thine own strength." And when He is exalted, then Israel redeemed will sing--"So will we sing and praise Thy power."

(How the critics have made havoc with all these Psalms, trying to find a solution, when the Lord Jesus is the only solution as He is the key to all the Scriptures! The Targum reads in verses 1 and 7 "King Messiah" and Jewish interpretation has mostly been on Messianic lines. Perowne writes on this kingly Psalm "Each Jewish monarch was but a feeble type of Israel's true King; and all the hopes of pious hearts still looked beyond David or David's children to Him who should be David's Lord as well as David's Son.")

PSALM 22 The Sufferings of Christ and the Glory That Follows

1. The suffering (22:1-21)
2. The glory (22:22-31)

Verses 1-21. In many respects this Psalm is the most remarkable in the entire book and one of the sublimest prophecies in the whole Bible. The sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow are here wonderfully foretold. The inscription mentions A yeleth Shahar, which means "the hind of the morning." Jewish tradition identifies this hind with the early morning light, when the day dawns and the rays of the rising sun appear like the horns of the hind. The eminent Hebraist Professor Delitzsch, makes the following remark: "Even the Jewish synagogue, so far as it recognizes a suffering Messiah, hears His voice here, and takes the hind of the morning as a name of the Shechinah, and makes it a symbol of coming redemption." And the Targum recalls the lamb of the morning sacrifice, which was offered as soon as the watchman on the pinnacle of the temple cried out, "The first rays of the morning burst forth." All this is very suggestive. The inscription also tells us that the Psalm was written by David. "We know, however, of no circumstances in his life to which it can possibly be referred. In none of the persecutions by Saul was he ever reduced to such straits as those here described" (Perowne). David's personal experience is all out of question. He speaks as a prophet, such as he was (Acts 2:30) and the Spirit of God useth him to give one of the completest pictures of Christ, His suffering and glory, which to David must have been a mystery, so that with other prophets, he searched and enquired as to its meaning. (See 1 Peter 1:10-12). Our Lord in uttering the solemn word with which this Psalm begins in the darkness which enshrouded the cross gives us the conclusive evidence that it is He of whom the Psalm speaks. The Spirit of God equally so in Hebrews 2:11-12 shows that it is Christ. And the glory-side of this gem of prophecy proves fully that none other than the Christ of God is meant.

The precious, blessed, unfathomable work of the sin-bearer on the Cross and its far reaching results in blessing and glory is here unfolded to our faith, as well as for our joy and comfort. The heart of the atonement occupies the foreground, not the physical sufferings, but the suffering He endured from the side of God, when He made Him who knew no sin, sin for us. "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken me?"--But Thou art holy! That is the answer to the "Why?" And when the blessed One was thus forsaken, and faced as the substitute of sinners the holy, sin-hating God, He finished the work, the work which enables God to be just and the justifier of all who believe in Jesus. "It is finished!" was His triumphant shout, expressed in the Greek by one word--"tetelestai." And our Psalm ends with a similar word--"He hath done"--the Hebrew word "ohsa" expresseth the same thought--it is finished.

Still more astonishing are the details of His physical sufferings, which were all so minutely fulfilled on Calvary. Here we find foretold the piercing of hands and feet, the excessive thirst He suffered, the terrible agony by hanging suspended, every bone out of joint; the laughter and hooting of his enemies, the very expressions they used surrounding the cross are given here, and the dividing of the garments and casting lots over them and other details are prophetically revealed. And to this must be added another fact. Crucifixion was an unknown method of death in Jewish law. Among ancient nations the Roman penal code alone seems to contain exclusively this cruel penalty; Rome evidently invented it. Yet here this unknown death penalty is described in a perfect manner. What an evidence of divine inspiration!

And the critics, how they have tried to explain away this great prophecy! And they are still trying to explain it away. Some apply it to Hezekiah; others say it may describe the sufferings of Jeremiah; still others say it is the Jewish nation. And some try to make it out as being only coincident that the Hebrews had such a piece of literature and that one of their own, Jesus of Nazareth, made such an experience. Surely these infidels are fools, for only a fool can adopt and believe such a method of reasoning against these conclusive evidences of revelation.

Verses 22-31. The deliverance of the sufferer comes in with the twenty-first verse. Thrice He calls for help. "Haste Thee to help Me"--"Deliver my soul from the Sword"--"Save me from the Lion's Mouth." Then we hear of the answer: "Thou hast answered Me from the horns of the wild-oxen." He was surrounded by the dogs (Gentiles) and the assembly of the wicked (Jews) as mentioned in verse 16, but now God has answered Him. The sufferings are ended and the glory begins. The horns of the wild-oxen denote power; the power of God answered Him and raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory. We therefore behold Him at once as the risen One with a great declaration. "I will declare Thy name unto my brethren." And thus He spake after His passion and resurrection, "Go and tell my brethren that I ascend unto my Father and your Father, and to my God and your God." This brings out the first great result of His finished work. It is the Church, His body, brought into this definite and blessed relationship with Himself. In the midst of the congregation (the Church) He sings praises. He is in the midst. "For both, He that sanctifieth, and they who are sanctified are all of one; for which cause He is not ashamed to call them brethren, saying, I will declare Thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the

church will I sing praise unto Thee" (Hebrews 2:11-12). And then the circle widens. Israel too will praise Him, all the seed of Jacob will glorify Him. The ends of the earth shall remember and turn unto the Lord. All the kindreds of the nations will worship Him. He will receive the kingdom and the glory. Thus this Psalm, which begins with suffering, ends with glory, a glory yet to come for Israel and the nations of the earth.

PSALM 23 Christ, the Great Shepherd

1. Assurance (23:1-3)

2. Comfort (23:4-6)

Verses 1-3. Well has it been said "without Psalm 22, there could be no Twenty-third Psalm." While the former Psalm reveals Christ as the good Shepherd, who gives His life for the sheep, this Psalm makes Him known as the great Shepherd of the sheep, whom the God of Peace hath brought again from the dead, through the blood of the everlasting covenant (Hebrews 13:20). And all who deny the atoning work of Christ have no claim whatever upon the assurance and comfort of this Psalm.

But we must not overlook the fact that the first application of the Twenty-third Psalm must be made in connection with that godly remnant of Israel of a future day. While He is individually the Shepherd of all who trust in Him, He is also nationally the Shepherd of Israel. The Patriarch Jacob spoke of this when he said, "the God which fed me," or, literally, "my Shepherd." In Psalm 53:1 the Lord is spoken of as being the Shepherd of Israel nationally, while in another Psalm the pious in Israel declare "we are the people of His pasture, and the sheep of His hands." In Isaiah 40:11 we have record of another national promise made to His people Israel--"He shall feed His flock like a Shepherd" and Micah calls Israel "the flock of Thine inheritance" (Micah 7:14). The entire thirty-fourth chapter of Ezekiel reveals Him as the Shepherd and His future work when He will gather graciously the scattered sheep of Israel and lead them back to their own land. This Psalm has therefore a wider national application, especially in connection with the already mentioned godly remnant who look forward during the time of Jacob's trouble, the great tribulation, to His visible manifestation. It will be their comfort, when they walk through the valley of the shadow of death, when their enemies arise threateningly on all sides. Then they will say, "I will fear no evil, for Thou art with me" and again "Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies." Their hope is expressed in holy anticipation as dwelling finally in the house of the Lord forever, that is the hope of sharing the blessings and glories of the millennial reign.

Much has been written devotionally on this Psalm. Hundreds of books have been published, but it has never been exhausted nor ever will be. The assurance of the first three verses belong to every believer on the Lord Jesus. He is individually the Shepherd and each child of God can say, "Jehovah is my Shepherd, the Shepherd who never fails, who never changeth, the Jehovah-jireh--the LORD who provides. He gives pasture, peace and rest, with the never failing waters, the supply of His Spirit. Then He restoreth after failure and leads in paths of righteousness for His Name's sake.

Verses 4-6. And here is the comfort for all earthly circumstances, no matter where the path may be. Goodness and mercy are in store for all His sheep and the blessed goal to be with Him, not in an earthly house, where yet His glory is to dwell visibly, but in the Father's house with its many mansions.

A good way to read this Psalm is by asking the question, "What shall I not want?"

I shall not want-- Rest--for He makes me to lie down in green pastures. Drink--for He leadeth me beside the still waters. Forgiveness--for He restoreth my soul. Guidance--for He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness. Companionship--for Thou art with me. Comfort--for Thy rod and Thy staff comfort me. Food--for Thou preparest a table before me. Victory--in the presence of mine enemies. Joy--Thou anointest my head with oil. Overrunning joy--for my cup runneth over. Everything in time--for goodness and mercy shall follow me. Everything in eternity--for I shall dwell in the house of the LORD forever.

PSALM 24 The Chief Shepherd, the King of Glory

1. Who shall dwell with Him when He comes? (24:1-6)
2. The glorious manifestation of the King (24:7-10)

Verses 1-6. This Psalm may have been composed and used on the occasion of the removal of the ark from the house of Obed-Edom, to the city of David on Mount Zion (2 Sam. 6). It is a millennial Psalm and describes how the Lord will enter His glorious dwelling place on Mount Zion when He appears in power and in glory. When the King comes back He will choose Zion for His glorious rest, as so many prophecies tell us, and reign from there, while another house of the Lord, the great millennial temple filled with His glory, will then be built. Who then shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? Or who shall stand in His holy place? That these questions have nothing to do with the church, which at that time is as the glorified body with the Lord, is obvious. The character of those who will enter into His presence when He comes back to earth to dwell in Zion, and who will share the blessings of the kingdom, is that of practical righteousness, which is the fruit of faith. This company includes those Israelites who believed during the tribulation, who turned to the Lord, and also the company of Gentiles who learn righteousness when the judgments of the Lord are in the earth (Isaiah 26:9).

Verses 7-10. Here we have the glorious manifestation and entry of the King into His House and dwelling place. It is a most sublime description. It has nothing to do with the ascension of our Lord, it is His glorious return and entry into the earthly Zion to fill it once more with His visible glory. And the King of Glory is the Lord of Hosts. Jehovah of Hosts, He is the King of Glory. He who was forsaken on the cross is now crowned with many crowns.

This Psalm concludes this series which so wonderfully tells out the person and work of Christ.

Psalms 25-39

The fifteen Psalms which follow give the deep soul exercise of the godly. All fifteen, except the thirty-third, are marked as Psalms of David. Much of it expresses undoubtedly his own individual experience during the days of his suffering and at other occasions. Prophetically these Psalms give again the experience of the godly remnant of Israel in the time of trouble, preceding the coming of the King. We also can trace in these experiences much which concerns our Lord in His earthly life, when as the Holy One He lived that perfect life of obedience and trust, suffering too among the ungodly. But great caution is needed in the application of these Psalms to our Lord. Here we find expressions which could never be true of Him, who knew no sin. For instance some have applied Psalm 38:7: "for my loins are filled with a loathsome disease and there is no soundness in my flesh" to the Lord Jesus, simply to sustain the theory that He carried literally our diseases in His body. This is positively wrong. His body was a holy body. Death had no claim on it nor could disease lay hold on that body. But many of these experiences are unquestionably the experiences of the Perfect and Righteous Man, the second Man, walking in the midst of sinners.

These fifteen Psalms are rich in spiritual food, yet it must always be remembered that strictly speaking it is not Christian experience, but the experience of Jews under the Law dispensation, and it needs spiritual discernment in using these utterances for ourselves with our heavenly calling and spiritual blessings in Christ Jesus. We give but one illustration of what we mean.

The much beloved thirty-seventh Psalm with its blessed promises which we as Christian believers have a right to enjoy and to claim contains the promise, "But the meek shall inherit the earth; and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace" (verse 2). This is promised to the godly Jews who will inherit the earth. The Church does not inherit the earth, but hers is a heavenly possession. When our Lord in the kingly proclamation, the sermon on the mount, said, "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth," He quoted from the thirty-seventh Psalm. This promise has therefore nothing whatever to do with the Church, but is a kingdom promise for the godly in Israel.

(It is deplorable that of late not a few of God's people have been confused by "new light" concerning the kingdom. This

theory claims that John the Baptist and the Lord Jesus never offered the promised kingdom to Israel, but that the kingdom of heaven is equivalent with the present dispensation.)

The scope of our work does not permit a detailed exposition of these fifteen beautiful Psalms. We must leave it to the reader to ponder over them prayerfully and to enjoy their blessed comfort, yet always "dividing the Word of Truth rightly."

PSALM 25 Prayer for Mercy and Deliverance

1. Dependence on the Lord (25:1-7)
2. Confidence and assurance (25:8-14)
3. The Lord the refuge in trial and distress (25:15-22)

Verses 1-7. This is another alphabetical Psalm, though not perfect in structure as two letters of the Hebrew alphabet (v and k) are missing. This great prayer-psalm begins with the expressions of trust in Jehovah. The soul is uplifted and calm in His presence. Depending on the Eternal One, the soul knows that none that wait on Him shall be ashamed. David found this true in his own experience; so have generations upon generations of His people, and the godly of Israel in the future will make the same experience. They will turn to Him and inquire for His ways, His paths and His truth. Here are their prayers: "Show me--lead me--teach me--remember Thy mercies--remember not my sins--remember me." And He will answer, yea, He will remember their sins and iniquities no more and remember them in mercy. Our prayer as Christian believers is also for guidance, but we know that our sins are put away, that He hath saved us.

Verses 8-14. Here we find expressions of confidence and assurance. He guides the humble in judgment, He teaches the humble His way, a truth which all His people may well remember. The godly in Israel, fearing the Lord, express their confidence that their seed shall inherit the earth and that "all the paths of the LORD are mercy and truth unto such as keep His covenant and His testimonies." Yea, they know His secrets through His Word; this godly remnant will see and enjoy His covenant, the new covenant. (See Jeremiah 31:31-34.)

Verses 15-20. They are in distress, a net has entangled their feet; they are desolate and afflicted, in affliction and pain, the burden of sin is upon them, enemies hate them with cruel hatred. They look away from self and from man and are turning their eyes only to the Lord. From Him their deliverance must come. "Redeem Israel, O God, out of all his troubles." And that prayer will be answered.

PSALM 26 An Appeal on Account of Righteousness

1. Pleading integrity (26:1-5)
2. Separated unto the Lord (26:6-8)
3. Be gracious unto Me (36:9-12)

Verses 1-5. The opening verses remind us of the First Psalm and well may we put these words into the lips of the perfect man, who walked in integrity and was separate from sinners. Here we find no confessions of sin, no pleadings for forgiveness, but instead an avowal of conscious uprightness and separation from wicked men as well as love for His house and for the place where His honour dwells. It is the godly remnant pleading not exactly moral perfection, but uprightness of heart, which has led them apart from the apostate part of the nation. They hate the congregation of evil doers, and on account of this they look for divine vindication. No Christian believer pleads on such grounds with God. We plead that worthy Name, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Verses 6-8. The washing of the hands in innocency is a Jewish figure. See Deut. 21:6. They cleanse themselves from defilement to approach His altar as the priests had to wash their hands and feet (Exodus 30:17-21).

Verses 9-12. Then their prayer--redeem me and be merciful unto me--gather not my soul with sinners--all the pleading

of integrity of heart and separation from evil-doers has not produced assurance of acceptance, though in hope they look forward to the day when in the congregations they will bless the Lord. How different the assurance which grace gives to us, that we are redeemed and the fullest mercy is on our side.

PSALM 27 Holy Longings and Anticipations

1. Confidence in the Lord (27:1-3)
2. Longings and anticipations (27:4-6)
3. Earnest prayer in trial and trust in the Lord (27:7-14)

Verses 1-3. This Psalm leads us deeper. We repeat that primarily it is a rehearsal of David's experience, perhaps at the time of Absalom's rebellion. Here faith breaks through in triumph, with deep longings for the house of the Lord and for His presence, which is followed by a description of the trials through which the godly Israelites will pass in the future. He is light, salvation and the strength of life; thus faith lays hold on the Lord and in view all fear and terror must vanish. "The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? the LORD is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?" It belongs to us all. Yet greater is the shout of faith uttered on the pinnacle of our great Salvation Epistle, Romans 8--"If God be for us, who can be against us?"

Verses 4-6. Heart longings and blessed anticipations follow. They long for the earthly sanctuary, we for our heavenly abode. Their desire is to dwell in the house of the Lord--to behold the beauty of the Lord--to inquire in His temple. And we too desire to be with Him, to behold Him face to face, and what it will mean then to inquire in His holy temple! What it will be when up yonder we shall no longer look into a glass darkly! Then follows praise. Their heads will be lifted up--"therefore will I offer in His tabernacle sacrifices of joy; I will sing, yea, I will sing praises unto Jehovah." And while Israel will sing on earth when their earthly hope and deliverance has come, the praises of His church will fill the heavens above.

Verses 7-14. Once more we hear the cry in distress. The present trouble which is upon them comes into view. They plead, "leave me not, neither forsake me, O God of my salvation"--a prayer which no true Christian believer needs to pray.

PSALM 28 Prayer For Judgment and Praise For the Answer

1. Prayer for judgment (28:1-5)
2. Praise for the answer (28:6-9)

Verses 1-5. Their cry now increaseth because of their enemies, the enemies of Israel in the last days. They breathe out cruelty to them (27:12). They pass through the valley of the shadow of death and if He does not answer and remains silent they be like those that go down to the pit. Hence the imprecatory prayer, "Give them according to their deeds, etc." (verse 4)

Verses 6-9. In faith the answer is anticipated and praise is given for it. The Psalm ends with a prayer. "Save Thy people (Israel), and bless Thine inheritance, and lift them up forever." The next Psalms bring the answer.

PSALM 29 The judgment Storm

1. Give unto the Lord the glory of His Name (29:1-2)
2. The day of the Lord described as a thunderstorm (29:3-9)
3. The calm after the storm--the Lord is King (29:10-11)

Verses 1-2. The voice of His trusting people is hushed; His voice is now heard. From Psalm 25 to 28 we have seen the

soul exercise of the remnant of Israel, we heard their prayers, we learned of their hopes and anticipations and of their trials and sorrows. Their last prayer in the preceding Psalm was "Save Thy people," and now He is seen arising to save them. His glory and strength, the glory of His Name, is now to be manifested.

Verses 3-9. This is one of the most wonderful poetic descriptions we have in the Bible. The day of the Lord, when He will be manifested in wrath and in mercy, is described under an onrushing thunderstorm. The mighty tempest passes from north to south. Jehovah thundereth, great waters sweep along, His voice is heard with power. The mighty cedars of Lebanon are broken by the fury of the storm. The cedars of Lebanon are symbolical of the high and exalted things which will be broken to pieces in that day. (Read Isaiah 2:11-14.) Lebanon and Sirion, the lofty mountains, skip like a young unicorn. The mountains will be shaken by mighty earthquakes and all the governments, typified by mountains, will also be shaken. He is manifested with flames of fire, the lightning of His righteousness, which ushers in His glorious reign. Then the hind is made to calve--it means Israel's new birth, while the forests (the nations) are stripped and laid low. And in His temple, that greater house, whose maker He is, earth and heaven, "all that is therein uttereth glory" (literal translation).

Verses 10-11. The storm is past. The Lord has come. The judgment flood is gone. Jehovah now has taken His throne. He is King and blesseth His people with peace. The name of Jehovah is found 18 times in this Psalm and this Jehovah is our ever blessed Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

PSALM 30 A Psalm of Praise

1. Praise for deliverance (30:1-5)
2. Past experience (30:6-12)

Verses 1-5. The inscription says that the Psalm was written by David as a song of dedication of the house. It probably means the house of the Lord mentioned in 1 Chron. 22:1. The Psalm must be looked upon as expressing prophetically the praise of the nation for the deliverance and when that greater house of the Lord will be on the earth (Ezekiel 40, etc.) David's experience, of course, stands in the foreground. It is generally assumed that David was sick unto death and that the Lord raised him up. But this foreshadows the experience of the remnant of Israel. They approached the pit, while their foes were ready to rejoice over them, but the Lord intervened, and they were saved and healed. Then the singing begins (verse 4). Weeping had endured for a night, the dark night of tribulation, but joy came with the morning, that blessed morning for which all is waiting, when the day breaks and the shadows flee away.

Verses 6-12. This is a rehearsal of the experiences through which they passed. Mourning for them is turned into dancing; the sackcloth is taken off and the garments of joy and gladness are put on. Then His glory will be manifested and will sing His praise throughout Israel's land and the whole earth will be filled with His glory.

PSALM 31 The Enemies of Israel and the Victory

1. The prayer for deliverance (31:1-18)
2. The victory (31:19-24)

Verses 1-18. Many saints have turned to this Psalm for encouragement in time of trouble and sorrow. And there is much in it which helps the trusting soul. Notice the different names of Jehovah--my rock--my house of defense--my strong rock--my fortress--my strength--God of truth. But like the previous Psalms this one also unfolds prophetically the sufferings of the remnant of Israel during the last days of this age.

Yet likewise we may think of Him who endured the contradiction of sinners. The words "into Thine hand I commit My spirit" were used by our Lord when He laid down His life on the cross (Luke 23:46).

Verses 19-24. The outcome of all the suffering and trials will be victory for the godly. His goodness will be displayed

in their behalf, He will answer the voice of their supplications in the coming great deliverance. The faithful ones will be preserved. the proud rewarded for their evil deeds.

PSALM 32 Fullest Blessing

1. The blessedness of righteousness imputed (32:1-5)
2. The blessedness of hiding-place (32:6-7)
3. The blessedness of guidance and preservation (32:8-11)

Verses 1-5. This is the first of the 13 Maschil Psalms, the Psalms of special instruction. They tell us of the understanding which the godly in Israel will have in spiritual things (Daniel 12:10). All these Maschil Psalms have reference to the last days. The foundation of this Psalm is David's own experience. See the application of it in Romans 4. This blessedness of being justified by faith, and all that is included, will be the portion also of the godly in Israel during the end of the age, after the true Church has been caught up. They will pass through David's experience and enjoy the "sure mercies of David."

Verses 6-7. And the Justifier is the hiding-place, the refuge. As He is now the hiding-place for His trusting people, so will He be their hiding-place. The floods of great waters point clearly to the great tribulation. They will be preserved as it is written concerning this godly remnant by Isaiah: "Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee; hide thyself as if it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast" (Isaiah 26:20).

Verses 8-11. Then the blessedness of guidance and preservation. His eye will rest upon them and with His eye He will guide them, as He watches over and guides all His people. And finally the righteous kept and delivered will shout for joy.

PSALM 33 The Future Praise of Jehovah

1. The call to praise Jehovah (33:1-3)
2. His praise as the Creator (33:4-9)
3. His praise of His governmental dealings (33:10-17)
4. His praise as the Keeper and Deliverer of the Righteous (33:18-22)

What the last verse of the preceding Psalm exhorts to shout for joy, is in this Psalm more fully unfolded. Such praise the Lord has not yet received, it looks forward to millennial times when all earth fears the Lord and all the inhabitants stand in awe of Him (verse 8). Now they oppose and defy Him and His Word. Then the counsel of the nations will be brought to nought and His people Israel, His own nation, will be blessed. The last verse is a prayer that His mercy may be bestowed upon His people Israel, who hope in Him.

PSALM 34 The Perfect Praise of His Redeemed People

1. His praise for salvation (34:1-10)
2. The instructions of the righteous (34:11-16)
3. His redemption remembered (34:17-22)

This is another alphabetical Psalm, only one letter is omitted. It is primarily the praise of David after his escape from Gath, as the inscription tells us. Prophetically it is the praise of His redeemed and delivered people, delivered from all their fears (verse 4) and saved out of all their troubles (verse 6). Such will be their worship and praise in the coming day, while they themselves will be teachers and instructors in righteousness (verses 12-16; see 1 Peter 3:10-12).

Verse 20 is a literal prophecy concerning our Lord and was literally fulfilled (John 19:36). But the believer also can

claim this promise, for we are His bones. "It intimates to the believer the limitation within which the power of the oppressor is confined, with whom he is in ceaseless conflict. As the same Scripture which contains the record of Messiah's sufferings provided also that no bone of Him should be broken, so it is with the saint." They will be kept by His own power. The last two verses of this Psalm shows the judgment of the wicked and the deliverance of the righteous in that day. We have seen once more how Psalm is linked with Psalm.

PSALM 35 The Cry for Justice and Divine Help

1. The cry of distress (35:1-10)
2. The contrast? (35:11-18)
3. Prayer for vindication and victory (35:19-28)

This Psalm introduces us again to the suffering of the righteous, giving another prophetic picture of the distress of the remnant. When David composed this Psalm we do not know. But He casts himself completely on the Lord and calls to Him for help and vindication. Thus the godly have always done when surrounded by the enemies who persecuted them. The condition of the godly when violence is in the earth during the time of Jacob's trouble is here fully pictured, and their prayers prewritten by the Spirit of God. They look to Him to fight against their enemies, so that they may be confounded and put to shame, that they might be like the chaff before the wind, driven away. These are imprecatory petitions, such as a Christian is not authorized to pray, but these petitions will be perfectly justified in those final days, when judgment is decreed upon the enemies of God. The godly act in righteousness towards the wicked, but they reward evil for good, showing that they are ripe for judgment. And therefore their plea, "How long, O Lord, wilt Thou look on?" (verse 17) "Rescue my soul from their destructions, my darling from the lions." This reminds us of the Twenty-second Psalm where this expression applies to our Lord. The remnant suffers with Him. And then their faith looks forward to the time of vindication and victory.

PSALM 36 Contrasts

1. What the wicked is and does (36:1-4)
2. What Jehovah is and does (36:5-9)
3. Prayer and trust in His loving kindness (36:10-12)

The wicked are described in their wickedness, with sin in the heart, no fear of God; filled with pride and flattery, speaking evil and doing evil. "But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived" (2 Tim. 3:13). This is the divine forecast for the last days and these opening verses of this psalm show the wicked of the last days. But what a Lord He is whom they do not fear! What a contrast! And the righteous know His mercy, His faithfulness, His righteousness and His judgment. Only good is in store from His side for those who trust in Him. His lovingkindness is excellent, He covers them with the shadow of His wings, He satisfies them abundantly with the fatness of His house. Such will be the hope and comfort of the godly when the wicked wax worse and worse, till the day comes when the workers of iniquity shall fall, unable to rise again.

PSALM 37 The Blessed Lot of the Righteous Contrasted with the Wicked

1. Waiting for Jehovah and His promise (37:1-11)
2. The doom of the wicked and the portion of the righteous (37:12-20)
3. The ways of the righteous and the wicked (37:21-29)
4. God's gracious ways with the righteous (37:30-40)

This Psalm is also alphabetical in structure and somewhat proverbial in character. It is full of sweet comfort and encouragement to faith. All the saints of God have fed on its beautiful statements, and the coming saints of Israel will find help and strength in it for their souls. He who trusts in the Lord and waits for Him needs not to fret on account of evil-

doers; they will soon be cut off. But what is the righteous man to do? Trust in the Lord--delight thyself in Him--commit thy way unto the Lord--rest in the Lord. If God's people will but do this all is well, for He who never faileth adds His promises. He promises safety, the fulfilment of the heart's desire; He will bring it to pass and bring forth righteousness as the light. Waiting for the Lord will end for the godly of that coming day, when the evil-doers will be cut off in judgment and when those who waited on the Lord shall inherit the earth. This is Israel's promise which will be realized for the godly remnant when the Lord appears in glory in their midst. These brief hints will help in the study of the entire Psalm. It must be looked upon as prophetic, pointing to the day when the wicked troubles no more, when his end is come and when the Lord exalts the righteous to inherit the land.

PSALM 38 The Suffering Saint and Confession of Sin

1. Suffering and Humiliation (38:1-8)
2. Looking to the Lord (38:9-15)
3. Confession and prayer (38:16-20)

This Psalm is read by the Jews on the day of atonement. It pictures great suffering in body and soul; it reminds us in different ways of the book of Job. (See and compare verse 2 with Job 6:4; verse 4 with Job 23:2; verse 11 with Job 19:13; the loathsome disease, with no soundness in the flesh, also reminds of Job's experience.) And the suffering one looks to Jehovah, He is his hope. He confesses his sins, pleads, "Make haste to help me, O Lord of my salvation." And that cry will always be answered.

PSALM 39 Deep Soul Exercise in View of Man's Frailty and Nothingness

1. The vanity of life (39:1-6)
2. Self-judgment and prayer (39:7-13)

This Psalm is connected closely with the preceding one and shows deep soul exercises. In the midst of trial, with God's hand resting upon the sufferer, he had been silent before his enemies. Before the Lord he did not maintain silence but pours out his heart, confessing the vanity of his fleeting life which appears to him as a hand-breadth and altogether vanity. Beautiful is verse 7. "And now, Lord, what wait I for? My hope is in Thee." All else the saint waits for in this little life down here is vanity except the Lord. These two Psalms have also their special application to the suffering remnant, who learn the vanity of all things and wait for the Lord only.

PSALM 40 Christ the Obedient One and the Fruit of His Work

1. The path of the Obedient One (40:1-12)
2. His prayer and His comfort (40:13-17)

Verses 1-12. The Fortieth and Forty-first Psalms are Messianic. Our Redeemer and Israel's Redeemer is blessedly revealed in them both and with the testimony to Him the first book of the Psalms closes. Psalm 40 begins with what may be termed "Christ's resurrection song." He came and went as the sin-bearer into the horrible pit (Hebrew: the pit of destruction) and the miry clay, and the power of God brought Him out, raised Him from the dead, set His feet upon a rock and established His goings (His ascension). A new song is put into His mouth, "even praise unto our God." It is the song of redemption which He sings first and all who believe on Him join in that song. That is why we read "our God." The many who shall see it are those who trust in Him who was delivered for our offenses and raised again for our justification. And who can tell out the wonderful works He has done in redemption; "they are more than can be numbered." Verses 6-8 are quoted in Hebrews 10. The ears opened, literally "digged ears," refers us to Exodus 21. The New Testament quotes the Septuagint translation, made undoubtedly with the sanction of the Holy Spirit, "a body hast Thou prepared Me." In verses 13-17 we hear Him pray as the sin-bearer of His people, as we hear Him say in verse 12 that the sins He bore are more than the hairs upon His head. The doom of those who reject and despise Him, and the blessing of all who love His

salvation are likewise mentioned.

PSALM 41 Faith and Unbelief in View of the Cross

1. Faith in Him and the Results (41:1-3)
2. Unbelief and its hatred (41:4-9)
3. The vindication of the Christ of the cross (41:10-13)

The poor one (literally: the miserable, exhausted one) is the Lord Jesus suffering on the cross. Blessed are they who understand as to Him, who consider Him, for it means deliverance, salvation, preservation, victory and happiness. But unbelief mocks and sneers at Him. They speak against Him, make evil devices against Him, the sin-bearer, that an evil disease (literally: a thing of Belial) is upon Him and that He shall rise no more. All this points back to the cross and is still true of the unbeliever who rejects the cross. Verse 9 refers to Judas who betrayed Him. See John 13:18 and notice when our Lord quotes from this Psalm He omits the words "whom I trusted," for the Omniscient One knew Judas, and did not trust him. And He, the Poor and Needy One, the Miserable One, the Forsaken One, had His prayer answered; He is the Risen One (verse 10); in God's own presence, before His face (verse 12). The first book of the Psalms ends with praise, prophetic of the praise which is yet to fill all the earth. Amen and Amen.

II. THE EXODUS SECTION: BOOK Two: PSALMS 42-72

The second division of the book of Psalms corresponds to the book of Exodus, the second book of the Pentateuch. That book begins with the groans and moans of a suffering people in Egypt and after redemption by blood and by power, ends with the glory of the Lord filling the tabernacle when the work was finished. Ruin, oppression, suffering and sorrow, ending in deliverance and redemption, is the order in which the Psalms in this section are arranged. It is a most interesting study and we regret that we cannot enter into all the details, to explore these mines of prophecy. The oppressed, persecuted people, who suffer surrounded by the ungodly, is that same godly remnant of Israelites. Their deliverance comes by the visible manifestation of the Lord, the second coming of our Lord. The Psalm which concludes this Exodus of the Psalms is 72, the great Kingdom Psalm, when His Kingdom has come and the King reigns in righteousness.

Psalms 42-49

The first eight Psalms form the first section. Here the remnant is seen in great distress, having fled from Jerusalem on account of wickedness during the time of the great tribulation (Daniel 12:1), longing for deliverance. Then we learn how that deliverance comes by the manifestation of the King and the results which follow that deliverance.

PSALM 42 Longing after God in the Midst of Distress

1. Longing after God and His sanctuary (42:1-6)
2. Distress and the comfort of hope (42:7-11)

This is the second Maschil Psalm, for instruction of the godly of that day. The remnant looks towards the sanctuary, the house of God, from which they are separated and driven away. They are panting after God, as the hart panteth after the water brooks. Their cry comes from "the land of Jordan"--Jordan, the type of death--and from the Hermons (which means "ban"), from the hill Mizar (littleness). The enemy taunts, "Where is thy God?" For them deep calleth unto deep and they cry out "all Thy waves and billows are gone over me." They suffer with Him, bearing His reproach, over whose blessed head the waves and billows also passed. "Why hast Thou forgotten me?" they cry to God and remind Him of the oppression of the enemy. Yet hope and trust fills their soul.

PSALM 43 The Cry Against the Ungodly Nation and Antichrist

1. The cry to God (43:1-2)
2. Send out Thy light and truth (43:3-5)

Here their enemies are mentioned, the ungodly nation, serving the beast (Rev. 13:11-18). The deceitful and unjust man, is that coming man of sin, the son of perdition, who then has taken his seat in the temple of God in Jerusalem (2 Thess. 2). They realize their help must come from the Lord to lead them to the holy hill and the sanctuary. They call for the coming of Him who is "the Light and the Truth."

PSALM 44 The Increased Cry for Deliverance

1. My King, O God! Command deliverances (44:1-8)
2. Trouble upon trouble and confusion (44:9-21)
3. Awake! Arise for our help! (44:22-26)

The third Maschil Psalm. They remember the days of old, what God did for His covenant people in the past, how He gave them the land with an outstretched arm and delivered them from their enemies. They own Him as King and call on Him to command deliverances for Jacob. Then they utter their complaint and describe the great troubles and calamities they are facing; they are spoiled, like sheep appointed for meat, scattered, scorned and derided. Yet they have not forgotten Him. Then follows the cry for the Deliverer and for deliverance. "Arise for our help, and redeem us for Thy mercies' sake."

PSALM 45 The Answer: The King Messiah and His Glory

1. The King in His majesty and power (45:1-5)
2. His throne and His glory (45:6-8)
3. With the King, sharing His glory and kingdom (45:9-17)

This beautiful Psalm, a perfect gem, gives the answer to the prayer of distress, "Arise for our help", with which the preceding Psalm closed. It is also a Maschil Psalm and a traditional view claims Solomon as the author. And how the critics have laboured, without success, to explain away its Messianic meaning! The Jews have borne witness to this fact. The Chaldean Targum paraphrases verse 2 by saying, "Thy beauty, O King Messiah, is greater than that of the sons of men." And the eminent Jewish expositor Aben-Ezra says, "This Psalm treats of David, or rather of his son the Messiah." But the first chapter in the Hebrew Epistle establishes forever that the Lord Jesus Christ is here prophetically revealed. It has the inscription upon Shoshannim" (lilies). Here the theory that the inscriptions belong to preceding Psalms breaks down, for He is the Lily of the Valley, revealed now as the King, the Beloved One.

What sublime descriptions of the Person of our Lord! Here is His perfect Humanity, fairer than the children of men, with grace poured into His lips. His kingly glory, His manifestation in glory, executing the vengeance of God upon His enemies and delivering His waiting people. Here is His deity, for the King is God, "Thy Throne, O God, is forever"; His cross, He loved righteousness and hated iniquity, and the oil of gladness which is upon Him in resurrection glory, and His fellows share His glory. He receives the kingdom. With Him is the queen at His right hand in gold of Ophir, the Lamb's wife, to share His rule and reign with Him. The King's daughter is Israel, now all glorious within, born again, with garments of wrought gold, the symbol of glory. Her companions are nations now brought to the King. From henceforth the Name, which is above every other name, will be remembered and His people will praise Him forever and ever.

PSALM 46 The Deliverance and What Follows

1. God is our Refuge and Strength (46:1-3)
2. His coming in power and glory (46:4-7)
3. What follows His manifestation (46:8-11).

This is "a song upon Alamothe," which means "maidens' voices" and calls to remembrance the song which Miriam and the women sang when the Lord redeemed His people by power at the Red Sea. The remnant delivered relates prophetically the experience of deliverance. They trusted in God as their refuge and strength, though the earth was moved and the mountains carried into the sea. Then He appeared and helped His people "at the dawn of the morning." The nations raged, the kingdoms were moved--then His voice was heard, while His people shouted "Jehovah of hosts is with us." They call next to behold the desolations which judgment has wrought. Then, and only then follows peace and all wars are ended. "He maketh wars to cease unto the ends of the earth, He breaketh the bow and cutteth the spear asunder."

PSALM 47 He is King Over All the Earth

1. In the midst of His people (47:1-5)
2. The praise of His delivered people (47:6-9)

And now we see prophetically how the redeemed people clap their hands and shout unto God with the voice of triumph, for Messiah is King and then they sing praises unto the King, for He is King over all the earth and highly exalted. Every knee must bow and every tongue confess.

PSALM 48 The Judgment of the Nations and the Millennium

1. Jerusalem the city of the King (48:1-3)
2. The confederated nations scattered (48:4-7)
3. The millennium (48:8-14)

Jerusalem is now seen as the city of the great King. His glorious throne will there be established, and Mount Zion becomes the joy of the whole earth. Verses 4-7 show what preceded the coming of the King. The nations had come against Jerusalem (Zech. 14), a mighty confederacy was assembled. He came and scattered them by His judgments. Then Jerusalem is established forever; His millennial reign begins.

PSALM 49 Retrospects and Meditations

1. Hear this, all ye peoples! (49:1-4)
2. His message of retrospect and encouragement (49:5-20)

If such is the outcome and the goal of the purposes of God concerning His people, why should they fear in the days of evil, which precede the coming glory? The ungodly will pass away no matter how great their riches are, nor can they redeem themselves; their way is folly; like sheep they are laid in the grave and death feeds on them. But different is the lot of the righteous. They shall have dominion over them in the morning, when the night of suffering and trouble is ended. They will be redeemed from the power of the grave and He shall receive them, "for He will swallow up death in victory."

Psalms 50 and 51

PSALM 50 The Demands of a Righteous God

1. His coming and His call (50:1-6)
2. The God of Israel speaks (50:7-13)
3. The demands of righteousness (50:16-21)

Psalms 50 and 51 belong together. In the first God is described coming to Israel, proclaiming His righteousness and demanding righteousness from His people and in the second Israel makes confession of sin. Psalm 50 is by Asaph. He

describes the Lord shining out of Zion, coming in glory as the righteous judge to judge His people. When the Lord appears His people will be gathered in His presence, for He has a controversy with them; He declares unto them the righteousness which He as their God requires. He does not want their ritual services, sacrifices and offerings, but He requires that which is the fruit of true faith, the sacrifice of thanksgiving and practical righteousness of life. He uncovers their moral condition and warns, "Now consider this, ye that forget God, lest I tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver."

PSALM 51 The Confession

1. Conviction and prayer for forgiveness (51:1-8)
2. Prayer for cleansing and restoration (51:9-13)
3. Bloodguiltiness acknowledged (51:14-17)
4. Prayer for Zion (51:18-19)

This great penitential Psalm, according to the inscription, was the outburst of confession and repentance of David when Nathan had uncovered his sin. Well has it been said, "So profound a conviction of sin, so deep and unfeigned a penitence, so true a confession, a heart so tender, so contrite, a desire so fervent for renewal, a trust so humble, so filial in the forgiving love of God, are such as we might surely expect from 'the man after God's own heart.'" We cannot enter into all the petitions and expressions of sorrow over sin which are found in this remarkable Psalm. It goes deep in confession and brokenness of spirit. All the saints of God know something of such deep soul exercises on account of sin.

We point out the prophetic meaning of the Psalm. It is the future confession of Israel of their sin and especially their bloodguiltiness which is upon that nation. It is therefore the answer of penitent Israel to the words of the righteous judge in the preceding Psalm. David had bloodguiltiness upon him. And when the Jews delivered the Holy One into the hands of the Gentiles they cried, "His blood be upon us and upon our children." This bloodguiltiness will then be confessed when the Lord comes, when they look upon Him whom they pierced and shall mourn for Him (Zech. 12:10). Isaiah 53 is a similar confession which Israel will yet make. It will be the time of their deep contrition, national repentance and weeping. Then they will become the teachers of the Gentiles, to teach transgressors His ways, that sinners be converted unto Him. They will sing aloud of His righteousness, when the Lord has taken away their sins. Then they will bring sacrifices of righteousness and the Lord will do good to Zion and build Jerusalem.

PSALM 52 The Proud and Boasting Man

1. The character of the man of sin (52:1-7)
2. The character of the righteous (52:8-9)

The four Psalms which follow (all Maschil Psalms) give mostly a prophetic picture of the man of sin, the final Antichrist, the false messiah-king, under whom the godly in Israel will especially suffer. He is first described as the mighty man, the super-man, who boasts in evil. He is also a lying, deceitful man, "working deceitfully" and having a "deceitful tongue." But God is going to deal with him, destroy him forever, take him away, pluck him out of his dwelling place, and out of the land of the living. He will be destroyed with the brightness of the Lord's coming (2 Thes. 2:8).

PSALM 53 The Apostasy Under the Man of Sin

This Psalm is in greater part the same as the fourteenth. It is the description of the apostasy, the complete turning away from God and opposition to God, which will hold sway when Satan's mighty man is on the earth. Then the godly remnant will sigh for the coming of salvation out of Zion.

PSALM 54 The Prayer of the Godly

1. The prayer for salvation (54:1-3)

2. The assurance of faith (54:4-7)

During that final apostasy when the man of sin is revealed, the saints among the Jews will suffer persecution as the prophetic Word elsewhere reveals. Here is another prophetic record of their prayers, with a believing anticipation of deliverance.

PSALM 55 In the Throes of the Great Tribulation

1. Prayer for help (55:1-3)
2. Longings to escape (55:4-8)
3. The great tribulation (55:9-21)
4. The comfort of hope (53:22-23)

The man of sin, the Antichrist, stands out prominently in this Psalm. Because of him and his oppression, the godly remnant calls for help. They are overwhelmed with horror and beholding the abomination, they wish for wings like a dove and escape from the storm and the tempest of the great tribulation. This is in accordance with Matthew 24:15-16, which refers to the same time. They will actually flee to the mountain and will be away from Jerusalem as we learned in Psalm 42. The great tribulation has begun and of Jerusalem it will be true "wickedness is in the midst thereof, deceit and guile depart not from her streets." And this wicked one, the Antichrist, is one of the nation, not a stranger, the man with a flattering tongue, who even walked in the house of God. And now his character and the character of his followers is exposed as they turn against the godly. Hence the imprecatory prayer (verse 15). Here is the 70th week of Daniel's prophecy, the last seven years, divided into half. In the first half the Antichrist is the man who claims friendship, with words smooth as butter, but in the middle of the week he breaks the covenant and puts his hands against such as are at peace with him (verse 20).

Psalms 56-60

PSALM 56 The Faithfulness of God, the Comfort of His People

1. Trust and Comfort (56:1-9)
2. Praise for anticipated deliverance (56:10-13)

These five Psalms which are grouped together are Michtam Psalms. This one was written by David when the Philistines took him at Gath. The inscription Jonathelem-rechokim has been rendered by the Septuagint translators as "upon the people driven afar from the holy place," the literal rendering is, "The dove of silence in far off places." On account of the great tribulation, the abomination in Jerusalem, seen in the previous Psalm, the godly have left the city and here we have the expressions of their trust in the faithfulness of their God. Whatever the enemy may do they can say in all their wanderings and with all their tears, "Thou tellest my wanderings, put Thou my tears into Thy bottle, are they not in Thy book?" Blessed comfort is ours too.

PSALM 57 Perfect Trust in God

1. Sheltered until the trouble is past (57:1-5)
2. Deliverance and praise (57:6-11)

The inscription is Al-taschith, which means "destroy not"; it is the Michtam of David when he fled from Saul. It shows us once more the exercise of faith in the godly of Israel. In the shadow of His wings they take refuge till these calamities are overpast. They look for intervention from above, from where it will surely come at the close of the days of tribulation. "He shall send from heaven, and save me." Then they know they will be delivered in anticipation of which the voice of praise is heard. "Be Thou exalted, O God, above the heavens, let Thy glory cover all the earth."

PSALM 58 A Judgment Psalm

1. Why God must judge (58:1-5)
2. The judgment executed (58:6-11)

"Do ye of a truth in silence speak righteousness?" (literal rendering of the first verse). Righteousness is not heard on earth. Wickedness and violence are on the earth, therefore God must arise and deal with these conditions in judgment. It will overtake the wicked and the imprecatory prayers will be answered. Then the righteous will be glad when he seeth the vengeance and it will be said, "Verily there is a reward for the righteous; verily He is a God who judgeth the earth."

PSALM 59 Gentile Enmity Against Israel

1. Surrounded by nations (59:1-8)
2. Their judgment anticipated (59:9-17)

Another Michtam of David when he was persecuted by Saul. While in previous Psalms we saw prophetically the remnant of the last suffering from their own ungodly brethren and the Antichrist, here the nations are their enemies. The word "heathen" should always be translated "nations." They will surround Jerusalem. This is mentioned in verse 6. They are like the dogs, the term used for Gentiles in the Word. The godly pray for deliverance and in faith sing of His power--"I will sing aloud of Thy mercy in the morning"--that coming morning when the shadows flee away.

PSALM 60 The Lord with His People

1. Confessions and prayer (60:1-5)
2. The inheritance anticipated (60:6-8)
3. Faith's certainty (60:9-12)

This Psalm, "Shushan-Eduth" (the lily of testimony), also a Michtam of David, has for its beginning a confession of the godly in Israel. The Lord they acknowledge had scattered them and is angry with them. They pray for restoration. "That thy beloved may be delivered, save with Thy right hand and hear me." Then He hears and answers in His holiness and His people rejoice as once more they possess their earthly inheritance. The casting of the shoe upon Edom means the subjugation of Edom, taking possession and making Edom a servant.

Psalms 61-68

PSALM 61 The Identification of the King with His People

1. His cry and their cry (61:1-4)
2. His answer and exaltation (61:5-8)

The following eight Psalms are grouped together leading up again to the final deliverance of Israel and the glory of the Lord. The question in connection with this Psalm is, who is the king whose years shall be from generations to generations, that is forever, who shall abide in God's presence forever? The ancient Jewish Targum says it is King Messiah, which is the true answer. This is the key to this Psalm. The King, Christ, is seen as identified with the remnant. He walked on earth trusting, having as the dependent Man His shelter in God. And so does the godly remnant trust and fleeing to the rock which is higher than they, find their shelter there also. And when the King comes back they will have their full deliverance.

PSALM 62 Waiting and Trusting

1. He only (62:1-2)
2. Persecuted (62:3-4)
3. My expectation from him (62:5-12)

This Psalm is not difficult to interpret. It has always been food for the saints of God. Faith in God in the midst of adversity and persecution, waiting on Him, expecting salvation, deliverance and defense only from Him is beautifully expressed. Like all these Psalms this one also gives us a prophetic glimpse into the experience of the remnant of Israel. But it has its practical value for us likewise. The first verse literally rendered is, "Only unto God my soul is silence"; that is, hushed in His presence, in confident submission. To expect all from Him, nothing from man, to look away from self and magnify the Lord, is the secret of a life of rest and victory.

PSALM 63 Heart Longings

1. To see Thy power and glory (63:1-4)
2. Satisfied longings (63:5-11)

A Psalm of David when he was an outcast in the wilderness of Judah. Thus it fits in well with the outcast remnant, thirsting after God, longing to see His power and His glory displayed. And these longings are created in their hearts by the Holy Spirit, as in our hearts also. These longings will be satisfied in the coming day of His manifestation, when His people shall praise and worship Him.

PSALM 64 The Wicked and their End

1. The power of the wicked displaced (64:1-6)
2. Their sudden end (64:7-10)

This Psalm stands in contrast with the preceding ones. The outward circumstances, the deeds and power of the wicked, are seen again. But suddenly the Lord will act and strike down the wicked. He will avenge His own elect, who cry day and night unto Him. (See Luke 18:1-7. The widow in this parable is the godly Israelitish remnant.)

PSALM 65 The Times of Restitution and Refreshing

1. Spiritual blessings (65:1-5)
2. Earthly glories and blessing (65:6-13)

The four next Psalms unfold prophetically the times of restitution of all things as spoken by the mouth of His holy prophets since the world began. Here we get the visions of Israel's restoration, her spiritual blessings and her praise unto the Lord, and what will be the result for the nations and for all creation. We recommend a careful study in details by comparing Scripture with Scripture. In this Psalm Zion is mentioned first. It will be the joy of the whole earth and His praises will sound forth from the glorious place of His rest. Then He who answereth prayer unto Him, who is the desire of all nations, all flesh will come. The nations will be gathered into the kingdom. Israel's transgression will be purged away and they will be fitted to draw near and be satisfied with the blessings of His house, that future holy temple which will be filled with His glory (Ezekiel 43). The terrible things in righteousness with which the Lord has answered the pleadings of His suffering people, are His judgments, the vengeance of God. The results will be "peace on earth, Who stilleth the roaring of the seas, the roaring of their waves, and the tumult of nations." Verses 9-13 show that the curse which rests now upon creation will then be removed and even creation itself will shout for joy and sing.

PSALM 66 The Praise and Worship of the Millennium

1. What God hath wrought! (66:1-7)
2. Israel's praise and worship (66:8-20)

"Shout aloud unto God, all the earth! Sing the glory of His Name, ascribe to Him glory, in His praise." This will be done in the coming kingdom age. And Israel will be the leader of that praise, calling upon the nations to join into the glory song. "All the earth shall worship Thee, and shall sing unto Thee, they shall sing Thy Name, Israel will worship in the beauty of holiness, and this people, now a holy nation and kingdom of priests, become His witnesses." "Come and hear all ye that fear God, and I will declare what He has done for my soul."

PSALM 67 The Fullest Blessing

This brief Psalm does not permit any division. It is closely linked with the preceding one, telling us of the fullest blessings in store for Israel and the whole earth, when the new day has dawned and the King reigns. If this little Psalm in its prophetic message were understood it would end forever all postmillennial misconceptions as to the conversion of the world. Israel prays that the Lord may be gracious to them as He will in that coming day. As a result of Israel's conversion by the coming of the Lord, His way will be known upon the earth and His salvation among the nations. Then the peoples will praise, and the nations will be glad and rejoice. The Lord will be King of nations (verse 4) and the earth yield her increase. Here is God's way for the full blessing the earth and the race needs. Israel prays "God shall bless us" and as the result "all the ends of the earth shall fear Him." But Israel's blessing is inseparably connected with the return of our Lord. No blessing and restoration till He comes again.

PSALM 68 The Great Redemption Accomplished

1. The introduction (68:1-3)
2. The proclamation of His Name and of His acts (68:4-6)
3. A historic review (68:7-12)
4. Israel's place of blessing and the Redeemer (68:13-19)
5. His victory over the enemies (68:20-23)
6. The great procession (68:24-29)
7. The conversion of the nations and the kingdom (68:30-35)

This is one of the greatest Psalms. The Name of God is found in it in seven different forms: Jehovah, Adonai, El, Shaddai, Jah, Jehovah-Adonai and Jah-Elohim. The opening verses mention three great facts of the accomplished redemption. God arises--the enemies are scattered--the righteous rejoice. See Num. 10:35. Praise then begins. Verse 4 correctly rendered is "Sing unto God, sing forth His Name, Cast up a way for Him that rideth in the deserts" (not heavens). See also Isaiah 62:10. The word used for deserts (araboth) refers to the regions south of Jerusalem, Jordan and the Dead Sea. The One who comes as the glorious King is He who hath passed through the scenes of death and has the power to lead from death to life. He delivers His earthly people who waited for Him, while the rebellious dwell in a parched land. The manifestation of the God of Israel at Sinai (verse 7, etc.) is the type of His future manifestation. Verse 13, "Though ye have lain among the sheepfolds (Israel)--wings of a dove covered with silver and greenish gold." The dove, as the sacrificial bird, is a type of Christ, but it is also applied to godly Israel in the Song of Solomon, when they are addressed as "O my dove." It applies therefore to both. The wings are covered with silver and gold. Silver stands for redemption and the greenish gold, the finest, for glory. Christ has brought redemption and glory, and under His blessed wings, Israel enjoys and possesseth both. Then the mount of God where His glory will be seen where He dwells forever. Verse 18 is quoted in Ephesians 4:8. He, the Redeemer of Israel, had descended first into the lower parts of the earth, even into the depths of death and the grave. Then He ascended into glory. But notice, it saith here that this ascended One received gifts for men, but in Ephesians we read that He communicates that which He hath received as the risen and glorified One. The Holy Spirit adds to it in Ephesians. But He also omits something. He leaves out "even for the rebellious." This refers to rebellious Israel and has no place in the Epistle which concerns the church alone. Then His victory over enemies and the lawless leader, the Antichrist (verses 20-23). The wonderful procession, He the triumphant leader, the head of the new

creation (verses 24-29). And finally the world and the nations bowing before Him. There will be a temple in Jerusalem once more, as we saw before. The kings of the earth will go there to worship and to bring presents. And then peace on earth, true peace, lasting peace, universal peace, which the world tries to have now while we write this, without the Prince of Peace. "He scattereth the peoples that delight in war" (verse 30). Peace on earth in the Psalms always follows the visible and glorious manifestation of the King.

Psalms 69-72

PSALM 69 The Suffering and Rejected Christ

1. Hated without a cause (69:1-6)
2. Bearing reproach (69:7-12)
3. His own prayer (69:13-21)
4. The retribution (69:22-28)
5. His exaltation and the glory (69:29-36)

Psalms 69-72 go together and lead us prophetically from the suffering and rejected Christ to the glory of His kingdom in the Seventy-second Psalm. The Sixty-ninth Psalm, like the Forty-fifth, bears the inscription, "upon Shoshanim" (lilies). It concerns Christ and indirectly also the people who suffer for His sake. The Spirit of God in the New Testament quotes this Psalm repeatedly. See verse 4 and John 15:25; verse 9 and John 2:17 and Romans 15:3; verses 22-23 and Romans 11:9-10; verse 25 and Acts 1:20. Verse 21 was literally fulfilled as we find from the Gospels, Matthew 27:34, 48; Mark 15:23, 36; Luke 23:36 and John 19:28-30. No further evidence is needed that the Lord Jesus Christ in His suffering and rejection is here described. Yet the critical school attempts to deny the prophetic aspect. Referring to verse 21 and what the Gospels say about our Lord's words, "I thirst" that the Scriptures might be fulfilled, Prof. Davidson saith in the Century Bible "the fulfilment of Scripture referred to must not be understood as the accomplishment of a direct prophecy." And again in commenting on verses 22-23, quoted by the Spirit of God in Romans 11, the same professor declares, "These imprecations are among the darkest and fiercest in the Psalter. The gulf which separates these verses from 'Father forgive them,' marks the impassable limits of typology." But it does not in the least. The words apply to the nation as righteous retribution from the side of God after they rejected His Son. In His heart there is still the same love, for they are still beloved for the Father's sake. But these imprecations also belong rightly into the lips of the remnant against the antichristian oppressors of the last days. Well may we read the Psalm and think of all His suffering and sorrow in our behalf. The Psalm ends with His praise, the exaltation and victory of the Christ who died for the ungodly.

PSALM 70

This Psalm is "to bring to remembrance." It is the repetition of the last five verses of the Fortieth Psalm. The cross is again made known and the attitude of men towards that cross, those who reject Him and those that love His salvation.

PSALM 71 Israel's Song of Hope

1. Declaration of trust (71:1-11)
2. Anticipations of faith (71:12-18)
3. Revival and victory (71:19-24)

This Psalm, which bears no inscription whatever, gives another prophetic picture of the faith and the anticipations of faith as found in the godly of Israel, when the salvation is about to come out of Zion. They look to Him who is all sufficient to deliver and to save them. The Psalm may well be called Israel's song of hope. It abounds in many beautiful, refreshing statements, equally precious to us.

PSALM 72 The Kingdom Psalm

1. The King, who reigns in righteousness (72:1-4)
2. His kingdom from sea to sea (72:5-11)
3. The blessings and the kingdom (72:12-20)

The last Psalm of this Exodus section describes the establishment of the promised kingdom, the kingdom of heaven on earth. Surely the Spirit of God directed the arrangement of the Psalms, and put each into the right place. Here we have a beautiful prophecy of what is yet to be and for which all is waiting now, in a time when every form of government has failed and law and order seems to go to pieces. The King and the King's Son is the Lord Jesus Christ, He who came as the Only-Begotten from the bosom of the Father to this earth, to seek the lost sheep of the house of Israel, offering them first the promised kingdom. His own received Him not. In previous Psalms we heard the voice of His complaints, His sorrows and saw the sufferings of the cross. But here we behold Him enthroned as the King of Righteousness and the King of Peace. Righteousness and peace He alone can bring to man and He will surely bring both for the whole earth when the cloud brings Him back. Then He will be feared and worshipped as long as the sun and moon endure, for all times. Showers of blessing will fall and the righteous will flourish, while the wicked can trouble the righteous no more. Abundance of peace will be the lot of mankind then and His kingdom will include all the kingdoms of the earth. His enemies will lick the dust and kings will bring Him presents. And the blessings of His Kingdom! All the subjects in His kingdom will share them and all creation as well. The doxology of this section is the greatest of all. "And let the whole earth be filled with His glory. Amen and Amen."--The prayers of David the Son of Jesse are ended." Let us quote once more Prof. Davidson what he makes of this. "A note, probably added by the editor of the Elohist collection, to mark the end of a group of Davidic Psalms." What blindness! David had seen the glories of the kingdom of Him who is His Lord and His Son and then declared "his prayers are ended." He has nothing more to pray for.

III. THE LEVITICUS SECTION: BOOK THREE: PSALMS 73-89

The third division of the book of Psalms corresponds in character to the third book of the Pentateuch, the book of Leviticus. That is the book of the Sanctuary, of Holiness. And this section, which is the shortest, also has the same character. Each Psalm brings the sanctuary of Israel in view, with the same prophetic-dispensational character as in the first two books. The Companion Bible gives the following division of the 17 Psalms: Psalms 73-83, The Sanctuary in Relation to Man. Psalms 84-89, The Sanctuary in Relation to Jehovah.

Psalms of Asaph Concerning the Sanctuary (73-77)

PSALM 73 The Problem of the Suffering of the Righteous

1. The perplexity (73:1-9)
2. Departure from God (73:10-14)
3. The sanctuary and the solution (73:15-28)

Eleven Psalms by Asaph open this Leviticus section. The clean heart is mentioned at once, and the assurance that truly God is good unto Israel and to those of clean heart. But here is the old question, the wicked prosper in spite of all their pride, their violence and corruption, while the righteous suffer. The prosperity of the wicked had an evil effect too upon the people, who departed from God. And Asaph's steps had well nigh slipped, as some said, "Verily I cleaned my heart in vain and washed my hands in innocency." Then he turns to the sanctuary and finds the solution. In the light of God and His holiness he sees their end. Desolation is coming upon them in a moment, they are utterly consumed with terrors. Then having had the vision of the sanctuary he grieves over his foolishness, like a beast which does not know God. But could there be more beautiful words than those in verses 23-26! Read and enjoy them. But the experience of Asaph will be the experience of the godly remnant.

PSALM 74 The Enemy in the Sanctuary

1. The Prayer on account of the enemy (74:1-3)
2. The work of the enemy (74:4-9)
3. Intercession for intervention (74:10-23)

This is a Psalm for instruction, a Maschil Psalm. The enemy is seen in the sanctuary. This has been applied to the defilement of the temple by Antiochus Epiphanes, but prophetically it rather refers to that end-time, when the enemy will defile the temple with the abomination of desolation (Matthew 24:15). Then the remnant loving the sanctuary tells the Lord about it as we read in this Psalm, and in a mighty intercession pleads for intervention. "O deliver not the soul of thy turtledove (Israel) unto the multitude of the wicked--Have respect unto the covenant, for the dark places of the earth are full of the habitations of cruelty." How true that will be during the great time of trouble. And then the cry to God to arise.

PSALM 75 The Divine Answer

1. Christ the righteous judge (75:1-5)
2. His judgment (75:6-10)

It is Christ as King who is pictured in this Psalm coming to answer the pleas of His people in behalf of His sanctuary. The translation in our version of the opening verses is faulty. "We give thanks to Thee, O God, we give thanks--Thy Name is near! When I have taken the set time, I, even I, will judge uprightly. Though the earth and all the inhabitants thereof are melting, I myself set up its pillars." Then He executes His judgments. He deals with the wicked, the horn lifted up, the man of sin. He putteth down and lifteth up. The wicked will be cut off and the righteous exalted.

PSALM 76 Divine Government Established and Maintained

1. The Prince of Peace reigns (76:1-6)
2. The day of wrath and what it brought (76:7-12)

We behold the Lord now in Judah, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, His Name great in Israel! In Salem He has His tabernacle and in Zion His dwelling place. There, as the Prince of Peace, He broke the arrows, the shield, and sword and battle. The stouthearted were spoiled. Judgments were heard from heaven; the earth feared and was still, then the meek of the earth were saved. The Lord is terrible to the kings of the earth, the final confederacy of nations. How wonderful the order of these Psalms!

PSALM 77 The Distressed Saint and His Comfort

1. The distress (77:1-10)
2. The comfort (77:11-20)

This Psalm shows the distress of the saint in deepest exercise of soul. He earnestly seeks the Lord and never leaves off. "my hand was stretched out in the night, and failed not" (literal translation of verse 2). He moaned and complained and his spirit was overwhelmed. Then in still greater distress he asks, "Will the Lord cast off forever?--Is His mercy come to an end forever?"--"Hath God forgotten to be gracious?" The comfort comes to him as he thinks of God's past dealings, as he remembers His work of old. He realizeth "Thy way, O God, is in the sanctuary, who is so great a God as our God?" He remembers how God redeemed His people Israel in the past, and this being His way as a holy God, the God of the Sanctuary, He will redeem again and manifest His power. One can easily see how this Psalm also is Israelitish and finds its application in the last days.

Psalms 78-83

PSALM 78 A Historical Retrospect

1. The call to hear (78:1-8)
2. Ephraim's failure (78:9-11)
3. His dealings in power and mercy (78:12-55)
4. The continued provocation (78:56-64)
5. His sovereign grace in choosing David (78:65-72)

This historical retrospect needs no further comment. It is God speaking to the hearts of His people through their own history from Egypt to David. How graciously He dealt with them all the way! The crowning fact is His sovereign grace in choosing Judah, Mount Zion which he loved, building there His sanctuary, and choosing David His servant to feed Jacob His people and Israel His inheritance. Here we may well think of the Son of David, God's Anointed in whom God's sovereign grace is made known and who will yet feed Jacob and Israel His inheritance.

PSALM 79 Lamentation and Prayer on Account of the Enemy

1. The Enemy in Jerusalem (79:1-4)
2. How Long, Lord? (79:5-13)

Zion, the place He loves, mentioned in the preceding Psalm, is here prophetically seen in desolation. The nations have come into the inheritance, Jerusalem is become a heap of ruins, the temple is defiled. The dead bodies of His servants and His saints lie unburied, and the people are a reproach, a scorn and a derision. A similar prophecy we found in the Seventy-fourth Psalm, which should be compared with this Psalm. While Jerusalem and the temple has seen more than once such desolations, we must view these predicted calamities as being the final disaster which is yet to overtake the city. Read Daniel 9:27; Matthew 24:15; Rev. 11, and Rev. 13:11-18. And in that day of calamity where shall the faithful turn? They cry to Him whose faithfulness is proven by the dealings of the past and assured by the Davidic covenant. How long, Lord? Pour out Thy wrath upon the nations and the kingdoms, the ten kingdoms and the little horn of Daniel 7. They pray, "Remember not our former iniquities--Help us, God of our Salvation." Then when the answer comes they will give Him never ceasing praise.

PSALM 80 Looking to Heaven for Help Through the Man at His Right Hand

1. Calling to the Shepherd (80:1-4)
2. The ruin of His inheritance (80:5-16)
3. The Man of the right hand (80:17-19)

This Psalm continues the same theme. They call now definitely to the Shepherd, He who is enthroned in glory between the Cherubim. They ask Him to "shine forth," to manifest Himself in glory and power for their salvation, to answer their cries for help. Three times they plead, "Turn us again, O God, and cause Thy face to shine, and we shall be saved." Ancient Jewish comments on this verse say that the face which shines upon Israel is the Messiah. Even so when His face shines, when He is manifested in glory His earthly people will be saved. And they know Him. They speak of Him as "the Man of Thy right hand," as "the Son of Man whom Thou madest strong for Thyself." It is our Lord who sits at the right hand of God, waiting till His enemies are made the footstool of His feet (Psalm 110). Criticism refuses to accept this. They say, "Of course Israel is meant" (Century Bible on the Psalms, p. 88).

PSALM 81 Hope Revived: His Gracious Return to Israel

1. The blowing of the trumpet (81:1-5)
2. His loving call to His people (81:6-12)
3. Gracious results promised (81:13-16)

Hope has revived and singing is commanded. What interests us most is the call to blow the trumpet in the new moon. The blowing of the trumpet, in the feast of trumpets (Leviticus 23), marks the beginning of Israel's New Year. Dispensationally it stands for the regathering of Israel and is followed by the day of atonement, that future day, when they shall look upon Him whom they pierced (Zech. 12:10) and after that the final feast, the harvest feast of tabernacles, a type of the millennium. Thus with the blowing of trumpets begins the revival of Israel's hope in answer to the prayers of the preceding Psalm. And He Himself addresses His people and promises as a result of hearkening to His voice deliverance from their enemies and other blessings.

PSALM 82 Concerning Judgment

1. The judge with His righteous judgment (82:1-5)
2. Arise O God! judge the earth (82:6-8)

His own presence in the congregation of God (Israel) means a righteous judgment. Israel is then owned as His congregation (Num. 27:17). The judges among them were called gods; the Hebrew word for judges in Exodus 21:6 is "elohim"--gods, mighty ones. Our Lord refers to this verse 6 in John 10:34. But they were unrighteous in their judgments and so He comes Himself to execute judgment and to do justice to the afflicted and needy. And more than that, He will judge the earth and the nations.

PSALM 83 The Final Enemies Overthrown

1. The enemies in confederacy (83:1-8)
2. Their complete defeat and fate (83:9-18)

Elsewhere in prophecy we read of the confederacies of nations, Israel's enemies, coming against the land of Israel in a final great onslaught. There will be an invasion from the north mentioned in Isaiah 29; Joel 2; Daniel 8:9-12, and in Zech. 12:2. Then there will also be Gog and Magog invading the land (Ezek. 38, etc.). It seems the former is in view here. The godly remnant prays and speaks of these invading hosts as "His enemies" calling upon the Lord to deal with them. Their satanic object is to cut them off from being a nation. They remind the Lord of what He did with Israel's former enemies and treat them likewise, so that Jehovah may become the Most High (God's millennial Name) over all the earth.

Psalms 84-89

PSALM 84 In View of the Sanctuary

1. Heart longings (84:1-7)
2. In the sanctuary (84:8-12)

The two next Psalms are of the sons of Korah, who themselves are monuments of saving grace. (They were saved from the fate of Korah; see Num. 26:10-11.) In these precious outpourings of the heart for the sanctuary of the Lord, we read prophetically the heart longings of the remnant of Israel. They are not yet in possession of the fullest blessings but look forward now to an early realization of all their hopes of being at His altars again. And all they long for will be their happy and lasting portion. They will go from strength to strength; He will be their Sun and Shield; He will give grace and glory. Verse 9 shows us our Lord. "Behold, O God our Shield, look upon the face of Thine Anointed (Christ)." It is through Him that all this will be accomplished.

PSALM 85 All Promised Blessings Realized

1. What grace has done (85:1-3)
2. Prayer for the fulfilment (85:4-9)
3. Righteousness and peace (85:10-13)

What will come to Israel when Christ returns to be their King is blessedly made known in the opening verses of this other Korah Psalm. Favour will rest upon the land; the captivity of Jacob is brought back, their iniquity is forgiven and their sin covered; His wrath is turned away. Hence they pray that all this may speedily be accomplished as it surely will in the days when heaven will send Him back. Then He will speak peace to His people and His saints and glory will dwell in the land, even their land (verses 8-9). Then righteousness and peace will kiss each other and truth shall spring out of the earth.

PSALM 86 A Prayer

1. The prayer of the poor and needy one (86:1-9)
2. The praise of His Name (86:10-17)

This Psalm has for an inscription "A prayer of David." We can hear in it the voice of the Son of David, our Lord, pleading in the place of humiliation, and also the pleadings of the remnant saints. The prophetic element enters in with verse 9. "All nations whom Thou hast made shall come and worship before thee O Lord." This will be the glorious result of His humiliation. Into the many and precious details of this Psalm we cannot enter. The name of the Lord (Adonai) is found seven times in this Psalm.

PSALM 87 Zion and Its Coming Glories

Another Korah Psalm. Zion is the object of Jehovah's love where He will manifest His glory. Glorious things are spoken of the city of God. This we learn from many visions of the prophets. When these prophecies are fulfilled and the glory has come, then Rahab (pride--Egypt) and Babylon shall know, as well as Philistia, Tyre and Cush. Nations will be born again and turn to the Lord and share the blessings of the kingdom. Then the singers will sing "All my springs are in Thee," in Him who dwelleth in Zion. The Christian believer gives now this testimony and knows its blessed truth, that Christ is all and in Him we have all our resources. But what will it be when nations with Zion shall know this!

PSALM 88 The Deepest Soul Misery Poured Out

1. In deepest misery and distress (88:1-7)
2. Crying and no answer (88:8-18)

This is a Maschil Psalm by Heman the Ezrahite. See 1 Kings 4:31; 1 Chronicles 6:33, 44; 25:4. It is a Psalm of deepest distress, picturing the darkest experience with no ray of light or word of comfort. That it describes the real experience of a saint no one would doubt. But in it we can hear again the voice of sorrow of Him who was the Man of Sorrows and acquainted with grief. It is His testimony concerning that He passed through as the Great Sufferer. "Thou hast laid me into the lowest pit, in darkness, in the deeps. Thy wrath lieth hard upon me, and Thou hast afflicted me with all Thy waves."--"Thy fierce wrath goeth over me, Thy terrors cut me off." Such was His experience when on the cross. The Christ in humiliation and suffering is mentioned so frequently to remind His people of the cost-price of deliverance and glory, and that His must be the glory and the praise.

PSALM 89 God's Faithfulness: His Oath-bound Covenant with David

1. Jehovah's faithfulness (89:1-18)
2. His covenant with David (89:19-37)
3. The ruin and desolation (89:38-45)

4. How long, Lord? Remember! (89:46-52)

A Maschil of Ethan, a Merarite (1 Chron. 6:44; 15:17). The greater part of this Psalm extols Jehovah's lovingkindness and faithfulness and makes prominent the covenant with David. We must of course look beyond David and behold Him, the Son of David in whom this covenant will be ratified. Viewed prophetically this Psalm becomes intensely interesting. Verses 4-37 tell us of all the blessings which will be on earth when our Lord, the Son of David, is King. He is the Firstborn, higher than the kings of the earth (verse 27). All His enemies will be beaten down, they are scattered (verses 10, 22). Justice and judgment will be the foundations of His throne, mercy and truth will go before His face (verse 14). His people will be blessed and walk in the light of His countenance; He will be the glory of their strength, their defense and their King (15-18). His seed (including the heavenly people, the Church, and the earthly people) shall endure forever, and His throne as the days of heaven (29, 36). The past ruin of the house of David and the people Israel, the result of unbelief and disobedience, covered with shame instead of glory, is described in verses 38-45 and the prayer follows that the Lord may remember what He has sworn to David.

IV. THE NUMBERS SECTION: BOOK FOUR: PSALMS 90-106

The Ninetieth Psalm begins the fourth book of Psalms, corresponding in different ways with the book of Numbers. It opens with the only Psalm written by Moses in the wilderness when the people were dying on account of unbelief, and is followed by a Psalm which shows the second Man, the Lord as the head of a new creation. In this book are found numerous millennial Psalms, showing us prophetically when under Christ, in the day when all things are put under His feet, the wilderness experiences of His people end, glory comes to Israel, the nations and all the earth.

Psalms 90-93

PSALM 90 Man's Condition of Sin and Death

1. The Eternal One (90:1-2)
2. Frailty and Death because of Sin (90:3-10)
3. The Prayer: Return Jehovah! How long? (90:11-17)

This Psalm of Moses shows what man is as a sinner, picturing his nothingness, the misery and frailty of his life, and death. The race dies, but does not become extinct, for He says, "Return ye children of men. They are carried away as with a flood, they are as a sleep-like grass which groweth up. In the morning it flourisheth, and groweth up; in the evening it is cut down and withereth." And time to the Eternal One is as nothing, for a thousand years are to Him as nothing. (See 2 Peter 3:8.) It is true, every statement as to frailty, uncertainty and death, of the entire race. But even in this Psalm of the first man with sin and death, we must see the prophetic aspect. If Verses 7-8 are true of those who died in the wilderness, they are also true of God's earthly people in the time of their trouble. "For we are consumed by Thine anger and by Thy wrath are we troubled. Thou hast set our iniquities before Thee, our secret sins in the light of Thy countenance." Hence their plea to return. The prayer with which this Psalm of death closes becomes illuminated when we look at it dispensationally. "Return, O LORD, how long? And let it repent Thee concerning Thy servants. O satisfy us early with Thy mercy; that we may rejoice and be glad all our days.--Let Thy work appear unto Thy servants and Thy glory unto their children." It is the expression of hope uttered by His earthly saints.

PSALM 91 Christ, the Second Man

1. In dependence (91:1-2)
2. In security (91:3-8)
3. His triumph and exaltation (91:9-16)

This Psalm has no inscription. Its author is unknown, but we know it is the testimony of the Spirit of God concerning

the second Man, our Lord. Satan knew this also for he quoted this Psalm to our Lord in Matthew 4, omitting the words "in all thy ways" (verses 11-12 and Matthew 4:6). It is the Psalm God's people love to read on account of its precious assurances given to those who put their trust in Him. In a larger and prophetic sense we have here the blessings of God's power in the kingdom age when under the rule of the King His people will be kept from all evil. But let us not forget that we have in it a prophetic picture of our Lord as He walked as the dependent Man on the earth. He dwelled in the secret place of the Most High and trusted in Him, walking in perfect obedience. Death had no claim on His life, for He knew no sin. No evil could come near Him. Angels ministered unto Him. The lion and the adder--Satan in his two-fold character, as the powerful enemy and as the sneaking, hidden serpent--He tramples under His feet. And some day the enemy will also be completely bruised under the feet of His people. Then His exaltation, "I will set Him on high."

PSALM 92 A Psalm of Praise

1. Praise for His works (92:1-5)
2. The enemies who perish (92:6-9)
3. The happy lot of the righteous (92:10-15)

The inscription tells us it is a Psalm for the Sabbath day. The rest for His people comes when the Lord arises, delivers them, and the enemies perish. This Psalm looks forward to that rest, the coming great Lord's day. The praise is on account of the work Jehovah has done, His redemption work in behalf of His people. "Thou hast made me glad through Thy work--I will triumph in the work of Thy hands." Then the wicked shall perish, and all the workers of iniquity shall be scattered, while the saints of God shall flourish like the palm tree.

PSALM 93 Jehovah Reigneth

This is a kingdom Psalm by an unknown author. The Lord reigneth in majesty. And under His reign the world is established; He is above all the floods of many waters, none can withstand Him. Revelation 11:15-18 may be read in connection with this brief kingdom Psalm. The angry nations mentioned in this passage correspond with the floods of waters mentioned in the Psalm.

Psalms 94-100

PSALM 94 Prayer for the Execution of the Vengeance of God

1. The Prayer on account of the enemy (94:1-7)
2. Expostulation with the wicked (94:8-13)
3. The comfort of the righteous (94:14-23)

The seven Psalms which follow lead on to the full establishment of the kingdom on earth and most of these Psalms celebrate His judgment reign, and the blessings of the age to come. We start once more with a Psalm which pictures vividly the trials of the days which precede the coming of the Lord and the coming of His kingdom. The Spirit of God has arranged these Psalms, as we have by this time learned, in such a manner as to lead from suffering to glory, the path which He went and which His people are appointed to follow also. Hence we see in this Psalm the wicked persecuting and breaking in pieces the people of God, and the righteous remnant is calling to the God to whom vengeance belongeth to show Himself, that is, to manifest His glory in their behalf. The voice of faith we hear also, the assurance that the Lord will not forsake His people nor His inheritance, that the Lord will intervene in behalf of His own and cut off the wicked.

PSALM 95 In Anticipation of His Coming

1. Singing unto Him? (95:1-5)
2. Let us worship and bow down (95:6-11)

It is a call to Israel in anticipation of the soon appearing of the expected Saviour-King. The next Psalm will show that He has come. How are they, His people, to welcome Him? With singing, with confession (this is the literal translation of thanksgiving in verse 2), with worship and prostration. And there is the warning now not to harden their hearts, not be like their fathers who could not enter into His rest. His people must welcome Him as a willing, as an obedient people and such will be the humble remnant, having passed through the gracious discipline of the tribulation days. The end verses are quoted in Hebrews 3 and 4.

PSALM 96 The Lord Has Come

1. The new song (96:1-3)
2. The Lord supreme (96:4-6)
3. Glory unto His Name (96:7-10)
4. Creation celebrating (96:11-13)

And now He has come and is manifested in the earth. The singing times begin and will last for a thousand years, when they will merge into the never ceasing songs of eternity. It is a call now to make the glad and glorious news known in all the earth and to make His glory known among the nations. That will be the work of converted Israel. Not much comment is needed; it is all so plain if we just see it refers to His visible return. And while Israel rejoices, the nations hear that He reigneth, all creation will rejoice as well, for He takes the curse away and delivers creation from its groans.

PSALM 97 His Glorious Reign

1. Jehovah reigneth (97:1-5)
2. In righteousness and with glory (97:6-12)

He reigneth! Earth and the multitude of isles will now rejoice, for He whose right it is occupies the throne and all unrighteousness, wickedness and idolatry will be banished. Zion and the daughters of Judah rejoice and all the righteous rejoice. It is the time of singing and of joy. And the heavens will reveal His righteousness, while angels worship Him (verse 7 and Hebrews 1:6). What glory scenes will then take place upon this earth!

PSALM 98 The New Song

1. The call to sing (98:1-3)
2. The response (98:4-6)
3. The praise of all (98:7-9)

The Lord by His coming has done wonderful things. He has brought salvation and victory; He has made known His salvation, His righteousness in judgment was seen by the nations. He has also remembered the house of Israel in His mercy and all the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of God. And therefore the call to sing the new song. And the world and creation will Join in.

PSALM 99 The Reign of Righteousness

1. His throne (99:1-3)
2. Judgment and righteousness executed (99:4-6)
3. His gracious dealings (99:7-9)

It is a Psalm of the righteous government. The Lord who reigns is holy, demands obedience. He is holy and must be

worshipped. Moses and Aaron were His priests in the past and Samuel among them that called upon His Name. He dealt graciously with His people in the past and forgave them, and the same Lord now reigneth and will deal in righteousness and mercy with His people.

PSALM 100 Nothing but Praise

It is Israel's voice in praise which we hear in this brief Psalm, which so fittingly concludes this series of great millennial Psalms. They exhort that all the earth should make a joyful noise unto the Lord, to serve Him and come before Him with singing. The third verse tells us that they are the speakers. All are to enter His gates with thanksgiving and come into His courts with praise. How often is this Psalm used in a spiritualized way, making the gates and the courts some church building. But we worship in spirit and in truth and not in an earthly house. The gates and courts have reference to that future temple, which will be a house of prayer for all nations.

Psalms 101-106

PSALM 101 The Righteous King Speaketh

1. The character of the King (101:1-3)
2. His righteous demands of His subjects (101:4-8)

A Psalm of David. He speaks as king concerning himself and those in his kingdom. But it is evident that once more he speaks as a prophet concerning the true King, the Son, whom God had promised through him, our Lord Jesus Christ. He is a King of perfect righteousness, which David was not. This true King is in complete fellowship with Jehovah, for He is one with Him. He will not tolerate evil in His kingdom of righteousness. The proud and wicked are not suffered by Him. He will destroy early (morning by morning) the wicked out of the land and all evil doers will be cut off from the city of the Lord. Those who walk in a perfect way shall serve Him.

PSALM 102 Christ the King in His Humiliation

1. In the place of humiliation and dependence (102:1-7)
2. His enemies (102:8-11)
3. The set time for Zion (102:12-16)
4. The blessings which follow (102:17-22)
5. The God-man in His work (102:23-28)

That this Psalm is a prophecy concerning the sufferings of Christ, His humiliation and death, and the gracious results which flow from it, is confirmed by the quotation in the first chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews. In that chapter His work and His glory are unfolded. Here we have both. First we have a prophetic picture of the lonely One, like a pelican, an owl in the desert and as a sparrow alone upon the house top. What a deep humiliation for Him who created all things (verses 23-28) to take the lowest place, even like a sparrow. Then we read how His enemies reproach Him. He eats His bread like ashes and mingles His drink with weeping. He suffers more than that, in making atonement--God's indignation and wrath is upon Him.

Next we read something of the joy which was set before Him on account of which He endured the cross, despising the shame. Here is part of the travail of His soul. God will through Him, have mercy upon Zion when the set time to favour her has come. All nations will then fear His Name, and all the kings behold His glory. And Zion shall assuredly be built when the Lord appears in glory, His second coming. Then the glorious results when "the people are gathered together (in the kingdom) and the kingdoms serve the Lord." The closing verses tell us of His glory as the God-Man. The Man who suffered thus is the Lord of all, Jehovah the Creator. The Spirit of God alone could teach the true application of these words and He has done so in Hebrews 1:10-12.

PSALM 103 The Praise of Israel

1. The benefits of full salvation (103:1-7)
2. Merciful and gracious (103:8-18)
3. His throne and His kingdom (103:19-22)

This is the well-beloved Psalm, because God's people love it for its precious and beautiful expressions, telling out the full salvation of our Saviour Lord and the gracious compassion which He manifests towards His own. But we must not overlook the prophetic aspect, which but few believers have recognized. It is really the hymn of Praise which will be sung by redeemed and restored Israel. Theirs will be a whole-souled praise. Their iniquities are forgiven, their diseases are healed, their life is redeemed from the pit, they are crowned with lovingkindness and tender mercies. Their youth is renewed like the eagle's (Isaiah 40:28-31), which will be fulfilled then. And then the riches of mercy towards His beloved people! His Throne and His kingdom are seen in the closing verses and everything blesses Him.

PSALM 104 Creation's Praise

1. The Creator (104:1-4)
2. The foundations of the earth (104:5-9)
3. His works manifesting His kindness (104:10-23)
4. How manifold are Thy works (104:24-30)
5. Rejoicing in His works: Hallelujah! (104:31-35)

He is now praised as the Creator by creation. He is seen in His creator-glory. When the kingdom is established that glory will then be manifested. Verse 4 is quoted in Hebrews 1 showing that the glory of the risen Christ is here likewise revealed. The angels of God will ascend and descend upon the Son of Man. Then creation will be in its rightful place and man will see His glory there. The earth will be filled with His Riches (verse 24). Then too sinners will be consumed out of the earth and the wicked be no more for He is King. The Psalm ends with hallelujah. His people and all creation will praise Him.

PSALMS 105 and 106 The Memories of the Past

The last two Psalms of this fourth section review the entire history of Israel up to the time of the judges. It is the story of God's faithfulness and mercy, and the story of their shameful failure and apostasy. He is ever mindful of His covenant, and that covenant is mentioned first, as the foundation of all. Then how He watched over them. The story of Joseph is mentioned, followed by the rehearsal of the deliverance out of Egypt. Psalm 106 is couched in words of confession, showing their failure all the way, sinning, forgetting, lusting, unbelieving and disobedient. Only infinite mercy and grace could save such a people. Prophetically these Psalms express the repentance and national confession of Israel, when the Lord has saved them. Then with a new heart, the nation born again, with a new spirit within them, they read their history aright and learn to know the God of Jacob as never before. It is the fulfillment of Ezekiel 36:31. "Then shall ye remember your own evil ways, and your doings that were not good, and shall loathe yourself in your own sight for your iniquities and for your abominations."

THE DEUTERONOMY SECTION: BOOK FIVE: PSALMS 107-150

The final section of the book of Psalms, the fifth, is just like Deuteronomy. It shows God's ways with Israel, the end of these ways in deliverance not only for His people, but for their land, for the nations of the earth, for all creation. The book ends with the Hallelujah Chorus of redemption.

Psalms 107-108

PSALM 107 Israel's Deliverances

1. The wanderers regathered (107:1-9)
2. The prisoners released (107:10-16)
3. The fools healed (107:17-22)
4. Brought to the haven of rest (107:23-32)
5. The praise of His ways (107:33-43)

In the book of Deuteronomy, in Moses' great prophecies, we read of the scattering of the nation, the lot which should befall them as a disobedient people, becoming wanderers among the nations. But we read also of the promised regathering and the promises of restoration (Deut. 30). How harmonious it is to find the first Psalm of the Deuteronomy section celebrating this promised regathering and restoration! Again we see the divine power which guided the hand of the instrument who arranged these Psalms. And they thank and praise Him for this accomplished salvation. As wanderers amongst the nations they suffered and yet perished not as the peculiar nation; but now they are brought back to the city of habitation, to their own land. They had rebelled against the words of God and sat as prisoners in darkness and shadow of death; but now they are released and He brought them out of the darkness, out of judicial blindness, out of national and spiritual death, into life and light. They were fools on account of their transgressions; but now His Word has healed them. They were the storm tossed nation upon the restless waves of the sea, the emblems of the nations of the world; but now the storm is passed, the sea of nations is calm and He has brought them into the desired haven. For all this they praise Him. They are now "Israel His glory" through whom and in whom He has glorified Himself.

PSALM 108 Israel's Praise for Salvation

1. Israel's praise (108:1-4)
2. The inheritance (108:5-9)
3. Through God alone (108:10-13)

This Psalm is not a patchwork of two other Psalms as the critics declare (Ps. 72:8-12 and 60:7-14), but it comes in as a Psalm of David to give another hint on Israel's praise in the day of deliverance. Their heart is fixed to sing His praise. It is a praise not only amongst themselves, but a praise among the nations. Where they were once a byword they are now a blessing. And their deliverance and possession they will enjoy is not of themselves; it is through God and His power. The second part of the Psalm looks back to the time when deliverance had not yet come.

Psalms 109-113

PSALM 109 Christ in Humiliation

1. Despised and rejected (109:1-5)
2. The rejectors and their fate (109:6-20)
3. The Christ in His sorrow (109:21-25)

The five Psalms which are next grouped together belong to the most interesting in the whole collection. They give a marvellous prophecy concerning Christ, His rejection, exaltation and coming glory. In Psalm 109 we see Him rejected. In Psalm 110 He is at the Right hand of God, waiting till His enemies are made His footstool, returns as the victorious King and becomes the Priest after the order of Melchisedec. The three Psalms which follow, all Hallelujah Psalms, show forth His glory and His kingdom.

Psalm 109 gives us once more the story of His rejection. We hear the complaints from Himself, indited by His Spirit. He is the hated One. They fight against Him without a cause. They reward Him with evil for good, and His love, the love

which sought them, they answer with hatred. Verses 6-15 have reference to Judas who betrayed Him and applies to all those who reject Him. Verse 8 is quoted by Peter in Acts 1:20. Of the betrayer it is said, "He loved cursing, so let it come unto him; as he delighted not in blessing, so let it be far from him." But this is true of all who reject Christ. All the cursing and punishment which come upon the rejectors of Christ are self-chosen. In the closing verses we hear the weeping, sorrowful voice of the Rejected One.

PSALM 110 The Psalm of the King-Priest

1. His person, exaltation and waiting (110:1)
2. His manifestation and His glory (110:2-4)
3. His judgment and His glory (110:5-7)

Seven verses only, but what revelations and depths we find here! The Psalm is frequently quoted in the New Testament. Who is the person of whom the first verse testifies? Here is the critics' answer. "Is the Psalm Messianic? Looking at it by itself, and without prepossession, one would not say that it is, for the writer has in mind some actual ruler of his own day, and his references are to events of his own times" (Prof. Davidson). But what about the words of our Lord in Matthew 22:41-46? In the light of these words every critic who denies the Messianic meaning of this Psalm is branded as a liar. And such they are. Our Lord shows that David wrote the Psalm, that he wrote by the Spirit, that the Psalm speaks of Him, as David's Lord and David's Son. To deny these facts is infidelity. And the Holy Spirit useth the Psalm to show the exaltation of Christ. See Acts 2:34-35; Hebrews 1:13 and Hebrews 10:12-13.

How well it fits in with the preceding Psalm. The Rejected One is the Risen One. His work on earth as the sin-bearer is finished. God raised Him from the dead and exalted Him to His own right hand. There He waits for the hour when God will make His enemies His footstool. This is not accomplished by the preaching of the gospel, nor by the work of the Church, but by God when He sends Him back to earth again and He will bind Satan and all His enemies will be overthrown. The rod of His power will proceed out of Zion and He will rule in the midst of His enemies. Then in that coming day of power, His people (Israel) will be a willing people, who will shine in the beauty of holiness in the dawning of the morning. He will be the true Melchisedec, a Priest upon His own throne. Then His judgment work and His Victory, judging nations and the wicked head of nations. "He shall drink of the brook in the way, therefore shall He lift up the head." He was the humbled One, who drank of death, and now is the exalted One. (For a complete exposition see the author's pamphlet "The Royal Psalms.")

PSALM 111 Hallelujah! He Has Done It

This is the first Hallelujah Psalm, following Psalm 110, in which He is praised for what He is and for what He has done. It is a perfect alphabetical Psalm: not a letter of the Hebrew alphabet is missing. It shows the perfect One and the perfect praise He will receive when He is on the throne as the King-Priest. The next Psalm is also perfect in its alphabetical character. Both Psalms have 22 lines, each prefixed by a letter of the Hebrew alphabet in their right order. All then will be order and all human speech can say will be said in praise of Him who has done it. Read the Psalm and see how His work in redemption is praised. He has now sent redemption to His people. Verse 9 is quoted in Zacharias' song, Luke 1:68, showing that in faith he too looked forward to the time of the kingdom.

PSALM 112 Hallelujah! The Righteous are Blessed

The second Hallelujah Psalm tells of blessedness of the righteous in the day the Lord is enthroned. It is preeminently Israel. His seed will be mighty upon the earth--wealth and riches will be in their house. And the righteous character, their righteous acts are given. "He hath dispersed, He hath given to the poor." While this is done by the Jews even today in their unbelief, what will it be in the day they know Him and worship the King? See Paul's answer in Romans 11:12-15. The desire of the wicked is then perished. Righteousness reigns.

PSALM 113 Hallelujah! Praise His Name!

This third Hallelujah Psalm begins with a Hallelujah and ends with Hallelujah. It is given in the authorized version as "Praise ye the Lord" (as in all these Psalms). It would be more sublime to maintain this grand old Hebrew word "Hallelujah." His Name is praised. "Praise the name of the Lord--Blessed be the Name of the Lord." Yea from the rising of the sun unto the going down, from one end of the earth unto the other, the Lord's Name is praised. He is above all nations. What Hannah so beautifully uttered in her song of Praise has come. "He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth the needy out of the dunghill; that He may set him with princes, even with the Princes of His people." That is Israel redeemed by Him. And so is "the barren woman, a joyful mother of children."

Psalms 114-117

PSALM 114 Retrospect

As in the book of Deuteronomy God's ways with His people are reviewed so we find in some of these Psalms the reminders of God's dealing with Israel in the past. Here it is first of all the deliverance out of Egypt and what happened then, the type of the greater deliverance effected by the power of God. (See Jeremiah 16:14-15.)

PSALM 115 Who Their God is?

1. Israel's God (115:1-3)
2. In Contrast with Idols (115:4-8)
3. O Israel Trust in the Lord (115:9-18)

Here Israel acknowledges her Saviour-Lord, unto Him alone is glory due. The nations had asked, Where is now their God? (Ps. 43:3, 10; 79:10) The Contrast between the God of Israel and the dumb idols of the nations follows. But Israel's God, the Lord, who has delivered them, is the living God and therefore the exhortation to trust Him who blesseth His people. Israel's resolve closes this Psalm: "But we will praise the LORD, from this time forth forevermore. Hallelujah."

PSALM 116 The Praise of Israel for Deliverance from Death

1. The Deliverance-Experience (116:1-9)
2. Thanksgiving (116:10-19)

Redeemed Israel expresseth in this Psalm her love to Jehovah for His gracious deliverances, for answered prayer and for His salvation. They were, during the great tribulation, as a faithful remnant; surrounded by the sorrows of death, the pains of Sheol were upon them. Death stared them in the face. Then they cried to the Lord, and, as of old, He heard them and sent deliverance. He dealt bountifully with them, delivered them from death, the eyes from tears, the feet from falling. And now they serve Him, taking the cup of salvation and performing their vows unto the Lord. The death of those who died in the tribulation period as martyrs is mentioned in verse 15. "Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of His saints." Compare with Rev. 14:13, which also refers to the Jewish martyrs during the tribulation. The Psalm ends with another hallelujah.

PSALM 117

This is the shortest Psalm. All the earth, all the nations, are now called upon to praise, because His merciful kindness has been great towards His people Israel. And their blessing means the blessing of the world. See the significant and interesting verse in Deut. 32:43, the last note of Moses' prophetic song. Hallelujah.

Psalms 118-119**PSALM 118 Christ the Head of the Corner**

1. His mercy endureth forever (118:1-7)
2. The past experience (118:8-12)
3. Jehovah My Salvation (118:13-19)
4. The rejected stone the head of the corner (118:20-29)

This Psalm is the last one which is used from ancient times by the Jews in celebrating the Passover in the home. The Psalms sung begin with Psalm 113 and end with this Psalm, the one hundred-eighteenth. It is called the "Hallel," the Praise. Our Lord sang together with His disciples this Hallel (Matthew 26:30; Mark 14:26). The One hundred-eighteenth Psalm was therefore the last which they sang, before the Lord with His disciples that memorable night when He was betrayed, went to the Mount of Olives. And speaking to the chief priests and elders our Lord applied this Psalm to Himself. See verse 22 and compare with Matthew 21:42. Furthermore verse 26 is also used by our Lord in Matthew 23:39. So there is no question that the Spirit of God speaks of Him in this Psalm. It has been suggested that this Psalm was written and used in connection with the completion and consecration of the second temple. That it was used in other feast days, apart from Passover, seems evident; perhaps in connection with the feast of tabernacles. The Psalm begins with thanksgiving for His mercy manifested towards Israel in their deliverance. Nations had compassed them about, but in the Name of the Lord they were cut off. Therefore Israel sings "The LORD is my strength and song, and is become my salvation." The voice of rejoicing and salvation is therefore in the tabernacles of the righteous (verses 14, 15). They are delivered from death. Note the "gates of righteousness" in verse 19, through which they wish to enter in to praise the Lord. But immediately after we read, "This gate is the LORD's, the righteous shall enter it." It is Christ the Door, through which Israel also must enter, as every other sinner must use Him as the gate, the door of salvation. We read therefore at once "I will praise Thee for Thou hast heard me and art become my salvation."

And then the verse concerning the stone which the builders rejected and which has become the head of the corner. His people rejected Him and He became for them the stone of stumbling and a rock of offence. They were nationally broken to pieces (Matthew 21:44). Then He became the cornerstone of another house, the church, of which He is the chief cornerstone. In the day of His second coming He will be the smiting stone, striking down Gentile dominion (Daniel 2) and grinding opposing nations to powder (Matthew 21:44). And after that He will be the cornerstone for His people Israel, upon whom all rests. This is indeed marvellous in their eyes as it is also to us. The cry "Hosanna," or "Save now" (verse 25) and "Blessed is He that cometh in the Name of the LORD is the welcome of Israel to her returning King.

PSALM 119 The Law Written on Their Hearts and the Praise of the Word

This is the longest and most perfect Psalm in the whole collection. It is an alphabetical acrostic. It is composed of 22 sections, each having eight verses, 176 verses in all. Each section begins with a different letter of the alphabet and each verse of the different sections begins also with the corresponding letter of the section. Eight times each letter of the alphabet is mentioned in the 22 sections. The number eight in the Word has the meaning of resurrection, death is gone and life has come. Israel has passed from death to life and now extols the Word and the Law of God. The time has come when it is fulfilled what the Lord spoke through Jeremiah concerning the new covenant, "I will put my law in their inward parts and write it in their hearts." We behold then in this Psalm the joy of Israel in knowing the Word, in praising the Word and being obedient to the Word. In each verse except verses 90 and 122 the Word is mentioned and the following terms are employed: Law, commandment, word, saying, path, way, testimonies, judgments, precepts and statutes.

We give the twenty-two sections under the different Hebrew letters with a brief succession as to their contents:

Aleph: 1-8. The blessedness of those who obey His Word.

Beth: 9-16. Cleansing by the Word.

Gimmel: 17-24. The quickening by the Word.
 Daleth: 25-32. The uplift of the Word.
 He: 33-40. The power of the Word.
 Vav: 41-48. Victory through the Word.
 Zayin: 49-56. Comfort through the Word.
 Cheth: 57-64. Preservation through the Word.
 Teth: 65-72. The pricelessness of the Word.
 Jod: 73-80. Testimony through the Word.
 Caph: 81-88. Affliction and the Word.
 Lamed: 89-96. The Word eternal.
 Mem: 97-104. Wisdom through the Word.
 Nun: 105-112. The Word the lamp and the light for all occasions.
 Samech: 113-120. The wicked and the Word.
 Ain: 121-128. Separation and deliverance through the Word.
 Pe: 129-136. Communion through the Word.
 Tsaddi: 137-144. Zeal for the Word.
 Koph: 145-152. Experience through the Word.
 Resh: 153-160. Salvation through the Word.
 Schin: 161-168. The perfection of the Word.
 Tav: 169-176. Prayer and praise through the Word.

The whole Psalm is a marvellous evidence of verbal inspiration. But what will it be when the Word will thus be exalted and lifted to its proper place of supremacy through righteous Israel!

PSALMS 120-134 The Psalms of Degrees

Fifteen brief Psalms follow, called songs of degrees, or, ascents. They were in all probability used by Israel going up to Jerusalem three times a year to celebrate the feasts of the Lord--"Whither the tribes go up, the tribes of the LORD, a testimony for Israel, to give thanks unto the name of the LORD." They are indeed Psalms of "the goings-up" for we rise higher and higher as we read through them. Prophetically they give us again the steps from trial and suffering to the glorious consummation.

As they are so simple in language and construction no lengthy annotations are needed. Psalm 120 begins with distress, picturing again the suffering of the righteous godly remnant. In Psalm 121 the Keeper of Israel, the Covenant Keeping God, is revealed, who has made heaven and earth and neither sleeps nor slumbers. He has kept Israel in all their troubles and saved them. Psalm 122 brings us to Jerusalem and the house of the Lord. The redeemed ones go up to worship there. Thrones are there also for judgment, the thrones of which our Lord speaks in Matthew 19:28. Peace and prosperity have come.

In Psalm 123 there is another cry to Jehovah to be gracious and the next one, Psalm 124 celebrates the deliverance of Israel. "Blessed be the LORD." Men arose against them, but the Lord delivered His people. Mount Zion comes in view in Psalm 125. It cannot be moved, it abideth forever. Then when the word and the law go forth from Zion and Jerusalem there will be peace upon Israel. Psalm 126 celebrates the returning of the captives and this is the song they sing: "The LORD has done great things for us, whereof we are glad." Psalm 127 acknowledges the Lord as the One from whom all blessing and help must come. Psalm 128, which follows, shows the blessing which will be enjoyed when the Lord reigneth and blesseth His people out of Zion. Then we have a description of Israel's affliction in the past and how the hand of the Lord delivered them out of all their afflictions--Psalm 129. And in Psalm 130 we have a Psalm calling for forgiveness and waiting for the plenteous mercy and redemption which is promised to His people. Psalm 131 shows Israel prostrate, hoping in the Lord. Then follows the beautiful One hundred thirty-second Psalm in which Zion and its King is prophetically unfolded. It begins with the promise made by David to build a house, but the Lord made a covenant instead

with him. "The LORD hath sworn in truth unto David; He will not turn from it; of the fruit of thy body will I set upon Thy throne" (Acts 2:30). And that is Christ, as the Son of David. He will choose Zion; it is His resting-place. He is enthroned in Zion and what is connected with it is found in verses 13-18.

The One hundred thirty-third Psalm gives a blessed picture, not of the church, as it is so often taught, but of the great brotherhood of Israel, when once more they are a nation before the Lord. Then the Spirit will flow upon them and through them. In the last songs of the ascents, Psalm 134, we behold them in the house of the Lord, in the temple, lifting up their hands in worship in the sanctuary, praising the Lord and calling for blessing out of Zion.

Psalms 135-136

PSALM 135 Israel's Knowledge and Praise of the Lord

1. Knowing and praising His Name (135:1-7)
2. Deliverances of the past remembered (135:8-12)
3. His Name endureth forever (135:13-21)

The last song of ascents (134) showed Israel's praise in the sanctuary. The two Psalms which come next show this worship and praise more fully. This Psalm begins with a hallelujah and ends with a hallelujah. It will be an endless praise. The servants who stand in the house of the Lord and in the courts are called to praise Him. Israel cleansed and redeemed is now His servant (Zech. 3:7). They are His peculiar treasure (verse 4--Exod. 19:5). Then once more the remembrance of the deliverances of the past, the contrast with the idols of the nations (like Psalm 115) and the call to the house of Aaron, the house of Israel, the house of Levi and all that fear Him, to bless the Lord.

PSALM 136 His Mercy Endureth Forever

This is a historical Psalm of praise, as His grateful people Israel think of all He has done. Twenty-six times we read "His mercy endureth forever." The Psalm begins with a threefold call to give thanks unto the Lord, the God of gods, and the Lord of lords; the triune God is thus adored. And after this the brief sentences which rehearse His mighty deeds of the past as Creator and as the God of Israel, are followed by the praise of His mercy. This Psalm was undoubtedly used in the Temple worship. The Jews in their ritual call it "the great Hallel." It will probably be used in the future, when in the new temple Israel will sing the praises of His Name.

PSALM 137 Remembering the Exile

This Psalm is in remembrance of the Babylonian captivity written by an unknown person. Some have named Jeremiah, but he was not in Babylon. The Psalm expresseth the never dying love for Zion in the heart of Israel. The same love is alive today after an exile of almost two thousand years. "If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget its cunning. Let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth, if I remember thee not; if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chiefest joy." But this Psalm also looks forward to the day when divine retribution will be measured out to the daughter of Babylon, when Israel's enemies will be punished for their sins committed against His people. The fate of the final Babylon as given in Isaiah 13:16 corresponds with the last verse of this Psalm. See also Isaiah 47:6.

PSALM 138 A Psalm of Deliverance

This is a Psalm of David giving praise to the Lord for deliverance. The harp is now no more hanging idle on the willows, but is tuned afresh to praise His Name. It is not alone David's praise who cried and the Lord answered him, it is the praise of Israel for accomplished deliverance from the exile and therefore the kings of the earth are also mentioned. "All the kings of the earth shall praise Thee O LORD, when they hear the words of Thy mouth."

PSALM 139 In the Divine Presence

1. His omniscience (139:1-6)
2. His omnipresence (139:7-12)
3. Praising Him (139:13-18)
4. Delighting in His holiness (139:19-24)

Here we see the people of God in the light of God, standing in His presence. He is an omniscient and an omnipresent God. How marvellously this is given in this Psalm. And what a comfort to know that He knoweth, that He seeth, that He is about us, around us, with us everywhere, that His hand leads, that His hand upholds the saint, and that darkness and light are both alike to Him. And this God has fashioned us, He is our Creator. And the thoughts of God mentioned in verses 17 and 18 may be applied to the thoughts of His love in redemption. How precious are these thoughts in which He has remembered the sinner's need. They are indeed more than the sand. And with the knowledge of God's omniscience, His omnipresence, His thoughts of love and grace, the saint loves God's holiness, separating himself from the wicked, counting God's enemies his enemies, hating those who rise up against God. And then that prayer-"Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me and know my thoughts. And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting." Can you pray thus daily in the presence of an omniscient and omnipresent Lord?

PSALMS 140-142

These three Psalms are Psalms of David. The third one in this series, 142 is another Maschil, the last Maschil Psalm, being a prayer when David was in the cave. In these Psalms the distress of Israel, the godly remnant of Israel, is again remembered. In Psalm 140 we see prophetically the evil and violent man, that man of sin of the last days. And therefore have we one more imprecatory prayer for the destruction of the wicked (verse 10). The last verses look forward to the overthrow of the wicked and the exaltation of the righteous.

In Psalm 141 the righteous are seen in separation from the wicked, and the prayer for preservation. Psalm 142 contains continued prayer for deliverance. The psalmist's voice is lifted up to the Lord. Before Him he poured out his complaint and before Him he showed his trouble; not before man, but before the Lord. He knew when his spirit was overwhelmed that the Lord knew his path. All these experiences of trial and trouble will be repeated among the godly remnant, as all God's people have passed and are still passing through similar soul-exercises.

PSALMS 143-145

In Psalm 143 the enemy is mentioned again, the enemy who pursued David. "For the enemy has persecuted my soul; he has smitten my life down to the ground; he has made me to dwell in darkness, as those that have long been dead." How this again reminds us of the death experience of the pious remnant when the man of sin, the Antichrist will rule in Israel's land. Prayer for deliverance follows. Hear me speedily--Hide not Thy face from me--Cause me to hear Thy lovingkindness--Deliver me, O LORD, from mine enemies, I flee unto Thee to hide me!

The next Psalm riseth higher. Faith lays hold on God. Israel, as David did, will look in faith to Him who has the power to deliver His trusting ones. "My Goodness, and my Fortress; my high tower and my deliverer; my shield and He in whom I trust; who subdueth the peoples under me" (literal translation). They acknowledge before Him their nothingness, days like shadows passing away. We see how this prayer too brings the final days of the age and the coming deliverance by the intervention from above before us. "Bow Thy heavens, O LORD, and come down; touch the mountains and they shall smoke. Cast forth lightning, and scatter them. Shoot out Thine arrows, and destroy them. Send Thine hand from above; rid me and deliver me out of the great waters (the great tribulation) from the hands of the strangers (the Gentiles). Whose mouth speaketh vanity, and their right hand is a right hand of falsehood" (144:5-8). Then bursts forth the new song which anticipates the answer for this great prayer, the answer which the coming Lord brings to His suffering people, by His manifestation in power and in glory. Verses 12-15 anticipate the days of earthly blessings when the King has returned and

rules in righteousness.

Psalm 145 is a magnificent outburst of praise. While it is David's praise, it is also the praise of Him who is the leader of all the praises of His people, the Son of David, our Lord. He is singing praises in the great congregation (Psalm 22:25) composed of His redeemed people Israel and the nations of the earth. It is an alphabetical Psalm, all letters of the Hebrew alphabet are given except one, the letter "nun." The Numerical Bible gives the following helpful suggestion: "I cannot but conclude that the gap is meant to remind us that in fact the fullness of praise is not complete without other voices which are not found here; and that those missing voices are those of the Church and the heavenly saints." In the book of Revelation we have the record of this full praise. See Chapter 5 and the fourfold Hallelujah in the beginning of Chapter 19. In this Psalm we find the celebration of the power of God displayed in judgments and in the deliverance of His people. Here we read likewise of His great lovingkindness in "The LORD is gracious and full of compassion; slow to anger and of great mercy." See Exodus 34:6-7. He has come to dwell in the midst of His people. The kingdom has come and His saints speak now of the glory of that kingdom. They will talk of His Power. "Thy kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and Thy dominion endureth throughout all generations." The mercies of the Lord displayed in that coming kingdom are the subject of the praise in verses 14-21. We learn now why this great praise Psalm was preceded by Psalms of distress and prayer. It is in remembrance of the sufferings of His trusting people in the last days, and to magnify the Lord, who alone will save them and that unto the praise of His Name.

PSALMS 146-150 The Hallelujah Chorus

The five Psalms with which this marvellous book closeth are all Psalms of praise. The word "praise" is found in the Hebrew thirty-seven times. Each one of these Psalms begins and ends with a hallelujah; there are ten hallelujahs.

First is a hallelujah which celebrates Himself, He who is the God of Jacob. Precious vision of Him who delights to call Himself "the God of Jacob," the God who loves the sinner and has redeemed His people. Who is He? The Creator of all, by whom and for whom all things were made (verse 6). The Lord of judgment and redemption; the Lord who looseth the prisoners, openeth the eyes of the blind, raiseth them that are bowed down--and He will reign for ever. Hallelujah.

Psalm 147 is the hallelujah for what He has done for His people Israel. They praise Him now in the beauty of holiness. He hath built Jerusalem; He hath gathered the outcasts of Israel; He hath healed the broken hearted and bound up their wounds. He manifests His glory too by the heavens above. And nature is now in full harmony, restored and blessed. But Jerusalem is the center of praise and glory. He hath blessed Zion and her children (verses 12-14). Hallelujah.

The notes of praise swell higher and higher. In Psalm 148 it is heaven and earth which sing His praises. The heights above, the angels, the heavenly hosts, the sun, the moon, the stars, the heaven of heavens, His eternal dwelling place, praiseth Him. And so does all the earth. The creatures of the deep praise Him, so do the hills and the mountains, the trees of the field, beasts, cattle, birds and creeping things. The kings of the earth, all races of men praise Him, who is worthy of all praise. Hallelujah.

Psalm 149 is the hallelujah of the new song. Israel redeemed is leading the glory-hallelujah song. The children of Zion are joyful in their King. They sing praises unto Him. They praise Him for victory and blessing. He has executed vengeance upon the ungodly. All His saints have honour and Glory now. Hallelujah.

And the finale, the last Psalm! It is the praise to the full. We have seen the "crescendo" of praise in these Psalms and now we reach the "fortissimo," the loudest and the strongest praise. With this the great redemption is consummated. Look at this Psalm. It begins with hallelujah and after this first hallelujah we find nothing but praise--praise Him--praise Him--praise Him! Let all that hath breath praise the Lord. Hallelujah!

Do you praise Him now? Oh let us give Him as our Lord, Him who hath redeemed us by His own Blood, who will soon gather us home to be like Him and forever with Him, let us give Him praise. Let us sing our hallelujahs now, songs of

praise in the night, while we wait for the break of day, the Morningstar. And the end of all for earth and heaven will be the hallelujah chorus, a praise which will never die in all eternity. Hallelujah!

THE BOOK OF PROVERBS

The Annotated Bible

Arno Clement Gaebelein

THE BOOK OF PROVERBS

Introduction

The title of this book in the Hebrew Bible is "Mishle," which is derived from the verb "Mashal," to rule, hence short sayings which are given to govern life and conduct. It also has the meaning of "resemblance," that is a parable. Many proverbs are concentrated parables. Our English word "proverbs" comes from the word "proverbia" used in the Latin translation. Traditionally the authorship of the whole book is attributed to Solomon, but the book itself does not claim this, nor does it sustain the Solomonic authorship of the entire collection. The major portion of the book is attributed to Solomon and there can be no question that he is the author of it. In First Kings 4:32 we read that the great king uttered 3,000 proverbs in which the wisdom given to him is illustrated. But the book does not contain this number of proverbs.

Chapter 25 begins with the statement: "These are also proverbs which the men of Hezekiah, King of Judah, copied out." This pious king must have had a great interest in compiling and preserving certain portions of the Word of God. According to this statement in Proverbs he must have commissioned certain scribes to add to the previous collection of proverbs by Solomon, other proverbs, which up to that time had remained uncollected. Then in chapter 30 we find the words of Agur the son of Jakeh, and in chapter 31 the words of King Lemuel.

From these facts which appear in the book it is clear that the composition of the entire book of Proverbs cannot be attributed to Solomon. The book begins with "The Proverbs of Solomon the Son of David, King of Israel". In the beginning of chapter 10 we read again: "The Proverbs of Solomon". It seems clear then that in chapters 1-24 we have the proverbs of Solomon; chapter 25 to the end contains also proverbs by the king, except the last two chapters. In all probability the scribes of Hezekiah who copied out the proverbs of chapters 25-29 added the last two chapters. What criticism states, that "the later chapters of this book point to the second or third century before Christ," is only an assertion.

Another feature of this book is, that numerous times a person is addressed as "My son," and the personal pronoun is often used "thou, thee, thy," etc. The sections where we find this are chapters 1-9; 19:20--24:34; and 27-29:27. Who then is the person addressed? Does Solomon address some one or is it Solomon himself who is addressed? Dr. J.W. Thirtle in his *Old Testament Problems* distinguishes between proverbs written by Solomon and those which were written for him. All those which are addressed to "My son," and in which the personal pronoun is used, it is claimed, are given to Solomon by "wise men or teachers" and that all these sententious sayings were given to young Solomon by these men to fit him for rulership. But this produces other difficulties. The proverbs of Solomon would in this case be very few in comparison with the size of the book, and furthermore we do not know who these wise men or teachers were who instructed the king and wrote such words of wisdom.

It seems to us that there is another way in which these sections containing the personal address, "My son," may be explained. When the Lord appeared unto Solomon in Gibeon, He said unto him, "Ask what I shall give thee." Then Solomon asked for an understanding heart, to discern between good and bad. Then the Lord said, "Lo I have given thee a wise and understanding heart" (1 Kings 3:5, etc.). His prayer was answered. Then the Lord must have spoken to him by His Spirit and given him the instructions he needed as the king over His people Israel. It is more than probable that the

sections in which the address "My son" and the personal pronoun is used contain the heavenly instructions given to the young king in the beginning of his reign by the Lord Himself. One cannot be dogmatic about this, but if such was the case the difficulties disappear. There is no need to put these proverbs for Solomon into the mouths of unknown wise men. It was the Lord who spoke to Solomon, addressing him thus and Solomon guided by the Spirit of God penned all these words. But it seems that the beginning of chapter 4 contains a brief autobiography of Solomon relating to his training. If wise men or teachers had spoken these words their names would have been mentioned and their sayings would have appeared in a different setting, without being found in different sections of the book.

As Dr. Thirtle has pointed out, these sayings, instructions given to Solomon, as we take it by the Lord in answer to his prayer for an understanding heart, cover certain commands relating to Israel's kings, as given in the law of Moses. These commands we find in Deut. 17:14-20.

"When thou art come unto the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee, and shalt possess it, and shalt dwell therein, and shalt say, I will set a king over me, like as all the nations that are about me; thou shalt in any wise set him king over thee, whom the LORD thy God shall choose: one from among thy brethren shalt thou set king over thee: thou mayest not set a stranger over thee, which is not thy brother. But he shall not multiply horses to himself, nor cause the people to return to Egypt, to the end that he should multiply horses: forasmuch as the LORD hath said unto you, Ye shall henceforth return no more that way. Neither shall he multiply wives to himself, that his heart turn not away: neither shall he greatly multiply to himself silver and gold. And it shall be when he sitteth upon the throne of his kingdom, that he shall write him a copy of this law in a book out of that which is before the priests the Levites: And it shall be with him, and he shall read therein all the days of his life; that he may learn to fear the LORD his God, to keep all the words of this law and these statutes, to do them: That his heart be not lifted up above his brethren, and that he turn not aside from the commandment, to the right hand, or to the left: to the end that he may prolong his days in his kingdom, he, and his children, in the midst of Israel."

Now in the sections of Proverbs, pointed out above, in which the personal address is used, some instructions are given which correspond to the commandments relating to the king, as found in the passage from Deuteronomy which we have quoted. Of special interest are the repeated warnings against the "strange woman." The strange women against which the Spirit of God warned him in his youth, are the women of other nations, Gentiles. The passage in Deuteronomy says, "Neither shall he multiply wives to himself, that his heart turn not away." The Spirit of the Lord anticipated the sad end of the great and wise king and therefore warned him against the strange woman, under the picture of the harlot, who ensnares and whose ways end in death. But the heavenly wisdom which had instructed him and warned was not heeded. It is written, "King Solomon loved many strange women, together with the daughter of Pharaoh, women of the Moabites, the Ammonites, Edomites, Zidonians, and Hittites; of the nations concerning which the LORD said unto the children of Israel, Ye shall not go in to them, neither shall they come in to you, for surely they will turn away your heart after their gods. Solomon clave unto these in love" (1 Kings 11). Then followed his downfall. "It came to pass, when Solomon was old, that his wives turned away his heart after other gods." Then he worshipped Ashtoreth, Milcom and Chemosh and other idol gods. The words of wisdom the Lord gave him, thus giving him understanding, were not heeded and the allurements of the strange woman, of which his inspired pen had warned, became a mournful fact in his own history.

The literary form of these proverbs is mostly in the form of couplets or distichs. The two clauses of the couplet are generally related to each other by what has been termed parallelism, according to Hebrew poetry. Three kinds of parallelism have been pointed out.

1. Synonymous Parallelism. Here the second clause restates what is given in the first clause.

Judgments are prepared for scorners
And stripes for the back of fools.
-- Proverbs 19:29

2. Antithetic Parallelism. Here a truth which is stated in the first clause is made stronger in the second clause by

contrast with an opposite truth.

The light of the righteous rejoiceth,
But the lamp of the wicked shall be put out.
-- Proverbs 13:9

3. Synthetic Parallelism. The second clause develops the thought of the first.

The terror of a king is as the roaring of a lion--
He that provoketh him to anger sinneth against his own life.
-- Proverbs 20:2.

The Teachings of Proverbs

The Proverbs, speaking generally, give moral teachings as to human conduct, often giving the contrast between the righteous and the wicked. But besides this there is much which goes deeper. Many of these short sayings can be applied to the Lord Jesus Christ and to the gospel. There is one portion which speaks definitely of the Son of God, our Lord, who is Wisdom. This is found in chapter 8:22-31. When we read in chapter 13:7, "There is that maketh himself poor, yet hath great wealth," we can well think of Him who was rich and became poor for our sake that we by His poverty might be rich. Then there are verses which speak of a friend, "There is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother" (18:24). "A friend loveth at all times, and is born as a brother for adversity" (17:17). Well do we think, in reading such and similar verses in this book, of our Lord, who is the friend of sinners. Proverbs in spiritual instruction and application has an inexhaustible wealth.

The Spirit of God makes use of this book in quoting from it in the New Testament: Chapter 1:16 is quoted in Romans 3:15; 3:11-12 in Hebrews 12:5-6, also in Rev. 3:19; 3:34; in James 4:6 and 1 Peter 5:5; 4:26 in Hebrews 12:13; 10:12 in 1 Peter 4:8; 11:31 in 1 Peter 4:18; 25:21-22, in Romans 12:20; and 26:11 in 2 Peter 2:22.

Proverbs ought to be studied by believers as diligently as any other portion of God's Holy Word. The prayerful searcher will soon be rewarded by many nuggets of divine truth.

We make another suggestion on the study of this book. Many of the lessons given in these proverbs are illustrated by the lives of the godly and ungodly recorded in the Bible. It will prove a most helpful occupation to fit the experiences of these two classes as found in the Word of God to many of these proverbs.

The Division of Proverbs

As already stated in our introduction the book of Proverbs, as a book, was not in existence in the days of Solomon; it was completed through the interest, no doubt inspired interest, of King Hezekiah. That Solomon wrote the proverbs as attributed to him is beyond question.

The scope of this book is quite simple for it is clearly marked in its contents.

We find seven sections.

I. INSTRUCTIONS OF WISDOM GIVEN TO SOLOMON: Chapters 1--9

II. THE PROVERBS OF SOLOMON: Chapters 10:1--19:19

III. INSTRUCTIONS GIVEN TO SOLOMON: Chapters 19:20--24:34

IV. THE PROVERBS OF SOLOMON COLLECTED BY HEZEKIAH: Chapters 25--26

V. INSTRUCTIONS GIVEN TO SOLOMON: Chapters 27--29

VI. THE WORDS OF AGUR THE SON OF JAKEH: Chapter 30

VII. THE WORDS OF KING LEMUEL TAUGHT HIM BY HIS MOTHER: Chapter 31

It will be seen at a glance that instructions given to Solomon alternate with the proverbs of Solomon, teaching others as he first had been taught. The description of the virtuous woman in the last chapter is in the Hebrew in the form of an acrostic. The twenty-two letters of the Hebrew alphabet are found in these verses, just like in the alphabetic Psalms and in Lamentations.

Analysis and Annotations

A detailed analysis, as we have made it in other books, cannot be fully made in this collection of proverbs. Most of them are detached and each has a message by itself. To interpret each separately, to point out the many spiritual lessons, as well as prophetic application, to show their relation to other portions of the Word of God and to explain them by incidents taken from the Bible, would require volumes; and even then the spiritual meaning would not be exhausted. All we can do is to hint at their meaning and give some annotations which, under God, may be helpful in the closer study of this book

I. INSTRUCTIONS OF WISDOM GIVEN TO SOLOMON

CHAPTER 1

1. The Introduction (1:1-7)
2. Warning against evil companions and covetousness (1:8-19)
3. The appeal of wisdom (1:20-33)

Verses 1-7. The introductory words of these verses present the object of the book. These proverbs were given to Solomon, and contain instructions he received from the Lord. They are given to him that he might know wisdom. The word "wisdom" is the characteristic word of this book for it occurs in the original language 42 times, which is 6 times 7. Six in Scripture is the human number, while 7 is the divine number. Wisdom is the first thing to be acquired, and that is followed by instruction, or admonition, to receive the instruction, the discipline of wisdom. The instructions are in justice, judgment and equity and they give subtilty to the simple. The word "subtilty" means prudence; the word "simple" has the meaning of "guileless." Solomon was a young man when the Lord answered his prayer for a wise and understanding heart, and in these proverbs given to him he received "knowledge and discretion" (thoughtfulness). Thus by the Word of God comes wisdom and that produces understanding and a moral character in the man who trusteth in the Lord and is obedient to Him. To hear marks the wise man, and hearing will increase learning, learning will give understanding so that proverbs can be understood and also the interpretation. The latter word is only used once more in the Old Testament. It has the meaning of "satire." The words of the wise and their dark sayings (riddles) are the words of the wise men of this world, the philosophers. The meaning is not that these wise men were the instructors of the young monarch, but that the divinely given proverbs rightly understood would protect him from accepting the foolish things of human wisdom, of philosophy. "This verse (6) intimates that the aim of the book is to confer an initiation which will make the possessor free of all the mysteries of the wise" (T.T. Perowne).

Verse 7 contains the keynote to the entire book. (See 9:10; Eccles. 12:13; Job 28:28; Psalm 111:10.) The word "fear"

means a godly fear, reverence. This fear of the Lord is mentioned fourteen times in Proverbs. This childlike reverence, so sadly lacking among the young of our day, is the beginning of knowledge; there is no true knowledge apart from the fear of the Lord. It means to acknowledge the Lord, adore and worship Him, bow in faith to His revelation and put it above everything else. The foolish despise wisdom and instruction, they follow the philosophies of this world. To acknowledge the Lord to reverence and fear Him is thus written over the portal of the house of wisdom.

Verses 8-19. The practical instructions begin with an exhortation of obedience to the father and mother. "My son" is the address of the Lord to Solomon, who thus acknowledges him as His child. Obedience to parents is not only commanded in the law dispensation; it is as prominent in the dispensation of grace, as we learn from Ephesians 6:1 and Colossians 3:20. One of the marks of the last days among those who profess Christianity who have the form of godliness but have not the power of it, is "disobedience to parents" (2 Timothy 3). Such disobedience, so prominent today among professing Christians, is coupled with disobedience to God and rejection of His Word. Much of the ungodliness today has its source in this disobedience. This is followed by warning against wicked associates, those who are lawless and desperate men, thieves and murderers, who pass through the country greedy for gain. Solomon is exhorted not to walk in the way with them. The one who fears the Lord walks in separation and keeps away from the paths of the wicked. Verse 16 is quoted by Paul in the third chapter of Romans. There is a striking resemblance of this passage to Psalm 10 in which we have a description of the wicked, prophetically indicating the man of sin. (See annotations on that Psalm.)

Verses 20-23. Wisdom now speaks and wisdom in this first section of Proverbs is a person, a divine person. The eighth chapter gives us a wonderful vision of that Person, the Son of God, who is the Wisdom. First stands the call of Wisdom. The call may be answered or rejected. Wisdom promises if the call is obeyed, "Behold, I will pour my Spirit unto you, I will make known my words unto you." But if the call is refused the consequences will be disastrous. The appeal of wisdom closes with a precious promise.

But whoso hearkeneth unto me shall dwell safely
And shall be quiet from fear of evil.

This appeal of wisdom, the call, the promise, the refusal and the calamity of the refusal to listen to Him who speaks furnishes an excellent theme for preaching the Gospel to the unsaved.

CHAPTER 2

1. The pursuit of wisdom and its results (2:1-9)
2. Preservation from the evil man and the strange woman (2:10-19)
3. The path of the righteous (2:20-22)

Verses 1-9 This second chapter of divine instructions begins with an exhortation to pursue after Wisdom. The sayings of Wisdom, that is the Word of the Lord, must be received, laid up, the ear must incline to hear them, the heart must be applied to understanding. In verse 3 mention is made of prayer. There must be crying after knowledge and for understanding and that must be followed by seeking and searching. If these conditions are fulfilled then the fear of the Lord is one's portion as well as the knowledge of God. These are excellent instructions for the study of the Word of God. If followed then the Lord will give wisdom (James 1:5). He layeth up sound wisdom for the righteous. He Himself is the Wisdom and in Him are laid up all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge (Colossians 2:3). He also is a shield (the better word for buckler) to them that walk uprightly, and the way of His saints is preserved by Him.

Verses 10-19. When Wisdom entereth the heart and the soul rejoiceth in true knowledge, what blessed consequences will follow! There is preservation and deliverance. The way of the evil man, the proud, the ungodly and their crooked ways hold out no attraction to those who love and seek wisdom. Then for the first time the strange woman, the foreign woman is mentioned. While a prostitute is meant, the warning to Solomon was to beware of the allurements of those who were outside of the commonwealth of Israel, the heathen Canaanitish cults in which prostitution played such a prominent

part. If we look on these instructions as given to a young man, we see the temptations out lined which are peculiar to the young-disobedience to parents, evil companions and the lust of the flesh.

Verses 20-22. He who ordereth his conduct according to divine instruction will walk in the way of the good and keep the paths of the righteous, dwelling in the land of promise while the wicked have no such hope.

CHAPTER 3

1. The call and promise of wisdom (3:1-10)
2. Happy is the man that findeth wisdom (3:11-20)
3. Promise and instruction (3:21-25)

Verses 1-10. The call to obedience is followed by promise. The promise is like all the promises to an earthly people "for length of days and long life". Here are some blessed exhortations loved and cherished by all His people (verses 5-7). How happier, and more fruitful the children of God would be if they obeyed constantly this instruction: "in all thy ways acknowledge Him and He shall direct thy paths."

Verses 11-20. Verses 11-12 are quoted in Hebrews 12. The man who findeth wisdom, that is, who knows the Lord, is happy. If we look upon wisdom as personified in the Lord Jesus Christ we can read "His ways are pleasantness, and all His paths are peace. He is a tree of life to them that lay hold on Him, and happy is every one that retaineth Him" (17-18).

Verses 21-34. The words of the Lord kept are life to the soul, grace to the neck; they insure safety; they protect and keep by day and by night. Each verse has a blessed meaning. This chapter ends with the promise that the wise shall inherit glory while the promotion of fools will be shame.

CHAPTER 4

1. Solomon's training (4:1-9)
2. Hear, O my son: Receive my sayings (4:10-19)
3. My son, attend to my words. (4:20-27)

Verses 1-9. This passage shows the early training which Solomon received and he passeth on the instructions. It is said that these verses formed a model for many Puritan homes in England and the Scotland of the covenant. He was the beloved one, his father's true son. Note the different exhortation, about wisdom: Forget it not; forsake her not; love her; exalt her. Then the promises: She shall preserve thee; she shall keep thee; she shall promote thee; she gives honor; an ornament of grace for the head and a crown of glory. If we take wisdom and make it the Lord Jesus Christ and His Word, what blessed food for the soul we will enjoy!

Verses 10-19. Here we find instructions for Solomon and all the godly with the corresponding promises. Then there is the warning concerning the path of the wicked and a contrast between the way of the righteous and the way of the wicked.

But the way of the righteous is as the dawn of light
That shineth more and more unto the perfect day.

This is a blessed statement. As soon as we accept the true wisdom, the Lord Jesus Christ, we enter upon a way which faceth the east, the sunrise. The light of the coming dawn illumines that path, and at some time the perfect day will break when all shadows flee away.

Verses 20-27. Instructions to receive and to obey the words of wisdom are the contents of this address. The eye is never

to be taken off from the words of the Lord; they are to be kept in the midst of the heart. How important to listen to such counsel, even for us His children:

Keep thy heart with all diligence;
For out of it are the issues of life.

CHAPTER 5

1. Shun the strange woman and sinful passion (5:1-14)
2. The life of chastity (5:15-23)

Verses 1-14. It is a warning against literal fornication and the accompanying spiritual fornication, turning away from the worship of Jehovah and worshipping idols. The dreadful results of sinful lust are vividly described. How many a young man has found out the truth as given in these words in his licentious life.

And thou mourn at thy latter end
When thy flesh and thy body are consumed.

Solomon received these repeated warnings, yet after great prosperity and honor came to him, and his glory spread in every direction like many a rich and successful man of today, these warnings were not heeded and he had to experience in his own life the truths of these words he had penned by the Spirit of God.

Verses 15-23. Here we have a sweet exhortation and picture of marital fidelity and a picture of true love in family life. How the Christian family should manifest something greater than this is revealed in Ephesians 5.

CHAPTER 6

1. The surety (6:1-5)
2. The sluggard (6:6-11)
3. The naughty, good-for-nothing person (6:12-19)
4. The strange woman (6:20-35)

Verses 1-5. These are instructions concerning contracts, in being surety for a neighbor and the danger connected with it.

Verses 6-11. The sluggard is commanded to go to the ant for a lesson. (See also 30:25.) The ant is a marvellous little creature. That which modern science has found out by close observation of the life of this little insect is here tersely stated by the words of the Lord, the Creator. They swarm in the woods and in the fields; they work day and night; they capture, train and nourish aphides, which they use as a kind of slave. They build vast and symmetrical mounds, which they use as homes and barns, and which are, relatively to the size of the tiny builders, three times larger than the Egyptian pyramids. They march and labor in unison, have their own wars, nourish their sick, and all is done without a chief, an overseer or a ruler. Yet man with a higher intelligence and a higher work to do can be a sluggard.

Verses 12-19. The description of the sluggard is followed by that of a worthless person. It is a son of Belial (the term used in the Hebrew) whose picture is drawn. He is a naughty person, a good-for-nothing, a man of iniquity; he has a lying mouth. A minute description of his way and work is given; everywhere he makes mischief and causeth division. But suddenly there comes the calamity upon him. He shall be broken and that without remedy. Such is the way of the man who despiseth wisdom, follows his old nature and plunges ultimately into the outer darkness. Finally there will yet appear "the man of sin," that wicked one, in whom all these evils will culminate and he shall suddenly be broken without remedy. (See Daniel 11:45.) We do well to read carefully the six things which the Lord hateth (6:16-19).

Verses 20-35. The words of the Lord, the commandment and the law as stated here, are of unspeakably great importance. They are to be in the heart and about the neck.

When thou walkest, it shall lead thee;
 When thou sleepest, it shall watch over thee;
 And when thou wakest, it shall talk with thee.

They are a lamp and a light; they are the way of life. Then follows another description of the evil woman, a warning not to lust after her beauty nor to be taken by her eyelids. These oriental women painted their faces; by plucking their eyebrows they made them almond-shaped. Alas! that in the society of the twentieth century the women and girls of a so-called Christian civilization should do the same thing, and we fear, for the same purpose as the whorish woman described in this chapter.

CHAPTER 7

The entire chapter is a continuation of the strange woman and the warning against her. The Word and the law of the Lord will keep the obedient son from her. If Solomon had obeyed the Word of God, not to multiply wives (Deut. 17:17) his end would not have been spent in the degrading fellowship with the harlots of other nations. The description is very graphic. What the word pictures is as prominent in the great centers of Christendom as it was thousands of years ago in Babylon and Egypt. And so it is still true:

She hath cast down many wounded;
 Yea, many strong men have been slain by her.
 Her house is the way to hell,
 Going down to the chambers of death.

But think of Solomon after having received these inspired descriptions and warnings, that he should have been forgetful of them all.

CHAPTER 8

1. The call and appeal of wisdom (8:1-11)
2. What wisdom is and what wisdom gives (8:12-21)
3. Wisdom; the Person, who He is (8:22-31)
4. The renewed appeal (8:32-36)

Verses 1-11. This is one of the most interesting chapters in the entire book. It begins with a call and appeal of wisdom, much like the call and appeal of the first chapter. If wisdom calls, has a voice, then wisdom must also be a person. Who personified wisdom is we learn most blessedly in this chapter. Wisdom calls to the sons of men; wisdom speaks of plain and excellent things; she speaks the truth; her words are the words of righteousness; wisdom is better than rubies.

Verses 12-21. This section may well be looked on as an introduction to the sublime revelation in verses 22-31. Wisdom is a person and what wisdom gives, the power wisdom has, makes it clear that wisdom is a divine person. Kings and princes rule by that person, as well as the nobles and judges of the earth. The powers that be are ordained by this wisdom. And that person says:

I love them that love Me
 And those that seek Me early shall find Me.

This wisdom has riches and honor to bestow; has durable riches and righteousness; the fruit of it is better than fine gold; those that love the wisdom will receive an inheritance. In the next place we hear who that person is.

Verses 22-31. The Wisdom is the Son of God. The personification of wisdom is found in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ. This wonderful passage is a great prelude to the incarnation and the subsequent redemption work of the Son of God. Here Solomon beheld the highest of all; he had a vision of the Messiah of Israel, the Son of David, whose wisdom, peace and kingdom of peace and glory he but faintly foreshadowed. The critical school must of course deny this application to our Lord. "The passage played a great role in subsequent thought, for it lies at the back of much of the speculation of Philo, and at a subsequent period was greatly employed by Christian theologians in support of their doctrine of the person of Christ through their identification of wisdom in this passage with Logos (the Word) of the fourth Gospel" (New Century Bible).

Wisdom was possessed by the Lord in the beginning of His ways, before His works of old. But that is the beginning without a beginning.

In the beginning was the Word; and because the Word, the Son of God, is God, He like God has no beginning. The word "possessed" has also the meaning of "formed". "This word has been a battleground of controversy since the days of the Arian heresy. But it is well to remember that, all theological questions apart, it is impossible to understand the word, whatever rendering of it we adopt, as indicating that wisdom ever had a beginning, or was ever properly speaking created. Wisdom is inseparable from any worthy conception of Him who is "the only wise God" (1 Tim. 1:17), and therefore is like Him "from everlasting to everlasting" (Perowne). Wisdom, the Son of God, was always with God from everlasting. Before there ever was anything created, before the mountains were settled, or even the earth had been made, He was. And when creation began He was there. He, the Son, was by Him, as one brought up with Him. From the greater revelation in the New Testament we learn that all things were created not only for Him, but also by Him (Colossians 1:16). Wisdom speaks: "And I was continually His delight, rejoicing always before Him." This can only be true of God the Son. And furthermore He says: "Rejoicing in the habitable part of His earth; and My delight was with the sons of men." His delight was so great, that He laid by His glory, and left His eternal dwelling place to become man and redeem man by the death of the cross.

It is interesting to observe that this glimpse, this adumbration of a great truth, which was only to become fully clear in Christ Jesus our Lord, was advanced a tittle in clearness and completeness by a book which is not considered to be inspired, the so-called Book of Wisdom, in a passage which must be quoted: "For she (i.e., Wisdom) is a breath of the power of God, and a pure influence flowing from the glory of the Almighty; therefore can no defiled thing fall into her. For she is the brightness of the everlasting light, the unspotted mirror of the power of God and the image of His goodness. And being but one, she can do all things; and remaining in herself, she maketh all things new; and in all ages entering into holy souls, she maketh them friends of God and prophets. For God loveth none but him that dwelleth with Wisdom. For she is more beautiful than the sun, and above all the order of stars; being compared with the light, she is found before it."

Verses 32-36. Then follows the renewed appeal. Wisdom says, "Whosoever findeth me findeth life." How true of our Lord; in Him we find and have life. note the two occurrences of "blessed" in this paragraph.

CHAPTER 9

1. The invitation of Wisdom (9:1-12)
2. The contrast with Folly. (9:13-18)

Verses 1-12. The first section of Proverbs closeth with a contrast of Wisdom and Folly, both personified. The one, our Lord, the other under the symbol of a foolish woman. Wisdom sends forth her invitation after her house is built and the feast is spread. It reminds us of the parable of the great supper (Luke 14). Here too is the gracious invitation, "Come, eat of my bread and drink of the wine which I have mingled."

Verses 13-18. Folly too has her house and sitteth in the door on a seat in the high places of the city to call to her victims. She invites to the stolen waters, so sweet to the natural man, to eat bread in secret places, equally pleasant. But what is the end? "The dead are there; ... her guests are in the depths of hell." The foolish woman is the world with its lusts.

II. THE PROVERBS OF SOLOMON: CHAPTERS 10--19:19

Beginning with the tenth chapter we have the collection of proverbs given by inspiration through Solomon. In this section the personal address, "My son," and the personal exhortations are missing. It will be noticed that each verse in this section contains a proverb, consisting each of two lines, mostly of an antithetic character, except 19:7, which has three lines instead of two (a tristich).

It is impossible to give a detailed analysis of these chapters, nor can we take up each proverb separately for meditation. This must be left to each reader. By comparing Scripture with Scripture, and a prayerful study of these terse sayings, the heavenly wisdom given in these chapters can readily be found. There is no end to practical application. Yet even in these chapters a certain order is maintained. The contrast in each chapter is between the righteous and the wicked, between right and wrong.

CHAPTER 10 The Godly and the Ungodly in Life and Conduct

The opening proverbs are concerning treasures, earthly substance. What an important sentence, "Treasures of wickedness profit nothing!" Throughout these proverbs there are the warnings concerning getting riches, or as it is expressed in a modern phrase "getting rich quick" (28:20), and the dangers connected with it.

These grave warnings of Wisdom are especially needed at the present time in England and America, when the undisguised and the unrestrained pursuit of riches has become more and more recognized as the legitimate end of life, so that few people feel any shame in admitting that this is their aim; and the clear unimpassioned statements of the result, which always follows on the unhallowed passion receive daily confirmation from the occasional revelations of our domestic, our commercial and our criminal life. He that is greedy of gain, we are told, troubleth his own house. An inheritance may be gotten hastily at the beginning, but the end thereof shall not be blessed. A faithful man shall abound with blessings, but he that maketh haste to be rich (and consequently cannot by any possibility be faithful) shall not be unpunished. He that hath an evil eye hasteth after riches, and knoweth not that want shall come upon him. "Weary not thyself," therefore, it is said, "to be rich;" which, though it may be the dictate of thine own wisdom, is really unmixed folly, burdened with a load of calamity for the unfortunate seeker, for his house, and for all those who are in any way dependent upon him (Expositor's Bible).

There are also warnings against being slack, which maketh poor, while the hand of the diligent, he that is up and doing, maketh rich. We find promises and assurance for the godly like these: "Righteousness delivereth from death ... the Lord will not suffer the righteous, the soul of the righteous to famish ... blessings are upon the head of the just ... the memory of the just is blessed."

The walk and conduct of the two classes are contrasted, especially in relation to the mouth and lips. The walk of the righteous is the sure walk (10:9); the mouth of the righteous is a well of life, it is a fountain for good (10:11). In this proverb we are reminded of John 4:10 and 7:38, the believer indwelt by the Holy Spirit welling forth waters of life. While violence covers the mouth of the wicked and hatred does nothing but stir up strife, love, the true love in the heart of the just covereth all transgressions. (See 1 Peter 4:8 and James 5:20.) Whoever has understanding his lips speak wisdom. In all these proverbs there is something to be learned in a practical way and many blessed lessons are written here for all who desire to walk righteously, godly and soberly in this evil age. Here is a test, for instance, "He is in the way of life that heedeth correction" (10:17, corrected translation). But as soon as one forsaketh reproof he errs. How well it would be if children of God would daily consider verse 19. "In the multitude of words there wanteth not sin, but he that refraineth his

lips is wise." The fear of the wicked, the fear of the Lord, the hope of the righteous and the expectations of the wicked are furthermore contrasted in this chapter.

CHAPTER 11 The Contrast Continued

The continued contrast in this chapter between the righteous and the wicked contains many precious gems, sweet to faith and wholesome for instruction. In the second verse there is a warning as to pride. Pride and shame are vitally linked together, as is lowliness and wisdom. Lowliness therefore is true wisdom. A Rabbinical comment on this passage says, "Lowly souls are filled with wisdom as the lowly places are filled with water." Again riches are mentioned. They profit nothing in the day of wrath. (See Zephaniah 1.) But righteousness delivered from death (11:4). What wisdom there is in verse 8, "The righteous is delivered out of trouble, but the wicked cometh in his stead." Even so will it be when the Lord comes and gives rest and deliverance to His own and trouble and wrath to the wicked (2 Thess. 1). Verse 19 has been rendered:

He that is steadfast in righteousness is so unto life,
And he that pursueth evil doeth so unto his own death.

The delight of the Lord, declares the next proverb, is in the way of the upright, who remain steadfast in righteousness.

In verse 30 we read that the fruit of the righteous is a tree of life, not the righteous is a tree of life, but the fruit of the righteous, which means that he gives forth blessing and life to others, and that is here expressed in one sentence, "and he that winneth souls is wise." (See Daniel 12:3.)

CHAPTER 12 The Contrast in Relation to Various Conditions

In these proverbs we have the righteous mentioned, his thoughts, his words, his domestic relationship, his attitude toward animal creation (12:10); his diligence; all is contrasted with the wicked in these beautiful antithetic expressions of wisdom. The thoughts of the righteous are right (12:5), because his heart is right; his words bring deliverance (12:6); in speaking truth he showeth forth righteousness (12:17); his tongue is health (12:18); the lip which uttereth truth shall be established for ever (12:19); he knows nothing of lying lips, but dealing truly he is the Lord's delight (12:22). All is summed up in one statement, with which the chapter closeth: "In the way of righteousness there is life; in the pathway thereof there is no death." Happy are we if we know this way, which is Christ Himself, and if we follow Him. Verse 21 speaks of the blessing of the righteous, "There shall no evil happen to the just," that is, all things must work together for good.

CHAPTER 13 The Contrast: Advantage and Disadvantage

The contrast in Proverbs concerning the righteous and the wicked is continued in this chapter, showing mostly the advantage of the righteous, illustrating a statement found in the prophet Isaiah: "Say ye to the righteous, that it shall be well with him, for they shall eat the fruit of their doings" (Isaiah 3:10). Then the contrast: "Woe unto the wicked! It shall be ill with him, for the reward of his hands shall be given him" (verse 11). The righteous eats good by the fruit of his mouth; the transgressor receives violence. There is fatness for the soul of the diligent and nothing for the soul of the sluggard. Righteousness keepeth; wickedness overthroweth. While the light of the righteous rejoiceth, the lamp of the wicked shall be put out. These are some of the contrasts.

In verse 7 is a statement which may be applied to our Lord: "There is that maketh himself poor, yet hath great riches." He who has all the riches made Himself poor for our sake.

Then there is warning against pride. In fact the proverbs abound in these warnings. "By pride cometh contention" (verse 10). To the proud who refuseth correction cometh poverty and shame (verse 18).

CHAPTER 14 The Wise and The Foolish: The Rich and The Poor

The contrast now concerns the wise and the foolish, the rich and the poor. Let us see some of these contrasts. "In the mouth of the foolish is a rod of pride, but the lips of the wise shall preserve them" (14:3). The foolish shoots forth his foolishness like a branch. Separation from the foolish man is commanded in the seventh verse. The wise cannot have fellowship with the foolish, as the believer is not to be yoked to the unbeliever. Fools make a mock at sin (14:9). The word "sin" in the original means "trespass offering." That is exactly what the foolish man does, including the religious fool; he denies both sin and the blessed provision God has made to deliver from the guilt and power of sin. But among the righteous, says the next line, there is favor (acceptance). Because the righteous owns himself a sinner, judgeth himself and accepts God's redemption through the one sacrifice.

How true it is "the heart knoweth his own bitterness, and a stranger does not intermeddle with its joy" (14:10). We can tell our troubles and sorrows to others, but the bitterness of the heart cannot be revealed, but it is known to One who is touched with our sorrows and the bitterness of life through which we pass, for He Himself passed through it also.

Here is another deep saying, which shows that behind this wisdom uttered by the wise king, there is another who knows all what is going on in human life and in the heart. "Even in laughter the heart is sorrowful, and the end of that mirth is heaviness" (10:13). How often the sorrowful, the downcast covers all with forced laughter and no one suspects that underneath the mirth there is heaviness. This is true of children of the world, the foolish who reject true wisdom and know not the Lord Jesus Christ.

Of the poor and the rich we read that the poor is hated; the rich has many friends (14:20). He that oppressteth the poor reproacheth his Maker: but he that honoreth Him hath mercy on the poor" (14:31). To deal kindly with the poor and the lowly is God-like. The righteous will manifest his righteousness in a practical way by considering the poor.

Precious are two other proverbs in this chapter.

In the fear of the Lord is strong confidence;
And His children shall have a place of refuge.
The fear of the Lord is a fountain of life,
To depart from the snares of death. (14:26-27)

CHAPTER 15 The Better Things

One can read through the proverbs recorded in this chapter and ask the question, What are the better things?

A soft answer which turneth away wrath is better than grievous words (verse 1). The tongue of the righteous which useth knowledge aright is better than the mouth of fools (verse 2). Better is the prayer of the upright than the sacrifice of the wicked (verse 8). Better is he that followeth after righteousness than the way of the wicked, for the one the Lord delights in, the other is an abomination (verse 9). Better is the heart that seeketh knowledge than to feed on foolishness (verse 14). Better is a little with the fear of the Lord than great treasure and trouble therewith (verse 16). This fits many in our own days. Better is a dinner of herbs where love is, than a stalled ox and hatred therewith (verse 17). Better it is to be slow to anger than wrathful (verse 18). Better is the plain way of the righteous than the thorny way of the slothful (verse 19). Better is to hear reproof than to refuse it (verse 32).

Some other deep sayings are found in this chapter. For instance in verse 11.

Sheol and destruction are before the LORD,

How much more then the hearts of the children of men.

(Destruction, or Abaddon, is used in Revelation 9:11.)

All is known to the Lord. The unseen world as well as the future; all eternity is known to Him. All is naked and open before Him. He knoweth the hearts of men, yea even our thoughts afar off, before they ever pass through our finite minds.

Twice prayer is mentioned in this chapter, in verses 8 and 29. Not alone does the Lord delight in the prayer of the upright, but He also heareth them. "The LORD is far from the wicked, but He heareth the prayer of the righteous."

CHAPTER 16 In the Light of the Lord

The name Jehovah (LORD) appears eleven times in this chapter of Proverbs. The Lord has the final word, for to man belong the preparations (or plans) of the heart; but from the LORD is the answer of the tongue. It is the same thought as in our English proverb--"Man proposes--God disposes." Man loves to justify himself, his ways are clean in his own eyes; but the LORD weigheth the spirits; He is the judge of ways and motives. Our works are to be committed (literal: rolled upon) unto the LORD, then establishment and blessing will follow. It is strange that these three verses were omitted in the Septuagint version of the Old Testament.

The LORD hath made all things for Himself, yea, even the wicked for the day of evil (verse 4). Much error has been taught in connection with this verse. Some have taught that God made some wicked. It is not said that God makes a man wicked, for "He made man upright" (Eccles. 7:29), but being wicked by his own choice he comes under the irrevocable law which dooms him to "the day of evil," of calamity and punishment. By this, the Apostle teaches us, even in its final and most awful form, is revealed not the arbitrary predestination, but "the righteous judgment of God" (Romans 2:5-11, T. T. Perowne).

The abomination to the Lord is to be proud in heart. Pride, not only pride as it works out in deeds, but pride as nourished in the heart, seen by the eyes of the Lord alone, is equally an abomination to Him. How much there is in these days! The second stanza of this proverb speaks of joining hand in hand, or hand to hand. It is the much praised "team-work," confederation, alliance, etc., to do a big work and make a big name. Much of this attempt of doing "big things" in the day of "small things" has its source in the pride of the natural man.

In the sixth proverb of this chapter we have a Gospel text. The word mercy is literally "grace." The word "purged" is the word translated elsewhere by "covered" or "atoned." In the Lord Jesus Christ and His work is revealed "grace and truth" and by His work so blessedly finished on the cross our iniquity is covered. Then comes the fear of the Lord which results in departing from evil.

If a man walks in righteousness, in true humility, if he pleaseth the LORD, then his enemies will be silenced and not talk against him. Only too often the charges brought against the children of God by the enemies of truth, are the result of not walking in the truth.

Comforting to faith is the ninth verse. We may devise, plan, and often worry as we make our plans but behind it stands the LORD and in spite of our failures and mistakes "He directeth" the steps of the righteous.

Twice more the name of the LORD is given in this chapter. "And whoso trusteth in the LORD, happy is he" (verse 20). The only true happiness is to know the Lord, to trust Him and to follow Him. Inasmuch as we may increase in knowledge of Him, in confidence and in practical obedience our happiness is an increasing happiness. In the last verse we read that the disposing of the lot is of the LORD. The lot was used in the Old Testament. It is mentioned rarely in the New Testament, once preceding the day of Pentecost (Acts 1:26).

After the Holy Spirit came to guide and direct no lot is needed any longer. We pass over the many other blessed instructions recorded in this chapter. Private meditation and prayer unlock the many riches deposited in them.

CHAPTER 17 Diverse Proverbs

Of the twenty-eight proverbs found in this chapter we point out but a few. "The refining pot is for silver and the furnace for gold; but the LORD trieth the hearts" (verse 3). Man may try silver and gold, but God only the hearts. And He tries the hearts by the refining process, trials and afflictions, the process which rests in His own hands. (See Psalm 66:10-12; Mal. 3:3-4; 1 Peter 1:7.)

"He that covereth a transgression seeketh love, but he that repeateth a matter separateth very friends" (verse 9). To cover a transgression does not mean to ignore sin. How he who has sinned and is in transgression is to be dealt with is given to us in Galatians 6:1-5. To act in the spirit of love towards one who has sinned is Christ-like. To repeat the matter, gossip about it, harp on the shortcomings and failure, is Satan-like, for he is the accuser of the brethren.

"A friend loveth at all times, and a brother is born for adversity" (verse 17). This is beautifully illustrated in the case of David and Jonathan (1 Sam. 18--20). And the great Friend, the brother born for adversity, is the Lord Jesus Christ. He loveth at all times; His love is limitless and timeless. It is the love which passeth knowledge.

CHAPTER 18 Proverbs of Personal Instruction

There is first a warning against separation produced by desire, that is for gratification and pleasure, and not for a righteous purpose. Such a one becomes an enemy of true wisdom and one who intermeddled with all wisdom. This proverb finds a New Testament illustration in Alexander the coppersmith, as well as Hymenaeus and Philetus, and Diotrephes of whom John writes in his epistle. A fool foams out his own folly. This proverb in verse 2 is illustrated by many of the critics of the Bible. They have no delight in true understanding but their own hearts are laid bare by their mad oppositions to God's Holy Word.

The fool's mouth, his lips, the talebearer (whisperer), and the slothful are the themes of the proverbs in verses 6-9. Then we read "The Name of the LORD is a strong tower; the righteous runneth into it and is safe" (verse 10). The Name (Ha-Shem, in Hebrew) stands for Jehovah Himself. He is the place of refuge, of shelter, protection and safety for all who in faith turn to Him. In Him is our peace and safety. The Hebrew meaning of "is safe" is "set on high." Even so if we flee to Him and become His, we are exalted in Him, seated in Christ in heavenly places.

Another proverb of solemn meaning is found in verse 12. "Before destruction the heart of man is haughty, and before honor is humility. Scripture abounds in illustrations of these two lines. The truth stated here is still being manifested in the lives of men and women. The only place of safety for God's people is the place in the dust, the place of humility.

"Death and life are in the power of the tongue; and they that love it shall eat the fruit thereof" (verse 21). The Epistle of James (chapter 3) speaks in the same manner of the power of the tongue and its misuse. Evil words will bring evil results. But the tongue speaking the words of life and love, as given in the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, is a power for good, the power of life--and oh! what shall the harvest be in that day!

CHAPTER 19:1-19 Further Proverbs on Personal Instruction

One may be poor, but walking in integrity, he is far ahead of him who is perverse in his lips and is a fool. Then we find proverbs about fretting against the Lord; warning against false witness and speaking lies and other matters. We call special attention to verse 12.

The King's wrath is as the roaring of a lion.
But his favour is as dew upon the grass.

It may be applied to Him who is The Lamb of God and also the Lion of the tribe of Judah. Some day He will roar in His displeasure and manifest the wrath, so well deserved by the world. But even then His grace will be revealed, for in wrath He will remember mercy, the mercy promised to Israel. "I will be as the dew unto Israel; he shall grow as the lily, and cast forth its roots as Lebanon" (Hosea 14:5).

We then read of a foolish son, a contentious wife, concerning houses and riches, a prudent wife. There is a warning against slothfulness, and exhortation to keep the commandments and to pity the poor, for giving to the poor means lending to the Lord. The son is to be chastened as long as there is hope and a warning against sinful wrath. This verse marks the end of this section of proverbs.

III. INSTRUCTIONS GIVEN TO SOLOMON

CHAPTER 19:20-29

Beginning with the twentieth verse of chapter 19 the personal address begins again and we read repeatedly the phrase "My son" up to the twenty-fifth chapter. This section corresponds therefore with the first nine chapters, containing the instructions which Solomon received from the Lord and which he records in these chapters.

Once more there is the call, like in the opening chapters, to hear, to give attention. "Hear counsel, and receive instruction, that thou mayest be wise in thy latter end." The Lord knew beforehand what "the latter end" of Solomon would be. The wise man who warned against the fool, the backslider, the unjust and the man who forsakes counsel and the Lord, himself illustrates the truths given in these proverbs by turning away from the Lord. Alas! he did not hear counsel, and therefore instead of being wise in his latter days he became a fool. The truth expressed in verse 22 was Solomon's portion as long as the fear of the Lord governed his conduct. He was satisfied, had peace and prosperity; but when he no longer feared the Lord, evil came upon his kingdom and it was divided. "Wherefore the LORD said unto Solomon, Forasmuch as this is done of thee, and thou has not kept My covenant and My statutes which I have commanded thee, I will surely rend the kingdom from thee, and will give it to thy servant" (1 Kings 11:11).

CHAPTER 20 Proverbs as to Personal Conduct

Proverbs of warning and instructions as to personal conduct are found mostly in this chapter; a number of them are of special interest if applied to Solomon. The first one is concerning wine and strong drink. As the use of wine among the people of Israel was legitimate the warning is against intemperance (Deut. 14:26). The Bible gives many illustrations of the truth of this proverb-warning. We may think of Noah, Lot, Nabal, Ben-hadad, Belshazzar and others.

From all the good things we select the following. In verse 3 is instruction which makes for peace. It is the fool who meddles and thus produces strife, but it is an honor for man to cease from strife. In verse 13 we find a warning against self-indulgence. In verse 19 the talebearer and flatterer is mentioned. The sin of flattery should be avoided by all the godly for it nourisheth pride and works nothing but evil.

Many great and noble men have been ruined by admiration and popularity, who might have thriven, growing greater and nobler, in the fiercest and most relentless criticism. Donatello, the great Florentine sculptor, went at one time of his life to Padua, where he was received with the utmost enthusiasm, and loaded with approbation and honors. But soon he declared his intention of returning to Florence, on the ground that the sharp assaults and the cutting criticisms which always assailed him in his native city were much more favorable to his art than the atmosphere of admiration and eulogy. In this way he thought that he would be stimulated to greater efforts, and ultimately attain to a surer reputation.

Verse 22 gives another beautiful instruction. "Say not, I will recompense evil; but wait on the LORD, and He shall save thee." To put everything in the hands of the Lord, to trust Him and wait for His own time, that is true wisdom. But it is a lesson hard to learn. The twelfth chapter of Romans gives the same instruction. "Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath; for it is written, vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord." Also 1 Thess. 5:15: "See that none render evil for evil;" and 1 Peter 3:9; "Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing." How blessed it is to wait on the Lord, to bide His own time, and in waiting to know that He does all things well. Thrice in this chapter the king is mentioned: in verses 2, 26 and 28. These verses may be applied to Him, who is greater than Solomon, the King of kings and the Lord of lords. When He comes again He will deal with the lawless and with His enemies, but His throne is not only a judgment throne, but it is also upheld by mercy.

CHAPTER 21 Personal Instructions as to Life and Conduct

In the proverbs of this chapter the Lord is mentioned five times. "The king's heart is in the hand of the LORD, as the rivers of water: He turneth it whithersoever He will" (verse 1). The rivers of water are "water-courses," the irrigation system known to the ancients, opening and shutting sluices directed the flow of the waters. Thus the Lord governs the king's heart as He directs the affairs of men. The Lord pondereth the hearts (verse 2). The same truth is stated in chapter 16:2; self-justification suits the natural man but the Lord testeth all hearts. How well it is to remember in all our conduct, that truth, so comforting to the believer, expressed by Peter, "Thou knoweth all things." More acceptable than sacrifice to the Lord, is to do righteousness and judgment (verse 3). This may be compared with 1 Sam. 15:22, Hosea 6:6; Micah 6:6-8. The words of our Lord in the Gospel of Matthew give the same truth. "But go ye and learn what that meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice" (Matt. 9:13). At the close of the chapter two additional statements are made concerning the Lord; "There is no wisdom nor understanding, nor counsel against the LORD" (verse 30). No matter how man may plan, how cunning the enemy may be, it will all come to naught, for the Lord is above all. How well Eliphaz the Temanite expressed this truth when he said: "He disappointeth the devices of the crafty, so that their hands cannot perform their enterprise. He taketh the wise in their craftiness; and the counsel of the froward is carried headlong" (Job 5:12-13). Safety is not by "the horse prepared against the day of battle, nor by might or by power, but safety is of the LORD" (verse 31). How well then to look away from man and look to the Lord and to know in Him is our safety. The other proverbs in this chapter giving direction as to life and conduct, warning against the high look and the proud heart, getting of treasures by a lying tongue, against heartlessness in refusing to hear the cry of the poor, against loving pleasure and luxurious living, against covetousness and other matters do not need further annotations.

CHAPTER 22 Instructions Continued

Better than great riches, better than silver and gold is a name and loving favor. If a person has riches and a bad name and is not well thought of, he is less honorable than the poor man who has a name and good reputation. In Ecclesiastes, Solomon says: "A good name is better than precious ointment" (Eccles. 7:1). The third verse has a wise message: "The prudent man foreseeth the evil and hideth himself, but the simple pass on, and suffer for it." The Lord has revealed in His Word the evil which is in store for the sinner and the impenitent. He also has prepared a hiding place, an ark of safety, in His Son, our Lord. The prudent believeth the Word and flees to the refuge; the simple, the unbelieving, pass on and suffer for it when the evil comes. Humility and the fear of the Lord has a reward, while thorns and snares are in the way of the froward. sowing and reaping is found in verses 8 and 9. He that soweth iniquity reaps vanity, or calamity; he that has a bountiful eye, who looks upon the poor and needy with kindness and supplies their wants reaps blessing. In verse 11 we read, "He that loveth pureness of heart, for the grace of his lips the king shall be his friend." In such, whose hearts are pure and whose words are gracious, the Lord, the King, delights.

Beginning with verse 18 we find another call to hear, and to apply the heart to His knowledge: "For it is a pleasant thing if thou keep them within thee, they shall withal be fitted in thy lips. That thy trust may be in the LORD, I have made known to thee this day, even to thee." This is the personal message to Solomon by the Lord, heeded by him for many years and finally disobeyed.

The proverb of verse 28: "Remove not the ancient landmarks, which thy father has set," is a restatement of Deut. 19:14. It is repeated in chapter 23:10. In Job 24:2 we read "Some remove the landmarks." These landmarks were for Israel sacred things, for their possessions were staked off according to the Lord's will; to meddle with them was a transgression. While Israel, God's earthly people had landmarks, God's heavenly people also has landmarks of the heavenly realm, the blessed doctrines of the Word of God, which constitute the faith once and for all delivered unto the saints. And how man removes these landmarks in our day! How true it is, "Some remove the landmarks," that which our fathers cherished, believed and trusted in. The rationalist, the ritualist and the delusionist do it constantly and thus destroy the foundation upon which everything rests.

CHAPTER 23 Instructions Continued

The opening proverbs of this chapter treat of self-restraint in curbing the appetite and give manners to be observed in the presence of a superior. Warnings against riches and their uncertainty are contained in verses 4 and 5. How well it would be if the great mass of professing Christians, and some true believers also, would consider this instruction: "Labor not to be rich." But this exhortation as well as the exhortation in 1 Timothy 6:1-10 is overlooked, and many who profess to have their riches in Christ, in the heavenly places and never ending glory, weary themselves with earthly gain, and aim to become wealthy. But riches have wings; they can fly away swiftly as does the eagle when he mounts heavenward. This too is mentioned in the epistle to Timothy, in which those who are rich are charged not to be highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but to be rich in good works. The evil eye mentioned in verse 6 has nothing to do with the superstitious belief that some person with an evil eye can cast a spell to harm others. It means a dishonest, insincere person, one who is pharisaical. While he urges to eat and drink, puts on a friendly front, in his heart he entertains other thoughts.

Not to envy sinners is commanded in verse 17; one who walks in fear of the Lord all the day long looks to their end, though they may prosper now, their prosperity will end, but the expectation of him who fears the Lord will not be cut off.

Beginning with verse 22 is another call to hearken. Parents are to be obeyed. The truth is to be bought and never to be sold, as well as wisdom, instruction and understanding. There is a price often to be paid for the possession of the truth. Some have suffered even unto death to possess the truth, and in its defense. Then in verse 26 is the familiar exhortation, "My Son, give me thy heart, and let thine eyes delight in my ways." This word is often misused when applied to sinners, the unsaved. It is addressed to a son. The gospel does not come to the sinner with the exhortation "give"; the sinner has nothing to give. The gospel comes with an offer and if the offer of free grace is accepted, the believing sinner becomes a child of God, a son of God and an heir. Such a one is to yield his whole heart to the Lord, and his eyes are to delight in His ways. Thus Jehovah spoke to Solomon. The chapter ends with proverbs relating to self-indulgence, the sin of intemperance and all that goes with it.

CHAPTER 24 Instructions Continued

In the final instructions of this chapter we find first a description of the evil men. Their heart studieth destruction; their lips talk mischief. This theme is repeatedly referred to in this chapter. In verse 15 the evil man is addressed not to lay wait for the righteous and not to spoil his resting place. The Lord takes care of the righteous; he may be overcome by misfortunes seven times, yet will he rise again. Different it is with the wicked when he falls into mischief. Yet there must be no rejoicing over the fall of the enemy, nor gladness when he stumbled. This displeaseth the Lord. Still higher is the command of the New Testament, "Love your enemies; ... recompense no man evil for evil; ... overcome evil with good." There is to be no fretting because of evil men nor envy (verses 1 and 19). Why should the righteous be envious at the wicked in their prosperity? The Thirty-seventh Psalm enters more fully into this; but here the same answer is given in a terse way. The wicked have no reward; their candle will be put out. Their calamity riseth suddenly, and who knoweth the ruin of them both? which means that the Lord and the king, will deal with the wicked. Another proverb of this chapter we mention: "If thou faint in the day of adversity thy strength is small" (verse 10). The hour of trial is the hour which brings the test. When adversity brings despondency, and even worse, murmuring, it is an evidence that the heart does not fully trust the Lord.

The last section of this chapter is introduced by the statement, "These things also belong to the wise," or as it may be rendered, "These also are sayings of the wise." The chapter ends with a vivid description of the slothful. His field and vineyard bear witness to his character. They are grown over with thorns and covered with nettles and the stone wall is broken down. And why all this? "Yet a little Sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands in sleep." An illustration of this sluggard can be found a thousand times over again in our own land.

IV. THE PROVERBS OF SOLOMON COLLECTED BY THE MEN OF HEZEKIAH

CHAPTER 25

Here begin the proverbs which the good king Hezekiah, under the guidance of the Spirit of God, added to this book. "This title is interesting as affording a proof that a revival of literary activity accompanied the revival of religion and of national prosperity which marked the reign of Hezekiah. The men of Hezekiah were doubtless a body of scribes engaged under the direction of the king in literary labors."

Very fittingly the opening verses of this collected portion of proverbs relate to the king. While it is the glory of God to conceal a thing, the glory of kings is to search out a matter. God has many things concealed as to Himself, the great universe, creation and His ways in providence; but kings should inquire diligently into the matters brought before them and search them out in their administration of justice. Some day the great King who is coming, the King of Kings, who knows all the secrets of God as well as the hearts of men, will search out all things and bring the hidden things to light. When that day comes the fifth verse will see its accomplishment.

Take away the wicked from before the king--
And His throne shall be established in righteousness.

When He comes to establish His throne of righteousness, to rule as the true Melchizedek, the King of Righteousness and of Peace, the wicked and evildoers will be taken away in judgment. Only then can there be a righteous government. Verses 6 and 7 remind us of the parable of the great supper spoken by our Lord in Luke 14.

Verses 21 and 22 are quoted by the Holy Spirit in the Epistle to the Romans (12:20). And that is followed by another saying as to the conduct of the righteous man. "The north wind driveth away rain; so does an angry countenance, a backbiting tongue." The backbiter does the work of Satan and the Lord hates the slandering tongue as He hates the flattering tongue. The believer can show an angry countenance, without sinning, and cut short the pernicious work of the backbiter (Ephesians 4:26). Verse 28 gives a good definition of true self-control, the rule over one's own spirit.

CHAPTER 26 Concerning the Fool and the Sluggard

Eleven times we meet the word fool in this chapter. Three different words are used in the Hebrew for fool. The first is "avil" which signifies weakness. The second word "kesil" occurs nearly fifty times, means fat or dense. The third word is the Hebrew "nabal," which is derived from the verb to fade, or to wither; it means a vulgar, bad man who has given himself over to wickedness. The natural man in his condition, his darkened mind, his sinfulness answers to much that is said about the fool in this book. As snow in summer and rain at harvest time are quite impossible in Palestine, so is honor for a fool. A fool may utter a curse, as they often do, and wish something evil, but being causeless, it will not be fulfilled. The fool needs correction, the stripes for his back, he deserves no answer, and if he is answered it must be according to his folly. The foolish questions mentioned in the New Testament may well be considered here (Titus 3:9). The tenth verse is doubtful in its translation. A better suggested rendering is the following:

A master workman formeth all himself aright,
But he that hireth a fool hireth a transgressor--

That is, a master does everything right; a fool spoils everything. The eleventh verse is quoted in 2 Peter 2:22. The Apostle applies it to the outward professor of Christianity who turns back to the world after a period of profession and reformation. The true child of God is never described as a dog, nor could the other sentence in Peter's Epistle mean a true believer. "The sow that was washed turned to her own wallowing in the mire." A hog may be washed, yet in spite of the washing he is still a hog. So a sinner may profess salvation yet may never have been born again, and after a brief period of profession turn again to his old sins and habits.

The slothful man, the man that deceiveth his neighbor, the talebearer, the contentious man, the lying tongue and the flattering mouth, furnish other proverbs. How true it is "A flattering mouth worketh ruin." Every godly man and woman should hate and avoid flattery.

V. INSTRUCTIONS GIVEN TO SOLOMON

In the three chapters which follow 27-29 we find the change we have noticed before. These proverbs are addressed to a person and the phrases "My son" and the personal address, "thou," "thy" and "thyself," are again used in these chapters. Like the previous sections, so here we find instructions which were given to Solomon.

CHAPTER 27 Instructions and Warnings

The opening proverb warns against procrastination. No one can be sure of what the next day may bring forth. True wisdom is not to trust the future day, for it may never come, nor are we to dwell in the past. While it is today we must live and act and leave nothing undone which can be done today. How true this is of salvation which is offered for today--now is the day of salvation. How many have been lost forever by procrastination, by thinking a more convenient time would come. Well has one said, "The thief which cheats us of our days and beggars us of our wealth is the specious thought that tomorrow belongs to us." The illusion is as old as the world, but is today as fresh and powerful as ever. James 4:13-14 gives the same lesson. In the second verse we find a warning as to self-praise. Self-praise is one of the worst forms of pride, that pride which another proverb states (16:18-19) "goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall."

"Open rebuke is better than secret love" and "faithful are the wounds of a friend; but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful" (verses 5-6). A wise man welcomes open criticism and rebuke, though such rebuke may wound, yet being given by the faithfulness of a friend, it is far better than the deceitful kisses of a flattering enemy. The 14th verse may be linked with these statements. "He that bleaseth his friend with a loud voice rising early in the morning, it shall be counted a curse unto him." Insincerity lurks behind such loud, pharisaical protestations of friendship.

A great truth is given in verse 19: "As in water face answereth face, so the heart of man to man." The still pool of water was man's first mirror. Gazing in it the face is reflected. As truly as the face seen in the pool is like the face which the water reflects, so truly does one man's heart reflect the other's. Though there may be culture, education and a certain refinement, underneath each human being there is the same corrupt, fallen human nature.

CHAPTER 28 Warnings and Instructions Continued

The wicked is a coward; the righteous man, because he trusteth in the Lord and knows the Lord is on his side, is as bold as a lion. It is the conscience which makes a coward of the wicked man.

This chapter has many sharp contrasts and important warnings and exhortations. We point out a few. Those who forsake the law, turn their backs upon the revelation of God, refuse obedience to Him, praise the wicked, they make common cause with them. Those who keep the law, obey God's Word, are contenders for the faith (verse 4). Evil men are blind, but with seeking the Lord comes understanding, the blind eyes are opened (verse 5). A wise son is he who keepeth the law; such was Solomon till he plunged into apostasy and darkness (verse 7). Then in the ninth verse is another pithy

saying. He "that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abomination." It is the same truth as stated in Psalm 66:18, "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me."

An important message is contained in verse 13. "He that covereth his sins shall not prosper; but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy." Every attempt to cover up sin is a failure. How much of this is done today, not merely the covering of individual sins, but the denial of sin itself. The modern theology useth much ingenious argumentation which tries to make out of sin something else; speaks of it as a mere defect, as if it were some kind of a taint in the blood, a hereditary and therefore unavoidable weakness, something for which man is not responsible. All these inventions, which sweep aside the declarations of the infallible Word of God, are "covering up." No mercy can there be for those who deny sin and sins. The fig leaves must be torn away with which man still tries to cover his nakedness. There must be confession, repentance, self-judgment and then of course trust in Him who died for the ungodly.

The next proverb (verse 14) contains a beatitude. "Happy--or blessed--is the man that feareth always." He who has found forgiveness is sheltered by the precious blood, walks in newness of life and in godly fear all the day long.

We mention verses 25 and 26: "Trust in the LORD brings blessing; and he that trusteth in his own heart is a fool."

CHAPTER 29 The Final Instructions

These final instructions given in proverbs cover the similar ground as those in the previous chapters. Wisdom shines out in each, and the contents of every proverb shows that the author is not Solomon but He who is perfect in knowledge. "He that being often reprov'd hardeneth his neck shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy." Scripture abounds with examples of cases of hardening the neck and the heart, like Pharaoh, Ahab and others. This proverb will be finally proven to be the truth when an ungodly age will end with judgment for those who were often reprov'd and continue in sin.

Once more the sin of flattery is mentioned. "A man that flattereth his neighbor spreadeth a net for his feet" (verse 5). Flattery is akin to lying and can never be right, but is always a mistake, which results in the gravest consequences. More servants of the Lord have been spoiled by flattery than in any other manner. It is literally, as this proverb says, "spreading a net for his feet."

In verse 23 we read, "A man's pride shall bring him low, but honor shall uphold the humble in spirit." It should be connected with the proverb in chapter 26:12, "Seest thou a man wise in his own conceits? There is more hope of a fool than of him." Pride always brings low; humility always brings up. The highest place is the lowest place. "The fear of man bringeth a snare; but whoso putteth his trust in the LORD shall be safe" (verse 25). The fear of man is born of unbelief. The Christian who fears man shows clearly that he is not looking to the Lord, but to man. The fear of man surely bringeth a snare, it leads to men-pleasing and men-praising. And because one seeks the honor which comes from man and not the honor which cometh from God only, man, his approval or disapproval, is feared. The fear of man is as dangerous, as subtle and as un-christianlike as flattery, talebearing, backbiting, whispering and the other evil things mentioned in these proverbs.

This chapter concludes the proverbs of Solomon. As we have seen, the instructions which he received, first from the Lord, and the instructions which were given such which were for his conduct and life, for guidance and direction, and the proverbs which were revealed to him to give to others. We express once more the belief that every true Christian should devote more attention to these God-given instructions. How much there is in all of them for all classes of believers!

VI. THE WORDS OF AGUR THE SON OF JAKEH

CHAPTER 30

Some hold that Agur is another name for Solomon. This opinion is also upheld by the Talmud, which speaks of six names which belonged to the King: Solomon, Jedidiah, Koheleth, Son of Jakeh, Agur and Lemuel. But this opinion cannot be verified, nor do we know who Agur the son of Jakeh was. The Septuagint and the Vulgate have translated the Hebrew words and formed a sentence out of them. "Agur" means "assembler" and Jakeh has the meaning of "pious," so that some think that Agur means an unknown godly man who gathered these sayings and they were embodied in this book. We leave the name as it is, and believe that Agur, the son of Jakeh, is the name of the author of this chapter. "Whoever Agur was, he had a certain marked individuality; he combines meditation on lofty questions of theology with a sound theory of practical life. He was able to give valuable admonitions about conduct. But his characteristic delight was "to group together in quatrains visible illustrations of selected qualities or ideas" (R.F. Horton). The opening verse also tells us that he spoke to Ithiel (God with me) and Ucal (I shall be able). The Revised Version has a marginal reading instead of the two names Ithiel and Ucal: "I have wearied myself, O God. I have wearied myself O God, and am consumed." We do not adopt this.

The structure of the chapter itself is different from the other chapters in this book. It begins with a prologue, containing his confession, in which he shows a spirit of deep abasement and acknowledgment of his own ignorance (verses 2-3).

This is followed by five questions concerning creation and the Creator and His Son (verse 4).

The questions are answered by God's revelation. This is indicated in the next two verses (5 and 6).

Next comes a prayer by Agur the son of Jakeh (verses 7-9).

One proverb follows next in the tenth verse. After that come the so-called "quatrains," six groups of proverbs each consisting of four things. Between the second and third group a single proverb is inserted (verse 17) and at the close of the chapter stands another proverb.

In the prologue he takes the low place, and in his confession manifests the deepest humility, with no taint of pride, thus illustrating the true humility enjoined in the proverbs of Solomon. Because he confessed that he had no understanding nor knowledge of the holy, the Lord gave him all what he lacked.

The questions he asks are concerning the Creator. "Who is He that hath ascended up into heaven and descended? Who hath gathered the wind in His fists? Who hath bound the waters in a garment? Who hath established all the ends of the earth? What is His Name, and what is His Son's Name, if thou canst tell?" He knows there is a Creator. He cannot question the eternal power and Godhead, which alone can account for this ordered universe. He has not, like many thinkers, ancient and modern, dropped a plummet down the broad deep universe, and cried, No God. He knows there is a God; there must be an intelligence able to conceive, coupled with power able to release this mighty mechanism. But Who is it? What is His Name or His Son's Name? Here are the footsteps of the Creator; but where is the Creator Himself? (Expositor's Bible) By searching God cannot be found out; the fullest answer is given in the New Testament. We are reminded of John 3:13. We know Him who has ascended, because He descended from heaven; Who is the Lord and Creator of all, now in God's presence as the glorified man, and some day He who ascended into heaven will descend again.

That in the next place the Word of God is mentioned, that is the written revelation of God, is not without meaning. Man needs this revelation to know the Lord, and have the question answered which human speculation and scientific research can never answer. On account of the statement "add thou not unto His words" critics have surmised that the canon of the Old Testament must have been completed when this chapter was written. They have put the date long after the exile. But such a conclusion is unwarranted. God had commanded long before that nothing should be added to His words (Deut. 4:2). The prayer of Agur in verses 7-9 is closely linked with the foregoing verses. He prays for deliverance from vanity and lies, that he may have a true and honest heart, so necessary for the reception of the truth of God; then he prays to have neither poverty nor riches. Poverty might induce to steal and take the name of God in vain, then His Word would be rejected by him; and riches would mean the same, as it might lead him to say, Who is the Lord?

The proverb in the form of a command in verse 10 is isolated from the trend of thought in this chapter. The first quatrain comes next in verses 11-14. Four times the word generation is used, describing the classes of people frequently mentioned in the preceding chapters of proverbs. Then follow four things which are insatiable. The climax is reached gradually. The horseleach (or vampire) has two daughters by name of "Give." Even so is the poor heart of man; and there are three and four things of the same character; the unseen regions into which disembodied spirits are going day after day, year after year; the barren womb; the earth upon which rain descends yet is never filled with water, and the fourth thing, the fire, which never saith, it is enough, which consumes till nothing is left. These unsatiable things mentioned are symbolical of the condition of the natural man, always taking in yet always, restless and never satisfied. Then there are four things inscrutable: The way of the eagle in the air; the way of the serpent on a rock; the way of a ship in the midst of the ocean; and the way of a man with a maid (verses 18-20).

Four disquieting things are given in verses 21-23. In verses 24-28 the four little things, yet wise, are pictured. They are the ants, the conies, the locusts and the lizard (not spider as in the A.V.). Here are lessons for man: the sluggard, the fool, the evil man, and other characters touched upon in proverbs are put to shame by the sagacity of these little things. Four graceful things conclude these sayings: A lion, a greyhound, an he-goat and a king, against whom there is no rising up. So may the righteous man act. Bold as a lion, swift as the greyhound to carry out the Lord's will in the Lord's service, climbing the steeps like the he-goat, and always victorious like a king undefeated. We see that these statements of Agur have a definite bearing upon the entire book of Proverbs inasmuch as they restate and illustrate the different characters, such as the ungodly, the unwise, the fool, the sluggard, the proud, the righteous, the godly, the humble, etc., mentioned in the book. Agur's message ends with a word of counsel to exercise self-restraint.

VII. THE WORDS OF KING LEMUEL TAUGHT HIM BY HIS MOTHER

CHAPTER 31 The Virtuous Woman

"The words of King Lemuel, the prophecy that his mother taught him"; this is the superscription of this chapter. Who is King Lemuel? No king by that name is known. We do not hesitate in saying that it is Solomon. It means "unto God" one who is devoted to the Lord. In all probability Solomon's mother called her boy by this name, and here is the record therefore of the instruction given by Solomon's mother. The warning is once more, and that very earnestly (shown by the thrice asked "what?" What shall I say unto you?) against licentiousness, against wine and strong drink. The brief words of the mother's exhortation end with a request to act righteously as king, to stand up for those who are appointed to destruction, to plead the cause of the poor and needy.

The final portion of the book of Proverbs is a description of the virtuous woman. This section is quite different from the rest of the book, like many Psalms and the Lamentations it is alphabetically arranged. The virtuous woman, who is far more valuable than rubies, is described in her home as a faithful wife, a painstaking mother and the competent mistress of her household. There is no need to allegorize this description and apply it to the Church, as some have done. But this virtuous woman stands out in prominent and bright relief--a relief against the descriptions of "the strange woman," the adulteress so repeatedly mentioned in Proverbs (2:16-20; 5:1-23; 22:14; 23:27, etc.). One of the proverbs is expanded in this beautiful picture drawn by the Spirit of God: "Whoso findeth a wife findeth a good thing, and obtaineth favor from the LORD." But how few of the modern women reach this ideal! How few among Christian women measure up to it!

Thus ends the book of Proverbs, the book filled with practical instructions, warnings; food for thought and meditation; filled with wholesome counsel, with direction and guidance, the wisdom which is from above.

THE BOOK OF ECCLESIASTES

The Annotated Bible

Arno Clement Gaebelein

THE BOOK OF ECCLESIASTES

Introduction

The book of Ecclesiastes has difficulties which have puzzled both the expositor and the reader. We do not mean the question of authorship so much as the contents. It has been branded as pessimism, and not a few have declared that it is unworthy of the Holy Spirit and should never have been added to the other books of the Bible. In spite of all these perplexities connected with the book and hasty judgments, it has a definite place in the organism of the Holy Scriptures, and without this book the revelation of God would be incomplete.

The title the book bears in our English translation comes from the Septuagint, and is an attempted translation of the Hebrew word "Koheleth", which Luther in the German version translated with "Preacher" (Prediger); it is thus translated in the King James version in the opening verse of the book--"The words of the preacher." But the Hebrew word Koheleth can hardly mean preacher. It is derived from the verb "kahal" which means "to gather" or "assemble." The word "kahal" has been translated "congregation," or as the Greek of the Septuagint translates it "ecclesia." Koheleth is feminine, evidently a word specially provided, and it has been suggested that this was done to correspond to "wisdom" in Proverbs, which is also the feminine gender (Prov. 1:20). Perhaps the word "debater" comes nearest to the meaning of the original. The word Koheleth is found nowhere else in the Bible; but in Ecclesiastes it occurs seven times, three times in the beginning, once in the middle and three times at the end of the book.

The Authorship and Date

Both Jewish and Christian tradition ascribe this book to King Solomon. The book itself does not leave us in doubt about it. Chapter 1:12-16 is conclusive. If this is disputed, as it is almost universally among rationalistic critics, and also by some who are not rationalists, we may well ask the question, Who wrote Ecclesiastes? The higher critic is unable to give a satisfactory answer. They give the date of the book and its composition about 250-235 B.C. The book itself shows that this is impossible, for the author of it lived at a time when Israel had reached the zenith of prosperity and glory. That time was during Solomon's reign. If Solomon was not the author, then another person living during the reign of Solomon must have written the book. But everything shows that only Solomon could have been the author fit and fitted to write this book.

As already stated Jewish teachers and Christian teachers give decisive testimony for the Solomonic authorship. In a Jewish commentary of Ecclesiastes (Midrash Koheleth) which was written almost 1,200 years ago, a large number of learned and ancient rabbis bear witness to the fact that Solomon is the author. The Targum, or paraphrase, on this book, composed in the sixth century A.D., with many other Jewish commentators, speaks of Solomon as the writer of Ecclesiastes. Equally uniform is the testimony of the teachers of the early church. The critics fully acknowledge this consensus of Jewish and Christian opinion and they have an explanation for it. They say these scholars and commentators "wanted the faculty of historical criticism, one might almost say, of intellectual discernment of the meaning and drift of a book or individual passages,... and that they had no material for forming that opinion other than those which are in our hands at the present time" (Dr. E.H. Plumbtree in The Cambridge Bible). We shall see what the "intellectual discernment" is, of which critics constantly boast, and we shall find that it is but another term for "infidelity."

It was Luther, the great German reformer who, as far as we know, began first to cast doubt upon this book. In his "Table Talks" he said; "Solomon did not write the book himself, but it was composed by Sirach in the time of the Maccabees. It is, as it were, a Talmud put together out of many books, probably from the library of Ptolemy Euergetes, King of Egypt." He was followed by Grotius in 1644 who also denied that Solomon is the author. "From that time onward," says a critic, "the stream of objections to the Solomonic authorship has flowed with an ever increasing volume." No doubt it is still flowing, and that stream carries those who trust themselves to it farther and farther away from childlike trust in God's Holy Word.

Some of the Objections of Critics

The main objection is on linguistic lines. Hebraeists have pointed out that there are several scores of words and forms in Ecclesiastes which are found only in the post-exilic books and literature; some they claim originated even later. Professor Delitzsch makes the bold statement, "If Ecclesiastes is of Solomonic origin, then there is no history of the Hebrew language." And another scholar states, "We could as easily believe that Chaucer is the author of *Rasselas* as that Solomon wrote Ecclesiastes." But not so hasty, gentlemen! There is another side to this question of the foreign words in this book, which, after all your objections, still is believed to be Solomon's. Your objection on these linguistic peculiarities is really an evidence for the Solomonic authorship of this book. The words which are Aramaic (and Aramaic belongs to the same branch of language as the Hebrew Semitic) have been proven by other scholars to be in common use among the nearby nations who used the Chaldean language. Solomon was a scholar himself. No doubt all the available literature of that age and of the surrounding nations was at his disposal, and he was familiar with it. It is said of him, "His wisdom excelled the children of the East country and all the wisdom of Egypt, for he was wiser than all men." That Solomon used Aramaic words is perfectly logical; but it would have been strange if such words had been absent from this book, with its peculiar character and message. That Solomon's foreign diplomacy, as well as marriages with foreigners also made him familiar with Aramaic words and sayings is quite possible. Then we might add that no unimpeachable proof has ever been given that the Aramaic words and forms used by Solomon were of later date at all. At any rate objections to the date and authorship of a Bible book on purely philological evidence suits those perfectly who approach the Word of God as they approach any other literary production.

Another objection is made on account of the statement in chapter 1:12, "I, the preacher, was king over Israel." It seems almost childish that these scholars raise such a point; it shows the weakness of their case. They declare that the writer of the book says, "I, the preacher, was king over Israel," and that this could not have been written by Solomon, who never ceased to be king. This objection is foolish. It is not at all the question of the fact that the writer of the book reigned as king, but rather what was his position at the time when he wrote the book?

Another objection is the absence of the name of Jehovah in this book. It has been said, "A book coming from the Son of David was hardly likely to be characterized, as this is, by the omission of the name Jehovah." This objection springs from the deplorable ignorance of the critics concerning the message and purpose of this book. The omission of the name of Jehovah and the use of the name of God as Elohim exclusively is a mark of the genuineness of the book. We shall refer to this later when we touch on the character and message of Ecclesiastes.

We mention but one more of the objections. They say "That the book presents many striking parallelisms with that of Malachi, which is confessedly later than the exile and written under the Persian monarchy, probably 390 B.C."

This studied objection can readily be answered by anybody. In fact we have seen no valid objection whatever. Every one can be satisfactorily answered. A mature scholar, Dean Milman, wrote many years ago: "I am well aware that the general voice of German criticism assigns a later date than that of Solomon to this book. But I am not convinced by any arguments from internal evidence which I have read."

The Message of Ecclesiastes

No other book in the whole Bible is so perplexing, if not confirming to the average reader as is Ecclesiastes. It is a book filled with hopelessness and despair, depicting the difficulties and disappointments of life, and the hollowness of temporal things; at the same time it seemingly sanctions a conduct which clashes with the standards of holy living as revealed in other portions of the Scriptures. The utter absence of any praise, or expression of joy and peace, as it is in the group of other books to which Ecclesiastes belongs (Job, Psalms, Proverbs and Solomon's Song) is another striking characteristic.

The problem is solved in the very beginning of the book itself. In the first verse we are introduced to the illustrious author of the book, who calls himself "Koheleth," and "the son of David, King in Jerusalem." This ought to settle the question for ever. If another man wrote as the critics maintain centuries later and assumed that he is "the son of David and King of Jerusalem," he was a fraud. But why does Solomon write? What is the theme he follows? What is the object of his debate or discourse? The next two verses give the answer to these questions and the solution of the problem. Vanity of vanities, saith Koheleth; vanity of vanities--all is vanity. "What profit hath a man of all his labor which he taketh under the sun?" Here are two words which arrest our attention. The first one is "vanity," used five times in the second verse. It occurs many times throughout the book and is frequently connected with "vexation of spirit" (literally, pursuit of the wind). The word "vanity" means that which soon vanishes, nothingness. It is used for the first time by Eve when she had her second son, whom she called "Abel." So the great king, the wisest of men in his discourse in which he seeks and searches out by wisdom concerning all things that are done under heaven (verse 13), and in all his searching independent of Jehovah's revelation, he discovers that all is vanity and vexation of spirit.

The second word which we notice is "under the sun." This expression is found twenty-nine times in this book. Now that which is "under the sun" is on the earth. There is, of course, something which is above the sun, that is heaven, the heavenly things. Ecclesiastes then is occupied with earthly things, with what man does apart from God, that is the natural man. The book describes the things under the sun, shows that all what man does, his pursuits, his labors, whatever undertaken and all that is connected with it, is nothing but vanity and vexation of spirit, ever unsatisfying and filled with sorrow and perplexity. The writer makes it clear that in all his searching and description of the things under the sun he does not depend on divine revelation, on that which is above the sun, but he reacheth his results through the light which nature gives; his resources are within himself. This is confirmed by the phrase, "I communed with my own heart," which occurs seven times in the book. The book of Ecclesiastes is therefore the book of the natural man apart from divine revelation. This is the reason why the name Jehovah (God's name as He enters in covenant relation with man) is omitted and the name of God is only expressed by Elohim, that is His Name as Creator. It shows what the natural man is, the life he lives, and the world in which he lives with its fleeting vanities. Ecclesiastes is embodied in the Holy Scriptures for one purpose, to show to the natural man the hollowness and vanity of all that is under the sun, and to convince him thereby to seek and find that which is better, that which is above the sun.

"it is the experience of a man who--retaining his wisdom, that he may judge of all--makes trial of everything under the sun that should be supposed capable of rendering men happy, through the enjoyment of everything that human capacity can entertain as a means of joy. The effect of this trial was the discovery that all is vanity and vexation of spirit; that every effort to be happy in possessing the earth, in whatever way it may be, ends in nothing. There is a canker worn at the root. The greater the capacity of enjoyment, the deeper and wider is the experience of disappointment and vexation of spirit. Pleasure does not satisfy, and even the idea of securing happiness in this world by an unusual degree of righteousness cannot be realised. Evil is there, and the government of God in such a world as this is not in exercise to secure happiness to man here below--a happiness drawn from things below and resting on their stability" (Synopsis of the Bible).

Natural men, and even infidels, have put a kind of a seal upon the character of the book. The French infidel Renan praised it as being the only charming book that a Jew had ever written, a book, he added, that touched our grief at every point, while he saw in the writer one who ever posed but was always natural and simple. Frederick the Great, equally infidel, regarded it as the most valuable book in the whole Bible.

Revelation and Inspiration

In the study of this book the important distinction between what is "revelation" and what is "inspiration" must not be overlooked. What Solomon sought out, the conclusions he reached, the things he found as he communed with his own heart, all is recorded in this book by divine inspiration. But this inspired record is not revelation in the sense, for instance, as the Epistle to the Ephesians. It is not divine revelation for man to be guided by. It is not revelation concerning that which is above the sun, nor the future. We mention this because those who hold the evil doctrines of soul-sleep and also annihilation turn to Ecclesiastes and quote (9:5, 10) as being "the word and revelation of God" when it is not.

The book too directs to Christ. There is that which is above the sun, that which is not vanishing, but abiding. The old creation demands a new creation and that has been made possible in Christ.

The Division of Ecclesiastes

It has been charged "that the book is very far removed from the character of a systematic treatise and therefore does not readily admit of a formal analysis." This verdict is far from being right. The analysis and division of the book depends on the right viewpoint concerning the contents of it. As we have stated in our introduction Ecclesiastes is the book of the natural man searching out the things under the sun and the conclusions he reached. The division of the book should be made with this theme in mind.

After reading the book carefully a number of times one finds that there are two main parts. The first six chapters form the first part and the remaining six chapters constitute the second part. In the first part the search of the wise man brings out the fact what the chief good is not, how all things under the sun are vanity and vexation of spirit. In the second part the search leads to certain conclusions. The chief good is sought for in wise conduct but in all we are still on the ground of the natural man.

PART I. CHAPTERS 1-6

1. THE PROLOGUE AND THE SEARCH BEGUN: (1-2)
2. THE RESULTS OF THE SEARCH: (3-4)
3. EXHORTATIONS ON DIFFERENT VANITIES AND CONCLUSIONS: (5-6)

PART II. CHAPTERS 7-12

1. THE GOOD ADVICE OF THE NATURAL MAN, DISCOURAGEMENT AND FAILURE: (7-9:12)
2. THE PRAISE OF WISDOM AND PHILOSOPHY, THE FINAL WORD AND THE GREAT CONCLUSION: (9:13-12)

Analysis and Annotations

PART I. CHAPTERS 1-6

1. The Prologue and the Search Begun

CHAPTER 1

1. The introduction and prologue (1:1-11)
2. The seeker; his method and the results (1:12-18)

Verses 1-11. In the general introduction we have already referred to the opening verses as giving the information who the author is and what is the object of his treatise. So sure is the critical school that Solomon is not the king mentioned that

one says "the fact that Solomon is not the author, but is introduced in a literary figure, has become such an axiom of the present day interpretation of the book, that no extended argument to prove it is necessary." Still another makes the following remarks as to the date of the book: "I shall presume that we have in this book, a late, perhaps the very latest, portion of the Old Testament canon; and that the book was written, not in the palmy days of the empire of Solomon, but at a time when the Jewish people, once so full of aspirations to universal empire, always so intolerant of foreign supremacy, was lying beneath the yoke of Persian or Syrian or Egyptian kings; when the Holy Land had become a province, ruled by some Eastern satrap, and suffering from the rapacity and corruption inherent at all times in such government" (Dean Bradley). Such presumptions spring from ignorance about the message of the book. We shall find in the text the above assertions refuted and a confirmation likewise of the Solomonic authorship.

"Before following the Preacher in his great quest it should be noted that he is to be viewed as a man who himself belongs under the sun. Whether the word Koheleth is rendered "preacher," "debater," or "assembler," or "one of an Assembly," the whole tenor of the teaching proves it is wisdom from under the sun, natural wisdom, that is speaking. The wisest of men undertakes to observe and experiment with life under the sun, in order to find out for all men the outcome of all his searchings, and then rehearses all to an assembly of his fellows. He is not supposed to know any divinely-revealed wisdom, or to have heard of a righteousness of faith, or of divine mercy, or of forgiveness of sins. He is to make answer as a natural man to whom is given the resources and helps common to natural men, only he is wiser and richer than they, and so must bring the final answer for all. And also he is a Hebrew and knows of one living and true God. When he says "thou," in advice or warning, it is not so much to some disciple or "son" he is speaking as to himself, or he is then assuming a high ground, far above "the maddening crowd," but it is soon apparent how, in these most exalted frames of the pious and philosophic mind, he is still only a natural man, for he is found, soon after, in the depth of despair uttering his disgust and hate of life and exclaiming: "The whole is vapor and a chasing of the wind." That "thou" is, after all a sign that he is talking to himself, telling what he and all men under the sun ought to do, but utterly fail to do.

Not only does he pronounce the verdict of "vanity" for all, but he resorts to the same passing mirthful enjoyment he commends to all; but he would do it all before God. He is indeed wiser and more serious than other men, only to become more perplexed and sorrowful than they.

On him hangs more heavily than on other men

... the burden of the mystery
 ... the heavy and the weary weight
 Of all this unintelligible world.

He, if any, can say, "I know there is nothing better for them." He is king and can lay the whole world under contribution to furnish the means for answer. "What can the man do who cometh after the king?"

He repeatedly says, "I have seen all the works that are done," all the "oppressions", and "all the labor that I have labored at." And so he is to speak for the world, for the race, for man, for high, for low, wise and foolish, rich and poor, in hut and hall, living and dying. And he speaks as before God. He, of all men, feels a strange fear, seeing that somehow man's imperfect vain life under the sun is mysteriously related to and controlled by the unalterable purpose and work of God. W. J. Erdman, Ecclesiastes.)

The first note as to vanity is found in verses 4-11. There is a law of repetition, or circle-movement. It works in the sphere of nature as well as in human life. Generation follows generation; the sun has his circle; the winds too have their currents in which they blow from north to south and south to north; the waters also are subject to the same law. History repeats itself, for the thing that has been, is that which shall be and that which is done is that which shall be done. There is then, no new thing under the sun; nothing is new, all is repetition, a monotonous unchangeableness. Man is in the midst of it; he too is subject to this law. Everything then under the sun is restless, unstable (except the earth itself, which abideth forever: verse 4) hollow and empty, therefore all is vanity. Here is a picture of unrest, weariness, if not melancholy and

despair.

Verses 12-18. On the critical objection that Solomon is meant in verse 12 see the general introduction. The great king, filled with wisdom and learning, rich and prosperous as none ever was before him in Jerusalem, nor after him, gives his heart to search out everything that is done under heaven. When he says: "I communed with mine own heart," he states the method of his search. He does it by meditation and not through revelation. He searches not in the light which comes from above, but that which comes from nature and by observation. He tells us a little more of himself. "Lo, I am come to great estate, and have gotten more wisdom than all they that have been before me in Jerusalem; yea, my heart had great experience of wisdom and knowledge." Is this language not sufficient to establish beyond the shadow of the doubt that Solomon speaks? And if not Solomon, who was it who dared to write these words? And what are the given results by the great and wise king of Jerusalem? The result is twofold. "I have seen all the works that are done under the sun; and behold all is vanity and vexation of spirit"--the pursuit of the wind, that is chasing air-bubbles. And another conclusion: "For in much wisdom is much grief, and he that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow" (verse 18). What a verdict from such a man as Solomon was. He had all things man can enjoy; all pleasures and honors; great possessions, chariots, horses, palaces and a large estate and he exclaims "nothing but travail!" "Nothing but vanity and vexation of spirit!" It all leaves me empty; it does not satisfy.

But he had given himself to wisdom. He possessed unusual wisdom. The king was what we would term today a great scientist. He excelled in wisdom all the children of the East country. Proverbial in his days was "the wisdom of Egypt"; yet his wisdom was greater. His fame was in all nations round about. Philosophy and poetry were his great achievements. "And he spake of trees, from the cedar tree that is in Lebanon even unto the hyssop that springeth out of the wall; he spake also of beasts, and of fowl, and of creeping things and of fishes" (1 Kings 4:29, etc.). He was a great botanist, an ornithologist and zoologist. He traced God's wonders in nature, that which the natural man can so easily do. But what about all this wisdom? Did it satisfy his soul? We listen to his answer: "I perceived that this also is vexation of spirit." The more knowledge the more sorrow. Alas! how trite it all is!

But is there something else which satisfies? Is there a higher wisdom and knowledge? There is, but in the book of the natural man it is unrevealed. That which satisfies, which is not vanity and vexation of spirit, is that which is above the sun, and not under it. From above the sun He came, who is the wisdom of God, the son of God. He has come and gone, but brought to the poor thirsting and hungry heart of man the true knowledge. He who died for our sins and is now back above the sun, is He "in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" (Col. 2). That which alone can satisfy is Christ.

CHAPTER 2 The Results of the Search and Different Vanities

1. His personal experience (2:1-11)
2. Various vanities and a conclusion (2:12-26)

Verses 1-11. Here we find first of all the king's personal experience. He experimented, so to speak, with that which is the possession of the natural man, a fallen nature. In that nature are found three things: the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life. We can trace these three things in the opening verses. The lust of the flesh in verses 1-3; the lust of the eyes in verses 4-6, and the pride of life in verses 7-8. He said in his heart, Go to now, I will prove thee: that is, I will try now to satisfy thee, that is myself, my heart. He said to himself, "enjoy pleasure." He laughed and had mirth; he tried wine, laid hold on folly. Then he made great works, built houses, planted vineyards, laid out beautiful oriental gardens with fruit trees, all kinds of shrubbery, with pools of water, springs and waterfalls--all so pleasing to the eye--the lust of the eyes. To all this he added servants and maidens, with great possessions. He gathered silver and gold and treasures such which only kings could obtain, gifts, probably from other monarchs, perhaps those which the Queen of Sheba brought. He also paid attention to music, had men singers, women singers, and an orchestra. Then, self-satisfied, he leans back and says, "So I was great and increased more than all that were before me in Jerusalem; also my wisdom remained with me" (verse 9). Who can doubt even for a moment that all this could mean any other person but Solomon; none but he could speak thus. But to make sure, he did not leave a single desire unsatisfied, for "whatsoever mine eyes desired I kept

not from them, I withheld not my heart from any joy." Well, he had tried everything, every pleasure, everything that is beautiful to the eye; he was surrounded with every comfort, had all honor and glory, was wealthy and esteemed. Does he then sing and in a blessed peace of mind is he content and satisfied? Far from it. "Then--then"--when he had done all these things and had every desire fulfilled--"then I looked on all the works that my hands had wrought, and on the labor that I had labored to do; and, behold, all was vanity and vexation of spirit; and there was no profit under the sun." It is a groan instead of a song. But that sounds pessimistic. It is the pessimism into which sin has put man. Whatever man does and seeks in satisfying that old nature, whatever his pursuits, his labors and his achievements in life, if it is that and nothing else, in the end it is nothing but vanity and a chasing of the wind.

Thank God! there is One who can still the hunger and thirst of the soul, who graciously invites, "if any man thirst, let him come unto Me and drink."

Verses 12-26. He now turns in search for happiness in another direction. The old, old question, "Is life worth living?" after all he had stated must be answered negatively--if all is vanity and vexation of spirit and there is no profit under the sun, in anything that man enjoys, labors for and obtains, then life is not worth living. He had been disappointed in his search, but now he turns to something more ideal and not materialistic as the former things. "Then I saw that wisdom excelleth folly, as far as light excelleth darkness." He turns philosopher, but it is of no avail, for it leads in the same road and ends with the same groan--vanity and vexation of spirit. While wisdom is superior to folly as far as light is superior to darkness, yet wisdom cannot help man, cannot give him peace nor give him happiness. There is one event which happens to the wise men and to the fool: that event is death. As it happeneth to the fool, so it happeneth unto me. What then was the good that I was more wise? He at once concludes "this also is vanity." Death, according to the conception of the natural man, apart from revelation, plunges the wise man and the fool into oblivion, "there is no remembrance of the wise more than of the fool for ever; seeing that which now is in the days to come shall all be forgotten and how dieth the wise man as the fool?" (verse 16) Such is the reasoning of the natural man. By revelation we know that there is remembrance. But it leads Koheleth, the King, almost to despair. He hates life. If the pursuit of pleasures, the lust of eyes and the pride of life left me empty, and were found out to be nothing but vexation of spirit, so that life is not worth living, equally so, he finds out, that wisdom in itself and its possession brings the same results--vanity of spirit--I hated life! Then he speaks of labor done. He has labored to leave it all to the one who comes after him, and he may be a fool and not a wise man. Or he may have labored wisely and it is left all to one who never did anything, a sluggard. All he brands as vanity and ends by saying, "For what hath a man of all his labors, and of the vexation of his heart wherein he hath labored under the sun? For all his days are sorrows, and his travail grief, yea his heart taketh no rest in the night. This is also vanity."

The conclusion reached is that, apart from God, man has no capacity to enjoy his labor. Verse 25 has been metrically rendered as follows:

The good is not in man that he should eat and drink And find his soul's enjoyment in his toil; This, too, I saw is only from the hands of God.

2. Further Results of the Search

CHAPTER 3

1. The times of man under the sun (3:1-11)
2. When then is the good? (3:12-15)
3. Concerning judgment and the future (3:16-22)

Verses 1-11. There is a time for everything. Twenty-eight "times" are mentioned, beginning with the time of birth and ending with the time for peace. Everything has a fixed time: Life-death; seeding-harvesting; killing-healing; breaking-down building-up; weeping-laughing; mourning-dancing, etc. These are the times of the entire race; that is what human life is. All moves and changes; all appears unto him profitless. "What profit hath he that worketh in that wherein he

laboreth? What is the gain of it, to be born and to die, to plant and to pull up, to weep and to laugh, to mourn and to dance, to get and to lose, to love and to hate?" But he advanced a step. He recognizeth that all this travail must be of God, who has produced these never ceasing changes, so that men's hearts might be exercised thereby. "I have seen the travail which God has given to the sons of men to be exercised in it." Yeah, there is something which is in man. "God hath set the world in their heart," the correct rendering is, "God hath set eternity in their heart" (verse 11). Man has the sense of the infinite in his heart.

All that time offers, all these changes cannot satisfy, nor can man with eternity in his heart find out the truth about it by himself. He may feel but cannot understand.

Verses 12-15. What then is the good? To what can man in such condition, with such constant changes, and with an unsatisfied feeling of the infinite in his heart resort to? The searcher gives his results. Let man rejoice and do good in his life. Let him eat and drink and enjoy the food of all his labor. But let him also do so fearing God in view of God's judgment, for "God requireth that which is past." This is about as far as the natural man can see.

Verses 16-22. The thought of judgment expressed in verse 15 is now more fully taken up. It seems as if a ray of light now breaks in. There must be from the side of God's judgment. Under the sun he saw in the place of judgment wickedness, and in the place of righteousness, wickedness was there also. Then he said in his heart, "God shall judge the righteous and the wicked." He draws the conclusion that the present injustice must be dealt with by God. But here he stops short. He may surmise, but certainly he has not. Instead of advancing in his searchings as a natural man he comes back to his old wail of vanity. "I said in mine heart, it is because of the sons of men that God may prove them, and that they may see they themselves are but as beasts. For that which befalleth the sons of men befalleth beasts; even one thing befalleth them: as the one dieth so dieth the other; yea, they have all one breath; and man hath no pre-eminence above the beasts: for all is vanity." It shows that as far as life beyond the present is concerned all is darkness for man. He may have "eternity set in his heart", but he has no light. Death comes alike to man and beast; they die and are gone, hence the conclusion, "man hath no pre-eminence above the beast." But man has, as the revelation of God teacheth. But here we do not listen to God's revelation but to the searchings and observations of man only. The natural man knows, "all" men and beasts "go to one place, all are of the dust, and all turn to dust again." Then there is just a faint suggestion of something which might be beyond the grave. The correct rendering of verse 21 is, "who knoweth whether the spirit of man goeth upward, and the spirit of the beast goeth downward to the earth?" Man and beast share the same being, draw breath in the same way, spring from the dust, return to the dust, but who can give assurance that the spirit of man really goeth upward? Who knoweth if this is really true. Who has come back and told us the truth about it? Who knoweth? Such is still the cry of the natural man with all his boasted discoveries and research. Finally he reacheth the same goal as Koheleth--all is vanity. Oh! blessed truth as given by revelation and above all in the person of our Lord and His precious gospel! Man indeed has the pre-eminence and is not like the beast that perisheth. Redeemed by Him who became man, to die for our sins, not only the spirit of the redeemed goeth upward but in its time the body will leave the dust and be changed like unto the glorious body of Him, who as glorified man sits at the right hand of God.

Returning to the wise king with his search, in view of all this, which he has brought forth in this chapter he gives his counsel as to what man is to do under these harassing circumstances. "Wherefore I perceive that there is nothing better than that a man (the natural man) should rejoice in his own works, for that is his portion; for who shall bring him to see what shall be after him?" (See also 6:12).

CHAPTER 4 Observations of Different Wrongs

1. Concerning oppressions (4:1-3)
2. Concerning envy of fools and the rich (4:4-7)
3. Concerning the miser (4:8-12)
4. Concerning popularity (4:13-16)

Verses 1-3. He observes that the world is filled with oppressions. This connects with the statement made in the previous chapter, (verse 16). Criticism declares in connection with this passage that it could not have been written by Solomon, nor does it, they claim, describe the conditions of the people Israel during the reign of the king. One commentator asks, "Can this bitter experience be drawn, I asked in passing, from the golden day of Solomon, from the high noon of Hebrew prosperity, as sketched in the book of Kings?" They apply it to the days of the Ptolemies. But Solomon does not say that the oppressions were in Jerusalem at all. He says that he saw "all the oppressions that are done under the sun." As the great king was in touch with other nations he knew what oppression, poverty, tears and sorrow are in the world, and that the oppressed, the grief stricken, the downtrodden, have no comforter. It is so still, "under the sun." Oppression and all that goes with it is still the history of part of the race and will be as long as sin reigns. Injustice and unredressed wrongs have been the order for almost six thousand years. So deep is his sorrow over these conditions that he declares it would have been better for both the living and the dead if they had never existed at all.

Verses 4-7. In continuing his observations he mentions the successful man, the man who has made life worth living. But success breeds envy. It makes his life bitter. Instead of being loved the successful man is hated; what else then is it but vanity and vexation of spirit! But now another extreme. It is the sluggard, the lazy man, the fool who eats his own flesh. But here is the best human wisdom can suggest. Avoiding both extremes, he declares, "Better is an handful with quietness, than two handfuls with labor and vexation of spirit."

Verses 7-12. Another vanity is observed. Some are misers, heaping up riches and treasures untold. He has no relations, no children, no brother, even companionship and friendship are unknown to him. He lives his solitary life. His ambition is to labor and gather riches, but his eyes are never satisfied with riches; he wants more and more all the time. This also is vanity and is a sore travail.

Verses 13-16. Popularity is another vanity and vexation of spirit. No lot is abiding. Upon the throne sits an old and foolish king. He is dethroned and is replaced by a youth out of prison.

3. Exhortations on Different Vanities

CHAPTER 5

1. Concerning worship and vows (5:1-7)
2. Concerning extortions (5:8-9)
3. The vanities of wealth (5:10-17)
4. The conclusion (5:18-20)

Verses 1-7. The writer, King Solomon, seems to have been exhausted in his descriptions as to the things under the sun. He pauseth and turns to something different. He meditates on worship, that man aims to get in touch with the unseen God. "He seems to turn to himself again and communes with his heart on the loftier heights of what proves to be, after all, but natural religiousness, and what cannot save him from the depths of unbelief, ignorance and despair, in which he is soon hopelessly floundering. Mindful of man's jaunty liberalism and enslaving superstitions, rash vows and wordy prayers, shallow reverence and dreamy worship--dreamy and unreal because full of entreating vanities and worldly business, the speaker earnestly exhorts the multitude going to the house of God to have few words and slow and solemn steps in their worship and vows; but even then he does so like a natural man himself, knowing only of a God far away, who is looking upon the sinful on earth with cold judicial eye, ready to destroy the work of man in wrath." (W.J. Erdman, Ecclesiastes)

The natural man may fear God, fear Him with a slavish fear, make an attempt to worship Him and do something, yet he does not know God nor can he know Him by himself. Christendom, even today, bears witness to the worship of the natural man. Yet this natural religion, which recognizeth the existence of a Creator, speaks of Him as the All-wise, the Omnipotent and the Eternal, makes an attempt to worship in a house by ceremonies and ritual, or that which takes on a more liberal form, does not meet the needs of man. God is still in heaven and man on earth (verse 2), and a vast distance

between--an unbridged gulf. To bring man to God, to give him peace and assurance, to deliver him from fear, revelation is needed that which is "above the sun." The gospel of Jesus Christ is the only provision.

Verses 8-9. Once more he calls attention to oppression, the extortions so common "under the sun," and he shows that One higher than they will some day judge them, for He has regard for the poor and the oppressed.

Verses 10-17. He speaks now of wealth and of earthly prosperity. Silver does not satisfy, nor is he that loveth abundance satisfied with the increase. It is vanity. Earthly happiness in the things under the sun is a vain hope. The reasons why riches, and what goes along with them, cannot give true enjoyment have been searched out by the wise king and the results of his observations are given in these verses. "As he came forth from his mother's womb naked so shall he go again as he came, and shall take nothing for his labor, which he may carry away in his hand ... and what profit hath he that he laboreth for the wind?" (See 1 Timothy 6:7).

Verses 18-20. What then has he seen and learned in observing all these vanities? He draws the conclusion that it is good and comely for one to eat and to drink, and then to enjoy to fullest extent the good which he has obtained all the days of his life, the life and length of days given him by the Creator. And if God has given him riches and wealth and the capacity to enjoy it, then he ought to take his portion and rejoice in his labor. Such a spirit of enjoyment will make him forget the evil in his day; it will carry him over the disagreeable things of life. "For he shall not much remember the days of his life, because God answereth him in the joy of his heart." The latter phrase means that God Himself corresponds to his joy, for real enjoyment is a God-acknowledging spirit.

CHAPTER 6 Disheartening Contradictions

1. Riches--Inability to enjoy them (6:1-2)
2. Having All--Yet no fill of the soul (6:3-9)
3. The sad ending wail (6:10-12)

Verses 1-2. The first evil the wise searcher sees as a discouraging contradiction is, that God giveth a man riches, wealth, and honor so that he does not lack in anything whatever. But God does not give him the power to enjoy it, a stranger instead eats thereof. This makes impossible what he stated in the closing verses of the preceding chapter. The cherished desires of man have found no fulfilment. And if he has seen this evil, so do we still see it also. Where then is "the good and comely" of chapter 5:18? This is vanity and it is an evil disease, he confesseth.

Verses 3-9. But here is more of life's bitterness. If one should beget a hundred children and live to a very ripe old age, so old he becomes that it seems as if there is to be no burial for him at all, yet his soul is not filled with good--what then? "I say that an untimely birth is better than he, for it cometh in vanity and departeth in darkness, and the name thereof is covered with darkness; moreover it has not seen the sun nor known it; this hath rest rather than the other: yea, though he live a thousand years twice told, and yet enjoy no good; do not all go to one place?" It is a sad, sorrowful picture, yet every word of it is true as to man's existence. With all his long life and all it brings, riches and power, his soul has not the fill it needs, that which satisfies. His life ends at last and then there is the one place--the region of the unknown, the Sheol, where they all go. And about that one place there is no light; it is felt existence after death but of what nature? All is darkness! Better, far better off, is the untimely birth.

In verse 7 he comes back again to the labor that man does. It is for the mouth, yet it does not satisfy--the appetite is not filled. The hunger returns, and man must labor to satisfy it and yet it is never filled. The fool and the wise make the same experience. The wise has no advantage over the fool; and the poor man who has something to eat in sight is far better off than the rich, whose desires wander, seeking that which gratifies. Vanity and vexation of spirit! We may all sum it up in a brief sentence: Man under the sun, whatever he does, all his labors, all his riches, all his seeking for good, all his achievements cannot satisfy him, it cannot give that which the soul of man craves and needs. Nor can it ever be discovered by the searcher, the wise man, the philosopher, the scientist. What man needs is not anything "under the sun" but that

which is "from above the sun."

Verses 10-13. Who knoweth what is good for man in this life that is--what is it that can satisfy the heart and soul of man? He spendeth all the days of his vain life as a shadow. For who can tell a man who shall be after him under the sun? It is the wail of darkness and despair. Who knoweth? Not the natural man. But the question which man cannot answer, God has graciously, blessedly and eternally answered in His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. With Peter we too cry out, "Lord to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life" (John 6:68)

PART II. CHAPTERS 7-12

1. The Good Advice of the Natural Man, Discouragement and Failure

CHAPTER 7

1. The better things (7:1-14)
2. The anomalies (7:15-18)
3. The strength of wisdom, yet none perfect (7:19-22)
4. The worst thing he found (7:23-29)

Verses 1-14. All had been tested by the royal searcher; all was found out to be vanity and vexation of spirit. Darkness, discouragement, uncertainty and despair were the results. The good, that which is right and comely for men, supposedly, found had also turned unto vapor, empty and hollow like the rest. He starts now in a new direction; he turns moralist and philosophizeth on the better things. He climbs high with his reason and deductions. He had come to the conclusion that life is not worth living. Having riches, possession of everything, were found out nothing but vanity. Perhaps being good, having the better things morally, and doing good, will satisfy the heart in "which is set eternity," the soul of man, And so he makes his observations in seven comparisons.

A good name better than precious ointment;
 the day of death better than the day of birth;
 the house of mourning is better than the house of feasting;
 sorrow is better than laughter,
 the rebuke of the wise better than the songs of fools;
 the end of a thing better than the beginning;
 the patient in spirit better than the proud in spirit.

He has used his highest power of reasoning in reaching these conclusions, similar to the conclusion of other wise men, moralists and philosophers among the pagans. The different "sacred writings" of other nations, the Greek, Roman, Persian, Hindu, Chinese, etc., poetry and ethics as well as philosophies of all these nations give a definite proof that Ecclesiastes is the book of the natural man, that reason speaks and not revelation. For these "sacred writings" and philosophies are on the same line as our book. But does this satisfy? Can man thereby attain perfection? His heart has passions which man cannot control. Oppression makes a wise man mad (verse 7); anger is in his bosom (verse 9). Again he mentions wisdom. It is a good thing, just as good as an inheritance; it profits to see the sun, but not above the sun. Wisdom and wealth are both good as a defense; both give life, animate the person who possesses them, give a certain amount of enjoyment. But can both wisdom and wealth give a solution to man's problem? Who can make that straight which God hath made crooked? His ways are mysterious, unsolvable as far as man is concerned; man cannot solve the providential dealings of God. Prosperity is followed by adversity and adversity by prosperity; He sets one over against the other. But who by his reason, by his wisdom, can find out what God will do in the future, what His dealings will be? In the very reading of all these statements one feels like walking in a dense fog. Some statements are beclouded so that it is difficult to ascertain the correct meaning that the searcher is really aiming at. Perhaps this is the case to teach the lesson how man, with his finite reason searching for light, apart from revelation, wanders in darkness and ends in confusion.

Verses 15-18. Prosperity and adversity, controlled by a higher power; how are they meted out? No one knows when they come; they come to the righteous and to the wicked. He has seen the righteous perish in his righteousness and the wicked prolongs his days in his wickedness. How does the natural man, the philosopher, meet this difficulty? He answereth it by what is called "common sense." "Be not righteous overmuch, neither make thyself overwise; why should thou destroy thyself?" Do not overdo it, strike a happy medium; avoid any kind of excess; be not too self-righteous for you might become puffed up and then you destroy yourself. Here is more "common sense" of the natural man. Be not overmuch wicked, neither be thou foolish; why shouldst thou die before thy time? Enjoy yourself, but avoid too much wickedness; have a good time but avoid excesses. Not too much righteousness and not too much wickedness; just a happy middle way; such a way, thinks the natural man, is not compatible with the fear of God.

Verses 19-22. Wisdom is strength. He had tried wisdom; he tells us what he proved by wisdom. But the wise man makes a wise confession: "I said I will be wise; but it was far from me." He owns his ignorance. Everything has left him unsatisfied. He cannot find out by wisdom that which is far off and exceeding deep. All is imperfection. "There is not a just man on the earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not" (verse 20).

Verses 23-29. Again he applies his heart to know, to search and to go to the root of the matter--to know the wickedness of folly, even of foolishness and madness. And what does he find? "I find more bitter than death the woman whose heart is snares and nets, and her hands as bands." He speaks here as a Hebrew with the knowledge at least of what happened to man. God hath made man upright, but they have sought out many inventions. And woman was deceived by the serpent and her heart is often a snare and a net and her hands drag down into the vile things of the flesh. Here, at least, is an acknowledgement that sin is in the world and has corrupted the old creation, but what about the remedy? He knows nothing of that, for the new creation which lifts man out of the condition where sin has put him is the subject of the revelation of God.

CHAPTER 8

1. Prudence before kings (8:1-10)
2. Of the righteous and the wicked (8:11-13)
3. The conclusion (8:14-17)

Verses 1-10. What else had he seen? What were his further discoveries? He is still ardent in praising wisdom, though he had confessed "that it was far from him." Wisdom makes the face to shine and the boldness of the face becomes changed. He cautions as to the governmental powers in the world, urges prudence and submission. He is a keen observer. But nothing can deliver from the power of the grave. The tyrannic ruler ruleth over another to his own hurt, but the power of the tyrant does not deliver him from the power of the grave and he is soon forgotten.

Verses 11-13. But here is a true statement, which the natural man discovers by observation, for instance, in reading the pages of history. "Because sentence against an evil work is not speedily executed, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil." Evil will be punished; man knows that by experience. And he knows "that it shall be well with them that fear God, which fear before Him. But it shall not be well with the wicked, neither shall he prolong his days which are as a shadow, because he feareth not God." But what about his former saying, "Be not righteous overmuch--be not overmuch wicked?" He is in perplexity. But his reason, which has approved of "fearing God," by which he knows that it shall be well on earth with the righteous, is now staggered, when he sees just men unto whom it happeneth according to the work of the wicked, and wicked men to whom it happeneth according to the work of the righteous. Nothing but contradictions! Like a shipwrecked man who strikes out amidst the raging waves to reach the land, and is constantly thrown back by the waves he tries to master, with all his wisdom, his searching, his conclusions and nice sayings, he is thrown back, and once more he cries his "vanity."

Verses 15-17. He is at the end of his wit. He moralized, spoke of things better; made his observations and gave

exhortations; a measure of light he has to judge certain things, but the darkness is too overwhelming. His boasted wisdom has left him stranded completely. What then shall he say? In spite of the higher tone he assumed, he is back at his old conclusion, only more emphatic than before: "Then I commended mirth, because a man hath no better thing under the sun than to eat, and to drink, and to be merry; for that shall abide with him of his labor the days of his life, which God giveth him under the sun." Enjoy life! There is no better thing! Thank God through revelation we know "the better part," that which satisfies and which abides. Then comes the confession of utter helplessness in verse 17. A man, the natural man, cannot find out, he is not able to find out anything.

CHAPTER 9

1. The common fate (9:1-6)
2. Make the best of life (9:7-10)
3. The great uncertainty (9:11-12)

Verses 1-6. Here is another conclusion. The righteous and the wise with their works are in the hands of God. One event is in store for all, for the righteous, the wicked, the good, the clean, the unclean, the one who sacrificeth and the one who sacrificeth not--the grave is the one common goal. In that goal there is the end of all human toil and ambition. But even with this knowledge that all go one way, and the certainty of it, man does not reckon with it at all; "the heart of the sons of men is full of evil, and madness is in their hearts while they live." They live on with madness in the heart; then comes death. Surely reason, dark reason, says "a living dog is better than a dead lion"; the dead lion has nothing left of all his majestic awe, but if man is alive, though he be as a dog, it is the better thing. Surely everything here is pessimism gone to seed. And what in this darkening perplexity does the searcher have to say about the dead? "The dead know not anything, neither have they any more reward; for the memory of them is forgotten" (verse 5). And again, "There is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the grave (Sheol) whither thou goest." But is this the truth? Is this a doctrine of the faith delivered unto the saints? Is this the revelation of God? A thousand times, No! It is the verdict which the natural man, pagan or infidel philosopher, pronounceth. But revelation, the life and immortality brought to light by the gospel, tells us something entirely different. Yet these sentences penned when the searcher finds himself in the most despairing condition, are used by men and women, who claim to be Christians, to prove the abominable doctrines of "soul-sleep," that after death the soul plunges into a state of unconsciousness, and that the wicked are annihilated. Christian doctrine? NO! but paganism, and a denial of the revelation from above the sun.

Verses 7-10. Therefore, because "death ends it all," that unbelievable conclusion of the natural man, make the best of life. Feast well and enjoy your wine, be sure and let the wine of earthly joys make your heart merry. Dress spotlessly in the heights of fashion; be well groomed; put ointment on your head. Have a good time with your wife; enter into everything energetically--for a little while longer and you reach the common fate. Is this also "revelation" for faith to follow, or is there something better from above the sun? The New Testament answers blessedly this question.

Verses 11-12. He returns-to speak another word. Even this is not satisfying. A man knoweth not his time, "As the fishes that are taken in an evil net, and as the birds that are caught in the snare, so are the sons of men snared in an evil time, when it falleth suddenly upon them."

2. Praise of Wisdom and Philosophy, the Final Word and the Great Conclusion

CHAPTER 9:13-18

Before he had declared that wisdom is strength. He comes back to this statement and gives an illustration of it. He is in a calmer mood, but what does his meditation amount to? Only to show that this also is vanity.

CHAPTER 10

This chapter contains a series of proverbs, expressing the wisdom and prudence of the natural man. Here are a number of observations and all show that there is a practical value in wisdom and that it has certain advantages. These maxims are of a different kind than the proverbs in the preceding book. There we are face to face with the wisdom which is from above, here it is the wisdom of man. The name of the Lord is not mentioned once, Similar philosophic utterances can be traced in the literature of other ancient nations. They need no detailed annotations.

CHAPTER 11

1. Proverbs concerning man's work (11:1-6)
2. The vanity of life (11:7-10)

Verses 1-6. These continued proverbs concern the work of man and begin with exhortations to charity and are followed by the wise acknowledgement that no one knows the works of God, who is the maker of all. All this knowledge is within the compass of the natural man.

Verses 7-10. After these philosophic proverbs he comes back to his former finding--vanity. So to speak he sums up life in one verse, "Truly the light is sweet and a pleasant thing it is for the eyes to behold the sun." It is a great thing to have life. A different strain from his despondency, when life seemed not worth living. Alas! there is another "but." "But if a man live many years, and rejoice in them all; yet let him remember the days of darkness; for they shall be many. All that cometh is vanity." Yes, let him enjoy himself in the present, but there is "a dead fly in the ointment" (10:1). There is looming up the dark future; days of darkness are coming for him--it is the grave, and human reason, philosophy, science nor anything else can bring light into this baffling darkness. "All that cometh is vanity!" Thank God, through revelation we know that those who believe His revelation, and believe on Him, whom God has sent, who is the propitiation for our sins, who conquered death and the grave--for such, "all that cometh is glory!"

Is it sarcasm that follows? He calls upon the young man to rejoice in his youth. Have a good time! Walk in the ways of thine heart, that heart out of which nothing but evil can come, and in the sight, not of the all-seeing eye of God, but of thine eyes. Do as you like! Follow my previous advice--be not righteous overmuch; be not too wicked; follow the middle road and enjoy yourself. Then comes a weighty sentence, "but know thou that for all these things God shall bring thee to judgment." But is not this revelation? Can the reason of man discover that such will be the case? Reason does know the law in nature "that whatsoever a man sows that he shall also reap." Reason beholds this law working not only in nature, which teaches man many things, but also in history, so that the philosopher can say, "the history of the world is the judgment of the world."

CHAPTER 12

1. Youth and old age (12:1-8)
2. The concluding epilogue (12:9-14)

Verses 1-8. Childhood and youth are vanity! That is the concluding sentence of the previous chapter. The vanities of life, the doom and darkness of the grave are uppermost in his mind, and the final word he speaks, ere he closeth with his epilogue, is the same with which he began his search, the search which brought out so many things, yet nothing in reality--as in the beginning of the book, so now he cries out, "Vanity of vanities, saith the preacher, all is vanity" (verse 8). He has come back in all his reasoning to the place from which he started.

Once more he speaks of youth and exhorts, "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth." This advice is given in connection with the thought expressed in chapter 11:9, "God will bring thee into judgment." Yet the natural man cannot obey this command. He then points to that which is inevitable. The balmy days of youth and energy will be followed by years in which man says, "I have no pleasure in them, the days of old age. Then death stalks in and the dust returns to the earth as it was and the spirit to God who gave it (verse 7). The description of the approach of old age is extremely

beautiful. Clouds begin to cast a shadow over the spirit; sorrows multiply, one comes after the other as "clouds return after rain." The keepers of the house (the hands) tremble with weakness, and the strong men (the knees) become feeble. But a few of the grinders (the teeth) are left and those that look out of the windows (the eyes) are darkened. Then the doors are shut in the streets, the ears become dull and can no longer hear the familiar sound of the grinding at the mill; he is troubled with sleeplessness and no longer enjoys pleasure. He is troubled with fears. His hair becomes snow-white like the almond tree in bloom and the least thing becomes a heavy burden; the appetite is gone. Age has come and man is ready to go to his "age-long home." The silver cord is snapped (the spinal column), the gold bowl is broken (the brain), the pitcher is broken at the fountain (the heart), and the wheel broken at the cistern (the blood and its circulation). But if he speaks of an age-long home, what is that home? And he speaks now of the spirit returning to God, but what does it mean? There is no answer, no light on these questions, for the natural man, even at his best, and in highest wisdom, cannot find the truth for himself about that "home" nor what it means--the spirit return to God. And thus he ends, "All is vanity."

But if we turn to the gospel, the gospel of God, the gospel of His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, the gospel which is from above the sun, which reaches down to lost man under the sun, that blessed gospel lifts man higher and higher, till redeemed, saved by grace, washed in the blood of the Lamb, he reaches the place above the sun, the Father's house with its many mansions, the eternal home of the saints of God.

Verses 9-14. The final great conclusion remains. He reaches the high-water mark of his reasoning wisdom. Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: "Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work unto judgment with every hidden thing, whether it be good or whether it be evil." This is great wisdom, but does it help man? Does it bring comfort to his soul? Does it carry with it that which satisfies his heart? God is in heaven and man on the earth, he said before. There is an immeasurable distance between. And this masterly conclusion of the royal searcher still leaves God and man apart, with not even the faintest glimmer of light. Man is a sinner; how can his sins be forgiven? How can man, with a sinful heart, "obey commandments"? What about that judgment of every hidden thing? Alas! no answer; and man, struggling man, lost, sinful man, face to face with that which the highest natural wisdom can produce, must quake and tremble.

Hence Ecclesiastes is the way-preparer for the gospel of Jesus Christ. Like every other Old Testament book it points and leads to Christ, in whom all problems are solved, all questions answered, in whom the old creation ends and the new begins.

THE SONG OF SONGS

The Annotated Bible

Arno Clement Gaebelein

THE SONG OF SONGS

Introduction

The Song of Solomon, as this book is called in the King James Version, is the third book of which Solomon is the author, preceded by Proverbs and Ecclesiastes. In the Hebrew Bible it occupies a different place. It is found there in the section called "Kethubim," the Hagiographic division. It belongs to the so-called "Megilloth" or rolls and is placed first among them--Song of Solomon, Ruth, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes and Esther. In the synagogal service it has been appointed to be read on the eighth day of Passover, the feast of redemption. This is suggestive, for, as we shall see, this Song is a love-song, expressing the love of Messiah for His people.

A better title for this book is "the Song of Songs." It corresponds to the Hebrew beginning of the book in Hebrew--Shir Ha-shirim. It is called "Song of Songs" in the Septuagint (Asma Asmaton) and also in the Vulgate (Canticum Canticorum). This title expresses most fully the spiritual meaning of this little book.

Needless to say that this beautiful Song has suffered much from the hands of the men who claim to be critics of the Word of God. We do not care to repeat the charges which have been made against this Song as being sensuous, if not immoral, in its suggestions. Such is the verdict of the natural man, who, by such criticism, reveals the state of his own heart.

The Solomonic authorship has likewise been attacked, and it is claimed that the book was written long after Solomon's day. Wellhausen, the German critic, declares that "the most original of the Hagiographic writings is the song of Solomon; the names and things which occur in it assign it clearly to the second half of the Persian period. We see from it that the law had not yet forbidden love-poetry to the Jews, and had not made the enjoyment of life impossible." Nearly all the other critics have placed the date after the exile. The objections against the composition of the book in Solomon's period are mostly on account of a few words, which critics think were unknown to the people during Solomon's reign. What we have stated on these philological objections in the introduction to Ecclesiastes holds good in the case of this book also. While Wellhausen and others have denied the Solomonic authorship and date, other scholars have declared that the song itself has all the marks of Solomon. Among these marks Professor Delitzsch mentions "the familiarity with nature, the fulness and extent of the book's geography and artistic references, the mention of so many exotic plants and foreign things, particularly of such objects of luxury as the Egyptian horses."

Neither the Jews nor the early church doubted the authenticity of Solomon's Song. It formed part of the Hebrew Canonical Scriptures from very ancient times, and there is no valid reason why it should be rejected or the Solomonic authorship be denied.

Another question which has been raised is as to the unity of the contents. Inasmuch as different voices are heard speaking in this little book, and it being composed of dialogues as well as monologues, some critics claim that the book is not a unity, but rather a collection of love poems, similar to those written by Burns and Heine. One critic (Budde) endeavors to prove that the book is a collection of folk-songs sung at weddings, which some unknown hand collected. But

the unity of the book in tone and its language disposes of this theory, nor is there any ground to call it, as some have done, a Hebrew drama.

The Story of the Song

It is the story of the love of King Solomon for Shulamith, the bride, who by turns is a vinedresser, shepherdess, midnight inquirer, etc., while the king is described in all his beauty, as the beloved one. In this way the Jewish interpreters as well as the vast majority of Christian commentators have understood the story of the Song.

But there is also a different explanation of the story, the so-called "literalist." It was first proposed by an expositor by name of Jacobi in 1771, and was later adopted by Herder, Umbreit, the critic Ewald, and the French infidel Renan and others. In England it found an able defender in Dr. Ginsburg. Briefly stated this literalist explanation is as follows:

There lived somewhere at Shulem a widowed mother, several sons and a beautiful daughter. They were farmers. One day while the damsel tended the flocks, while resting under an apple tree, she met a beautiful young shepherd to whom she was later espoused. One morning this youth invited her to accompany him into the field, but as her brothers were anxious for her reputation they sent her away to take care of the vineyards. She then requested him to meet her in the evening, and, as he did not keep his appointment, and fearing that he might have had an accident, she searched for him and found him. One day she met accidentally King Solomon, who happened to be on a summer visit to that neighborhood. Enraptured by the beauty of the damsel, the king took her to his royal tent, and there, assisted by court ladies, endeavored with alluring flatteries and promises, to gain her affections, but without effect. Released from the presence of the king, the girl sought her beloved shepherd. But the king took her with him to Jerusalem in great pomp, in the hope of dazzling her with his splendor; but neither did this prevail; for even while there she told her beloved shepherd, who had followed her to the city that she was anxious to be with him.

The shepherd, on hearing this, praised her constancy, and such a mutual demonstration of their love took place, that several of the court ladies were greatly affected by it. The king was still determined to win her affections and watched for a favorable opportunity, and with flatteries and allurements, surpassing all former ones, tried to obtain his purpose. He promised to give her the highest rank, if she would comply with his wishes, but she refused, declaring that her affections were pledged to another. The king then was obliged to dismiss her, and the shepherdess with her beloved returned to her native place.

There are at least three reasons why this view must be rejected. In the first place, it makes havoc with the order of the book. The text must be cut up, and a veritable "grasshopper-method," jumping from one place and chapter to another, must be employed in order to put such a story together. In the second place, it is contrary to all the Jewish and Christian interpretation of the past; they all must be branded as erroneous if this literalist explanation is the true one. And finally it makes King Solomon, who as King of Peace, and in the glory of his kingdom, is a type of Christ, the Messiah, a vile tempter, who tries his utmost to seduce the shepherdess.

We therefore believe that it is the story of Solomon's love for his bride, the Shulamith, as believed by the vast majority of Jewish and Christian expositors.

The Allegorical Meaning

That this song has a deep, mystical and spiritual meaning has always been recognized. The Jews have looked upon it in this light and some orthodox Jews forbade it to be read till a person had reached the thirtieth year. It has been called by them "the Holy of Holies." Jewish interpretation has rightly explained this love-song as typifying the love of Jehovah for his people Israel and His union with His people. We believe this is the correct interpretation, only it is not Israel, the whole nation, but rather the godly remnant. The Song of Songs shows forth the affections which the King-Messiah creates in the heart of this remnant at the time of the re-establishment of their relationship with Himself, when once more they enter into

that blessed relationship, which has been severed for such a long time. Here, then, is a blessed revelation in a mystical form of Christ's devoted love for the remnant of His people and Jerusalem, and the heart response which comes from that remnant.

The Larger Application

This interpretation does not exclude another and larger application to Christ and the Church. Such an application is fully warranted by the teaching of the New Testament. While the Messiah loves the remnant of His people Israel, whose love and heart devotion He will animate in the future, when they are taken back into His favor, He also loved the Church and gave Himself for it. Both Israel's union with the Messiah, the Lord God, and the greater union of the Church and Christ, are typified in both Testaments by the marriage relation. The following passages will demonstrate this fully: Isa. 54:5, 52:5; Jer. 3:1; Ezek. 16:23 and many others; in the New Testament: Matt. 9:15, 22:2, 25:1; John 3:29; 2 Cor. 11:2; Eph. 5:23, 32; Rev. 19:7, 22:17.

The teaching of some that only Israel is the bride of Christ must be rejected. It is true that the Church, as the body and bride of Christ, is unrevealed in the Old Testament, but it is anticipated, and we have a perfect right therefore to apply the precious statements in this song of love to ourselves.

This has been done in the past. The history of the application to the Church is of much interest. We touch upon it briefly.

Hippolytus (225 A.D.) was the first commentator of Solomon's Song and he states that the primary application is to Israel and next to the Church. Origen developed this application to the Church and her union with Christ more fully. After him the identification of the bridegroom and the bride with Christ and the Church became the predominant one. Athanasius, Gregory of Nyssa and Jerome followed more or less the interpretation and application made by Origen. Jerome's view was that the bride and the bridegroom were Christ and the Church, or Christ and the soul. Augustine agreed with him also, but restricted the meaning to the union of Christ and the Church.

Theodore of Mopsuestia, a great expositor of the Word of God, gave the Song a more literal explanation. Chrysostom, Theodoret and nearly all the great exegetes of the early Church teach that the Song typifies the love of Christ for His Church.

In the Middle Ages the mystical school made great use of this portion of the Word of God. Thus Bernard of Clairvaux preached not less than eighty sermons on the first two chapters. To mention all the expositors of the Middle Ages and more recent ones would fill pages.

The critical school has broken away completely from the spiritual application to Christ and the Church. "The admixture of this carnal imagery," says Dr. Harper in the Cambridge Bible, "With the more spiritual passion of the bride and her lover has grown repulsive to us as it could not be formerly."

The Division of the Song

Different divisions of this song have been made; none appears to be satisfactory. We believe the best way to study the Song of Songs is to take it up verse by verse without attempting a detailed division and analysis.

Annotations

SONG OF SONGS

In studying this Love Song the primary application to the remnant of Israel must not be lost sight of. It is to be kept in mind that we are on Jewish ground and that the perfect assurance of that perfect love, which we know as members of His body, is lacking. The deeper spiritual applications which the individual believer may make in heart communion with the Lord, must be left to each person. In a certain sense we are here in the "Holiest" of all, for love-communion with our Saviour-Lord is the most precious thing. It produces that worship and adoration which is so acceptable in His sight, the worship in the Spirit. Our annotations will therefore be more of a general nature, but, we trust, under God, helpful to a deeper study of the book.

CHAPTER 1

The bride speaks first. She is occupied with the Beloved One. What He is, and all His kindness and loveliness have produced in her heart the love and admiration she expresses. The first rapturous outburst is, "Let Him kiss me with the kisses of His mouth; for Thy love is better than wine." She does not mention the Beloved by name; for her there is but One, beautifully illustrated by Mary when she came to the sepulchre and seeking Him said to the one she supposed to be the gardener, "If thou has borne Him hence." The kiss expresseth reconciliation (Luke 15:20), it is the token of peace, and above all, of affection. Thus the remnant of Israel will long for Him, for reconciliation, peace, and His affections. But true believers, the members of Himself, know in fullest assurance their reconciliation in Him; that He is peace and enjoy His affection. His love is better than wine. Wine is the symbol of earthly joys and pleasures; far better than anything under the sun is His love.

In verse 3 His worthy Name is described as "ointment poured forth." It is because of all He is and all He gives. Well do we sing, "How sweet the Name of Jesus sounds in a believer's ear." The passage reminds us of Mark 14:3. For all who know Him His Name is the Name above every other name. But while we know His Name in all its preciousness, His own people Israel, the godly among them, will know Him likewise in the future. The virgins mentioned here, loving Him, are those separated ones in Israel who refuse to fall in line with the antichristian delusion of the great tribulation. We find them mentioned in Rev. 14:1-5.

The bride desires to be drawn by Him and knows that if He draws all will run after Him. Then the King appears and brings her into His chambers, typifying full communion of love. Joy and rejoicing are the results. Verses 5-6 are the bride's confession. She confesseth she is black, which does not denote at all, as some have taken it, that she was an Ethiopian. It means sunburnt, as she declares, "Look not upon me because I am black, because the sun has looked upon me." She passed through the scorching heat of affliction and sorrow, yet she is comely (Ezek. 16:10); through His mercy and kindness not forsaken. The daughters of Jerusalem the bride addresses are those of the nation, who do not yet share her knowledge of the Beloved, the Messiah. Israel had been called to be "the keeper of the vineyards," that is, the keeper of nations and to be a blessing to them; but she had failed; not even her own vineyard did she keep. It is her confession to Him whom she now knows and longs for.

And she wants to belong to Him only, and be with Him where He is. She seeks shelter in the place where He makes His flock to rest at noon; for her soul loves Him. For her He is become the shepherd of Israel, who has found His sheep (Isa. 49:10; Ezek. 34:13-15). And if the remnant of Israel thus longs for Him and His precious fellowship, how much more should we, His heavenly people, love Him and be attached to Him only! Then He speaks in verse 8. Because of her confession He calls her the fairest among women. She is to go forth "by the footsteps of the flock." What He says of her, what she is, He Himself has produced in her and for her. The horses imply energy and swiftness (same as in the New Testament); the ornaments the gifts of His love (Ezek. 16:11). Interesting is verse 11, "We will make beadrows of gold with studs of silver." The Jews believe that both God and the Messiah are Kings. "We" denotes the Father and the Son; the beadrows of gold and studs of silver denote the joy and the nuptial crown for the bride (Esther 2:17; Ezek. 16:12). Thus Messiah will crown His faithful ones in Israel, while His church will be crowned in glory.

Then the bride speaks again of her affections in the rest of the chapter. While the bridegroom calls her fair, she in return cries out, Behold, Thou art fair, my Beloved, yea, pleasant.

CHAPTER 2

The voice of the bride is heard again in the opening verses of this chapter; some understand it as meaning the Messiah speaking of Himself as the Rose and the Lily of the valley, but it is rather the bride. She is in her purity and separation like the lily among thorns, among the apostates of the nation during the end of the Jewish age. Of the Messiah she speaks as the apple-tree. She has no fruit of herself, but rests under Him as the blessed fruit-bearer. Under Him she finds her shelter, while He protects her and she can enjoy His fruit under His shadow. There she, and all true believers have rapture and rest and enjoy His fruit, which is sweet to the taste. The Bridegroom has brought her to His own place. She is in the house of wine (the better translation, instead of banqueting house). Unlimited joy and gladness are now her portion; the banner of love is over her; while she revels in His love, and He, too, rests in His love, for all His gracious purposes towards the godly remnant of Israel are accomplished. The spiritual application to the church is easily made. In verse 7 she charges the daughters of Jerusalem not to disturb in any way the love-relations she enjoys, till He please, till the rest of the daughters of Jerusalem, too, shall know Him, according to His own purpose. It is interesting to note that several times the phrase, "I charge you daughters of Jerusalem" is found in this song. Each time it is followed by His coming. Here we read, "The voice of my Beloved! Behold He cometh!" It is His coming as Messiah revealing Himself to the bride. In chapter 3:6 He comes as King Messiah; His Name is revealed as Solomon, the Prince of Peace. Then once more the same phrase, "I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem, is found in chapter 8:4-5, and here the bride is coming out of the wilderness with Him, leaning on her Beloved, not the supposed shepherd lover, but King Messiah.

The rest of this chapter bears witness to the correctness of the Jewish interpretation. All shows that it refers to the time when the remnant of Israel knows Him and is enjoying the blessings and the glories promised unto them. The winter is past, the time of death and coldness; the rain is over, spring-time is at hand. The morning without clouds is breaking! Flowers appear; the birds begin their song; the cooing of the bird of love, the turtle dove, is heard. Furthermore, the fig tree putteth forth her green figs (the national fruit-bearing of the once cursed fig tree); the vines, too, begin to give the tender grapes. Who cannot see in the imagery of all these statements that millennial times are about to begin! Then there is His call to her, "Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away." Be wholly for Me! He calls her "My dove." She is in the clefts of the rock, and He Himself is that rock, where His people are hidden away and find shelter. He longs for her and she longs for Him. His eyes are upon her, His beloved bride, and her eyes upon Him. Joyfully the bride cries out, as the assurance of His great love stirs her soul, "My Beloved is mine and I am His." Yet the fullness has not yet come. It is all still in blessed anticipation of the time of fullest manifestation--"until the day dawn and the shadows flee away." "Turn my Beloved," she calls to Him, "Be Thou like a gazelle or a young hart," swift in Thy coming, upon the mountains of Bether, the mountains of spices and frankincense, when the time of worship begins.

CHAPTER 3

The scene changes. The bride is now alone and in the darkness of the night. She is seeking her Beloved and is unable to find Him. Her heart is filled with the same love she exhibits in the previous chapter, but the joy and comfort she lacks. We see her walking through the streets and in the broadways, looking for Him whom her soul loveth; she sought Him but found Him not; Then the watchmen of the night which pass through the street came across the seeking one and she eagerly inquires, "Have ye seen Him whom my soul loveth?" They have no answer for her, probably they knew not what she meant. No sooner had she passed them by, when she found Him. All this is prophetic, as it reveals the soul exercise of that godly remnant of Israel during the night of tribulation. There is no need of giving a meaning to every detail.

As already stated, His coming described in verses 6-11 is His coming as King Messiah. In the last verse we have the key. "Go forth, daughters of Zion, and behold King Solomon, with the crown wherewith His mother crowned Him, in the day of His espousals, and in the day of the gladness of His heart," His mother is Israel. Israel gave birth to Him according to the flesh, as it is also seen in the great vision of the Apocalypse (Rev. 12). In that day when He comes up from the wilderness, like pillars of smoke, in the Shekinah cloud, when He comes the mighty victor, yet the true Solomon, the Prince of Peace, who speaks peace to the nations, His mother Israel will crown Him Lord of all.

CHAPTER 4

The King, the Bridegroom speaks of her, who is "perfect through His comeliness put upon thee" (Ezek. 16:14). He tells out all she is in His sight and loving estimation. He has called her from the lions' den, from the mountains of the leopards (verse 8); she has passed through the fires of persecution and tribulation and now His heart expresses His delight in her. There are eight descriptions of her beauty. He tells her, "Behold thou art fair, my love, behold thou art fair." And after the description of the beauty He beholds in her, whom He has brought out of the wilderness and out of the lions' den, He says, "Thou art all fair, MY love; and there is no spot in thee." He assures her of His delight in her. It is all His own workmanship; she has not made herself fair without a spot. His grace and power have accomplished it for her. And what is true of the bride-remnant of Israel is also true of the Church. In Him we have our completeness and perfection; His own comeliness and glory is bestowed upon us. The happy day is coming for Him and for us when He will present the church to Himself, "a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish" (Eph. 5:27).

In verses 12-15 we have a beautiful description of the garden, the land of Israel in which His beloved is now planted once more. Here are found the precious fruits, as well as the spikenard and all the trees of frankincense. There is the fountain, the well of living waters; this as well as the north wind and the south wind, typifies the Holy Spirit. And she invites Him to come to His garden. "Let my Beloved come into His garden and eat its precious fruit."

CHAPTER 5

The Bridegroom answers the invitation extended to Him when the bride had said, "Let my Beloved come into His (not her) garden." He says, "I am come into My garden, My sister, My spouse." She is both "sister and spouse." When He speaks of her as sister, He owns the national relationship. In Matthew 12:46-50 He disowned that relationship because they rejected the offer of the kingdom, but now it is reestablished and the godly portion of Israel becomes the spouse. In His garden, the product of His love and His death, He finds now His enjoyment, His joy and His satisfaction. He invites others to come and partake. "Eat, O friends; drink, yea, drink abundantly, beloved ones."

But there is no response here from the side of the bride. She exhibits slothfulness. He is seen now standing outside; His head is filled with the night dew and standing at the door He knocks (See Rev. 3:20). The comment on this difficult portion of the Song, as given in the Synopsis of the Bible, is especially helpful.

"Alas, what hearts are ours! We turn again to ourselves as soon as we are comforted by the testimony of the Lord's love. The Bridegroom's sensitive and righteous heart acts upon her word, and He retires from one who does not listen to His voice. She arises to learn of her own folly, and the just delicacy, with respect to herself, of His ways whom she had slighted. How often, alas! do we act in the same manner with regard to the voice of His Spirit and the manifestations of His love! What a dreadful loss, but, through grace, what a lesson! She is chastised by those who watch for the peace of Jerusalem. What had she to do in the streets at night, she whom the Bridegroom had sought at home? And now her very affection exposes her to reproof, the expression of its energy placing her in a position that proved she had slighted her Beloved. If we are not in the peaceful enjoyment of the love of Christ, where He meets with us in grace, the very strength of our affection and our self-condemnation causes us to exhibit this affection out of its place, in a certain sense, and brings us into connection with those who judge our position. It was right discipline for a watchman to use towards a woman who was wandering without, whatever might be the cause. Testimonies of her affection to her Beloved at home, the love of her own heart, do not concern the watchman. Affection may exist; but He has to do with order and a becoming walk. Nevertheless her affection was real and led to an ardent expression of all that her Beloved was to her--an expression addressed to others, who ought to understand her; not to the watchman, but to her own companions. But if sloth had prevented her receiving Him in the visitations of His love, her heart, now disciplined by the watchman and turned again to her Beloved, overflowing with His praises, being taught of God, knows where to find Him."

The words recorded in verse 9 are no doubt addressed to the bride by the rest of the nation. How beautiful is her

answer! She speaks of Him as "the chiefest among ten thousand." Here is symbolical language. White tells us of His holiness; ruddy reminds us of His love, so fully expressed in the shedding of His blood. His cheeks were once smitten; Grace is in His lips; the belly speaks of His bowels of mercy; His eyes are the eyes of love; the gold is the symbol of His Deity; the hair is the symbol of His perfect humanity. After giving ten features of His beauty, she has exhausted herself and in ecstasy cries out, as thousands upon thousands in every generation have done, "Yea, He is altogether lovely ... this is my friend." Blessed are all who can repeat these words and who can say, "This is my friend."

CHAPTER 6

The description of Her Beloved was addressed to the daughters of Jerusalem. Their answer is recorded in the beginning of this chapter. Her outburst of praise, her glowing testimony of Him, created the desire in the hearts of others to become His. "Whither is thy Beloved gone? ... We will seek Him with thee." The bride answers and then in words of precious assurance she declares, "I am my Beloved's and my Beloved is mine."

Then the Bridegroom speaks in loving praise of her. He speaks of that which she is for Him. He owns that remnant as "the only one" of her mother (the nation Israel). Nor is she alone His dove, but she is fair as the moon and clear as the sun; glory covers her and she is like an army with banners displayed.

He went down into the garden, to look at the verdure of the valley, to see if His vine budded, and suddenly, before He is aware, His love makes Him like Ammi-nadib, which means "the chariots of my willing people" (Psalm 110:3). He leads them forth in triumph and in glory.

CHAPTER 7

The rapturous outburst in praise of the bride, the saved and glorified remnant of Israel, with which this chapter begins, must not be put into the lips of the bridegroom, the Messiah-King. It is the praise of the daughters of Jerusalem, who now recognize her as the beloved of the King. Her highest confession is found in this chapter. He begins to speak of her with verse 6, "How fair and pleasant art thou, my love, in delights." She answers His expressions of love. "I am my Beloved's, and His desire is toward me." This is the highest--to know she possesseth Him and that His heart's delight is in her. This, too, is our happy knowledge. We know He belongs to us; we are Christ's and in us He has, and finds, His delight. Blessed is the scene with which this chapter closes. He calls on her to go forth with Him into the fields, to go to the vineyards, to see the budding and blossoming, the blooming pomegranates, the choice fruits new and old, all laid up for the Beloved.

This takes us into millennial times. It will be the time of fruit bearing and glory for Him in the fields, in the vineyards, among all the nations of the world. "For as the earth bringeth forth her bud, and as the garden causeth things that are sown in it to spring forth; so the Lord GOD will cause righteousness and praise to spring forth before all nations" (Isa. 61:11). "Truth shall spring out of the earth, and righteousness shall look down from heaven. Yea, the LORD shall give that which is good and our land shall yield her increase" (Psa. 85:11, 12).

Israel restored in fellowship with the King will share in the fullest sense these coming blessings and glory.

CHAPTER 8

The last chapter of the Song is a review of the whole. There is unquestionably a recapitulation of the entire book. The bride's desires are once more given to be loved and caressed by Him. For the last time we have the charge to the daughters of Jerusalem and once more the coming is announced. "Who is this that cometh up from the wilderness leaning upon her Beloved?" She returns with Him. The Beloved is mentioned seven times in the book. There is the voice of the Beloved (2:8); the call of the Beloved (2:10); claiming the Beloved (2:16); opening the Beloved (5:5); praising the Beloved (5:9-16); leaning on the Beloved (8:5) and longing for the Beloved (8:14).

Here again the apple tree is found (2:3). It is Christ. There the Lord awoke her and manifested Himself to her. From Christ alone she derives her life. Thus only can Israel give birth to this remnant, which, at Jerusalem, shall become the earthly bride of the great King, which desires to be, and shall be, as a seal upon His heart, according to the power of a love that is strong as death, that spares nothing and yields nothing. The little sister of verse 8 has been interpreted as meaning Ephraim, the ten tribes, who will then also come into remembrance and blessing. Solomon's vineyards at Baal-hamon (master of multitudes) points clearly to the converted nations in the millennium and then His own vineyard. Israel is mentioned in verse 12.

The Song of Songs ends with a prayer, "Haste my Beloved, and be Thou like a gazelle or a young hart upon the mountain of spices." Thus the remnant of Israel will plead in the future, that He may come and be manifested in His glory; but the bride of Christ, the Church, prays "Even so, Come Lord Jesus."

In conclusion, we mention the attempt made by some, to trace in this Song of Songs the entire history of the Church. We give the divisions made for those who desire to examine this interpretation. John the Baptist's Ministry is claimed to be covered by chapters 2:8--3:5. The Ministry of the Lord Jesus on earth is traced in chapters 3:6--5:1. From the agony in Gethsemane to the conversion of Samaria is thought to be in chapters 5:2--8:5. Then chapter 8:5-14 is said to be a picture of the times when the Gentiles were first called to the revelation and the coming of the Lord.

We think the safest interpretation is that which holds closely to the Jewish meaning, as we have done in these brief annotations.

THE BOOK OF ISAIAH

The Annotated Bible

Arno Clement Gaebelein

THE PROPHET ISAIAH

Introduction

The opening verse of this great book gives us information concerning the prophet Isaiah and the period covered by his official ministry. "The Vision of Isaiah the son of Amoz, which he saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem, in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah, kings of Judah." Of his personal history we know but little. Jewish tradition claims that he was related to King Uzziah. That he must have come from a prominent family may be gathered from the fact that he had ready access into the presence of the kings of Judah, Ahaz and Hezekiah, and probably also the others. That he was married we learn from the book. He had two sons which bore prophetic names. The one was Shear-Jashub (a remnant shall return), prophetically indicating that God would leave a remnant of His people. The second son was Maher-shalal-hash-baz, which means "hasting to the spoil, hurrying to the prey," prophetic of the coming and threatening invasion of Assyria.

Nothing else is said of his personal history in the book which bears his name nor do we find anything about his death. There is a trustworthy tradition that he lived during the reign of Manasseh, also that he suffered martyrdom, because he reproved the vices and idolatries rampant during the reign of that wicked king. This tradition says that the mode of his death was by being sawn asunder. (See Hebrews 11:37 which, in case this tradition is true, would apply to Isaiah.) Josephus, the great Jewish historian, speaks of the cruel persecutions under the reign of Manasseh in the following words: "He barbarously slew all the righteous men that were among the Hebrews; nor would he spare the prophets, for he every day slew some of them, till Jerusalem was overflowed with blood."

The Times of Isaiah

Isaiah lived during the eighth century before Christ. This is fully confirmed by the chronology of the kings of Judah mentioned in the first verse of the book. To understand fully the prophecies which he made in the name of Jehovah, a good knowledge of the times in which he lived and acted as Jehovah's mouthpiece is eminently necessary. We shall enter into it a little more fully to help the student of this book.

Isaiah must have lived to a very old age, for it is quite certain that for fully seventy years he exercised his God-given office. Two hundred and forty years before Isaiah the kingdom of Israel had been divided, after Solomon's apostasy. The glory had departed from both the kingdom of Israel or Samaria (also called Ephraim), and the kingdom of Judah. Both had been greatly affected by civil wars and conflicts with other nations. The kingdom of Israel sunk deeper and deeper, ruled over by a number of depraved kings, who plunged the people into the grossest idolatries with the accompanying immoralities, so that God's righteous judgment fell upon it first. During the prophetic ministry of our prophet the judgment fell on the ten tribe kingdom of Israel. About the year 736 B.C., Tiglath-Pileser, the Assyrian king, had killed Rezin, the king of Damascus, with whom Pekah the king of Samaria had made an alliance. Tiglath-Pileser then invaded the northern kingdom of Israel, took many cities in Gilead and Galilee and carried the inhabitants into his own country. (See 2 Kings 16:5-9; Amos 1:5, etc.) This was the first captivity of Israel. The rest of the inhabitants of Samaria, the kingdom of the ten tribes, were carried away by the successor of Tiglath-Pileser, that is Shalmaneser. (Read about this in 2 Kings 17:3-18, 1 Chronicles 5:26, and Hosea 8:16). Now, Isaiah's home was in Jerusalem, the capital of the kingdom of Judah, and he

witnessed from there the calamity which had come upon the ten tribes.

Isaiah began his ministry under the reign of Uzziah. He was a good king, a worshipper of the Lord, yet he did not remove the places of idolatrous worship. He had a sad end (2 Kings 15:1-5). He is also called Azariah. Chapter 6 in Isaiah tells us that he had his great vision in the year when this king died of leprosy. The son of Uzziah, Jotham, reigned in his stead. He did not trouble himself about the high places and the idolatrous groves, and the condition of the nation was that of corruption (2 Kings 15:32-26). He built cities, castles and towns; he prepared for war in time of peace. The ancient Assyria had seen its end with Sardanapulus and in its place arose the two kingdoms of Assyria and Babylonia. Babylonia soon took the lead and Assyria was joined to the Chaldean monarchy. The dissolution of the great Assyrian monarchy took place during the reign of Jotham, yet we have not evidence that Isaiah uttered a definite prophecy during the reign of Jotham. He probably did, but we cannot locate it in the book.

Then came Ahaz, the twelfth king of Judah. He was an ungodly ruler and his reign was marked by disaster. (See 2 Chronicles 28; 2 Kings 16.) In idolatry such as burning incense in the valley of Hinnom, and burning his children in the fire of idol worship, he was as wicked, or almost so, as his grandson Manasseh. As a punishment the Lord sent the kings of Syria and Samaria against him. In one day Pekah the king of Syria killed a large number of Jews and took 200,000 captive. They were only saved from deportation by the intercession of the prophet Obed. The full record of this is found in 2 Chronicles 28. Then Ahaz trembled before this strong alliance and resolved in calling in the aid of the Assyrian.

It was at that time that prophet and king met at the waterworks as recorded in chapter 7. The prophet assured the wicked monarch that Jerusalem had nothing to fear from Syria and Samaria, that Jehovah would protect Jerusalem. He urged Ahaz to ask a sign, which he refused to do. Then the Lord gave him a sign, that of the virgin who should conceive and bring forth a son and call his name Emmanuel. It is a prediction concerning the virgin birth of Israel's Redeemer King, the Son of God. The thought is this; How can Jerusalem and Judah perish as long as He, the Messiah, David's Son and David's Lord, has not come? Isaiah also told the king that the menace then threatening would be speedily removed, but that his alliance with the Assyrian would bring disaster. But Ahaz, though he saw a fulfillment of the prophecy concerning the kings of Syria and Samaria, did not heed the warning. When an invasion of the Edomites and Philistines threatened (2 Chronicles 28:17, etc.), he turned again to his old ally, the king of Assyria. He made him costly presents. Tiglath-Pileser, as already stated above, conquered the kings of Syria and Samaria. Ahaz visited his heathen friend and ally in Damascus, and when he saw there a beautiful altar, he sent a model of it to Urijah, the priest, in Jerusalem, who constructed one like it, and afterward Ahaz used it to commit idolatry and all the abominations which go with it. (See 2 Kings 16.) But the prophecy about disaster through the Assyrian king was not fulfilled during the lifetime of this wicked king. It came with Sennacherib's invasion during the reign of the next king Hezekiah. He invaded the land but could not touch Jerusalem.

Hezekiah, the son of Ahaz, was the very opposite to his wicked father. He was one of the most godly kings which occupied the throne of David. He started in with overturning the altars of idolatry and cutting down the groves where his predecessors had permitted the wicked religious ceremonies of heathendom. Then the temple was renovated. He also destroyed the brazen serpent which Moses long ago had made, and which had been preserved as an object of idolatry, much as ritualistic Christendom worships the literal cross of wood or metal. He restored furthermore the observance of Passover. After his successful war with the Philistines, he decided to cast off the yoke of the Assyrian by not paying the tribute which his father Ahaz had promised to pay. Then Sennacherib advanced with a large army and spread ruin in every direction. Hezekiah fortified Jerusalem and prepared for a siege (2 Chronicles 22:1-8). Then he sent ambassadors to the Assyrian and sued for peace. Sennacherib demanded a large sum of money and gave him assurance that the army would be withdrawn (2 Kings 18:13-15). Hezekiah agreed and stripped even the temple of its treasures to pay the vast sum. Then Sennacherib went down to Egypt but was defeated by Tirhaka, king of Ethiopia. Maddened by the defeat he approached Jerusalem again, and sent messengers from Lachish and demanded its surrender. Hezekiah then spread the whole matter before the Lord, in the house of the LORD, and received the answer that the city was safe. Isaiah's ministry in all this is found in the historical portion of his book. When Sennacherib dared to advance towards the city, the angel of the Lord slew 185,000 of his men in one night. It must be remembered that a large portion of the prophecies of Isaiah up to chapter 39 are occupied with these events, and can only be rightly understood in the light of the history of Judah of that period.

Concerning the Authorship of Isaiah

We have stated before that according to Jewish tradition Isaiah perished by the hands of wicked men by being sawn asunder. Equally wicked men have "sawn him asunder" in a different way. We mean the so-called "higher or destructive critics." Did Isaiah really write this book? Could it be the work of one man? Are there not evidences of a composite authorship? These and other questions have been raised, and their answers given by men whose boast is of superior scholarship, of greater knowledge than the knowledge of the past generations; men who blasphemously assert that their finite brains have absorbed more knowledge in these matters than the infinite Lord of Glory, the Lord Jesus Christ, possessed in the days of His dwelling on earth.

For some 2,500 years no one ever thought of even suggesting that Isaiah did not write the book which bears his name. The criticism of this book and the denial of this great prophet being the sole author of it is a very modern thing. It started with a man by the name of Koppe, who attacked, in 1780, the genuineness of chapter 1. He was followed by another theologian who expressed doubt as the Isaiah being the author of chapters 40-66, generally called the second part of Isaiah. Rosenmureller, the notorious Eichorn, the Hebraist Gesenius, Ewald and others took a hand in it in sawing Isaiah asunder, each questioning certain portions of the book. The great Leipzig professor, Franz Delitzsch, also joined the band of "scientific butchers," and declared that the second part of Isaiah is of post-exilic authorship. This was done by him in 1889, and after this with the year 1890 a veritable flood of criticism set in, led, by Canon Driver, George Adam Smith, Duhm, Stade, Hackman, Comill, Cheyne and many others. Their infidel discoveries have been readily accepted in this country and are now being taught in Methodist colleges, in the Union Theological Seminary of New York, the Chicago University, in Baptist, Presbyterian and other denominational institutions. But let it be said that there are also scholars just as mature as these critics who stand up for the Isaiahan authorship of the whole book. We mention Stier, Weber, Strachey, Naegelsbach, Barnes, Bodenkamp, Cobb, Benjamin Douglass, Green, Thirtle, and many others.

The critics have invented a Deutero-Isaiah, that is a second Isaiah, who should have written the second part. Then another set of "scholars" with their scientific microscope discovered that this Deutero-Isaiah could not have written everything of this second part; that there was a third, or Trito-isaiah, who wrote chapters 55-66. They also found out with their scholarship that parts were written in Babylon, and other parts in Palestine. They are still at it, "sawing Isaiah asunder." To mention their methods, their hair-splittings, their philological objections and their claims would fill pages, and we would, if we were to follow it, oblige our readers to examine the inventions of the natural, darkened heart of man, which does not believe in God. There are 1,292 verses in the book of Isaiah. Out of these the ultra critics allow 262 verses to be genuine and the rest, 1,030 verses, are rejected by them.

We repeat here what we say in the studies of Isaiah at the close of our analysis and annotations.

But what does all this mean? It is a denial of what is written in the first verse of this book, "The vision of Isaiah, the son of Amoz, which he saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem, in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah." And if several men wrote this book, if part was written during the Babylonian captivity and other parts added after the captivity, then this statement with which the book begins is untrue. This first verse assures us that the book is a whole, that all we find in it is the vision of one man. To deny this breaks down the truthfulness of the book and reduces it to the level of common literature. This is what the critics have done. But the book of Isaiah is quoted in the New Testament. The Jews always believed this book to have been written by Isaiah. They held this belief when our Lord was on the earth. He Himself read in the synagogue of Nazareth from chapter 61 which critics deny to be the writing of Isaiah. Quotations from Isaiah are frequently found in different parts of the New Testament. Twenty-one times we read of Isaiah and his words in the New Testament. The phrases used are the following: "Spoken by the prophet Esaias;" "Fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias;" "Well did Esaias prophesy;" "In the book of the words of Esaias;" "As said the prophet;" "These things said Esaias;" "Well spake the Holy Spirit by Esaias," "Esaias also saith;" "Esaias saith." This is evidence enough that the Lord and the Holy Spirit through the evangelists and the Apostle Paul set their seal to this uncontradicted and unanimous belief that Isaiah wrote this book. The critics by their methods impeach the testimony of the Lord Himself or charge the infallible Lord of Glory to have been limited in His knowledge and that He acquiesced in the current traditional belief of the Jewish

people, knowing better Himself.

All the arguments of the critics are disproven by the book itself. One only needs to study this book and the careful study will bring out the unanswerable fact of the unity of the book of Isaiah. Only one person could have written such a book and that person did not write it by himself, but was the mouthpiece of Jehovah. This is the conclusion of an intelligent and spiritual study of the book itself. The silly and arbitrary restrictions the critics make, that Isaiah could not have written certain passages, because it was beyond his horizon, or that he could not have mentioned Cyrus, the Persian king, by name, over 150 years before he was born, springs from the subtle infidelity which is at the bottom of the destructive criticism, which denies the supernatural altogether.

The Message of Isaiah

The name Isaiah means "Jehovah saves" or "Jehovah is salvation." He has well been called the evangelical prophet. There are more direct quotations as well as indirect allusions to this great book in the New Testament than from any other prophetic book. Josephus relates that Cyrus, the Persian king, was greatly moved by the reading of the book of Isaiah, one of the evidences, that Isaiah was not compiled after the exile. In the passage where Josephus speaks of the edict issued by Cyrus permitting the Jews to return, he says: "This was known to Cyrus by his reading the book which Isaiah left behind him of his prophecies; for this prophet has said that God had spoken thus to him in a secret vision, 'My will is that Cyrus, whom I have appointed to be king over many and great nations, send back My people to their own land, and build My temple.' This was foretold by Isaiah 140 years before the temple was demolished. Accordingly, when Cyrus read this and admired the divine power, an earnest desire and ambition came upon him to fulfill what was so written." The early church held Isaiah in great esteem and recognized its great message. When Augustine had been converted he asked Ambrose which book he would advise him to study first. Ambrose told him, "The prophecies of Isaiah." All the great men of God, the instruments of the Spirit of God like Luther, Calvin, Knox and others acknowledged the greatness of this book and its message.

What Peter says as to the contents of the writings of the prophets of God is more true of Isaiah than of any of the other prophetic books except the Psalms. "The Suffering of Christ and the glory that should follow." Isaiah's message reveals the Redeemer and King of Israel. He is the "Holy One of Israel" mentioned by this title twenty-five times. The Redeemer of Israel is Jehovah the Creator. He announced His virgin birth, the child to be born of the virgin, the Son given, and reveals the titles of that Son (9:6). He describes Him in His lowliness, His tenderness, His miracles, as the servant of Jehovah, and above all as the sin-bearer in that wonderful fifty-third chapter. But how much more Isaiah was permitted to reveal of His glory. He pictures in prophetic vision that kingdom which is yet to come, and which will come with the return of our Saviour-Lord. The details of His coming, His glory and His kingdom are unfolded in the special lecture on this subject which the reader finds with the other lectures at the close of the annotations.

Another great message is the predictions of future glories for and blessings for Israel, Jerusalem and the nations. These have been grouped by us in the third lecture on Isaiah under the following heads: (1) Israel's Restoration to their Land, (2) Israel's Spiritual Blessings, (3) The Blessings for the Land, (4) The Future of Jerusalem, (5) The Future Blessings of the Nations, (6) The Blessings for all Creation.

The Division and Scope of Isaiah

The book is an organic whole which proves that it can never be the piecemeal work of a number of men who assumed the name of Isaiah. That the language of the second part differs so much from the style of the first is no argument against the unity of the book at all. The style changes according to the character of the prophecy. "His style is suited to the subject and changeth with it. In his denunciations and threatenings, he is earnest and vehement; in his consolations, he is mild and insinuating. He so lives in the events he describes that the future becomes to him as the past and present" (Hengstenberg). If we believe that Isaiah was but the mouthpiece of Jehovah, that he wrote under the guidance and direction of the Holy Spirit, as He moved him and put the words into his pen, all difficulties disappear. But as we have already stated the scope

of the book is conclusive evidence of both, the inspiration of the book and its Isaiahic authorship.

There are two great sections first of all. The one, chapters 1-35, contains the earlier prophecies. Chapters 40-66 the later prophecies. Between these two portions is a historical parenthesis contained in chapters 36-39.

in the earlier prophecies judgments are announced upon Jerusalem, Judah and upon nations, while blessings of the future are also given, but they take a secondary place. In the later prophecies we likewise read of judgments but the major portion reveals the glories and blessings of the future.

In the earlier prophecies the Assyrian invasion as it took place is announced, giving at the same time a prophetic forecast of a future invasion from the north in the time of the end. In the later prophecies the Assyrian is no longer mentioned. The Babylonian captivity announced in the thirty-ninth chapter is seen by the prophet as past and he predicts the return and beyond that the return of the remnant from the greater dispersion and the final glory of the kingdom with the coming of the King.

We shall now give the scope and division of these books.

I. THE EARLIER PROPHECIES (1-35)

1. Prophecies under the Reign of Uzziah, Jotham and Ahaz (1-12)
2. The judgment of the Nations and the Future Day of Jehovah (13-27)
3. The Six Woes. Judgment Ruins and Restoration Glories (28-35)

Each section of the earlier prophecies foretells great judgments but each section ends with the vision of a regathered and restored people.

THE HISTORICAL PARENTHESIS (36-39)

II. THE LATER PROPHECIES (40-66)

1. In Babylon: Deliverance Promised through Cyrus (40-48)
2. The Servant of Jehovah: His Suffering and His Glory (49-57)
3. Jewish History in the Endtime: The Glory of Israel and of the Coming Age (58-66)

Each section begins with a chapter which is the key to the whole section. Each concludes with a description of the two classes which compose the nation especially in the last days, and that there is no peace for the wicked but punishment.

Analysis and Annotations

The reader will find that every chapter has been analyzed as to its contents. We have not made copious annotations, because the three lectures on the book of Isaiah as found at the close of the analysis cover the contents of this book in such a manner that detailed annotations for a study of the book can be omitted. We suggest that all who desire to study this great prophecy in a closer way read carefully the introduction, and after that the three lectures on "The Scope of Isaiah," "The Messianic Predictions" and "Future Glories and Blessings." These lectures should be carefully studied and every passage should be looked up. After this has been done, take up the book section by section and follow the analysis we give and consult the lectures whenever needed.

I. THE EARLIER PROPHECIES (1-35)

1. Prophecies under the Reign of Uzziah, Jotham, and Ahaz (1-12)

CHAPTER 1 Jehovah's Case Against Judah and the Promise Of Restoration

1. *The title of the book and contents (1:1)*
2. *The moral and religious decline of the nations (1:2-15)*
3. *Jehovah's exhortation and appeal (1:16-20)*
4. *The result of obstinate refusal (1:21-24)*
5. *The promise of restoration (1: 25-3 1)*

The promised restoration of Jerusalem is still future. The "afterward" when the earthly Jerusalem is to be called "The City of Righteousness" refers to the second coming of Christ. Compare with Jeremiah 33:14-26.

CHAPTER 2 Zion's Future Glory and the Day of Jehovah

1. *The glories in the latter days (2:1-4)*
2. *Exhortation to walk in the light (2:5)*
3. *The corruption of the people (2:6-9)*
4. *The day of Jehovah (2:10-22)*

The vision of verses 1-4 is altogether future. When Israel is converted and in possession of the land, when once more a house of Jehovah will stand in Israel's land, then this great prediction will be fulfilled. Compare with Micah 4:1-5. The Day of the Lord (Jehovah) is the day of His visible manifestation to deal with the earth in judgment. Compare with Isaiah 24, etc., Zephaniah 1.

CHAPTER 3 Judgments upon the Rulers and the Daughters Of Zion

1. *The judgment against the rulers (3:1-7)*
2. *Jerusalem's sad condition (3:8-9)*
3. *Jehovah's message (3:10-15)*
4. *The worldliness of the daughters of Zion (3:16-23)*
5. *Their humiliation in judgment (3:24-4:1)*

This chapter describes the corrupt conditions among the professing people of God in Isaiah's day. A similar corruption and worldliness prevailing in our age demands divine judgment.

CHAPTER 4 Zion's Future Cleansing and Glory

1. *Israel regathered and cleansed (4:2-4)*
2. *Jehovah's visible glory revealed (4:5-6)*

The Branch of the Lord (Jehovah) is the Lord Jesus Christ. After judgment has been executed cleansing is promised and glory is established on Mount Zion.

CHAPTER 5 The Song of the Vineyard and the Six Woes

1. *The song of the vineyard and Jehovah's lament (5:1-4)*
2. *The judgment upon the vineyard (5:5-7)*
3. *The wild grapes (5:8-23)*

4. *First woe against covetousness (5:8-10)*
5. *Second woe against fleshly lusts (5:11-17)*
6. *Third woe against mockers (5:18-19)*
7. *Fourth woe against moral insensibility (5:20)*
8. *Fifth woe against conceit (5:21)*
9. *Sixth woe against lawlessness (5:22-23)*
10. *Jehovah's anger and the invader announced (5:24-30)*

Compare the song of the vineyard with Matthew 21:33-44. The wild grapes of Israel fully correspond to the wild grapes of nominal Christendom. "If God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest He also spare not thee" (Rom. 11:21).

CHAPTER 6 The Prophet's Vision and New Commission

1. *The time of the vision (6:1)*
2. *Jehovah of hosts (6:2-4)*
3. *The prophet's woe (6:5)*
4. *The cleansing (6:6-7)*
5. *"Here am I. Send me." (6:8)*
6. *The new commission (6:9-10)*
7. *The limitation of the judgment (6:11-13)*

Note the eight steps: vision, conversion, self-judgment, cleansing, self-surrender, communion, commission, intercession. This vision is the glory of Christ (John 12:41). The fulfillment of the hardening judgment of the nation, the blinding of their eyes did not set in completely in Isaiah's day. Study carefully Matt. 13:14-15; John 12:39-41; Acts 28:25-27. However, Israel's blindness is not permanent.

CHAPTER 7 The Prophet before King Ahaz

1. *The king in trouble (7:1-2)*
2. *Isaiah sent and his message (7:3-9)*
3. *A sign offered and refused (7:10-12)*
4. *The sign: The virgin birth (7:13-16)*
5. *The advent of the Assyrian (7:17-25)*

Study carefully the historic setting of this chapter and 2 Chronicles 28:1-27. See lecture on "Messianic Predictions." In verse 14 the virgin birth of Christ is announced. Much of the controversy is around the word "virgin" (*almah*), which the critics declare does not mean a virgin but a young married woman. However, they err. In Genesis 24:43, Exodus 2:8, Psalm 68:25, Song of Solomon 1:3, etc., the same word is used, and it means "virgin" in these and other passages. The Septuagint, a Greek translation of the Old Testament made some 300 years B.C., translates the Hebrew "*almah*" with "*pardenos*," the Greek for virgin. Matthew 1:23 confirms this Messianic prediction.

CHAPTER 8 Jehovah's Word Through Isaiah and the Assyrian Announced

1. *The divine instruction and Maher-shalal-hash-baz (8:1-4)*
2. *The Assyrian to come (8:5-8)*
3. *The answer of faith (8:9-10)*
4. *A word to the faithful remnant (8:11-20)*
5. *The coming great distress (8:21-22)*

The names are significant. Isaiah heard the word "Maher-shalal-hash-baz," and then is told to call his newborn son by

this name. The name means "swift for spoil, hasty for prey." Isaiah's other son was named "Shear-Jashub," which means "a remnant shall return." The names of the sure witnesses are equally full of meaning. Urijah (Jehovah is light), Zechariah (Jehovah remembers), and Jeberechiah (Blessed of Jehovah).

Verses 14 and 15 are deeply interesting. It is the rejection of Immanuel, Christ. Compare with chapter 28:16 and read the following passages: Luke 2:34, 20:18; Matthew 21:44; Rom. 9:32, 33; 1 Pet. 2:8.

Also note the quotation of verse 18 in Hebrews 2:13. The great distress is a description of what awaits apostate Israel.

CHAPTER 9 The Message of Hope Concerning Israel's Future and the Impending Judgments

1. *The Messiah, His Name, His rule, His kingdom (9:1-7)*
2. *Judgment upon Israel (9:8-12)*
3. *The impenitent nation (9:13-17)*
4. *The wrath of Jehovah (9:18-21)*
5. *Unrighteous judges and three questions (10:1-4)*

Matthew 4:12-16 quotes the opening verses of this chapter. This applies to His double advent. The first and second coming of the Lord are wonderfully blended together in verses 6-7. The nation in impenitence and God's wrath against them has had its past and present fulfillment. It is not yet exhausted. It looks forward to the coming day of wrath.

CHAPTER 10 The Assyrian, His invasion of Immanuel's land, and His end

1. *The first four verses belong to the preceding chapter. A description of the Assyrian enemy (10:5-11)*
2. *The overthrow of his army announced (10:12-15)*
3. *The punishment (10:16-19)*
4. *The return of the remnant (10:20-23)*
5. *The faithful remnant comforted (10:24-27)*
6. *The Assyrians march against Jerusalem (10:28-32)*
7. *Jehovah's intervention (10:33-34)*

This is an interesting and important chapter. The Assyrian enemy was used by God to punish his people. In chapters 7 and 8 his coming was announced. In this chapter we read a fuller description of this great troubler and how he invaded the land of Israel. God addresses him as the rod He uses in anger against His people. While all this had a past fulfillment a similar invasion of the land of Palestine will be enacted before the times of the Gentiles close and the King of Kings appears. The Assyrian of the end time comes from the North; therefore he is called in Daniel's prophecy "the King of the North." Antiochus Epiphanes is a type of this final outward foe of Israel. Study carefully with this chapter Isaiah 14:24-25; Isaiah 30:31-33; Micah 5:1-7; Daniel 8:23-26; 11:40-45; Psalm 74:1-10; Psalm 89. Jehovah shall suddenly make an end of him. Verses 33-34 compare with Daniel 11:45.

CHAPTER 11 The Coming King and His Kingdom

1. *The King: Who He is and what He will do (11:1-5)*
2. *The peace and blessing He brings (11:6-10)*
3. *The gathering of scattered Israel (11:11-16)*

It is a great vision of the future which this chapter unfolds. The critics deny that the blessed Person mentioned in the opening verses is our Lord Jesus. They think Hezekiah or Josiah is meant. 2 Thess. 2:8 shows that it is our Lord. Link verses 1-5 with chapter 9:6-7. Again His coming in humiliation and His coming in exaltation are here interwoven. We behold His reign in righteousness. Verses 6-10 need not to be spiritualized, as it is so often done. Romans tells us (8:18-

23) that a literal groaning creation, travailing together in pain until now, will be delivered of its groans and curses. The hour of deliverance strikes with the "manifestation of the Sons of God." However, this manifestation does not take place till the Lord is manifested the second time. In the coming kingdom to be established on earth and ruled over by the King from above, creation will be put back into its original condition.

Israel's regathering will be from a worldwide dispersion. It will be "the second time." It does not and cannot mean the return from Babylon, but the return from their present exile of almost 2,000 years.

CHAPTER 12 Israel's Salvation Hymn

1. *When Israel will sing (12:1)*
2. *What Israel will sing (12:2-3)*
3. *To whom Israel will sing (12:4-5)*
4. *The Holy One in the midst (12:6)*

It is Israel's future song of praise for salvation. Read in this light what a wonderful meaning this little chapter has. The song will be sung by the delivered and blessed remnant "in that day." In what day? When the Lord arises to judge; when He is manifested in His glory; when He brings back the captivity of His people.

2. The judgment of the Nations and the Future Day of Jehovah (13-27)

CHAPTER 13 The Burden of Babylon

1. *Jehovah's call to the judgment of Babylon (13:1-5)*
2. *The day of Jehovah: When Babylon falls (13:6-16)*
3. *Babylon overthrown (13:17-22)*

The great judgments announced in this part of Isaiah were only partially fulfilled in the past. The great Babylon which came into existence as the mistress of the world after this prophecy had been given, fell by the Medes (verse 17 and Daniel 5). The judgment of this Babylon is meant here first. But the Babylon of the past is the type of a Babylon of the future, another mistress of the ecclesiastical and commercial world. It is yet to appear in its final form (Rev. 17-18). Its fall comes in the day of the Lord. This great day is described in verses 6-16 in this chapter.

CHAPTER 14 Israel's Restoration and Blessing After Babylon is Fallen and the Burden of Philistia

1. *Israel's restoration and exaltation (14:1-2)*
2. *The proverb against the king of Babylon (14:3-11)*
3. *The triumph over Lucifer (Satan) (14:12-20)*
4. *Babylon's destruction (14:21-23)*
5. *The Assyrian broken (14:24-27)*
6. *The burden of Philistia (14:28-32)*

When the last great Babylon is overthrown the Lord will remember His people and Jerusalem in mercy. He will then set His people in rest in their own land. The king of Babylon here in this chapter is not Nebuchadnezzar, nor his grandson Belshazzar, but the final great king of Babylon. It is the little horn of Daniel 7, the great political head of the restored Roman empire. Behind this final king of the times of the Gentiles looms up Satan, who energized that wicked and false king. The description of him who was "Lucifer," the light-bearer, and his fall is of deep interest.

CHAPTER 15 The Burden of Moab

1. *The Destruction Announced (15:1-9)*

CHAPTER 16 The Burden of Moab Continued

1. *God's call to Moab to repent (16:1-5)*
2. *Moab's pride and judgment (16:6-14)*

The fifteenth and sixteenth chapters form one prophecy. Moab's land bordered on the land of Israel. The historical facts concerning Moab may be studied and followed through the following passages: First Samuel 14:47; Second Samuel 8:2; Second Kings 1:1; 3:4; Second Chronicles 20; Second Kings 8:20; 24:2. Moab's sin and judgment are frequently mentioned by the prophet. See Amos 2:1-3. A great past judgment of Moab's is described in 15:1-9. The call in chapter 16:1 to send a lamb has nothing to do with Him who is "the lamb of God." The exhortation becomes clear by reading Second Samuel 8:2 and Second Kings 3:4, 5. Christ, however, is in view in verse 5, chapter 16. A remnant of Moab is to be left and in the time of the end we find Moab mentioned again. Read Isaiah 11:14 and Daniel 11:41. The final ruin of Moab is described in Isaiah 25:10-12.

CHAPTER 17 The Burden of Damascus and Judgment upon Ephraim

1. *Damascus to be a ruinous heap (17:1-3)*
2. *Judgment upon Ephraim (17:4-11)*
3. *Woe to the enemies of Israel (17:12-14)*

Damascus was the ancient city of Syria, mentioned for the first time in Gen. 15. Syria and Ephraim had made common cause against the house of David. Tiglath-pileser, King of Assyria, executed the judgment upon Damascus and made of it a ruinous heap. But the judgment is also future. And the enemies of Israel, which trouble His people, will be troubled "in that day." It is a solemn word with which this chapter closes, "This is the portion of them that spoil us, and the lot of them that rob us."

CHAPTER 18 When Israel Will be Brought Back

1. *The land beyond the rivers of Ethiopia (18:1)*
2. *The ambassadors sent (18:2)*
3. *The trumpet blown and Jehovah's Message (18:3-6)*
4. *Israel restored to Mount Zion (18:7)*

An interesting prophecy concerning a nation of great power, which will be used in the bringing back of God's ancient people.

CHAPTER 19 The Burden of Egypt

1. *The judgment announced (19:1-15)*
2. *Egypt blest with Israel in the last days (19:16-25)*

Egypt has passed through many judgments. Hundreds of years after the divine predictions had been given the Word of the Lord was accomplished. The final judgment upon Egypt comes in that day when the Lord appears in visible glory. Egypt will come, like other nations, to the front once more at the close of the times of the Gentiles. But mercy is also in store for Egypt. Egypt will be called "His people." When the Lord smites Egypt that land will return to Him. It will then be lifted out of the dust and receive a place of blessing only second to that which Israel will enjoy.

CHAPTER 20 The Near-Punishment of Egypt by Assyria

1. *Isaiah walks naked and barefooted (20:1-2)*
2. *The meaning of his action (20:3)*
3. *Egypt punished by Assyria (20:4-6)*

A strong party in Jerusalem looked to Egypt for help from the threatening Assyrian invasion. This prophecy shows the utter hopelessness of expecting help from Egypt. The victory of Assyria over Egypt is predicted.

CHAPTER 21 The Burdens of the Desert of the Sea, of Dumah, and Arabia

1. *The burden of the desert of the sea (Babylon) (21:1-10)*
2. *The burden of Dumah (21:11-12)*
3. *The burden upon Arabia (21:13-17)*

The fall of Babylon is predicted, for Media is mentioned. This event was over two centuries in the future. Isaiah beholds the Persian hosts advancing. Such is prophecy, "history written in advance."

CHAPTER 22 The Burden of the Valley of Vision (Jerusalem)

1. *Jerusalem's deplorable state (22:1-4)*
2. *The invading armies (22:5-7)*
3. *The siege and the calamity (22:8-14)*
4. *Shebna (22:15-19)*
5. *Eliakim (22:20-25)*

This is another intensely interesting prophecy. Jerusalem has passed through many sieges and at last in part the prophecy has been fulfilled. But there is another siege of Jerusalem impending. It will come after the message of the fall of the final Babylon. See Zechariah 14. Still more interesting are Shebna and Eliakim, mentioned in this chapter. Shebna, the proud one, is the usurper, the type of the Antichrist. Eliakim is the type of Christ, He whose right it is to reign. It is Christ displacing Antichrist, which is seen in verses 15-25. Compare 22:22 with Rev. 3:7.

CHAPTER 23 The Burden of Tyre

1. *Tyre's great disaster (23:1-5)*
2. *The complete overthrow (23:6-14)*
3. *Tyre's future restoration and degradation (23:15-18)*

Tyre typifies the commercial expansion and glory of the world. Behind this commercial glory stands Satan, the god of this age. Read Ezekiel 28:11-19. Nebuchadnezzar carried out judgment upon Tyre (Ezek. 29:17-18). A revival of Tyre is also predicted. We call attention to a statement in the beautiful Forty-fifth Psalm, a millennial Psalm. When the King appears, surrounded by His own, "The daughter of Tyre shall be there with a gift" (Ps. 45:12). It is what is indicated in Isaiah's vision, "And her merchandise and her hire shall be holiness to the Lord."

CHAPTER 24 The Day of Jehovah

1. *Jehovah dealing with the earth (24:1)*
2. *All classes affected (24:2)*
3. *The Desolations described (24:3-12)*

4. *The Jewish Remnant during the trouble (24:13-20)*
5. *The punishment of the high ones and kings (24:21-22)*
6. *Jehovah's reign in Mount Zion and Jerusalem (24:23)*

A marvellous chapter. Not a word of it has ever been fulfilled. The great day of Jehovah is that day of which Isaiah speaks in chapter 2, Zephaniah in chapter 1, Zechariah in chapters 12-14 and every other prophet. It is the day of 2 Thess. 1:7-10.

Notice that chapters 24-27 are a continuous prophecy. To break them into chapters has been a mistake. Study the phrase "in that day." Find what Jehovah will do in the day of His manifestation. He will judge and He will bless. Singing begins in that day.

The high ones in verse 21 are the wicked spirits in the heavenly places (Ephesians 6). The Kings on earth are the Kings mentioned in Psalm 2 and Rev. 19:19. Their visitation after many days will be a visitation of judgment and not of blessing.

CHAPTER 25 Israel's Praise and the Blessings of the Kingdom

1. *The praise of the delivered nation (25:1-5)*
2. *The blessing for all nations during the Kingdom (25:6-8)*
3. *Israel rejoicing after waiting (25:9)*
4. *Moab and Israel's enemies judged (25:10-12)*

In the foreground of this chapter stands another hymn of praise, which redeemed Israel will sing in "that day." Jehovah has done wonderful things for His people. Compare with chapter 12:5; Psalm 46:8-9, etc.

The blessings for all nations are described in verses 6-8. The mountain is Zion (Isaiah 4:5-6, Psalm 132:13-14). From there the streams of blessing will gush forth. Then "all the ends of the earth shall remember, and turn unto the Lord, and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before thee" (Ps. 22:27). Darkness will be removed and all tears wiped away. All this does not relate to the eternal state, but to conditions on the earth.

CHAPTER 26 Judah's Glory Song

1. *Praise for Jehovah's faithfulness and mercies (26:1-6)*
2. *The experiences of waiting during the night (26:7-11)*
3. *The assurance of peace and deliverance (26:12-18)*
4. *Assurance of restoration and preservation (26:19-21)*

We call attention to verses 12-21. Annihilationists base upon these words the evil doctrine that the wicked are not raised, but destroyed. The fact, however, is that verses 13 and 14 do not teach a physical resurrection. The teaching is that the lordship of other nations over Israel is forever gone. No other lords will ever rise again to domineer over Israel.

Death and resurrection are often used in the Old Testament as symbols of Israel's national death and national resurrection. See Hosea 6:2; Ezekiel 37; Daniel 12:2 and verse 19 of the present chapter.

CHAPTER 27 Israel's Enemies Overthrown and the Great Restoration

1. *Assyria, Babylon and Egypt punished (27:1)*
2. *What Jehovah has done and will do (27:2-11)*
3. *The vineyard established and the glorious consummation (27:12-13)*

This is a fitting finale to the second section of this book. Israel's chief enemies are indicated by the leviathan, the serpent and the dragon. Behind them stands the serpent and the dragon, Satan. When these enemies are overthrown and Satan is bound then "Israel shall blossom and bud, and fill the face of the world with fruit."

The last word tells of Israel's literal regathering under the blowing of the trumpet (Matt. 24:31) and their future worship in Jerusalem. The ending of the first and second sections are alike. They reveal Israel's future glory and blessing.

3. The Six Woes of the Prophet, Judgment Ruins and Restoration Glories to Come (28-35)

CHAPTER 28 The First Woe and the Message of Assurance

1. *Ephraim addressed (28:1-6)*
2. *Jerusalem equally corrupt and guilty (28:7-8)*
3. *The prophet mocked (28:9-10) The prophet's answer (28:11-13)*
4. *Their covenant with death (28:14-15)*
5. *The message of assurance (28:16-22)*
6. *How Jehovah judges (28:23-29)*

The first woe is directed against the ten tribes, Ephraim. The judgment is that which fell upon them through the invasion of Sennacherib. Yet glory is also in store for the scattered, so-called, lost tribes. A remnant will return. Verse 5 describes this glory.

The prophecy here and in the subsequent chapters was not by any means fulfilled when the Assyrian came into Israel's land. Its greater fulfillment is in the future, when the Assyrian once more invades Israel's land. See chapter 10. The covenant with death and agreement with hell (verse 15) must be compared with Daniel 9:27. It is the time when the apostate Jewish nation enters into a covenant with the coming prince and worships Antichrist. This verse and the message from the Lord in verses 16-22 are deeply interesting.

CHAPTER 29 The Second Woe Against Ariel and the Third Woe

1. *The fall of Ariel (Jerusalem) predicted (29:1-4)*
2. *Their enemies dealt with by Jehovah (29:5-8)*
3. *The people's condition: Blinded and religious formalists (29:9-14)*
4. *The third woe (29:15-16)*
5. *In that Day: joy and blessing for the meek and iniquity punished (29:17-24)*

Ariel means "the lion of God." It is one of the names of Jerusalem. A great siege of Jerusalem is predicted. Neither Sennacherib's invasion nor the siege of Jerusalem by the Romans accomplished this prophecy. At the end of this age the King of the North (Assyrian) and confederate nations with him will besiege Jerusalem. Of this the chapter gives us the history. Sennacherib's army is a type of the King of the North. Read again chapter 10 and study with this chapter before us Zechariah 12-14; Micah 4:11; 5:4-15, and especially the last part of Daniel 11. After that last siege of Jerusalem "that day" will bring blessing for the faithful and punishment for the wicked.

CHAPTER 30 The Fourth Woe Against Alliance With Egypt

1. *The alliance and its failure (30:1-7)*
2. *The written table against the rebellious people (30:8-14)*
3. *Jehovah's word of encouragement (30:15-17)*
4. *The nation blest and restored (30:18-21)*

5. *Idolatry ceases and the land restored (30:22-26)*
6. *The accomplishment by the coming of the Lord (30:27-33)*

While this chapter had a significance, like all these prophetic utterances, for the people in Isaiah's day, its complete revelation can only be grasped in the light of what is yet to come. The Jewish people have never yet possessed the blessings of verses 18-20. These will come as a result of the second coming of Christ. See verse 30.

CHAPTER 31 The Fifth Woe Against Them that Go Down to Egypt

1. *The Egyptian Alliance condemned again (31:1-3)*
2. *Jehovah promises to deliver Jerusalem (31:4-9)*

All looks forward towards the future. It is Jerusalem's glorious future. The Lord will deliver it; He will preserve it (verse 5).

CHAPTER 32 The Coming King and His Kingdom

1. *The King and His rule (32:1-8)*
2. *The careless women addressed (32:9-12)*
3. *The judgment of the land and the city (32:13-14)*
4. *The hope of the future (32:15-20)*

The connection with the previous chapter is obvious. In chapter 31:4-9 the coming of the Lord for the deliverance of His people and the punishment of their enemies is predicted. "So shall the Lord of Hosts come down to fight Mount Zion and the hill thereof." And now in the beginning of chapter 32 the coming King and His righteous reign is revealed. The King is the Man Christ Jesus, "a hiding place from the wind and a cover from the tempest."

Verses 13-14 describe once more the judgment which rested upon the land and the city. But it is not permanent. "Until the Spirit be poured upon us from on high." This great outpouring of the Spirit connected with the restoration of Israel's land has not yet taken place. It comes in that day. Read Joel 2.

CHAPTER 33 Sixth Woe Against the Assyrian and What Is to Follow

1. *The judgment announced (33:1)*
2. *The prayer of the faithful remnant (33:2-6)*
3. *The judgment executed (33:7-13)*
4. *The judge in the midst of Zion (33:14-16)*
5. *The King beheld in His beauty (33:17-23)*
6. *Healing and forgiveness the result of the coming of the King (33:24)*

This is the last mention which is made of the Assyrian apart from the historical chapters. Here again the judgment of the final Assyrian is in view. When the Lord arises and is exalted the judgment of the last great enemy of Israel will be executed. This judgment scene is described in verses 9-13. The prayer of the faithful remnant is recorded in verses 2-6. The remnant is that portion of the nation which holds to Jehovah and His word in the last days. Their prayer will be answered by the King, whom they shall see in His beauty. What Zion will be then and what the Lord will be to His earthly people is seen in the rest of the chapter.

CHAPTER 34 The Day of Jehovah

1. *Addressed to the world: Jews and Gentiles involved (34:1)*
2. *The shaking of the earth and the heavens (34:2-8)*
3. *The day of vengeance (34:9-17)*

This is one of the darkest chapters in the Bible. A worldwide judgment is described such as has never taken place in the history of the world. The indignation of the Lord is then upon all nations and upon their armies. Like chapter 33, it tells of the great judgments to come.

CHAPTER 35 Restoration Glory and the Kingdom

1. *Creation blest and the glory of the Lord revealed (35:1-2)*
2. *The spiritual and material blessings of the kingdom (35:3-9)*
3. *The return of the ransomed of the Lord (35:10)*

What follows the great judgments of the day of Jehovah, when our Lord Jesus Christ is revealed from heaven in flaming fire, is now brought forward in this final chapter of the first great part of Isaiah's vision. The unscriptural view, that the coming of the Lord in judgment means the complete end of the world, is once more answered. After judgment ruin comes restoration glory. What that glory is we find in this chapter. Read it carefully and also the "Studies in Isaiah" which follow this analysis. The last verse shows the ransomed of the Lord returning to Zion, delivered from sorrow and sighing, filled with joy and singing salvation songs. It is the bringing back to their own land of a delivered people.

A brief word of review. Each section of Part I, chapters 1-35, foretells great judgments. Judgments upon Jerusalem, the land of Judah, the nations, the whole world. These visions were not at all fulfilled in the past judgments. The day of the Lord ("in that day" *ba yom hahu*, a phrase so often used by Isaiah) will bring these threatened judgments. But there are the predictions of restoration and blessing, which always follow that day. Each of the three sections end with the vision of a regathered and restored people, brought back to their land. The scope is perfect because it is divine.

THE HISTORICAL PARENTHESIS (36-39)

The center of the book of Isaiah is a brief but deeply interesting historical account of events during the reign of King Hezekiah. His name is mentioned not less than thirty-one times in these chapters. His great works in reformation and otherwise are recorded in 2 Kings 18:4-7, 2 Chronicles 29-30:5-22, 2 Kings 20:20. From Proverbs 25:1 we learn that he was a great lover of the Word of God, for he had it copied, perhaps by many scribes. He was 25 years old when he ascended the throne and reigned 29 years, 727-699 B.C. No doubt he was one of the greatest kings of Judah.

The events recorded in these chapters are not put together chronologically. The king's sickness, prayer and recovery occurred before the attempts of Sennacherib to take Jerusalem and the subsequent complete overthrow of the Assyrian hosts. This arrangement has its meaning. These historical chapters are designed for an appendix to the earlier prophecies (1-35) and for an introduction to the later prophecies (40-66). The Assyrian enemy is repeatedly predicted in the earlier prophecies. Indeed he is seen as the enemy of God's people, the rod of God's anger to punish His disobedient people. How the Assyrian came and the angel of the Lord smote the camp is therefore put first, because it is related to the first prophecies of Isaiah. In connection with Hezekiah's pride in chapter 39 the future Babylonian captivity is announced. The later prophecies look upon the people as in Babylon, assuring the remnant of restoration, not alone from the dispersion in Babylon but the future great restoration, the regathering from all countries.

We give a brief analysis of these four chapters and leave it to the reader to gather up the blessed lessons of confidence in God, dependence upon Him, of prayer, as well as others, in which these chapters abound.

CHAPTER 36 The Threatening Enemy

1. *The Assyrian invasion (36:1-3)*
2. *Rabshakeh's mockery (36:4-10)*
3. *Eliakim, Shebna, and Joah's Request (36:11)*
4. *Rabshakeh's address in Hebrew defying God (36:12-20)*
5. *The silence of the people (36:21)*
6. *The terror of Eliakim, Shebna, and Joah (36:22)*

CHAPTER 37 Hezekiah in the House of the Lord and Sennacherib's Second Attempt

1. *Hezekiah's humiliation and Isaiah sent for (37:1-5)*
2. *The message from the prophet (37:6-7)*
3. *Rabshakeh's letter (37:8-13)*
4. *Hezekiah's prayer (37:14-20)*
5. *The prayer answered (37:21-35)*
6. *The army of Sennacherib judged (37:36)*
7. *The judgment upon Sennacherib (37:38)*

CHAPTER 38 Hezekiah's Sickness and Healing

1. *Isaiah's startling message (38:1)*
2. *Hezekiah's prayer (38:2-3)*
3. *The prayer heard and the sign (38:4-8)*
4. *The king's sorrow and joy, a psalm of praise (38:9-20)*
5. *The remedy for the recovery (38:21-22)*

The message of approaching death startled the king because at that time he had no son. If he had died what then would have become of the Messianic hope through the house of David? Beautiful it is to hear the Lord say through Isaiah, "Thus saith the Lord, the God of David, thy father." Before that Isaiah gave him the message "For I will defend this city to save it for Mine own sake and for My servant David's sake.

CHAPTER 39 Hezekiah's Self-Exaltation

1. *The ambassadors of Merodach-baladan (39:1)*
2. *Hezekiah's boasting (39:2)*
3. *Isaiah's inquiry (39:3-4)*
4. *The Babylonian captivity announced (39:5-7)*
5. *Hezekiah's submission and comfort (39:8)*

The prediction of Isaiah of the Babylonian captivity, fulfilled through King Nebuchadnezzar about 100 years after these words were spoken, is startling. The reader will bear in mind that the Assyrian was not yet overcome, for the sickness and self-exaltation of Hezekiah preceded the judgment of Sennacherib's army. The Assyrian and not Babylon was the threatening enemy. God's Spirit alone could enable him to make such a prediction.

II. THE LATER PROPHECIES OF COMFORT AND GLORY (40-66)

Like the first part this second part of Isaiah has three sections. The three sections of the first part revealed the judgments to come upon the Jewish people, Jerusalem, the nations and the earth. The three sections of the second part reveal the great blessings in store for the people of Israel, Jerusalem, the nations and the earth, after the judgments are passed. These sections give the past, present, and the future history of the Jewish people.

In the first section (40-48) they are seen prophetically in Babylon, but about to be delivered and brought back to the land. Cyrus is predicted as the chosen instrument. However, this section looks also beyond the return of the remnant from Babylon. Their present dispersion and coming restoration is predicted as well.

In the second section (49-57) we find this period of their history more fully brought forward. In this section the servant of Jehovah is more fully revealed. He came to His own and they received Him not. They hid their faces from Him and esteemed Him not. In consequence of this rejection Israel is not gathered (49:5), while those who are afar off, the Gentiles and the isles of the sea, hear of the salvation of God. It is the present age which can be traced in this section. Israel not gathered and the rejected One is given for a light to the nations. The great central figure in this section is the suffering servant of Jehovah (chapter 53).

In the third section we discover their future history. Here we see Him, who suffered, as the victorious King. A remnant is seen back in the land and the glories and blessings of the future burst forth in marvelous splendor.

1. In Babylon: Deliverance Promised Through Cyrus (40-48)

CHAPTER 40 The Opening Message: Key and Introduction to this Section

1. *Comfort for His people (40:1-2)*
2. *The voice in the wilderness (40:3-5)*
3. *The prophet's message (40:6-8)*
4. *The message to Zion (40:9-11)*
5. *The supremacy of Jehovah (40:12-26)*
6. *Comfort for Jacob and Israel (40:27-31)*

The first verses of this chapter are the key and introduction to the entire section. The Lord now speaks in comfort to Jerusalem and announces the pardoning of her iniquity and that in blessing she will receive double for her sins. In verses 3-11 the first and second coming of Christ are again blended together. John the Baptist was that voice crying in the wilderness (John 1:23). Not in Matthew, but in Luke, Isaiah 40:3-5 is quoted with the exception of verse 5. In its place the Holy Spirit saith, "And all flesh shall see the salvation of God." The glory of the Lord will be revealed with the second Advent. When that glory appears Israel is saved, in the meantime the salvation of God is offered to the Gentiles. Jehovah speaks in this chapter of Himself and the evidences that He is God. This is the peculiar feature of the entire section. All is spoken to encourage the faith of His people. Blessed lessons we find here. Verses 27-31, however, will only be fully realized in the future kingdom.

CHAPTER 41 Jehovah's Challenge

1. *The address to the islands and the peoples (41:1)*
2. *Jehovah's question, Cyrus and his ways predicted (41:2-4)*
3. *Nations troubled on account of Cyrus (41:5-7)*
4. *Israel as Jehovah's servant (41:8)*
5. *The message of comfort and assurance of restoration (41:9-20)*
6. *Jehovah's second challenge: He alone can declare things to come (41:21-24)*
7. *The future things revealed (41:25-29)*

Cyrus is here mentioned for the first time, though not yet by name. He is in view in verses 2-3 and 25. His work as a mighty conqueror is outlined and the consternation of the surrounding nations on account of it is described. Verses 18-20 go beyond the times of Cyrus. They can only be fulfilled when He who is greater than Cyrus will appear.

CHAPTER 42 The True Servant of Jehovah

1. *The Servant of Jehovah and His mission (42:1-4)*
2. *His future work among the nations (42:5-9)*
3. *The future song of redemption glory (42:10-13)*
4. *Jehovah's manifestation in power (42:14-17)*
5. *The address of exhortation to the deaf and blind nation (42:18-25)*

Matthew's Gospel (12:20) tells us that this servant is the Lord Jesus Christ. Mark the different phases of His character and work while on earth and His future work when He appears again. The song of redemption glory will be sung only when He is manifested. Israel is seen as a people robbed and spoiled. None saith "Restore." This is their present condition.

CHAPTER 43 Jehovah Speaks in Comfort to His People

1. *What Jehovah is and will be to Israel (43:1-7)*
2. *Second address to the blind and deaf people (43:8-13)*
3. *Jehovah deals with their enemies (43:14-17)*
4. *Blessed things to come: They shall show forth My praise (43:18-21)*
5. *Jehovah's loving appeal and promise to remember their sins no more (43:22-28)*

Chapters 43-45 must be studied together. Jehovah speaks in these chapters as nowhere else in the prophetic Word. Note the many declarations Jehovah makes. "I have redeemed thee," "I will be with thee," "I have loved thee," "I have made him," "I am the LORD, I will make a way in the wilderness." All God's people can lay claim to these blessed words of promise and assurance. Ultimately Israel will possess and enjoy these great blessings.

CHAPTER 44 Jehovah Continues to Speak

1. *Spiritual blessings promised by the gift of the Spirit (44:1-5)*
2. *Jehovah the First and the Last (44:6-8)*
3. *Idolatry rebuked (44:9-20)*
4. *Remember! Return! Sing! (44:21-23)*
5. *The faithful Jehovah, the Redeemer (44:24-27)*
6. *Cyrus named (44:28)*

The outpouring of the Spirit upon Israel's seed promised in the beginning of the chapter has not yet taken place. Compare with chapter 32:15 and 59:21. Verses 21-23 look forward to the coming age of blessing. Then Israel will be "Jehovah's servant" on the earth; then their transgressions will be blotted out. Then the heavens, the earth, the mountains and the trees will break forth in singing. In verse 28 Cyrus is mentioned by name. This great Persian King was then in the distant future an unborn being. Jehovah knew him and named him through Isaiah. He calls him "my shepherd" and predicts his work. Josephus declares that when Cyrus found his name in the book of Isaiah, written 220 years before, an earnest desire laid hold upon him to fulfil what was written.

CHAPTER 45 The Word of Jehovah to Cyrus, to Israel and to the Ends of the Earth

1. *Thus saith Jehovah to Cyrus (45:1-13)*
2. *Thus saith Jehovah: Israel shall be saved (45:14-17)*
3. *Thus saith Jehovah to the ends of the earth: Every knee to bow (45:18-25)*

Cyrus is called in this chapter God's anointed (Messiah). Jehovah called him by name, but it was for the sake of Israel. But it is well to bear in mind that Cyrus, God's instrument, called and prepared to make the restoration of a remnant possible, is likewise a type of Christ, through whom alone the promises of God to the nation can be accomplished.

Note the statements "Israel shall be saved in Jehovah with an everlasting salvation" (verse 17). "All the ends of the earth will be saved" (verse 22). Then idolatry will be rebuked (49:9-20). But notice the order. First Israel must know salvation and as a result the ends of the earth will look and be saved. The most precious gospel truths found here are well known.

CHAPTER 46

1. *Babylon Is to Fall The Babylonian idols carried by the beasts (46:1-2)*
2. *How Jehovah carries His people (46:3-4)*
3. *The divine reproach (46:5-7)*
4. *A ravenous bird (Cyrus) to come from the east (46:8-11)*
5. *Salvation in Zion (46:12-13)*

The opening verses are comforting. The helplessness of the Babylonian idols is described. They have to be carried. They cannot deliver out of captivity, for they themselves have gone in to captivity. But Jehovah carries His people from birth to old age. The last verse takes us beyond the fall of the Babylon of the past. When the final Babylon described in Revelation is accomplished then it will be true "I will place salvation in Zion for Israel my glory."

CHAPTER 47 A Description of the Fall of Babylon

1. *Babylon's degradation announced (47:1-3)*
2. *Israel acknowledges the redeemer (47:4)*
3. *Retribution for Babylon (47:5-7)*
4. *The destruction swift and sure (47:8-15)*

In chapter 14 a similar description of Babylon and the fall of the king of Babylon is recorded. All has its meaning for the future.

CHAPTER 48 The Divine Restatement Concerning His People, Their Condition and Future

1. *Their condition and Jehovah's predictions (48:1-8)*
2. *Jehovah acts for His Name's sake (48:9-11)*
3. *I am He" (48:12-16)*
4. *Israel's future blessing (48:17-21)*
5. *No peace for the wicked (48:22)*

This chapter touches once more upon the different phases of Jehovah's messages from chapters 40-47. Israel's apostate condition, Jehovah's sovereign grace and mercy towards them, Cyrus (verses 14-15), the blessings of the future for a converted remnant of His people, are all mentioned again. Solemn is the declaration that whatever Jehovah does, whatever comfort and peace He bestows, however grand and glorious the blessings of the future are, the wicked are forever excluded. There is no peace unto the wicked.

This chapter closes the first section of the second part of Isaiah. Babylon, Cyrus and Jehovah's majesty and glory, revealed in predicting future things, the helplessness of idols and Jehovah's mercy and power manifested in the restoration and blessing of His people are the leading features of this section.

2. The Servant of Jehovah, His Suffering and His Glory (49-57)

CHAPTER 49 The Servant of Jehovah and His Mission

1. *The servant speaks of himself (49:1-3)*
2. *He complains of failure (49:4)*
3. *Jehovah's answer to him (49:5-13)*
4. *Zion speaks (49:14) Jehovah's answer (49:15-26)*

This entire chapter is the key to the whole section. The Servant of Jehovah, the Lord Jesus Christ, stands in the foreground. He is seen as the Rejected One, who complains that He has labored in vain. The ultimate result of His Work is prophetically described. In the opening verses He speaks of His call. To bring Jacob to God is why He appeared in the midst of His own. But Israel is not gathered, for they rejected Him (verse 5). The nation abhorreth Him. Israel's gathering was not accomplished at the first advent. The nation was set aside. By their fall salvation came to the Gentiles. This is fully revealed in verses 6-7. In verses 8-13 we find the future work of Christ as King. When it is accomplished the heavens will sing and the earth will be joyful. Zion's present complaint (verse 14) is answered by promises of restoration.

CHAPTER 50 The Servant Speaks of His Determination and Suffering

(verses 1-3 belong to the preceding chapter.)

1. *The cause of Zion's present desolation (50:1-3)*
2. *The Servant's self-witness (50:4)*
3. *His obedience and His suffering (50:5-6)*
4. *His victorious triumph (50:7-9)*
5. *The two classes: Those who fear Him and those who reject Him (50:10-11)*

The Suffering One is speaking. Little comment is needed on this chapter if the reader will use the above outline.

CHAPTER 51 Jehovah Encourages His Faithful People, the Remnant of Israel

1. *The call to remember Abraham (51:1-2)*
2. *Zion to be comforted (51:3)*
3. *His righteousness near and His arm to judge the people (51:4-6)*
4. *Fear ye not (51:7-8)*
5. *The prayer of faith (51:9-11)*
6. *Jehovah answers (51:12-16)*
7. *The suffering of the nation to end (51:17-23)*

The Lord speaks to His faithful people. He reminds them of Abraham and the covenant. He assures them that the wilderness of Zion shall become like Eden, like the garden of the Lord. Judgment shall overtake the earth. It is beautiful to see how the faithful pray in faith after this message from Jehovah (verses 9-11), and how Jehovah answers them (verses 12-16).

CHAPTER 52 Zion Awakening and the Coming of the Lord

(it is unfortunate that chapter 52:1-12 is detached from chapter 51 and that the last 3 verses of chapter 52 are detached from the chapter which follows. The correct division is chapter 51-52:12, chapter 52:13-53:12.)

1. *Zion called to awake (52:1-5)*
2. *"In that day" Behold it is I (52:6)*

3. *The results of the return of Jehovah (52:7-12)*
4. *The Servant's suffering and glory (52:13-15)*

The last paragraph of chapter 51 gives the divine declaration that the suffering and affliction of Israel is to end. "Behold I have taken out of thine hand the cup of trembling, even the dregs of the cup of my fury; thou shalt no more drink it again" (51:22). Now Zion assured of the end of suffering is called upon to awaken and put on beautiful garments. She is to arise from the dust. Such is the glorious future of Jerusalem. Verses 7-12 reveal the blessed results of the Coming of the Lord. Then it shall be said, "Thy God reigneth." Then and not before "all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God" (52:10).

Verses 13-15 connect with chapter 53:1-12. Chapters 51-52:12 are parenthetical.

CHAPTER 53 The Sinbearer and His Victory

1. *The marred visage and His exaltation (52:13-15)*
2. *His life and His rejection by the nation (53:1-3)*
3. *The work of the Sinbearer: smitten, afflicted and bruised (53:4-6)*
4. *His submission and His deliverance (53:7-9)*
5. *His glorious reward (53:10-12)*

In "Messianic predictions," at the close the reader will find hints on this great chapter. We do not repeat them here. The New Testament fully bears witness to this great vision of the cross of Christ, the vicarious suffering of the Son of God and its blessed results. To reject them as meaning Christ and His work of atonement is equivalent to the rejection of the revelation of the New Testament and especially the rejection of the Person of our Lord. The chapter is one of the greatest in this book. After chapter 52 the Servant of Jehovah is no longer mentioned. He is seen in the next section as the King coming with power and executing the judgments of God.

CHAPTER 54 Israel Called to Sing

1. *The blessings of restoration (54:1-6)*
2. *Mercy bestowed (54:7-10)*
3. *The earthly glory of Jerusalem (54:11-14)*
4. *Jehovah keeps and defends His people (54:15-17)*

After the cross the singing. What singing there will be in the earth when at last "they will look upon Him, whom they have pierced." Israel will some day know the full meaning of Isaiah 53, and when He is owned at last the glories and blessings of restoration will, through infinite grace, be bestowed upon them. Enlargement and faithfulness will be the results. The shame of Israel's youth and long widowhood is ended. The forsaking is ended. Everlasting kindness will be their happy portion. The fear and sorrow of Israel are ended because "He hath poured out His soul unto death."

CHAPTER 55 Salvation's Offer and Provision

1. *The invitation to everyone and the promise (55:1-2)*
2. *The sure mercies of David (55:3-5)*
3. *The exhortation to seek and to forsake (55:6-7)*
4. *God's thoughts and God's ways (55:8-11)*
5. *The joy, peace and glory of the future (55:12-13)*

The scope and application of this chapter must not be limited. While Israel eventually will break forth in singing as the result of believing on Him, whom they once despised, the invitation to a free and full salvation goes forth to every one. It

is the great gospel invitation in this book. But the national promises to Israel are in evidence in verses 3-5. And when Israel is redeemed the invitation to salvation will go forth as never before. Now individuals are saved. Then nations will be brought into the kingdom. "Nations that knew not thee shall come unto thee because of the Lord thy God, and for the Holy One of Israel; for He hath glorified thee."

CHAPTER 56 Salvation Enjoyed by the Strangers and Eunuchs

1. Strangers and servants joined unto the Lord to serve Him and to love the Name of the Lord (56:1-8)

The first eight verses of this chapter stand by themselves. Strangers to the commonwealth of Israel and eunuchs are gathered in. It is the result of the gracious invitation of the preceding chapter and that again is the result of the work of the Servant of Jehovah and His vicarious suffering. While these verses look forward to the kingdom we have in them a hint of what God does now in gathering strangers. The gathering of the others in verse eight can only take place when the outcasts of Israel are brought in.

Chapters 56:9-57:14 must be read continuously.

CHAPTERS 56:9-57:21 The Condition of the Apostate Nation and the two Classes

- 1. The condition of the shepherds of Israel (56:9-12)*
- 2. Apostate Israel (57:1-14)*
- 3. The two classes (57:15-21)*

The final chapter of this second section corresponds to the last chapter of the first section (chapter 48). The sad condition of the people Israel is pictured. This is their national apostasy throughout this age, while strangers are joined to the Lord and the church is gathered. The worst is yet to come. Chapter 57:9 looks forward to the great apostasy during the great tribulation. The king is the Antichrist, who takes his seat in the temple and claims worship (2 Thess. 2). They worship him, the masterpiece of Satan, and thus they debase themselves unto hell.

Gracious is the promise to the feeble remnant, those who are contrite and humble. "I have seen his ways and will heal him. I will lead him also and restore comforts unto him and to his mourners." Peace is promised to him that is afar off (Gentiles) and to him that is near (Israel). It will be fully realized in the kingdom. "But the wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt. There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked." It is the same solemn declaration which stands last in chapter 58. Comfort and peace for all, except for the wicked. It is a complete answer to the heresy of the present day, which claims that all Israel, including the wicked dead, will be saved and have a share in the Kingdom of Peace.

3. Jewish History in the Endtime: their Future Glory and the Glory of the Coming Age (58-59)

This third and last section of the vision of Isaiah can only be understood and appreciated if it is studied in the light of other prophecies which predict the final events with which the times of the Gentiles close. That period consists of 7 years, the last 3 1/2 being the great tribulation. According to these predictions a part of the Jewish nation will be back in their land. These returned Jews will consist of two classes, a faithful remnant who own their condition, trust in Jehovah and in the national promises, and an unbelieving mass. The latter will be the large majority and hate their own brethren. In their unbelief they will build another temple and eventually will accept the false messiah, the Antichrist. The struggles and troubles of the endtime can easily be traced in this last section. The faithful remnant, their fears and hopes, their sufferings and prayers are written here, as well as their deliverance through the coming Of the King, the Lord Jesus Christ. The prophetic descriptions of the future of Jerusalem, the land of Israel, the restored nation, the spiritual blessings and the glories in store for this earth are the most magnificent in the entire book.

CHAPTER 58 The Condition of the People, Repentance, and the Blessings to Follow

1. *The Prophet's commission (58:1)*
2. *The transgression and sins of Jacob uncovered (58:2-5)*
3. *The divine requirements (58:6-7)*
4. *What Jehovah promises (58:8-14)*

Once more the Prophet is commissioned to cry and this time to call the people to repentance. Such will be the case during the time of the end. The first advent of the Lord was heralded by John the Baptist, who called the nation to repentance. The second advent will be preceded by another call to repentance. It is before us in this chapter. See also Malachi 4:3-6.

In verses 9-14 we have all the great future blessings of the converted remnant of Israel described. It is the entire section in embryo.

CHAPTER 59 Apostasy and Confession, Jehovah's Intervention and the Coming of the Redeemer

1. *The deplorable condition of the people (59:1-8)*
2. *The confession (59:9-15)*
3. *Jehovah's intervention (59:16-19)*
4. *The coming of the Redeemer (59:20-21)*

The corruption of the people during the endtime is first described. But grace is at work and a part of the people confess their sins. They confess that they are in darkness, that they are blind, that they stumble and are like dead men. They confess that salvation is far from them. They confess their lying, their departure from God and their revolt. It is their future repentance. Then Jehovah sees and intervenes. He answers the confession in person. He comes to repay the adversaries. He comes in mighty judgment power. As a result they will fear His name. The Redeemer then comes to Zion and appears for the salvation of them that turn from transgression. Compare this with Romans 11:25-32.

CHAPTER 60 The Glory Chapter: The Morning of a New Age and Its Blessing

1. *The light and glory has come (60:1)*
2. *The darkness before the morning (60:2)*
3. *The conversion of the Gentiles (60:3)*
4. *The dispersed brought home (60:4)*
5. *The conversion of the world (60:5-9)*
6. *Jerusalem restored and glorified (60:10-16)*
7. *The theocratic kingdom established: Its material and spiritual glories (60:17-22)*

A small volume might be written on this glory chapter. The reader will note how all stands connected with chapters 58-59. First the call to repentance, then the uncovering of Jacob's transgression, their confession, the answer of Jehovah by His personal manifestation. He deals with His adversaries and appears as Redeemer in Zion. Then the glory light breaks forth. It is the dawn of the morning. That morning was preceded by gross darkness--universal apostasy and corruption. After the glory has broken forth the kingdom age begins. The conversion of the Gentiles will take place and Jerusalem will be indeed the city of a great King. Then at last all the people will be righteous. How strange that Christendom should ignore these majestic predictions and their divine order.

CHAPTER 61 The King, Jehovah's Messenger: His People and their Salvation Song

1. *Jehovah's Messenger and His work (61:1-5)*

2. *His people a kingdom of priests and their work (61:6-9)*
3. *The salvation song (61:10)*
4. *The blessings of the whole earth (61:11)*

Luke 4 tells us that the Lord Jesus Christ applied the opening verses to Himself. The destructive criticism denies both the Isaiah authorship of this chapter and its messianic application. The satanic origin of this kind of criticism is here fully exposed. But our Lord did not quote the whole of verse 2. He only read up to "the acceptable year of the Lord." This sentence marks the work He did in His first advent. The day of vengeance is introduced by His second advent. The results of His second coming are described in the verses which follow. Then Israel will be the kingdom of priests and a holy nation (Exodus 19). They will sing the song of salvation (verse 10). Righteousness and praise will follow.

CHAPTER 62 Zion's Glory

1. *He will not rest (62:1)*
2. *The new names (62:2-5)*
3. *The intercession and the answer (62:6-9)*
4. *The accomplishment at hand (62:10-12)*

The intercession in the beginning of the chapter is that of Christ. He will not rest till He has accomplished His purpose in His earthly people and in Zion. When it is accomplished Gentiles and kings will witness it. Zion then shall be called by a new name. The forsaken one will no longer be forsaken; the desolation of the land will cease. She shall be called Hephzibah (my delight in her); the land will be Beulah (married). All points to the glorious consummation of the kingdom, and other watchmen intercede and give Him no rest till He establish and make Jerusalem a praise in the earth. Faithful Jews, men of prayer will during the great tribulation call on God to make good His Word and fulfil His promises. May God's people even now plead and intercede for the hastening of all His purposes. "Behold, thy salvation cometh, behold His reward is with Him and His work before Him." Note the results of His coming in verse 12.

CHAPTER 63 The Executor of the Day of Vengeance

1. *The glorious appearing (63:1)*
2. *The day of vengeance (63:2-6)*

Rev. 19:11-21 corresponds to this marvelous description of the coming King. Before in this section we read of the day of vengeance, the Lord's intervention in behalf of His people and the overthrow of their enemies. The day of vengeance is now beheld by the prophet. The acceptable year is closed and judgment sweeps the earth. Often this chapter is quoted as meaning the salvation work of Christ. It has nothing to do with that. It is His judgment work. It is unfortunate that the sixty-third chapter is not ended in our Bibles with the sixth verse. Verses 7-19 belong to chapter 64.

CHAPTER 63:7-19-64:12 The Great Intercessory Prayer

1. *Jehovah's loving kindness and power in the past remembered (63:7-14)*
2. *Their deepest need (63:15)*
3. *The cry of faith, Thou art our Father (63:16)*
4. *The increasing plea (63:17-19)*
5. *The prayer for Jehovah's manifestation (64:1-4)*
6. *Confession and humiliation (64:5-7)*
7. *The cry for mercy and help (64:8-12)*

This is one of the greatest prayers in the Bible. The prophet no doubt prayed it first of all, and the Spirit of Christ through him. But its full meaning will be reached when the faithful remnant of Israel in the endtime cries for help and

deliverance during the great tribulation. When Daniel discovered that the end of the Babylonian captivity was at hand, he uttered a great prayer (Daniel 9). The same beautiful spirit of a contrite heart, confession of sin, trust in Jehovah, pleading for Jerusalem and expectation of deliverance, which characterizes Daniel's prayer is seen in this great prayer. Many of the prayers in the book of Psalms are the prayers of the remnant suffering in the land before the second advent.

The remaining two chapters contain the answer to this prayer.

CHAPTER 65 Jehovah's Answer: The Rebellious and Their Judgment, the Faithful and Their Blessings

1. *The divine rebuke to the apostates (65:1-8)*
2. *The elect seed (65:9-10)*
3. *The judgment of the apostates (65:11-12)*
4. *The blessings of Jehovah's servants and the contrast (65:13-16)*
5. *The glories and blessings of the future (65:17-25)*

The first eight verses give a description of the iniquities practiced by apostate Israel. Judgment will overtake them in the day of vengeance. Then the blessings of Jehovah's true servant (the remnant) are declared. They shall eat, drink, rejoice and be blessed. All is contrasted with the wicked who have forsaken the Lord. A marvelous revelation concerning the future is given in verses 17-25. When will all this be accomplished? It begins with the day of Jehovah; that day of the Lord is one thousand years. At the close of it the new heavens and a new earth will be created. Then, when eternal ages begin the complete fulfillment is reached. But the blessings of the Millennium are also before us. Jerusalem is created a place of rejoicing and His people, the people of the kingdom, Jews and Gentiles, obedient to the laws of the kingdom, will enjoy the material blessings here predicted. And groaning creation is seen once more delivered.

CHAPTER 66 The Finale: The Two Classes and the Prophecy of Isaiah in a Retrospect

1. *The apostates and their wicked worship (66:1-4)*
2. *The remnant suffering and encouraged (66:5)*
3. *The sudden manifestation of the Lord (66:6)*
4. *The nation's rebirth (66:7-9)*
5. *Jerusalem's supremacy and glory (66:10-14)*
6. *The warning of judgment (66:15-18)*
7. *The regathering after judgment (66:19-21)*
8. *The blessings for the righteous (66:22-23)*
9. *The destiny of the wicked (66:24)*

This great chapter is the fitting conclusion of the prophecy of Isaiah. The leading predictions contained in Isaiah concerning the future are once more restated. The opening verses have mystified many readers of this book. The apostate part of the Jewish nation, restored in unbelief (a restoration now going on), erect a temple once more and resume their ancient worship. This worship without faith in Jehovah is an abomination before Him. It were as if they offered swine's blood. Their coming judgment is announced in verse 4. The pious remnant, the praying remnant is seen once more. They tremble at the Word of the Lord. The unbelievers in their own nation hate them. They are mocked because they expect Jehovah's intervention from above. "Let the Lord be glorified"--they say in ridicule (verse 5). Then the coming of the Lord takes place. This is described in the sixth verse. The nation's rebirth, the supremacy and glory of Jerusalem, additional warnings, the gathering of the people into the kingdom, the blessedness of the righteous and the destiny of Jehovah's enemies conclude the chapter and the book.

The reader will have noticed that each section of the second part begins with a chapter which is the key and introduction to the section. Each concludes with a description of the two classes which compose the nation in the last days and emphasizes the fact that for the wicked there is no peace, but punishment. Each section reveals a person. The first

section reveals Cyrus, under whom the remnant returned from Babylon; the second, the suffering Servant of Jehovah; the third, the King of Glory to execute vengeance and deliver His people. May He give us to see these wonderful things to come. May the vision of the future be the inspiration of our lives.

THE SCOPE OF ISAIAH

It is a great book which bears the name of Isaiah. The scope of the book and the contents are of indescribable grandeur. The more it is read, the more its majestic greatness takes hold of the heart and mind of the reader. The revelations and predictions it contains are the foundations of our faith. They unfold the future of Israel, describe the glories of the kingdom to come and the blessings in store for this earth. Isaiah is the prophet of the future. The supernatural origin of the writings of this noble prophet is in evidence throughout the entire book.

The work of the Critics. Perhaps no other book has been of late years so much attacked by the destructive critics as the book of Isaiah. This in itself is an evidence of its genuineness and inspiration. Satan through his instruments attacks especially those parts of God's Word where the Holy Spirit has revealed the Person of our Lord, His work and His coming kingdom. It is the first move towards the rejection of the Person of Christ. In reading some of the critical works on Isaiah one is reminded of a dissecting room. These critics follow the tactics of the Jewish King Jehoiakim. He took the penknife and cut the scroll upon which God's message through Jeremiah was written. I wonder if archaeologists will some day find that penknife. If so it ought to be presented as a precious relic to the school of the destructive critics who might build a shrine for it in one of their institutions.

It would be interesting to follow the history of this criticism. We fear, however, it would not be very edifying to us who are believers in the inspiration of this book. What the critics have especially attacked is the authorship. They tell us that the book of Isaiah is of a composite origin. Isaiah did not write the entire book which bears his name. For about 2500 years no one ever thought of even suggesting that Isaiah did not write the book. Then they invented an unknown person who is called the Deutero-Isaiah, i.e., a second Isaiah, who is said to have written the sublime chapters 40-66. With this they did not stop. They found out that this Deutero-Isaiah only wrote chapters 40-55 and a Trito-Isaiah wrote the greater part of chapters 55-66. With their supposed learning they discovered that some of these chapters were written in Babylon and others in Palestine. Some of the most radical critics have even gone beyond this.

To give the result of the work of the critics, men like George Adams Smith, Canon Driver and A. B. Davidson, declare that out of the 66 chapters, which compose the book of Isaiah forty-four were not written by Isaiah. Others cut out more than that so that actually they claim out of the 1292 verses found in the book of Isaiah only 260 were penned by the prophet.

But what does all this mean? It is a denial of what is written in the first verse of this book. "The vision of Isaiah, the son of Amoz, which he saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem, in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah." And if several men wrote this book, if part was written during the Babylonian captivity and other parts added after the captivity, then this statement with which the book begins is untrue. This first verse assures us that the book is a whole, that all we find in it is the vision of one man. To deny this breaks down the truthfulness of the book and reduces it to the level of common literature. This is what the critics have done. But the book of Isaiah is quoted in the New Testament. The Jews always believed this book to have been written by Isaiah. They held this belief when our Lord was on the earth. He Himself read in the synagogue of Nazareth from chapter 61, which the critics deny to be the writing of Isaiah. Quotations from Isaiah are frequently found in different parts of the New Testament. Twenty-one times we read of Isaiah and his words in the New Testament. The phrases used are the following: "Spoken by the prophet Esaias"; "Fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias"; "Well did Esaias prophesy"; "In the book of the words of Esaias"; "As said the prophet Esaias"; "The saying of Esaias the prophet"; "These things said Esaias"; "Well spake the Holy Spirit by Esaias"; "Esaias also saith"; "Esaias saith." This is evidence enough that the Lord and the Holy Spirit through the evangelists and the Apostle Paul set their seal to this uncontradicted and unanimous belief that Isaiah wrote this book. The critics by their methods impeach the testimony of the Lord Himself or charge the infallible Lord of Glory to have been limited in His knowledge and that He

acquiesced in the current traditional belief of the Jewish people, knowing better Himself.

All the arguments of the critics are disproved by the book itself. One only needs to study this book and the careful study will bring out the unanswerable fact of the unity of the book of Isaiah. Only one person could have written such a book and that person did not write it by himself, but was the mouthpiece of Jehovah. This is the conclusion of an intelligent and spiritual study of the book itself. The silly and arbitrary restrictions the critics make, that Isaiah could not have written certain passages, because it was beyond his horizon, or that he could not have mentioned Cyrus, the Persian king, by name, over 150 years before he was born, springs from the subtle infidelity which is at the bottom of the destructive criticism, which denies the supernatural altogether.

Turning to the book we find that there are two great parts:

1. The earlier prophecies (1-35)
Historical parenthesis (36-39)
2. The later prophecies (40-66)

In the first part we find that Isaiah witnesses against the moral and religious conditions of the people. Judgments are announced upon Jerusalem, Judah and upon the nations. Judgments to come are the leading features in the first 35 chapters. The blessings of the future after the execution of these judgments are also revealed, but they take a secondary place. We see in the first part the gathering of the storm-clouds, we hear the rolling thunders of divine judgment, and in the distance the calm and sunshine after the storm. The second part is introduced with the words of comfort, "Comfort ye, comfort ye, my people." While we read also of judgments in this part the great revelation of the later prophecies of Isaiah is the restoration which is in store for Jerusalem and the great blessings which the nations and the earth will receive when Jerusalem has been restored and her people redeemed.

in the first part the Assyrian is announced to come against Jerusalem. The Assyrian invasion stands in the foreground. This Assyrian enemy however is the prophetic type of another external foe, who appears in the endtime. Then the deliverance of Jerusalem is announced and the Assyrian completely overthrown. In the second part the Assyrian enemy is no longer mentioned. From this we conclude that these chapters were written after the Assyrian period. Israel's restoration from Babylon and from the greater dispersion which has lasted so long is predicted in the second part. The wonderful results of this restoration are here revealed. These two parts are therefore inseparable. The Isaiah who wrote of judgments is the Isaiah who makes known the blessings. The entire book gives the history of Israel, past, present and future. Both parts reveal Him who is the Holy One of Israel, the Redeemer. His incarnation, His obedience as God's servant, His rejection, His suffering and death, His second coming and kingdom rule are progressively revealed from chapters 1-66.

The division of the first part. If we omit chapters 36-39, which are historical, we find that the main divisions of the first part are three.

First division (1-12). In this division we find first Israel's sin and apostasy; their hardening; God's judgment upon them. This is followed by a vision concerning the future, 2:1-5. Six woes are pronounced in chapter 5 upon the apostate nation. We find the birth of the Redeemer announced. His Person, His work and His future glory are indicated. The Assyrian is mentioned for the first time; his pride and overthrow are pictured. The section closes with a vision of the future. The second coming of Christ, the restoration of the people Israel and what will come in blessing to the Gentiles and to creation is predicted. It closes with a beautiful song of praise, which redeemed Israel will sing in that day. Attention has often been called to the fact that the opening verses and chapters of a book give the key for the whole book. The first twelve chapters of Isaiah contain the whole book of Isaiah in embryo.

Second division (13-27). Here we find first the judgments upon different nations announced. Babylon's judgment stands in the foreground. When that final judgment falls upon Babylon and its king, Israel will find mercy and in a triumphant utterance celebrate the fall of the king of Babylon. All this has a meaning for the future. Then judgments are announced

against other nations. Palestina, Moab, Damascus, Ethiopia, Egypt, Elam, Arabia and Tyre are mentioned. Eleven chapters, 13-23, are taken up with those judgments, which were only partially fulfilled in the past.

With the twenty-fourth chapter the subject of judgment is continued. Chapters 24-27 contain a great prophecy. The judgment announced is the coming judgment for this world when the Lord Jesus Christ appears the second time. All classes are affected by it and the high ones that are on high (Satan and his angels) and the kings on earth are involved in it. This portion ends with several songs of praise. The remnant of Israel praises Jehovah for deliverance and for His mercy to Jerusalem. Then there is a prophecy concerning the blessings of the future, when the Lord in connection with the blessing bestowed upon Israel will make a feast of fat things for all people. The last verse of this section announces once more the regathering of His scattered people to bring them back to Jerusalem. The great trumpet mentioned in 27:13 is the same of which the Lord speaks in Matthew 24:31, only our Lord tells us in addition that the angels will be used in this service.

Third division (28-35). In this section we find first six woes. The first section also contained six woes. The first woe is against Ephraim. Then follows the woe against Ariel (Jerusalem) that distress is to come upon this city. Blessing is promised after this visitation. Then there is a third woe against those who seek to hide their counsel from the Lord and their works are in the dark. The fourth woe is upon those who enter into an unholy alliance with Egypt, seek help there instead of the Lord. The fifth woe is directed against those who trust in the arm of flesh, in horses and chariots. The sixth woe is against the Assyrian destroyer. But alongside of these woes we find the promises of blessing to Israel in the future. A king is to reign in righteousness. The work of righteousness is to be peace. Jerusalem and Israel's land is to be desolate till the Spirit be poured out from on high, then the wilderness shall be a fruitful field (32:13-20). The 34th chapter is a great prophecy of the future day of the Lord when His indignation will be upon all nations and when His fury will be poured out upon all nations and when His fury will be poured out upon all their armies. It is the day of the Lord's vengeance and the year of recompenses for the controversy of Zion (verse 8). The last chapter in this section, chapter 35, shows again the future blessings for Israel and for the earth and the return of His people to Zion. And they come with singing. "And the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away."

We call attention to the fact that these three great sections follow the same course and end in the same way. The ending of each section reveals the restoration of Israel, the singing of the redeemed people and the blessing which will result from restored and blest Israel for the nations and for the earth.

in dividing the earlier prophecies of Isaiah into three sections we have not considered chapters 36-39. These chapters are of a historical character, Hezekiah's experience with the Assyrian invasion, Hezekiah's prayer, the prophet's message to the king, the destruction of the Assyrian army, the king's sickness and recovery and his fall into pride, are the contents of these four chapters. They may be looked upon as an appendix to the first part of Isaiah's vision and the preface to the second part. The Assyrian and his destruction is the culmination of the first part; the prediction of Isaiah concerning the Babylonian captivity (chapter 39:6-7) opens the way for the later prophecies.

The division of the second part. In these later prophecies we find likewise three great sections. However the character of the predictions found in the second part differs much from the earlier prophecies. The historical settings so prominent in the first part are entirely absent in the second. We briefly hint at the structure and contents of these three divisions.

The first division (40- 48). This section begins with the message of comfort to Jerusalem. The first two verses of the fortieth chapter are the keynotes of the great symphony of Israel's future blessing and glory, which gradually breaks forth in this part, swelling higher and higher. "Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God. Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem (literally: to the heart of Jerusalem) and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned; for she hath received of the Lord's hand double for all her sins." Throughout these later prophecies we find the comfort in store for His people, that their wanderings will end in restoration, their enemies will be conquered and their sins pardoned. Should it surprise anyone that the language employed in these great messages differs very much from the language of the first and earlier prophecies?

We find in this opening section a great deal of the majesty and glory of the God of Israel. A contrast is made between Israel's God and the idols of the nations. The one great proof brought forward is that the God of Israel has the power to predict future events. Read chapter 41:21-25. All this is spoken to encourage the faithful remnant of Israel to trust in Jehovah. In view of the Babylonian captivity, which Isaiah had announced this is of special meaning. Again and again Jehovah speaks in these chapters of Himself and His power to forgive, to save and to deliver. "I am He--the first and the last--I even I am the Lord; and beside me there is no saviour--I am the Lord your Holy One, the creator of Israel, your King--there is no God beside me--a just God and a Saviour"; these are a few of the direct utterances of Jehovah through Isaiah in this section. Jehovah has the power to save and to deliver His people.

Here we read of "the servant of Jehovah." It has a twofold meaning. The redeemed remnant of Israel is spoken of as the servant of the Lord. This is what Israel will be in the future. But this title as used in the opening verses of chapter 42 refers to Christ.

The people of Israel are prophetically seen in this section in Babylon but about to be delivered from Babylon. The great deliverer Cyrus, whom God called, is named in this portion of the book. The Lord who speaks of His power to tell the future things manifests this power in naming an unborn being and telling beforehand what his work was to be. Cyrus and his mission are recorded over 150 years before this Persian king was born and the record is found in chapter 44:24-45:25. Cyrus is called "the anointed"--"my shepherd"--"whose right hand Jehovah upholdeth"--"who performs all Jehovah's pleasure." He is likewise called "a ravenous bird from the east" (46:11). The return from Babylon is predicted to take place through the instrumentality of this king. But a greater restoration through a greater Anointed One, the Redeemer of Israel, is promised in these chapters. The end of the section looks forward to that great coming restoration. The last verse declares "there is no peace, saith the Lord, unto the wicked."

The second division (49-57). This section brings the servant of Jehovah prominently before us. It is no longer the redeemed Israel, nor Cyrus, but the Lord Jesus Christ comes fully into view. The opening verses of chapter 49 with which this division begins are again the keynote to the entire section. The Servant of the Lord is here called Israel, for He is the true Israel. In Him God is glorified. He Himself breaks out in the mournful complaint. "I have labored in vain, I have spent my strength for naught." He is called to bring Jacob to God, yet Israel is not gathered. But the Gentiles hear of Him, whom Israel refuses. "I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth." All is indicated in these verses what the Servant of the Lord would do. His people, the nation, would despise Him and Israel would not be regathered at once but the Gentiles were to hear of Him. In chapter 50:4-11 we read again of Him. Here His suffering is mentioned more fully. "I gave My back to the smiters and My cheeks to them that plucked off the hair; I hid not My face from shame and spitting" (50:6). The last time this Servant, the Christ, is mentioned by Isaiah is in chapter 53. Here we find the marvellous portrait of Him who suffered, died as the sinbearer and of His exaltation. After the sublime fifty-third chapter the Servant of the Lord is not mentioned again.

This section also speaks of what is in store for Israel when at last they believe in Him whom they once despised. The most glorious promises follow the fifty-third chapter. The fifty-fourth chapter has never yet seen its fulfillment and can only be fulfilled when the remnant of Israel bows before the One whom they once despised. These chapters of this section look forward to their future blessing. The last verse of the second division is the same as the last verse of the first division, "There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked."

The third division (58-66). This is the great finale of Isaiah's symphony of Israel's coming restoration and redemption. It is the most majestic and sublime portion of the book. Here the remnant of Israel takes a more leading part. While in the previous chapters of these prophecies we hear promises of restoration in this concluding division we see a small and feeble remnant actually back in the land. It has nothing to do with the small remnant which returned from Babylon. It is a remnant of believing Jews brought back to the land and suffering in the midst of the great tribulation which precedes the glorious manifestation of the Lord and the literal fulfillment of the promises of the blessing for Jerusalem. We have a record of their soul exercise, their troubles and their prayers in chapter 63:7-64:12. In chapter 64:1 they pray for the coming of the Lord. And that coming in great power and glory is described in this division. The Redeemer comes to Zion

and He comes bringing the day of vengeance for all His enemies (chapter 59:20; 63:1-6). But who is able to expound the glorious things which are spoken of Jerusalem and the future of His redeemed people? Beginning with the sixtieth chapter we find an almost unbroken prediction of what is to be in the day when the Redeemer comes to Zion, what it will mean for His earthly people, for Jerusalem, for the nations and for all creation. This section is closely linked with certain predictions in the earlier prophecies; in fact, these closing chapters are expansions of the former vision of Isaiah as found in chapters 2:1-5; 11-12, and others. The last chapter is a resume of the great events predicted before. Here once more we read of the sudden manifestation of the Lord from heaven, the deliverance of the remnant of His people, the peace like a river for Jerusalem, the bringing back of the scattered sheep of Israel, the fiery judgments of the Lord and the conversion of the Gentiles. The last verse reveals the judgment upon the wicked. Their worm shall not die; their fire shall not be quenched. This fully corresponds with the ending of the two previous divisions, when the Lord saith, "there is no peace for the wicked."

The same order of revelation prevails in the second part of Isaiah as in the first. We have seen how every division in the first part closed with predictions of blessing for Israel, their restoration and the glory of Jerusalem as well as the blessings which the whole earth will receive when that has come to pass. The same revelation is contained on a larger scale in the second part. The same order of events is maintained. And how solemn it is that each division of the later prophecies of Isaiah in the second part of his book closes with the declaration of the punishment, yea, the eternal punishment of the wicked. There is no peace for the wicked. Their worm dies not; their fire is not quenched. Evil teachers claim there is a restitution of all things including the wicked dead. Isaiah in his vision makes known what that promised restitution of all things is. The restoration of Israel; the restoration of Israel's land; the restoration of Jerusalem; peace for this earth; deliverance for groaning creation--all these he reveals. But solemnly God has said, "There is no peace for the wicked."

The great unity of the book of Isaiah proves that he wrote the entire book. The arrangement and contents tell us that it is not the work of man, but of the Spirit of God.

MESSIANIC PREDICTIONS IN ISAIAH

It would be of much interest and profit if we could take up each division of this great prophetic book and study some of its revelations. This we cannot do. But we shall point out two great topics which are progressively revealed in the vision of Isaiah. We shall study first the messianic unfoldings in this book, and then the great coming events, such as Israel's future blessings in the earth and the blessings of the kingdom to come.

Of all the prophets Isaiah saw the most about Christ. Only the book of Psalms contains a larger number of messianic predictions. Every glory of our Lord and every phase of His life on earth were beheld by this great man of God. His incarnation, His growing up in Nazareth, His public ministry, His message to the people, His rejection by the nation, His sufferings, the shame and the cross, His death with its meaning, His resurrection, His ascension, His glorious exaltation and future manifestation as well as His work as Prophet, Priest and King, are all found in this book. We shall point out some of these great predictions and the connection in which we find them.

The Redeemer promised is Jehovah Himself. That the Messiah is Jehovah Himself, who appears on earth in the midst of His people, God manifested in the flesh, is seen in this entire book. The call of Isaiah to the prophetic office was in a great vision in which he saw Jehovah and His glory (Chapter 6). Whom he beheld is explained in the Gospel of John, the Gospel which tells us so fully of the essential deity of the Lord Jesus. "These things said Esaias when he saw His glory and spake of Him" (John 12:41). He who was on the earth and whom His own received not is the One whose glory Isaiah saw in the temple vision.

He is called throughout Isaiah "the Holy One of Israel." Twenty-five times this title of the Lord, who deals in judgment and in mercy with His people, is found in Isaiah. Read 1:4; 5:19, 24; 10:20; 12:6; 17:7; 29:19; 30:11, 12, 15; 31:1; 37:23; 41:14, 16, 20; 43:3, 14; 45:11; 47:4; 48:17; 49:7; 54:5; 55:5; 60:9, 14. This phrase is found in only six other passages in the Old Testament. The Holy One of Israel is Jehovah; He is the Redeemer of His people. "Our Redeemer Jehovah of hosts

is his name, the Holy One of Israel" (47:4). "Thus saith Jehovah, thy Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel" (48:17). This Holy One is the Creator. "The Holy One hath created it" (41:20). He hath stretched the heavens and laid the foundations of the earth (41:13). He appeared as the Holy One in their midst and they knew Him not but despised Him. In chapter 50:2-9 He is beheld as the One who clothes the heavens and who gives His back to the smiters. In chapter 49:7 the Redeemer, Jehovah, the Holy One, is seen as despised and abhorred by the nation. At His second coming Isaiah predicts Israel shall discover that the rejected and despised One is Jehovah. "Therefore My people shall know My Name, therefore they shall know that I am He" (52:6). The words "I am He" (Ani Hu) is a divine Name and our Lord used it when He said to the woman at the well "I am" and to the company in the garden of Gethsemane.

In chapters 7 and 8 His name is revealed as "Immanuel," God with us. Throughout Isaiah's vision the Redeemer, the Anointed One who is rejected by the nation, who suffers and dies, who comes again to dwell in the midst of His people, is Jehovah.

His incarnation. The first messianic prediction in Isaiah relates to the incarnation of the Son of God. We find it in chapter 7:14. As it is well known its messianic character is denied by Jews and by the higher critics. The virgin birth is clearly predicted in these familiar words by Isaiah and the Holy Spirit in the first chapter of the New Testament tells us of the fulfillment of the words spoken by the Lord through Isaiah. In the first chapter of Luke the full announcement of the birth of Immanuel by the virgin is made by Gabriel to Mary. The rejection of this first great prophecy of the incarnation means the rejection of the incarnation itself.

Such alas! has been the case. We do not attempt to enter into the objections which are made against Isaiah 7:14. Not one of them has any foundation. The authority of the New Testament is sufficient to any believer.

The historic setting, however, is interesting and solves the problem why Isaiah received just this message at that time. Ahaz was threatened by King Pekah of Israel and by Rezin of Damascus, because he refused to make common cause with them against Assyria. He preferred the friendship of Assyria. When it became known that these two kings were planning an attack upon Jerusalem, Ahaz and the whole city were terror stricken. He decided at once to send to Assyria for help. How he sent messengers with valuable gifts to Tiglath-Pileser and called himself his servant and his son, is written in 2 Kings 16:7-8.

Isaiah was then told by God to meet Ahaz at the waterworks of Jerusalem and to take his son Shear-Jashub along. The meaning of this name is "the remnant shall return." In his interview with the king the prophet exhorts him to be true to Jehovah and that the house of David has nothing to fear. If he accepted the divinely given message he would be quiet and delivered of his fear and faintheartedness. Then God offers Ahaz a sign, either in the depth or in the heights above. But the unbelieving king refused the offer. His wicked heart dreaded the consequences of such a sign. He did not want to be near to God and get a sign that God was near to him. He felt that in such a case he would have to abandon what God condemns and give up the alliance with the Assyrian. Then God gives the sign. It is the sign of the birth of the Messiah. The Deliverer is first announced in the Bible as being the seed of the woman; then as coming of the seed of Abraham from Isaac and Jacob; then of Judah and finally that He should be of the house of David. Here the prediction is narrowed down to the fact that He should be born of a virgin, necessarily of the house of David. Ahaz the King of Judah feared for Jerusalem and the royal line. He had no cause to fear for God promised David a son to come from his loins, He whom King David addressed as his Lord, the root and offspring of David. The house of David was perfectly secure. Thus the unbelief of Ahaz was made the occasion for this great prediction. Christ to be born of the virgin and yet "God manifested in the flesh."

In chapter 9:6 the incarnation is announced once more and in a prophetic vision it is seen as already accomplished, "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given." The child is the Son of the virgin and He is God's unspeakable gift, the Son. As Man born of the woman He will have the government upon His shoulder and possess the throne of David. This looks forward to His second coming. The Son given is the Wonderful Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace. His humanity and deity are here blended together.

His life and ministry on earth. The leading features of this blessed life and service on earth are revealed in Isaiah. We call attention to a few of the more prominent predictions.

His lowliness. He who was rich became poor for our sake. This poverty seems to be indicated in Isaiah 7:15, "butter and honey shall He eat." His lowliness is more fully predicted in 53:2, "For He shall grow up before Him as a tender plant, and as a root out of the dry ground; He hath no form and comeliness; and when we shall see Him, there is no beauty that we should desire Him."

The Servant of the Lord. As such He is filled with the Spirit. "And the Spirit of the Lord is upon Him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord" (11:2). "Behold My servant whom I uphold, Mine elect in whom my soul delighteth; I have put My Spirit upon Him" (42:1). His method is seen; He is unostentatious in His service. "He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause His voice to be heard in the street" (42:2). His loving tenderness. "A bruised reed shall He not break and the smoking flax shall He not quench; He shall bring forth judgment unto truth" (42:3). These words are applied to Him in the New Testament (Matthew 12:18-20). His obedience we find predicted in chapter 50:5: "The Lord hath opened mine ear, and I was not rebellious, neither turned away back." His message is given likewise. "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; He hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord" (61:1-2). It is a well known fact that our Lord read these words in the synagogue of Nazareth and pronounced them fulfilled. He also gives us a very important hint in reading this prediction. He stopped short in reading this passage. The rest belongs to His second coming. The first and second coming of Christ are repeatedly blended together.

As servant of the Lord He brings light. "The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light; they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death upon them hath the light shined" (Matthew 4:15-16).

His miracles are also touched upon. In chapter 35 we read: "Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing." When He appeared in the midst of His people He did these miracles to prove to the nation that He had the power of the kingdom in His hands; however Isaiah 35 looks forward to the kingdom, which is yet to come.

His rejection by the people Israel. This rejection was predicted by Isaiah. As already quoted in chapter 49:4, He is seen as despised and abhorred by the nation, so that He mournfully complains, "I have labored in vain, I have spent my strength for nought." On account of this rejection "Israel is not gathered" (verse 5). More fully is this rejection of the Servant of the Lord seen in the great fifty-third chapter. "He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief-, and we hid as it were our faces from Him; He was despised and we esteemed Him not."

His mission to the Gentiles. While Israel is predicted to reject this servant, the Gentiles are to see His light and rejoice in His salvation. It is true most of these predictions await His future work, when He comes again and the Gentiles will be given to Him for an inheritance, but they also imply what is now in force. "I the Lord have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand and keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles" (42:6-7). "It is a light thing that Thou shouldest be My servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob and to restore the desolations of Israel that Thou mayest be my salvation to the end of the earth" (49:6). Through Him Gentiles are saved now and when He comes again even the ends of the earth will know Him and He will reign over the Gentiles. Unto Him every knee must bow and every tongue shall swear (45:23).

The sufferings of Christ. It was given to Isaiah to behold 700 years before the Son of God appeared on earth an almost complete picture of the sufferings of Christ and their vicarious character. How the obedient servant was to be treated by men is for the first time mentioned in chapter 50:6: "I gave My back to the smiters and My cheeks to them that plucked off the hair, I hid not My face from shame and spitting." But the great revelation of the sufferings of Christ is found in the famous fifty-third chapter. It is the culmination of the second part of Isaiah. The center of the chapter is "brought as a

Lamb to the slaughter." The most ancient as well as reliable Jewish expositors apply the chapter to Messiah. The great expositors of the Church in the past have all read the story of the cross of Christ in this chapter. The New Testament repeatedly quotes Isaiah 53 and knows no other fulfillment than in Him, who was the man of sorrows.

The Spirit-filled evangelist Philip heard the eunuch reading from this chapter and then opened his mouth and preached Jesus unto him. The infidel Jews have invented a theory which teaches that the nation's sufferings are described and not the Messiah's. This wicked denial the destructive critics have fully indorsed.

The last three verses of chapter 52 belong to the fifty-third chapter. If we count them to the great chapter we find five progressive parts:

1. The Servant-His suffering and His exaltation, so that the nations are astonished at Him and kings shut their mouths. It is the keynote of the prediction that follows (52:13-15).
2. His life and His rejection by the nation (53:1-3).
3. His sufferings; smitten, afflicted, wounded and bruised (53:4-6).
4. His submission and His deliverance (53:7-9).
5. His glorious reward (53:10-12).

But what is all contained in this matchless chapter! We have in it a description of the Servant, the vicarious sufferer, the triumphant victor as nowhere else. Twelve great statements are made concerning His work on the cross:

1. He hath borne our griefs. 2. Carried our sorrows. 3. He was wounded for our transgressions. 4. Bruised for our iniquities. 5. The chastisement of our peace was upon Him. 6. With His stripes we are healed. 7. The Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all. 8. For the transgression of my people was He smitten. 9. Made His soul an offering for sin. 10. He shall bear their iniquities. 11. He bears the sin of many. 12. Made intercession for the transgressors.

His holy, spotless character is revealed. As a lamb He suffered in patience. He had done no violence nor was deceit in His mouth. He suffered and died for others. He suffered for His people (John 11:50-51). It was God who smote Him, the Lord who bruised Him, who put Him to grief. There is in the whole Bible no grander unfolding of John 3:16 than this great chapter. Whoever rejects Isaiah's vision of the Sinbearer, rejects the gospel and denies the atoning work of the cross.

We also behold His grave, we see Him risen in this chapter, exalted, interceding, justifying many, having a seed, an offspring as the last Adam, securing the travail of His soul and dividing the spoil with the great. Ah! who can tell out the majestic grandeur of this great peak in God's revelation! After this great vision, the Servant of the Lord is not mentioned again, nor His sufferings. The glory side comes more fully in view in chapters 54-66. And it will be fully realized when Israel has confessed Him, whom they once rejected.

The predictions of glory and the second coming of Christ. More numerous and richer are the messianic predictions, which reveal His exaltation and the fact of His glorious second coming.

Isaiah beheld His personal, visible and glorious coming, not as the sufferer but as the King. He saw Him coming in majesty and glory. His glory is seen in these visions as covering Jerusalem and the land and eventually the whole earth. He comes to Zion to redeem His people and deliver them out of the hands of their enemies. He comes to overthrow the wicked one and to execute the judgments of God on the earth. He comes to establish peace and dwell in the midst of His people and rule as King over the nations. We can call attention to a very few of the many predictions from different chapters; our remaining study will bring this great theme more fully to our view.

"He shall judge among the nations and shall rebuke many people; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruninghooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more (2:4). This is the program of God. Peace on earth will thus be accomplished. It follows His visible manifestation. He appears in

the glory of His majesty and will alone be exalted in that day (2:10, 11). His glory will cover Jerusalem (4:5). "With righteousness shall He judge the poor and reprove with equity for the meek in the earth; and He shall smite the earth with the rod of His mouth and with the breath of His lips shall He slay the wicked" (11:4). "The earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea" (11:9). "Cry out and shout, thou inhabitant of Zion; for great is the Holy One of Israel in the midst of thee" (12:6). "I will punish the world for their evil and the wicked for their iniquity" (13:11). "Therefore I will shake the heavens, and the earth shall remove out of her place in the wrath of the Lord of Hosts, and in the day of His fierce anger" (13:13). "The Lord of hosts shall reign in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem and before his ancients gloriously" (24:23). "And it shall be said in that day, Lo this is our God, we have waited for Him and He will save us; this is the Lord we have waited for Him, we will be glad and rejoice in His salvation" (25:9). "The Lord cometh out of His place to punish the inhabitants of earth for their iniquity" (26:21). "Behold a King shall reign in righteousness" (32:1). "And the Glory of the Lord shall be revealed and all flesh shall see it together (40:5). "And the Redeemer shall come to Zion, and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob, saith the Lord" (59:20). "Arise, shine for thy light is come and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee" (60:1).

"Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? this that is glorious in His apparel, traveling in the greatness of his strength? I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save. Wherefore art Thou red in thine apparel, and Thy garments like him that treadeth in the winevat? I have trodden the wine-press alone; and of the people there was none with Me: for I will tread them in Mine anger, and trample them in My fury; and their blood shall be sprinkled upon My garments, and I will stain all My raiment. For the day of vengeance is in Mine heart, and the year of My redeemed is come. And I looked, and there was none to help; and I wondered that there was none to uphold: therefore Mine own arm brought salvation unto Me; and My fury, it upheld Me. And I will tread down the people in Mine anger, and make them drunk in My fury, and I will bring down their strength to the earth" (63:1-6).

"For behold, the Lord will come with fire, and with His chariots like a whirlwind, to render His anger with fury, and His rebuke with flames of fire. For by fire, and by His sword, will the Lord plead with all flesh: and the slain of the Lord shall be many. For I know their works and their thoughts; it shall come, that I will gather all nations and tongues; and they shall come, and see My glory. And I will set a sign among them, and I will send those that escape of them unto the nations, to Tarshish, Pul, and Lud, that draw the bow, to Tubal and Javan, to the isles afar off, that have not heard My fame, neither have seen My glory; and they shall declare My glory among the Gentiles" (66:15-16; 18-19).

These are a few of Isaiah's predictions concerning the future glory of our Lord and the work of judgment and mercy He will execute. May it be our delight to meditate on these great prophetic unfoldings of the Person and the glorious work of our Lord, till some day we shall be face to face with Himself and through grace become partakers of His glory.

FUTURE GLORIES AND BLESSINGS

The book of Isaiah abounds in great predictions of glories and blessings in store for this earth and its inhabitants. Not one of these have been fulfilled in the past, nor are they now in process of fulfillment. They must therefore be fulfilled in the future. To this we might add that not one of these great predictions can be fulfilled till the predicted judgments have taken place.

Isaiah uses some 45 times the phrase "in that day." He uses these words almost exclusively in the earlier prophecies contained in chapters 1-35. This day is the day when Jehovah is manifested and when He deals in judgment with the earth. We give a few of the more prominent passages in which that day is mentioned (chapter 2:10-22). Here the day is described as bringing the exaltation of the Lord and the utter casting down of all that is lofty and high (chapter 13:9-13). These words tell us that it is the day in which the world will be punished for its wickedness and that heaven and earth will be shaken (chapter 24). In this great judgment chapter we read that all classes will be affected by it, the earth will reel to and fro like a drunkard and be removed like a cottage. Then the kings on earth will be punished. The high ones on high, the wicked spirits in the heavenlies, will be shut up in prison. This great day Isaiah beheld is the day "when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and

that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ" (2 Thess. 1:7-8). Such a day has not yet been. It will surely come. Never before have things been so ripe for that day as they are now.

Whatever we find in future glories and blessings in Isaiah is always in connection with that day. The glories and blessings do not precede that day, but the day precedes the glories and blessings promised. Therefore we say the fulfillment of these great predictions has not been in the past, they are not now being fulfilled and they cannot be fulfilled till the storm clouds of divine judgment have swept over this earth and the Lord has been manifested.

The great majority of Christians hold the unscriptural view that in the Church and through the Church the visions of Isaiah are fulfilled in a spiritual way. But they forget the great day in Isaiah and the fact stated that the glories and blessings predicted follow that day.

What then are these predicted glories and blessings? We find that the larger number of them belong to the people Israel. We look at these first.

The future blessings of Israel. This wonderful people has a wonderful future. God has not cast them away and to them still belong the promises and the glory. Israel is set aside throughout this present age and judicially blinded. Isaiah had to announce this fact. We find that in the vision which called him into the prophetic office the message was given to him that the nation should not hear and that their eyes should be blinded. The consummation of this predicted blindness came after they had rejected Christ. We find these words of Isaiah (6:10) quoted three times in the New Testament. In Matthew 23:13-15. Israel had then rejected Him and He began to teach the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven in parables. In John 12:40 when the Lord was about to suffer and to die. In Acts 28:27 at the close of the book of Acts after the gospel had been preached to them by the Holy Spirit come down from heaven. They rejected it and the last statement of the Apostle of the Gentiles, who loved his people so well, is a significant one, "the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles and they will hear it." Since then the message Isaiah received has been fully carried out. They are judicially blinded and scattered among the nations. Their land is desolate. Their city is trodden down by the Gentiles. Their sufferings and woes have been indescribable. God has hidden His face from them and in His wrath He has forsaken them.

But Isaiah's vision tells us likewise that this condition is not to be permanent. The curse will be changed into blessing and they will receive double for all their sin.

Their restoration to the land. They will be brought back to the land. In chapter 11:10-12 we find one of these unfulfilled predictions of Israel's restoration. It has been taught that these words were fulfilled in the return of the remnant from Babylon. Notice, however, that it saith "and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth." It speaks of a gathering from a world-wide dispersion, not from the Babylonian captivity. It includes the islands of the sea and it is distinctly stated that the Lord shall set His hand again the second time to recover the remnant of His people. The entire chapter shows that it is a future thing.

In chapter 14:1-2 is another unfulfilled prediction. "For the Lord will have mercy on Jacob and will yet choose Israel, and set them in their own land." The nations are mentioned as helping them to return. This fact is indicated elsewhere in Isaiah (chapters 18:7, 66:20). This regathering is stated in 27:13. "And it shall come to pass in that day, that the great trumpet shall be blown and they shall come which were ready to perish in the land of Assyria, and the outcasts in the land of Egypt and shall worship the Lord in the holy mount of Jerusalem." Also read 35:10; 43:5-6; 49:10-12. All the great predictions in the later prophecies concerning Israel's glorious state in the land make such a regathering necessary.

The spiritual blessings. The calling of Israel as a nation is stated in Exodus 19:5-6. "Now therefore if ye will obey my voice, indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me, above all people, for all the earth is mine. And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation." Up to now this has never been; yet God's gifts and calling are without repentance. The day is coming when the Lord in His infinite grace will bestow upon the remnant of His people such spiritual blessings, that they will be healed of all their backslidings and become a holy nation and a kingdom

of priests in the earth.

This is beautifully revealed in the first song of redemption in chapter 12. Closely connected with their regathering predicted in the preceding chapter is their grateful expression for the spiritual blessings they received. His anger is turned away, comfort has come at last. They sing and praise for Jehovah has done excellent things. Then the Lord gives them rest from their sorrows, fear and hard bondage (14:3). The songs of redemption in chapters 25-26 celebrate the same blessings. The forgiveness of their sins is promised in chapter 33:24, "the people that dwell therein shall be forgiven their iniquity." "I, even I, am He that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins" (43:25). "I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and, as a cloud, thy sins return unto me, for I have redeemed thee" (44:22). This is followed by a song. "I will bring near My righteousness; it shall not be far off, and My salvation shall not tarry and I will place salvation for Israel My glory" (46:13). Read also 54:6-10. Then the Spirit of God will be poured out upon them. This is promised in chapter 32:15. The promise is connected with their restoration to the land. The same promise is found in chapter 59:20-21. First the Redeemer comes to Zion and the Spirit is promised unto Israel and Israel's seed. These great future blessings are especially revealed in chapters 61 and 62. "But ye shall be named the priests of the Lord, men shall call you the ministers of our God." Thus their priestly calling among the nations will be realized. But when? After the day of vengeance, the second coming of the Lord (verse 2). The same blessings are stated in verses 7 and 10. Then they shall be called "the holy people," "the redeemed of the Lord" (62:12). In one day the new birth of the nation will take place (66:8).

But let us understand that these blessings are not for the apostate portion of the nation. Millennial Dawnism, as well as others, claims that all Israel will receive these blessings, not alone the wicked element which sides with the man of sin and worships him, but also all the past generations who died in their sins will be raised up and brought back to the land and possess these things. No such teaching is found in the Word. Ezekiel 37, the vision of the raising up of the dry bones, has nothing to do with a physical resurrection; it is a type of their national restoration. Ezekiel 20:38 makes it clear that the rebels, the apostates, will have no share in these blessings. These will not enter into the land saith the Lord. Two parts of the people will be cut off and die and the third part only shall be brought through the fire.

The blessings for Israel's land. The land of Israel, Palestine, is called by Isaiah "Immanuel's land" (8:8). Desolation has come upon it on account of the transgressions of the people. It is now an unfruitful land, a land of wastes and ruins. But there is a glorious future for Immanuel's land and He who lived His blessed life in that land, where He shed His blood and died, will also make it a glorious land. We can only link a few passages together where this is promised. Read 30:23-26; 60:17-22; 61:4; 62:4-5; 65:21-24.

The future of Jerusalem. Jerusalem, still trodden down by the Gentiles, has a glorious future. It will become the great capital of the kingdom, which will cover the whole earth. In chapter 1 Isaiah speaks of Jerusalem as a harlot and that murderers dwell in it. This is true now and blood-guiltiness rests upon it. But afterward, Isaiah announces, "thou shalt be called the city of righteousness, the faithful city." That will be after the Lord has come. Then "out of Zion shall go forth the law and the Word of the Lord from Jerusalem" (2:3). The Holy One of Israel will make His dwelling place there and cover it with His glory (4:2-6; 11:9-10; 12:6; 24:23). Then they will rejoice on account of it. "In that day shall this song be sung in the land of Judah; we have a strong city; salvation will God appoint for walls and bulwarks" (26:1). 33:20-21 shows another picture of Zion and Jerusalem. Also 54:11-14; Jerusalem will be a praise in the earth (62:7). "But be glad and rejoice forever in that which I create; for behold I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy. And I will rejoice in Jerusalem and joy in My people, and the voice of weeping shall no more be heard in her, nor the voice of crying" (65:18-19). What a beautiful word this is! His people rejoice in Him and He rejoices in them. Jerusalem has become at last the place of joy and peace and Jerusalem is His joy. Then He will fully have the travail of His soul and be satisfied. Once more Jerusalem is mentioned in the last chapter, "Rejoice ye with Jerusalem, and be glad with her, all ye that love her, rejoice for joy with her, all ye that mourn for her" (66:10). The nations redeemed will rejoice. But we may well think of the joy of the glorified saints, including all the saints, both the Old Testament and New Testament saints. They all loved Jerusalem. We love Jerusalem, and when He rejoices in the accomplishment of His purposes we shall rejoice with Him. His joy will be our joy in glory.

The future blessings of the nations. Closely linked with these great future blessings and glories for Israel His people are the blessings of the Gentiles. The many predictions which concern the Gentiles cannot be fulfilled till Israel and Jerusalem have entered into their blessing. The conversion of the world is nowhere taught to take place in this present age through the church, but it is always found in connection with converted Israel. This is an important principle. The day of the Lord will bring great judgments for the Gentile world. When these judgments are in the earth the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness (chapter 26:9). The Lord will deal in great and world-wide judgments with the Gentiles, especially with those which had the light and turned from the light. But there will be Gentiles who turn to God during these great judgments and believe the testimony, the gospel of the kingdom, preached at that time (Matthew 24:14). What are the blessings promised to these nations? We touch upon a few. In chapter 2:2-4 we find one of the most comprehensive. The nations will go up to that house of the Lord, which is yet to be built and which will be, according to another prophecy, a house of prayer for all nations. This great prediction is sadly spiritualized. It is applied to the church; and the fulfillment was, it is claimed, when the Lord selected the twelve apostles on a mountain. It has nothing whatever to do with the church nor with the church age. When Jerusalem has been restored, the nations which are left will go there to worship. Then war will end and not before. This is God's peace program. In 11:9-10 we read that the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the Lord and the Gentiles will seek Him. The great things, which He hath done, will be known in all the earth (12:5). Greater still is the vision of chapter 15:6-8. A feast of fat things will be made. Now God has spread the gospel feast and invites all to come. "Come, for all things are now ready." But the invitation to this feast will soon end. Then comes "the supper of the great God," a fearful judgment to which the fowls of heaven are invited (Revelation 19:16-18). This is followed by the feast of all peoples. The veil which is now over the heathen nations will be destroyed and all tears will be wiped away; the tears of sickness, the tears of want, the tears of affliction, the tears of sorrow. The gathering of the nations will be to Israel; they will be joined to them and thus the kingdom will extend over the whole earth. "Lift up thine eyes round about and behold, all these gather themselves together and come to thee" (49:18). World conversion, the multitude of nations brought to the knowledge of God (not into the Church) is beautifully predicted in chapter 60. First we see the glory of the Lord shining forth; this is His second coming. But in what state does He find the earth? "Behold, darkness shall cover the earth and gross darkness the people." This is the apostasy, the moral and spiritual darkness the Lord will find on the earth. It will soon be changed by His glorious appearing. The Gentiles will then be brought to that light.

"And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising. Lift up thine eyes round about, and see; all they gather themselves together, they come to thee: thy sons shall come from far, and thy daughters shall be nursed at thy side. Then thou shalt see, and flow together, and thine heart shall fear, and be enlarged; because the abundance of the sea shall be converted unto thee, the forces of the Gentiles shall come unto thee. The multitude of camels shall cover thee, the dromedaries of Midian and Ephah; all they from Sheba shall come: they shall bring gold and incense; and they shall show forth the praises of the Lord. All the flocks of Kedar shall be gathered together unto thee, the rams of Nebaioth shall minister unto thee: they shall come up with acceptance on Mine altar, and will glorify the house of My glory. Who are these that fly as a cloud, and as the doves to their windows? Surely the isles shall wait for me, and the ships of Tarshish first, to bring thy sons from far, their silver and their gold with them, unto the name of the Lord thy God, and to the Holy One of Israel, because He hath glorified thee. And the sons of strangers shall build up thy walls, and their kings shall minister unto thee; for in My wrath I smote thee, but in My favor have I had mercy on thee. Therefore thy gates shall be open continually; they shall not be shut day nor night; that men may bring unto thee the forces of the Gentiles, and that their kings may be brought. For the nation and kingdom that will not serve thee shall perish; yea, those nations shall be utterly wasted" (60:3-12).

This is the vision of the kingdom to come. That coming age, introduced by the visible and glorious coming of Christ, will mean the end of idolatry and the worshipping of the Lord. "All flesh shall come to worship before Me, saith Jehovah" (66:23).

The blessings for all creation. In Romans 8 we read of the future and complete deliverance of groaning creation. It will come with the manifestation of the sons of God. That manifestation takes place when the Lord Jesus Christ comes again. He who created all things and whose creation was marred by sin; He who came into His creation and died for the creature's sin, will in that coming day deliver creation from its curse. The blessings of a delivered creation were beheld by Isaiah.

"The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together: and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice' den" (11:6-8).

Also read chapter 65:25. Only the serpent will continue to crawl in the dust as an abiding witness of Satan and sin; also as a warning, for after the kingdom age Satan will be loosed for a little season (Revelation 20:7).

All waits for the coming of these great blessings and glories. We insist again that they cannot come till "that day" of Isaiah's vision has appeared. It will surely come, though it has tarried long. Judgment ends the present age and blessings for Israel, the nations and all creation are the characteristics of the age to come. The church and her heavenly destiny was not seen by Isaiah. In the New Testament we read exclusively of the church, how it began and how it will suddenly end. When the predicted judgments smite the earth the true Church is gathered home and is in His presence. Her destiny is not an earthly kingdom, an earthly Jerusalem, but with the King, the Lord of Glory in the heavenly Jerusalem. The destiny of the church is not to be ruled over in the kingdom, but to rule over the kingdom. May God's Spirit give unto us the power to enjoy these great revelations and rejoice in them even before they are accomplished.

THE ACTORS OF THE PERIOD OF ISAIAH

Chronologically Arranged

Before Christ

765 Isaiah born
 789-740 Uzziah
 784-745 Jeroboam II
 745-737 Menahem
 745-727 Tiglath-pileser III
 740 The call of Isaiah's vision, chapter 6
 740-736 Jotham
 738 Arpad, Calno, Carchemish and Damascus taken by Tiglath-pileser III
 737-736 Pekahiah
 736-730 Pekah
 736-727 Ahaz
 734 Syro-Ephraimitic war; Gaza captured by Tiglath-pileser III; Galilee carried captive to Assyria
 732 Damascus taken by Tiglath-pileser III
 730-722 Hoshea
 727-699 Hezekiah
 727-722 Shalmaneser IV
 722 Fall of Samaria; end of the kingdom of Israel
 722-705 Sargon II
 721-709 Babylonia under Merodach-Baladan
 720 Battle of Karkar; Sargon II conquers Arpad, Hammath and Damascus. Battle of Raphia
 717 Sargon II conquers the Hittites, takes Carchemish, their capital
 714 Hezekiah's sickness
 712 Merodach-Baladan sent messengers to Hezekiah
 711 Siege of Ashdod by Sargon II
 709 Merodach-Baladan driven from Babylonia by Sargon II
 705-681 Sennacherib
 703 Merodach-Baladan again king over Babylonia

701 Siege of Jerusalem by Sennacherib; Judah, Moab, Edom, Ammon and Philistia made to pay tribute.

Tirhakah (afterwards "king of Ethiopia") head of the Egyptian army under Shabaka

699-643 Manasseh, king of Judah. Tradition claims that under Manasseh,

Isaiah suffered martyrdom

THE BOOK OF JEREMIAH

The Annotated Bible

Arno Clement Gaebelein

THE PROPHET JEREMIAH

Introduction

This book starts with information concerning the person of Jeremiah, the time when he was called to the office of a prophet, and the period of time during which he exercised his ministry.

Jeremiah means "exalted of the Lord," or, "established by the Lord." He was the son of Hilkiyah. Some have identified the father of Jeremiah with the high-priest Hilkiyah, who was such a power in Josiah's great reformation work. This is incorrect. The high-priest Hilkiyah was of the line of Eleazar, as recorded in 1 Chronicles 6:4, 13. The father of the prophet Jeremiah was, we read in the first verse of this book, of the priests that were in Anathoth; the priests who lived there were of the line of Ithamar. (See 1 Kings 2:26; 1 Chronicles 24:3, 6.) Anathoth, the home of Jeremiah, was in Benjamin, about three miles northeast of Jerusalem.

The first time the Word of the Lord came to young Jeremiah, for he was but a child, was in the thirteenth year of King Josiah, or just a year after the eventful reformation accomplished by that good man. We know but little of the activity of the prophet during the subsequent reign of Josiah. Only one message is timed "in the day of Josiah the king" (3:6). In the history of that illustrious king of Judah, we read nothing of Jeremiah, with the exception of the brief statement "and Jeremiah lamented for Josiah" (2 Chron. 35:25). It seems that the third verse gives the period covering the larger part of the ministry of this prophet. The Word of the Lord came unto him "also in the days of Jehoiakim, the son of Josiah, king of Judah, unto the end of the eleventh year of Zedekiah, the son of Josiah, the king of Judah, unto the carrying away of Jerusalem captive in the fifth month."

The book which bears this prophet's name abounds in personal allusions. In fact no other prophet in his character, in the exercise of his soul, and in his experience is so fully portrayed as Jeremiah; not even Ezekiel and Daniel whom, with Habakkuk and Zephaniah, were his contemporaries. The study of this great man of God is deeply interesting.

He has been called "the weeping prophet" and is generally known by that name. No other prophet wept like Jeremiah. That outburst in his lamentations, "For these things I weep; mine eye, mine eye, runneth down with water" (Lam. 1:16) shows how tender hearted he was, and how his tears flowed freely. But he was something else beside the weeping prophet. He was a man of great courage, with the boldness of a lion. In the presence of His Lord he was prostrate and broken, one who trembled at His Word, filled with godly fear. He was a man of prayer and faith in the Lord and faithful in the discharge of his great commission.

His Life of Service and Suffering

His lot was one of great solitude; he was divinely commanded to remain unmarried (16:2). He was forbidden to enter the house of joy and feasting (16:8). Reproach and derision were his daily portion (20:8). He was betrayed by his own kindred (12:6), and his fellow citizens at Anathoth wanted to kill him (11:21). Then, in the first part of his book, we read of the inner struggles he had, the spiritual conflict, when everybody was against him. In the bitterness of his spirit he spoke of himself as "a man of contention to the whole earth" (15:10). He even doubted whether his whole work was not a delusion and a lie (20:7), and like Job he cursed the day of his birth (20:14). When the Chaldeans came to the front and Jeremiah heard from the Lord that Nebuchadnezzar was called as His servant to receive the dominion from His hands (27:6), Jeremiah urged submission. This stamped him as a traitor. False prophets appeared who contradicted him with their false messages; he committed his cause to the Lord. On one occasion when the temple courts were filled with thousands of worshippers, he appeared and uttered the message that Jerusalem would be a curse, that the temple should share the fate of the tabernacle at Shiloh (26:6). Then the great conflict began. The priests, the false prophets and the people demanded his death (26:8). The Lord graciously protected him through chosen instruments. Still greater were his sufferings

under Zedekiah. His struggles with the false prophets continued; they called him a madman (29:26), and urged his imprisonment. He then appeared in the streets of Jerusalem with bonds and yokes upon his neck (27:2), showing the coming fate of Judah. A false prophet broke the offensive symbol and gave a lying message that the Chaldeans should be destroyed within two years. Then the Egyptian army approached, and the Chaldeans hastened away; it created a dangerous condition for Jeremiah. He sought to escape to his home town Anathoth; it was discovered, and he was charged with falling to the Chaldeans as others did (37:14). In spite of his denial, he was thrown into a dungeon. Later he was thrown into the prison pit by the princes to die there. From that horrible fate he was again mercifully delivered. When the city fell, Nebuchadnezzar protected his person (39:11), and after being carried away with other captives as far as Ramah, he set him free. It was left to him whether he would go to Babylon to live under the special protection of the king, or remain in the land with the governor Gedaliah. He chose the latter. But Gedaliah was murdered by Ishmael and his associates. Then the people forced him to emigrate with them to Egypt. The last glimpse of the prophet's life we have of him is in Tahpanhes, uttering there a final protest and a great message. Nothing is known of the details of his death.

"He is preeminently the man that hath seen afflictions (Lam. 3:1). He witnessed the departure one by one, of all his hopes of national reformation and deliverance. He is forced to appear as a prophet of evil, dashing to the ground the false hopes with which the people were deluded. Other prophets, Samuel, Elisha, Isaiah, had been sent to arouse the people to resistance. He has been brought to the conclusion, bitter as it is, that the only safety for his people lies in their acceptance of that which they think is the worst evil, that brings on him the charge of treachery. If it were not for his trust in the God of Israel, for his hope of a better future to be brought out of all this chaos and darkness, his heart would fail within him. But that vision is clear and bright, and it gives to him, almost as fully as to Isaiah, the character of a prophet of glory. He is not merely an Israelite looking forward to a national restoration. In the midst of all the woes he utters against the nearby nations, he has hopes and promises for them also. In that stormy sunset of prophecy, he beholds, in spirit, the dawn of a brighter day. He sees that, if there is any hope of salvation for his people, it cannot be by a return to the old system and the old ordinances, divine though they had once been. There must be a New Covenant. That word, destined to be so full of power for after ages, appears first in his prophecies. The relations between the people and the Lord of Israel, between mankind and God, must rest, not on an outward law, with its requirements of obedience, but on an inward fellowship with Him and the consciousness of entire dependence. For all this the prophet saw clearly there must be a personal center. The kingdom of God could not be manifested but through a perfect righteous man, ruling over men on earth. They gather round the person of Christ, the Jehovah Zdidkenu--THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS, the Son of David, Israel's coming king."

The Authorship of Jeremiah

The book begins with "The words of Jeremiah," and it closes with chapter 51:64 with the statement, "thus far are the words of Jeremiah." The final chapter is an addition of a historical character. That Jeremiah must be the author of the greater part of the book is proven by the many personal references which only the prophet himself could have written. No other prophet was so frequently commanded to write as Jeremiah was. "Write thee all the words that I have spoken unto thee in a book" (30:2). "Take thee the roll of a book and write therein all the words that I have spoken" (36:2). Then Baruch witnessed that he wrote all these words which came from Jeremiah's lips in a book (36:18); and when the roll was burned the Lord said, "Take thee again another roll, and write in it all the former words that were in the first roll" (36:28). "So Jeremiah wrote in a book" (51:60). Who are the men who try to make us believe that Jeremiah did not write these words? Baruch, his secretary, who took the dictations from the lips of the prophet (36:27) may have arranged, under the direction of Jeremiah, the different prophecies. The language used is the language of his time and is tinged with Aramaic. The style does not compare with that of Isaiah.

There are, of course, many difficulties in connection with the text. For instance, the Greek version (the Septuagint) differs more widely from the Hebrew than that of any other portion of the Old Testament. Numerous passages like 7:1-2, 17:1-4, 23:14-26, etc., are omitted in the Greek version. Inasmuch as the Hebrew is the oldest and the Septuagint was made from the Hebrew, the latter is the correct text. The critical school has made much out of these apparent difficulties and the disorder and unchronological character of the book. Therefore Jeremiah has suffered just as much in the dissecting room of the destructive critics as Isaiah and Moses. Thus Peake in his commentary on Jeremiah uses nine symbolic letters to show which is which.

J. Which stands for the prophecies of which Jeremiah is most likely the author. S. This stands for certain supplementers. JS. This stands for the words of Jeremiah worked over by a supplementer; nobody knows who he was. B. This means Baruch and his production. BS. This means that Baruch's words were supplemented by some more unknown supplementers. R. This stands for Redactor, whoever he was. I. Here we have an unknown author who, according to the critics, wrote chapter 10:1-6. K. Here is another unknown gentleman, the author of 17:19, etc. E. This letter denotes extracts from 2 Kings.

It is of little interest to quote the ramblings of Duhm, Ryssell, Hitzig, Renan and others about the authorship and compilation of

Jeremiah. Not one of these scholars agrees. They have theories but no certainties. How simple it is to believe the beginning and the end of this book, that here are "the words of Jeremiah. And though King Jehoiakim tried to destroy these words, they still live and they will live on in our days, in spite of the successors of the wicked king, the professors of apostasy, who are trying to give Christendom an abridged Bible.

That the book appears disjointed and is unchronological is no argument against its authenticity. The Companion Bible gives the following: "The prophecies of Jeremiah do not profess to be given in chronological order; nor is there any reason why they should be so given. Why, we ask, should modern critics first assume that they ought to be, and then condemn them because they are not? It is the historical portions, which concern Jehoiakim and Zedekiah that are chiefly so affected; and who was Jehoiakim that his history should be of any importance? Was it not he who cut up the Word of the Lord with a penknife and cast it into the fire? Why should not his history be cut up? Zedekiah rejected the same Word of Jehovah. Why should his history be respected?"

The Message of Jeremiah

His message is first a message which charges the people with having forsaken Jehovah. The sins of the people are uncovered, especially the sins of false worship and idolatry. Connected with this are the appeals to return unto the Lord with the promises of the mercy of Jehovah. The impenitent condition of the people is foreseen and judgment is announced. Then follow the messages which make known Jehovah's determination to punish Jerusalem, and further announcement of the impending judgment. But while Jeremiah gave the messages of warning of the coming disaster of Nebuchadnezzar's conquest, he also received prophecies concerning the future. Thus in chapter 23 we find a great prophecy of restoration. He speaks of the days when the righteous Branch, the King, is to reign, when Judah will be saved and Israel dwell safely. Who that King is, every believer knows. His name is "Jehovah our Righteousness." It is the Lord Jesus Christ. Greater still is the great prophecy contained in chapters 30-31. Here we find the prophecy of the new covenant to be made with the house of Judah and the house of Israel. Chapter 33 contains another prophetic restoration message. Chapters 46-51 contain prophecies against Gentile nations.

The personal experience and the sufferings of this prophet are of a typical character, like the experiences and sufferings of other men of God in the Old Testament. The following passages make Jeremiah a type of Christ: Chapter 11:19, 13:17, 20:7 (last sentence), 20:10, 26:11, 15; Lamentations 1:12, 3:14.

The Divisions of Jeremiah

We have already referred in the introduction to the charge made by the critics that the book of Jeremiah is unchronological and lacks proper arrangement. Says one critic, "as the book now stands, there is nothing but the wildest confusion, a preposterous jumbling together of prophecies of different dates." Attempts have therefore been made to reconstruct the book on a chronological basis, but none of these are satisfactory. On the other hand, some able scholars have come to the conclusion that we possess the book substantially in the same state as that in which it left the hands of the prophet and his secretary Baruch. We believe this is correct. If Jeremiah was guided by the Spirit of God in writing and dictating his great messages, he wrote them down just as the Spirit wanted to have them written down. If some things appear disjointed, or out of the chronological order, there must be some wise purpose in it. We shall discover this as we proceed with the analysis and in our annotations.

To enjoy fully the book of Jeremiah a good knowledge of the historical setting is eminently necessary. We have given many references in the annotations which will help in this direction.

We call attention first to the two main divisions of the book. The first constitutes the greater part of the book, from chapters 1-45. This portion has the full ministry of the prophet during the reign of Josiah, the brief reign of Jehoahaz (Shallum; see chapter 22:10-12); the reign of Jehoiakim, Jehoiakin (Coniah) and the reign of Zedekiah. The second division contains the prophecies against Gentile nations, that is chapters 46-51. The last chapter is an appendix corresponding in its history to 2 Kings. Some have looked upon this appendix as the introduction to the Lamentations.

The prophecies historically according to the reign of Josiah, Jehoahaz, Jehoiakim, Jehoiakin, and Zedekiah may be arranged as follows:

Under the Reign of Josiah. The call of Jeremiah and probably the greater part of chapters 1-6.

Under the Reign of Jehoahaz. The prophecy contained in chapter 22:10-12.

Under the Reign of Jehoiakim. Chapters 7-20, 25-26, 35-36, 46:1-12, 47, 49.

Under the Reign of Jehoiakim (Coniah, Jeconiah). Chapters 22 and 23.

Under the Reign of Zedekiah. Chapters 21, 24, 27, 28, 29, 30-34, 37-44, 46:13-28, 50 and 51.

We make the following divisions for the study of this book:

I. THE PROPHET'S CALL TO REPENTANCE, THE NATION'S IMPENITENCE, AND THE JUDGMENT ANNOUNCED (1-13)

II. THE PROPHET'S MINISTRY BEFORE THE FALL OF JERUSALEM, THE PROPHECIES OF JUDGMENT AND RESTORATION, THE PERSONAL HISTORY OF JEREMIAH, HIS FAITHFULNESS AND HIS SUFFERING (14-39)

III. AFTER THE FALL OF JERUSALEM (40-45)

IV. THE PROPHECIES CONCERNING THE GENTILE NATIONS (46-51)

V. THE HISTORICAL APPENDIX (52:1-34)

The different subdivisions will appear in the analysis.

Analysis and Annotations

I. THE CALL To REPENTANCE, THE IMPENITENCE OF THE PEOPLE, AND THE JUDGMENT ANNOUNCED

CHAPTER 1 The Call of the Prophet

1. The introduction (1:1-3)
2. The divine call (1:4-10)
3. The renewed call and the first visions (1:11-19)

Verses 1-3. The first three verses introduce us to the person of the prophet, to the time the Word of the Lord came unto him, and to the sphere of his ministry. Jeremiah's father, Hilkiah, was a priest of the line of Ithamar; his home was Anathoth of Benjamin. (See general introduction.)

Verses 4-10. "Then the Word of the LORD came unto me" (verse 4). The prophet is the writer who tells us how he was called into the office of a prophet. A sovereign, omniscient and omnipotent Lord speaks to and informs the young Jeremiah that He knew him, that his call was prenatal. He had been chosen and set apart for the specific work which he now was to undertake. (See Isa. 49:1; Gal. 1:15, 16). What comfort this assuring knowledge must have been to the prophet in his trying ministry, in the persecutions which were his portion and the suffering he passed through! The Lord had called him, the Lord knew all that would take place, and He had the power to sustain him. And he is the same Lord today, and Jeremiah's comfort is still the comfort of His trusting people.

Jeremiah expresses at once his fear. Like Moses (Exodus 4:10), he manifests self-distrust. He was but a child, not in the sense of a mere child, but a youth. The Septuagint translates it, "I am too young." After that the Lord encouraged him by the promise of His presence, "I am with thee to deliver thee." Then He touched his mouth and said, "Behold, I have put my words in thy mouth." He was the mouthpiece of Jehovah, Who commissioned him to fulfill a ministry over nations and kingdoms, to announce the overthrow of them by the judgments of the Lord.

Verses 11-19. Some think that this renewed call came in the beginning of the reign of Jehoiakim. There is nothing in the text to indicate this. The first vision is that of the rod of the almond tree. The Hebrew word for almond is "Shakad," which means to watch, to wake early. It is the first tree which shows the return of spring. It denotes the early fulfillment of the judgment purposes of the Lord.

The vision of the seething pot toward the north denotes the coming invasion by the kingdom of the north, that is, the Babylonians under Nebuchadnezzar. Then follows the renewed commission with a threat in case of disobedience; if his fearfulness would lead him to abandon the commission. More than that, the Lord, knowing the fears of the servant He had called and separated, encouraged him and once more promised him, "I am with thee saith the LORD, to deliver thee."

CHAPTERS 2:1-3:5 Expostulation and Impeachment

1. His love and kindness to Jerusalem (2:1-3)
2. The unfaithful people (2:4-11)
3. The two evils and the results (2:12-18)
4. Impeachment (2:19-30)
5. Expostulation (2:31-37)
6. Jehovah waiting to show mercy (3:1-5)

Verses 1-3. The first message Jeremiah received begins with reminding Jerusalem of the kindness Jehovah bestowed upon the nation in her youth, and how she went after Him in the wilderness. He had separated Israel to belong to Him, to be a holy nation, the first fruits of His increase, which probably means that other nations should through Israel be called to know Him. He was their protector and those who tried to devour them would be held guilty.

Verses 4-11. After Jehovah had called to the remembrance of the people the days of her youth, He reproves them for their unfaithfulness. This is the opening chapter of the roll which Jehudi read in the presence of Jehoiakim, which he threw into the fire after he had mutilated it with his penknife (chapter 36:23). The remonstrance starts with a pathetic question: "What iniquity have your fathers found in Me, that they are gone far from Me, and have walked after vanity, and are become vain?" Was there anything unrighteous in Him: had He dealt in a treacherous way? Was the fault in Jehovah that they had left Him? They had not thought on His faithfulness as He had led them out of Egypt, through the desert and the shadows of death. It was forgotten by them, and when Jehovah brought them to the land of promise they had defiled the land. Priests, pastors and prophets had apostatized. Thus Jehovah states His case to plead with them and their children. Their folly and ingratitude were worse than that of heathen nations. Such was the failure of the favored nation. The failure of Christendom is even greater when we think of the greater manifestation of God's love in the gift of His Son, and the greater blessing and deliverance.

Verses 12-18. The two evils are, forsaking Jehovah, the fountain of living waters, and the hewing for themselves cisterns, broken cisterns that can hold no water. Jehovah was the storehouse of the living waters, put at the disposal of His people without money and without price. But instead of confessing, "All my springs are in Thee," they had left Him, the source of life and comfort; and turned to broken cisterns of their own invention, as well as to the idols and worshipped them. It is so among the professing people of God in this dispensation; the two evils are present with us also. The result for Israel was enslavement. The young lions came (the Assyrian invasion) and made the land waste. Noph (Memphis) and Tahpanhes (Daphnae), that is, Egypt, did the same. It came as the fruit of having forsaken the fountain of living water.

Verses 19-30. The impeachment begins with the solemn statement: "Know therefore and see that it is an evil thing and bitter, that thou hast forsaken Jehovah Thy God, and that my fear is not in Thee, saith the Lord GOD of hosts." They had broken the covenant and played the harlot. The noble vine He had planted had degenerated. Their iniquity was marked before the Lord, and nothing that they did could remove the stain (verse 22). Yet they denied their guilt of going after idols. And when the Lord tells them, "withhold thy foot from being unshod," that is, running so much after strange gods, so that the feet become unshod, by wearing out the sandals, they boldly declared, "There is no hope; no, for I have loved strangers, and after them will I go." Their backs and their faces were turned from Jehovah. But when the time of trouble comes, they will say, "Arise, save us." But could or would the false gods they had made respond and save them? Some day a remnant of that nation will turn to the Lord and cry, "Arise, save us," and He will answer.

Verses 31-37. Israel's conduct was incomprehensible. Once more it is the "Why" of Jehovah. What had He done that they should turn away from Him? Can a maid forget her ornaments, or a bride her attire? Yet His people had forgotten Him, who had loved and adorned them, days without number. He will plead with them because they said, I have not sinned.

Chapter 3:1-5. Here is the first time the gracious invitation is given, "Return again to Me, saith the LORD." And how many times after, the Lord pleads in the riches of His mercy for His people to return unto Him and offers them forgiveness.

The Call to Repentance and judgment Announced (3:6-6:30)

CHAPTER 3

1. The contrast between backslidden Israel and treacherous Judah (3:6-11)
2. The call to return and the promised glory (3:12-18)
3. The future true repentance predicted and anticipated (3:19-25)

Verses 6-11. The message which begins with the sixth verse was given to Jeremiah during the reign of Josiah. There is then, first of all, a contrast between Israel (the ten tribes) and her sister Judah. (Compare with Ezekiel 23.) The house of Israel, the northern kingdom was judged first by the Lord. She played the harlot; after she had done so, the Lord said, "Turn thou to Me." She refused, and her treacherous sister the house of Judah saw it. And when the Lord dealt with the house of Israel in judgment and they were carried away, Judah did not fear but played the harlot. The tenth verse proves conclusively that the reformation under Josiah was not a true spiritual revival: "And yet for all this her treacherous sister Judah hath not returned unto Me with her whole heart, but feignedly, saith the LORD."

Verses 12-18. Here is a message to be proclaimed toward the north, calling on backsliding Israel to return. He promises mercy to them. One hundred years before, the house of Israel had gone northward as captives. The Lord knew where they dwelt and sent them this message of mercy. He knows today where the house of Israel is, the ten tribes, and at some future time the gracious offer given here will be consummated in their return. These verses are prophetic. They speak of the time when the chosen people will return. Then Jerusalem will be called "the throne of the LORD." Israel will be converted. All the nations will be gathered unto the Name of Jehovah; the house of Judah with the house of Israel will be reunited. That will be when the King our ever blessed Lord comes back.

Verses 19-25. What the future true repentance of the people will be is here predicted and anticipated. There will be weeping and supplications. They will acknowledge that true salvation is in the Lord. They will confess their sins and their disobedience.

CHAPTER 4

1. True repentance and what it means (4:1-4)
2. The alarm sounded: judgment comes (4:5-13)
3. The doom of the rebellious people (4:14-22)
4. The desolation of Israel's land through judgment (4:23-31)

Verses 1-4. A return must be a return unto Him, Jehovah; anything less is insufficient. Their abominations must be judged and put away. Every return of backsliders must be in the same way--a true return to the Lord with confession of sin, self-judgment, and abandonment of evil. The circumcision of the heart means regeneration. (See chapter 31:31-34, and Ezek. 36:26.)

Verses 5-13. This is the first definite announcement of the coming judgment from the north, which Jeremiah had seen in the vision of the boiling pot toward the north (chapter 1). The lion who comes, the destroyer of the Gentiles, who makes the land desolate, is Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon. It is a very vivid description of the approaching judgment. Verse 10 means not that Jeremiah is reproaching the Lord for having deceived the people. Jeremiah did not preach peace, but the false prophets did. They came and spoke in the name of Jehovah, that there should be peace; and Jehovah permitted as a judgment these prophets, and the message of these prophets. And thus they were deceived.

Verses 14-22. The doom of Jerusalem and Judah is sealed; there can be no escape. Their ways and their doings brought all upon them. And when Jeremiah hears it from the lips of the Lord, he breaks out in a lament: "My bowels, My bowels! I am pained at my very heart. My heart maketh a noise in me; I cannot hold my peace, because thou hast heard, O my soul, the sound of the trumpet, the alarm of war."

Verses 23-31. Then the prophet has a vision of what will happen to the land of Israel, when the judgment threatened above has passed over it. The unscriptural invention and wicked teachings of Seventh Day Adventism applies this passage to the whole earth and teaches that when the Lord comes the whole earth will be laid waste. Like Isaiah 24, only Israel's land is in view. It must be not overlooked that the Lord said: "The whole land shall be desolate; yet will I not make a full end." This is Israel's hope.

CHAPTER 5

1. The apostate conditions of Jerusalem (5:1-9)
2. The impending judgment (5:10-18)
3. Sowing and reaping (5:19-29)
4. The horrible thing (5:30-31)

Verses 1-9. So degenerate had the inhabitants of Jerusalem become that the Lord promised if but one man could be found in the city who executed judgment and sought the truth, He would pardon Jerusalem. It was a general apostasy. A similar apostasy is predicted for the end of our age. "Nevertheless when the Son of Man cometh shall He find the faith on the earth?" "They were foolish, saith the Lord; they broke the yoke and burst the bonds; they have refused to return. They were as fed horses in the morning; every one neighed after his neighbor's wife. Shall I not visit these things, saith the Lord; and shall not my soul be avenged on such a nation as this?"

Verses 10-18. The judgment messages had not been believed by the people (verse 12). What the invader from the north will do to Israel is described in verses 15-18. Again the promise is given, "I will not make a full end with you." The Lord keeps in the midst of His people a remnant.

Verses 19-29. Their sowing was bringing a harvest. They asked, "Wherefore doeth the LORD our God all these things unto us?" He answers them that they had sown their evil seed in forsaking the Lord and serving strange gods; the harvest would be serving strangers in a strange land. The good things promised had been turned away by their sins and iniquities. The question of verse 9 is repeated in verse 29. And what was true of that generation, is true of this present age also. The seed which is being sown is Bible rejection; the rejection of the gospel of Christ, the seed of apostasy, will bring a harvest of judgment as it did with Israel.

Verses 30-31. False prophets, false priests and the people were satisfied with it. How is it going to be in the end? Both prophets and priests were in league against the prophet of God. They misled the people; they were a curse instead of a blessing. It is not unlike the religious conditions in Christendom today.

CHAPTER 6

1. The call to the children of Benjamin (6:1-8)
2. Corruption and the deserved judgment (6:9-26)
3. The prophet addressed (6:27-30)

Verses 1-8. The children of Benjamin are exhorted to flee for safety on account of the evil from the north. There were probably among the Benjamites God-fearing men. Those who heeded the call fled and escaped. It is a warning message which follows: "Be thou instructed, O Jerusalem, let my soul depart from thee; lest I make thee desolate, a land not inhabited." But they heeded it not.

Verses 9-26. They did not hear because they had uncircumcised ears, neither had they delight in the Word of the Lord. How true this is today of the great mass of professing Christians! The Lord will now no longer restrain His fury; He will pour it out upon them. Covetousness, the love of money, as it is in our day, was the controlling passion. Prophet and priest dealt falsely; their one message, like the one message of the prophet and priest today, was peace, peace, when there was no peace. Then once more the judgment from the north is announced (verses 18-26).

Verses 27-30. In the final paragraph of this chapter the Lord speaks intimately to the prophet. He is encouraged and strengthened. He is set as a tower and as a fortress. What a position of honor! May we consider it as we are as His believing people surrounded by the flood of apostasy; that we, too, are called to be a tower and fortress.

The Prophet's Temple Address (7-9)

CHAPTER 7

1. Amend your ways and your doings (7:1-15)
2. No prayer-answer to be expected (7:16-20)
3. Sacrifices rejected; Obedience demanded (7:21-28)
4. Jerusalem's rejection (7:29-34)

Verses 1-15. We call this next address of the prophet "the temple address," because he was commanded to stand in the gate of the LORD's house. There he stood, a solitary figure, and said: "Hear the Word of the LORD, all ye of Judah, that enter in at these gates to worship Jehovah." Their worship was but external. They trusted in the temple of the Lord, as if with the house itself some kind of a blessing was connected and the house would shield them from disaster. Micah gives the same delusion of the apostate people: "Yet will they lean upon the LORD, and say, is not the LORD among us? no evil can come upon us" (Micah 3:11). Such a false trust in ordinances and outward worship is only too evident in Christendom also. The masses of unsaved people with their religious observances think it is a protection and insures the Lord's help and blessing. They trusted in lying words. They were thieves, murderers, adulterers, perjurers and idolators, and they thought if they go to the house of the LORD they would be delivered from these abominations. The Lord calls upon them to amend their ways and their doings, to work a better righteousness. They had made His house a den of robbers. This verse (verse 11) was quoted by our Lord in Matt. 21:13. He tells them of the fate of Shiloh when it was overthrown on account of the wickedness of Israel; such would be the fate of the temple (Psa. 78:60). They would be cast out as the whole seed of Ephraim had been cast out.

Verses 16-20. The Lord told the prophet that no prayer of intercession would be answered. "I will not hear thee." What a word this is, coming from Him, who had told Israel to cry unto Him and He would answer. They had provoked Him by making cakes to the queen of heaven. They had fallen in with the worship of a female idol, so prevalent among the idolatrous nations which surrounded them, like the Phoenicians, the Assyrians, the Egyptians and the Babylonians. The Babylonian Venus, Ishtar, was called by them the queen of heaven. The Assyrian called her Beltis, the female form of Baal; they placed in the sculpture a star over her head and called her "the mistress of the heavens." The Phoenicians worshipped this "queen of heaven" under the name of Ashtoreth or Astarte. This wicked worship, with which all kinds of immoral ceremonies were connected, had been adopted by the Jews. The women made cakes to present to this goddess. Jewish tradition tells us that the image of the idol was stamped on each cake. This worship of "the queen of heaven" is perpetuated in the mystical Babylon, Rome, the great whore and mother of harlots (Rev. 17). Mary is called by Romanists "the queen of heaven" and "mistress of the heavens." It can be proven that Mariolatry is but the continuation of the Babylonish worship of the goddess they called "queen of heaven." If the Lord was provoked to anger because the women of Israel brought cakes to this queen of heaven, how much more is He provoked to anger with the idolatries of papal Rome?

Verses 21-28. He brands their sacrifices as worthless. He gave no command concerning burnt offerings and sacrifices in the day He brought them out of Egypt. Destructive critics have built upon this verse (22) a puerile argument to prove that the law of sacrifices was not given by Moses, but introduced many centuries later. When the Lord first led them out of Egypt, He gave them no laws as to sacrifices, but asked obedience. They harkened not; nor did they in Jeremiah's day. It is a nation that obeyeth not the voice of the Lord, nor receiveth correction.

Verses 29-34. The hair was cut off as a sign of mourning (Job 1:20). Jerusalem is to lament in the high places. They have defiled His house. On the heights of Tophet, in the valley of the son of Hinnom, they had burned their children as a sacrifice to Molech (2 Kings 23:10). The days were now to come when the same place should become the place of slaughter. The carcasses of the people should then be meat for the beasts of the earth; they should lie there unburied. Such was to be Jerusalem's rejection and judgment.

CHAPTER 8

1. The horrors of the invasion (8:1-3)
2. Hardened hearts and retribution (8:4-12)
3. Utter destruction threatened (8:13-17)
4. The prophet's lamentation (8:18-22)

Verses 1-3. These verses must not be detached from the preceding chapter. The division of chapters is often unfortunate in this book. The invaders from the north would even have dugged out the bones of the dead. Kings, priests, prophets and people who had worshipped the sun, the moon and the stars should be exposed and spread out before the sun and moon, remain unburied and become dung. We doubt not that all this was literally done during the Chaldean invasion.

Verses 4-12. They did not repent of their wickedness. Theirs was a perpetual backsliding. The stork knows his appointed time; the turtle, the crane and the swallow observe the time of their coming, but they had hardened their hearts in such a manner that they knew not the judgment of the Lord. Hence the retribution (9-12).

Verses 13-17. The thirteenth verse shows the desolation which will fall upon the land when the Lord arises. The words of verses 14-

16 were spoken by the prophet and not by the impenitent people as some take it. The 16th verse is extremely vivid.

Verses 18-22. His heart was faint in him. He is overwhelmed with sorrow. The harvest was passed, the summer gone and they were not saved. It is a mournful outburst.

CHAPTER 9

1. The prophet's complaint and Jehovah's answer (9:1-9)
2. The cause of desolation and destruction (9:10-16)
3. The call for the mourning and wailing women (9:17-22)
4. Glorifying in the Lord in view of judgment (9:23-26)

Verses 1-9. Here again is a deplorable break. The opening verses of this chapter belong to the preceding one. The prophet still speaks. He is overwhelmed with sorrow; his eyes are fountains of tears. He weeps day and night over the slain. He wishes himself away in some wilderness, to be alone and separated from the adulterous generation. Then follows a description of the moral corruption of the people. The Lord answered him and once more asks the question: "Shall not I visit them for these things? saith the LORD; shall not my soul be avenged on such a nation as this?" (See chapter 5:9, 29.)

Verses 10-16. Jerusalem will be heaps, ruins and a den of dragons. The cities of Judah will be desolate. But why is it like this? Because they forsook His law, obeyed not His voice, and practiced idolatries. Therefore their portion would be wormwood and gall. They would be scattered among the nations.

Verses 17-22. The time of wailing and mourning is at hand. "For death is come up into our windows, and is entered into our palaces, to cut off the children from without and the young men from the street." Pestilence was to sweep over them and enter into their habitations. Hence the call to the professional wailers to sing the mournful dirges of death. These wailing women are also called "wise women," for they dabbled in magical, occult things, in familiar spirits and in soothsaying.

Verses 23-26. The days were coming when judgment would strike Jews and Gentiles, for the uncircumcised Gentiles and for Israel, uncircumcised in heart. In view of these days of judgment the prophet exhorts to stop their boasts in wisdom, in might and in riches, for all availeth nothing. "But let him that glorieth glory in Me, that he understandeth and knoweth Me, that I am the LORD which exercise loving-kindness, judgment and righteousness, in the earth, for in these things I delight, saith the LORD." May we also glory in Him and not in the things of the dust, the temporal, the passing things, which are but for a moment! Let us remember "the coming of the Lord draweth nigh."

CHAPTER 10 The Vanity of Idols

1. Be not dismayed at the signs of heaven (10:1-5)
2. The contrast: The vanity of idols and the Lord, the King of Nations (10:6-18)
3. The affliction of the prophet and his prayer (10:19-25)

Verses 1-5. The heathen paid attention to the signs of heaven, such as eclipses, comets, meteoric showers, etc. They were dismayed at these things. All they did, their customs and observances in connection with idol worship, was nothing but vanity.

Verses 6-18. Idols are nothing, but the Lord God of Israel is all. He is the King of Nations, who rules over all. He is the true God, the living God, the everlasting King. At His wrath the earth trembles and the nations shall not be able to abide His indignation. He made the earth by His power; He established the world by wisdom; He stretched out the heavens by His discretion. But what is man? Brutish in his knowledge.

Verses 19-25. Here we see how Jeremiah identified himself with the afflictions and sorrows of Jerusalem. In his prayer he pleads that the judgment might be only for correction and not for a complete and perpetual consummation. "O LORD correct me, but with judgment; not in thine anger, lest thou bring me to nothing." He calls for judgment upon the nations. Well may we see in pleading Jeremiah, the weeping prophet, who is afflicted in Jerusalem's affliction, who identified himself with his people, a type and picture of Him who is greater than Jeremiah.

CHAPTER 11 The Broken Covenant and the Plot Against Jeremiah

1. The broken covenant (11:1-17)
2. The plot revealed and Jehovah's answer (11:18-23)

Verses 1-17. Jehovah had made a covenant with His people. He tells the prophet about it and the responsibility which was connected with that covenant. They were to obey His voice. Then should they be His people and He their God. And of this covenant it was written, "Cursed be the man that obeyeth not the words of this covenant." The prophet answered the Lord: "So be it LORD" (Amen). Then he is commanded to proclaim this covenant and tell the people that they had broken the covenant. They had followed the evil example of their fathers. They had burned incense to the idol gods. Therefore the prophet again is told not to pray for this adulterous generation, "for I will not hear them in the time they cry unto Me in their trouble." Yet the Lord in spite of it all still calls them "My Beloved," though they had broken the covenant and worked lewdness. Verse 16 is used by the Spirit of God in Romans 11, the chapter which begins with the assurance that God has not cast away His people. The branches of the green olive tree are broken. Yet there is hope; they are still beloved for the Father's sake.

Verses 18-23. The Lord revealed unto him their doings. He was ignorant of it, like a lamb or an ox brought to the slaughter. They wanted to cut him off from the land of the living. He calls for vengeance upon them, which is in full keeping with the law dispensation and God's righteous government.

Righteousness characterizes the saint as well as love, and has its place where there are adversaries to that love and to the blessing of the loved people. It is the Spirit of prophecy, not the gospel, no doubt because prophecy is connected with the government of God, not with His present dealings in sovereign grace. Hence in the Revelation vengeance is called for by the saint. (Synopsis of the Bible.)

The men of Anathoth had intimidated him by saying, "Prophecy not in the name of the LORD, that thou die not by our hand." The Lord answers him that their young men should die by the sword, and their sons and daughters by famine. No remnant of them should be left.

CHAPTER 12 The Prophet's Prayer and the House Forsaken, Yet Compassion

1. The prophet's prayer (12:1-6)
2. The house forsaken, yet compassion (12:7-17)

Verses 1-6. In his outburst of grief and in great mental perplexity Jeremiah states the old question, why does the righteous man suffer, why does the wicked prosper? And then the prayer for His intervention. Such will be again the case with the godly remnant in the end of this present age. They will suffer and be persecuted as godly Jeremiah was and pray as Jeremiah prayed: "Pull them out like sheep for the slaughter, and prepare them for the day of slaughter." The imprecatory psalms are of the same prophetic meaning. Jehovah's answer tells him that greater trials were in store for him (verses 5, 6).

Verses 7-17. The house is to be forsaken. The dearly beloved is to be given into the hands of the enemies. The sword of the Lord would now devour them. But there is the warning to the nations who touch His inheritance. He will deal with them in judgment as He dealt with Judah. Then we find the promise, "I will return and have compassion on them." This is still future. The compassion for Israel comes in the day of His return.

CHAPTER 13 Signs, Warnings, and Exhortations

1. The linen girdle and the filled bottles (13:1-14)
2. Hear and give glory (13:15-21)
3. The justice of the judgment (13:22-27)

Verses 1-14. The prophet enacts a sign, that of the linen girdle. After he had put on the girdle, he was told to hide it in a hole of the rock of the Euphrates. After many days, he was commanded to dig for the girdle. It was found marred and profitable for nothing. Was this only a vision, or did the prophet actually make the long journey to the Euphrates and then repeat it after many days? The latter is quite improbable, nor can the command be called a vision. The question is what river is meant, the river Euphrates or another river by a similar name? The Hebrew word for Euphrates is "Perath," and the word river is generally added to this word. In the text here it is missing. Now, three miles north of Anathoth there was a small river by the name of "Parah" (Joshua 18:23). It probably means this

place to which the prophet was commanded to go. Both words in the Hebrew spring from the same root.

The meaning of this symbolical action is explained. A girdle belonged to the priest. Israel was called to be the priestly nation. As a girdle cleaveth to the loins of a man, so the Lord had chosen Israel to cleave unto Him, "that they might be unto Me for a people," and for a name and for a glory. And as the girdle had become marred and profitable for nothing, so even would their pride, that in which they gloried as the chosen people, be marred.

The bottles filled with wine, dashed one against the other, are the symbol of their sin intoxication and their destruction.

Verses 15-21. How patient and merciful is Jehovah! He interrupts His judgment message by calling on the people, whom He still loves, to give ear and to give glory to Jehovah. It is the utterance of the prophet, the outpouring of His love towards His people. The prophet addresses the king and the queen: "Humble yourselves." And then his heart seems to break in anticipation of their obstinacy. "But if ye will not hear, my soul shall weep in secret places on account of your pride, and mine eye shall weep sore, and run down with tears, because the LORD's flock is carried away captive."

Verses 22-27. Wherefore? they asked. And He answers, "For the greatness of thine iniquity ... because thou hast forgotten Me and trusted in falsehood." Woe unto thee, Jerusalem! wilt thou not be made clean? When shall it be? But could they do it themselves? "Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? Then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to evil." The new heart is needed (Ezek. 36); the new birth of which the Lord spoke to the teacher in Israel.

II. THE PROPHET'S MINISTRY BEFORE THE FALL OF JERUSALEM, THE PROPHECIES OF JUDGMENT AND RESTORATION, THE PERSONAL HISTORY OF JEREMIAH, HIS FAITHFULNESS AND His SUFFERING

CHAPTER 14 The Great Drought, the Sword, the Famine, and the Pestilence

1. The description of the drought (14:1-6)
2. The prophet's priestly intercession (14:7-9)
3. The answer (14:10-18)
4. The renewed prayer (14:19-22)

Verses 1-6. The vivid description of the great drought is given in these verses. The little ones sent forth for water returned empty handed. It is the picture of distress.

Verses 7-9. And now the prophet's voice as intercessor is heard. Like Daniel (chapter 9), in his great prayer Jeremiah acknowledges the nation's sin as his own. But he trusts in the Lord and knows that He is "the hope of Israel," the Saviour. Blessed statements of faith which came from His lips: "Thou, O LORD, art in the midst of us--we are called by Thy Name--leave us not" (verse 9)! The Saviour and hope of Israel has surely not given up His people, though judgment had to do its work.

Verses 10-18. They wandered away from Him, saith the Lord in answering Jeremiah. Their iniquities will be remembered and their sins visited. This is the demand of a righteous God. He is not going to hear their cry; the sword of the famine and the pestilence will consume them. Jeremiah tells the Lord about the message of the false prophets. They had promised peace, just as the false teachers in Christendom do today. But they prophesied lies in His name; He had not sent them, nor commanded them nor had He spoken to them.

Verses 19-22. What soul stirring petitions these are. It is not the impenitent nation which speaks, but the prophet is pleading in the place of the people and for them.

CHAPTER 15 The Prophet's Deep Soul-Exercise

1. The answer (15:1-9)
2. The prophet's grief and sorrow and Jehovah's answer (15:10-21)

Verses 1-9. The preceding prayer is now answered and the Lord tells Jeremiah that if Moses and Samuel, these two great men of intercessory prayer, were pleading, judgment would not be averted. What is in store for those who are appointed to death, for the sword, for the famine, for captivity, will be accomplished. There is no escape. They will be removed among all kingdoms on account

of Manasseh's great sin (2 Kings 21:11-15). The terrors of judgment are described in verses 7-9. Their children will be taken; widows increase; the mother of seven children faints, because they are all taken from her.

Verses 10-21. Jeremiah is overwhelmed. He pronounces a "woe" upon himself and declares that his mother has given birth to one who is a man of strife, of contention to the whole land. He has faithfully discharged his duty; he loved his people and they hated him beyond measure. Every one cursed him, as if he were a wicked man. What anguish of soul this implies! But then the Lord was near to cheer and comfort him, as He is near to us when we are in sorrow and all is dark and we are in despair. It would be well with him and with those, who, like Jeremiah, trust the Lord. But the remnant, too, would suffer with the nation's portion (13-14). This brings out another prayer from Jeremiah's heart. He pleads for revenge upon his adversaries, and then prays, "Take me not away in Thy longsuffering, know that for Thy sake I have suffered rebuke." But while he prayed he also used the Word of God. "Thy words were found, and I did eat them." He fed on the bread of life. The word was unto him the joy and rejoicing of his heart. He knew from the Word that he was called by His Name. And we also can turn to the Word and feed on it. But how few can say, "Thy Word is the joy and rejoicing of my heart." That Word on which Jeremiah fed, which filled his sorrowful heart, led him to separation. It will lead us also to separation in the evil day of departure from God and the threatening judgment. He sat alone; He refused to have anything to do with the assembly of mockers, those who denied His Word and His Name, who listened to the false prophets with their false message. Verse 18 must be interpreted in the sense that Jeremiah speaks as representing the godly remnant of Israel. There was such a remnant then in the midst of the wicked mass, there will be such a remnant again in the future, during the great tribulation, or, as Jeremiah calls that time, "The time of Jacob's trouble." They suffer in the trials and judgments; they are fearful, yet trusting. Jeremiah is representative of this remnant. The answer the Lord gives in verses 19-21 must be explained in the same light. Verse 21 will find its final fulfillment of the future remnant when the Lord returns and redeems them from the hand of the wicked and the hand of the terrible, the two beasts of Revelation 13.

The Coming Calamities: Restoration Promised, Ruin Imminent on Account of Judah's Sin and Concerning the Sabbath (16-17)

CHAPTER 16

1. The coming calamities (16:1-13)
2. The coming days of restoration and blessing (16:14-21)

Verses 1-13. In view of the coming calamities Jeremiah is bidden to remain unmarried and not to raise a family. The verses which describe the coming calamities need no further annotations.

Verses 14-21. The great dispersion was announced by the Lord in the preceding verse: "Therefore will I cast you out of this land, into a land that ye know not, neither ye nor your fathers; and there ye shall serve other gods day and night; where I will not show you favor." But is this to last forever? Is this dispersion permanent? Will they always be homeless wanderers? The next verse gives the answer: "I will bring them again into their land that I gave unto their fathers." They will be brought back from the land of the north and from all lands where they had been driven. It will be a greater deliverance than the deliverance out of Egypt. Critics have found fault with these verses: "They are out of place here, but whether inserted by accident, or whether to modify the painful impression of the prophecy of judgment in which they are inserted, we cannot say" (Prof. A.S. Peake). They are not out of place, nor inserted by some unknown hand. The Lord declares His gracious purposes which will yet be accomplished. That these verses were not fulfilled in the return of the small remnant from Babylon is obvious. They will be fulfilled in the future, when the house of Israel and the house of Judah will be re-established in the land. Then the so-called "lost tribes" will be found again by Him for whom they were never lost, "For Mine eyes are upon all their ways, they are not hid from My face neither is their iniquity hid from Mine eyes." He will send fishers and hunters to bring them forth. It is the same of which our Lord speaks in Matt. 24:31. The elect of whom the Lord speaks are not a spiritual Israel, but the elect nation Israel. Then the voice of the prophet is heard in verse 19 with a blessed prophetic declaration: "The Gentiles shall come unto Thee from the ends of the earth, and shall say, Surely our fathers have inherited lies, vanity and things wherein there is no profit." It denotes the conversion of the world, which--in prophecy never precedes the restoration of Israel, but always follows that great coming event. (See Rom. 11:12, 15; Acts 15:14-17).

CHAPTER 17

1. Judah's sin (17:1-4)
2. The curse and the blessing (17:5-11)
3. The worship of Jeremiah (17:12-18)

4. Concerning the Sabbath (17:19-27)

Verses 1-4. The sin of Judah was idolatry, engraven with a pen of iron, the point of a diamond, upon their heart (from whence it proceeded) and upon the horns of their altars. They had destroyed but a few years before the asherim (translated groves, a kind of sacred post), and now their children turned back to the abominable heathen cults. His anger and judgment must now be their portion.

Verses 5-11. A curse is pronounced upon him who trusteth in man, who departeth from the Lord. For such a one there is no hope; he shall not see good; he must be an outcast, like the heath in the desert. And such is the natural condition of man, his heart is departed from the Lord, he trusteth in himself, making flesh his arm to defend and to uphold. But blessing is for the man who trusteth in the Lord, whose hope the Lord is. Verse 8 contains the same truth as Psalm 1:3. It is a description of the God-fearing in Israel, who knew the Lord, trusted and hoped in Him. He had called them to this place of blessing; He had encouraged them to trust in Him; He had manifested His glory and His power in their midst. But they turned away from Him, they leaned not on Him, but on the arm of flesh, on Egypt. The heart is the source of it, deceitful above all things and desperately wicked. The question, "Who can know it?" is answered, "I the LORD search the heart." He has sounded the depths of it and in His omniscience knew the shameful history of Israel, and all their backsliding. So He knew and knows what we are, yet in sovereign love and grace He has loved us and bears with His own.

Verses 12-18. The worship of the prophet stands here also for the worship and soul exercise of the godly remnant of the Lord's people. The sanctuary of the godly is the glorious high throne, that throne which we know as the throne of grace. In verse 14 there is expressed by the prophet in behalf of the God-fearing the need of His salvation. They mocked the prophet, "Where is the Word of the LORD? Let it come." So they will hate the remnant of the future (Isa. 66:5). And we know the prediction in Peter's second Epistle (2 Peter 3). Verse 18 corresponds to the imprecatory psalms. What Jeremiah prays, was fulfilled upon that evil generation; and some day the imprecatory psalms will be fulfilled when the Lord deals again in judgment with the nation.

Verses 19-27. Kuenen and other critics deny the Jeremianic authorship of this passage. It is not out of keeping with the message of the prophet. The Sabbath of which he is commanded to speak is the standard of Israel's spiritual condition, for it is the weekly reminder of Israel's covenant relation with Jehovah. If they neglected the divine command, as they always did in their departure from the Lord, it was the outward evidence that they had broken the covenant. If they really returned to the Lord they would show it by keeping the solemn Sabbaths and the Lord would bless them. But they obeyed not. This passage as well as others is used by the pernicious Seventh Day Adventistic cult, which denies grace and turns back to the law. But the Sabbath has nothing to do with the Church, nor has the Church anything to do with the Sabbath. The Sabbath is an institution of the law in connection with Israel. The great documents addressed to the church, the Epistles, never mention the Sabbath once, nor is there anywhere in the Epistles an exhortation to keep the Sabbath.

CHAPTER 18 The Potter and the Clay

1. In the potter's house and the message (18:1-17)
2. The plot against the prophet and his prayer (18:18-23)

Verses 1-17. He was commanded to go to the house of a potter and watch his work. The vessel Jeremiah sees fashioned out of clay is marred; it did not turn out well. Then the clay was taken up again and made in another vessel as it seemed good to the potter to make it. Then came the message: "O house of Israel, cannot I do with you as this potter? saith the LORD. Behold as the clay is in the potter's hand, so are ye in my hand, O house of Israel." If the creature of the dust can do as he pleases with the clay, how much more the Sovereign God. The Holy Spirit evidently uses this in Romans 9:20-32.

If a nation is threatened with destruction and that nation turns to the Lord, He will repent of the evil pronounced upon them. This is fully illustrated in the case of Jonah's prediction, God-given as it was, of Nineveh's overthrow. Nineveh repented and the judgment was not executed upon that generation. But if the Lord has promised a nation good and that nation does evil in His sight, He will repent of the good He had promised unto them. Thus the potter's action is used to convey a great lesson, the lesson of God's sovereignty, to do as He pleaseth, yet always in perfect righteousness. If Israel had owned then the sin and guilt and turned to the Lord, He would have acted in sovereign grace towards them. Their answer was: "There is no hope; but we will walk after our own devices, and we will every one do the imaginations of his evil heart." What depravity and wicked boldness these words reveal! They refused to believe the message of the Lord. They pushed aside the hand which would snatch them out of the fire. They acknowledged the evil heart and deliberately declared to continue in wicked defiance of Jehovah. And is it any better in professing Christendom today? The answer of the Lord, an answer of kindness and long-suffering follows.

Verses 18-23. They arose in rebellion against the messenger of Jehovah. They hated him. They would smite him with the tongue, malign him, bring false accusations against him. But the man of God does not take up their contentions. Like Hezekiah when the enemy reviled him, Jeremiah turned to the Lord. He tells the Lord all about it. Then he prays for judgment to fall upon them. Here once more we must look upon these words prophetically. Such expressions as used by the prophet here will, during the great tribulation, come from the lips of the remnant of Israel, who suffer from their enemies and who righteously call for heaven's vengeance, which will fall upon these enemies when Jehovah, our Lord, is manifested in glory.

CHAPTER 19 The Broken Bottle

1. The broken bottle and the message (19:1-13)
2. The fate announced in the court of the Lord's house (19:14-15)

Verses 1-13. He was to get a potter's earthen bottle accompanied by elders and priests, and go to the valley of the son of Hinnom. There he should proclaim the words Jehovah would breathe into him. The message is another judgment message and needs no further comment. In Tophet, the valley of Hinnom, they had worked their abominations, burnt their sons with fire. Now it should become the valley of slaughter, so that their carcasses should be eaten by the fowls and wild beasts. He would cause them to eat the flesh of their loved ones. It was fulfilled during the siege of Jerusalem (Lam. 4:10). Then he broke the bottle as a sign that thus the people and the city should be broken.

Verses 14-15. When the prophet returned from the valley of Hinnom he took his place in the court of the LORD's house and declared the fate of the city.

CHAPTER 20 Pashur.-Jeremiah's Perplexity and Complaint

1. Pashur and Jeremiah (20:1-6)
2. Jeremiah's great perplexity and complaint (20:7-18)

Verses 1-6. A great scene now follows the message in connection with the broken bottle. The great Pashur, the chief governor in the house of the LORD had heard of the message. He smites Jeremiah and puts him in the stocks, which must have been some form of cruel torture by which the victim was rendered helpless, besides being exposed to the vulgarity of the people who passed by and would taunt him. In this position Jeremiah remained all night before the high gate of Benjamin. In the morning he was released. He then speaks as only an inspired prophet can speak. His name Pashur (which means "most noble") should now be "Magor-missabib," which means "terror on every side." The awful fate of Pashur and his own is predicted. He is dumb, perhaps even then terror-stricken, as he looks into the flashing eyes of the man of God and listens to the fiery words.

Verses 7-18. What follows now is a most passionate outburst, revealing an unspeakable emotion of the soul, as perhaps nowhere else in the prophetic Scriptures. Even critics acknowledge this as "one of the most powerful and impressive passages in the whole of the prophetic literature, a passage which takes us, as no other, not only into the depths of the prophet's soul, but into the secrets of his prophetic consciousness." "LORD," he cries, "Thou has deceived me, and I was deceived." The Revised Version has translated it, "Thou has persuaded me," but that is not correct. He acknowledges himself deceived, or enticed. He is troubled with doubt. He speaks of his great trials. He is a laughing stock--he is a reproach and a derision all the day. He tried to stop mentioning Him and not to speak any more in His name; but he tried to turn back upon his commission. But then the fire burned within him; his conscience became as a burning fire. He had heard defaming, his best friends had said "We will denounce him." They thought of taking revenge on him.

But suddenly faith is victorious. He must have remembered the words of the Lord in connection with his commission, "For I am with thee saith the LORD, to deliver thee" (chapter 1). And so he cries out, "The LORD is with me." He prays to see His vengeance on his enemies, for unto Him he had revealed His cause. And then the singing! "Sing unto the LORD, praise ye the LORD; for He has delivered the soul of the needy from the hand of the evil-doers." Such is the experience of the godly remnant in fears and doubts, troubled on all sides, fleeing to Jehovah, till the singing times come, when He appears for their deliverance and the hallelujahs will sweep the earth and the heavens.

But his grief overwhelms him. Perhaps he thought again of all the sneers and mockeries, of all the harsh words, the unfaithful friends and the physical pain he endured. He is occupied with himself and the soul struggle begins anew and culminates in a near collapse. He curses, as Job did, the day in which he was born.

CHAPTER 21 The Prophetic Warning

1. Zedekiah's inquiry (21:1-2)
2. Jehovah's answer through Jeremiah (21:3-14)

Verses 1-2. It has been said that this chapter is historically misplaced and therefore must be considered an evidence of the composite authorship of this book. The Spirit of God for some reason unknown to us has put it in this place. Zedekiah sent unto Jeremiah Pashur (a different one from the Pashur in the preceding chapter) to inquire as to Nebuchadrezzar, the King of Babylon. This is of course Nebuchadnezzar. The form of his name found in Jeremiah is derived more correctly from the Babylonian, which is "Nabukudurri-usur." Here the great king is mentioned for the first time in Jeremiah. The wicked Zedekiah may have remembered God's dealing with Hezekiah when the Lord annihilated the army of Sennacherib, the Assyrian. Then Zedekiah said: "Peradventure the LORD will deal with us according to all His wondrous works, that he may go up from US."

Verses 3-14. Zedekiah (whose name was Mattaniah), the ungodly king, who had been made king by Nebuchadrezzar after he had carried away captives from Jerusalem, heard a message of judgment from Jeremiah. The Babylonian king's army was again before the city, because Zedekiah had revolted and broken his agreement with the king. How could Zedekiah even imagine that a righteous Lord had a message of peace for him? The Lord Himself will now fight against Jerusalem and its wicked king. The enemy will do the appointed judgment work: "he shall smite them with the edge of the sword; he shall not spare them, neither have pity, nor have mercy." The king is to be taken captive. Then he addresses the people and the house of David in no uncertain words, which need no further comment.

Concerning the Kings of Judah (22:1-23:8)

CHAPTER 22

1. The message in the house of the king of Judah (22:1-9)
2. Touching Shallum, the King of Judah (22:11-12)
3. Concerning Jehoiakim and his fate (22:13-19)
4. Concerning Coniah and his fate (22:20-30)

Verses 1-10. What a figure Jeremiah was as he stood, obedient to the divine command, before the royal palace to deliver his God-given message! The door of mercy still is open. Let them execute judgment, let them stop oppressing the stranger, the widows and orphans, let them shed no longer innocent blood, then the house of David shall prosper. If not, the house shall become a desolation. The nations astonished at the destruction and overthrow of the city will hear the answer that it is "because they have forsaken the covenant of the LORD their God and worshipped other gods and served them."

Verses 11-12. He is also called Jehoahaz (1 Chron. 3:15; 2 Kings 23:30, 31). He was carried away by Pharaoh-Necho into Egypt; he will return.

Verses 13-19. This wicked king and his evil doings are described in these verses. He was a cruel despot, who built his palaces by forced labor; covetousness, shedding of innocent blood, oppression and violence characterized his reign. Then his ignominious burial, the burial of an ass, is predicted. It means that an ass has no burial and so Jehoiakim would have no burial; he is the only king of Judah whose burial is not recorded. It may be possible that Jeremiah added these words by divine command, after this king had cut the roll to pieces and burned it in the fire (Jer. 36). The prophet wrote the same words contained in the roll (all these chapters beginning with chapter 2 constitute the roll the king burned), and many others were added. Most likely because he had done that wicked work in cutting the Word of God to pieces and casting it into the fire, this special shameful end was announced. Beware you cutters of the Bible, you mutilators of the Word of God, your end, too, will be an ignominious end!

Verses 20-30. Coniah, also called Jehoiachin, Joiakim and Joachim, after a brief reign of a few months had been carried away to Babylon to die there. Then the prophet's voice breaks in with a mighty appeal, "O earth, earth, earth, hear the word of the LORD." Every true believer feels like shouting these words in the present days of departure from God and rejection of His Word. Then there is a prediction as to Jeconiah, "Write ye this man childless, a man that shall not prosper in his days; for no man of his seed shall prosper, sitting upon the throne of David and ruling any more in Judah." A curse was thus pronounced upon the house of David in the line of Solomon. But there was still the line of Nathan the son of David. Messiah, the Son of David, could therefore not spring from the line

of Solomon; he must come from the line of Nathan. Joseph, the husband of the virgin Mary of Nazareth was a son of David through the line of Solomon, the disinherited line; but Mary of Nazareth was a daughter of David through the line of Nathan.

CHAPTER 23:1-8

1. The false shepherds (23:1-4)
2. The True Shepherd (23:5-8)

Verses 1-4. The word "pastors" means "shepherds." Ezekiel received a larger message about these false shepherds, the hirelings who did not feed the flock. (See annotations of Ezekiel 34.) The scattered remnant of the Lord's flock (not the Church, but the remnant of Israel) will yet be gathered out of all countries, be fruitful and increase, no longer fearful, dismayed or in want. It is a prophecy concerning the time when the Shepherd of Israel, their King as well, is manifested.

Verses 5-8. A great Messianic prophecy follows. "The Righteous Branch," the Son of David, whose name is "THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS" (Jehovah Zdidkenu) is the Lord Jesus Christ. He is the King who will reign and prosper, executing judgment and justice in the earth. The prophecy is unfulfilled. He came as the Son of David, the promised King. He offered that kingdom to Israel; they rejected Him. But He is coming again, and in that day of glory this great prediction will be accomplished. His people Israel will be saved (Rom. 11:25-27). Their wonderful restoration from the north and from all the countries will then take place.

CHAPTER 23:9-40 Condemnation of the False Prophets

1. Jeremiah's lament on account of the false prophets (23:9-14)
2. The condemnation of these prophets (23:15-32)
3. Forgotten and forsaken (23:33-40)

Verses 9-14. The prophet is overwhelmed because of the wicked prophets, because in the LORD's house wickedness was found. The false prophets of Samaria had led the people into idolatry and the prophets of Judah were guilty of all kinds of immoralities. Like priests, like people; they all became unto the Lord as Sodom, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem like Gomorrah.

Verses 15-32. They will be fed with wormwood and will have to drink gall. On account of their false message of peace (verses 17, 18), the whirlwind of divine judgment will fall upon them and upon the head of the wicked. They prophesied lies in the name of Jehovah; they were prophets of the deceit of their own heart. They tried to make the people forget the Name of Jehovah. Such is today still the work of apostate teachers, who speak out of the deceit of their hearts, who prophesy lies and who aim at the Name which is above every Name. How different is the word of the Lord, from the idle dreams of these false prophets. "Is not My word like as a fire? saith the LORD; and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces?" (verse 29). Three times the Lord declares He is against these prophets (verses 30-32).

Verses 33-40. If they ask the question, "What is the burden of the LORD?" the answer is to be, "I will cast you off." The burden, or word of the Lord is not to be mentioned again to them. They will be utterly forgotten and forsaken, with everlasting reproach and perpetual shame upon them.

CHAPTER 24 The Two Baskets of Figs

1. The vision of the two baskets of figs (24:1-3)
2. The vision interpreted (24:4-10)

Verses 1-3. Jeconiah, with the choicest of the nation, had been carried away into captivity. A large portion remained, and were not taken away, and these attributed their escape from exile to some goodness in them. At that time the prophet had a vision. He saw set before the temple two baskets of figs. The one basket was filled with good figs, the second basket with bad figs.

Verses 4-10. The good figs are symbolical of those who were carried away into captivity. They were sent away for their good. He promises them good things. They are going to return; He is going to build them; He will plant them. More than that, He will give them a heart to know that He is the Lord. "For they shall return unto Me with their whole heart." They are never to be plucked up. This prophecy evidently goes beyond the return of the small remnant from Babylon, yet partially at least it was fulfilled. The bad figs are

those who remained with Zedekiah in Jerusalem, but they also should be removed into all the kingdoms of the earth, "to be a reproach, a proverb, a taunt and a curse.

CHAPTER 25 The Seventy Years' Captivity and the Judgment of the Nations

1. The retrospect (25:1-7)
2. The seventy years' captivity announced (25:8-11)
3. The punishment of Babylon and its king (25:12-14)
4. The wine-cup of fury for the nations (25:15-29)
5. The day of the LORD and wrath of God (25:30-38)

Verses 1-7. The prophet in the fourth year of Jehoiakim addresses the people of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem. The fourth year of Jehoiakim was also the first year of Nebuchadrezzar. In this eventful year the battle of Carchemish was fought and Nebuchadrezzar defeated Egypt. The supremacy of Babylon had been insured. At this critical time the prophet gives a retrospect of his ministry among them. From the thirteenth year of Josiah he had spoken to them, but they had not heard. The Lord sent other servants, too, but they did not hear. He puts before them their stubbornness and how they provoked the Lord to anger.

Verses 8-11. And now the solemn verdict is announced. The northern power is coming against this land, headed by King Nebuchadrezzar, who is here called for the first time by the Lord, "My servant." All mirth and joy will be taken from them; the whole land shall be a desolation, and they shall serve the king of Babylon for seventy years.

Verses 12-14. When the seventy years are ended the Babylonian nation and its king (Belshazar) would be punished for their iniquity. All that is written in this book of Jeremiah, concerning Babylon is to be accomplished (including the final desolation). Daniel in Babylon, when he read the book of Jeremiah, dwelt perhaps on this passage, and turned to the Lord in that remarkable prayer recorded in the ninth chapter of the book which bears his name.

Verses 15-29. While the Lord thus judged Jerusalem, should the other nations go unpunished? And He answers, "Ye shall not be unpunished, for I will call for a sword upon all the inhabitants of the earth, saith the LORD of hosts" (verse 29). This prophecy is most remarkable. It predicts a world war. All nations shall drink and be moved and be mad because of the sword. It includes all the kingdoms of the world which are upon the face of the earth (verse 26). Have we not seen something like this during the past, most horrible war of history? And may this not be the prelude to the day of the Lord, when these nations will have to face the judge and judgment?

Verses 30-38. The Yom Jehovah, the day of the LORD, is now announced by the prophet. It is that great future day ushered in by the visible and glorious manifestation of the Lord. All the prophets speak of that day as the day of consummation and glory. It is equally prominent in the New Testament (Matt. 24:30; 2 Thess. 1:7-10; 2 Peter 3:7-10; Rev. 19:11-21, etc.). Jeremiah beholds Him coming from above, with a shout, not the shout with which He calls His own together (1 Thess. 4:17), but the shout of judging wrath. He will plead with all flesh. The slain of the Lord shall be many. The howling of the shepherds, the false leaders, because their end is come, concludes this great vision.

CHAPTER 26 Threatened with Death and His Deliverance

1. The temple like Shiloh, and Jerusalem to be a curse (26:1-7)
2. Threatened with death (26:8-11)
3. Jeremiah's defense (26:12-15)
4. History remembered and the prophet's deliverance (26:16-24)

Verses 1-7. We are now taken back to the beginning of the reign of Jehoiakim. (Compare with chapter 7.) The Lord still waits in patience for their repentance. With holy boldness the prophet stands in a place where the worshippers pass to enter the temple and announces the message. The temple is to be like Shiloh, that is forsaken (Psa. 78:60). Jerusalem is to be a curse.

Verses 8-11. Then he was arrested for his faithfulness and threatened with death, "Thou shalt surely die." The priests and the prophets were his accusers before the princes. How often this has been repeated in the history of God's true witnesses! During pagan Rome as well as papal Rome, the false priests and false prophets hated and despised God's witnesses and persecuted them. It is so in

our times.

Verses 12-15. He makes his defense in a few dignified words. He tells them he is Jehovah's messenger. He tells them that he is in their hands, but warns them if they kill him they shed innocent blood. This courage was born of faith. He knows that he is in His hands.

Verses 16-24. The princes and people were deeply impressed and declared that he was not worthy of death. This encouraged certain elders to speak, in whose heart some fear seems to have been left. They remembered the prophet Micah, the contemporary of Isaiah, who spoke similar words in the days of Hezekiah (Micah 3:12). Hezekiah did not have Micah killed. They warned against so rash a deed. They also mentioned the case of the prophet Urijah, who had also prophesied, as Jeremiah did. He had fled to Egypt, but was brought back, then Jehoiakim killed him. We do not know why his case is mentioned in this connection, unless it is to show the difference between good Hezekiah and wicked Jehoiakim. Then Ahikam, the father of Gedaliah, who was governor under Nebuchadnezzar, stood by him, and he was delivered.

CHAPTER 27 The Optimism of the False Prophets Contradicted

1. The call of Nebuchadnezzar to be the servant of God (27:1-11)
2. The call to submit and to serve the king of Babylon (27:12-22)

Verses 1-11. It was in the earlier part of the reign of Zedekiah (Jehoiakim in verse 1 is a clerical error, see verses 3 and 12) that Jeremiah is commanded to make bonds and yokes to put them on his neck; then he was to send them to the surrounding nations by the ambassadors at the court of Zedekiah. The verses which follow are of much importance and interest. God speaks as Creator, and in His sovereignty He appoints Nebuchadnezzar as head over the nations and over the beasts of the field, also over the fowls of heaven (Dan. 2:38), not permanently, but for a time. God appointed a new form of government, because Jerusalem had failed, and the theocratic government as vested in the house of David was to pass away. An imperial head is chosen by the Lord from among the Gentiles. He constitutes Nebuchadnezzar His servant; with him and his rule begin the times of the Gentiles. He is the golden head in the dream-image he saw, which young Daniel interpreted by Divine revelation. The times of the Gentiles are fully revealed in Daniel's great prophecies. The predicted end of these times are not passed into history; we are still living in the times of the Gentiles. They end with the second, visible coming of Christ, when Gentile world-dominion, as it started with Nebuchadnezzar, will end, and the kingdom of heaven begins.

This fact--that God has committed power in this world to a man--is very remarkable. In the case of Israel, man had been tried on the ground of obedience to God, and had not been able to possess the blessing that should have resulted from it. Now God abandons this direct government of the world (while still the sovereign Lord above); and, casting off Israel whom He had chosen out from the nations, grouping the latter around the elect people and His own throne in Israel, He subjects the world to one head, and committing power unto man, He places him under a new trial, to prove whether he will own the God who gave him power, and make those happy who are subjected to him. when he can do whatever he will in this world.

Whoever refuses now the new governmental order will be punished by the Lord; the nations that put their neck under the yoke of Nebuchadnezzar, to serve him, will remain in their land.

Verses 12-22. He speaks to the king and to the priests and calls them to submit to the new government established with Nebuchadnezzar. He urges them not to believe the lying prophets with their false, optimistic message, who promised smooth things. Every message they uttered, contradicted the Word of God. It is the same in Christendom today. The rationalistic critics have a message of unscriptural optimism concerning the conditions of this age, which contradicts everything made known in the prophetic Word. Part of the vessels from the temple had been carried away. The false prophets said that these vessels would shortly be returned. The Lord dispels this lying message, for He reveals through His prophet that the remaining vessels shall also be taken to Babylon.

CHAPTER 28

1. Hananiah, the false prophet (28:1-11)
2. The judgment of Hananiah (28:12-17)

Verses 1-11. One of these lying prophets became very bold, and declared that he had a message from the Lord that the yoke of the

Babylonian king was to be broken, and that within two years the temple vessels would be brought back. Jeremiah said "Amen"--let it be so! But he knew it could not be so, for the Lord had spoken to him; he gives a test. Then Hananiah became still more arrogant. Jeremiah had about his neck the yoke (chapter 27:2). Hananiah took it off and broke it and declared again that within two years the yoke of Nebuchadnezzar should be broken. What applause he must have earned from the unbelieving masses about him!

Verses 12-17. Instead of yokes of wood there should be yokes of iron, the prophet tells Hananiah. He exposes him as a deceiver whom the Lord had not sent, and announces his fate, that he should die this same year. He died in the seventh month of the same year.

CHAPTER 29 Jeremiah's Letter to the Exiles

1. Jeremiah's letter (29:1-23)
2. Concerning Shemaiah and his false prophecies (29:24-32)

Verses 1-23. King Zedekiah sent Elasah and Gemariah on a diplomatic mission to King Nebuchadnezzar. Jeremiah used the occasion to send a letter by them to the exiles. The letter first of all makes it clear that their stay in Babylon will not be transitory. They are to settle down, build homes, many, rear families, take wives for their sons and husbands for their daughters. They were to seek the peace of Babylon, for Babylon's peace would mean their own peace. The latter injunction has often been forgotten by the Jews during the past 1900 years, since their great dispersion; often have they fomented strife among the nations where they are strangers.

The false prophets had predicted a speedy return. Some of these false prophets had gone with them to Babylon and were present in the prison camp on the banks of the river Chebar. We read in Ezekiel 11:3 that they ridiculed the Divine command and gave wicked counsel. They felt themselves secure. Ezekiel continued the message of Jeremiah. (See annotations of Ezekiel.) Once more the seventy years are mentioned and what is to take place after they have expired. "For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the LORD, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you an expected end." He promises an answer to their cry, and if they seek Him, He will be found. How gracious and merciful He is towards His own! In His own time all His gracious purposes will be fully accomplished in that nation, as they were partially accomplished in the return of a remnant after the exile. Verse 14 speaks of the larger return "gathered out from all the nations." But those who persistently continued in disobedience, who listened to the false prophets will suffer the predicted fate; for such there will be no deliverance. Two of the false prophets are mentioned by name, Ahab and Zedekiah (not the king). Besides being false prophets, they were adulterers and whoremongers. King Nebuchadnezzar roasted them in the fire (22-23).

Verses 24-32. Shemaiah, a Nehelamite, which means "the dreamer," was also in Babylon, and when the captives received the letter from Jeremiah, he answered the letter. The letter was received by a certain Zephaniah, of whom he inquired, "Why hast thou not reproved Jeremiah of Anathoth, which maketh himself a prophet to you?" When Zephaniah received this letter he read it to Jeremiah. The Lord exposes the Nehelamite as a deceiver, and his judgment is announced.

The Glorious Future of the Nation (30-31)

CHAPTER 30

1. The time of Jacob's trouble (30:1-11)
2. Zion's desperate condition and the promise of deliverance (30:12-17)
3. Restoration and glory (30:18-24)

Verses 1-11. The critics have made havoc with this great prophecy. De Wette, Hitzig, and other rationalists, claim to have discovered that this chapter, and those which follow, are the work of the spurious "second Isaiah." The critics, with their present day echoes in different colleges, reject these chapters as not being Jeremianic. They are totally wrong. This great prophecy, which begins with the thirtieth chapter, is quite in order after all these judgment messages, announcing the doom of Jerusalem and of the nation. What then about the future, that future which all their fathers had cherished, the promises which rested upon the covenant Jehovah made with David? Was now everything to be blotted out and no national hope left? The last siege of Jerusalem was in progress; soon all the threatened judgments would pass fully into history. How perfectly in order is it that now should be given a message of the glorious future of the nation.

Jeremiah is commanded to write in a book all the words Jehovah had spoken; quite sufficient evidence that Jeremiah is the author and that this book is not a patchwork of different supplementers, redactors and compilers.

The first promise in verse three is concerning the coming days in which the people Israel and Judah will return to their God-given land to possess it. Has this promise been fulfilled? Expositors generally say that it was fulfilled in the return from the captivity. But this is not so. Here is a promised return not only of the house of Judah, but a return of the ten tribes also. This has never taken place. In spite of the "British-Israel" hallucination, every sane Bible reader realizes that the house of Israel is still scattered among the nations. This restoration promise will be accomplished in the future. Then we hear what will precede that restoration. It will be a time of great trouble, even the time of Jacob's trouble (Matt. 24; Mark 13), the great tribulation revealed in other portions of the prophetic Word, notably in Daniel and Revelation. When that time comes "Jacob will be saved out of it." The yoke of the last Gentile world-power (the revived Roman Empire, the ten-horned Beast of Dan. 7 and Rev. 13) will then be broken (verse 8) and they will serve the true David, David's Lord and David's Son, our Lord (verse 9). Then follows the message of comfort. How well history has confirmed this one sentence of verse 11: "Though I make a full end of all nations whither I have scattered thee, yet will I not make a full end of thee."

Verses 12-17. Here is a reminder of Zion's desperate condition and shameful history and how He had to chastise His people and wound them with the wound of an enemy. Such is still their lot and will be down to the end of this age, a people scattered and afflicted, devoured and spoiled by the nations. But when the time comes, the time of mercy for Zion, her enemies will be dealt with. In arrogant unbelief, these nations, so called "Christian nations," said "Zion is an Outcast"--"whom no man seeketh after" (verse 17); but the Lord says, "I will restore health unto thee, and I will heal thee of thy wounds."

Verses 18-24. The city then will be built again. The voices of praise and joy will be heard once more. He will glorify and increase them. He will be their God and they shall be His people. The whirlwind will strike "the head of the wicked," the wicked false king, the false Messiah, Antichrist. The next chapter is the continuation of this great prophecy.

CHAPTER 31

1. The home-going of the nation (31:1-9)
2. The joy of salvation (31:10-14)
3. The preceding tribulation, sorrow and repentance (31:15-21)
4. Assurance (31:22-26)
5. The new covenant (31:27-34)
6. The everlasting nation (31:35-40)

Verses 1-9. Sovereign grace will bring them back and give them the songs of salvation. It is true of Israel "I have loved thee with an everlasting love, therefore with loving kindness have I drawn thee";--it is equally true of us. What a day of joy it will be when they go back home once more, never to leave the old homeland again! Then the watchmen on mount Ephraim cry, "Arise ye, and let us go up to Zion unto the LORD our God." Can there be anything more touching and beautiful than verses 8-9?

Verses 10-14. The nations are addressed. oh! that the great nations of today might have an ear to hear this message, "He that scattered Israel will gather him, and keep him as a shepherd does his flock." His promises made to Israel will not fail. The nations should understand, as they do not, that Israel will yet become the head of all the nations of the earth. What singing that will be in that day of which the prophet speaks (verse 12). What rejoicing after their sorrow! What fullness will be theirs!

Verses 15-21. Rachel weeping for her children (verse 15) is quoted in Matthew 2 in connection with the killing of the boys in Bethlehem. It has also a future fulfillment, when once more Satan will manifest his power as the murderer during the tribulation. But the promise, "They shall come again from the land of the enemy" and "Thy children shall come again to their own border," clearly shows that captivity is likewise meant from which Rachel's children (Joseph and Benjamin, i.e., Ephraim) shall return after the final tribulation and weeping. Physical resurrection is not in view here. Therefore, the next verse speaks of Ephraim moaning and in repentance. Then God's gracious answer "Is Ephraim my dear son?--I will surely have mercy upon him."

Verses 22-26. Backsliding Israel is exhorted and the assurance is given, "A woman shall compass a man." It refers to Israel as the woman, the timid, weak, forsaken one, who now will compass a man: that is have power given unto her to become the ruler. (Some have translated this difficult passage, "The woman shall be turned into a man.") Then follows the promise of assurance.

Verses 27-34. In the preceding verse we read that Jeremiah awoke, so that this message must have come to him in a vision by

night, and sweet was his sleep. How refreshing must have been to his troubled soul this wonderful prophecy! The great prediction in these verses is the one concerning the new covenant. This covenant is not made with Gentiles, nor even with the church as so often erroneously stated. It is the new covenant to be made with the house of Israel and the house of Judah. This is fully confirmed in the Epistle to Hebrews (Hebrews 8:8-13). The old covenant is the law-covenant, which the Lord did not make with Gentiles, but with Israel exclusively. The new covenant is of grace. The ground of this new covenant is the sacrificial death of the Lord Jesus Christ, His blood, as we learn from His own words when He instituted the supper. He died for that nation, and therefore all Israel will yet receive the promised blessing of this new covenant. This prophecy is therefore still unfulfilled, for Israel does not enjoy this new covenant now. In the meantime, while Israel has not yet the blessings of this new covenant, Gentiles, who by nature are aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise, believing in Christ, possess the blessings of this new covenant to the full. In that coming day of Israel's return, the nation, Israel and Judah, will be born again, know the Lord, and their sins will be remembered no more.

Verses 35-40. This word of Jehovah is a complete answer to those in Christendom who think that God has cast away Israel, that they are no longer the chosen people. The Lord makes a condition, "If heaven above can be measured, and the foundations of the earth searched out beneath, I will also cast off all the seed of Israel for all they have done saith the LORD." Neither has heaven been measured, neither has the depth of the earth been searched out, nor will this ever be accomplished. What a faithful covenant-keeping God He is! Verses 38-40 have never been fulfilled in the past.

CHAPTER 32 Jeremiah in Prison

1. Shut up in the court of the prison (32:1-5)
2. The revelation of the Lord concerning Hanameel (32:6-15)
3. The prophet's prayer (32:16-25)
4. Jehovah's answer (32:26-44)

Verses 1-5. The siege of Jerusalem began in the ninth year of Zedekiah's reign. It was in the tenth year, a year later (39:1) that we find Jeremiah in prison. In order to understand this imprisonment Jeremiah 37:11-21 must be consulted. He was first thrown as a prisoner into the house of Jonathan the scribe. It was a dungeon, perhaps some underground place. He was consigned there. It was a horrible place, for Jeremiah was afraid he might die there (37:20). Zedekiah seems to have been somewhat favorably inclined towards him. He asked him secretly to his palace and after Jeremiah told the king, in answer to his question about a word from the Lord, that the king should be delivered into the hands of the king of Babylon, Zedekiah on his request released him from the dungeon and put him into the court of the prison, and was kept by the king's order from starvation (37:21). Here, in our chapter, is the full text of his faithful message; had it been less faithful he might have been released.

Verses 6-15. The coming of his cousin with the request to buy his field in Anathoth is divinely announced. The right of redemption was Jeremiah's. (See Leviticus 25:25.) Hanameel came, and Jeremiah, realizing that it was of the Lord, bought the field, paying for it seventeen shekels of silver. The sale was legally transacted and executed; there being two rolls, one sealed, the other open. It was all delivered to Baruch, the faithful secretary of the prophet, mentioned here for the first time. He was instructed to put all in an earthen vessel. By his action the prophet proved his simple faith in the promised return.

Verses 16-25. What a beautiful prayer it is which came from the lips of the prisoner! He acknowledges first of all, as we all do in believing prayer the power of God, that there is nothing too hard for the Lord. Then he speaks of the loving kindness and righteousness of the God of Israel, and mentions the past history of the nation. What the Lord had predicted against the city and the nation had been done; the city was given to the Chaldeans. "What Thou hast spoken is come to pass; and behold Thou seest it." He then mentions the fact that the Lord had told him to buy that field. Then the prayer is interrupted, like Daniel's prayer.

Verses 26-44. The answer the Lord gave to praying Jeremiah is twofold. Jeremiah had said in faith, "There is nothing too hard for the LORD." The Lord answered him, "Behold, I am the LORD, the God of all flesh; is there anything too hard for Me?" Then He announces first of all the fate of the doomed city (verses 28-35). After this comes once more the message of comfort and peace looking forward to that blessed future when Israel is gathered out of all countries, brought back to the land--when they shall be His people (verses 36-44).

CHAPTER 33 New Message of Restoration and Blessing

1. The call to pray and Jerusalem's overthrow (33:1-5)

2. Future blessing and glory (33:6-14)
3. The Branch of Righteousness; Jerusalem's new name (33:15-18)
4. Jehovah's faithfulness (33:19-26)

Verses 1-5. Jeremiah is still in prison, as we learn from the first verse. The siege of Jerusalem is on. Then the Lord said, "Call unto Me, and I will answer thee, and show thee great and mighty things, which thou knowest not." What an offer and what an assurance! Then the Lord speaks of the great and mighty things, announcing first the overthrow of Jerusalem. The demolished houses of Jerusalem are coming to be used in the defense to serve against the mounds and the sword. There will be great slaughter. (The Hebrew text of verses 4 and 5 has many difficulties.)

Verses 6-14. The next great and mighty things revealed are the future blessings and glory. Health and cure, abundance of peace and truth, a complete return from the captivity of both Judah and Israel, cleansing from all their iniquity, complete forgiveness, all are promised; and let it be remembered none of these promises has been realized. Verses 9-13 also concern the future restoration of the land and the city. What a day is yet to come when "the voice of joy, and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom, and the voice of the bride, the voice of them that shall say, Praise the LORD of Hosts" is heard, when Zion sings her beautiful redemption songs. "Behold the days come, saith the LORD, that I will perform that good thing which I have promised unto the house of Israel and the house of Judah." The delay may be long and still deferred according to His eternal purposes; but at the appointed time these days will surely come.

Verses 15-18. "In those days" in the coming days, the days of blessing and glory, when Christ comes the second time, He, the Branch of Righteousness will occupy the throne of His father David. (See Luke 1:32.) Then salvation for His people will have come, and the city will receive a new name, the name of Him whose glory covers it, "THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS." Likewise will the temple worship be restored. (See annotations on Ezekiel's millennial temple.)

Verses 19-26. This is similar to 31:35, etc. His gifts and calling are without repentance. The Davidic covenant stands. He does not cast away His people.

CHAPTER 34:1-7 Jeremiah Warns Zedekiah

The besieging army was before the walls of Jerusalem when the prophet is commanded to go to the king and tell him that the city will soon be burned. He announced also Zedekiah's fate. He could not escape, but would be delivered into the hands of the king of Babylon. He would see Nebuchadnezzar eye to eye, speak with him mouth to mouth, and then be taken to Babylon. Ezekiel said he should not see Babylon (Ezek. 12:13). Both statements are true. He saw the king as a prisoner at Riblah and there his eyes were put out (2 Kings 25:6, 7), and then he was taken away to Babylon. Yet he was not to die by the sword, but in peace. And Jeremiah discharged faithfully his message.

CHAPTER 34:8-22 The Message of Condemnation

The king had made a covenant that all Hebrew slaves should be released (Exodus 21:1-6; Deut. 15:12-18). The princes and people agreed, but afterwards broke the covenant. The message of condemnation tells them, since they had done this, that the Lord will set them free to fall a prey to the sword, the pestilence and famine. The text explains itself.

CHAPTER 35 The Faithful Rechabites and the Unfaithful Jews

1. The command concerning the Rechabites (35:1-11)
2. The lesson for the Jews (35:12-19)

The Rechabites were Kenites and were numbered with the children of Israel (1 Chron. 2:55). During the reign of Jehoiakim the incident of this chapter happened. The critics may rave against the "unchronological" construction of Jeremiah jumping from one period into another, but there we see the guiding hand of the Spirit in the arrangement of these events. It is perfectly in order that this should come next to the chapter which relates the broken covenant. A careful reading and study of this chapter will bring out the lesson of their faithfulness to their father's command, and the unfaithfulness of the Jews to God's command.

CHAPTER 36 The Indestructibility of the Word of God

1. The writing of the roll (36:1-4)
2. The reading of the roll (36:4-20)
3. The king cuts and burns the roll (36:21-26)
4. The indestructibility of the Word of God (36:27-32)

Verses 1-4. Once more we are taken back to the fourth year of Jehoiakim. Jeremiah is now commanded to commit all the words Jehovah had spoken to him to writing. It was for the purpose that the people might hear of all the evil and that they might yet consider it and turn to the Lord to be forgiven. How gracious and merciful He is! He then dictated all the words to Baruch, who wrote them down. But, asks a critic, how could he remember all he had spoken? The same Spirit who communicated the messages to him, re-communicated them to the prophet.

Verses 4-20. Jeremiah was "shut in," which, however, does not mean that he was a prisoner (see verse 19); it probably means that he was not permitted to enter the LORD's house on account of some ceremonial impurity. So he sent Baruch, his amanuensis, to read the scroll to the people on the fasting day, and when all the people had come together, Baruch read the roll at the entry of the new gate. Michaiah, one of the sons of Gemariah, was deeply moved by what he had heard, went to the place where the princes sat in counsel and told them what he had heard from Baruch's lips. Baruch was then commanded to appear before the princes to read the roll to them. What they heard frightened them. They declared they would tell the king.

Verses 21-16. The king sent for the roll. The king listened to but a few of the leaves. Then, energized by the devil, he pulled out his penknife, cut the roll, and, to make sure that the roll would be destroyed, he cast it into the open fire, and with keen satisfaction he watched till the roll was consumed. Elnathan, Delaiah, and Gemariah tried to keep him from doing this evil deed, but he refused to listen to them. These three had at least some reverence for the Word of God, and therefore the Holy Spirit records their names. The king was not satisfied with this. His satanic anger was so aroused that he wanted to have Baruch and Jeremiah apprehended. Like the mad king Saul, he probably thought of killing them both. But the Lord hid them.

What Jehoiakim did, has been done over and over again. It is being done today as never before in the history of Christendom. It is being done by the destructive critics, in colleges and universities; it is done by the men who have produced the Shorter New Testament and the Shorter Old Testament, by those who advocate an abridged Bible, by others who, like the English writer Wells, want a new Bible. The same power of darkness is behind all these wicked attempts to mutilate the Word of God. Jehoiakim's work is nothing in comparison with these twentieth century infidels, because these aim at the most precious, the most blessed revelation of God, the doctrine of Christ. Their condemnation will be far greater than that of the Jewish king.

Verses 27-32. But did the king destroy the Word of God? One might just as well speak of destroying God Himself. Neither God nor His Word can ever be affected by the efforts of men inspired by the enemy of the truth of God. The Word of God endureth forever. It is, like God, eternal. How the Bibles have been burned a thousand times over again! In pagan Rome and papal Rome Satan has raged against the Bible. His Word lives on. And now the devil, camouflaged as an angel of light, in the guise of "devout scholarship" and "reverent criticism" tries it again. His Word lives on! Emperors and popes, philosophers and infidels who attacked the Bible are gone; the Bible is still with us. Jeremiah is told to take another roll. Once more the Lord dictates the same words to him, and Jeremiah again dictates them to Baruch, "with many like words," including a judgment message of the miserable end of the wicked king.

Jeremiah and Zedekiah and the Fall of Jerusalem (37-39)

CHAPTER 37

1. Jeremiah's warning (37:1-10)
2. Jeremiah's arrest (37:11-21)

Verses 1-10. To understand more fully these chapters it must be remembered that the besieging army before the gates of Jerusalem was temporarily withdrawn, because an Egyptian army had appeared against it. This was no doubt an occasion for the false prophets to preach their false hope, so that the people were deceived. Once more Zedekiah sent to the prophet a deputation (21:1) after Nebuchadnezzar had made him king. The occasion was on account of the withdrawal of the Chaldean army (verse 5). They thought that it was surely a good sign and expected a favorable message. The false hope with which they were deceiving themselves was swept away by the word of Jehovah as it came to the prophet (verses 7-10). There was no hope and after Zedekiah had rebelled (see

our annotations on 2 Kings 24-25), the king of Babylon came and burnt the city with fire.

Verses 11-21. When the Chaldean army had left, Jeremiah went forth to go to his hometown Anathoth, for what is not revealed. He may have gone to claim his portion which belonged to him as priest. When, in the gate of Benjamin a captain arrested him, charging the prophet with desertion, he denied the charge. Such a charge could easily be made on account of Jeremiah's former exhortation to submit to the Chaldeans. He is put in prison in the house of Jonathan the scribe; but later the dungeon is changed to the court of the prison. (See the annotations to 32:2.)

We give a diagram which illustrates the chronology of the siege of Jerusalem and the fall of the city.

I. The Siege begun in the ninth year

39:1..... Siege begun
 34:10..... Manumission of slaves

II. The Siege raised temporarily in the ninth or tenth year

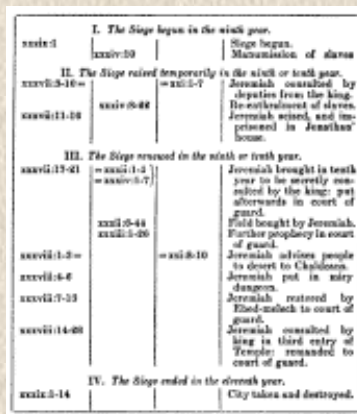
37:3-10=====21:1-7..... Jeremiah consulted by deputies from the king.
 34:8-22 Re-enthralment of slaves.
 37:11-16..... Jeremiah seized, and imprisoned in Jonathan's house.

III. The Siege renewed in the ninth or tenth year

37:17-21===32:1-5..... Jeremiah brought in tenth year to be secretly consulted by the king: put afterwards in court of guard.
 =34:1-7....:
 32:6-44..... Field bought by Jeremiah.
 33:1-26..... Further prophecy in court of guard.
 38:1-3=====21:8-10..... Jeremiah advises people to desert to Chaldeans.
 38:4-6..... Jeremiah put in miry dungeon.
 38:7-13..... Jeremiah restored by Ebed-melech to court of guard.
 38:14-28..... Jeremiah consulted by king in third entry of Temple: remanded to court of guard.

IV. The Siege ended in the eleventh year

39:1-14..... City taken and destroyed.



CHAPTER 38

1. Jeremiah in the dungeon and his rescue (38:1-13)
2. Jeremiah with Zedekiah: His last appeal (38:14-28)

Verses 1-13. Jeremiah is next accused of high treason. The charge is based on his message, given to him by the Lord: "He that goeth forth to the Chaldeans shall live." Like the conscientious objectors during the past war, they accused him of being unpatriotic. "This man seeketh not the welfare of this people, but the hurt." They demand his life. In the sixth verse we see him in a deep dungeon, into which he was put by means of ropes. And Jeremiah sank into the vile mire. This reminds us of Him, our blessed Lord, who was also accused by false witnesses, and who went Himself into the horrible pit and the miry clay, into the deepest suffering and the jaws of death, to take us out of the dungeon, where sin has put us. The wicked princes evidently meant to leave Jeremiah in that dungeon to suffer a horrible death.

But the servant of the Lord was not in the hands of the princes, but in the hands of his Master. God chooses for the deliverer a slave, an Ethiopian, Ebed-melech (servant of the king). The heart of this Ethiopian eunuch was touched with pity. He goes to the king, who seems to have been ignorant about what had been done to Jeremiah and tells him that Jeremiah is likely to starve to death in the filthy hole where they had put him. The king commands the eunuch to act at once with thirty men to deliver Jeremiah. With what tenderness, to spare the man of God all needless pain, Ebed-melech carried out the king's wish (verse 12)!

Verses 14-28. This is a great dramatic scene. Zedekiah sends once more for Jeremiah. We suppose the filth of the dungeon was still clinging to the prophet's garments. The king wants to know something. "Hide nothing from me," he demands. He may rest assured that the prophet of holy courage hides nothing. But Jeremiah asks two questions: "Wilt thou not surely put me to death? And if I give thee counsel, wilt thou not hearken unto me?" The first question the king answers: "I will not put thee to death." The second question he leaves unanswered. His heart was hardened like Pharaoh's heart.

He gives him once more the message of Jehovah: Go forth to the king of Babylon, acknowledge his authority, believe in My Word and thou shalt live and thine house; then Jerusalem will not be burned. But if not, then you cannot escape and the doom of the city is sealed. The king shrinks from such a surrender. Terrors of an imaginary kind seize hold on him. He fears the Babylonian king will deliver him into the hands of the Jews who had deserted already, and that they would mock him and ill-treat him. Jeremiah pleads once more. It is his final appeal: "Obey, I beseech thee, the voice of the LORD." But the king refuses. The final request he made of Jeremiah but reveals his miserable character. The last interview has ended. Jeremiah remains in the prison and was there when Jerusalem was taken.

CHAPTER 39

1. The fall of Jerusalem and the fate of Zedekiah (39:1-9)
2. Nebuchadnezzar's kindness to Jeremiah (39:10-14)
3. Ebed-melech's reward (39:15-18)

Verses 1-9. The Word of God comes true; the prophecy of Jeremiah is vindicated! The mighty army of Nebuchadnezzar returned to the city; for many months the siege goes on under indescribable suffering. How horrible it must have been! Then the city fell and the victors rushed in; the work of slaughter and burning began. According to Jewish tradition it was on the ninth day of the month Ab. On the same date in the year 70 of our era, the city was destroyed again and the temple burned, announced some forty years before by one greater than Jeremiah, the Lord Jesus Christ. Ever since, Jerusalem has been trodden down by the Gentiles and is so still. The prophetic Word tells us of a final great tribulation which will sweep over the land, and the restored, unbelieving nation, and once more armies will gather before the city.

Zedekiah tried to escape with his men of war, but is captured. Cruelly his boys are slaughtered in his sight--the last thing his eyes beheld, for immediately after his eyes were put out. Bound with chains he is led to Babylon. All the houses of Jerusalem go up in flames; the walls are demolished and the remnant of the people are carried away prisoners (52:4-16). The poorest are permitted to remain and were treated mercifully. God remembers the poor and they are spared. For all we know, these poor people, who had nothing, were the godly, those who wept over the conditions and who cried to God for help. Their prayer, the prayer of the needy, was answered.

Verses 10-14. And if the poor were remembered, the prophet was likewise treated with great kindness. The Babylonian king commanded: "Take him, and look well to him, and do him no harm; but do unto him even as he shall say unto thee." Nebuzar-adan

found the great man of God in the prison. The princes had to come and take him from the prison house of humiliation. What an exaltation! He dwelt among the people. He cast his lot with the poor, who had nothing. We doubt not Nebuchadnezzar knew much of the history we have followed, that which transpired in Jerusalem during the siege. Perhaps he even knew the great messages concerning himself. But it was the Lord who made him act as he did. His loving eye was open above His servant, who had served so faithfully.

Verses 15-18. And now the deliverer of Jeremiah, the Ethiopian eunuch, receives his reward. This message was previously given before the city fell into the hands of Nebuchadnezzar, when Jeremiah was still in prison. It is put here into this place for a very definite purpose, which once more answers the puerile charges of the critics.

It is when judgment comes that the faithful are rewarded. This is the lesson. While the ungodly fell and were carried away, the poor remained and were spared; Jeremiah is well treated, and Ebed-melech receives his reward. So will it be when the Lord comes.

III. AFTER THE FALL OF JERUSALEM (40-45)

CHAPTERS 40-41 The Treachery in the Land and the Flight to Egypt

1. Jeremiah's choice (40:1-6)
2. Gedaliah and Ishmael's deed (40:7-41:3)
3. Ishmael's further atrocities and retreat (41:4-18)

Verses 1-6. The opening paragraph of this chapter tells us of the choice which was given to Jeremiah. He was loosed from the prisoner's chains and told by the captain of the guard "If it seems good unto thee to come with me into Babylon, come and I will look well unto thee, but if it seem ill unto thee to come with me to Babylon, forbear; behold all the land is before thee, whither it seemeth good and convenient for thee to go, thither go." Jeremiah decided to stay with his people in the land.

Verses 40:7-41:3. The history of this section is as follows: Gedaliah had been made governor by the victorious king. When the captains heard it they came to him at Mizpah and Gedaliah exhorted them to loyalty to the Chaldeans. Then Gedaliah is warned that Baalis, the King of Ammon, has sent Ishmael to assassinate him, but Gedaliah refuses to believe the report. Then Johanan declares himself ready to kill Ishmael, so that the dreadful results of the murder of the governor Gedaliah might be averted. Gedaliah thinks it is all slander and forbids it. In the seventh month Ishmael, with ten men, who are being entertained by Gedaliah, murders him and all the Jews and Chaldeans, who are present. It is a horrible story.

Verses 41:4-18. The next day Ishmael met eighty men who came from the north; he invited them to come to Gedaliah, who was dead in his house. When they came to the place he slew them, except ten men, who offered to reveal to him hidden treasures of food. Then he carried off all the rest of the people who were left in Mizpah, to go to the land of Ammon. When Johanan and the captains heard of what Ishmael had done, they pursued him unto Gibeon, but Ishmael with eight men escaped to the Ammonites. Johanan took those whom they had rescued out of the clutches of the monster Ishmael, and, fearing the Chaldeans, purposed to go to Egypt.

CHAPTER 42

1. Jeremiah the intercessor (42:1-6)
2. The answer from Jehovah (42:7-22)

Verses 1-6. The remnant, the few who were left after the terrible happenings recorded in the preceding chapter were now cast upon the Lord and besought the prophet to pray for them: "That the LORD thy God may show us the way wherein we may walk, and the thing that we may do." They believed in Jeremiah as a man of God. He promises to do so, and when the answer comes he will not keep back anything.

Verses 7-22. The answer came ten days later. Then the word of the Lord came unto Jeremiah. If he had spoken of himself, sat down and thought out by himself what they were to do now he would have waited ten days. But it was not his counsel, not his opinion or advice; the Lord's answer to the divine counsel is that they should abide in the land and that the king of Babylon would not hinder them in any way. Then the Lord would plant them and build them up. The Lord promises them mercies and salvation. But if they went down to Egypt, the Lord's anger would be upon them and judgment would overtake them.

In their hearts they had a desire to go to Egypt. He who is the searcher of hearts knew all about it. They used deceit, and now the Lord, knowing that they would not obey, announced through the prophet that they should die by the sword, the famine and the pestilence.

CHAPTER 43

1. The rebellion against Jeremiah (43:1-7)
2. Jeremiah's prediction about the conquest of Egypt (43:8-13)

Verses 1- 7. No sooner had Jeremiah finished communicating the divine answer, but the captains and the proud men denounced him. They charged him that he spoke falsely, that all he had said was at the instigation of Baruch, that both were traitors. Then the leaders did not obey the voice of the Lord to dwell in the land; they took the remnant of Judah (verse 5 is explained by 40:11-12) all the people, including Jeremiah and Baruch, to lead them down to Egypt, and finally they settled in Tahpanhes (Daphne), which was in the northeastern part, on the road out of Egypt to Palestine.

Verses 8-13. Then Jeremiah was commanded by the Lord to take great stones and bury them at the entry of Pharaoh's house in Tahpanhes, so that all the men of Judah could be witnesses of it. In 1886 the Egyptologist, Professor Petrie, excavated at Tahpanhes a brick pavement before a kind of a palace, which probably was the place where Jeremiah hid the stones. The ruin was Kasr el BintJehudi, which means, "the palace of the daughter of Judah," the place evidently assigned to the daughters of Zedekiah. (See verse 6.) The word brick-kiln means a pavement of bricks. Then, after having buried the stones, he announced that Nebuchadnezzar would come and set his throne there also, that he would conquer Egypt, smite it and burn the idol temples there. Such an invasion took place about 568 B.C., when the Egyptian King Amasis was defeated. The pillars mentioned in verse 13 are obelisks, and Beth-Shemesh means "the house of the Sun" (Heliopolis or On).

CHAPTER 44

1. The message to the Jews (44:1-10)
2. Their punishment (44:11-14)
3. Worshipping the queen of heaven (44:15-19)
4. Jehovah's answer (44:20-28)
5. The sign: Pharaoh-Hophra's Defeat (44:29-30)

Verses 1-10. The message is concerning all the Jews who were now dwelling in Egypt. Besides being in Tahpanhes, they were also in Noph (Memphis) and in Pathros, which was in the upper Egypt. Not long ago ancient papyri in Aramaic were discovered which show that there was a Jewish colony in that part of Egypt. Jeremiah reminds them in his message how God had dealt with Jerusalem and Judah on account of their idolatries, though He had sent prophets to warn them. And now they were doing the same thing in Egypt. "You too bring now utter ruin upon yourselves and all your own."

Verses 11-14. This announces their coming punishment. "Behold I will set my face against you for evil, and to cut off all Israel." They are to be punished as Jerusalem was.

Verses 15-19. What heart-hardness to say to the man of God, "We will not hearken." They intended to perform their vows to worship "the queen of Heaven." All they said was, it was well with us when we worshipped the queen of Heaven in the homeland. The women seem to have been concerned mostly in this, but they did so with the knowledge and the consent of their husbands. See about the queen of Heaven and the worship, chapter 7 and the annotations there. They claimed that all the disaster which had come on them was the result of abandoning their evil practices. What defiance and wickedness, the fruit of their unbelieving hearts! Still greater is the defiance and wickedness of today, when the cross and the gospel of Christ are deliberately rejected.

Verses 20-28. The answer is plain enough, and they heard what their fate would be for their deliberate unbelief and disobedience. These are solemn words, and the Lord said, "They shall know whose Word shall stand, Mine or theirs." God's Word will always stand, and so will those who stand by the Word of God and put their trust in it.

Verses 29-30. He gives them a sign that such will be the case. Hophra is to be given into the hands of his enemies. This happened a few years before Nebuchadrezzar defeated Amasis, who had succeeded Hophra.

CHAPTER 45

This is the shortest chapter and contains a special message to Baruch, the companion and secretary of the prophet Jeremiah. It must be noticed that this did not take place in Egypt, where now the prophet and his friend sojourned, but it was in the fourth year of Jehoiakim. Baruch had just finished writing the words which Jeremiah dictated. It was no doubt a strenuous task, and when Baruch laid down his pen, the work having been finished, the Lord sent him a special message, showing that He had not forgotten the faithful scribe. He, too, was deeply exercised over the existing conditions; he shared the grief and sorrow of the prophet. But there must have been a measure of disappointment in Baruch's heart. Had he expected some special recognition? Was he seeking something for himself, expecting great things? Had he planned and was he lifted up with some high ambition? It would seem that such was the case, for He who knows the thoughts of His creatures from afar said to him: "And seeketh thou great things for thyself? Seek them not." It is the very heart of the old nature to seek great things, to be ambitious for earthly possessions and honors, to please oneself. God's people need to watch against this more than against anything else. It is the very crime of the devil, pride (1 Tim. 3:6). Every high ambition must be dethroned; the only ambition worthy of a child of God is to please Him, who lived on earth, never pleasing Himself, who made of Himself no reputation. How it ought to ring in our hearts daily: "Seeketh thou great things? Seek them not." Seek not recognition in this poor age; wait for His day. And Baruch is assured of God's protection and care.

IV. THE PROPHECIES CONCERNING THE GENTILE NATIONS

CHAPTER 46 Concerning Egypt

1. Prophecy about Pharaoh-Necho (46:1-12)
2. Nebuchadnezzar's invasion of Egypt (46:13-26)
3. A message of comfort (46:27-28)

Verses 1-12. This Pharaoh made an attempt to invade the territory of the king of Babylon, but was defeated by Nebuchadnezzar in a battle on the river Euphrates at Carchemish. This prophecy was given about eighteen years before the fall of Jerusalem. All was literally fulfilled.

Verses 13-26. This was given after the fall of Jerusalem, when the remnant had gone to Egypt. (See chapters 43 and 44.) This also was fulfilled. Verse 26 promises a future restoration of Egypt. Compare this with Isaiah's prophecy (19:19-25).

Verses 27-28. This blessed message of comfort also awaits its final great fulfillment in the coming days of promised blessing for Jacob's seed.

CHAPTER 47 Concerning the Philistines

This brief chapter is concerning the inhabitants of the borderland of Canaan, called Philistia. This announced judgment was fulfilled a short time after it was spoken by the prophet.

CHAPTER 48 Concerning Moab

1. The overthrow of Moab (48:1-10)
2. The humiliation of Moab (48:11-19)
3. Reaping what they sowed (48:20-28)
4. Destroyed on account of its pride (48:29-47)

With these divisions the chapter may be studied in detail. Moab was of incestuous off spring (Gen. 19:37). Israel is now exhorted to flee and save itself because Moab is to be destroyed. Moab's national deity was Chemosh, who was also worshipped by the sister nation, the Ammonites. Chemosh was probably the same as Molech. He is now to go forth into captivity with his priests and princes. On verse 10 critics say: "This bloodthirsty verse is surely not Jeremiah's." But they forget that the whole prophecy is introduced with, "Thus saith the LORD," and the critic's knife, which cuts out certain verses from this chapter, mutilates the Word of God. There is no valid reason to brand this and other verses as the work of some supplementer.

The chief places of Moab are mentioned. "The horn of Moab (horn the emblem of power) is cut off and his arm is broken, saith the LORD." And why this judgment? "For he has magnified himself against the LORD." They were filled with pride, yea, they were exceedingly proud. The Lord speaks of it thus: "His loftiness and his arrogancy and his pride and his haughtiness of heart." How God detests pride! In both Testaments it is marked out as the great abomination in the sight of God. Filled with pride and haughtiness, they derided Israel, God's people; whenever Israel was mentioned "they skipped for joy" (verse 27). Of verses 28 and 29, critics declare that they are mostly derived from Isaiah 15 and 16. These two chapters contain a similar prophecy about Moab, but these utterances by Jeremiah are not copied from Isaiah, but are a divine repetition of the coming judgment of that people. "Woe be unto thee Moab! the people of Chemosh perisheth! for thy sons are taken captives, and thy daughters captive." This is the final word in this predicted judgment of Moab. And thus Moab was broken.

The last verse speaks of a territorial restoration of Moab, not of a restitution of that wicked generation, as some teach. We do not know where a remnant of Moab is today, to possess in millennial times their former land; nor do we know how the Lord is going to accomplish it. But we know He will fulfill His own Word and we do not need to invent some scheme of how it will be done.

CHAPTER 49 Concerning Ammon, Edom, Damascus, Kedar, and Elam

1. Concerning the Ammonites (49:1-6)
2. Concerning Edom (49:7-22)
3. Concerning Damascus (49:23-27)
4. Concerning Kedar and Hazor (49:28-33)
5. Against Elam (49:34-39)

Ammon was the younger brother of Moab, and, like the Moabites, the Ammonites were a wicked people, though they had no cities like Moab, but were restless wanderers; they were also the enemies of Israel. The predicted judgment has come. Where is Ammon today? In what tribe or nation is a remnant preserved? Only the Omniscient One knows. But their captivity, like that of Moab, will be brought back again in the days when Israel becomes the head of the nations.

Edom, springing from Esau, was the most outspoken enemy of Israel. In our annotations on the prophecy of Obadiah we return to this chapter. Their complete judgment is here announced. "For, lo, I will make thee small among the nations and despised among men. Thy terribleness has deceived thee and the pride of thine heart, O thou that dwellest in the clefts of the rock, that holdest the height of the hill. Though thou shouldst make thy nest as high as the eagle, I will bring thee down from thence, saith the LORD" (49:15-16). Here at least the critics concede that this is a true description of the dwelling places of Edom of old. "Its capital, Petra, lay in an amphitheater of mountains, accessible only through a narrow gorge, called the Sik, winding in with precipitous sides from the west; and the mountain sides round Petra, and the ravines about it, contain innumerable rock-hewn cavities, some being tombs, but others dwellings in which the ancient inhabitants lived" (Canon Driver). No restoration for Edom is promised.

Damascus's anguish and sorrow is predicted next, followed by a prophecy concerning various Arabian tribes; Kedar and Hazor are to be smitten.

The final prediction is as to Elam. Elam was east of South Babylonia and the lower Tigris, later known as Susians. This prophecy was given at the beginning of Zedekiah's reign. Elam became an ally of the Persian kingdom. Here her overthrow is foretold as well as her restoration "in the latter days."

CHAPTERS 50-51 Babylon

These two final chapters contain a great prophecy concerning Babylon, her overthrow and doom. The fifty-first chapter closes with the statement "thus far are the words of Jeremiah." There is a direct statement that Jeremiah wrote all these words. We find it at the close of chapter 51:59-64. "Jeremiah wrote in a book all the evil that should come upon Babylon, even all these words that are written against Babylon." It would be a brazen infidelity which says Jeremiah did not write all these words. Yet the almost universally accepted view of the critics is that these chapters cannot be the work of Jeremiah. The German infidel, Professor Eichhorn, the man who coined the phrase "higher criticism," started this denial; Kuenen, Budde and others have followed in his steps. Others have modified this radical view and concede the possibility that Jeremiah may have been the author of these two chapters. No believer in the Word of God can have a moment's doubt as to this question.

An analysis of these two chapters would be difficult to make. We therefore point out some of the leading parts of this great

utterance. The prophecy covers both the doom of Babylon as it has been and the doom of another, the mystical Babylon, so prominent in the last book of the Bible, in which also two chapters are devoted to Babylon. Some hold that the literal Babylon is meant in Revelation; that the city in Mesopotamia must be rebuilt; that it will finally become the one great world center domineering the religious, commercial and political affairs of all the world, and that when this has taken place Jeremiah's prophecy will be fulfilled. A careful examination of this theory will show that it is untenable. It would mean that all the great world-centers of today must be wiped out first, and London, New York, and others would have to yield their supremacy to the restored Babylon. The chapters in Revelation show

us clearly that a Babylon of a mystical nature is meant, which in spirit, in worldly glory and corruption corresponds to the ancient Babylon. This mystical Babylon is Rome. This has been the interpretation of the chapters of Revelation from the earliest times and is still maintained, with a few exceptions, by all sound and spiritual expositors of the Word of God.

The message begins with the command to publish among the nations the conquest of Babylon, that Bel (lord) is put to shame and that Merodach (the chief god of Babylon, known as Marduk in Babylonian inscriptions) is dismayed. The gods of Babylon are put to confusion on account of the fall of the city. The disaster comes from the north (Medo Persia, the conqueror of Babylon; Daniel 7). Verses 4-7 predict the return of the nation thoroughly penitent. That the return of a small remnant after the defeat of Babylon does not exhaust this prophecy is obvious. The return promised here comes in the day when the times of the Gentiles are over, when Babylon and the Babylon spirit will pass away, when all false gods fall and the Lord is exalted in that day. Then the lost sheep of Israel will be found and gathered again.

The invasion under Cyrus is described in verses 9-10. The fall of the Babylon in Revelation is not brought about by an invasion such as is described here, but by the ten horns of the beast, the revived Roman empire (Rev. 17:16; Dan. 7).

Verse 13 announces the complete overthrow of the city, to become the hindermost of the nations, a wilderness, a dry land and a desert. This ruin was not at once carried out, but gradually ancient Babylon became all that. The ruins of this once powerful city have been located north of Hilla, a town of about 25,000 inhabitants. Koldewey, of the German Orient Society, laid bare by excavation many of the ruins, showing that the city covered twelve square miles; great streets and canals, and the ruins of the Marduk temple have been found. These ruins can never be rebuilt (Isa. 47). There is nothing which indicates that this once glorious city is to have a revival and then be destroyed once more and remain a wilderness after its destruction at some future time.

In her fall Babylon only reaped what she had sown. "For it is the vengeance of the LORD; take vengeance upon her; as she hath, do unto her" (verse 15). The same verdict is pronounced upon the Babylon of the end time, when Rome will once more have supremacy, when the present day Babylon-spirit will concentrate in a great world federation. "Reward her even as she rewarded you, and double unto her double according to her works; in the cup which she hath filled fill to her double" (Rev. 18:6). The nations will then drink of the cup of God's wrath and judgment as the literal Babylon did. Coupled with these judgment predictions are the future blessings of Israel. When the Lord overthrows the final Babylon, as seen in the book of Revelation, when the great whore is judged and her seat, Rome, in Italy, goes up in smoke, then Israel's day of glory and blessing breaks. "In those days, and in that time, saith Jehovah, the iniquity of Israel shall be sought for, and there shall be none; and the sins of Judah, and they shall not be found; for I will pardon them whom I leave as a remnant" (50:20; see chapter 31:34; Micah 7:18, and Romans 11:25-28). After still more predictions concerning the fall and doom of Babylon (verses 21-32), we find another prophecy of comfort. When the times of the Gentiles end with the complete dethronement of Babylon in its mystical meaning as pictured in Revelation, the Redeemer of Israel will arise to plead the cause of His people Israel. The fiftieth chapter ends with an additional description of the desolation of Babylon.

The fifty-first chapter is a continued prophecy of the doom and utter desolation of the proud mistress of the nations. Much here connects with Rev. 18. The remnant of Israel is addressed in verses 5 and 6. Compare with Rev. 18:4. It is the same command to flee Babylon, a principle which is in force today as regards the true church and her separation from ecclesiastical evil. The golden cup mentioned in verse 7 is also mentioned in Revelation in chapter 17:4, in the description of papal Rome and her evil abominations. In the rest of the chapter God's dealing in judgment is wonderfully told out, prophetic of that coming day when the Lord will deal with the world in judgment. This must be the reason why such an extended prophecy is given. It all goes beyond the judgment of the literal Babylon. We call attention to the last verses of this long chapter. We read there that the prophet, after he wrote down all these words against Babylon, gave the book to Seraiah, chief chamberlain of Zedekiah. This was before the fall of Jerusalem. Seraiah was evidently the brother of Baruch (32:12). While Jeremiah knew the significant position that Babylonia, and especially King Nebuchadnezzar, had been given by the sovereign Lord, on account of which he urged submission to the Chaldeans; he also knew even then, before Jerusalem fell, of Babylon's fall and doom. Seraiah went to Babylon and he was to read the roll there, probably not in public, but in private. After reading, he was to speak certain words (verse 62), then bind a stone to the roll and cast it into the

Euphrates. When the roll was sinking he was to say, "Thus shall Babylon sink and shall not rise again." In our New Testament book of prophecy we read: "And a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone, and cast it into the sea, saying, Thus with violence that great city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no more" (Rev. 18:21). That great predicted end of all God-defiance and opposition, typified by Babylon and its past glory, will surely come. Jeremiah uttered his last word.

The last chapter of Jeremiah is not from his pen; some other inspired writer was moved by the Holy Spirit to add the history of the capture of Jerusalem and the fate of the people.

The substance of this appendix is found in 2 Kings 24:18-20 and 25:1-21, 27-30. The reader will find in the second book of Kings our annotations on this history. But why is it added here once more? Evidently to show how literally the judgment predictions and divine warnings given through Jeremiah were fulfilled. For a time the false prophets had their way; their lying messages, their words of delusion and false hope were listened to and believed. The lot of the prophet of God was a lonely lot; he was rejected and he suffered. Yea, often the weeping prophet was discouraged and filled with gloom. But the time came when he was vindicated and God's Word was vindicated, while the false prophets were found out to be liars and deceivers.

In our own day we have the false prophets still with us, men and women, who deny the truth and teach error. They speak of world improvement, world betterment, and world conquest. What God has spoken concerning "wrath and judgment to come" is set aside. Those who preach and teach according to the infallible Word of God, who see no better world, no universal righteousness and peace, are branded as pessimists. The "day of the LORD" and the "coming of the Lord" are sneered at. But as the Word of God spoken by Jeremiah was vindicated, so the Word of God will be vindicated again, till all the enemies of the written Word, the Bible, and the living Word, Christ, are silenced forever.

THE BOOK OF LAMENTATIONS

The Annotated Bible

Arno Clement Gaebelein

THE BOOK OF LAMENTATIONS

Introduction

In the Hebrew Bible, the small book which follows in our English Bible the book of Jeremiah, is placed in the portion which is called "Kethubim" (the writings). It is one of the five, so-called "Megilloth." The Septuagint translation begins with a brief paragraph which is not found in our version: "It came to pass that, after Israel was taken captive and Jerusalem was made desolate, Jeremiah sat weeping and lamented with this lamentation over Jerusalem, and said ...;" then the first chapter begins. The Vulgate (Latin) translation has adopted this statement and also the Arabic version.

There can be no question that Jeremiah is the inspired author of these outbursts of grief, as well as confession of sin and dependence on Jehovah. Yet this has not only been seriously questioned, but positively denied. Critics claim that probably chapters 2 and 4 must have been written by an eye-witness of Judah's conquest; they deny that it was Jeremiah and think it must have been one of the exiles. The claim is made because it appears to them that these two chapters lean strongly on Ezekiel and parts, they say, must have been copied after Ezekiel's writings. The other chapters, they say, are much later. Critics like Budde and Cheyne put the third chapter in the pre-Maccabean period towards the end of the third century. All is nothing but guesswork, which is proved by the different theories of these scholars, which clash with each other. To show the superficial method of these men we shall give a few of the star arguments against the Jeremianic authorship of Lamentations. They say that 4:17 could hardly have been written by Jeremiah because the writer includes himself with those who had expected help from Egypt. But the critic does not see that the prophet identifies himself with the nation, as Daniel did. Then again, they object to 4:20, because it speaks of Zedekiah in such a way as Jeremiah would never have spoken of him. But how do they know? Zedekiah was still the Lord's anointed, even as David recognized down to the sad end of Saul, the king as the Lord's anointed. Instead of being an argument against the authorship of Jeremiah, it is one for it.

Then these "literary" critics claim that the smooth and beautiful style cannot be Jeremiah's. "The whole style of these poems, though exquisitely beautiful and touching, and studded with the thoughts of the great prophet, is absolutely different to anything we find in the long roll of Jeremiah's great work. It is too artificial, too much studied, too elaborately worked out" (A.B. Davidson). If A.B. Davidson and other critics had just a little faith in divine inspiration they would not write such puerile criticism. As if the Spirit of God could not change the style and manner of the writings of one of His chosen instruments!

The Lamentations are correctly divided into five chapters in a very remarkable way. Chapters 1 and 2 consist each of twenty-two verses of three lines each. All is written in a certain meter. Each verse begins in both chapters with the successive letters of the Hebrew alphabet. They are acrostics. The third chapter has instead of 22 verses, 66 verses, that is 3 x 22. The first three verses of this chapter begin each with the first letter of the Hebrew alphabet; the next three with the second letter, so that in these 66 verses the Hebrew alphabet is again followed. The fourth chapter is also arranged in the same manner, acrostically, each of the 22 verses begin with the letters of the Hebrew alphabet. The last chapter shows no such arrangement. We doubt not that in all this there may be a hidden, a deeper meaning, which no saint of God has yet discovered.

The message of this book is extremely precious. It is a pity that so few of God's people have ever paid a closer attention to this book. Here is indeed a great mine of comfort and spiritual instruction which will prove very wholesome to all those who walk with God.

When Israel suffered in Egypt the Lord said: "I have surely seen the affliction of My people" (Exodus 3:7). Lamentations shows the same blessed fact, that Jehovah has a loving and deep interest in the afflictions of His people through which they pass on account of their sins. He who had to chastise His people is nevertheless moved with compassion in their behalf. Yea, in their affliction He Himself is afflicted and He yearns over them. The feelings, deep emotions of sorrow and humiliation, expressed by the mouthpiece of Jehovah, Jeremiah, were produced by the Spirit of Christ, in the heart of the prophet.

"There is nothing more affecting than the sentiments produced in the heart by the conviction that the subject of affliction is beloved of God, that He loves that which He is obliged to smite, and is obliged to smite that which He loves. The prophet, while laying open the affliction of Jerusalem, acknowledges that the sin of the people had caused it. Could that diminish the sorrow of his heart? If on the one hand it was a consolation, on the other it humbled and made him hide his face. The pride of the enemy, and their joy in seeing the affliction of the beloved of God, give occasion to sue for compassion on behalf of the afflicted, and judgment on the malice of the enemy" (Synopsis of the Bible).

Prophetically we may look upon these lamentations as embodying the soul-exercise of the godly remnant of God's earthly people passing in a future day through the great tribulation. That beautiful prayer found in the last chapter will then be answered, "renew our days of old" and all the glorious promises given to Israel will then be fulfilled.

No further division of this book is needed; the division into five chapters is perfect.

CHAPTER 1 Jerusalem's Great Desolation and the Sorrow of His People

The chapter begins with an outburst of grief over Jerusalem's desolation. Once she was a populous city; now she is solitary. Once she was great among the nations, like a princess among provinces, and now she is widowed. Then in the next verse we hear her weeping; she weeps all night long; none is there to comfort her; her friends have turned against her, they have become her enemies. She was disobedient to her Lord, she rejected His Word, she gave up her holy place as His separated people and now "she findeth no rest." The Lord's hand is upon her for the multitude of her transgressions. The hopeful note we find in verses 8-11. Here is confession of her guilt and shame; here is humiliation and appeal to the Lord on account of the enemy. "See, O LORD, and behold; for I am become vile." Such humiliation and self-judgment is pleasing in the Lord's sight.

In verse 12 Jerusalem speaks: "is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by? Behold, and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow, which is done unto me, wherewith the LORD hath afflicted me in the day of His fierce anger." The passer-by who beholds the ruins of Zion is asked to look upon the desolations and then to consider that the Lord in His righteous anger smote her, who is still His beloved. Well may we think of Him, who had to say, "See if there be any sorrow like unto My sorrow," who was smitten and afflicted, upon whom Jehovah's rod rested, over whose blessed head all the waves and billows of Divine judgment-wrath rolled, He who is the Beloved, the Son of God, our Lord. Again the prophet breaks out in weeping, "His eye runneth down with water." He is deeply affected over the desolation and judgment which has taken place. But a greater One, greater than Jeremiah, stood centuries after before the same city, brought back from the ruin of Jeremiah's time. And as He beheld that city He wept, because His omniscient eye beheld a still more appalling judgment for city and nation.

Forsaken, uncomforted, distressed, humiliated, sighing and crying, owning her rebellion, vindicating Jehovah and His righteousness, Jerusalem sits in the dust, "abroad the sword bereaveth, at home there is death."

CHAPTER 2 What the Lord Has Done

The great catastrophe continues in vivid description throughout this chapter also. Not an enemy has done it, not Nebuchadrezzar and his Chaldean hordes, but the Lord is the executor of all. The beauty of Israel He cast down; He swallowed up the habitations of Jacob; He burned against Jacob like a flame; He bent His bow like an enemy; He poured out His fury like fire; He was as an enemy. These are a few of the many expressions with which the righteousness of the Lord in judging His people is acknowledged.

And what a great description of Jerusalem and her inhabitants we read in verses 8-16. Gates broken down; king and princes among the Gentiles; law abandoned; no more visions! Elders on the ground in sackcloth and ashes; virgins hanging their heads; children and sucklings swooning in the streets--and all that pass by clap their hands, hiss, and wag their head at the daughter of Jerusalem.

"The LORD hath done what He had devised; He hath fulfilled the Word that He had commanded in the days of old." Oh! that the people today would hear and believe that God will yet fulfill other judgment messages and deal with the world on account of its sin. The chapter ends with a prayer.

CHAPTER 3 The Prophet's Suffering and Distress

This chapter is intensely personal. None but Jeremiah could have written these wonderful expressions of sorrow, the sorrows of the people of God into which he entered so fully, in such a way that they become his own. He shared all their afflictions, bore them himself and then was hated by them. It was the Spirit of Christ who created these feelings in the heart of the prophet. In reading these words of deep distress and the words of faith and waiting for Him, we must look beyond Jeremiah and see a picture of our Lord, "the Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief," His sorrow and His afflictions, the emotions of His holy soul, as well as the experiences and soul exercise of the believing remnant of Israel in days to come.

The prophet speaks of himself as one who is smitten by the rod of God's wrath, the man that hath seen affliction. He had not deserved that wrath; the wrath and affliction have come upon a sinful people, but he identifies himself with them. What must have been the suffering and the affliction of our Lord when He, at the close of His blessed life, suffered and died the death of the cross! The rod of righteousness fell on Him. More than Jeremiah did, He tasted that wrath, when He who knew no sin was made sin for us. "He (God) hath bent His bow, and set me as a mark for the arrow. He hath caused the arrows of His quiver to enter into my reins. I was a derision to all my people and their song all the day" (verses 12-14). He speaks of "the wormwood and the gall" (verse 19); of the "smitten cheek filled with reproach" (verse 30).

Through such suffering Jeremiah passed as well as the godly of all ages, as well as those in the future. Jeremiah's affliction but faintly foreshadows the afflictions of the Afflicted One. But while Jeremiah suffered with Jerusalem and for Jerusalem, he was not destitute of comfort. He knew the Lord and He sustained him in his affliction. How beautifully he speaks of the mercies of the Lord, of His compassions which never fail, of the greatness of His faithfulness (verses 22, 23). Such is the comfort still of all those who know the Lord; it is the song in the night: "The LORD is my portion, saith my soul; therefore will I hope in Him. The LORD is good unto them that wait for Him, to the soul that seeketh Him." All His saints speak thus when they feel the chastening hand of the Lord. He has full confidence in the Lord and knows "He doth not afflict willingly," and that "the LORD will not cast off for ever." And again, "though He cause grief, yet will He have compassion according to the multitude of His mercies."

Beginning with verse 40, a real return is described. There is self-examination: "Let us search and try our ways and turn again to the LORD." This is followed by prayer: "Let us lift up our hearts with our hands unto God in the heavens." Then comes confession: "We have transgressed and have rebelled; Thou hast not pardoned." It describes prophetically the repentance of a Jewish remnant when this present age ends and the Lord is about to be manifested in visible glory. Jeremiah's lament over Jerusalem's condition and the nation's state is once more recorded in verses 45-47. "Thou hast

made us an offscouring and refuse in the midst of the people. All our enemies have opened their mouths against us. Fear and snare is come upon us, desolation and destruction." Such will also be the complaint of the suffering remnant. This chapter ends with an imprecatory prayer. "Render unto them a recompense, O LORD, according to the works of their hands. Give them sorrow of heart, thy curse unto them. Persecute and destroy them in anger from under the heavens of the LORD." It is like the imprecatory prayers in the Psalms, prayers which will be prayed when the godly in Israel suffer under their enemies in the great tribulation.

CHAPTER 4 The Departed Glory and the Cup of Shame

This new lament begins with a description of the former glory of Zion and its present wretchedness; the glory is departed:

How is the gold become dim! The most pure gold changed! The stones of the sanctuary are poured forth at the top of every street. The precious sons of Zion, just like fine gold-- How are they now esteemed like earthen pitchers: the work of the potters' hands! Even the jackals draw out the breast, giving suck to their young-- The daughter of my people is become cruel, like the ostriches in the wilderness. The tongue of the sucking child cleaveth to the roof of his mouth for thirst. The young children ask bread, no man breaketh it unto them. They that did feel delicately are desolate in the streets. They that were brought up in scarlet embrace dung hills.

What degradation and shame! The Lord had called Zion to be like the pure gold, precious and glorious. In his beautiful parable, Ezekiel speaks thus of Jerusalem's glory: "Thus wast thou decked with gold and silver; and thy raiment was of fine linen and silk and brodered work, thou didst eat fine flour, and honey, and oil; and thou wast exceeding beautiful, and thou didst prosper in a kingdom" (Ezekiel 16:13). The gold is become dim, the pure gold changed. Instead of the linen and silk there is sackcloth and ashes; instead of the flour, the honey, and the oil, there is want and famine. When the golden-glory departed from Zion, then the Lord revealed that Nebuchadnezzar is "the head of gold," the starting point of the times of the Gentiles. The glory had departed and Zion had to drink of shame and want to the full on account of her sins (verse 6). And what a contrast now between what the Nazarites and nobles of the nation were once and what they are now. They were purer than snow, whiter than milk, and now they are blacker than coal. They were ruddy in body; and now their skin cleaveth to their bones. What a horrible transformation sin had wrought! Sin is a robber; sin brings its wages. It robs of glory and gives nothing but suffering, shame and death. All that God had spoken long ago, the very curses generation after generation had read in the book of the law (Deut. 28:56, 57; Lev. 26:29), had come upon them. The kings of the earth, the inhabitants of the world, knew that Jerusalem was unconquerable, for the Lord of all the earth was Zion's King and Lord. What no earthly power could have done, to enter Jerusalem and spoil the city, the Lord had done, "on account of the sins of her prophets, the iniquities of her priests, that have shed the blood of the just in the midst of her." Jerusalem was built again. Once more after the seventy years the city was restored, the temple rebuilt. Then the just One came, the Messiah of David, the Lord of Glory. They shed the blood of the just One, and now, as verse 14 says, "They wander about blind."

And Edom! She had rejoiced at Zion's overthrow, even as Gentiles have despised Israel. But there is judgment in store for the nations, mercy for Israel, when the punishment is accomplished. "He will no more carry thee away into captivity."

CHAPTER 5 The Prayer of Hope

The lamentations end with a prayer: "Remember, O LORD, what is come upon us; consider and behold our reproach." It is the prayer of confession and of hope, which reaches the heart of the God of Israel. The prophet, in behalf of the nation, pours out his confession: "The crown is fallen from our head; woe unto us that we have sinned." And there is hope in the Lord who remaineth, whose throne is from generation to generation. The prayer, "Turn Thou us unto Thee, O LORD, and we shall be turned; renew our days as of old." (verse 21) will some day be blessedly answered. The Eightieth Psalm contains the same prayer a number of times, and there He is mentioned who will yet save His people Israel from their sins. "Let Thy hand be upon the Man of Thy right hand, upon the Son of Man whom Thou madest strong for Thyself. So will not we go back from Thee; quicken us and we will call on Thy Name. Turn us again O LORD God of hosts, cause Thy

face to shine, and we shall be saved."

"The prophet now presents in this chapter the whole affliction of the people to God, as an object of compassion and mercy. This is an onward step in the path of these deep exercises of heart. He is at peace with God; he is in His presence; it is no longer a heart struggling with inward misery. All is confessed before Jehovah, who is faithful to His people, so that he can call on God to consider the affliction in order that He may remember His suffering people according to the greatness of His compassions. For Jehovah changes not (5:19-21). The sense of the affliction remains in full, but God is brought in, and everything having been recalled and judged before Him, all that had happened being cleared up to the heart, Jeremiah can rest in the proper and eternal relations between God and His beloved people; and, shutting himself into his direct relations with his God, he avails himself of His goodness, as being in those relations, to find in the affliction of the beloved people an opportunity for calling His attention to them. This is the true position of faith--that which it attains as the result of its exercises before God at the sight of the affliction of His people (an affliction so much the deeper from its being caused by sin).

"This book of Lamentations is remarkable because we see in it the expression of the thoughts of the Spirit of God, that is, those produced in persons under His influence, the vessels of His testimony, when God was forced to set aside that which He had established in the world as His own. There is nothing similar in the whole circle of the revelations and of the affections of God. He says himself, How could He treat them as Admah and Zeboim? Christ went through it in its fullest extent. But He went through it in His own perfection with God. He acted thus with regard to Jerusalem, and wept over it. But here man is found to have lost the hope of God interposing on His people's behalf God would not abandon a man who was one of this people, who loved them, who understood that God loved them, that they were the object of His affection. He was one of them. How could he bear the idea that God had cast them off? No doubt God would re-establish them. But in the place where God had set them all hope was lost forever. In the Lord's own presence it is never lost. It is in view of this that all these exercises of heart are gone through, until the heart can fully enter into the mind and affections of God Himself indeed, this is always true.

"The Spirit gives us here a picture of all these exercises. How gracious! To see the Spirit of God enter into all these details, not only of the ways of God, but of that also which passes through a heart in which the judgment of God is felt by grace, until all is set right in the presence of God Himself. Inspiration gives us not only the perfect thoughts of God, and Christ the perfection of man before God, but also all the exercises produced in our poor hearts, when the perfect Spirit acts in them, so far as these thoughts, all mingled as they are, refer in the main to God, or are produced by Him. So truly cares He for us! He hearkens to our sighs, although much of imperfection and of that which belongs to our own heart is mixed with them. It is this that we see in the book of Lamentations, in the Psalms, and elsewhere, and abundantly, though in another manner, in the New Testament" (Synopsis of the Bible).

THE BOOK OF EZEKIEL

The Annotated Bible

Arno Clement Gaebelein

THE PROPHET EZEKIEL

Introduction

From the opening verses of the book we learn that Ezekiel was the son of Buzi, the priest, and belonged consequently to the much honored Zadok family. That he knew the nobility of Jerusalem well and was intimate with them may be indirectly learned from the eleventh chapter. Rabbinical tradition makes Buzi (which means "contempt") a son of Jeremiah. There is no evidence for this. Eleven years before the complete ruin of the city and the temple by the King of Babylon, Ezekiel was carried away into the captivity. This deportation is recorded in 2 Kings 24:14. Before Ezekiel with the princes and the mighty men were taken into captivity, others had been removed to Babylon, notably Daniel and his three companions. Ezekiel must have known Daniel personally. His name is found three times in this book (14:14, 20; 38:3).

Ezekiel was not a youth, as generally supposed, when he was deported to Babylon, for the matured character of a priest which appears in his writings and his full and intimate acquaintance with the temple service render such a supposition highly improbable. Jewish tradition declares that he exercised already the prophetic office before he was carried away.

The name Ezekiel means "strengthened by God." It has been stated by some that this is not the original name of the prophet, but his official title, which he adopted on account of his ministry among the people. Very interesting on this controverted point is the statement in a rabbinical comment. The declaration is made that the prophets of God received their significant names, so closely linked with and expressive of the character of their messages, from above, and not according to the will of their earthly parents. God called them to their work and had them named accordingly before they ever entered upon their offices as prophets. We believe this may be correct, especially in view of Jeremiah 1:5.

Where He Ministered

The place where we find Ezekiel is the river Chebar. This river is now known by the name Kabour. It emptied into the Euphrates north of Babylon and was also called Nar-Kabari, the great canal. Here Nebuchadnezzar had started a colony of captives. In chapter 3:15, the name of the place is given; it was at Tel-abib. In this settlement the prophet seems to have lived. Two passages in the book tell us that he had his own house (3:24, 8:1). We also know that he was married (24:16-18). The death of his wife is the only event he mentions of his personal history, and that would probably have not been recorded if it were not connected with his prophetic office. The prophecies he uttered among the captives are carefully dated. The first date is found in chapter 1:1-2.

Ezekiel and Jeremiah

Ezekiel's great prophetic ministry is closely connected with that of Jeremiah. When Ezekiel had his first great vision on the banks of the river Chebar, Jeremiah had already been a prophet for thirty-five years. Only a few years more remained for this great man of God. That Ezekiel must have been acquainted with Jeremiah and his messages of warning and exhortation is more than likely. Yet it is strange there is not a single reference to Jeremiah in the entire book of Ezekiel. It

is strange in view of the fact that the messages of these two men have so much in common. Critics make the assertion that Ezekiel as a prophet was molded by the teaching of Jeremiah. Kuenen claims that Ezekiel must have been for many years the close student of Jeremiah's writings. Before Ezekiel proceeded to write his own prophecies, his mind, it is claimed, had become so saturated with the ideas and language of Jeremiah that every part of his book betrays the influence of his predecessor. This view would make Ezekiel an enthusiastic admirer and copyist of Jeremiah. But in the book of Ezekiel the phrases "Thus saith the Lord God"--"The Word of the Lord came unto me"--occur over and over again. The words he spoke, the mighty messages he delivered, were not produced by the influence of Jeremiah nor by his example, but by the Spirit of God. Other critics have even done greater dishonor to this chosen instrument of the Lord and to the Word he preached. We quote from The New Century Bible: "It would appear that there runs through all the prophet's activities, at least in the earlier period, a strain of mental abnormality--perhaps of actual malady. By some writers this has been supposed to be a form of catalepsy. Probably Ezekiel was no more a cataleptic than Paul; with equal probability he was what would now be called a 'psychical subject,' and as such liable to trances--and perhaps a clairvoyant." Such are the ridiculous things invented by men, who claim scholarship, and whose aim is to deny the supernatural origin of the words and the visions of the prophets of God.

The fact is that Jeremiah and Ezekiel were called by Jehovah to specific ministries. In their characters and natural temperaments they differed greatly. Jeremiah, assuming, as a very young man, his prophetic office during the reign of Josiah, was called to deliver the messages of the awful judgments which were to come upon Jerusalem and had to witness these in their execution. He was an extremely kind, gentle, and tender-hearted man. Jeremiah is the prophet of a dying nation; the agony of Judah's prolonged death struggle is reproduced with tenfold intensity in the inward conflict which rends the heart of the prophet. Ezekiel was of a different temperament. The deep soul exercise we find so often in Jeremiah, his tender, loving sympathies, are almost entirely absent in Ezekiel. He lacked the emotional character of Jeremiah. He was a man of great energy and vigor; he was stern and had a deep sense of his human responsibility. Both prophets uncover the corrupt conditions of Judah and condemn them. The condemnations in Ezekiel are far more severe than those in Jeremiah. The style of Ezekiel is also different from that employed by his contemporary.

In all this he differs from Jeremiah; and more so in the greater and more complete visions concerning the future.

His Ministry

There is an evident connection between the communication which Jeremiah sent from Jerusalem unto the captives in Babylon and the beginning of Ezekiel's ministry. The letter of Jeremiah is found in chapter 29 of the book of Jeremiah. It is an interesting document. It seems to have been occasioned by a number of false prophets who had appeared among the captives, and who encouraged the rebellious and disobedient spirit which prevailed among the exiles. They prophesied falsely, led the people away, and awakened the delusive hope of an early return from the captivity. While Jeremiah continued to minister to the feeble few and the poor, who were left behind, Ezekiel was engaged among the captives and contended against these false prophets and against the false hopes of the people who gave no evidences of repentance. Inasmuch as Jerusalem had not yet been completely destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar, the captives, who had listened to the false prophets, expected a speedy return to their own land. To dispel this false hope Jeremiah had sent them the message, "For thus saith the LORD, that after seventy years be accomplished at Babylon I will visit you, and perform My good word toward you, in causing you to return to this place" (Jer. 29:10). Ezekiel then labored also to dispel this false hope preached by the prophets, whom the Lord had not sent. By his stern and solemn words, by divinely commanded actions and symbols, he had to deliver the message that there was no hope for Jerusalem. When the catastrophe came at last, his ministry changed. He comforts the disappointed and heartbroken people and delivers his great restoration messages.

This great prophet had to do certain divinely commanded things in the presence of the people who were living in deception after having listened to the false prophets. In chapter 3:24-26 he had to shut himself up, bind himself, and then he was made dumb. Then he was commanded to lie upon his right side and upon his left for 430 days (4:4-8). In chapter 4:9 he had to eat unclean bread. Then he had to shave his head and beard (5:1); to carry a captive's baggage (12:3-7); when his wife died, he was not to mourn (24:15-20); and again he lost his speech (24:27). The key to all this is found in chapter

24:24.

The visions of glory Ezekiel had belong to some of the greatest recorded in the Word of God. Much in the beginning of the book reminds of the last book of the Bible, the Revelation. We mention a few passages to be compared: Ezekiel 1 with Rev. 4 and 5. Ezekiel 3:3 with Rev. 10:10. Ezekiel 8:3 with Rev. 13:14, 15. Ezekiel 9 with Rev. 7. Ezekiel 10 with Rev. 8:1-5. The critics declare upon this striking correspondency that "much of the imagery of Revelation is borrowed from Ezekiel."

The Division of the Book

A careful reading of the book of Ezekiel shows, in the first place, that the prophet received messages and saw visions before the final destruction of Jerusalem, and after that catastrophe had taken place in fulfillment of his inspired predictions, he received other prophecies. The predictions preceding the fall of Jerusalem are the predictions of the judgment to fall upon the city and upon Gentile nations, the enemies of Israel. The predictions Ezekiel received after the city had been destroyed are the predictions of blessing and glory for Israel and Jerusalem in the future. The first part of the book has found a fulfillment in the destruction of the city by Nebuchadnezzar. The second part is awaiting its fulfillment at the close of the times of the Gentiles, when Israel will be regathered, restored and the glory of the Lord returns to another temple, which Ezekiel beheld in a magnificent vision. All will be accomplished when the Lord returns to dwell in the midst of His people, so that the name of the city will be "Jehovah-Shammah"--"the Lord is there" (48:35). These two main divisions are clearly marked in the book itself In chapter 33:21, after the prophet had received a renewed call as watchman, we read: "And it came to pass in the twelfth year of our captivity, in the tenth month, in the fifth day of the month, that one that had escaped out of Jerusalem came unto me, saying, The city is smitten." This determines the two parts.

To show the perfect and orderly arrangement of the whole book of Ezekiel we shall give a complete analysis.

I. PREDICTIONS BEFORE THE DESTRUCTION OF JERUSALEM

Section A. judgment Predictions Concerning Jerusalem (1-24)

1. The Vision of the Glory of the Lord and the Call of the Prophet (1-3:14)
2. The judgment Announced, Four Signs and Their Meaning, and the Two Messages. (3:15-7:27)
3. Visions in Relation to Jerusalem (8-11)
4. Signs, Messages, and Parables (12-19)
5. Further and Final Predictions Concerning the Judgment of Jerusalem (20-24)

Section B. Predictions of judgments against the Nations (25-32)

1. Against Ammon, Moab, Edom, and the Philistine (25:1-17)
2. Against Tyrus and Zidon (26-28)
3. Against Egypt (29-32)

II. PREDICTIONS AFTER THE DESTRUCTION OF JERUSALEM

Section A. The Watchman and the Shepherds (33-34)

1. The Renewed Call of Ezekiel as watchman (33:1-20)
2. Ezekiel's Mouth Opened After Jerusalem's Fall (33:21-33)
3. Message Against the shepherds of Israel (34:1-19)
4. The True Shepherd and restoration Promised (34:20-26)

Section B. judgment Announced Against Mount Seir and Israel's Final Restoration Promised (35-36)

1. The Message Against Seir and Idumea (35:1-15)
2. The Message of Comfort for Israel (36:1-38)

Section C. The Future Blessings of Israel, the Nation Regathered, Their Enemies Overthrown and the Millennial Temple (37-48)

1. The Vision of the Dry Bones and Judah and Israel Reunited (37:1-28)
2. The Last Enemies, Gog and Magog, and Their Destruction (38-39)
3. The Millennial Temple, and Its Worship, the Division of the Land (40-48)

Analysis and Annotations**I. PREDICTIONS BEFORE THE FALL OF JERUSALEM****A. judgment Predictions Concerning Jerusalem (1-24)****CHAPTERS 1:1-3:14 The Vision of Glory and the Call of the Prophet**

1. The introduction (1:1-3)
2. The vision of glory (1:4-28)
3. Ezekiel's call and commission (2:1-8)
4. The roll eaten and the repeated commission (2:9-3:14)

Verses 1:1-3. The introductory words give us the time when Ezekiel was among the captives by the river Chebar. Four things are mentioned by Ezekiel, who is evidently the author of this book, for he uses the personal pronoun--the heavens were opened--he saw visions of God--the word of the Lord came unto him--the hand of the Lord was upon him. Ezekiel is the only prophet in the Old Testament of whom it is said that he saw the heavens opened. Four times the New Testament mentions opened heavens (Matt. 3:16; John 1:51; Rev. 4:1; 19:11). He then saw the visions of God concerning His governmental dealings with His people Israel. Then the hand of the Lord was also upon him when the word of the Lord had come unto him. Notice the order: An opened heaven, a vision, the call, and enablement by the power of God. Such is still the order for the servants of the Lord. The phrase, "The hand of the LORD was upon him," or came upon me, is found seven times in Ezekiel, in chapters 1:3, 3:14 and 22, 8:1, 23:22, 37:1, 40:1.

Verses 4-28. Then he had his great and wonderful vision, which is repeatedly mentioned in his book. We find it mentioned again in chapters 10 and 11, where it is seen departing from Jerusalem. Its return is promised in connection with the great millennial temple after the Lord's return (chapter 43). The vision is the vision of the glory of the Lord (11:28), The vision comes from the north, for a storm cloud of divine indignation from the north (Babylon) was to burst over the house of Judah. The whirlwind, the cloud, and the fire Ezekiel beheld are symbols of glory, the divine presence and judgment. (See Psa. 18:8-13; Hab. 3; Jer. 4:12-13). The vision then indicated the presence of the God of Israel and His glory, ready to deal in judgment with His apostate people. The living creatures are the same as mentioned and seen in Rev. 4:6-9. They are the cherubim, not fictitious creatures or symbols, but real beings. Their position is in connection with the throne. But upon the throne there was one who had the likeness as the appearance of a man. And this man was enshrouded in glory, with the rainbow about him. All this shows forth the glory of Him who is God' vision, glory and presence, the Son of God. It anticipates the Lord Jesus Christ, His exaltation upon the throne, government and judgment resting in His hands, who is now the Man in the glory. While the cherubim with their fourfold faces also symbolize the Lord Jesus, here in this vision they are seen in connection with judgment. It is the same in Revelation (Rev. 6; 15:7). And then the wheels and their work. In them was the spirit of these great creatures; the rims of the wheels (not rings) were full of eyes. There

was an orderly movement of these wheels. The wheels are on the chariot upon which rested the throne of God. They show forth and symbolize the purposes of God in the execution of His inerrant governmental dealings on earth. God controls it all, and His Spirit directs every movement. Much that is ridiculous has been written on this, and some would-be expositors claim that Ezekiel beheld an acroplane.

"Intelligence, strength, stability and swiftness in judgment, and, withal, the movement of the whole course of earthly events, depended on the throne. This living energy animated the whole. The cherubic supporters of the throne, full of eyes themselves, moved by it; the wheels of God's government moved by the same spirit, and went straight forward. All was subservient to the will and purpose of Him who sat on the throne judging right. Majesty, government and providence united to form the throne of His glory. But all the instruments of His glory were below the firmament; He whom they glorified was above" (Synopsis of the Bible).

Verses 2:1-8. We see Ezekiel prostrate upon his face. Then a voice spoke, not the voice of a cherubim; while in Revelation the cherubim speak, in Ezekiel they are silent, Jehovah addressed Ezekiel as son of man; the title which is found exactly one hundred times in this book. Daniel only besides Ezekiel is called by this name. Our Lord called Himself by that name and used it in connection with His suffering, exaltation, glory, and coming again. Ezekiel, too, passed through much suffering, passing symbolically through sufferings which the nation at large was to undergo. He is, therefore, in a measure a type of the Messiah, who took Israel's sin and shame upon Himself.

The Word which spoke was followed by the Spirit--"and the Spirit entered into me when He spoke unto me." Thus the Word and the Spirit are always connected. Then Ezekiel received his commission. He is sent to an impudent and hard-hearted people. His message is to begin with: "Thus saith Jehovah-God." The sender is the Lord; the message is from Him. Then the sender gives also assurance and encouragement.

Verses 2:9-3:14. Compare the roll here with Zech. 5:1-4; with the one of Rev. 5, which the Lamb receives and opens, and the little roll in Rev. 10:9, 10. These rolls have the same meaning, namely, the Word itself, the message of tribulation and judgment, which is written therein.

The Word must be received and eaten, that is the spiritual lesson. Ezekiel obeyed. It was self surrender and though the message was a hard message, yet it was sweet unto him. Compare with Jer. 15:16. Ezekiel was to speak the words of the Lord unto them; and the sender predicts failure. "The house of Israel will not hearken unto thee, for they will not hearken unto Me." It was to make no difference to the prophet. His commission was to speak Jehovah's words. Then cherubim and wheels are in motion. He is lifted up and Jehovah's hand is strong upon him.

CHAPTERS 3:15-7:27 The Judgment Announced, the Four Signs and Their Meaning, and the Two Messages

This section extends from chapter 3:15 to the close of the seventh chapter. The prophet is told of his great responsibility as watchman, and has to enact four signs. Two solemn messages close this section. The first message first predicts that the sword is to come upon the land and disperse them; the second message predicts the end.

1. The new charge and Ezekiel's new experience (3:15-27)
2. The sign of the tile (4:1-3) on (4:4-8)
3. The sign of the prophet's physical position (4:4-8)
4. The sign of the famine and the defiled bread (4:9-17)
5. The sign of the shaving of head and face (5:1-4)
6. The message of denunciation (5:5-17)
7. The first judgment message: I will bring a sword upon you (6:1-14)

8. The second judgment message: The end is at hand (7:1-27)

Verses 3:15-27. He had been transported by the power of God from the river Chebar to Tel-abib, where a number of captives dwelt. He sat for seven days in their presence without opening his lips. (See Job 2:13.) The silence of Ezekiel was broken by the Lord, who spoke to him and gave him a new charge, that of a watchman unto the house of Israel. His duty was to be twofold: First, to hear the word of the Lord from His own lips, and then to give the warning. It is a solemn message and charge, making known to the prophet his great responsibility.

The passage, as well as the corresponding one in chapter 33:1-20, has been often used in the defence of what is termed "falling from grace,"--that a true believer, who is saved by grace, may by sinning become unsaved again and then perish in his sins like the wicked. The words "fallen from grace" are found only once in the Bible, that is in Gal. 5:4. The context shows what they mean. If a believer goes to the law to be justified before God, if he tries by his own works, and by ordinances, to be righteous before God, he abandons the ground of grace. The dispensation in which we live is the dispensation of grace; grace reigns through righteousness unto eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord (Rom. 5:20). The message delivered by God to Ezekiel is in fullest keeping with the character of the law-covenant, though grace is also manifested in it. Righteousness has not the same meaning here as in the New Testament. We are constituted righteous by faith in Jesus Christ. It is now not the question of doing righteous deeds in order to be saved and live. We are saved by grace through faith. "Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned as of grace but as of debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on Him, who justifieth the ungodly, his faith is reckoned for righteousness" (Rom. 4:4). And he who is justified by faith has peace With God. The true believer may sin, but he does not deliberately practice and live in sin, for "he that is born of God doth not commit (practice) sin" (1 John 3:9). If he falls in sin, a gracious provision is made. We have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, and therefore we can confess our sins; forgiveness and cleansing follow according to the divine promise (1 John 1:9, 2:1-2).

Then he was commanded to go into the plain, where he again beheld the glory of the Lord and fell on his face. After that, he was shut up in his house; they were to put bands upon him and bind him. He was not to go among the captives, and God made him dumb (verses 25-26). Yet this dumbness was not complete or constant. Finally it ceased altogether. That was after Jerusalem had fallen (33:21-22). The dumbness was a sign to the nation--the sign of God's displeasure and the coming judgment upon Jerusalem (24:27).

Verses 4:1-3. The word tile means "brick." They were used by the Babylonians to preserve their records, and many have been found marked with building plans, etc. The sign of the tile foretells the siege of Jerusalem and Jehovah's opposition against the city.

Verses 4-8. While in the preceding sign Jehovah's action against Jerusalem was pictured, in this new sign a portrayal is given of the punishment which should come upon the inhabitants of the city. In his own person Ezekiel had to experience the great degradation and judgment which was to fall upon all the people. The critical school has invented all kinds of theories to explain, or rather to explain away, the divine command given to the prophet. They say that probably Ezekiel suffered from some form of epilepsy or catalepsy; they also point out the physical impossibility for a man to lie continuously for 390 days on his left side. But it says nowhere that the Prophet should be in that position day and night during these allotted days. The 390 and 40 days are symbolical. They mean years, giving us a total of 430 years. This reminds us of Exodus 12:40-41, where the sojourning of the children of Israel in Egypt is given as 430 years.

But the 390 years apply more specifically to Israel, the period of unfaithfulness of the ten tribes, beginning with Jeroboam. (1 Kings 11:31). The 40 years describe the unfaithfulness of the house of Judah. The captives were reminded by the prophet's position of the shameful history of their long apostasy. But more than that. The Lord said to Ezekiel: "I have laid upon thee the years of their iniquity ... so shalt thou bear the iniquity of the house of Israel." The sign, therefore, pictured the actual punishment which was now to fall upon the nation.

Verses 9-17. Both the sign of the famine and the bread baked in an unclean manner predict the horrors of famine in

connection with the siege of Jerusalem, and how the people in the subsequent captivity among the Gentiles should live in defilement.

Verses 5:1-4. The sharp knife is the symbol of the king of Babylon. (See Isa. 7:20.) He was God's instrument in the execution of His wrath; the people are represented by the hair. The third part of the hair burned with fire pictures the fate of a part of the people during the siege. The pestilence and the famine were also to consume them. Only a few in number, a small remnant, were to be preserved, as indicated when Ezekiel took a few hairs and bound them in his skirt.

Verses 5:5-17. These solemn words should be carefully read. In connection with them there ought to be read Jeremiah's lamentations, for Jeremiah's outburst of sorrow shows the literal fulfillment of this message. (See Verse 10 and compare with Lamentations 4:10.)

Verses 6:1-14. The mountains of Israel are mentioned first, because they were the places where the people practiced idolatry; they were the high places so often mentioned in the historical books. (Read Lev. 26:30-33.) Hundreds of years before, Moses wrote these words; and now they were all to be fulfilled. But the Lord also promised that a remnant should be left. That remnant would acknowledge the evil they had done. "They shall loathe themselves for the evils which they have committed in all their abominations." The words "because I am broken with their whorish heart" means literally translated, "When I shall have broken their whorish heart which has departed from Me." No judgment which has ever come upon Israel made a complete end of the nation. A remnant always remained and returned to the Lord. (See Rom. 11:5.) During the greatest and longest judgment which has come upon that nation, their world-wide dispersion during this present age, there is also a remnant still among them. When the Lord resumes His dealings with them during the last seven years of the times of the Gentiles, with which our age closes, a remnant from among them will turn to Him and be saved. That remnant will be carried through the judgments of the great tribulation and receive the promised kingdom.

Verses 7:1-27. This chapter closes the first great message of Ezekiel. This great judgment message is written in beautiful language, which, in the authorized version, is marred by numerous incorrect renderings. The reader will find a reliable metrical translation in our larger commentary on Ezekiel.

First, the end is announced to come upon the entire land; it could no longer be averted.

There is another day coming in which the Lord will deal in fearful judgments with this earth. Now is the day of salvation in which God speaks in love through His Son, When wickedness and apostasy has reached its climax, the day of salvation will end and "the day of vengeance of our God" will begin. Then He will speak in His wrath and vex them in His sore displeasure (Psa. 2:5). Then will they say to the mountains and rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb; for the great day of His wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?" (Rev. 6:16-17). God's judgments for the future are as sure as were His judgments in the past. There is a set time, the day of the Lord, when He, to whom the Father has given all judgments, will tread "the winepress of the fierceness of the wrath of God, the Almighty" (Rev. 19:15).

Then follows a solemn description of the doom of Jerusalem and the reasons why such a judgment is executed.

CHAPTERS 8-11 Visions in Relation to Jerusalem

1. The vision of abomination in the temple (8)
2. The vision of the linen-clothed man with the inkhorn (9)
3. The vision of the coals of fire (10)
4. The vision concerning the leaders: The glory departs (11)

Chapter 8. This vision shows the abomination which prevailed in the temple of Jehovah.

In the visions of God, Ezekiel is brought to the door of the inner gate that looks to the north. Here was the image of jealousy, which provoketh to jealousy. Some have taken this and the following visions to be retrospective. It has been said, "It was as if he were translated back to Jerusalem, and to the time when these things were occurring." Such is the view of some critics; however, it is untenable. These visions would lose their meaning if the prophet seemed to be translated back to Jerusalem and to the time when these abominations had happened in Israel's past history. Later we find the names of persons given, whom he saw. They certainly were living persons known to the prophet Ezekiel and his contemporaries. One of them died while Ezekiel prophesied (11:13). What was the image of jealousy which provoketh to jealousy? It was an idol. The word is used in Deut. 4:16, where it is translated "graven image." It is also found in 2 Chron. 33:7, 15, where it refers to the idol, which Manasseh had made and put up in the temple.

After Manasseh's idolatry came Josiah's great reformation. After his death, Judah plunged into greater wickedness under the reign of wicked kings, and a revival of idolatry followed once more. Such a wrath-provoking idol was beheld by the prophet. This image they worshipped. "Son of man, seest thou what they do?" They must have lain prostrate before that idol. And yet the glory of the God of Israel was still there.

That there will be a similar scene enacted in a future temple, during the great tribulation, is well known to all students of prophecy. (See 2 Thess. 2 and Rev. 13.)

The prophet saw creeping things and beasts worshipped; the elders and the people were practising Egyptian idolatry of the most degrading kind. Jaazaniah, the son of Shaphan, is especially mentioned. Shaphan was the scribe, who received from the high priest, Hilkiah, the book of the law, and read it before King Josiah (2 Kings 22:8-11; Jer. 39:14). The son of this God-fearing scribe was the leader of the idolators. And these idol worshippers, each in his chamber of imagery (probably individual cells), said: "This LORD seeth us not; the LORD has forsaken the earth." They denied His omniscience and omnipresence. The apostasy in Christendom is going the same road.

The women wept for Tammuz, the Babylonian "Dumuzi," the god of spring, who dies, and revives each year. It was a vile, obscene cult, for with the worship of Tammuz were connected immoral, licentious ceremonies. Sun-worship was the crown of all these abominations. (See verses 16-18).

Chapter 9. The six men mentioned are angels, into whose hands the city is given. Angels are used in judgments past and future. (See Matt. 13:41; 16:27; 2 Thess. 1:7-8.) Angels are likewise prominently mentioned in the book of Revelation. There is a striking correspondency between this chapter and Revelation 7:1-3. Those who sigh and weep constitute the remnant which have no sympathy with the abominations. They are marked for preservation. Thus a remnant was then kept. Well may we remember that now, in the professing church, in the midst of the apostasy, there is also a faithful remnant who sigh and cry and who have the special promise of the Lord (Rev. 3:10).

The word "mark" in the Hebrew is "Tav," the last letter in the Hebrew alphabet. Its literal meaning is "cross." This letter "T" was a cross in the older Hebrew script as well as in the Phoenician and Samaritan. The Egyptians also used a cross in their language, with them it was a sign of life. Ancient Jewish tradition gives the information that the blood sprinkled in Egypt on the doorpost (Exodus 12:23) was in the form of a cross. All this is interesting. To this we may add that in Gen. 4:15, the mark set upon Cain, an entirely different word is used.

Then the command was literally executed.

Chapter 10. Once more the glory vision appears. The linen clothed man who had done the marking in the previous chapter is now executing judgment. Who is He? Evidently more than an angel. That he is a supernatural being is clear. He held the place of pre-eminence among the other angels (chapter 9:2-4). This angel is the Angel of the Lord, the same who appeared to the patriarchs, to Moses, Joshua, Gideon, Manoah, and to others. It is the Son of God in the garb of an angel. In the same form he also appeared to Daniel on the banks of the river Hiddekel. "Then I lifted up mine eyes, and looked, and behold a certain man clothed in linen, whose loins were girded with fine gold of Uphaz. His body also was like the

beryl, and his face as the appearance of lightning, and his eyes as lamps of fire, and his arms and his feet like in color to polished brass, and the voice of his words like the voice of a multitude" (Dan. 10:5-6). Here we have a complete description of the same person whom Ezekiel saw taking the coals of fire and scattering them over Jerusalem. Judgment upon the guilty city came from His hands.

When we turn to the book of Revelation, we find a similar scene which has not yet been enacted. A careful comparison of this scene here with Rev. 8:3-5 is suggested. This angel who presents the prayers before the throne and who casts the judgment fires on the earth is the same who received the seven-sealed book (Rev. 5:1). It is the Son of God, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Then the glory of the Lord departed from the threshold of the temple; over its portals "Ichabod" (the glory is departed) was now to be written.

Chapter 11. The priests and the leaders of the nation were steeped in wickedness, defied God and the judgments His prophets had announced. They devised mischief (or iniquity) and gave wicked counsel. Their wicked counsel consisted in disobedience against Jehovah and His Word. In regard to the judgment they said, "It is not the time to build houses; this is the cauldron and we are the flesh." They knew of Jeremiah's letter which he had sent to the elders who were carried away captives. In that letter, Jeremiah, believing God's Word concerning the long duration of the captivity, gave the advice, "Build ye houses and dwell in them" (Jer. 29). They ridiculed that divinely given advice. They still thought themselves safe in Jerusalem. The phrase "this is the cauldron" means the city of Jerusalem; and we are the "flesh" themselves. As the flesh in the cauldron is preserved from the fire by the cauldron itself, so they felt themselves secure in the doomed city. That these wicked leaders were still in the city shows that the judgment in chapter 9 was not a complete judgment. It began at the sanctuary, and the wicked worshippers Ezekiel saw in his vision were smitten first of all, while the man with the inkhorn marked the entire remnant for preservation. Then the Spirit fell upon Ezekiel and he uttered Jehovah's message.

The message of judgment is followed by a message of mercy. Verses 14-21 are yet to be fulfilled in that nation. The final departure of the visible glory of the Lord concludes this chapter. It held its ascension from the Mount of Olives. From the same place, He who is the Lord of Glory and reveals the glory of the Lord, went back to the Father. And when He returns "His feet shall stand upon the Mount of Olives" (Zech. 14). It will be at that blessed time when Israel and Jerusalem will behold the return of the glory, which Ezekiel beheld departing from city and temple.

CHAPTERS 12-19 Signs, Messages, and Parables

1. Signs given through the prophet (12:1-20)
2. The message of speedy judgment (12:21-28)
3. The message against false prophets and prophetesses. (13)
4. The message against the elders (14)
5. The parable of the vine given to the fire (15)
6. The parable of the abandoned child and Israel's whoredom (16)
7. The parable of the riddle of the two eagles and the vine (17)
8. The message of the righteous judgments of God (18)
9. The Lamentations for the Princes of Israel (19)

With the twelfth chapter a new section of this book begins, ending with chapter 19.

Verses 12:1-20. They were a rebellious house and the prophet is told to do something, that they might consider. He was to attire himself like one who goes on a journey with sandals on his feet, a staff in his hand, a burden on his shoulder. He was told to move from place to place. The meaning of all this is explained in verses 8-16. The prince in Jerusalem is Zedekiah. His attempt to flee from Jerusalem, and his fate of having his eyes put out by the king of Babylon, his captivity and death are here clearly predicted. The following passages must be read and studied in connection with this chapter (Jer.

39:4, 52:10-11; 2 Kings 25:1-7).

Verses 12:21-28. The false prophets had preached a false hope, "The days are prolonged and every vision faileth." God had announced another message. Had they believed what God had spoken, that judgment was imminent, they would have surely repented and turned unto the Lord. Unbelief was responsible for their condition; in this they were sustained by lying prophets. And the Lord answered these false prophets. He changed the lying message and told them "the days are at hand"--the effect of every vision. All false visions, divinations and hopes were to cease. His Word is now to be done.

Chapter 13. And now the Lord speaks through Ezekiel about the false prophets in the midst of His people. They prophesied out of their own hearts; or as it might be rendered, "Who prophesy from their own mind without having seen." Such they were and such are the false teachers of this present age (2 Peter 2:1-2). Of such our Lord warned: "Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves" (Matt. 7:15). Every man who prophesies out of his own heart, who utters his own mind, whose preaching and teaching is not according to the oracles of God, is a false prophet, a blind leader of the blind. Like false prophets in Israel the false teachers in Christendom are the cause of the spiritual condition of the professing people of God. Of all such it is true what the Lord said through Ezekiel: "They have seen vanity and lying divination, saying, "The Lord saith, and the Lord has not sent them." They are self-called and self-sent. Behind them stands the father of lies (1 Kings 22:19-23; 1 Tim. 4:1). Next we find in verses 8-16 their condemnation and punishment. But there were also false women prophets; they practised occultism.

All this is also done in the very midst of Christendom in the twentieth century. Women prophets, the most subtle instruments of Satan, are plentiful in these days. The fact has often been pointed out that the prominent leaders in the evil cults of the last days are women. There has been a strange modern-day revival of occult practices upon Christian ground. Spiritualism, Theosophy, and Christian Science belong to this class. All three started with women. Spiritualism with its mediums, fortune-tellers and necromancers is almost entirely in the hands of women, who claim to be religious leaders. The same is true of theosophy, with its Hindu philosophy, and occultism, surrounded with an air of unholy mysticism. Christian Science is closely related to these two cults. Its founder practiced for a time the calling of a medium.

Significant is the description of their evil testimony as given in verse 22.

Chapter 14. These inquiring elders, with wickedness in their hearts, give another illustration of the depth of degradation in which the people had sunk. He who searches the hearts knew what was in them. They came with pious, religious pretensions. It sounded well to inquire of the Lord and seek the prophet-priest for that purpose. Their hearts were full of evil. While their lips spoke of asking the Lord, their hearts were full of idolatry. They liked idolatry. Their hearts were in it and this stumbling-block of their iniquity they had put before their faces, which means they openly defied the Lord God of Israel by their doings. "Should I be inquired of at all by them?" To seek the Lord and inquire of Him in such a condition reveals a brazen spirit and the deepest depravity. Yet this also belongs to the conditions in which the professing people of God are when judgment overtakes them.

Verses 12-23 contain an additional judgment message. The threatened judgment cannot be averted; it is unavoidable. Famine is to come and the noisome beasts, symbolical of Gentile world powers, as Daniel beheld them in his vision (Dan. 7). The judgment message closes again with a message of mercy and comfort for the remnant.

Chapter 15. This is the first of three parables to demonstrate still further the delusion of their false hope that deliverance would come. The vine is a type of Israel (Psa. 80:8-12; Isa. 5:1-6, and Hosea 10:1). The vine is only good for one thing, which is the bearing of fruit; apart from this it is worthless. The wood cannot be used for anything whatever. It is good for nothing but burning. Nebuchadnezzar carried out this sentence (2 Kings 25:9). It reminds us also of the parable of the vine our Lord spoke, in which, speaking of the unfruitful branch, He said, "Men gather them and cast them into the fire, and they are burned" (John 15:6). Some apply this also to Israel; it means the professing believer, who professes to be a branch in the true vine.

Chapter 16. This chapter consists of four sections: 1. The parable of the abandoned child. 2. Jerusalem's idolatries and moral degradation (verses 15-34). 3. The doom of Jerusalem and the promise of restoration (verses 35-59). 4. The covenant remembered (verses 60-63).

The parable of the abandoned child, and what the gracious Lord did for the little one is a most beautiful demonstration of what He had done in His sovereign love and grace for Jerusalem. It must be read first with this in mind. But this sweet parable illustrates also, as few other portions in the Old Testament do, the grace which the Lord bestows upon the believer in the gospel. Thy father an Amorite and thy mother a Hittite reminds us of what is true of all men, so tersely expressed in David's confession, "Behold I was shapen in iniquity and in sin did MY mother conceive me" (Psa. 51:5). Like the child pictured in the parable, we are lost, perishing in the field (the world). What could that perishing child do to save itself? Even so we cannot do anything to save ourselves. The Lord passing by had compassion and spoke His Word of power-- Live. He came from heaven to this earth, into the field to seek and save what is lost. He found man in the vile and helpless condition so aptly pictured by the miserable child. And more than that, He died to save man. He gave His life so that we might live. The first thing He does for the believing sinner is to give him life. When the spiritual dead hear His voice they live. The washing with water, the anointing with oil (type of the Holy Spirit), the announcement "thou becamest Mine," as well as the clothing, the beautifying and the crowning, all illustrate what His marvelous grace does for the trusting, believing sinner. It is all grace from start to finish, from the impartation of life in the new birth to the crowning in glory.

Upon this beautiful background of Jehovah's love and mercy, there is written next the dark picture of Jerusalem's whoredoms, symbolical of her wicked idolatries. It started all with pride (verse 15). Jerusalem did not acknowledge the giver. Instead of worshipping Him, they established the high places and conformed to all the wicked Canaanitish practices. Verses 15-34 give the depth of Jerusalem's apostasy.

Then the Lord addresseth her whom He loved, and who had turned away from Him as a harlot. Her doom and judgment is announced which once more is followed by the promise of mercy and restoration. The restoration of Sodom and her daughters has puzzled many. It has been used by Universalists, Russellites, Restorationists, teachers of Reconciliationism and other errorists to back up their inventions of a second chance of the wicked dead, or the ultimate salvation of the entire race. The restoration promises have nothing to do with the restoration of the wicked dead. They are promises of national restoration. It is a mistake to look in the Old Testament for any doctrines concerning the future state. Three facts will show this error of making the Old Testament teach the restoration of the wicked.

1. The Old Testament is not that part of the divine revelation where teachings and doctrines about the future state are given.

This is a most important fact. The Old Testament shows man as upon the earth, on this side of death, and not beyond death. The future of Israel on the earth, their supremacy and destiny of glory amidst the nations of the earth, the judgments of God in the earth, as well as the future blessings for the nations inhabiting the earth during the coming age, are all clearly revealed in the Old Testament. The state after death, that which is beyond this life, is shrouded in mystery in the Old Testament Scriptures. That great judgment, the great white throne judgment, is nowhere mentioned in the Old Testament, nor do we read a word there of "the second death." Resurrection of the dead, no doubt, was known to individual saints of Old Testament times; the Spirit of God revealed it to their hearts, but as a doctrine, resurrection is not found in the Old Testament. In Psalm 16 is revealed the hope of resurrection of the body, and there is a prophecy of the resurrection of our Lord.

2. Should we find anything in the Old Testament concerning the future state, the state of the righteous and the unrighteous after death, such a hint or statement can only be rightly understood and interpreted by the great doctrine concerning the future state as revealed in the New Testament.

By this, of course, we do not say that the Old Testament needs correction by the revelation of the New, nor do we say that the Old is inferior to the New; all is the Word of God. However, as the Old Testament does not show man's condition

after death, any passage which appears to relate to such a condition must be interpreted by the full light as given in the New Testament.

3. If such passages as Ezekiel 16:53 and Ezekiel 37:1-14, etc., teach the restitution of the wicked by resurrection for another chance, we must then find such a doctrine of the restoration most clearly and fully revealed as one of the great doctrines of the New Testament.

In vain, however, do we look in the New Testament for such a restoration--second probation doctrine. Such a doctrine is not even hinted at in the New. However, the New Testament gives the fullest revelation concerning resurrection and the future state. It tells us that there is indeed a resurrection of the body for every human being. This revelation of resurrection as contained in the New Testament leaves no room whatever for the Sodomites and all the wicked idolatrous Israelites to be raised up for another chance. Our Lord, in John 5:29, reveals a twofold resurrection, a resurrection unto life and a resurrection unto damnation. The human race, those who have died, are therefore in resurrection divided into two classes; they must come forth either unto life or unto damnation: there is no middle class. Later the New Testament teaches a first resurrection, an out-resurrection from the dead. Only those who have believed and died in Christ will have a share in this resurrection. Both Old and New Testament saints belong to it, but none have a part in it who died in their sins. The rest of the dead, meaning of course, the wicked dead, are not raised up till after the thousand years. This is a second resurrection, and this takes place not when the Lord comes the second time, but after His millennial reign (Rev. 20). The subjects of this second resurrection appear before the great white throne and are cast into the lake of fire. Now, these teachers claim that the return of Sodom and Samaria to their former estate means their resurrection for another chance when the Lord comes. But, as these departed, wicked people are wicked still, how can they have part in the first resurrection when the Lord comes, which is the resurrection of the righteous?

They surely cannot belong to this resurrection. And there is nowhere in the New Testament a word about another special resurrection in which all the wicked are raised from the dead for another chance. After the resurrection of the righteous dead there is but one more resurrection, the resurrection of the wicked unto damnation. In the light of these facts the flimsy theory built upon misapplied texts of the Old Testament, texts which relate to national restoration and blessing, breaks down completely. And now, having seen what the statements in this chapter of Ezekiel do not mean, let us see what is their meaning. While these statements cannot mean the resurrection of individuals, they mean a national restoration. There is promised in many passages of the Old Testament a national restoration of Israel. The ten tribes are to be brought back to their former possessions. Historically they have been lost. But they are not lost to God. He knows where they are. He has kept track of them, and in His own time He will make good the promises of their restoration and will bring back the remnants of the house of Israel, now scattered still among the nations. The Jews will also be restored to their territory. Repeatedly this national restoration of the ancient people is promised under the picture of a resurrection. But to other nations there is also promised such a national restoration in the days to come, when the Lord comes and begins His Kingdom reign over the earth. Such a national revival is beyond a doubt promised for a future day to Moab, Ammon, Assyria, and Egypt. Edom and Babylon, however, are doomed as nations and no revival whatever is promised to them.

We do not know, of course, how God will accomplish these promises of restoration and national revivals, and how He will gather the remnants of these former nations from the great sea of nations. We can leave this and other difficulties with Him who will see to the fulfillment of all these things.

Chapter 17. The great eagle mentioned first is Nebuchadnezzar. (See Jer. 48:40 and 49:22). He came to Lebanon and took the highest branch of the cedar, the symbol of the house of David, which was conquered by this eagle. Nebuchadnezzar made the youngest son of Josiah king over Judah and called him Zedekiah. This action is described in verse 5. The other great eagle is Hophra, the king of Egypt. To him Zedekiah turned for help. The interpretation and application of this parable is given in verses 11-21. The following passages should be read as helpful to the understanding of these verses: 2 Chron. 36:13; Jer. 27:1-2, 37:5-7, 52:11.

Israel's hope and Israel's future come once more into view in verses 22-24. The cedar is the royal house of David. God

in His sovereignty promises to take "of its young shoots a tender one and I will plant it upon a high and eminent mountain." This tender one is the Messiah, the Son of David. It is the same promise as given in the book of Isaiah. "And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots" (Isa. 11:1). "For He shall grow up before Him as a tender plant and as a root out of a dry ground" (Isa. 53:2). The high and eminent mountain typifies Mount Zion, and the kingdom of Messiah is pictured in the closing verses of the chapter. The high tree which is brought low, the green tree which is dried up, is the symbol of Gentile world-power. The low tree which is exalted and the dry tree which is made to flourish stands for the restoration of the kingdom to Israel when the Son of David, our Lord, comes again. Then the high tree will be cut down and the now flourishing Gentile dominion will dry up; Israel the low tree will be exalted, and the long, dry and barren nation will bring its blessed fruit.

Chapter 18. In verses 1-4, we find the false accusation against God and the divine answer, and this is followed in verses 5-9 by the conditions of life, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die" (verse 4). But the conditions to have life and to be just cannot be fulfilled by sinful man; nor is in these verses "eternal life" in view; these are not conditions to secure "eternal life," but to escape physical death in the announced judgment. The conditions which bring death are given in verses 10-13. The son does not die for his father's sins, as they thought in their wrong reasonings (verses 14-20). All their accusations that the Lord is unjust are completely answered in the final paragraph of this message (verses 21-32).

Chapter 19. This lamentation has two sections. The lamentations for the princes come first (1-9), and that is followed by the lamentation for the land of Judah (10-14).

The princes are Jehohaz and Jehoiachin. King Jehohaz was carried away captive into Egypt (2 Kings 23:33); his fate is lamented in verses 1-4. King Jehoiachin was taken to Babylon and he is lamented in verses 5-9. In the lamentation for the land of Judah the vine is once more mentioned. The vine is burned, the fruit devoured and there is no scepter in Judah.

CHAPTERS 20-24 Further and Final Predictions Concerning the judgment of Jerusalem

1. Jehovah rehearses His mercies bestowed upon Israel (20)
2. The impending judgment announced (21)
3. Jerusalem's sins and whoredom (22-23)
4. The parable of the boiling pot and the last word (24)

Chapter 20. The chapter contains a divine retrospect and an arraignment of the people for their national sins. The following division will greatly assist in an analytical study of this chapter. Verses 1-9 describe the nation's sins in Egypt. Verses 10-17 give the history of the first generation which came out of Egypt. It is a wonderful condensed rehearsal of all they were and what the Lord had done for them. The record of the second generation is contained in verses 18-26. This is followed by a description of their unfaithfulness and sins in the land (verses 27-32). Judgment then is announced and a future restoration promised. Verses 40-44 are yet to be fulfilled. The fire of judgment to sweep over the south field (Judah) is announced in the final paragraph (verses 45-49).

Chapter 21. A solemn message is given to the prophet: "Behold I am against thee, and will draw forth my sword out of its sheath, and will cut off from thee the righteous and the wicked." It was to be a widespread judgment, against all flesh. Ezekiel was commanded to sigh with bitterness before their eyes and was to tell them the cause of his grief (verses 1-7). The sharpening of the sword of judgment is given in verses 8-17. It was hanging over their heads, ready to strike at any moment. The question is asked, "Should we then make mirth?" is this the time of mirth, worldly pleasures and enjoyment? Not for the faithful in Israel. Nor is the present solemn time a time of mirth for those who know the signs of the times and what God has revealed concerning things to come.

The king of Babylon and his divination is vividly pictured in verses 18-24. The Babylonians used different kinds of enchantments, etc., to ascertain what they should do. The king stands at the cross-roads. Shall he go to Rabbath or against Jerusalem? He used arrows and put on one the name of "Rabbath" of the Ammonites; on the other "Jerusalem." Then he

shook them to and fro (correct rendering--"he made his arrows bright"). In verse 22, we see the result of this divination. He has in his hands the arrow with "Jerusalem" on it.

The wicked prince and the Coming One are seen in verses 25-27. Here Christ and Antichrist are contrasted. There can be no question that Zedekiah is first of all in view as the profane wicked prince of Israel. But the prophecy looks far beyond Zedekiah. It is the coming wicked prince, the one who comes in his own name, the final Antichrist, the false messiah, or, as he is also called in Revelation, the false prophet. That verse 25 refers to the time of the end, is seen by the words, "in the time of the iniquity of the end" (correct translation). The same phrase appears in Dan. 11:35-39, "the time of the end," and the person described in that passage is the Antichrist, the wicked prince. It is the time of the future great tribulation "when the transgressors are come to the full" (Dan. 8:23). This false Christ will claim priestly and kingly honors. He is the beast out of the earth, (Rev. 13) having two horns like a lamb, but speaking as a dragon. The two horns represent the priesthood and the kingship he assumes. And this, we learn from verse 26, is the character of the wicked prince of Israel of whom Ezekiel speaks. Again, we must correct the faulty translation of the authorized version: "Remove the mitre and take off the crown"; the word "diadem" is mitre, the head-dress of the high-priest (Exodus 28:4). He wears the mitre of the priest and the crown of the king. He is Satan's final counterfeit (like the pope) of the Priest-King. In verse 27, the overturning times are mentioned. Thrice it is stated, "I will overturn." Even so will it be at the time of the end until He comes whose right it is.

Verses 28-32 give the announcement of judgment upon the Ammonites.

Chapters 22-23. Before the sharpened sword of justice and retribution does its dreadful work, the Lord uncovers the guilt and vileness of the city and lays bare the corruption of her prophets, priests, and princes, as well as of the people. The violence and abomination of Jerusalem are revealed in verses 1-16; the smelting furnace in verses 17-23 is the symbol of Jehovah's fiery indignation against Jerusalem and its inhabitants. The corruption of the prophets, priests, and princes is fully uncovered in the closing section of chapter 22 (verses 23-31).

In chapter 23 Samaria and Jerusalem are called two sisters, Aholah and Aholibah, in their ungodly relation with Assyria and Chaldea. Aholah means "her tent." Aholibah, "my tent is in her." The latter denotes the fact that the true sanctuary was in Judah. The sins and vileness of both are portrayed throughout this long chapter, as well as the deserved punishment.

Chapter 24. The exact date is given by the prophet. It was the tenth day of the tenth month in the ninth year. What happened also on that date we find recorded in 2 Kings 25:1: "And it came to pass in the ninth year of his reign in the tenth month, in the tenth day of the month, that Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon, came, he and all his host, against Jerusalem, and pitched against it; and they built forts against it round about." How did Ezekiel know about all this? It was the Lord who gave him this information and led him to record the date. This is the statement of the second verse: "Son of man, write thee the name of the day, even of this selfsame day, the king of Babylon set himself against Jerusalem this same day." What does higher criticism have to say to this? We quote a recent commentator: "These verses (2) force on us in the clearest fashion the dilemma--either Ezekiel was a deliberate deceiver or he was possessed of some kind of a second sight!" What about divine revelation? This the "learned" men refuse to think even possible. The boiling pot announced is the symbol of Jerusalem.

Verses 15-18 announce the death of Ezekiel's wife, and he is commanded not to mourn or weep; all the customary signs of grief are forbidden him. While he faithfully delivered the message in the morning, even his wife was taken from his side. Death had dissolved the marriage union and taken from the prophet the beloved wife. Even so the relationship between Jehovah and Jerusalem was now completely to be severed. The question of the people and the answer is found in verses 19-27. Read verses 26-27 and compare with chapter 33:21, 22.

CHAPTERS 25-32 Predictions of Judgments Against the Nations

1. Prophecies concerning Ammon, Moab, Edom, and the Philistines (25)

2. Concerning Tyrus (26)
3. The glory of Tyrus and Her Fall (27)
4. The prince of Tyrus (28)
5. Concerning Egypt (29-30)
6. Pharaoh's greatness and his overthrow (31)
7. Lamentations and the great funeral dirge (32)

Chapter 25. The eight chapters as analyzed above are on prophecies concerning nations which were in touch with Israel. These predictions concern seven nations, and these are divided into four and three. The first four were the immediate neighbors of Israel. The first message concerns the Ammonites (verses 1-7). Both Ammon and Moab had a racial connection with Israel and were the incestuous offspring of Lot (Gen. 19:37-38). They were in constant conflict with Israel. Their evil character is revealed in this message. Moab is mentioned next (verses 8-11). We give several passages which may be consulted about Moab and the character of the people (Jer. 48:29; Isa. 16:6). There is promised for both Ammon and Moab a national restoration in the latter days, that is, when the Lord comes (Jer. 48:47, 49:6). Let us remember that these nations were proud in the extreme. And these judgments upon proud, self-exalting, God-forgetting nations, are not confined to the past. They will be repeated in the future when He will judge the nations.

Verses 12-14 concern Edom. The descendants of Esau, Edom, were closer to Israel than Ammon and Moab. Edom's deeds were more prominently against the people of God, more wicked and defiant, than the others. Israel was especially commanded not to abhor an Edomite (Deut. 23:7). Amos shows the sin of Edom (Amos 1:11). So does Obadiah (verses 3-4). The cruel Herods, the types of the man of sin, were Edomites. The judgment upon Edom is to be executed by Israel. This is to take place in a future day. (See Obadiah, verses 17-21 and Amos 9:11-12.) The final paragraph is concerning the Philistines (verses 15-17). The Philistines dwelt on a narrow strip on the seashore and were the long continued enemies of the people Israel. Jeremiah speaks of them (chapter 47). See also Amos 1:6-9, Joel 3:4; Isa. 14:29-32. The vengeance of the Lord fell upon the coast of Palestina, the Philistines, and they experienced the fury of the Lord. He dealt with them who had corrupted His people. And so God will deal in due time with all His enemies.

Chapter 26. A lengthy prophecy concerning Tyrus is found in this and in the chapters which follow. These great predictions have found a startling fulfilment. History confirms all that Ezekiel spoke should come to pass. In verses 1-14 we have the overthrow of the powerful city predicted.

The city of Tyrus (which means rock) was partly built upon an island off the mainland in the Mediterranean Sea. It was an ancient Phoenician city and is mentioned in Scripture for the first time in Joshua 19:29, where it is called "the strong city." It had a wonderful commerce, a description of which in its variety, we find in the twenty-seventh chapter. It was inhabited by seafaring men, and the prophet Isaiah describes this wealthy and influential city as "the crowning city, whose merchants are princes, whose traffickers are the honorable of the earth" (Isa. 23:8). We read in the next chapter how Syria, Persia, Egypt, Spain, Greece and every quarter of the ancient world laid their choicest and most precious things at the feet of Tyre, who sat enthroned on ivory, covered with blue and purple, from the isles of Elishah. Her beauty was perfect (Ezek. 27:11). During the reign of David and Solomon, Tyre came into great prominence, playing an important role in the commercial, political and religious history of Israel. Hiram, King of Tyrus, sent cedar trees to Jerusalem, as well as workmen, who built David a house (2 Sam. 5:11). How Tyrus aided in the construction of the temple and the palace under Solomon's reign, may be learned by consulting the following passages: 1 Kings 5:1-12; 7:13-14; 1 Chron. 14:1, 2 Chron. 2:3, 11. When the ships of Solomon sailed away to Ophir, "Hiram sent in the navy his servants, shipmen that had knowledge of the sea, with the servants of Solomon, and they came to Ophir, and fetched from thence gold, four hundred and twenty talents, and brought it to King Solomon" (1 Kings 9:27-28). She sinned against Jerusalem and the people of God. Joel and Amos, Isaiah, and Jeremiah mention her and her well-deserved judgment (Joel 3:4-6; Amos 1:9-10; Isa. 23; Jer. 47:4).

In the third verse of our chapter, we read the divine announcement of Tyre's fate: "Behold I am against thee, O Tyrus, and will cause many nations to come up against thee, as the sea causes its waves to come up. And they shall destroy the

walls of Tyrus, and break down her towers; I will also scrape her dust from her, and make her like the top of a rock." It was to become a place for the spreading of nets and a spoil to the nations. This great judgment was not all at once carried out. Nebuchadnezzar came first against her as predicted in verses 7-11. He besieged Tyre on the mainland and after thirteen years took the city; while that part of Tyrus which was built upon the island in the sea, protected by the fleet of Tyrus, escaped. Then came for her seventy years when she was forgotten, as predicted by Isaiah (23:15). After these years had passed Tyrus saw a startling revival. The island city became more powerful and wicked than before; "she committed fornication with all the kingdoms of the world upon the face of the earth" (Isa. 23:17). The continental Tyrus, however, remained in ruins.

Centuries passed and it seemed as if Ezekiel's prophecy concerning Tyre's complete overthrow would remain unfulfilled. It was about 240 years after when the literal fulfillment of this prophecy was accomplished. Alexander the Great came against the city built on the island. After seven months the city was taken by means of a mole, by which the forces of Alexander could enter the city. In constructing this mole, Alexander made use of the ruins of the old city. The stones, timber and the very dust of the destroyed city was laid into the sea to erect the causeway which accomplished the utter ruin of the wealthy city. And thus Ezekiel's prophecy was fulfilled. "And they shall lay thy stones and thy timber and thy dust in the midst of the water." The complete end of Tyrus had come. "And thou shalt be no more, though thou be sought for, yet shalt thou never be found again" (verse 21). So completely was the work done by Alexander, depositing the debris of the ruins of Tyrus on the mainland into the sea, that its exact site will remain undeterminable. And Alexander the Great fulfilled still another prophecy. Before he came on his mission, directed by God, to make an end of the proud and wicked city, Zechariah, the great post-exilic prophet, had once more announced the fate of Tyrus. "And Tyrus," said the Lord through Zechariah, "did build herself a stronghold, and heaped up silver as the dust, and fine gold as the ruin of the streets." This was after Nebuchadnezzar had destroyed the Tyrus on the mainland and she became the great island city. "Thus," said Zechariah, "behold, the Lord will cast her out, and He will smite her power in the sea, and she shall be devoured with fire" (Zech. 9:3-4). Alexander did this: he laid proud Tyrus in ashes. What an evidence that all these words are divine!

The effect of the fall of Tyrus and a lamentation over that fall are revealed in verses 15-21. There is a description of the descent of Tyrus into the pit (verses 19-20). The last sentence of verse 20, "And I shall set glory in the land of the living," means the coming glory of the earthly Zion, the glory in store for Israel.

Chapter 27. Verses 1-25 give an interesting description of the world-wide commerce and glory of this proud world city. "Sic transit gloria mundi," thus passeth the glory of the world! Of the proud and wicked mistress of the sea nothing but ruins remain and her very site is no longer known. What her past glory was is made known by the prophet, yet Ezekiel never had been to that city, nor did he have any knowledge of her grandeur, her great wealth and far reaching commerce. God revealed all unto him.

The description of her great commerce reminds us of that coming world-system as described in the last book of the Bible, the Revelation. Babylon the Great will be both an ecclesiastical and commercial world center. Her commerce is just like the commerce of Tyrus (Rev. 18:12-13). The fall of Tyrus is fully given in verses 26-30.

The description of Tyrus as a ship as given in the first part of this chapter is here maintained. Tyrus is to be shipwrecked. The east wind is Nebuchadnezzar, who came against the proud city to accomplish part of her ruin; and Alexander the Great, as we saw in our previous study, completed the work. A comparison with Revelation 18 will bring out the striking correspondency. When finally Babylon the Great falls, that coming religious-commercial world-system, with Rome as a center, her fall and desolation, will surely be greater than the fall of Tyrus. For this all is rapidly preparing.

Chapter 28. The prince of Tyrus, or, as he is also called, the king, was, according to the Jewish historian Josephus, Ithobalus, known in the Phoenician annals as Ithobaal II. He was the consummation of the pride and wealth of Tyrus; the terrible pride of the city headed up in him. His heart was so lifted up that he claimed to be a god and that he occupied the very seat of God. He boasted of greater wisdom than the wisdom of Daniel. He is a type of the final Antichrist, the man of

sin. Behind the wicked prince and king, there is seen another power, Satan.

Satan was the power behind the throne of the Tyrian king, as Satan is still the god of this age, who controls the kingdoms of the world. Inasmuch, then, as Tyrus is a type of the commercial glory of the world, its wealth and pride, foreshadowing the final great world-city or world-system, Babylon, the ruler of Tyrus, spoken of as prince, foreshadows the Antichrist; while as king, Satan himself stands behind him as the domineering power. The descriptions given of Satan as an unfallen being show that he was originally a marvelous being, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty. From Jude's Epistle, we learn that even Michael still recognized in him the grandeur of his unfallen past, and did not bring a railing accusation against him (Jude verses 8-10). He was in Eden, the garden of God, and every precious stone was his covering. It is a description of Satan's original place and of his great beauty. Furthermore, he was the anointed cherub that covereth; the Lord had set him to be this. As the anointed, divinely chosen cherub he held an exalted position in connection with the government of the throne of God. Everything shows that this majestic creature possessed a place of great dignity, being "upon the holy mountain of God," walking up and down in the midst of the stones of fire, he was ever present and moving about in the fiery glory of a holy and righteous God. "Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created till unrighteousness was found in thee."

In verses 20-26 the judgment upon Zidon, some twenty miles north of Tyrus, is predicted. For some years Zidon was even more prominent than Tyrus. She was burnt after a revolt against Artaxerxes Ochus in 351 B.C., but later rebuilt.

Chapters 29-30. First Egypt's desolation is announced (verses 1-12). The king of Egypt addressed in this prophecy was Pharaoh-Hophra, called in Greek, Apries. He was the grandson of Pharaoh-Necho, who defeated King Josiah at Meggido (2 Chron. 35:20-27). King Zedekiah of Judah expected help and relief from Pharaoh-Hophra, when Jerusalem was besieged. The Egyptian army under Hophra advanced through Phoenicia and forced the Chaldeans to raise the siege of Jerusalem (Jer. 37:5-7). But the relief was only temporary, for the Egyptian army had to retire. The prophet Jeremiah announced also the doom of Hophra, associating it with Zedekiah's doom: "Thus saith the LORD, Behold I will give Pharaoh-Hophra, King of Egypt, into the hands of his enemies, and into the hand of them that seek his life; as I gave Zedekiah, King of Judah, into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon, his enemy, and that sought his life" (Jer. 44:30).

But have these predictions been fulfilled? Did Egypt pass through a period of forty years' desolation and did a restoration take place after the forty years? Critics claim that these predictions were never literally fulfilled and that Nebuchadnezzar did not invade Egypt during the reign of Hophra. They point to the historical evidence that Amasis followed Hophra as King of Egypt, and under his reign Egypt was in a very flourishing condition. The historian, Herodotus, gives this information, and it is fully confirmed by Egyptian records on monuments. But did the prophet Ezekiel predict that Egypt should be invaded by Nebuchadnezzar during the reign of Pharaoh-Hophra? His predictions of disaster for Israel by trusting in Egypt had been used by the Assyrian officer in addressing Hezekiah: "Now, behold, thou trustest upon the staff of this bruised reed, upon Egypt, on which, if a man lean, it will go into his hand, and pierce it; so is Pharaoh, King of Egypt, unto all that trust on him" (2 Kings 18:21). And so it was. Egypt gave no help to Israel and only wounded them grievously, as a staff which breaks under the weight of him who leaneth upon it breaks and pierces the hand. Whenever God's people turn to Egypt (the type of the world) for help, and form ungodly alliances, they do so to their own hurt and shame.

Verses 13-16 predict a future restoration of Egypt. Isaiah also shows its future history, both in judgment and in blessing (chapter 19). Yet the prediction of Ezekiel that Egypt after the forty years should be restored and be the basest of all kingdoms and shall have no more rule, but be in a diminished condition, excludes the application of this prophecy to the coming millennium. Egypt had such a period of forty years' devastation, though the exact history of it may not be known to us. Prophecy is not learned by historical events, but history is revealed in prophecy. We believe prophecies, not because history has measured up to them, but we believe them because they are the inerrant Word of God. After Egypt's sorrowful forty years' experience and dispersion, this proud country went into a steady decline, and the Word of God was literally fulfilled when it became the basest of kingdoms, so that Israel put confidence no longer in Egypt. After Nebuchadnezzar's

raid, Egypt declined and sank lower still under the Persians and the Ptolemies, until she became the granary of Rome. And this degradation has continued throughout the centuries of this age, so that Egypt is literally the basest of the kingdoms. That she will play her part in the future at the close of our age we learn from Daniel's prophecy (Dan. 11:36-45). Egypt will rise into prominence ere long in connection with the present-day world conflict.

Then follows another prediction, the conquest of Egypt by Nebuchadnezzar, the King of Babylon (verses 12-21). This also was literally fulfilled. In chapter 30 we find first a prophecy as to the desolation of Egypt and her allies (verses 1-13).

The prophet's first utterance is concerning the day, "Howl ye! Alas for the day! For the day is near, even the day of the Lord is near, a cloudy day; it shall be the time of the Gentiles." What day is this? Other prophets mention the day of Jehovah as a day of judgment and wrath when the Lord will deal in His righteousness with the nations of the earth (Isa. 2, 13:6, 9; Joel 1:15, 2:1, 11, 3:14; Amos 5:18, 20; Obad. 15; Zeph. 1:7, 14; Zech. 14:1, etc). This day in its final meaning is the day on which the Lord Jesus Christ will be visibly revealed from heaven. It is mentioned in the New Testament in 1 Thess. 5:2; 2 Thess. 2:2 (where "day of Christ" should be rendered "day of the Lord") and 2 Peter 3:10. This day will bring "man's day" to a close and usher in a new age, when righteousness shall reign as grace reigns now. This day of coming judgment of all nations is seen also here in a prophetic perspective. All previous judgments of nations as announced by God's prophet's, nations which sinned against Israel the chosen people, foreshadow the one great day, when the times of the Gentiles end in the revealed manner (Dan. 2:34, 7:10-14). What came upon Egypt in the past through divine judgment will happen to the Gentile nations in the future at the close of our age, "when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ" (2 Thess. 1:7-8). Ever since the times of the Gentiles began with Nebuchadnezzar the divinely appointed head (Jer. 27:4-8), this day of the Lord has been drawing near, till now, with the stupendous present-day events, we can see this day rapidly approaching.

Two weeks after the lamentations over Pharaoh, the prophet uttered this solemn and most impressive elegy over the multitude of Egypt and the heathen nations who have gone into sheol. It has been called a weird Dantesque funeral march over the whole heathen world; but it is more than that. We look here into sheol and see the nations gathered there, stripped of their glory, in deepest abasement and shame. Their bodies are in the pit, the grave, and their souls in sheol, the unseen regions. God's patience was exhausted with them, the measure of their wickedness became full; then judgments swept them off the earth and they passed away and descended into sheol. And what irony there is connected with it! "Whom does thou surpass in beauty? Go down and be thou laid with the uncircumcised." And as the king came there with his multitudes, whom did they find there? Asshur, that is Assyria, is mentioned first: "Asshur is there and all her company." She was a cruel, pitiless, destructive power, and now she, who once caused "terror in the land of the living," is helpless, with all her power gone in the unseen world. Elam, Meshech, Tubal, Edom, the princes of the North, and the Zidonians are named as being in existence there. Once great powers, but now cut off, they lie with the uncircumcised in weakness and disgrace. While in chapter 31:16 the dead and gone nations were comforted over Pharaoh who descended into sheol; in this passage Pharaoh, who sees these nations, now is himself comforted as he discovers his former enemies there.

A similar statement about sheol as a place of departed nations, who are nevertheless conscious, is found in the book of Isaiah. There the king of Babylon is seen in his descent into sheol. "Sheol from beneath is moved for thee to meet thee at thy coming; it stirreth up the dead for thee, all the chieftains of the earth, it hath raised up from their thrones all the kings of the nations. All they shall speak and say unto thee, Art thou also become weak as we? Art thou become like unto us? Thy pomps are brought down to the grave, and the noise of thy viols, the worm is spread under thee, and the worms over thee?" (Is. 14:9-11). Solemn words these are behind which stands the undeniable truth of a conscious and eternal existence of the human race. But only the New Testament Scriptures give the full light upon the future state.

The destruction of the principal cities of Egypt is announced in verses 13-19. All has been literally fulfilled. Noph is Memphis, the seat of the worship of Ptah and Apis. The city "No" is Thebes, the ancient capital of Egypt, called by the Greeks "Diospolis," the city of Jupiter. Her ruins bear witness of the past, indescribable splendor. The great temple of Carnac stood there. The other places mentioned are Sin, which is Pelusium, now completely buried in sand. Aven is

Heliopolis, the center once of sun-worship; Pi-beseth is Bubastis, where the sacred cats were mummified, likewise a desolation now. Tehaphnehes or Daphnis also passed through judgment. What a remarkable fulfillment of what the Lord had announced through His prophet! May we here be reminded in our solemn times that the same omniscient Lord, who knows the end from the beginning, has spoken concerning this age, now closing in its predicted apostasy. Nations today steeped in bloodshed; nations filled with covetousness and hatred; an apostate professing Christendom and the indifferent masses have written over against them the judgment-wrath of the coming king. And He who fulfilled the words spoken through Ezekiel will also fulfill every other prediction uttered by His holy prophets and apostles.

The chapter closes with a prophetic description of the work of King Nebuchadnezzar, whom God used to execute His righteous judgments.

Chapter 31. Pharaoh's greatness is described in the first part of the chapter (verses 1-9). He is compared to the Assyrian, once so powerful and proud. The fall and desolation of the proud monarch under the picture of a tree follows in verses 10-14. The overthrow of Egypt and the resulting consternation among the nations is predicted in the last section of this chapter (verses 15-18).

Chapter 32. The lamentation over Pharaoh is contained in verses 1-10, followed by the final announcement of the sword of the King of Babylon, Nebuchadnezzar, in verses 11-16. The most interesting part in this last chapter of these great predictions of national judgments is the funeral dirge and the unveiling of the unseen world (verses 17-32).

II. PREDICTIONS AFTER THE DESTRUCTION OF JERUSALEM (33-48)

CHAPTERS 33-34

A. The Watchman, the False Shepherds, and the True Shepherd

1. The renewed call of Ezekiel as watchman (33:1-20)
2. Ezekiel's mouth opened after Jerusalem's fall is announced (33:21-33)
3. Message against the shepherds of Israel (34:1-19)
4. The True Shepherd and restoration promised (34:20-26)

Chapter 33:1-20. The commission of Ezekiel as watchman corresponds to the same call in chapter 3:16-21. In verses 10-20 the prophet announces certain principles of divine justice.

The exiles knew that the just wrath of God rested upon them as a nation and that their sins were unforgiven. Therefore they asked, "If our transgressions and sins be upon us, and we pine away in them, how should we then live?" They also accused the Lord of inconsistency by saying, "the way of the Lord is not equal" (verse 20; see also 18:25, 29). The answer Jehovah sends them makes known the principles on which He will deal with them individually as a just God. "O ye house of Israel, I will judge you every one after his ways." Judgment rested upon them as a nation, but the individual still could turn to the Lord in repentance. What a wonderful declaration it is which is recorded in verse 11! "Say unto them, as I live, saith the Lord GOD, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live; turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?" What compassion and mercy! As it was a day of judgment which had come upon them, true repentance was the needed thing. A past righteousness could not shield them from the judgment if sin had been committed. "As for the wickedness of the wicked, he shall not fall thereby in the day that he turneth from his wickedness." The wicked confessing and forsaking his sin would find mercy and forgiveness, while those who were impenitent would surely die and not live. "None of his sins that he hath committed shall be mentioned unto him; he hath done that which is lawful and right; he shall surely live." And this gracious promise was given in anticipation of the work of the cross, the redemption by the blood of Christ, by which God's righteousness is declared in passing thus over sins of Old Testament believers who turned to God (Rom. 3:25). The principles of divine justice are summed up in verses 18 and 19: "When the righteous turneth from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity,

he shall even die thereby. But if the wicked turn from his wickedness, and do that which is lawful and right, he shall live thereby." Needless to say, all this must be viewed as under the law-covenant. But their complaint that the way of the Lord is not equal was wrong, it was their way which was not equal. They were to be judged each according to what he had done.

Verses 33:21-33. In chapter 24:27, the promise had been given to Ezekiel that when the one who escaped from Jerusalem when it fell, arrived, the prophet should no longer be dumb. This dumbness evidently does not mean that he was continually silent, without uttering a word, for he prophesied what is written in chapters 25-32. He was to be dumb concerning Israel; the intervening chapters, before the messenger came, concern other nations. And now that promised messenger arrived and his mouth was opened again to prophesy about Israel. The first message is one of rebuke, describing their condition.

Verses 34:1-19. The shepherds of Israel were the kings and princes and all who had authority over them. The prophet Jeremiah had received a similar message (Jer. 23:1-2). These shepherds of Israel were responsible for the deplorable condition of the flock. Utterly selfish, they cared not for the sheep of His pasture; they feared not God nor did they have a heart for God's people. The flock was scattered and spoiled.

Such was the sad condition of the people Israel. And when the Lord Jesus appeared in their midst to seek the lost sheep of the house of Israel, He found them as sheep without a shepherd, and He had compassion upon them (Mark 6:34). But they rejected Him and the Shepherd was smitten. Zechariah's prophecy was fulfilled: "Awake, O sword, against My Shepherd, and against the man that is My fellow, saith the LORD of hosts. Smite the shepherd and the sheep shall be scattered, and I will turn Mine hand upon the little ones" (Zech. 13:7). The false shepherds, the Pharisees and the Sadducees, were a curse to the people, and the leaders were against the Shepherd. They delivered Him into the hands of the Gentiles. And now for nearly 2,000 years the sheep have been scattered and peeled, wandering among the nations of the earth (Luke 21:24). What is their hope and coming blessing we learn from this great prophecy.

(What is said in this chapter of the false shepherds who ill-treated the flock of God, His ancient people, may also be applied to the false shepherds, the hirelings in the professing church. See Acts 20:28-35 and 1 Peter 5:2-3.)

In verses 7-10, judgment is pronounced upon these false shepherds, and after that the Lord announces the deliverance of His flock (verses 11-19).

"Behold, I myself, even I, will search for My sheep and will seek them out." Jehovah arises in behalf of His scattered sheep. He will Himself exercise the office of a true shepherd, seeking out His flock. The cloudy and dark day (the times of the Gentiles) is gone and another morning breaks, the morning for which His people have waited so long. What He will do at this time for His scattered sheep is now fully proclaimed. "I will bring them out from the people, and gather them from the countries, and will bring them to their own land and feed them upon the mountains of Israel by the rivers, and in all the inhabited places of the country. I will feed them in a good pasture, and upon the high mountains of Israel shall their fold be; there shall they lie down in a good fold, and in a fat pasture shall they feed upon the mountains of Israel. I will feed My flock, and I will cause them to lie down, saith the Lord." And all this has not yet come to pass. Some apply these words to the restoration of a remnant from the Babylonian captivity and see no future fulfillment of these promises. It is evident that the returning remnant did not possess these blessings. Others make a spiritual application and claim that it means the Church and the blessing which Gentiles will receive as the sheep of Christ. This is the common path which most commentators follow. It needs no lengthy refutation, for neither Ezekiel, nor the other prophets know anything of the Church and the "other sheep," Gentiles saved by grace and with believing Jews constituting the one flock (John 10:16; Ephesians 3:1-6). This is unrevealed in the Old Testament. These gracious words of promise have not yet been fulfilled, nor will they be fulfilled as long as the Church, the body of Christ, is being gathered out from all nations. All must wait till God's purpose in this age is accomplished. When the Church is complete as to its elect number, when the Lord has come for His saints and the true Church has passed from earth into glory, then will the Lord turn in mercy to His people Israel and these promises given by Ezekiel will be fulfilled.

Verses 20-26. Some have applied this to Zerubbabel, the head of Judah at the return from, the Babylonish captivity; this is done by those who deny a future restoration of Israel. Others take these words in a strictly literal sense and teach that David the King will become the head of the nation once more, and raised, from the dead, will be the one shepherd over His people. It is not David, but He who is according to the flesh the Son of David and David's Lord as well. The one Shepherd can only be the Messiah. Numerous passages show that David's name is used in a typical sense. Jeremiah announced, "They shall serve the Lord their God, and David their King, whom I will raise up unto them" (Jer. 30:9). Here David stands typically for Christ, the Messiah of Israel, for He is raised up unto them when Jacob's trouble is ended (verses 1-7). Of Him Jeremiah speaks more fully in chapter 23:5-6: "Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. In His days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely; and this is the name whereby He shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS." The two, Judah and Israel, will be reunited by the one Shepherd. The Messiah of Israel is also mentioned by Hosea as David: "Afterward shall the children of Israel return, and seek the LORD their God and David their King, and shall fear the LORD and His goodness in the latter days" (Hosea 3:5). Isaiah speaks of the sure mercies of David, and adds, "Behold I have given Him for a witness to the people, a leader (prince) and commander to the people." It is therefore not David, raised from the dead, but the Prince of Peace, who was here once to seek the lost sheep of the house of Israel and who comes again to save the remnant of His people Israel and to receive the Throne of David (Isa. 9:6-7).

When the Lord is doing all that is promised here and the remnant has accepted the long rejected Messiah-King, a covenant of peace and blessing will follow. "And I will make with them a covenant of peace, and will cause the evil beasts to cease out of the land, and they shall dwell safely in the wilderness and sleep in the woods. Peace will come to the land and to the whole earth with His coming. The evil beasts, the Gentile world powers (Dan. 7) will no longer devastate the land. All will be peace and safety, so that they can sleep peacefully in the woods. "There shall be showers of blessing" (verse 26). How often a hymn is sung based upon this promise:

There shall be showers of blessing, This is the promise of love.

But how few who sing it know that the promise belongs first of all to Israel. When the Lord comes, the showers of blessing will be poured forth upon His people and upon all nations. It will be "the times of refreshing" (Acts 3:19).

Verses 27 and 28 give a brief description of the millennial kingdom. Groaning creation will then be delivered and the wild beasts will have their natures changed (compare verse 28 with Isa. 11:6-9 and Rom. 8:19-22). There is no need to speculate on the meaning of "the plant of renown," which will be raised up. It is none other than He, who, as to His humiliation, is described as "a tender plant" and "as a root out of a dry ground" (Isa. 53:2). But now He appears in all His glory, and becomes the plant of renown. Their shame and suffering will then be over. He will be their God and they will be His people.

CHAPTERS 35-36 Judgment Announced and Israel's Final Restoration Promised

1. The message against Mount Seir and Idumea (35)
2. The message of comfort to Israel (36)

Chapter 35. This is another judgment message, which is closely related to the coming restoration of Israel. When the Lord is merciful to His people and bestows upon them the promised blessings, He will also deal with their enemies in judgment. Edom was the most bitter enemy of Israel, their blood-relation. The judgment threatened here was executed upon Edom; but it has a prophetic meaning of the judgment which is in store for the enemies of God's people when the times of the Gentiles end and God arises in behalf of His suffering and persecuted people.

Then, in verses 14-15, we hear of the time of rejoicing which will come for His people when their enemies are judged (Deut. 32:43).

Chapter 36. With this chapter the great prophetic utterances of Ezekiel begin concerning the future restoration and blessing of Israel. From here on to the end of the book, all is still unfulfilled, nor can it be fulfilled until the Lord Jesus Christ comes again and is enthroned as King. The first seven verses announce once more the future judgment of Israel's enemies. Then comes the promised return to the land (verses 8-15). The mountains of Israel, barren so long, shall be inhabited again. Israel's past sins and chastisement are reviewed in verses 16-20, and then comes that great message of restoration and blessing through grace in that day when their once rejected King returns and they bow before Him. The characteristic words in verses 23-28 are the words "I will do." It is the word of sovereign grace. Eighteen times Jehovah says what He will do. They are the "I wills" of Israel's hope and coming glory.

He will gather them from among the nations and all countries and bring them back to their own land. Only a superficial expositor can speak of a fulfillment when they returned from Babylon. But even if this were so, though it is not, the verses which follow have never been fulfilled in the past. The cleansing of the nation is next promised: "I will sprinkle clean water upon you and ye shall be clean." It refers us to the water mixed with the ashes of the red heifer, which was sprinkled with a hyssop on the unclean, typifying the precious blood of Christ in its cleansing power (Heb. 9:13-14, 10:22). Thus, when the people of Israel believe on Him and look upon Him whom they pierced (Zech. 12:10), they will be cleansed. "In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness" (Zech. 13:1). Then follows the promise of the new birth of Israel. "A new heart will I also give you, and a new spirit will I put within you." The stony heart is to be taken away and they will receive a heart of flesh. Our Lord had this passage in mind when He talked with Nicodemus about the new birth. Nicodemus, the teacher in Israel, was ignorant of the fact that this new birth for Israel is necessary in order to be in that coming kingdom and to receive its blessings. Therefore the Lord said to him, "If I have told you earthly things (about Israel and the new birth as the way into the kingdom) and ye believe not, how shall ye believe if I tell you of heavenly things?" (the heavenly blessings which follow His sacrificial death).

CHAPTERS 37-48 The Future Blessings of Israel, the Nation Regathered, Their Enemies Overthrown, the Millennial Temple, and the Division of the Land

1. The vision of the dry bones and Judah and Israel reunited (37)
2. Gog and Magog and their destruction (38-39)
3. The millennial temple, its worship, and the division of the land (40-48)

Chapter 37. The future restoration of Israel, both nationally and spiritually, is now shown to the prophet in a vision. What these dry bones represent and what their revival mean, is explained by the Lord Himself. It may be used in application in different ways, to illustrate certain truths, but the true and only interpretation is the one which is given by the Lord in verses 11-14. But there is an erroneous interpretation of a serious nature which is widely taught and believed among many Christians. Because "graves" are mentioned, beside the dry bones and their resurrection, it is being taught that the vision means physical resurrection. Systems, like Millennial Dawnism, alias International Bible Student Association and others, which teach the so-called larger hope, a second chance for the impenitent dead, the restitution of the lost, teach that all the Israelites who have died in their sins will be brought out of their graves and then be saved. They use this vision to confirm this invention. An advocate of this theory declared that all the Christ-hating Pharisees and Sadducees who lived when our Lord was on earth would be raised up when He comes and then believe on Him. Matthew 23:39 was used by him as an argument. These restitution teachers also teach that inasmuch as Israel will have a second chance when they are raised from the dead, the Gentile dead will share also in the same. It needs no argument to refute this. The Word of God teaches a twofold resurrection: A first resurrection and a second resurrection, a resurrection of the just and a resurrection of the unjust (John 5:28-29). According to the above theory, there would have to be a third resurrection, a resurrection for a second chance and ultimate salvation of those who died in their sins. Of such a resurrection the Bible knows nothing.

In this vision of the dry bones, physical resurrection is used as a type of the national restoration of Israel. It is used in the same way in Daniel 12:2. In that passage the sleep in the dust of the earth is symbolical of their national condition. And when their national sleep ends there will be an awakening. When we read here in Ezekiel of graves, it must not be taken to mean literal graves; the graves are symbolical of the nation as being buried among the Gentiles. If these dry bones meant the physical dead of the nation, how could it be explained that they speak and say, "Our bones are dried up, and our hope is lost?" The same figure of speech is used in the New Testament. Of the prodigal it is said, "For this my son was dead, and is alive again" (Luke 15:24). Yet he was not physically dead, nor was he made alive physically. Therefore, this vision has nothing whatever to do with a physical resurrection. The late Dr. Bullinger, whose erroneous suggestions have led astray some, also taught that the vision of the dry bones includes resurrection as well as restoration.

Equally bad is that spiritualizing method which takes a vision like this, as well as the hundreds of promises of a coming restoration, and applies it all to the Church, ignoring totally the claims of Israel and their promised future of glory. This is the general trend of commentators.

Verses 15-28 predict the reunion of Judah and Israel with one king over them. That King is our Lord. Then the angelic message given to the Virgin when the coming incarnation was announced will be fulfilled: "The Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of His Father David, and He shall reign over the house of Jacob forever and of His Kingdom there shall be no end" (Luke 1:32-33).

Chapters 38-39. There will be at that time of restoration a great and final invasion of the land of Israel. Gog and Magog will invade the land "that is brought back from the sword, and is gathered out of many people." The invaders come "against the mountains of Israel which have always been waste; but it is brought forth out of the nations, and they shall dwell safely, all of them." In verse 11, the evil purpose of the invader is made known. From all this we learn that the invasion takes place at the time when the Lord has brought back His people and resumed His relationship with the remnant of Israel.

The invasion will happen some time after the beastly empire with its beasthead, the revived Roman empire, in its final ten kingdom form and the clay, with the little horn as leader (Dan. 7; Rev. 13:1-10) and the false prophet, the personal Antichrist (Rev. 13:11, etc.) have been dealt with in judgment (Rev. 19:19-20). The stone out of heaven has then fallen upon the feet of the great dream image of Nebuchadnezzar; and as far as the western confederated world power is concerned, it is now ended. But other nations gather now for an assault. It is a northern confederacy which sweeps southward to invade the land, as Antiochus Epiphanes did in the past, as well as the Assyrian in the days of Isaiah. These final invading hosts, under the leadership of a powerful king, come like a storm, and like a cloud to cover the land.

But who are they?

The leader is the prince of Rosh (not as the authorized version has it "the chief prince") of Meshech and Tubal. This prince is the head of the confederacy and with him allied are Persia, Cush, Phut, Gomer and Togormah. They come out of the north, or, as it is in Hebrew, "out of the uttermost north" (verse 15). Inasmuch as the Prince of Rosh is addressed in verse 3 as Gog, we take it that Gog is the name given to this prince and leader of these nations. His dwelling place is in the land of Magog. We know from Genesis 10:2, that Magog was the second son of Japheth. Gomer, Tubal and Meshech were also sons of Japheth; Togormah was a grandson of Japheth, being the third son of Gomer. Magog's land was located in what is called today the Caucasus and the adjoining steppes. And the three, Rosh, Meshech, and Tubal were called by the ancients Scythians. They roamed as nomads in the country around and north of the Black and the Caspian Seas, and were known as the wildest barbarians. We learn from this that the invading forces, which fall into Israel's land in the future, when Israel has been regathered, come from a territory north of Palestine which today is in the hands of Russia. And here we call attention to the prince, this northern leader, or king, who is the head of all these nations. He is the prince of Rosh. Careful research has established the fact that the progenitor of Rosh was Tiraz (Gen. 10:2), and that Rosh is Russia. All students of prophecy are agreed that this is the correct meaning of Rosh. The prince of Rosh, means, therefore, the prince or king of the Russian empire. But he also is in control of Meshech and Tubal, which are reproduced in the modern

Moscow and Tobolsk. Russia, we may well conclude from this, will furnish the man who will lead this confederacy of nations. We write this at a time when Russia is passing through horrors upon horrors. A revolution changed the autocratic government into a democracy, and that gave way to anarchy, produced by satanic powers. From what is written in this chapter, we learn that Russia will ultimately return to the old regime, and will once more become a monarchy to fulfill her final destiny as made known in this sublime prophecy. Well known it is that Russia has been in the past the most pronounced and bitterest enemy of the Jewish people. What she passes through today is but a fulfillment of what the Lord has spoken: "I will curse them that curse thee." Today, the Jews in Russia may have bright hopes of getting their rights and complete emancipation at last. For a time this may come to pass, but ultimately Russia will turn against them; and, as Pharaoh did, when Israel had left his domain, so this coming king of the north, the prince of Rosh, when Israel is back in the land, will turn against them.

With him come the other nations. Persia, which is even now in part occupied by Russia, will finally be a vassal to this prince of Rosh. Ethiopia and Phut are also in this confederacy. There also is Gomer and all its bands. Gomer, says Delitzsch, "is most probably the tribe of the Cimmerians, who dwell, according to Herodotus, on the Maeotis, in the Taurian Chersonesus, and from whom are descended the Curmi or Cymry in Wales and Britain, whose relation to the Germanic Cimbri is still in obscurity." Valuable information is given in the Talmud; Gomer is there stated to be the Germani, the Germans. That the descendants of the Gomer moved northward and established themselves in parts of Germany seems to be an established fact. All this is of much interest. Germany did not belong to the Roman empire, at least the greater part of Germany was never conquered by Rome. She will therefore not participate in the Western confederacy. Will she then become united to Russia and march under the prince of Rosh into the land of Israel? We cannot be sure about all these things. This, however, we know, that a powerful confederacy of nations, under the leadership of the prince of Rosh, Meshech and Tubal, will come up against Immanuel's land, when Israel has been restored and dwells safely.

The judgment and destruction of the invading hosts are vividly pictured in the thirty-fourth to thirty-ninth chapters as well as their burial. Compare verses 17-20 with Rev. 19:17-18; though the great supper in Revelation and Jehovah's sacrifice here in Ezekiel are not identical, yet both are judgments. The final paragraphs of this chapter (verses 21-29) give the promise of glory.

The last verse contains an important statement. The Lord says that He hides His face no more from them. This in itself shows that all this is not yet here; for still He hides His face from them. The hiding of His face from them will be no more when His Spirit is poured upon them. "I have poured out My Spirit upon the house of Israel, saith the Lord GOD." There comes then a time when the house of Israel, the literal descendants of Abraham, will receive an outpouring of the Spirit of God. Such is also the message of Joel, in which restoration and spiritual blessing, through the outpouring of the Spirit are blended together (Joel 2). We call attention to another passage which should be linked with the statement in this chapter. Isaiah 32:13-18 is a very striking prophecy. There is an announcement made first of all concerning the judgment which is to fall upon Israel's land. "Upon the land of My people shall come up thorns and briers; yea, upon all the houses of joy in the joyous city," etc. But this is not to last forever. An "until" follows. "Until the Spirit be poured upon us from on high." This is the same future outpouring of the Spirit of God. Up to now it has not been. The Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost came to form the body of Christ; but this outpouring in connection with Israel has another significance.

Chapters 40-48. The final nine chapters of this book form the climax of the great prophecies of Ezekiel; they belong to the most difficult in the entire prophetic Word. Once more the hand of the Lord rests upon the seer and in the visions of God he is brought into the land of Israel. In the very beginning of this grand finale we learn therefore that the visions concern the land of Israel. Let us remember, that after the fall of Jerusalem had been announced to Ezekiel (chapter 33:21), his prophetic utterances and visions concern the future when Israel is to be regathered and restored to the land. The previous two chapters dealt with the last invasion of the land of Israel and the complete overthrow of Gog and its hordes. The vision contained in this last section follows after Israel's final deliverance. So much is clear as to the time when the prophecies of these eight chapters will be accomplished. They have not been fulfilled in the past, certainly not in the remnant which returned under Zerubbabel and Ezra. Nor have these prophecies been fulfilled since then. All is future. Only when the Lord has gathered Judah and Israel, when He has established His glorious Kingdom in their midst and

delivered His people and the land from the last invader, will this last vision of Ezekiel become history.

This disposes then at once of the different modes of interpretation employed by so many expositors of this book. These are the following:

1. The theory of interpretation which looks upon the vision of these chapters as fulfilled in the return of the remnant from Babylon. One of the expositors who follows this line stated that these visions are "an ideal representation of the Jewish state about to be restored after the captivity." It does not need much argument to show that this mode of interpretation is erroneous. The temple which the remnant built does in no way whatever correspond with the magnificent structure which Ezekiel beheld in his vision. The fact is, if this temple is a literal building (as it assuredly is) it has never yet been erected. Furthermore, it is distinctly stated that the glory of the Lord returned to the temple and made His dwelling place there, the same glory which Ezekiel had seen departing from the temple and from Jerusalem. But the glory did not return to the second temple. No glory cloud filled that house. And furthermore no high priest is mentioned in the worship of the temple Ezekiel describes, but the Jews after their return from Babylon had high priests again. Nor can the stream of healing waters flowing from the temple as seen by Ezekiel be in any way applied to the restoration from the Babylonian captivity. Expositors who follow this mode of interpretation claim that all has been fulfilled and that there is nothing in store for Israel in the future, It is the most superficial method and totally wrong.

2. Another interpretation claims that the whole vision sprang from the imagination of the prophet. That it is all an ideal description of something which the expositor himself is unable to define. This mode of interpretation needs no further mention and answer.

3. The third interpretation of these chapters is the allegorical, which spiritualizes everything, and claims that the Christian Church, its earthly glory and blessing, is symbolically described by the prophet. This is the weakest of all and yet the most accepted. But this theory gives no exposition of the text, is vague and abounds in fanciful applications, while the greater part of this vision is left unexplained even in its allegorical meaning, for it evidently has no such meaning at all.

(What strange applications have been made of this vision! We quote from The New Century Bible which says concerning this temple:

"Its details shed a light nowhere else vouchsafed to us upon the ideals of Hebrew art, influenced perhaps, by Babylonian masterpieces, yet entirely national and Puritan; and they embody in material form Ezekiel's sober but intense conception of religion, as completely as the Gothic cathedrals translate into concrete and abiding stone and marble the soaring visions of medieval Christianity.")

The true interpretation is the literal one which looks upon these chapters as a prophecy yet unfulfilled and to be fulfilled when Israel has been restored by the Shepherd and when His glory is once more manifested in the midst of His people. The great building seen in his prophetic vision will then come into existence and all will be accomplished.

But while we are sure of the strictly future fulfillment of this final vision, the many details which abound in these chapters can hardly be fully interpreted as to their meaning. Much is obscure. That all has a deeper meaning we do not doubt; and here and there we shall offer suggestions, but many things we shall have to pass over. Before we turn to the text and open up the contents of these chapters, a telescopic view of the whole section is in order and will be helpful in our further studies.

As it will be impossible to give a detailed explanation of this future temple we give an analysis of these chapters. Our larger work on Ezekiel will be found helpful in a better understanding of this portion of this book.

I. THE DESCRIPTION OF THE TEMPLE (40-47)

CHAPTER 40

1. The introduction (40:1-4)
2. The gate toward the east (40:5-16)
3. The outer court (40:17-27)
4. The inner court (40:28-37)
5. The tables for the offerings and the chambers for the inner court (40:38-47)
6. The porch of the house (40:48-49)

CHAPTER 41

1. The holy place (41:1-2)
2. The most holy (41:3-4)
3. The side chambers (41:5-11)
4. The hinder buildings and the measurement (41:12-14)
5. Description of the interior of the temple (41:15-26)

CHAPTER 42

1. The priest's chambers in the inner court (42:1-14)
2. The final measurements (42:15-20)

II. THE TEMPLE WORSHIP (43-44)

CHAPTER 43

1. The return of the glory of the Lord and filling the house (43:1-9)
2. The address to the nation (43:10-12)
3. The dimensions of the altar (43:13-17)
4. The offerings to be bought (43:18-27)

CHAPTER 44

1. The outward eastern gate for the prince (44:1-3)
2. The charge concerning the strangers and the rebellious tribes (44:4-14)
3. The charge concerning the priests, the sons of Zadok (44:15-27)
4. The inheritance of the priests (44:28-31)

CHAPTER 45

1. The portions of the priests, the Levites, of the whole house of Israel, and the prince (45:1-8)
2. Concerning the prince (45:9-17)
3. The feast of Passover and the feast of tabernacles (45:18-25)

CHAPTER 46

1. The worship of the prince (46:1-8)
2. Further instruction as to worship (46:9-15)
3. Concerning the prince, his sons and his servants (46:16-18)

4. A final description of places in the temple (46:19-24)

III. THE VISION CONCERNING THE LAND (47-48)

CHAPTER 47

1. The waters of healing from the temple (47:1-12)
2. Borders of the land (47:13-21)
3. Concerning the stranger in the land (47:22-23)

CHAPTER 48

1. The portion of the seven tribes (48:1-7)
2. The oblation for the sanctuary, for the city, and for the prince (48:8-20)
3. The gates of the city and its new name (48:30-35)

Without entering into the measurements, the architecture, and other features of this great temple, we point out a few things which are important. First, as to the contents of the interior of this temple. The words "silver and gold" are not mentioned once in Ezekiel 40-48. Silver typifies grace in redemption, being the ransom money. Gold typifies divine righteousness. Both are absent in the millennial temple, for what the silver and gold foreshadows is now realized in His redeemed earthly people. The heavenly Jerusalem has gold in it, but silver is not mentioned in the description of the city in Revelation 21.

The chief ornaments in this temple are cherubim and palm trees; they were along the wall of the temple. So it was in the temple of Solomon. "And he carved all the walls of the house round about with carved figures of cherubim and palm trees and open flowers within and without" (1 Kings 6:29).

A palm tree was between cherub and cherub. As stated in the previous chapter, palms are the emblems of victory and remind us of the feast of tabernacles. They were seen high above on the posts. Cherubim speak of the presence of the Lord, who enters this house and is worshipped here. But the cherubim here have only two faces and not four as in the opening vision of this book (1:10-12). As often stated, these celestial beings tell out the Lord Jesus Christ in His personal glory. The lion, His kingly glory; the face of a man, His true humanity; the face of an ox, His servant character; and the face of an eagle, His heavenly origin and destiny, Son of God. It is not without meaning that the face of a man and the face of a young lion are seen on these cherubim and each face looks upon a palm tree. Its symbolical meaning is obvious. The Lord Jesus Christ has come again and visited the earth and the temple and appeared as the Glorified Man and the Lion of the tribe of Judah. His is the victory and the glory. When at last this temple stands in Israel's land, and its meaning and measurements, as well as other details, are fully known and understood, it will be known then that His blessed work, victory and person are symbolically seen throughout this house.

In the forty-third chapter we read of the returning glory. The glory will fill this house.

We must notice here especially, that the vision the prophet beheld was "according to the appearance of the vision" he saw before the destruction of the city; "the visions were like the visions," which he saw "by the river Chebar." This points back to the first chapter, when first by the river Chebar the heavens were opened to Ezekiel the priest, and he saw visions of God. At the close of that chapter, we read after the recorded vision, "This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the LORD." The same vision of glory appeared again to him when Ezekiel had left the river Chebar and gone into the plain (3:22-23). Then he had witnessed the gradual and solemn departure of the glory of the Lord. "Then the glory of the LORD departed from off the threshold of the house, and stood over the cherubim. And the cherubim lifted up their wings, and mounted up from the earth in my sight ... They stood at the door of the east gate of the house of the LORD, and the glory of the God of Israel was over them above" (10:18-19). Then finally the Shekinah went up and disappeared. "And

the glory of the LORD went up from the midst of the city and stood upon the mountain which is on the east side of the city" (11:23).

The similarity of the departure of the glory of the Lord from the temple before its destruction by Nebuchadnezzar and its future return to the temple of Ezekiel's vision is most interesting. It is the same glory which departed, which returns; it is the same Lord, who resumes relationship with His earthly people. The withdrawal of the visible glory of the Lord meant the departure of His gracious presence from among His people, which was followed by judgment. The return of the visible glory means the return of His gracious presence among them, and that the judgment, which has lasted so long, is forever gone. The departure of glory was through the east gate and was finally seen upon the mountain at the east side of the city; the return is from the way of the east, and the glory of the Lord enters through the east gate. But it is not only a visible glory, but the Lord Himself is in the Shekinah, Ezekiel beheld above the firmament and the cherubim, when he saw the glory of the Lord at the river Chebar, he heard His voice. And here also His voice is mentioned "like the sound of many waters." From verses 6 and 7, we learn, that after the glory had entered the house, the Lord addressed the prophet out of the house.

The Lord Himself in all His glory is manifested and enters the temple, the place of His rest and glory. The cherubim will be seen in person, and from the New Testament we learn that angels will be with Him also. His glory will then cover Israel's land and the earth. "His glory covered the heavens, and the earth was full of His praise. And His brightness was as the light; He had bright beams out of His side (marginal reading) and there was the hiding of His power." This is how Habakkuk describes the same manifestation of the glory of the Lord and the coming of the Lord of glory. (See Isa. 40:5, 58:8, 60:1-2, 66:18). Isaiah's great vision may be viewed as foreshadowing this manifestation of His glory. He saw the Lord sitting upon a throne and His train filled the temple. The seraphim cried one unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts, the whole earth is full of His glory. And as the prophet was cleansed and his iniquity taken away, and as he became the messenger of the Lord (Isa. 6), so the nation Israel will be cleansed and forgiven and become the messenger of Jehovah. (Such an application seems warranted in view of the message Ezekiel received from the Lord to the people, verses 6-12.)

When the Spirit had transported the prophet into the inner court of the temple, he discovered that the glory of the Lord filled the house. We repeat it, no such thing happened when the returned Jewish remnant had entered the temple. When the old men, who had seen the Solomonic temple and knew of its glory, beheld the foundation of the second temple, they wept (Ezra 3:12). When the house was dedicated, no glory returned, no cloud was seen, no Shekinah filled the house. Nor is it a spiritual glory, the glory of the church, as so many seem to believe.

But Haggai, who with Zechariah prophesied during the rebuilding of the temple, uttered a significant prophecy while that second house was building--a prophecy which must be linked with Ezekiel's vision of the returning glory: "For thus saith the LORD of Hosts: yet once, it is a little while, and I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land. And I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come, and I will fill this house with glory" (Haggai 2:6-7). This was not the house they were building. It is a future house, a future temple. That house will be built when the heavens and the earth are being shaken, when all nations shake, and when the desire of all nations, the King of Glory, the Prince of Peace, our Lord comes. Then this house will be filled with glory.

It will be a visible glory. It will be a permanent glory. He will now dwell gloriously in the midst of the children of Israel (verse 7). This visible glory will be seen over Jerusalem, like as it was of old, a cloud by day and a shining, flaming fire by night. "And Jehovah will create over every dwelling place of Mount Zion, and over its convocations a cloud by day and a smoke and the brightness of a flame of fire by night, for over all the glory shall be a covering (Isa. 4:5).

Another acknowledged difficulty is the one concerning the restored sacrifices and ordinances.

But what do these ordinances mean? Here are priests again standing before an altar, bringing bloody sacrifices, burnt offerings, sin offerings and peace offerings. Is this to be taken literally also? Some expositors have stated that all this had a

meaning in the past and could only be true in connection with the second temple. Others attempt to read into it a spiritual meaning. All, or nearly all commentators, think it inconceivable that such sacrifices could ever be brought again in a future temple. Those expositors who combat the premillennial coming of the Lord and the literal restoration of Israel, consider the supposed impossibility of a satisfactory explanation of this part of Ezekiel's visions, the collapse of the premillennial argument.

Sacrifices of bulls and goats were brought by Israel in their past history; the Lord commanded His people to do this. Every Christian knows that these sacrifices foreshadowed the work of Christ, His great sacrifice on the cross. In themselves these sacrifices Israel brought could not take away sins, nor give rest to the conscience, nor could they make the worshipper perfect. The Epistle to the Hebrews demonstrates this fully.

All these sacrifices had a prospective character, looking forward to the work of the cross. And when the Lamb of God died, when His blessed lips uttered the never-to-be-forgotten words, "It is finished," and God's hand rent the veil from top to bottom, the prospective character of these sacrifices was forever ended. The new and living way into God's presence, into the holiest, had been made by His blood. During this age Israel has no temple, and all their Levitical ordinances can no longer be practised by them. As Hosea declared, they are without a sacrifice (Hos. 3:4).

God, during this age, our present age, which began with the rejection of Christ by Israel and ends with His return, is gathering a heavenly people, the Church. The Church has for its worship no earthly place, no temple, but worships in spirit and in truth, in a heavenly sanctuary. There are no sacrifices, priests, altars, in connection with the true Church, the body of Christ. Christ is all. He is the sacrifice, the priest and the altar. That the enemy has produced upon Christian ground a ritualism which is aped after the Jewish system and which denies as such the gospel and Christianity, is well known. They have invented altars, and sacrifices, and priests. This is the Judaizing of the Church, "the other gospel which is not another," upon which the Spirit of God has pronounced the curse of God (Gal. 1). The day is coming when the Lord will deal in judgment with the apostate church which denies His Son and His work, while His true church will be taken to the place which He has prepared.

After the prophecy of the division of the land, comes the majestic ending, the last message this man of God uttered: "And the name of that city from that day shall be 'Jehovah Shammah,' the LORD is there." It is a fitting finale to this great book. In its beginning, we see the glory of the Lord departing. Throughout the pages of the book we read of Israel's rebellion, Jerusalem's judgments, the nation's disobedience and rejection. Then follow the messages of hope--Israel's conversion, the regathering of the twelve tribes, the final conflict, the returning glory of the Lord; and from that day the name of the city will be Jehovah Shammah. Because He has manifested His gracious presence in the midst of His people and established His throne, blessed His people with all the spiritual and national blessings promised by His holy prophets, destroyed all their enemies, and covered all with His visible glory once more, therefore the city will have the name "Jehovah is there." What a glory it will be for Him. The city through which He once walked with weary feet, the Son of God garbed in servant's form, the city through which He was dragged, when the cross was laid upon His shoulders, the city which cast Him out, the city outside of which He endured the cross and despised the shame--that same city will be made in that day the glory spot of the earth.

THE BOOK OF DANIEL

The Annotated Bible

Arno Clement Gaebelein

THE PROPHET DANIEL

At the close of the history of Hezekiah, the noble king of Judah, as reported by the prophet Isaiah, is found a significant prophecy. Hezekiah, like so many other good men before and after him, had fallen into the crime of the devil, pride (1 Timothy 3:6), and the Lord through the prophet Isaiah announced therefore the future judgment upon the royal house of David: "Behold the days come, that all that is in thine house, and that which thy fathers have laid up in store until this day shall be carried to Babylon, nothing shall be left, saith the Lord. And of thy sons that shall issue from thee, which thou shalt beget, shall they take away, and they shall be eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon. Then said Hezekiah to Isaiah, Good is the word of the Lord which thou hast spoken. He said, moreover, For there shall be peace and truth in my days" (Isaiah 39:6-8).

About one hundred years after this startling prophecy was literally fulfilled. The opening verses of the book of Daniel introduce us to this. The Babylonian king came and besieged the city of Jerusalem and conquered it. Among those carried away was Daniel and his companions. Daniel, as we learn from the third verse of the first chapter, was of princely descent.

This young man, the captive in Babylon, became, through the marvellous providence of God, one of the leading figures and prominent actors in the great Babylonian empire, under the reign of Nebuchadnezzar. He was made, in spite of his youth, a great man--the prime minister of Babylon.

Of his personal history, his character and remarkable experiences we know more than of any of the other prophets of God. As a mere lad he was brought to the strange land as a captive. We behold him and his companions, true to Jehovah, maintaining their God-given place of separation. He honored Jehovah and Jehovah honored him. Soon the Lord used the young captive by revealing unto him the forgotten dream of Nebuchadnezzar and the interpretation of the dream. Then followed the exaltation of the obscure captive; and afterwards he seemed to have been the close companion of the great Gentile monarch, who acknowledged finally the Lord-God of Israel as his God. Then God honored him by giving him the great visions of the future, so remarkable in their scope. The Lord appeared unto him; he talked with angels, and the messenger Gabriel addressed him as "the man greatly beloved." As an old man he had been quite forgotten during the reign of the grandson of Nebuchadnezzar, Belshazzar; only the queen mother, the aged wife of Nebuchadnezzar, remembered him. In that memorable night when Babylon fell the old prophet interpreted the handwriting on the wall, though old in years, still young in his faith. Under the reign of Darius he was cast among the lions, on account of his devotion to Jehovah, and wonderfully delivered.

What a man of prayer he was we learn from the ninth chapter. He reached a very old age, continuing even into the reign of Cyrus, and when his great work was done, ere the Lord called him home, he received the promise: "But go thy way till the end be; for thou shalt rest, and stand in thy lot at the end of days" (12:13). In the great faith chapter of the Hebrew Epistle his name is not mentioned, but his deeds are there. "Who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions" (Hebrews 11:33).

The Authenticity of Daniel

Perhaps no other book of the Bible has been so much attacked as the book of Daniel. It is a veritable battlefield between faith and unbelief. For about 2,000 years, wicked men, heathen philosophers and infidels have hammered away against it; but the book has proved to be the anvil upon which the critics' hammers have been broken into pieces. The book has survived all attacks, and we need not fear that the weak and puerile critics, the most subtle infidels of Christendom in our day, can harm the book. It has been denied that Daniel wrote the book during the Babylonian captivity. Kuenen and Wellhausen and their imitating disciples like Canon Farrar, Driver and others of inferior calibre, claim that the work was not written in the Exile, but centuries later. Daniel had nothing to do with the book at all; a holy and gifted Jew wrote it instead, and it is avowed fiction. Such are a few of the infidel statements made against this sublime book. These critics follow the wicked assailant of Christianity of the third century, Porphyry, who contended that the book of Daniel is a forgery, that it was written during the time of the Maccabees, after Antiochus Epiphanes, so clearly foretold in this book, had appeared. The whole reasoning method of the destructive Bible-criticism may be reduced to the following. Prophecy is an impossibility, there is no such thing as foretelling events to come. Therefore a book which contains predictions must have been written after the events which are predicted. But how could the man who committed such a forgery be a pious Jew? No, the book of Daniel is either divine or it is the most colossal forgery and fraud. No middle ground is possible.

We give a few of the evidences which answer the infidel attacks upon this great fundamental prophetic book.

It should be enough for every Christian that our Lord, the infallible Son of God, mentions Daniel by name in His great prophetic discourse delivered on Olivet (Matthew 24:15). There can be no question that our Lord at least twice more referred to the book of Daniel. When He speaks of Himself and His coming again in the clouds of heaven as the Son of Man, He confirms Daniel's vision in chapter 7:13, and when He speaks of the stone to fall in Matthew 21:44, He confirms Daniel 2:44-45. How does the critic meet this argument? He tells us that our Lord accommodated Himself to the Jewish views current in His day. They say, perhaps He knew better, and some say that He did not know. In other words, they deny the infallibility of our Lord, and with this invention that He accommodated Himself against His better knowledge, they accuse our Lord of something worse. When the Lord uttered the words, "Daniel the prophet" He put at once His unimpeachable seal on both the person and the book of Daniel.

But there are other evidences. The heathen Porphyry declared that the book was written during the days of the Maccabees; as stated above the modern critics have echoed the opinion of that lost heathen soul. But the Septuagint version of the Old Testament, which was made before the time of the Maccabees, contains the book of Daniel. It was in the hands of the learned Hebrews, who translated in the third century before Christ the Hebrew Scriptures into the Greek. The book therefore antedates the time of Antiochus Epiphanes.

Furthermore during the days of the Maccabees a book was written, the first book of the Maccabees, a historical account of those eventful days. This Maccabean work not only presupposes the existence of the book of Daniel, but shows actual acquaintance with it, and therefore gives proof that the book must have been written long before that period (1 Macc. 1:54, compare with Daniel 9:27; 2:49 and Daniel 3).

The reliable Jewish historian Josephus also furnisheth historically an evidence for Daniel. He tells us that when Alexander the Great, who is mentioned in Daniel's prophecy (chapter 8), came to Jerusalem in the year 332 B.C., Jaddua the high priest, showed him the prophecies of Daniel, and Alexander was greatly impressed with them.

Then we have the testimony of another prophet of the exile, the prophet Ezekiel. He speaks twice in the highest terms of Daniel, whose contemporary he was. (See Ezekiel 14:14-20 and 28:3.) Daniel also betrays such an intimate acquaintance with Chaldean customs and history, as well as their religion, such as none but one who lived there and was an eye-witness could have possessed. For instance, the description of the Chaldean magicians perfectly agrees with the accounts found in other sources. The account of the insanity of Nebuchadnezzar is confirmed by the ancient historian Berosus.

Then there has been a most striking vindication of this book through the Babylonian excavations, tablets, cylinders and monuments. Into this we cannot fully enter, but we cite but one of the most striking.

The name of Belshazzar furnished for a long time material to the infidels to reject the historical accuracy of the book. The father of Belshazzar was Nabonaid, who was not a son of Nebuchadnezzar at all. How then could Belshazzar be a grandson of Nebuchadnezzar? This objection is seemingly strengthened by the fact that no ancient historians include in the list of Babylonian kings the name of Belshazzar.

Berosus, who lived about 250 years after the Persian invasion, gives the following list of Babylonian monarchs: Nabuchodonosar (Nebuchadnezzar). Evil Marudak, who is the Evil Merodach of the Bible. Neriglissor. Laborosoarchod. Nabonaid. Cyrus, the Persian conqueror.

Different attempts were made to clear up this difficulty, but they failed. Now, if Daniel wrote his book he must be correct. But the critics are ever ready to put the doubt not on the side of history, but on the side of the Bible. So they said Berosus was not mistaken and that if Daniel really had written the book which bears his name he would have been historically correct. This is how matters stood up to 1854. In that year Sir Rawlinson translated a number of tablets brought to light by the spade from the ruins of the Babylonian civilization. These contained the memorials of Nabonaid, and in these the name of Bil-shar-uzzar appeared frequently, and is mentioned as the son of Nabonaid and sharing the government with him. The existence of Belshazzar and the accuracy of Daniel were at once established beyond the shadow of a doubt.

Daniel was promised by Belshazzar to become the third ruler in the kingdom (Dan. 5:16).

Why the third and not the second? Because Nabonaid was the first, Belshazzar his son was the second and vice-regent. Nabonaid had a daughter of Nebuchadnezzar for wife and therefore Belshazzar from his mother's side was the grandson of Nebuchadnezzar.

But have the critics learned by this complete defeat? Have they profited by this experience and will they leave the Bible alone? Not by any means. They will continue to look for flaws in the infallible Book. Some day they will discover the seriousness of their work.

The Important Prophetic Message of Daniel

It is impossible to overestimate the importance of the book of Daniel. It is the key to all prophecy; without a knowledge of the great prophecies contained in this book the entire prophetic portion of the word of God must remain a sealed book. One of the reasons why so few Christians have a correct knowledge of the prophetic forecast in the Bible is the neglect of the book of Daniel. The great prophetic portions of the New Testament, the Olivet discourse of our Lord (Matthew 24 and 25), and above all the great New Testament book of prophecy, the book of Revelation, can only be understood through the prophecies of Daniel.

To both, the Babylonian king and God's prophet, were revealed the political history of the "times of the Gentiles" (Luke 21:24). The rise and fall of the great monarchies, Babylonia, Medo-Persian, Graeco-Macedonia and the Roman, are successively revealed in this book. The appointed end of these times and what will follow the times of the Gentiles is made known. Our generation lives in the very shadow of that end. Then there are prophecies relating more specifically to Jerusalem and the Jewish people, showing what will yet come for that city and the nation.

It will be impossible in our brief annotations to do justice to all the details of this prophetic book. The larger work on the prophet Daniel by the author of The Annotated Bible should be carefully studied with the accompanying pages.

The Division of Daniel

The book of Daniel is written in two languages, in the Hebrew and in the Aramaic, the language of Chaldea. The first

chapter is written in Hebrew, in style closely allied to the Hebrew used in the book of Ezekiel. Chapters 8-12 are likewise written in the Hebrew language. But chapters 2:4-7:28 are written in the Aramaic language. This gives an additional argument for the authenticity of the book. The author was conversant with both languages, an attainment exactly suited to a Hebrew living in exile, but not in the least so to an author in the Maccabean age, when the Hebrew had long since ceased to be a living language, and had been supplanted by the Aramaic vernacular dialect. Daniel was led to employ both languages for a specific reason. What concerned these great monarchies, Babylonia and Medo-Persia, was written in the language with which they were familiar. What concerned the Jewish people was written for them in Hebrew. We shall not follow the linguistic division of the book. We find in the book two main sections:

I. DANIEL IN BABYLON, NEBUCHADNEZZAR'S DREAM, AND HISTORICAL EVENTS

- Chapter 1. Daniel and His Companions in Babylon
- Chapter 2. The Great Prophetic Dream of Nebuchadnezzar.
- Chapter 3-6. Historical Events

II. THE GREAT PROPHECIES OF DANIEL

- Chapter 7. The Night Visions of Daniel
- Chapter 8. The Vision of the Ram and the He-Goat
- Chapter 9. The Prophecy of the Seventy Weeks
- Chapter 10. Preparation for the Final Prophecy
- Chapter 11. The Wars of the Ptolemies and Seleucidae Predicted and the Coming Events of the End
- Chapter 12. The Great Tribulation and Israel's Deliverance

Analysis and Annotations

I. DANIEL IN BABYLON, NEBUCHADNEZZAR'S DREAM, AND HISTORICAL EVENTS

CHAPTER 1 Daniel and His Companions in Babylon

1. The introduction (1: 1-2)
2. The king's command (1:3-5)
3. Daniel and his companions (1:6-21)

Verses 1-2. Divine judgment, which had threatened so long, had finally fallen upon Jerusalem. It was executed by the divinely chosen instrument, Nebuchadnezzar. Three times he came against Jerusalem. In 606 B.C. he appeared the first time. This is the visitation mentioned here. In 598 he came again and carried away more captives, including Ezekiel. In 587 he burned the city and the temple.

Verses 3 - 5. As already stated in the introduction the young captives of the king's seed and of the princes (both of Judah) was in fulfillment of prophecy. They were to be added to the king's court and to receive special royal favors, instructions in the wisdom and language of the Chaldeans and have the privileges of the king's table.

Verses 6-21. Daniel means, "God is my judge"; Hananiah, "Beloved of the Lord"; Mishael, "Who is as God"; Azariah, "The Lord is my help." These beautiful names were soon changed into names of heathen meaning, to blot out the very memory of Jehovah. Daniel becomes Belteshazzar (Bel's prince); Hananiah is named Shadrach (illuminated by the sun-god); Mishael is called Meshach (who is like Shach-- Venus); and Azariah is changed to Abednego (the servant of Nego).

The purpose of the four expressed their loyalty to the God of their fathers and their obedience to His law. The Lord

rewarded them for their loyalty and faithfulness, as He is still the rewarder of all who trust in Him and walk in separation.

CHAPTER 2 Nebuchadnezzar's Dream and Its Interpretation

1. The forgotten dream (2:1-13)
2. The prayer meeting in Babylon and the answer (2:14-23)
3. Daniel before the king (2:24-28)
4. The revelation and interpretation of the dream (2:29-45)
5. The promotion of Daniel and his companions (2:46-49)

Verses 1-13. The king had a dream which was occasioned by thinking concerning the future (verse 29). God answered his desire by this dream, which made a great impression on him. But he had forgotten the dream. The soothsayers, wise men and magicians, who were kept by him to interpret dreams, were unable to reveal the forgotten dream: they confessed their utter helplessness. The king condemned them to death. Inasmuch as Daniel and his companions were counted among the wise men, "they sought Daniel and his companions to be slain."

Verses 14-23. And now Daniel steps to the front. But there is no haste and no hurry connected with it, for "He that believeth shall not make haste." He is brought before the king and promises to the king the meaning of that dream. It was the language of faith; he had confidence in God. He knew that the same Jehovah who had given another captive wisdom, Joseph in Egypt, was his God also. Then there was a prayer meeting in Babylon. While the condemned wise men, the astrologers and magicians trembled for fear of death, Daniel and his companions asked "mercies of the God of heaven concerning this secret." The prayer was speedily answered.

Verses 24-28. After Daniel had praised the God of heaven he requested an audience with the king. How beautiful he is in the presence of the mighty monarch! What an opportunity to glorify himself. But he hides himself completely and gives God all the glory. Then he tells the king that in the dream he is about to relate God has made known unto him "what shall be in the latter days."

Verses 29-45. Daniel then told to the king the forgotten dream:

Thou, O King, sawest, and behold a great image. This great image, whose brightness was excellent, stood before thee; and the form thereof was terrible. This image's head was of fine gold, his breast and his arms of silver, his belly and his thighs of brass, his legs of iron, his feet part of iron and part of clay. Thou sawest till that a stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet that were of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces. Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver and the gold broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshing-floors; and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them; and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth (verses 31-35).

The great man image is the prophetic symbol of the "times of the Gentiles." This expression "The times of the Gentiles" is not found in the book of Daniel, but it is a New Testament phrase. Our Lord used it exclusively. In that part of His prophetic discourse which is reported in the Gospel of Luke and which relates to the fall of Jerusalem and the dispersion of the nation, our Lord said: "And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations; and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles shall be fulfilled" (Luke 21:24). Now, the times of the Gentiles did not begin when Jerusalem rejected the Lord from heaven. Our Lord does not say that the times of the Gentiles were then ushered in. The times of the Gentiles started with the Babylonian captivity by Nebuchadnezzar. The glory of the Lord departed from Jerusalem. The other great prophet of the captivity, Ezekiel, beheld the departure of the Shekinah. "Then did the Cherubim lift up their Wings, and the wheels beside them; and the glory of the God of Israel was over them above. And the glory of the Lord went up from the midst of the city, and stood upon the mountain which is on the east side of the city" (Ezek. 11:22-23). But before that Jeremiah recorded a remarkable word. These are the words of

Jehovah concerning Nebuchadnezzar:

I have made the earth, the man and the beast that are upon the ground, by My great power and by My outstretched arm, and have given it unto whom it seemed meet unto Me. And now have I given all these lands into the hands of Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, My servant; and the beasts of the field have I given him also to serve him. And all nations shall serve him, and his son, and his son's son, until the very time of his land come: and then many nations and great kings shall serve themselves of him. And it shall come to pass, that the nation and kingdom which will not serve the same Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, and that will not put their neck under the yoke of the king of Babylon, that nation will I punish, saith the Lord, with the sword, and with the famine, and with the pestilence, until I have consumed them by his hand (Jeremiah 27:5-8).

Jerusalem had been supreme because the throne and the glory of Jehovah was there. Though Assyria, Egypt and Babylon had tried repeatedly to overthrow Jerusalem, they were held in check by the power of God and divine intervention, but when the measure of the wickedness of Jerusalem was full, Nebuchadnezzar was chosen to become the first great monarch of the times of the Gentiles. The dominion was then taken away from Jerusalem and transferred to the Gentiles.

Therefore the golden head in this prophetic man-image represents Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonian empire. The chest of silver, according to divine interpretation, stands for an inferior monarchy which was to follow the Babylonian empire. This second world empire is the Medo-Persian. The belly and thighs of brass represent the third great monarchy, the Graeco-Macedonian. The fourth great monarchy which was to rise during the times of the Gentiles, represented by the two legs of iron, is the iron empire, Rome. Here, then, is history pre-written. God, who knows the end from the beginning, revealed in this dream the course of the times of the Gentiles, beginning with the Babylonian monarchy and followed by three more: The Medo-Persian, the Graeco-Macedonian and the Roman. Notice the process of deterioration as indicated in the composition of this image: Gold, silver, brass, iron, and finally the iron getting less and clay taking a prominent place. It shows that politically the times of the Gentiles are not improving.

Everything which this image represents has been fulfilled, except the last portion, when a stone falls out of heaven and strikes the ten toes and the clay, so that the whole colossal figure goes to pieces, the different constituent metals become like the chaff on the summer threshingfloor and the striking stone becomes a mountain and fills the whole earth.

The fourth Empire, the Roman, has not yet fulfilled its history. The final form, and with it the final form of the times of the Gentiles is yet to pass into history. This final form is symbolically seen in the ten toes and the clay, in the feet of the image. The territory which constituted the now extinct Roman empire will in the near future undergo a political revival. It will reappear in a confederated Europe, except certain countries which never belonged to the Roman empire. In that confederacy will be kingdoms to the number of ten; the clay represents democracies, the rule by the people and for the people. The late great war has brought such a political combination into our times. Such is the future and end of the times of the Gentiles, as foretold in the feet of the image.

But what does the smiting stone represent, the stone which abolisheth the image and becomes itself a great mountain filling the whole earth?

The Stone is Christ. That the stone represents Christ is seen from the Scriptures. "Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious cornerstone, a sure foundation" (Isa. 28:16). Zechariah speaks of this stone with seven eyes upon it and engraven. We read of Him in the New Testament as the foundation stone of the church, the cornerstone, the stone rejected by the builders. Most interesting is His own word in the Gospel of Matthew: "And whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken: but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder" (Matt. 21:44). Here we have Israel's sin and judgment and the fate of the Gentiles. Israel stumbled against this stone; for them He was a stumblingstone and rock of offense. In consequence they were broken as a nation. But the Gentile world, rejecting Him, will be broken

when the stone falls. They will be ground to powder by the falling stone. Our Lord must have had the dream of Nebuchadnezzar in mind when he spoke these words. The falling stone of which He speaks and the striking stone in the dream mean the same Person, Himself .

The stone doing its work in smiting the image is a prophecy of the second coming of our Lord. The mountain filling after that the earth foreshadows that kingdom which will be established with the return of Christ and His enthronement as King of kings.

Verses 46-49. The heathen monarch then acknowledged Daniel's God in a threefold way: The God of Gods (the Father); the Lord of Kings (God the Son); the Revealer of Secrets (God the Holy Spirit). Daniel is lifted from the place of humiliation to a place of exaltation. He did not forget his companions; they share honor and glory with him. It is a beautiful picture of that day when our Lord will receive the throne and when His own will not be left behind in sharing with Him His glory.

Historical Events (3-6)

The four chapters which follow the great dream of Nebuchadnezzar are of a historical character. They do not contain direct prophecies, but record certain events which transpired during the reign of Nebuchadnezzar, his successor and grandson Belshazzar, and Darius, the Mede. On the personal history of these three persons and where they are found in profane history we have little to say, as a deeper examination of this subject would lead us too far and would be tedious. But this much must be said that the criticism which charged Daniel with being incorrect has been completely silenced by the Babylonian cylinders of Cyrus and Nabonaid and the so-called annalistic tablets, the very records of those days. It is true the personality of Darius the Mede has not yet been definitely located historically. However, we do not believe the Bible because its historical statements can be verified from profane history. We believe the Bible because its records are divinely inspired and therefore correct. What would we know of the genuineness of these ancient tablets and cylinders covered with cuneiform inscriptions if it were not for the Bible? These witnesses from the stones, which indeed cry out, do not verify the Bible, they are rather declared genuine and correct by the Word of God.

These four chapters then give us historical events. Each has a prophetic meaning, though direct prophecy is not found in them.

These chapters describe the moral conditions which held sway during the two first world empires; they indicate prophetically the moral conditions which continue to the end of the times of the Gentiles. Five things may be traced in these four chapters: The moral characteristics of the times of the Gentiles; what will happen at the close of these times; the faithful remnant in suffering; their deliverance and the Gentiles acknowledging God, as King and the God of heaven.

CHAPTER 3 The Image of Gold

1. The image of gold (3:1-7)
2. The faithful three (3:8-18)
3. The miraculous deliverance (3:19-25)
4. The worshipping king (3:26-30) Verses 1-7.

He had an immense statue of gold made, the image of a man, no doubt, and he set it up in the plain of Dura in the province of Babylon. It was idolatry and the deification of man. Idolatry and the deification of man are then the first moral characteristics mentioned which are to prevail during the times of the Gentiles. The times of the Gentiles produce a religion which is opposed to the God of heaven. The image was sixty cubits high and six broad. Seven is the divine number and six is the number of man. Sixty cubits and six reminds us of that familiar passage in the book of Revelation, where we have the number of a man given, that mysterious number "six hundred three-score and six," that is 666. The image then represents man, but the climax of man was not yet reached. However, the beginning foreshadows the end of the

times of the Gentiles. That end is described in chapter 13 of Revelation.

The civil power tried to force this universal religion upon the people. The great governors, judges, captains and rulers had to appear for the dedication of the image. But then the whole thing had a religious aspect. Listen, after looking at this great awe-inspiring image of gold-- the sweetest music--the cornet, the flute, the harp, the sackbut, psaltery, dulcimer and all kinds of music sounds forth. No doubt the Chaldean priests approached chanting some sweet Babylonian song. Why all this? To stir up the religious emotions and aid in this way the worship of an idol. It is intensely interesting that the ancient Babylonian worship, with its ceremonials and chanting is reproduced in Rome, which is called in Revelation, Babylon. (The book by Alexander Hyslop, *The Two Babylons*, gives reliable and important information on this fact.)

Verses 8-18. The companions of Daniel refused to worship the image and were cast into the fiery furnace. Notice their wonderful trust in God.

Verses 19-25. The very men who cast them down were consumed by the flames. But when the king looked towards the furnace he beheld to his great astonishment not three men bound and burning up, but four men loose and actually walking in the fire. "They have no hurt and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God." And when they brought up from the fiery furnace, no smell of fire was about them, not even a hair was singed, only the bands which had bound them were burned off. The fire had set them free but it could not touch them. But did the king speak true when he beheld the fourth like the Son of God? Little did he know what he said or what it meant, but assuredly he saw in that fire the Son of God, Jehovah, for He had promised His people, "When thou walkest through the fire thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle on thee." The faithful Lord kept His promise to His trusting servants.

And has not all this been repeated throughout the times of the Gentiles especially during the Roman Empire? Pagan Rome persecuted the true worshippers of God and in great persecutions multitudes suffered martyrdom. But think of what is worse, Papal Rome, that Babylon the Great, the mother of harlots. There we find the images and the sweet music, the prostrations and political power enforcing unity of worship. The fiery furnaces were there, the stake, the most awful tortures for those who were faithful to God and to their Lord. Think of the story of the Waldensians and Huguenots. And while for these noble martyrs, for whom there is a martyr's crown in the coming day of Christ, there came no deliverance and their bodies were consumed by the fire, yet the Son of God was with them and with praising hearts and a song upon their lips, He carried them through the fire.

And during the great tribulation will a faithful remnant of Jews suffer under the man of sin, as these three Hebrews suffered; but they will likewise be delivered.

Verses 26-30. Once more Nebuchadnezzar acknowledged God and made a decree that severe punishment should be the lot of all who say anything amiss against the God of Daniel's companions.

CHAPTER 4 The Tree Vision of Nebuchadnezzar

1. The king's proclamation (4:1-3)
2. The king relates the tree vision (4:4-18)
3. Daniel interprets the vision (4:19-27)
4. The tree vision fulfilled, the king's abasement and his restoration, (4:28-37)

Verses 1-3. This chapter is in form, at least in part, of a proclamation. This proclamation must have been written after the king had passed through the experience recorded in this chapter.

Verses 4-18. Read carefully the vision the king had and compare with Ezekiel 31:3 and Matthew 13, the parable of the mustard seed. In each case the great big tree is the symbol of pride and self-exaltation.

Verses 19-27. The prophet's interpretation of this dream needs no further comment. A careful reading will make it clear in its meaning.

Verses 28-37. Twelve months later he walked in the palace of the kingdom of Babylon. Then with a haughty mien he utters the fatal words: "Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for the house of the kingdom by the might of my power and for the honor of my majesty." Notice the personal pronoun. But while he yet uttered these words a heavenly voice was heard which announced that the kingdom is departed from him. What Daniel had said in his interpretation is repeated from heaven. The same hour was the thing fulfilled upon Nebuchadnezzar and he was driven from men and did eat grass as the oxen, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven, till his hairs were grown like eagles feathers, and his nails like birds' claws. And after the seven times had passed over him his understanding returned unto him and he blessed the Most High.

The great characteristic here is pride and self exaltation. As judgment came upon the great monarch in the beginning of the times of the Gentiles, so judgment will yet fall upon this proud and self exalting age of the Gentiles. That great big, political and religious tree will some day be hewn down and be destroyed.

And Nebuchadnezzar's great humiliation in becoming a beast for seven times (seven years), points us to the end of this Gentile age once more. (The attempt to ascertain from this "seven times" the length of the times of the Gentiles as some do lacks the support of Scripture. The seven times mean seven years.) Apostasy from God will be the great characteristic of that end. There will be no more looking up to God, but the attitude of the beast will be the attitude of the nations. We see much of this already. They mind earthly things and become the "earth dwellers" so frequently mentioned in the book of Revelation. Madness and bestiality will seize upon the Gentiles, after the One who hinders, the Holy Spirit is removed. Then proud and apostate Christendom will believe the lie and follow the beast with its lying wonders. This will last seven times, that is, seven years.

The stump of the great tree which remains in the field suggests the fact that the judgments which fall upon the nations in the time of the end will not completely destroy all nations. Many of them will be swept away. For those who wilfully rejected the gospel and turned away from the truth, there is no hope. But there are others which will be left and when these judgments are in the earth, the nations learn righteousness.

The millennium is also seen in this chapter in the restoration of Nebuchadnezzar and in the praise He gives to the Most High. In the previous chapter the three friends of Daniel speak of "our God," but in this chapter we hear of "the Most High." It is the millennial name of God. We see then in the fourth chapter the pride and self exaltation of the Gentiles, and how the Gentiles will be humiliated and judged. First there is self exaltation, that is followed by judgment, and then follows restoration and the acknowledgement of the Most High.

That nothing more is now reported of Nebuchadnezzar, that the last which we hear of him in Scripture is his acknowledgment of the Most High, is also not without meaning. It foreshadows the universal acknowledgment of God in the kingdom which the God of heaven will set up, when the stone fills as the mountain the whole earth.

CHAPTER 5 Belshazzar's Feast

1. Belshazzar's licentious feast (5:1-4)
2. The writing on the wall (5:5-9)
3. Forgotten Daniel (5:10-16)
4. The message of Daniel (5:17-31)

Verses 1-4. This feast of wickedness and blasphemy needs no further annotations. But it shows the great decline morally in the great Babylonian empire. Nebuchadnezzar, no doubt, had handled the golden vessels of the house of the Lord most carefully. He had stored them away, fearing to misuse them. The grandson sent for these vessels to drink out of them wine with his harlots and to praise his idols.

Verses 5-9. A mysterious finger then wrote over against the candlestick on the wall. The king saw plainly the part of the hand that wrote. The feast of licentiousness became suddenly a feast of gloom and consternation. Nor could the astrologers and wise men read the writing which had appeared on the wall.

Verses 10-16. At this point the queen, the aged widow of Nebuchadnezzar, appeared on the scene and called attention to an old man, who played such an important part during the reign of her husband. Daniel is sent for.

Verses 17-31. Daniel refused the honors of the king. He knew that ere long the blaspheming king would be no more. And Daniel was more than an interpreter of the handwriting on the wall. He is God's prophet and messenger, as a reading of this portion of the chapter shows.

This chapter reveals the blasphemous character of the end of the Babylonian monarchy. Blasphemy, rejection of God's truth are about us on all sides. There is a "Mene, Mene, Tekel" for apostate Christendom and for that final phase of Babylon as revealed in Rev. 17 and 18.

CHAPTER 6 Under Darius the Mede and Daniel in the Lion's Den

1. The decree of Darius (6:1-9)
2. Daniel's faith and steadfastness (6:10-15)
3. Daniel cast into the lion's den and the deliverance (6:16-24)
4. The Decree of Darius (6:25-28)

Verses 1-9. From the opening of this chapter we learn that Daniel also held a very high position in the beginning of the second monarchy, which had conquered Babylonia. He was preferred above all the other presidents and princes. This created jealousy. They devised a very cunning plan and made the king sign a decree, which they were sure Daniel would break. Inasmuch as the law of the Persians and Medes was irrevocable they were sure that the hated old man would be cast into the lion's den.

Verses 10-15. It is a beautiful scene. When Daniel knew the decree had been signed, he went calmly back into his house and with his windows open towards Jerusalem he prayed and gave thanks to the Lord. He looked away from earthly circumstances and looked to the Omnipotent One. The accusation followed. The king now discovers that he is in a desperate condition. His law demands that Daniel be cast to the lions, but his heart filled with love for Daniel would have liked to save him, but he found no way of delivering him.

Well may we think here of another law and another love. God, a holy and righteous God and a God of love, found a way to save man. God's holy law condemns man, who is a sinner and the curse of the law rests upon him. God's love is set upon the world, and He "so loved the world that He gave His only Begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." The curse of the law came upon Him who knew no sin and who was made sin for us, and therein is love manifested. Daniel is cast into the lions' den as our blessed Lord was given to the lion (Psalm 22:21), and a stone is laid upon the mouth of the den and it is sealed with the king's signet. He is so to speak in a grave, as good as dead in the eyes of the world, for who has ever heard of hungry lions not devouring a man. And all this brings before us that other place, the tomb in the garden, where He was laid and the stone before it, which bore the seal of the Roman world power. But as Daniel could not be hurt by the lions, so He who went into the jaws of death could not be holden by death. The tomb is empty and He is victor over death and the grave. All this is blessedly foreshadowed in this experience of God's prophet.

The Lord in whom Daniel trusted and whom he served delivered him from the lions. His accusers and their families were given to the ferocious beasts, which devoured them at once.

Verses 25-28. King Darius also acknowledged the God of Daniel.

The final characteristic of the times of the Gentiles is man worship. The heads of these empires including the Roman Caesars claimed divine honors. Papal Rome also puts up man as the viceregent of the Lord. And all about us we find the deification of man. Finally there comes the head of all this apostasy, the son of perdition, the man of sin, who demands worship for himself (2 Thessalonians 2).

II. THE GREAT PROPHECIES OF DANIEL

CHAPTER 7 The night visions of Daniel

1. The night vision of the three beasts (7:1-6)
2. The night vision of the fourth beast (7:7-8)
3. The judgment vision (7:9-12)
4. The son of man and His kingdom (7:13-14)
5. The interpretation of the visions given (7:15-28)

Verses 1-6. The sea in the vision is the type of nations (Rev. 17:15). The three first beasts he saw represented the same great monarchies which were shown to Nebuchadnezzar in his dream by the gold, silver and brass. The lion Daniel saw first rising out of the sea stands for the Babylonian empire symbolized by the lion (Jer. 4:7). The plucking of the wings and the man's heart must refer to Nebuchadnezzar's insanity and restoration (chapter 4). The bear is the emblem of the Medo-Persian monarchy (corresponding to the chest of silver in the image). One side of the bear was raised up, higher than the other, because the Persian element was the strongest. The three ribs denote the conquest of three provinces by this power. The leopard with four heads and wings is the picture of the great Alexandrine empire, the Graeco-Macedonian (corresponding to the belly and thighs of brass in the image).

The four wings denote its swiftness, the four heads the partition of this empire into the kingdoms of Syria, Egypt, Macedonia and Asia Minor. It is seen in the next chapter as the rough he-goat with a notable horn (Alexander the Great) and the little horn (Antiochus Epiphanes). The fourth beast was not seen in the first vision. Before we turn to the second night vision of the prophet we call attention to the fact that in the selection of beasts to represent these world powers who domineer the times of the Gentiles, God tells us that their moral character is beastly. The lion devours, the bear crushes, the leopard springs upon its prey.

Verses 7-8. This represents Rome, corresponding to the two legs of iron and the ten horns with the little horn between has the same meaning as the ten toes on the feet of the image. The little horn we find more fully mentioned in another portion of this chapter. Thus the prophet beheld the same monarchies revealed in the second chapter under the emblem of ferocious beasts. Such the nations are and in their standards and national emblems they have borne witness to their beastly characters. Notice also here the same process of deterioration as in the image. The monarchies degenerate from lion to bear, from bear to leopard and then into a great nondescript.

Verses 9-12. This vision brings us to the close of the times of the Gentiles. When the fourth beast with the ten horns and the little horn, the last thing spoken of this world empire, is in full swing, then the end comes. It is a great judgment scene which is here before us. How different the end of this age as revealed in the Word and as it is believed in Christendom. The great mass knows nothing whatever about this age coming to an end. It will go on indefinitely, so they believe, and its future is world progress, better times and the triumph of the Christian civilization. But others concede that a judgment must come and they think of the judgment here as the universal judgment, the great white throne judgment. This judgment is not the last judgment at all. It is a judgment which precedes the final judgment by 1,000 years. This judgment here must be read in connection with passages like Matthew 25:31-46 and Rev. 19:19-21. In reading the last passage no one can doubt that we have the same judgment here revealed to Daniel. But who is the one who occupies the central place in this vision of judgment? There can be but one answer. It is our ever blessed Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. John 5:22 gives the

conclusive answer: "For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son." The Ancient of Days is the Lord Jesus Christ. It is still more demonstrated if we turn to John's great Patmos vision.

Verses 13-14. These words are so plain that every Christian knows what they mean. They describe the second coming of Christ and the kingdom He then receives from the Father's hands. If this passage were more considered, Christians would stop speaking about the kingdom now. No kingdom till Christ comes again. Both the judgment vision and the vision of His coming to receive the kingdom correspond to the stone which smites the image and as a mountain fills the whole earth.

Verses 15-28. First, Daniel hears about the four beasts. But there is a significant statement in verse 18, the saints of the Most High receiving the kingdom.

Who are the Saints of the Most High? The fact that the term "Most High" is in the plural and may also be translated with "the most high or heavenly places" has led some expositors to say that the saints are the same who are seen in the Epistle to the Ephesians in which "the heavenly places" are repeatedly mentioned: in other words, the saints which compose the Church. It is true the Church will be with the Lord in Glory and "we shall reign over the earth," but this does not necessarily mean that the saints here represent the Church. There are other saints besides "Church saints." The saints of whom Daniel was thinking were his own beloved people. To that people is promised a kingdom in the days of the Messiah. With Him, the Lord in glory, there is a heavenly people, so as Messiah and the Son of Man in connection with the earth He has an earthly people, saints which will receive and possess with Him that kingdom which will fill the whole earth. These saints are the Godfearing Jews, who pass through the great tribulation and inherit the blessings and promises which God gave through their own prophets.

Another important matter is the little horn of whom now Daniel hears more fully. The ten horns are kings and the little horn in their midst will be the final imperial head of the revived Roman empire, that world domineering person of whom we read repeatedly in the Word of God. He must be distinguished from another one, the personal anti-Christ, the man of sin and son of perdition. In Revelation the revived Roman Empire is seen in chapter 13:1-10, and the second beast which John saw rising from the sea is the false Christ having two horns like a lamb but speaking like a dragon (Rev. 13:11, etc.) A closer study of these coming leaders of the end time is needed to understand the details; here we but point the way. Our larger work on Daniel will give help on all these chapters.

CHAPTER 8 The Ram and the He-Goat

1. The vision (8:1-14)
2. The interpretation of the vision (8:15-27)

Verses 1-14. Beginning with this chapter to the end of the book prophecy will lead us mostly upon Jewish ground. While some of these prophecies were fulfilled in the past, most of them are related to the future when the great end fulfillment takes place before the coming of the Son of Man in the clouds of heaven to receive the kingdom. The phrases "the latter times," "the time of the end," "in the last end of the indignation," appear several times in these chapters. These phrases describe the same period of time mentioned in the seventh chapter, "a time, times and dividing of times;" the 1,260 days or 42 months in the book of Revelation. It is the great tribulation which is recorded in the last chapter of this book.

The time and place of the vision in this chapter are given in the beginning. The ram, according to divine interpretation (verses 15, etc.), is the Medo-Persian monarchy--the silver kingdom, the kingdom also typified by the bear. The he-goat with a notable horn is the Graeco- Macedonian monarchy and the notable horn is Alexander the Great. In 334 B. C., Alexander leaped like a swift he-goat across the Hellespont and fought his successful battles, then pushed on to the banks of the Indus and the Nile and then onward to Shushan. The great battles of the Granicus, Issus and Arbella were fought, and he stamped the power of Persia and its King, Darius Codomannus, to the ground. He conquered rapidly Syria, Phoenicia, Cyprus, Tyre, Gaza, Egypt, Babylonia, Persia. In 329 he conquered Bactria, crossed the Oxus and Jaxaitis and

defeated the Scythians. And thus he stamped upon the ram after having broken its horns. But when the he goat had waxed very great, the great horn was broken. This predicted the early and sudden death of Alexander the Great. He died after a reign of 12 years and eight months, after a career of drunkenness and debauchery in 323 B.C. He died when he was but 32 years old. Then four notable ones sprang up in the place of the broken horn. This too has been fulfilled, for the empire of Alexander was divided into four parts. Four of the great generals of Alexander made the division namely, Cassander, Lysimachus, Seleucus and Ptolemy. The four great divisions were, Syria, Egypt, Macedonia and Asia Minor.

Then a little horn appeared out of one of these divisions; it sprung up out of Syria. This little horn is of course not the little horn mentioned in the previous chapter, for the little horn in Daniel 7 has its place in connection with the fourth beast (Rome), while this one comes from a division of the third beast, the Graeco-Macedonian monarchy.

History does not leave us in doubt of how and when this great prophetic vision was fulfilled. This little horn is the eighth king of the Seleucid dynasty. He is known by the name of Antiochus Epiphanes; after his wild and wicked deeds he was called Epiphanes, the madman. Long before he invaded the pleasant land (Israel's land), Daniel saw what he would do. He conquered Jerusalem. He took away the daily sacrifice in the temple and offered a swine and swine's blood upon the altar. He introduced idol worship, devastated the whole land and killed some 100,000 Jews.

In verses 13-14 is an angelic conversation. The 2,300 days (literal days) cover just about the period of time during which Antiochus did his wicked deeds. When they were ended Judas Maccabaeus cleansed the sanctuary about December 25, 165 B.C.

We believe these 2,300 days are therefore literal days and have found their literal fulfillment in the dreadful days of this wicked king from the north. There is no other meaning attached to these days and the foolish speculations that these days are years, etc., lacks scriptural foundation altogether. Such views and fanciful interpretations bring the study of prophecy into disrepute. We have special reference to the Seventh Day Adventist delusion. They teach the abominable falsehood that the Lord Jesus Christ did not enter into the Holiest till the year 1844 had been reached, because this is according to their reckoning 2,300 years after Cyrus had issued the command to build the temple. That this is a denial of the gospel itself and satanic is self-evident.

Verses 15-27. Gabriel is the interpreter of the whole vision. It should be carefully studied. It points to a future fulfillment.

Gabriel told Daniel that the vision has a special meaning for the time of the end. Four different expressions are used to denote the time of the final fulfillment of the vision: (1) "The time of the end" (8:17); (2) "The last end of the indignation" (8:19); (3) "The latter time of their kingdom" (8:23); (4) "When the transgressors are come to the full" (8:23).

Once more, at the close of the age, before the Lord comes in visible glory, in the days of the great tribulation, the time of Jacob's trouble, an invasion from the north takes place. Israel's land will once more undergo the horrors of a devastation, foreshadowed by Antiochus Epiphanes. The king of the north, as he is also called in Isaiah's prophecy, "the Assyrian," will do this work. For details and other prophecies relating to this coming event see our exposition of Daniel, pages 102-118.

CHAPTER 9 The Prophecy of the Seventy Weeks

1. The time and occasion of Daniel's prayer (9:1-2)
2. The prayer (9:3-19)
3. The answer and the prophecy of the seventy weeks (9:20-27)

Verses 1-2. It was in the first year of Darius, of the seed of the Medes, that Daniel understood by the sacred writings of his people, especially by the prophecy of Jeremiah, that the end of the years of the captivity was at hand. The promises in the Word of God led him at once to seek the face of the Lord and he poured out a wonderful prayer in His presence.

Verses 3-19. It has three parts: Verses 4-10: Confession of the failure of his people and acknowledgment of God's covenant mercies. Verses 11-14: The deserved curse as written in the law of Moses. Verses 15-19: Pleadings for mercy to turn away His anger and to remember His city, Jerusalem and His people. Throughout this prayer we read how completely he identified himself with the sins, the failure, the shame and the judgment of the people of God. This is remarkable. As we have seen from the first chapter, he was brought to Babylon when quite young and belonged even then to the believing, God fearing element of the nation. Yet he speaks of the nation's sins, their rebellion, their transgressions of the law and their wicked deeds as if they belonged to him. Of all the Bible characters Daniel appears as the purest. The failures of Abraham, Moses, Aaron, David and others are recorded, but Daniel appears with no flaw whatever in his character. As far as the record goes he was a perfect man. Of course he too was "a man of like passions" as we are, and as such a sinner. Yet this devoted and aged servant with such a record of loyalty to God and to His laws confesses all the people's sins and the curse and shame, which came upon them, as His own.

Verses 20-27. The prayer was not ended. How near heaven is may be learned from verses 20-32. Heaven is not far away, for there is no space and no distance with God. When Daniel began his confession and humiliation the Lord called Gabriel and instructed him what he should tell the praying prophet, and then Gabriel was caused to fly swiftly through the immeasurable space, and before Daniel ever reached the "Amen" the messenger stood before him and stopped his prayer. What blessed assurance! The moment we pray in the Spirit and in His Name our voices are heard in the highest heaven.

We give a corrected text of the great prophecy, perhaps the greatest in the entire prophetic Word.

Seventy weeks are apportioned out upon thy people and upon thy holy city to finish the transgression and to make an end of sins, and to cover iniquity, and to bring in the righteousness of the ages, and to seal the vision and prophet, and to anoint the holy of holies. Know therefore and understand: From the going forth of the word to restore and to rebuild Jerusalem unto Messiah, the Prince, shall be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks. The street and the wall shall be built again, even in troublous times. And after the sixty-two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, and shall have nothing; and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary, and the end thereof shall be with overflow, and unto the end war, the desolations determined. And he shall confirm a covenant with the many for one week, and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease and because of the protection of abominations there shall be a desolator, even until the consummation and what is determined shall be poured out upon the desolator (verses 24-27).

The literal translation of the term "seventy weeks" is "seventy-sevens." Now, this word "sevens" translated "weeks" may mean "days" and it may mean "years." What then is meant here, seventy times seven days or seventy times seven years? It is evident that the "sevens" mean year weeks, seven years to each prophetic week. Daniel was occupied in reading the books and in prayer with the seventy years of Babylonian captivity. And now Gabriel is going to reveal to him something which will take place in "seventy-sevens," which means seventy times seven years. The proof that such is the case is furnished by the fulfillment of the prophecy itself Now seventy-seven years makes 490 years.

What is to be accomplished. Verse 24 gives the great things which are to be accomplished during these seventy-year weeks or 490 years. They are the following: (1) To finish the transgression; (2) To make an end of sins. (3) To cover iniquity, (4) To bring in the righteousness of ages; (5) To seal the vision and prophet; (6) To anoint the Holy of Holies.

It must be borne in mind that these things concern exclusively Daniel's people and not Gentiles but the holy city Jerusalem. It is clear that the finishing of transgression, the end of sins and the covering of iniquity has a special meaning for Israel as a nation.

Now, these seventy year-weeks are divided into three parts. The first part consists in seven weeks, that is seven times seven, 49 years. During these 49 years the street and the wall of Jerusalem was to be rebuilt and the complete restoration

This chapter contains the preface to the final great prophecies as found in the last two chapters of this book. The certain man who appeared unto Daniel at the banks of the river Hiddekel (Tigris) was the Lord. Compare with Revelation 1, where John, the beloved disciple, beheld Him in a vision of glory. Daniel's vision is a pre-incarnation vision of the same One whom John beheld after His resurrection and in His glorified humanity.

The delayed answer by the angelic messenger is explained by the power of darkness. A powerful demon-prince, a satanic agency, having control over Persia, so that he claimed the title the prince of Persia, kept back the answer. Then the prophet was strengthened.

CHAPTER 11 The Wars of the Ptolemies and Seleucidae Predicted The Coming Events of the End

1. The wars of the Ptolemies and Seleucidae (11:1-35)
2. The time of the end and the man of sin (11:36-45)

Verses 1-35. Here we have history pre-written and the greater part of this chapter (verses 2-35) is fulfilled historically. So accurate are these predictions and their subsequent fulfillment that the enemies of "the Scripture of truth" have declared that it could never have been written by Daniel several hundred years before these persons came into existence and fought their battles. The pagan Porphyry in the third century in his "Treatise against Christians" bitterly attacked the belief that Daniel wrote these predictions. He argued that all was written after the events had taken place. The same arguments are used by the critics. Such is this most subtle infidelity that it can make use of the statements of a poor heathen in opposition to the divine revelation.

The prophecies given here were minutely fulfilled during the years 301 B.C., to 168 B.C. History verifies everything. The history covers a good part of the Persian and Graeco-Macedonian Empires, but mostly the wars of the Ptolemies and Seleucidae. Artaxerxes, Darius, Alexander the Great, Ptolemy Lagris, the King of the South, Ptolemy Euergetes, Seleucus Calinicus, Ptolemy Philopater, Antiochus Epiphanes, even the Roman fleet (the ships of Chittim), all enter into this prophecy. A detailed exposition of the prophecy and its fulfillment would fill many pages.

Before we pass on we desire to say again that all in these verses we have briefly followed has been historically fulfilled. We point out a mistake in which some have fallen. In verse 31 we read of "the abomination that maketh desolate." Our Lord in His Olivet discourse (Matthew 24:15) said: "When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place (whoso readeth let him understand)." Some believe that when our Lord spoke these words he referred to Daniel 11:31, and that this is the abomination of desolation. This is not quite correct. The abomination that maketh desolate of verse 31 is past and happened in the days of the atrocities committed by Antiochus Epiphanes. The abomination of desolation to which our Lord refers is mentioned in chapter 12:11, and it points, as we shall find later, to the abomination set up by the Antichrist, the second beast, in the middle of the week. The typical meaning of Antiochus Epiphanes and his crimes in the land of Judea and against Jerusalem we have already learned in connection with chapter 8.

Verses 36-45. The time of the end is mentioned in verse 35. What is to befall Daniel's people in the latter days as Daniel was told in chapter 10:14 is now revealed. Between verses 35 and 36 we must put a long and unreckoned period of time. Antiochus Epiphanes and the victorious Maccabees end the historical fulfillment of the predictions of the great prophecies in the first part of this chapter, and since then over 2,000 years have come and gone and the fulfillment of verses 36-45 have not yet been. First we read of a wilful king. Who is this king so fully pictured in verses 36-45?

Many expositors of Daniel apply this passage to Antiochus Epiphanes because they see not the important interval which exists between verses 35 and 36. However, a closer examination of the description of this king shows that he cannot be Antiochus. He is another person altogether, and as we shall see later, will be a Jew and assume kingly honors in the midst of the Jewish people. Antiochus was a Gentile. Others again identify this King with the first beast in Revelation 13, and say that the head of the revived Roman Empire, one like Napoleon the First is meant, while others see here a reference to

the pope in Rome. And whether the head of the Roman power, or the pope, or perhaps Mohammed, the term "Antichrist" is freely applied to each. Those who see the papacy here and the Romish corruption make some startling applications which are extremely fanciful.

The wilful king is the Antichrist. The Jewish people rejected their King, the Messiah, who came to His own, the Lord Jesus Christ. Our Lord told the Jews: "I am come in My Father's name, and ye receive Me not; if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive" (John 5:43). This other one has not yet come. We have his photograph here. He appears in Israel's land in the time of the end as a counterfeit Messiah and takes also the place of king in their midst. This wilful king, the personal Antichrist who deceives the apostate mass of the Jewish people, is repeatedly mentioned in the Old Testament prophetic Word. Isaiah speaks of him and his end (Isa. 30:33, 57:9). Zechariah calls him "the idol shepherd" (Zech. 11:15-17). He is repeatedly mentioned in the Psalms as "the wicked man"--"the man of the earth"--"the bloody and deceitful man." In the book of Revelation he appears as the second beast out of the land (Palestine) (Rev. 13:11-17). The two horns like a lamb as he is described there show clearly that he imitates Christ. He has the spirit of the dragon and appears as a religious leader, for this reason he is also called "the false prophet" in the book of Revelation (chapters 16:13, 19:20, 20:10).

In the New Testament he is called in the writings of John "the Antichrist". (See 1 John 2:18-22, 4:3; 2 John 7). Another great prophecy of the same person is found in 2 Thess. 2, where he is called "the man of sin, the son of perdition." The early Church believed that this evil person will be a real man, a Jew, and be energized by Satan. That he is the papal system or something else was invented later.

In verses 40-45 we have a prophecy of the wars and conflicts during the time of the end. The false king, Israel's false Messiah, the Antichrist, plays an important part in these conflicts. Then there are the kings of the south and of the north. The king of the south comes out of Egypt. His antagonist is the king of the north. The king of the south will be overthrown by the powerful king of the North, the same who is typified by the Antiochus Epiphanes. (Read about this invasion in Joel 2 and Zechariah 14.)

While the king of the north and his proud hosts are thus overthrown by the army of the Lord, what becomes of the wilful king, the Antichrist in the city? The king of the north cannot touch him. But the Lord Himself will deal with that wicked one. "Whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of His mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of His coming" (2 Thess. 2:8). Thus ends the great conflict of the time of the end. The eternal abode of the satanic instruments of the time of the end, the beast, that coming prince, the Antichrist and the king of the north will be the lake of fire.

CHAPTER 12 The Great Tribulation and Israel's Deliverance "

And at that time." What time? The time of the end, the time of trouble such as never was before; the same time to which our Lord refers in Matthew 24:21.

Michael, the great prince which standeth for the Jewish people, is now also mentioned again. He will stand up and take a leading part in the events of that time. From the book of Revelation we learn (chapter 12) that there will be war in heaven, that is where Satan has his dominion now as the prince of the power of the air. Michael, assisted by his angels, will cast out the great dragon, the devil and his angels. They will be forced down to the earth. Then when Satan and his angels are cast out the great tribulation will be instituted (Rev. 12:12). Michael will stand up in another sense and take a definite part in the deliverance of Daniel's people. It is not fully revealed what that will be.

The deliverance of which we read in these verses and the awakening of those "who sleep in the dust of the earth" has likewise been grossly misinterpreted. Because expositors have not seen the application of all this to the Jews in their future history in the land, they have read the church in here, and even what they term a general resurrection on a general judgment day. But we shall see now what is meant by the deliverance of Daniel's people.

Physical resurrection (as so often stated: a general resurrection) is not taught in the second verse. Physical resurrection is used as a figure of the national revival of Israel in that day. They have been sleeping nationally in the dust of the earth, buried among the Gentiles. But at that time there will take place a national restoration, a bringing together of the house of Judah and of Israel. It is the same figure as used in the vision of the dry bones in Ezekiel 37. This vision is employed by the men, who have invented the theory of a second chance and larger hope for the wicked dead to back up their evil teaching, but anyone can see that it concerns not the Gentiles but the Jewish people and that it is not a bodily resurrection, but a national revival and restoration of that people. Their national graves, not literal burying places, will be opened and the Lord will bring them forth out of all the countries into which they have been scattered.

There will be two classes, the godly and the ungodly. The ungodly accept the false Messiah, and in their national revival, shame and everlasting contempt awaits them, while the others, the godly, will enjoy life in the kingdom. The wise in verse 3 are the Jewish teachers and witnesses in the end time, those which compose the godly remnant. A special reward will be theirs during the kingdom, they shall shine as the stars forever. The same holds good, only in a higher sense for all those who are witnesses for Him during this age, who are faithful to Christ.

Then Daniel is addressed and beholds angels once more, as well Him who appeared clothed in linen, none other than the Lord. Then Daniel asked his final question.

Verses 11-12 have puzzled many readers of the book. Different theories are given.

But what is the meaning of these 1,290 and 1,335 days? Can there be anything plainer than the fact that these 1,290 and 1,335 days are literal days? Who authorizes us to make of these days years? By what process of exposition are we to arrive at the conclusion that "days" mean "years?" It is worse than folly to do that.

Now, the great tribulation lasts for 1,260 days. But here we have 30 days or a whole month added. The Lord will be manifested at the close of the great tribulation of 1,260 days, 3-1/2 years. Matthew 24:29-31 teaches us this. The extra month will in all probability be needed to make possible certain judgment events especially with the overthrow of the nations which came against Jerusalem and the judgment of nations as given in Matthew 25:31. We cannot speak dogmatically on all this. But certain it is that 1,335 days after the Antichristian abomination had been set up in Jerusalem, that is, 75 days, or 2-1/2 months beyond the time of the great tribulation, the full blessing for Israel and the establishment of the glorious rule of Israel's King, the once rejected Lord Jesus Christ, will have come, for it is written, "Blessed is he that waiteth and cometh to the thousand, three hundred and five and thirty days." This is as far as any teacher can safely go, and here we would rest.

THE BOOK OF HOSEA

The Annotated Bible

Arno Clement Gaebelein

THE PROPHET HOSEA

Introduction

The Minor Prophets begin with the book of Hosea. There are twelve of these books which are called by the name "minor prophets" not because their contents are of less authority than the preceding prophetic books, but on account of their size. The Jews considered them one book and the Talmud says of them, "our fathers made them one book, that they might not perish on account of their littleness." The term "minor prophets" was used by the church in early days. Augustinus states: "The prophet Isaiah is not in the books of the twelve prophets who are therefore called minor, because their discourses are brief in comparison with those who are called 'greater' because they composed considerable volumes." Jewish tradition claims that the present arrangement was made by the great synagogue formed by Ezra. This arrangement is not chronological. Joel precedes Hosea, while Hosea, Amos and Jonah were nearly contemporary; Obadiah is difficult to place. The introduction to the book enters into the question of date. Micah, the Morasthite, ministered between the years 757 and 699 B.C. Nahum, the complement and counterpart of the book of Jonah, also prophesied during the period of Isaiah. Habakkuk is later than the preceding prophets. He speaks of the invasion of the land by Chaldeans as imminent; his prophetic office was probably exercised during the second half of Manasseh's reign. Zephaniah prophesied under the reign of Josiah, between 642 and 611 B.C. Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi are post-exilic.

Hosea and His Times

The first verse of the book determines the period of Hosea. He prophesied while Uzziah was reigning in Judah and Jeroboam II in Israel, as well as during the time when Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah were kings over Judah. His whole prophetic ministry covers probably over seventy years, so that he must have reached a very old age. His prophecy is directed almost exclusively to the house of Israel, which had degenerated in a short time and Hosea lived during these awful years. Jeroboam II was almost the last king who ruled by the appointment of the Lord. After him kings made their way to the tottering throne of Israel by murdering their predecessors. Shallum slew Zechariah; Menahem slew Shallum; Pekah killed the son of Menahem; Hosea killed Pekah. All was anarchy in Israel.

The religious conditions were still worse. Nearly all these usurpers had made alliances with foreign powers which resulted in the introduction of the immoral, corrupt Phoenician and Syrian idolatry. The first Jeroboam had set up a rival worship so that the people would not go to Jerusalem to worship in the divinely appointed way. Jeroboam had been in Egypt (1 Kings 11:40; 12:2) where he had seen nature worshipped in the form of a calf, This worship he introduced in the identical words which their fathers had used when they worshiped the golden calf in the wilderness. (See Exodus 32:4 and 1 Kings 12:28). Outwardly the different ceremonies of the law, the feasts of Jehovah, the new moons and Sabbath days, the sacrifices and offerings were maintained, but all was a corrupt worship. The calf was the immediate object of that idolatrous worship. They sacrificed to the calf (1 Kings 12:32); they kissed the calf (Hosea 13:2) and swore by these idol-calves (Amos 8:14). As Dr. Pusey states: "Calf worship paved the way for the coarser and more cruel worship of nature, under the names of Baal and Ashtaroah, with all their abominations of consecrated child sacrifices, and horrible sensuality." It led to the most awful sins and degradation. Here is a description of the moral conditions prevailing in the days of Hosea, a condition brought about by the false worship and departure from God. Hosea and Amos acquaint us with

it. All was falsehood (Hosea 4:1; 7:1, 3); adultery (Hosea 4:11, 7:4, 9:10); bloodshed (Hosea 5:2; 6:8); excess and luxury were supplied by secret or open robbery (Hosea 4:2; 10:13; 11:12; 4:11; 7:5; 6:4-6; Amos 4:1); oppression (Hosea 12:7; Amos 3:9-10); false dealing (Hosea 12:7; Amos 8:5); perversion of justice (Hosea 10:4; Amos 2:6, 7); grinding of the poor (Amos 2:7, 8:6). Adultery was consecrated as an act of worship and religion (Hosea 4:14). The people, the king and the priests were all steeped in debauchery. Corruption had spread everywhere; even the places once sacred through Jehovah's revelation, Bethel, Gilgal, Gilead, Mizpah, Shechem, were special scenes of vileness and wickedness. Remonstrance was useless for the knowledge of Jehovah was wilfully rejected; they hated rebuke. To understand the message of Hosea and Amos these conditions, both religious and moral, must be fully understood.

The Message of Hosea

Like the message of other prophets Hosea's message is one of judgment and future mercy. He announced the coming judgment as certain and irreversible. They were to be led away into captivity. His sons and daughters born to him by Gomer, the daughter of Diblaim, expressed this coming judgment in their names which were given to them by divine direction. "Lo-Ruhamah"--I will have no mercy; and "Lo-ammi"--not my people. Then he announced in the name of the Lord, "I will cause the kingdom of the house of Israel to cease;" "I will have no mercy upon the house of Israel." "They shall be wanderers among the nations;"--"They shall not dwell in the Lord's land;"--"Israel is swallowed up; she shall be among the nations like a vessel in which is no pleasure." In the greater portion of his message there is an exposure of the people's moral condition and their impenitent state.

But there is also the message of mercy, which is found in the very beginning of the book. Here are a few of these comforting words, which still await their fulfillment in the day when they shall "seek the Lord their God, and David their King (the Messiah); and shall fear the Lord and His goodness in the latter days" (3:5)--"I will betroth her to me forever;"--"They shall fear the Lord and His goodness;"--"He will raise us up, and we shall live in His sight;"--"Till He come and rain righteousness upon you;"--"I will ransom them from the power of the grave, I will redeem them from death,"--"I will heal their backsliding;"--"I will be as the dew unto Israel, He shall grow as the lily, and cast forth its roots as Lebanon."

"It belongs to the mournful solemnity of Hosea's prophecy that he scarcely speaks to the people in his own person. The ten chapters, which form the center of the prophecy, are almost wholly one long dirge of woe, in which the prophet rehearses the guilt and the punishment of his people. If the people are addressed, it is, with very few exceptions, God Himself, not the prophet, who speaks to them; and God speaks to them as their judge. Once only does the prophet use the form so common in other prophets 'saith the Lord.' As in the three first chapters, the prophet, in relation to his wife, represented the relation of God to His people, so in these ten chapters, after the first words of the fourth and fifth chapters;--'Hear the word of the Lord, for the Lord has a controversy with the inhabitants of the land;'--'Hear ye this, O priests;'--whenever the prophet uses the first person, he uses it not of himself, but of God. 'I,'--'My,'--are not Hosea, and the things of Hosea, but God and what belongs to God. God addresses the prophet in the second person. In four verses only of these chapters does the prophet himself apparently address his own people Israel, in two expostulating with them (9:1, 5); in two calling them to repentance (10:12 and 12:6). In two other verses he addresses Judah, and foretells their judgment mingled with mercy (4:13). The last chapter alone is one of almost unmingled brightness; the prophet calls to repentance, and God in His own person accepts it, and promises large supply of grace" (Dr. Pusey).

We learn then from the message of this book, what is so largely written in all the prophets, that there is a glorious future in store for all Israel. Judah and Israel both will receive the promised blessing and glory in that day when the King comes back, when Ephraim joyfully cries out "I have seen Him" (14:8).

The conditions in Israel also find their counterpart in our own times. Christendom has turned its back in greater part upon the true worship, rejects the truth, yea the highest and the best God has given, the Gospel of Christ, hence the moral decline and apostasy and ere long a greater judgment than that which fell upon Israel.

The Division of Hosea

Hosea (meaning "salvation") in his style is abrupt and sententious. As already stated in the introduction he is the prophet of the ten tribes, though Judah is also mentioned by him. The book begins with two symbolical actions commanded by Jehovah, to illustrate Israel's adulterous condition and Jehovah's enduring love for His people in spite of their faithlessness. This is followed by a terse prophecy as to the condition of the people for many days and their return in the latter days (chapters 1-3).

The main portion of the book begins with the fourth chapter. This part begins with "Hear the Word of the Lord." in this section their religious and moral degradation through the priests and their coming ruin is announced. Then follows a description of the judgment which was to come upon Ephraim (the house of Israel) and also upon Judah. This is beheld by the prophet in a solemn vision (5:8-15), followed by a brief prophecy as to what will take place when the remnant of Israel returns unto the Lord (6:1-3). Then the Lord reproves them for their inconstancy, their immorality, their lewd priests. From chapter 7 to 13 we have similar remonstrances, with renewed announcements of the judgments on account of their wickedness, idolatries, leagues with heathen nations; the judgment is to be exile. What is to be their lot is predicted. This punishment is not to be delayed; it will, however, not destroy them, but purge them, leaving a remnant. The last chapter is one of gracious promise of what will take place in the day of their return. The division of this book is therefore twofold.

I. THE REJECTION OF ISRAEL AS AN ADULTEROUS WIFE AND HER FUTURE RECEPTION AND RESTORATION: (1-3)

II. THE MESSAGES OF EXPOSTULATION, JUDGMENT, AND MERCY: (4-12)

There are different subdivisions which will be pointed out and followed in the analysis and annotations.

The book of Hosea is quoted a number of times in the New Testament. See Matt 2:15, 9:13, 12:7; Rom. 9:25, 26; 1 Cor. 15:55; 1 Peter 2:5, 10.

Analysis and Annotations

I. THE REJECTION OF ISRAEL AS THE ADULTEROUS WIFE AND HER FUTURE RECEPTION AND RESTORATION

CHAPTER 1 Israel's Sin and Promise of Restoration

1. The introduction (1:1)
2. The prophet's marriage and birth of Jezreel (1:2-5)
3. The birth of Lo-Ruhamah (1:6-7)
4. The birth of Lo-ammi (1:8-9)
5. The future restoration (1:10-11)

Verse 1. This superscription gives the period of Hosea's ministry. First stands the statement that the word of the Lord came to him. Hosea means salvation; his father's name, Beeri, means "my well." Both are typical names. Critics have pointed out that Hosea was undoubtedly a resident of the northern kingdom of Israel, yet he mentions but one of the kings of Israel, Jeroboam, while four kings of Judah are given in this introduction. Inasmuch as Hosea long survived Jeroboam, the king of Israel, and the Judaic kings extend far beyond the time of the one Israelitish king, it has been alleged that the second part of the superscription does not harmonize with the first. Such is not the case. The superscription is made in this manner for some purpose. Hosea marks his Prophecy by the names of the kings of Judah, because in Judah the theocracy remained. He mentions Jeroboam (the Second), whose reign ended in the fourteenth year of Uzziah, because he was the last king of Israel through whom God acted and vouchsafed help to the rival kingdom. All the other kings of Israel who

came after Jeroboam, by whom the Lord sent deliverance to the ten tribes (2 Kings 14:2 7) were therefore recognized by the prophets of God; the kings which followed were robbers and murderers, whose names the Spirit of God finds unfit to mention in the prophetic ministry of Hosea.

Verses 2-5. In the beginning of his ministry, when Hosea was a young man, the Lord commanded him to take unto him a wife of whoredoms and children of whoredoms, and that for the reason, because the land hath committed great whoredoms, departing from the Lord. This command was at once executed by the prophet; he took to wife Gomer, the daughter of Diblaim.

We are confronted with an interesting question. What is the nature of these transactions? Were they real events, that Hosea literally took this woman and had children by her, or were they nothing but pictorial, visionary illustrations of the spiritual adultery and unfaithfulness of Israel? Did the prophet actually and literally enter into such an impure relationship, or, is it wholly an allegory? Luther supposed that the prophet called his lawful wife and children by these names at a certain time to perform a kind of drama before the people and thus remind them of their apostasy. The objectors to the literalness of this incident, and defenders of the allegorical explanation, have pointed out that it would be unworthy of God to command and sanction such an unchaste union. The allegorical meaning is entirely excluded by the text, which speaks of a literal transaction. All is related as real history, the marriage and the birth of the children. We quote first Dr. Pusey's words in support of the literal meaning of this command by the Lord.

"We must not imagine things to be unworthy of God, because they do not commend themselves to us. God does not dispense with the moral law, because the moral law has its source in the mind of God Himself. To dispense with it would mean to contradict Himself. But God, who is absolute Lord of all things which He made, may, at His sovereign will, dispose of the lives or things which He created. Thus, as sovereign judge, He commanded the lives of the Canaanites to be taken by Israel, as, in His ordinary providence, He has ordained that the magistrate should not bear the sword in vain, but has made him His minister, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil. So, again, He, whose are all things, willed to repay to the Israelites their hard and unjust servitude by commanding them to spoil the Egyptians. He, who created marriage, commanded to Hosea whom he should marry. The prophet was not defiled by taking as his lawful wife, at God's bidding, one defiled, however hard a thing this was."

This is the strongest defense of the literal interpretation of this incident. But there is another interpretation possible, which we believe is the correct one. As the context shows the symbolical meaning of Hosea's marriage is to illustrate Israel's unfaithfulness. But Israel was not always unfaithful; she played not always the harlot. Of necessity this had to be symbolized in the case of the prophet's marriage. The question then arises, was Gomer, the daughter of Diblaim an impure woman when Hosea married her, or did she become unchaste after her marriage to the prophet? We believe the latter was the case. The Hebrew does not require the meaning that she was impure at the time of the marriage; in fact, as already indicated, the supposition that Gomer lived the life of a harlot before her marriage to the godly prophet, destroys the parallelism, which the prophet's message embodies, with the relation of God to Israel. The expression "a wife of whoredoms and children of whoredoms" simply intimated to Hosea what the woman he married was going to be. If not taken in this sense it would mean that Gomer had already children when Hosea married her.

Gomer was called "a wife of whoredoms" by the omniscient Lord, in anticipation of her future conduct. She fell and became immoral after her union with Hosea, and not before. In this way she became a symbol of Israel, married unto the Lord, but afterwards became the unfaithful wife. With this view, the entire prophetic message of Hosea in the beginning of this book harmonizes. The name of the woman is likewise suggestive. Gomer, the daughter of Diblaim, means "Completion--a double cake of figs." Israel's wickedness is symbolized as complete and the double cake of figs is symbolical of sensual pleasures. And the prophet in spite of her unfaithfulness still loved her and did not abandon her. This illustrates Jehovah's love for Israel.

Then she bore him a son. Expositors have stated, "The children were not the prophet's own, but born of adultery and presented to him as his." But that can not be the meaning in view of the plain statement "she conceived and bare him a

son."

The Lord commands him to call this son "Jezreel." Jezreel has likewise a symbolical meaning. It means "God shall scatter" (Jer. 31:10); but it also means "God shall sow" (Zech. 10:9). Thus Israel was to be scattered and sown among the nations. Jezreel was the valley in which Jehu executed his bloody deeds. On account of his hypocritical zeal, the blood of Jezreel is now to be avenged, and the kingdom of the house of Israel would cease. Thus the name Jezreel (resembling in sound and form "Israel") indicates the speedy end of Israel, scattered and sown among the nations, on account of their whoredoms (see Ezek. 23).

Verses 6-7. Next a daughter is born. Here "bare him" as found in verse 3 is omitted. The prophet receives a name for her--Lo-ruhamah, which means "not having obtained mercy." Interesting are the two renderings of the Holy Spirit of this passage in the New Testament. In Romans 9:25 it is rendered "not beloved" and in 1 Peter 2:10, "hath not obtained mercy." Love and mercy were now to be withdrawn from Israel and they were to be taken away utterly.

Then the house of Judah is mentioned. They shall be saved by the Lord their God, because He has mercy on them. Their salvation was not by bow, by sword, or by battle, horses and horsemen. It was only a little while later when the Assyrian, who was God's instrument in the execution of judgment upon Israel, came before the gates of Jerusalem, but Jerusalem was saved in the manner as predicted here, not by bow or sword, but the angel of the Lord smote the army of 185,000 in one night. And later Judah was saved and a remnant brought back from Babylon. Then there is a future salvation for Judah in the end of the age.

Verses 8-9. Another son is born and "God said, Call his name Lo-ammi, for ye are not my people and I am not your God." Lo-ammi means "not my people." Lo-ruhamah and Lo-ammi are symbolical of Israel's rejection and the withdrawal of God's mercy. That this is not to be permanent the next two verses make this clear.

Verses 10-11. Abruptly we are transported from the present into the distant future, and a prophetic utterance of great depth follows. The tenth verse is quoted by the Holy Spirit in Romans 9 and gives full light on the meaning of the passage here. God's sovereignty is the theme of the ninth chapter of Romans: "And that He might make known the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy, which He has afore prepared unto glory, even us, whom He hath called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles. As He saith also in Osee (Greek form of Hosea), I will call them My people, which were not My people; and her beloved, which was not beloved. And it shall come to pass, that in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not My people, there shall they be called the children of the living God" (Rom. 9:23-26). Here is the commentary of Hosea 1:10. It means first that Israel shall be reinstated; but it also means the call and salvation of the Gentiles, and Gentiles called in sovereign grace are to be constituted "the sons of the living God." It is a prophetic hint on the blessing to come to the Gentiles, and that blessing is greater than Israel's.

The eleventh verse is a great prophecy and remains still unfulfilled. Some expositors claim that it was fulfilled in the return of the remnant of Jews under Zerubbabel. But the Babylonian captivity is not in view here at all. The great day of Jezreel will come, when King Messiah, our Lord returns. Then shall Judah and Israel be gathered together under one head, and gather once more to their national feasts in the land.

CHAPTER 2 Appeal and Punishment for Unfaithfulness The Resumed Relationship

1. The appeal and complaint (2:1-5)
2. The punishment for Unfaithfulness (2:6-13)
3. The resumed relationship and its great blessing (2:14-23)

Verses 1-5. Who is addressed in the first verse of this chapter? Some think the children of the prophet are meant. The godly in Israel, those who obtained mercy, are addressed, for the Lord acknowledges such still as "Ammi"-my people. The godly are to plead with the rest of Israel their mother, but who is disowned by Jehovah as the wife, on account of her

adulterous conduct. Then the Lord threatens her with severe punishment because of her unfaithfulness. She is to be stripped naked and be as in the day she was born (see Ezek. 16:4). Nor would there be mercy for her children because the mother, Israel, continued to go after her lovers.

Verses 6-13. Her way is to be hedged up with thorns; a wall of separation is to be raised and to keep her from her lovers. And if she follow after them and make a sinful alliance with them (symbolical of the idol worship of heathens which Israel practiced) she would not find them. Thus she might return to her first husband, to Jehovah. Israel had received from the Lord corn, wine, oil, silver and gold. Then they attributed it all to Baal and used it in idol worship. In verses 9-13 the punishment is fully made known. She is to be left alone; the gifts and blessings will be withdrawn; her lewdness is to be uncovered, all mirth will cease and the days of Baalim, spent in licentious worship, would be visited upon her in judgment.

Verses 14-23. Immediately after the announcement of her punishment follows the assurance or future mercy. Israel's conversion is promised (verses 14-17) and the great mercies of Jehovah's covenant are to be renewed (verses 18-23). The Lord of love will not forever abandon His people and though Israel has played the harlot so long, with no willingness to return unto Him, He Himself in infinite love is going to woo her back. He will allure her, as He brings her into the wilderness, and there speak "to her heart" (the Hebrew meaning). That will be in the coming day when the Lord will remember the remnant of His people during the time of Jacob's trouble and save them in that day. Then she will get her vineyards, her place of blessing, promised to Israel as His earthly people. The valley of Achor shall be the door of hope. In that valley Achan died, on account of whom all Israel had fallen under the ban (Josh. 7). There judgment had been enacted and after that blessing was restored to Israel and the ban was removed. Achor means "troubling." When Israel is in that great trouble, the great tribulation, the valley of trouble will become the door of hope, for then the Lord will forgive them their sins, cover them with His grace and redeem them by His power. Then the singing times begin again for Israel. "She shall sing there as in the days of her youth, and as in the day when she came up out of the land of Egypt." Songs of praise on account of accomplished redemption by Jehovah's power will then burst forth (Exod. 15; Isa. 12). She will be fully restored to her former relationship, typified by marriage. "It shall be in that day, saith the Lord, that Thou shalt call Me Ishi (my husband), and shalt call Me no more Baali (my master)." She will be re-married to the Lord, symbolically speaking, and become the earthly wife of Jehovah, while the church, the espoused virgin, becomes in glory the Lamb's wife (Rev. 19:6-8).

But greater blessing will be connected with that coming day of blessing, when Israel is received back (Rom. 11:15). Verse 18 tells us that creation will then be blest; the time of its deliverance has come. Here the same is indicated as in Isaiah 11:6-7 and Romans 8:21. The end of wars comes then and universal peace blesses the whole earth. This is always the order in the divine forecasts. First, Israel has to be brought back, and after that the blessings for the earth and the nations, including that peace, which the blinded world-church tries to secure without the Lord Jesus Christ. All these promises as to the future of Israel, her restoration and spiritual blessings, are unrealized. "It is infatuation to think that all this was fully accomplished in the return of a remnant from the captivity. The result is that even Christians, misled by this miserable error, are drawn away into the rationalistic impiety of counting God's Word here mere hyperbole to heighten the effect, as if the Holy Spirit deigned to be a verbal trickster, or a prophet were as vain as a litterateur. No; it is a brighter day, when the power of God will make a complete clearance from the world of disorder, misrule, man's violence and corruption, as well as reduce to harmless and happy resubjection the entire animal kingdom."

In that day all the great covenant blessings will return to redeemed Israel. Betrothed again to Jehovah in righteousness, in judgment, in faithfulness and mercies, Israel will know Jehovah. There will be an uninterrupted line of blessing from the heavens down to every earthly blessing. Heavens and earth will be gloriously united, and in answer to the call of His people the heavens will hear and cover all with blessing, for Satan's power is now gone. Israel is no more Lo-ammi, but they will be "His people" and He will be "their God," while the redeemed nation itself will be a blessing in the earth.

CHAPTER 3 Israel's Past, Present, and Future

1. The past (3:1-3)
2. The present (3:4)
3. The future (3:5)

Verses 1-3. The command here is not that the Prophet should enter into relation with another woman, but it concerns the same Gomer, the unfaithful wife. It seems she left the prophet and lived in adultery with another man. "And Jehovah said unto me, Go again, love a wife, who is beloved of her friend and who is an adulteress; just as Jehovah loves the children of Israel, who have turned towards other gods, and love raisin cakes" (correct translation; used in the idolatrous worship). She is not called "thy wife," simply "a wife"; yet the prophet is told to love the adulterous wife. This woman, whom the Lord commands Hosea to love, he had loved before her fall; he was now to love her after her fall, and while in that condition, in order to save her from abiding in it. It was for her sake that she might be won back to him. Such is the love of Jehovah for Israel.

He bought the adulteress for half of the price of a common slave (Exod. 21:32); it denotes her worthlessness. The measure of barley mentioned reminds of the offering of one accused of adultery, and, being the food of animals, shows her degradation likewise. He thus was to buy her back, not to live with him as his wife, but that she might sit as a widow, not running after others, but wait for him during an undefined, but long season, until he would come and take her to himself. While she was not to belong to another man, he, her legitimate husband, would be her guardian. Israel's spiritual adultery is in view in all this.

Verse 4. Here we have direct prophecy, a very remarkable one, as to Israel's present condition. It is to be their state for "many days." These "many days," unreckoned, are the days of this present age, in which Israel is in the predicted condition, while God visits the Gentiles, to gather through the preaching of the gospel a people for His Name, that is, the church. Their condition is to be threefold: Without a civil polity, without king or prince; without the appointed Levitical worship, no sacrifice; without the practice of idolatry, to which they had been given, without image, ephod and teraphim--the distinctly priestly garment, the ephod; the teraphim, the tutelary divinities, which they used before the captivity. Before the captivity they had kings; now they have none, would have none; after the captivity Judah had princes; no princes during the "many days." The real approach to God according to the Levitical service was to cease, for during the "many days" there would be no sacrifice. This has been Israel's condition for nineteen hundred years. What a wonderful forecast of the present we have here! Clearly then, this describes the present condition of Israel--the most anomalous spectacle the world has ever seen--a people who go on generation after generation without any of those things which are supposed to be essential for keeping a people in existence. They have lost their king, their prince; they have neither the true worship nor the worship of idols. They are unable to present a sacrifice, because they have no temple and no more priesthood. Here is an evidence of the supernaturalness of the Bible, one which no Jew nor destructive critic can deny.

Verse 5. Afterward--in the latter days. These two statements open and end the prophecy concerning their future. The "afterward" is not yet; the latter days are still to come. Their future is returning and seeking the Lord, their God and David their king. This is Christ. Nearly all the rabbinical writers and expositors explain it in this way. David himself this could not be. It is He who is David's Son and David's Lord, our Lord (Ezek. 37:23, 24). Here we have the prediction of the future conversion of Israel to the Lord, in the latter days, the days of His coming again.

(The Targum of Jonathan says on Hosea 3:5: "This is the King Messiah; whether he be from among the living or from the dead. His name is Messiah. The same explanation is given by the mystical books Zohar, Midrash Shemuel and Tanchuma. The greatest authorities among the Jews are one in declaring that 'the last days' mean the days of the Messiah; we have reference to Kirnchi, Abarbanel, Moses Ben Nacham and many others.)

II. THE MESSAGE OF EXPOSTULATION, JUDGMENT, AND MERCY

CHAPTER 4 The Lord's Controversy with His People

1. The condition of the people (4:1-5)
2. The loss of their priestly relation (4:6-11)
3. Israel's idolatry (4:12-19)

Verses 1-5. This chapter begins with a terse description of the condition of the professing people of God. First, we have the negative side--no truth, no mercy, no knowledge of God. And there was no truth, because they had rejected the Word of the Lord, hence the result no mercy and no knowledge of God. It is so still whenever and wherever the Word of God is set aside. Then follows the positive evil which was so prominent in their midst: Swearing, lying, killing, stealing, committing adultery, and abundant shedding of blood. Such was the continued moral condition of the house of Israel, the ten tribes. It was all the result of having rejected the Word of the Lord and having turned away from Him. The result of unbelief, destructive criticism and denial of the truth is today, as it was then, swearing, lying, stealing, killing and the immoralities of our times. Therefore judgment would overtake all, even the land itself.

Verses 6-11. The people were destroyed for lack of knowledge, the knowledge of God and His truth. They had lost their place of nearness to the Lord, their priestly character into which the Lord had called the nation (Exod. 19). Therefore they would be rejected to be no longer in priestly relationship to Jehovah. And the priestly class was as corrupt as the people--"like people like priests." They were to be punished for their ways and their doings.

Verses 12-19. Having left Jehovah they had turned to idols, asked counsel of a piece of wood and practiced divination. This abominable idol worship was practiced upon the tops of mountains. There, under trees, they gave themselves over to the vile rites of Baal-peor and Ashtaroth, both men and women abandoned themselves to the grossest sins of the flesh. And the Lord threatens that He would leave them alone in their vileness and not correct them, that they might be brought back. The first chapter of Romans is illustrated by verse 14; they glorified not God, became idolators and then God gave them up to their vile affections.

Then there is a warning to the house of Judah in verse 15. The most sacred places, like Gilgal, had become the scene of the idolatry of the ten tribes. Bethel, the house of God, became a Beth-aven, the house of vanity. If Judah offended and committed the same whoredoms, she would not escape judgment. The warning was unheeded.

"Ephraim (the ten tribes) is joined to idols; let him alone." Ephraim was too far gone; further remonstrances would not help, and so the evil is permitted to go unchecked, to run its full course.

CHAPTER 5:1-6:3 The Message to the Priests, the People, and the Royal House Judgment, Affliction and the Future Return

1. The message of rebuke (5:1-7)
2. The judgment announced (5:8-15)
3. The future return and the blessing (6:1-3)

Verses 1-7. The first verse shows who is addressed: the priests, the house of Israel and the house of the King. Judgment was in store for them, for Mizpah and Tabor, the places of hallowed memory, had been turned by their idolatrous worship into a snare. An old and interesting tradition among the Jews states that at Mizpah the apostates waited for those Israelites who went up to Jerusalem to worship there, to murder them. The next verse seems to indicate something like this tradition.

"And the apostates make slaughter deep; but I am a chastisement to them all." (We give the passage we quote in a better and more literal rendering. The authorized version is frequently incorrect.) (See also chapter 6:9.) And the Lord saw it all. "I know Ephraim, and Israel is not hid from Me." He knew the whoredoms of Ephraim and the defilement of Israel. Their evil deeds kept them from returning to their God, for the demon of whoredoms had taken complete possession of them and it kept them in sin and rebellion. Pride was the leading sin of Ephraim, it was to testify against them and both Israel and Ephraim would stumble on account of their guilt and Judah would share the same fate. And though they go with their

flocks of sheep and their herds, willing and ready to sacrifice, they shall not be able to find Him, for He hath withdrawn Himself.

Verses 8-15. Then follows a vision of judgment. The judgment is seen as having already fallen upon the guilty nation. The horn (Shophar) is blown in Gibeah and the trumpet in Ramah; the alarm is sounded. Gibeah and Ramah were situated on the northern boundary of Benjamin. The enemy was behind Benjamin pursuing. There will be no remedy and no escape (verse 9). "The princes of Judah have become, like the removers of landmarks: I will pour out upon them my wrath like water" (verse 10). A curse is pronounced in the law upon those who remove the landmarks (Deut. 27:17). Judah instead of taking warning from the disaster coming upon the northern kingdom, the ten tribes, sought gain by an enlargement of their own border. The princes of Judah, instead of weeping over the calamity, rejoiced at the removal of Israel as the means of removing the boundary line and increase their estate. Wrath was in store for Judah. To Ephraim the Lord would be as a moth. To the house of Judah He would be as rottenness. The moth destroys. Both terms, moth and rottenness, are symbols of destroying influences working against the house of Israel and the house of Judah (Isa. 50:9, 51:8; Psalm 39:11; Job 13:28). Then they turned to the Assyrian for help and to King Jareb. But there was no help. Jareb is not a proper name, it is an epithet applied to the king of Assyria and means "He will contend" or "He will plead the cause." Like a lion would be the Lord to Israel, and like a young lion to Judah. The same symbolical language is used in Isaiah in connection with the Assyrian, the rod of God's anger (Isa. 10). "Their roaring shall be like a lion, they shall roar like young lions; yea, they shall roar, and lay hold of the prey, and shall carry it away safe, and none shall deliver it" (Isa. 5:29). Thus judgment came upon them and they were carried away as a prey. And like the lion after his attack withdraws to his den, so the Lord would withdraw from them, leave them and return to His place, waiting till their repentance comes and they seek Him early in their affliction.

The last verse of this chapter has a wider meaning than the past judgment which came upon the house of Israel. The Lord of glory came to earth and visited His people. He came with the message and offer of the kingdom to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. He came unto His own, but His own received Him not. After they had rejected Him, delivered Him into the hands of the Gentiles to be crucified, He returned to His place. There He is now at the right hand of God, waiting for that day, when the remnant of Israel will repent and seek His face (Acts 3:19-20). That will be in their coming great affliction, in the time of Jacob's trouble.

Chapter 6:1-3. The division of the chapter at this point is unfortunate. The three verses of chapter 6 must not be detached from the previous chapter. Here we have the future repentance of the remnant of Israel, that is during the great tribulation. Believingly they will acknowledge His righteous judgment and express their faith and hope in His mercy and the promised blessings and restoration. They express what their great prophet Moses so beautifully stated in His prophetic song, that great vision given to him, ere he went to the mountain to die. "See now that I, even I, am He and there is no god with Me; I kill, and I make alive; I wound, and I heal; neither is there any that can deliver out of My hand" (Deut. 32:39). "After two days will He revive us; on the third day He will raise us up, and we shall live in His sight (literally, before His face)." They have been dead spiritually and nationally, but when the two days of their blindness and dispersion are over, there is coming for them the third day of life and resurrection. Jewish expositors have pointed out the fact that a day is with the Lord as a thousand years. They state that they will be in dispersion for two days, that is, two thousand years, after which comes the third day of Israel's glorious restoration. One Rabbinical commentator says: "The first day we were without life in the Babylonian captivity, and the second day, which will also end, is the great captivity in which we are now, and the third day is the great day of our restoration." Like Jonah was given up by the fish on the third day, so comes for Israel a third day of life and glory. Then the latter and the former rain will fall upon their land again, and, blest by Him, their Saviour-King, they will live in His sight. But the passage, no doubt, also points to the resurrection of our Lord, the true Israel in a hidden way.

CHAPTER 6:4-11 Divine Mourning over Ephraim and Judah

1. What shall I do to thee? (6:4-6)
2. Their transgression (6:7-11)

Verses 4-6. The Lord grieves and mourns over the condition of the people whom He loves. After the brief glimpse given of their great future of glory we are brought back into the days of Moses. The Lord grieves and mourns over His people whom He loves, who today are still beloved for the Father's sake (Rom. 9). But while He loved them, their love was like the morning cloud, like the dew, vanishing soon away. The morning cloud looks beautiful, gilded by the rays of the rising sun, but it quickly disappears through the heat of the sun; the dew glitters in the early morning, but soon it is gone. Thus was their love, fluctuating and changing. How often is the love of His heavenly people like the morning cloud and the dew! Thank God that His love never changes! The Prophets He had sent to them came, therefore, with words of condemnation, instead of words of comfort and cheer. They came to hew, as stone or wood is hewn, and the message of judgment they proclaimed condemned them; this is the meaning of the sentence, "I have slain them by the words of My mouth."

Verses 7-11. "Yet they like Adam have transgressed the covenant; they have dealt treacherously against Me." As God had made known His covenant to Adam, given him a commandment, so He had made a covenant with them and made known unto them His will. Like Adam they had transgressed the covenant. Adam had been called into relationship with His Creator and a place of blessing and favor in Eden had been given to him. He transgressed, and after his fall he was driven out. This happened to Israel. Called of God, who entered with them into a covenant and gave them the land of promise, but when they transgressed, like Adam, they were also driven out. Iniquity and blood was everywhere. Even the priests lurked as a band of robbers and murdered the travelers on the way to Shechem, one of the cities of refuge. (Note correct translation: "Upon the way they murder (those who go) to Shechem" verse 9.)

(Attention has been called to an important distinction. Man is called a sinner. The Gentiles as such are never called transgressors. We read in the New Testament of sinners of the Gentiles, but never "transgressors" of the Gentiles. Adam was under a law, which he broke and by it he became a transgressor. Israel was under the law, which they broke and became transgressors. But no covenant existed with the Gentiles, nor had they the law given to them; hence while they are lost sinners, they are not called transgressors in the sense in which the covenant people are called transgressors.)

The horrible thing was that Israel was steeped in whoredoms; they were not only spiritually adulterers, but following the idol worship they lived in literal harlotry and lewdness. Judah, too, would get a harvest. But the final sentence of this chapter, "When I return the captivity of My people," is a prophecy, not concerning the return from Babylon, but that other great restoration which is yet to come. Looked upon in this light the entire verse is prophetic. "For thee, also, Judah a harvest waits, when I shall turn the captivity of My people." When God restores His people in His promised covenant mercies then Judah will be visited by judgment as it will be in the end of this age.

CHAPTER 7 The Moral Depravity of Israel

1. Their moral depravity (7:1-7)
2. Mingling with heathen nations (7:8-16)

Verses 1-7. All the gracious efforts of the Lord to heal Israel resulted in a greater manifestation of the iniquity of Ephraim. Instead of turning to Him in true repentance and self-judgment their evil heart turned away from Jehovah, and they continued in their downward course. They did not consider that the Lord would remember all their evil deeds and punish them for it. The king and the princes, the political heads were as corrupt as the priests, they were pleased with the impenitence and wickedness of their subjects. Then follows a graphic description of their moral depravity. They were adulterers, burning with lust, "like an oven heated by the baker, who rests, stirring up (the fire), after he has kneaded the dough until it be leavened." They indulged in all the vile, obscene practices connected with the idol worship of the heathen about them. They were also drunkards and were heated with wine as they were with lust. They made their heart like an oven; their baker (meaning their own evil will and imagination) slept all night, but, awakening in the morning, their lust is stirred up again. Nor did anyone call upon the name of the Lord.

Such was the moral depravity of a people with whom the Lord had entered into covenant, the favored nation. The

source of it was unbelief and the rejection of His Word. The sad history of Israel is repeated in professing Christendom today.

Verses 8-16. The Lord called Israel to be a separated nation, but Ephraim mingled with the heathen (not, people) and is compared to a cake not turned. They adopted heathen ways, heathen manners and heathen vices. Like an unturned cake, which is black and burnt on the one side, while above it is unbaked, such was Ephraim's condition. Such a cake was fit for nothing; it had to be thrown away. The strangers with whom they mingled devoured their strength, nor did they not notice the signs of their speedy national decay. This is the meaning of the statement, "Gray hairs are here and there upon him, and he does not know it." Furthermore, Ephraim is likened to a silly dove without understanding. Instead of flying back to Jehovah their help and rest, they fluttered, like a moth around the flame, around Egypt and Assyria, trying to find deliverance there. But while fluttering from Egypt to Assyria and from Assyria to Egypt, they did not see the net which was spread for their destruction--that net was Assyria itself. In this net the Lord caught them; their freedom would be ended and captivity begin. Then follows the divine Woe. "Woe unto them! for they have wandered from Me. Destruction upon them, that they have transgressed against Me!" The divine lament cried after them, "I would have redeemed them, but they spoke lies against Me." While they may have cried with their mouth, their heart did not. They were like a deceitful bow on which the archer cannot depend, so the Lord could not depend upon Israel. God had, to apply the symbol, bent Israel as His own bow against evil and idolatry, but they turned themselves against Him.

CHAPTER 8:1-9:9 The Apostasy is Followed by Judgment

1. The judgment announced (8:1-7)
2. The apostasy which resulted in judgment (8:8-14)
3. Warning against self-security (9:1-9)

Verses 1-7. The prophet is commanded to sound the alarm of the impending judgment. The message is that the enemy will come swift as an eagle upon the house of the Lord, which here does not mean the temple (which was in connection with Judah), but Israel as the chosen people was the house, the dwelling-place of the Lord. All their spurious profession, their false claim, "My God, we know Thee, we, Israel", will go for nothing, because they transgressed the covenant and the law. The obnoxious thing they did is stated in verse 4. They had separated themselves from Judah and chosen their own kings and princes in self will, thus putting themselves outside of the theocracy; idolatry speedily followed. In Bethel they had erected the worship of the calf, the great abomination in the sight of the Lord. He rejects their corrupt worship, and ere long the calf of Samaria will be broken to pieces, like the golden calf their fathers made in the wilderness. They sowed the wind and the whirlwind would be the harvest (chapter 10:13, 12:2; Job 4:8; Prov. 22:8). They sowed vanity and evil; the tempest of destruction would be their reaping. What they sowed would not yield fruit at all. The Hebrew contains a play of words, "Tsemach brings no Quernach," which may be rendered, "shoot brings no fruit."

Verses 8-14. Israel had been swallowed up by the nations, that is, by mingling with them. By their doings they have become like a despised vessel. Their sin was going up to Assyria, like a wild ass, suing there for love and favor. They were like a stubborn brute going there by itself. Ephraim was even worse than the stubborn ass. They formed unnatural alliances with the Gentiles. There they gave presents, hiring lovers, literally rendered, "Ephraim gave presents of love" to practice her whoredoms. They forgot their Creator, God; their sacrifices Jehovah despised. Therefore the judgment.

Chapter 9:1-9. Under the reign of Jeroboam II Israel enjoyed great prosperity. It seems they had a bountiful harvest, corn and wine was in abundance. They gave themselves over to feasting and rejoicing. It was at such an occasion when the Lord sent this warning against their own security. Their captivity is announced where they would eat things unclean and feast days will no longer be possible. Then the prophet beholds them as already in the Assyrian captivity. They went away and turned towards the south to escape the sure destruction. But "Egypt will gather them, Memphis will bury them." Their precious things of silver will give way to thistles and thorns. The day of visitation was at hand; their iniquities are remembered and their sins will be visited.

CHAPTER 9:10-11:11 Retrospect, Israel's Failure and Ruin

1. Israel once beloved, now fugitive wanderers (9:10-17)
2. Their guilt and punishment (10:1-11)
3. Exhortation and rebuke (10:12-15)
4. The mercy of a merciful God (11:1-11)

Verses 10-17. Like a wayfaring man who finds grapes and figs in the desert and delights in them, so the Lord found Israel in the desert and they were His pleasure when He led them out of Egypt. But they requited His love by going after Baal-peor, one of the filthiest gods of heathendom. To this they consecrated themselves and practiced their vile abominations. Therefore the glory which He had given to His people will fly away like a bird and their licentious worship of unnatural vices would avenge itself so that there would be no pregnancy and no birth, the promised increase would stop. It seems verses 14-17 are an outburst of the prophet. How literally the sentence has been fulfilled. "They will be wanderers."

Chapter 10:1-11. Here is another retrospect, Israel once called to be a thriving vine (not empty), called to be fruitful; but Israel did not bring forth the expected fruit. As the nation abounded and prospered they increased their idol altars; as the land yielded its increase in the same measure they made their images. Their heart was smooth, or deceitful, for this they will now have to suffer. "Their heart is smooth; now will they make expiation." They will have no more king. The smooth or deceitful heart is described in verse 4, while in the verse which follows the judgment upon their calves they worshipped is announced. It, the calf, will be carried to Assyria to be made a present of to the king. The high places will be destroyed and thorns and thistles will overgrow its altars. Then they will say to the mountains, "Cover us!" and to the hills, "Fall upon us!" Well, it is to read in connection with this prophetic statement what our Lord said about the judgment of Jerusalem in Luke 23:30 and what is written in connection with the breaking of the sixth seal in Revelation 6:16.

Gibeah is mentioned (verse 9). The corruption of Gibeah is also noted in chapter 9:9. The horrible abomination of Gibeah is recorded in judges 19 in consequence of which the tribe of Benjamin was almost wiped out. And the people had become as wicked and guilty as Benjamin at Gibeah. The nations are now to be used to punish Israel. "And the nations will gather themselves against them, when I bind them for their offenses" (verse 10, literal translation).

Verses 12-15. Here is a break in the judgment message. If they would return to the Lord and would sow righteousness, they would reap mercy. But such sowing is impossible unless the fallow ground is broken up, that is, true repentance and a heart return unto the Lord. "For it is time to seek the Lord, until He come and rain righteousness upon you." In what infinite patience He waited for the repentance of His people! But while He would save them, they would not! Still God's gifts and calling are without repentance and the day will come when a remnant of Israel will seek the Lord; then He will come and rain righteousness upon them.

How different was their condition! The Lord rebukes them, for they had ploughed wickedness, and reaped iniquity. The noise of war is now heard; Shalman (a contracted form of Shalmanezar, the King of Assyria) is advancing and shall destroy all their fortresses as he destroyed Beth-arbel. (There is no further record of Beth-arbel and its destruction.) And who was responsible for all this havoc and the impending calamity? "Thus has Bethel done to you, for the evil of your great evil. In the early morning the king of Israel shall be utterly cut off." Bethel was the seat of Israel's idolatry, it drew God's wrath and finally ended the monarchy in Israel and their national existence.

Chapter 11:1-11. This chapter starts with a beautiful allusion to Israel's youth, when in sovereign love He called Israel, His firstborn son, out of Egypt, redeeming them by blood and power (Exod. 4:22-23). But this passage is quoted in the second chapter of the Gospel of Matthew: "That it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Out of Egypt have I called My Son" (Matt. 2:15). The blending together of Israel and Christ is very interesting. Christ is the true Israel and goes through the entire history of the nation, without failure and in divine perfection. He was carried as an infant into the land where Israel suffered in the fiery furnace; and finally He died for that nation and in some future day

through Him, the true Israel (called such in Isa. 49), Israel's great future and glory will come to pass.

But while the Son of God, the true Israel, was perfect and holy in all His ways, Israel was unfaithful. This record of Jehovah's faithfulness and mercy is here unfolded. He sent them prophets who called them, but they turned away from Him and gave themselves over to the Baalim and the idol-gods. How loving He had been to them! He led them, took them into His arms and healed them. He drew them with cords of love and was towards them "as those that would raise the yoke-strap over their jaws, and I reached out to them to eat" (verse 4). It is a beautiful picture of His great gentleness with them. Perhaps some of them were anxious to turn to Egypt and find a home there and thus escape the cruel Assyrian. But the Lord declares that they shall not return to Egypt, but Assyria is to be their king, because they refused to return. The sword of judgment would do its work completely (verses 6-7). Then follows a most wonderful outburst of deepest sorrow over the stubborn nation:

How should I give you up, Ephraim?
 How shall I surrender thee, Israel?
 How should I make thee like Admah?
 Or set thee like Zeboim?
 My heart is turned within me;
 My repentings are kindled together.

It is the same Lord who speaks here, who centuries later stood before the city and broke out in loud weeping when He beheld the city: "If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes" (Luke 19:42). "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold your house is left unto you desolate. For I say unto you, ye shall not see Me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord" (Matt. 23:37). How He loves His people! And though He has punished them, He does not forsake them; He will not be angry forever; He is a covenant keeping God, "For I am God and not man" (verse 9). "For I am the Lord, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed" (Mal. 3:6). And so here, this chapter of Jehovah's mercy ends with the assurance of their future restoration and blessing. "They will follow the Lord." That will be "when like a lion He roars." That is the day when He appears again as "The lion of the tribe of Judah." Then, in that day, like a bird from Egypt they will hasten back and like a dove from Assyria. "Then will I make them dwell in their houses, saith the Lord." Here is another prophecy of their restoration to their own, God-given home land.

CHAPTERS 11:12-12:14 The Indictment

1. Ephraim's indictment (11:12-12:2)
2. Remembrance of the past (12:3-6)
3. What Israel had become (12:7-14)

Chapter 11:12-12:2. Lying and deceit had been Ephraim's course towards Jehovah; instead of trusting Him and following Him faithfully they had attached themselves to idols, while Judah still outwardly cleaved to Jehovah, though it was in a rambling way. The word translated "ruleth" means rambling. The better rendering of the sentence is "and Judah is also rambling towards God (or unbridled against Him) and towards the faithful Holy One." But while outwardly Judah seemed to be all right, Ephraim fed on wind, was occupied with the vain, the empty things, increased in lies and desolation and turned to Assyria and Egypt for help, sending as a present olive oil to the latter and making a covenant with the former (see 2 Kings 17:4). Then the mask is torn from Judah's face. The Lord had a controversy with them also and would repay them according to their evil deeds.

Verses 3-6. Jacob's sons are now reminded of Jacob's experience. Though he was so weak and sinful yet the Lord in marvelous grace met him. The experience at Peniel is recalled. "Yea, he had power over the angel, and prevailed; he wept

and made supplication unto Him." There he learned the sufficiency of grace and his strength was made perfect in weakness. The angel who appeared unto him that night was none other than the Son of God. What a reminder it was to them. "He found him (Jacob) in Bethel!" In the very place where the Lord found Jacob and Jacob found the Lord, they had set up their awful, God-denying idol worship. Where God had shown such mercy there they practiced now their abominations. Jehovah, the God of hosts, was still the same. He is the Lord who changes not. He was waiting still for their return. To such a God, who keeps His covenant promises they were urged to return and prove their true return by keeping mercy and justice and by waiting on Jehovah continually. But the call of grace and mercy was unheeded.

Verses 7-14. The Lord calls apostate Israel a merchant, that is in Hebrew "Canaan." (Canaan means traffic; see Ezek. 17:4.) They had become Canaanites with the balances of deceit, loving to oppress. They had become fraudulent merchants, by cheating and oppression. Their wrong attitude towards Jehovah, having forsaken Him, led to a wrong attitude towards their fellowmen. Instead of repenting they boasted, "I am become rich, I have found me out substance." They were breaking the law continually (Lev. 19:36 and Deut. 25:13-16). Yet in all their lawbreaking they prided themselves of being a righteous nation. "In all my labors they shall find no iniquity in me that were sin." How all this fits a good part of the Jews today is too well known to need further comment.

Some day it will be different through the grace and mercy of the never-changing Lord. He is the Jehovah who delivered them out of Egypt; all their blessing and prosperity they owed to Him; He had guided and preserved them, and all their sinning would not diminish His faithfulness to them. They are going to dwell again some day in tents, a reference to the feast of tabernacles, that great feast which typifies the coming millennial blessings for restored Israel. Such had been the continued testimony of the prophets He had sent, who announced the coming judgments and the final blessings in a future day. But now everything was ruin on account of their idolatry. Gilgal was the seat of a part of their idolatry (chapter 4:15, 9:15). Then once more they are reminded of their progenitor Jacob. He fled before Esau his brother, yet though he was weak he served faithfully for a wife and for a wife he kept guard and Jehovah guarded and blest him. So He would concern Himself with them again. The twenty-sixth chapter of Deuteronomy throws light on this passage. But what was Ephraim's condition? Instead of acknowledging all Jehovah had done for Jacob and his offspring they provoked Him to bitter anger, therefore the Lord would punish them.

CHAPTER 13 Ephraim's Ruin and judgment

1. Ruin and judgment (13:1-8)
2. It is thy destruction, O Israel! (13:9-11)
3. Mercy to follow wrath (13:12-14)
4. The desolation of the nearing judgment (13:15-16)

Verses 1-8. In the beginning Ephraim was humble, and knowing his dependence, he spoke with trembling. Then he became puffed up, exalted himself in Israel, loving the preeminence, it led on to the schism from Judah and the house of David. The next step after this separation from Judah was idolatry, then the dying of the nation began. This sad history of Ephraim, revealing the steps of decline, beginning with self-exaltation and ending in ruin and death, has often been repeated in the individual history of countless multitudes among the professing people of God.

Then they went from sinning to sinning, from bad to worse, just as in our own days, the apostates in Christendom go from bad to worse in fulfillment of 2 Timothy 3:13. "But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived." Idolatry flourished on all sides. They added idol images in Gilgal and Beer-sheba to the golden calves (Amos 8:14). Then the judgment is announced. Just as the rising sun quickly disperses the morning clouds and the dew, so they should pass away (chapter 6:4). They would be like the chaff driven with a whirlwind out of the threshing floor (Psa. 1:4, 35:5; Isa. 17:13, 41:15-16); they would be like the quickly evaporating smoke, which comes out of the windows of a house without a chimney.

Then the Lord reminds them of their former relationship and that He is the true God, "and there is no Saviour beside

Me." In the land of the wilderness He knew them and there He cared for them and provided all their needs. But instead of acknowledging Him, they became full; self-exaltation followed, and then they forgot Him. Throughout the Word of God self-exaltation, pride is always given as the starting point of departure from God and the consequent ruin.

Verses 7-8 are interesting. They are to be rent by wild beasts, which, symbolically, represent the Gentiles. The ten tribes were carried away by the Assyrian, while later, when Judah met its judgment, the whole land was devastated by the lion-empire (Babylonia); by the bear (Medo-Persia); by the leopard (the Graeco-Macedonia); and finally by the dreadful beast, "the beast of the field shall tear them," the Roman power.

Verses 9-11. "It is thy destruction, O Israel, that thou art against Me, against thy help." What they had done in lifting themselves up, in forsaking Jehovah was spiritual and national suicide. They were alone responsible for their destruction. Where was their king to save them out of such ruin and destruction? The house of David with which the covenant had been made they had forsaken. He reminds them again of an episode in their past history, when they, their fathers, were rebellious and asked for a king. Such kings like Saul had been their kings which reigned over the ten tribes.

Verses 12-14. Ephraim deliberately held on to his sin. Their iniquity was bound up; it was laid by in store. The reference is to the oriental custom of tying up money and other valuables into a bundle and hiding it somewhere. It was done for security. So the Lord would see to it that their sins and iniquity would not be forgotten; all their sins were preserved for punishment (see Deut. 32:34). Sorrow and great trouble should come upon them. It has been thus in the past, it will be so in the future, in the time of "Jacob's trouble" (Jer. 30:7). When that time comes, when all their hope and strength is gone (Deut. 32:36-43) then He will deliver. Then all the enemies will be put down. Redemption from death and the plagues will come; they will be ransomed from the power of Sheol (not hell). Israel will be raised from its national death-sleep. Long she has been buried among the nations, without spiritual and national life, like those who are in the power of Sheol. But Jehovah will deliver the faithful portion of Israel and Judah, and they will rise from the dust of the earth, the symbol of their national restoration. To use this passage, as it has been done, to teach the restitution of the wicked, is wrong. It has nothing to do with the wicked dead and their future, but all applies to the restoration of Israel. (See the annotations of chapters 16 and 37 of the Prophet Ezekiel.)

Verses 15-16. These verses describe the horrors of the coming judgment by the Assyrians (2 Kings 8:12, 15:16, and Amos 1:13).

CHAPTER 14 The Return and the Glorious Redemption

1. The exhortation to return (14:1-3)
2. The glorious redemption (14:4-9)

Verses 1-3. This chapter is a wonderful finale to the messages of Hosea. What tender entreaties! What gracious assurance! What glorious promises of a future redemption! it is Jehovah beseeching His people, those who had forsaken Him, outraged His character of holiness and who had despised Him. First is the call to return. God's hands are tied as long as His people stay away from Him and do not return to Him in true repentance. No true salvation and deliverance for His people is possible without a true heart return unto Him. It is this for which He looks and waits.

Then the Lord Himself puts His word and a prayer into their mouth. He loves to provide all. "Take with you words and turn to Jehovah and say unto Him, Forgive all iniquity, and receive us graciously, so will we render the calves of our lips." Could their poor, darkened and mistrusting hearts ever even have imagined to ask thus of Him? Their consciences were defiled; the burden of guilt was upon them. But Jehovah does not mention their sins and their guilt, but tells them just to pray for forgiveness and for a gracious reception. And He who tells His wayward people to pray, to turn to Him, to pray for forgiveness, He who assures them that He hears, assures them of a gracious receiving, will never fail. How full of comfort these sentences are to all His people at all times! We can imagine that in Hosea's day there were individual Israelites who took these words to heart. After them generations of Jews read them and turned individually to the Lord,

found forgiveness and became the objects of His grace. And we too, as His people, when we have gone back in our spiritual life, can find our comfort here, and appropriate all this in faith as we act upon His Word. In the future the remnant of Israel will take these gracious exhortations to heart, and before the glorious redemption is given to them return to the Lord with this prayer.

"So will we render the calves of our lips." Literally rendered it is "we will pay as young oxen our lips," i.e., present the prayers of our lips as a thankoffering; we will be worshippers. Such is the result of a real return unto the Lord with sins forgiven and restored to His fellowship. The days of singing are coming for Israel in that day when they return unto Him and He appears in His glory to be enthroned as King. It will usher in the singing times for all the world, including groaning creation, then delivered. Then follows the evidence of their genuine repentance. It is expressed in words suited to the condition of Ephraim in Hosea's day. They repudiate Assyria; they acknowledge that no salvation is there, but only in Jehovah. No longer will they trust in their own strength and in the strength of their horses; no longer will they turn to idols and call them "Our God," but they will acknowledge Him in whom the fatherless findeth mercy. Israel, God's firstborn son, had been the prodigal, was fatherless, though the Father's love never gave them up. But now the prodigal returns and knows there is One in whom the fatherless findeth abundant mercy. All this true repentance will be manifested at the close of this age, when the remnant of Israel turns to the Lord.

Verses 4-9. His gracious answer to such repentance follows. Three times Jehovah speaks "I will." This is the word of sovereign grace. (See annotations on Ezekiel.) The three "I wills" are: (1) I will heal their backslidings; (2) I will love them freely; (3) I will be a dew unto Israel. They are arranged in a most blessed order. Mercy, love and gracious refreshment resulting in fruitfulness and beauty, such is the order. The past is wiped out, the present is love and the future is glory. Like the lily, like Lebanon and like the olive-tree, Israel is to be. The lily denotes beauty; they will be clad in the beauty of holiness. Lebanon stands for strength and stability; they will become the nation of power which can never be moved. Then they shall be once more the olive tree; the broken off branches will be put back (Rom. 11:16, etc.). The blessings of the restored Israel in the millennium are given in the seventh verse.

Beautiful is verse 8. "Ephraim (shall say), 'What have I to do any more with idols? I hear and I look upon Him; I am like a green fir tree. From Me is thy fruit found.'" Ephraim, the cake half turned, Ephraim, of whom it was said, he is joined to idols, leave him alone, now repudiates the idols. And why? I hear and I look upon Him! The vision of the Lord turned the stubborn heart. It is so still; the great power is to hear Him, to look upon Him. In that day Israel will look on Him whom they pierced, the great turning point in their future history. Then the nation will yield the fruit through their fellowship with Him. Blessed ending of this prophecy. "For the ways of Jehovah are right, and the just shall walk in them; but the transgressors shall fall therein."

THE BOOK OF JOEL

The Annotated Bible

Arno Clement Gaebelein

THE PROPHET JOEL

Introduction

Joel means "Jehovah is God." This name occurs frequently in the Old Testament (1 Sam. 8:2; 1 Chronicles 4:35, 5:4, 8, 12, etc.). The prophet Joel was the son of Pethuel. Numerous guesses have been made about his personality. A tradition states that he was from Bethom in the tribe of Reuben. In 1 Chronicles 24:16 a man by name of Pethahiah is mentioned. Some have connected him with the father of Joel, Pethuel, claiming upon this that Joel belonged to a priestly family; but this, as well as other claims cannot be confirmed. Jewish expositors make the statement that Pethuel was Samuel, because Samuel had a son by name of Joel; but, inasmuch as the sons of Samuel were evildoers this is incorrect. The book itself does not give even a single hint as to his personal history.

When and Where Joel Lived

As to the time and place, when and where he exercised his prophetic office, we are not left in doubt. He prophesied not like Hosea among the ten tribes, but he was a prophet of Judah. The entire prophecy bears witness to it; this fact has never been disputed. It is different with the date of Joel. Destructive criticism has assigned to Joel a post-exilic date, with some very puerile arguments. For instance the claim that the mention of the walls of Jerusalem (chapter 2:7, 9), point to a date after Ezra and Nehemiah. Such an argument is not an argument of a scholar but of school-boy. Critics also object to an early date because the Greeks are mentioned in chapter 3:6. But the Greeks are also mentioned in an inscription of Sargon (about 710 B.C.), and long before that in the Armana letters a Greek is also mentioned, as stated in "Higher Criticism and the Monuments" by Professor Sayce.

The best Jewish and Christian scholarship has maintained a very early date of Joel. When the editor published his larger work on Joel, in which he puts the date between 860 and 850 B.C., Professor H.A. Sayce of Oxford, one of the greatest scholars of our times, wrote in a personal letter to the writer: "Let me thank you heartily for your very interesting exposition of Joel. I am glad to see a work of the kind on conservative lines; the attempts to find a late date for the prophet rests on arguments which to the inductive scientist are no arguments at all." This strong statement and endorsement of a very early date for Joel certainly outweighs the arguments of certain critics who possess nothing like the scholarship of the Oxford professor.

There is nothing mentioned in Joel of the Assyrian period 800-650, nor is there anything said of the Babylonian period 650-538, hence Joel must have prophesied before the Assyrian period, that is in the ninth century B.C., or he must have lived after the exile. The latter is excluded, therefore Joel exercised his office as prophet in Judah during the middle of the ninth century, as stated above, about 860-850 B.C. This view is abundantly verified by different facts found in the book itself.

Now, the date of Amos is generally accepted as being in the middle of the 8th century before Christ. In the first chapter of the book of Amos there is an undoubted quotation from the book of Joel. (See Joel 3:16 and Amos 1:2). Dr. Pusey makes the following argument out of this fact:

"Amos quoting Joel attests two things. (1) That Joel's prophecy must, at the time when Amos wrote, have become a part of Holy Scriptures, and its authority must have been acknowledged; (2) That its authority must have been acknowledged by, and it must have been in circulation among, those to whom Amos prophesied; other-wise he would not have prefixed to his book those words of Joel. For the whole force of the words, as employed by Amos, depends on being recognized by his hearers, as a renewal of the prophecy of Joel. Certainly bad men jeered at Amos, as though this threatening would not be fulfilled."

The seven strongest reasons for the early date of Joel are the following:

1. Joel charges the Philistines with having invaded Judah, captured the inhabitants, and sold them as slaves. Now, according to 2 Chron. 21:16, this happened under Joram, B.C. 889-883. And they suffered the punishment predicted for their crime, under Uzziah, 2 Chron. 26:6. Hence Joel could not have written this book before B.C. 889, nor later than 732.

2. The Phoenicians, i.e., those of Tyre and Sidon, who in the days of David and Solomon were the allies, had in later times become the enemies of Judah. They too had been guilty of selling Jewish prisoners to the Grecians. Joel predicts that they also shall be punished for this crime--a prediction fulfilled in the time of Uzziah, B.C. 811-759. This proves that Joel must have prophesied before the days of Uzziah.

3. The Edomites (3:19), are ranked among the enemies of Judah. They came from the same stock as the Jews, and on account of their sin against their brethren, their country was to become a perpetual desolation. From 2 Kings 8:20, comp. with 2 Chron. 21:8, we learn that they became independent of Judah in the time of Joram, B.C. 889-883. They were again subdued, and their capital city Petra captured, B.C. 838-811, though the southern and eastern parts of their territory were not conquered until the reign of Uzziah, about B.C. 830. The prophet must have exercised his ministry, therefore, prior to the latter date.

4. The fact that no mention is made of the invasion by the Syrians of Damascus proves that Joel was one of the early prophets. This occurred in the latter part of the reign of Josiah, B.C. 850-840.

5. The high antiquity of Joel is proved by the fact that he makes no reference to the Assyrian invasion of the two Jewish kingdoms in B.C. 790. On the other hand, Amos clearly alludes to it (6:14).

6. Another proof is derived from the relation between Joel and Amos. The latter was certainly well acquainted with the writings of the former.

7. The mention of the Valley of Jehoshaphat is a circumstance leading to the same conclusion. It took this name from the memorable victory there gained over Moab and Ammon. The way in which Joel refers to it shows that this event must have been a comparatively recent one, and that the memory of it was still fresh.

On these grounds we conclude that in fixing the time of this prophet, we cannot take for our terminus a quo an earlier date than B.C. 890, nor for our terminus ad quem a later one than 840. It most probably falls between B.C. 860-850. Joel therefore is probably the oldest of the Minor Prophets.

The Prophecy of Joel

The prophecy of Joel is one which extends from his own time to the time of Israel's restoration and blessing in the day of the Lord. The style of the brief prophecy is sublime. To show its beauty we give a corrected metric version. It must be read through several times to grasp its vivid descriptions, the terse and solemn utterances, the full, smooth phrases, and above all the revelation it contains. His utterances are distinguished by the soaring flight of imagination, the originality, beauty and variety of the similes. The conceptions are simple enough, but they are at the same time bold and grand. The

perfect order in which they are arranged, the even flow, the well compacted structure of the prophecy are all remarkable.

He may well be called "The Prophet of the Lord's Day." Five times he mentions this day. Chapters 1:15, 2:1-2, 10-11, 30-31, and 3:14-16. The great theme then is "The Day of the Lord," that coming day, when the Lord is manifested, when the enemies of Israel are judged, when the Lord restores and redeems Israel.

The occasion of the book and prophecy of Joel was a dreadful scourge which swept over the land of Israel. Locusts swarms had fallen upon the land and stripped it of everything green. There was also a great drought. All was a chastisement from the Lord. Hence we see in the first chapter the penitential lamentations of old and young, priests and people. Then the vision widens in the second chapter. The locusts appear no longer as a scourge of literal insects; they become typical of an invading army. This hostile army invades the land from the North and makes the land a wilderness. The alarm is sounded in Zion; the repentance of the people follows. Then comes the great change in this picture of desolation and despair. The day of the Lord is announced. He acts in behalf of His people. He delivers them from the northern Army; He restores what the locusts had devoured; the land is restored and the latter rain is given. At the close of the second chapter stands the prophecy which predicts spiritual blessings through the outpouring of the Spirit of God upon all flesh, a prophecy which has not yet been completely fulfilled, which is not now in process of fulfillment, but which will be accomplished in the day of the Lord. The last chapter is the great finale of this symphony of prophecy. Here the judgment of the nations is vividly portrayed; what the day of the Lord will bring, and what will follow in blessing is the final theme.

But few Christians have ever given much heed to this prophetic book. There are many important truths in this book. A great deal of confusion might have been avoided if more attention had been given to the setting in which the prediction of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon all flesh is found. The Pentecostal delusion is built up mostly upon the wrong interpretations of this prophecy.

The Division of Joel

The divisions of the prophecy of Joel, as found in our English version, cannot be improved upon. We follow it in our analysis and annotations.

THE BOOK OF JOEL

A Metric Version

CHAPTER 1

1. The Word of Jehovah which came to Joel, the Son of Pethuel.
2. Hear this, ye aged men
And open the ear ye inhabitants of the land!
Hath this happened in your days,
Or even in the days of your fathers?
3. Relate it to your children
And your children to their children,
And their children to another generation.
4. What the Gazam*1 left, the Arbeh hath devoured
And what the Arbeh left, the Jelek hath devoured
And what the Jelek left, the Chasel hath devoured
5. Awake, ye drunkards and weep!
And howl all ye drinkers of wine
Because of the sweet wine,

- For it is taken away from your mouth.
6. For a nation has come up upon my land
Mighty and without number-- His teeth--lion's teeth--
The jaw teeth, that of a lioness.
7. He hath made my vine for a desolation
And my fig tree broken off;
Peeled off completely and cast it away;
Its branches are made white.
8. Lament like a virgin!
Girded with sackcloth for the husband of her youth.
9. Cut off is the meat and drink offering from the house of Jehovah.
10. "Wasted is the field
Mourning is the land--For wasted is the corn
The new wine is dried up The oil faileth."
11. Be ashamed, husbandman!
Howl--vine dressers!
For the wheat and the barley.
Because the harvest of the field is lost.
12. The vine is dried up
And the fig tree faileth
The pomegranate, also the palm and the apple tree.
All the trees of the field are withered.
Gone is joy from the children of men.
13. Gird yourselves and lament, O ye priests,
Howl, ministers of the altar;
Come lie down in sackcloth all night
Ye ministers of my God.
For withholden from the house of your God
Are the meat offering and the drink offering.
14. Sanctify a fast.
Call a solemn gathering.
Bring together the Elders
All the inhabitants of the land
In the house of Jehovah your God
And cry unto Jehovah
15. Woe! For the Day!
Because near is the day of Jehovah
Even like destruction from Shaddai*2 it comes.
16. Is not the food cut off before our eyes?
From the house of our God joy and gladness.
17. The seeds have perished under their clods.
The garners become desolate
The storehouses are broken down
For withered is the corn.
18. Hear the cattle groan!
The herds of cattle are bewildered,
For there is no feeding place for them.
Also the flocks of sheep are made to suffer*3
19. To Thee, Jehovah, I cry,
For the fire has consumed the goodly places of the desert
And a flame hath burned all the trees of the field.

20. Also the cattle of the field look Up*4 unto Thee
 For the streams of water are dried up,
 And a fire hath consumed the goodly places of the desert.

(*1 We leave these four words untranslated for reasons which will be given in the exposition.)

(*2 The only time Shaddai (Almighty) is used in Joel. In the Hebrew there is a resemblance of sound between "destruction" and "Shaddai.")

(*3 The Hebrew word, which we translate "made to suffer" means in its root "to be guilty.")

(*4 Another word different from the 19th verse is used, though nearly all translators use "cry." it is more a groaning, desirous looking up.)

CHAPTER 2

1. Blow the trumpet in Zion,
 Sound an alarm in the mount of my holiness.
 Let all the dwellers of the land tremble,
 For the day of Jehovah cometh,
 For it is near at hand.
2. A day of darkness and gloom
 A day of clouds and thick darkness,
 Like the dawn spread upon the mountains;--
 A people numerous and strong!
 Never hath there been the like before,
 Neither shall the like come again,
 in the years of many generations.
3. A fire devoureth before them,
 And behind them a flame burneth;
 Before them the land is as the garden of Eden,
 And behind them a desolate wilderness,
 Yea, and nothing can escape them.
4. Their appearance is like the appearance of horses,
 And like the horsemen shall they run.
5. Like the noise of chariots,
 On the mountain tops, they shall leap,
 Like the crackling of a flame of fire devouring the stubble,
 Like a strong people set in battle array
6. Before them the peoples are in distress
 All faces turn to paleness.
7. They run like mighty men
 They climb the wall like men of war;
 And they march each one in his ways,
 And they turn not aside from their ranks.
8. Nor cloth one press upon another
 A mighty one*5 marches in the high road.
 They fall upon the dart, but are not wounded.
9. They spread themselves in the city.
 They run along upon the wall,
 They climb up into the houses,
 They enter in by the windows like a thief
10. The earth trembleth before them,
 The heavens shake,

- The sun and the moon are darkened,
And the stars withdraw their shining.
11. And Jehovah uttereth His voice before his army
For very great is His host,
For He that executeth His Word is mighty;
For great is the day of Jehovah and very terrible,
And who can stand it?
12. Yet even now, saith Jehovah,
Return unto Me with all your heart,
With fasting and with weeping and with mourning.
13. And rend your heart and not your garments,
And return unto Jehovah your God,
For He is gracious and merciful,
Slow to anger and of great loving kindness
And repenteth Him of the evil.
14. Who knoweth He may return and repent
And leave a blessing behind,
An oblation and a drink offering
For Jehovah your God.
15. Blow the trumpet in Zion, Sanctify a fast.
16. Call out a solemn assembly,
Gather the people.
Sanctify a congregation.
Assemble the old men.
Gather the children,
And those that suck the breasts;
Let the bridegroom leave his chamber
And the bride her closet;
17. Let the priests, the ministers of Jehovah,
Weep between the porch and the altar,
And let them say:--
"Spare Thy people, O Jehovah,
And give not Thine heritage to reproach
That the nations should rule over them.*6
Wherefore should they say among the peoples
"Where is their God?"
18. Then Jehovah will be jealous for His people:
And will have pity on His people.
19. And Jehovah will answer and say to His people:
Behold I am sending to you the corn,
The new wine and the oil;
And ye shall be satisfied therewith.
And I will no longer make you
For a reproach among the nations
20. And I will remove afar from you the one from the North
And will drive him into a dry and desolate land,
His face toward the Eastern sea
His rear toward the Western sea
And his stench shall arise
And his ill odor shall ascend,
For he hath lifted himself up to do great things.

21. Fear not, O Land
Be glad and rejoice,
For Jehovah doeth great things.
22. Fear not, ye beasts of the field!
For the pastures of the desert spring forth,
The tree beareth her fruit
The fig tree and the vine give their strength.
23. Ye children of Zion, be glad and rejoice
In Jehovah your God;
For He giveth you the early rain in righteousness,
He causeth to descend for you the showers,
The early and the latter rain as before.
24. And the floors shall be full of corn,
And the vats shall overflow with new wine and oil.
25. And I will restore to you the years,
Which the Arbeh hath eaten.
The Jelek, the Chasel and the Gazam,
My great army, which I sent among you.
26. Then ye shall be in abundance, and be satisfied
And praise the name of Jehovah your God,
Who has dealt wondrously with you,
You My people shall never be ashamed.
27. And ye shall know that I am in the midst of Israel,
And that I Jehovah am your God, and none else.
And My people shall never be ashamed,
28. And it shall come to pass afterwards,
I will pour out My Spirit upon all flesh,
And your sons and your daughters shall prophesy;
Your old men shall dream dreams,
Your young men shall see visions.
29. Yea, even upon the men servants and the maid servants,
In those days will I pour out My Spirit.
30. And I will give wonders in the heaven and on earth,
Blood, and fire and pillars of smoke.
31. The sun shall be turned to darkness,
And the moon into blood,
Before the great and terrible day of Jehovah come.
32. And it shall come to pass
Whosoever shall call on the name of Jehovah shall be saved.
For in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance,
As Jehovah hath said,
Even for the remnant whom Jehovah shall call.

(*5 This is the literal meaning.)

(*6 Or, "they that should be a byword of the nations.")

CHAPTER 3

1. For behold in those days and in that time,
When I shall bring back the captivity of Judah and Jerusalem;
2. I will also bring together all nations,

- And will bring down into the valley of Jehoshaphat;
 And there will I judge them on account of My people,
 And My heritage Israel, whom they have scattered among the nations,
 And they divided My land.
3. And they cast lots for My people,
 They gave a boy for a harlot,
 And sold a girl for wine, and drank it.
4. Yea also, what have ye to do with Me, O Tyre and Sidon,
 And all the borders of Philistia?
 Would you requite Me with retaliation?
 If you retaliate
 Swiftly and speedily will I bring your recompense
 Upon your own head.
5. Because ye have taken My silver and gold,
 And have brought into your temples My very best things
6. And the children of Judah and of Jerusalem,
 Ye sold to the children of the Greeks,
 That ye might remove them far from their border.
7. Behold I will raise them up out of the place whither ye sold them,
 And I will return the retaliation upon your own head.
8. And I will sell your sons and your daughters
 Into the hands of the sons of Judah.
 And they shall sell them to the Sabeans to a far off nation.
 For Jehovah hath spoken it.
9. Proclaim this among the nations:
 Declare a war!
 Arouse the mighty ones!
 Let all the men of war draw near, let them come up!
10. Beat your ploughshares into swords,
 And your pruning hooks into spears.
 Let the weak say, I am strong.
11. Come together,
 All ye nations round about
 Gather yourselves together.
 Thither cause thy mighty ones to come down,
 O, Jehovah!
12. Let the nations arise and come up
 To the valley of Jehoshaphat,
 For there will I sit to judge all the nations round about.
13. Put in the sickle,
 For the harvest is ripe;
 Come--Tread!
 For the wine-press is full,
 The vats overflow;
 For their wickedness is great.
14. Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision!
 For the day of Jehovah is at hand in the valley of decision.
15. The sun and the moon are darkened
 And the stars withdraw their shining.
16. And Jehovah shall roar from Zion,
 And send forth His voice from Jerusalem;

- And the heavens and the earth shall shake;
But Jehovah will be a refuge for His people
And a fortress for the sons of Israel.
17. And ye shall know that I, Jehovah, your God,
Dwell in Zion, My holy mountain;
And Jerusalem shall be holy,
And strangers shall no more pass through her.
18. And it shall come to pass in that day
That the mountains shall drop down new wine,
And the hills shall flow with milk,
And all the river beds of Judah shall be full with waters,
And a fountain shall come forth from the house of Jehovah,
And shall water the valley of Shittim.
19. Egypt shall be a desolation
And Edom shall be a desolate wilderness.
For their violence against the children of Judah,
Because they shed innocent blood in their land.
20. But Judah shall abide forever.
And Jerusalem from generation to generation.
21. And I will purge them from the blood
From which I had not purged them
And Jehovah will dwell in Zion.

Analysis and Annotations

I. THE PLAGUE OF LOCUSTS

II. THE COMING DAY OF THE LORD: THE RUIN, THE REPENTANCE AND THE RESTORATION

III. THE EVENTS OF THE DAY OF THE LORD: ISRAEL'S ENEMIES JUDGED AND THE KINGDOM ESTABLISHED

I. THE PLAGUE OF LOCUSTS

CHAPTER 1

1. The prophet's appeal (1:1-4)
2. The call to the drunkards (1:5-7)
3. The call to the people and the priests (1:8-14)
4. The day of the Lord and the suffering land (1:15-18)
5. The prayer of the prophet (1: 19-20)

Verses 1-4. The prophet announces that it is the Word of Jehovah he utters, which came to him. Verses 2 and 3 are an introduction to the description which follows the great calamity which had befallen the land. It is in the form of an appeal. What had happened to the land is of such a fearful character that it is unprecedented. The visitation of the land by the locust plague is to be related to future generations, because there is a great prophetic meaning as to the future attached to the locusts, which will be pointed out later. The fourth verse we render in a way our own, leaving the words of the destroying insects untranslated.

What the Gazam left, the Arbeh hath devoured;

And what the Arbeh left, the Jelek hath devoured;
 And what the Jelek left, the Chasel hath devoured.

We left the Hebrew words untranslated because they do not express insects of different species; they are one insect, the locust, in a fourfold stage. Gazam means "to gnaw off," Arbeh is "to be many"; this is the common name of the locusts on account of their migratory habits. Jelek is "to lick off," and Chasel means "to devour or consume." The locust passes through a fourfold stage in its development to full growth. First, it is the gnawing locust, when first hatched; then it gets its wings and flies about; after that it starts in its destructive work by licking off whatever it finds, and, finally, it reaches its full growth and devours everything in its path. (Many foolish applications have been made of these locusts. one of the most ridiculous is the one made by a certain woman-healer in her book *Lost and Restored*.)

The locust plague which laid Israel's land bare was a judgment from the Lord. It was one of the judgments the Lord sent upon Egypt, and Moses had prophetically announced that the Lord would use them to punish his people (see Deut. 28:38, 42).

But these literal locusts, which fell literally upon the land and destroyed in a short time all vegetation, are symbolic of other agencies which were to be used later in Israel's history to bring judgment upon the land and the people. They are typical of Gentile armies, as stated in the second chapter, where the Lord calls them "My great army." Here is unquestionably a prophetic forecast as to the future of the land. From Daniel's prophecy we learn twice that four world powers should subjugate Israel and prey upon the land: Babylonia, Medo-Persia, Graeco-Macedonia and Rome. Zechariah, also, in one of his night visions, beheld four horns, and these four horns scattered Judah and Jerusalem. We see, therefore, in the locusts, first, the literal locusts which destroyed everything in vegetation at the time Joel lived, and these locusts are symbolical of future judgments executed upon the land and the nations by the prophetically announced world powers. At the close of the "times of the Gentiles," during which Jerusalem is trodden down, the final invasion of the land takes place; it is this which is described in the second chapter.

Verses 5-7. The first swarm had probably appeared in the fall; only the vineyards had not yet been harvested. They attacked the vineyards and speedily the vines and the grapes disappeared under the onslaught. The drinkers of wine were therefore to suffer first. That there was much drunkenness among the people Israel, especially in the days of their prosperity, may be learned from Amos 6:1-6; Isa. 5:11, 24:7-9, 28:7, etc. In verse 6 the locusts are described as a nation, mighty without number, with lion's teeth. This confirms the typical application to Gentile nations of the future who would devastate the land. See, furthermore, Numbers 13:33, Isaiah 40:22 and Jeremiah 51:14, where the same comparison is made.

Verses 8-14. On account of the great disaster the people are called to mourn and put on sackcloth. "Lament like a virgin, girded with sackcloth, for the husband of her youth." This is a significant expression. Israel in her relationship to Jehovah is here indicated. We are reminded of Isaiah 3:26 concerning Jerusalem, "And her gates shall lament and mourn, and she, being desolate, shall sit on the ground;" and Isaiah 54:6, "For the Lord hath called thee as a woman forsaken and grieved in spirit, and a wife of youth, when thou wast refused, saith thy God." So great was the havoc wrought that the meal and drink offering was cut off from the house of the Lord so that the priests mourned, the servants of Jehovah. This is their mournful chant:

Wasted is the field,
 Mourning is the land,
 For wasted is the corn,
 The new vine is dried up,
 The oil faileth.

This is followed by the call to lament for the husbandman and vinedressers. The whole harvest was gone, and besides the failure of the vine, the fig tree, the other trees are also mentioned, yea, "all the trees of the field are withered." On

account of the severity of this visitation joy had left the children of men.

Then comes the definite call to the priests to lament and cry unto Jehovah and to sanctify a fast (verses 13-14). But there is no record of a response. At the close of this chapter the Prophet alone raises his voice to Jehovah. We shall learn in the second chapter of the time of the national repentance of Israel.

Verses 15-18. For the first time we meet the day of the Lord (Yom Jehovah), that phrase used so frequently in all the prophetic books. The 15th verse is an exclamation of the Prophet as before his vision that day appears. In the midst of the weird description of the calamity, present in Joel's day, he beholds a greater judgment approaching. It is the same day he beholds which the other prophets mention; each time Joel uses this expression it means the coming day of the Lord, still approaching. It may be noticed that the five passages in Joel in which "the day of the Lord" is mentioned are progressive.

For a comparative study of this important phrase we quote the leading passage of the different prophets.

Isaiah. The phrase "in that day" is found many times in his book. We mention 2:2-5, 10-22; 4; 13:6-13. The great glory predictions of Isaiah 54, 60, 61 and 62 are all related to this day.

Jeremiah. He also speaks of that day (chapters 25:30-33; 30:18-24).

Ezekiel. Chapters 7 and 8. From chapters 37-38 we have the record of great events both of judgment and blessing which will come to pass in connection with that day. While Daniel does not use in his book the phrase "day of the Lord" nearly all his great prophecies are connected with that day. It is the day in which the stone smites the great image, representing the times of the Gentiles, and demolishes it; the day on which "the Son of Man" comes in the clouds of heaven to receive the kingdom. Hosea points to that day in chapters 2 and 3, as well as in the closing chapter. Amos witnesses to it in chapters 1:2, 6:3, 9:2, 15. Obadiah, who lived about the same time as Joel, speaks of the day in verse 15 of his brief prophecy. Micah in his prophecy refers to it in chapter 5:15. In Nahum the day is described in which the Lord will deal in judgment with the wicked world cities (see chapter 1:1-9). The third chapter of Habakkuk reveals that day. Zephaniah has a great deal more to say about that day than the preceding prophetic books (chapters 1:14-18; 2 and 3). Haggai bears witness to it in chapter 2:6-7. (Compare with Heb. 12:26-29.) Zechariah uses the phrase "in that day" many times, especially in the last three chapters. Malachi reveals the day in chapters 3:1-3 and 4:1-3).

We learn from all this what a prominent place the day of the Lord occupies in the prophecies. It must be so, for it is the day of manifestation and consummation. Joel beheld here for the first time this day.

Then follows an additional description of the great calamity which had come upon the land in Joel's day (verses 16-18).

Verses 19-20. Joel was, like all the other prophets, a man of prayer. No other mention is made by the prophet concerning himself, but this brief word is sufficient to give us a glimpse of his inner life and his trust in the Lord. He cried to Jehovah in the great distress.

II. THE COMING DAY OF THE LORD: THE REPENTANCE AND RESTORATION OF ISRAEL

CHAPTER 2

1. The alarm sounded and the day at hand (2:1-2)
2. The invading army from the north (2:3-11)
3. The repentance of the people and cry for help (2:12-17)
4. "Then." The great change (2:18)
5. Promises of restoration, and the early and latter rain (2:19-27)

6. The outpouring of the Spirit upon all flesh (2:28-31)

7. Deliverance in Mount Zion and Jerusalem (2:32)

Verses 1-2. With this chapter we reach the heart of the prophecy of Joel. The description of the literal locust plague is now no longer continued. As we have shown the literal locusts in their different stages were symbolical of nations laying waste the land as the locusts had done. Dispensationally the first chapter stands for the entire times of the Gentiles, which began with Nebuchadnezzar (Dan. 2:36-38), and they continue till the time comes when the God of heaven sets up a kingdom that cannot be destroyed. The second chapter takes us at once to the end of the times of the Gentiles, when the day of the Lord is to be enacted. Before the Lord appears in that day, the greatest distress will be upon the land and the people; there will be a great time of trouble such as never was before (Matt. 24:21). The remnant of His people will cry to the Lord for intervention and for deliverance, and the Lord will answer their cry and deliver them. Then their land becomes once more like the garden of Eden, there will be a great outpouring of the Spirit upon all flesh and from Jerusalem the great kingdom-center blessings will extend to all the nations.

This whole chapter as well as the next one is therefore unfulfilled. Nothing of it has been fulfilled. Before it can be fulfilled a part of the people Israel must be restored to the land of promise and the ancient ceremonies and institutions be at least partially restored.

The chapter begins with the sounding of the alarm for "the Day of Jehovah cometh, for it is near at hand." The last prophetic week of Daniel is now in process of fulfillment and near its end. (See annotations on Dan. 9.) A part of the people are back in the land, having returned there in unbelief, just as we see it today in the Zionistic movement. But in their midst will also be found a God-fearing remnant. The blowing of the trumpet shows that they have revived their ancient custom (Num. 10:1, 2, 9). We also mention that trumpets are often connected with the appearing of the Lord and the restoration of Israel. In the second verse the day is described and may be compared with Zephaniah 1:15-16 and Isaiah 60:2. Then there is an invading army announced which is fully described in the verses which follow. The words, "As the dawn spread upon the mountains," are a description of the day and not of the army, as some have taken it. On the one hand the day of the Lord is a day of darkness and gloom, on the other hand it is "like the dawn spread upon mountains." After the darkness, the morning light will break "the morning without clouds" (2 Sam. 23:4).

Verses 3-11. Many armies in past history have occupied the land of Israel and wasted it, but here is the coming great invasion from the north. This invasion is mentioned in the prophet Isaiah also. The Assyrian who came in Isaiah's day to take Jerusalem is the type of the final Assyrian who threatens the land and the people with destruction. He is also prefigured by Antiochus Epiphanes, who came into the land of Israel as the predicted little horn, rising from one of the divisions of the Graeco-Macedonian Empire (Dan. 8).

This army of Israel's enemies finds the land like the garden of Eden; it has been restored through political Zionism, irrigated and cultivated. The Jews are at it now, determined to make Palestine the garden-spot of the world, their Eden, as it has been said. Then comes the rude awakening. They thought themselves safe; they dreamed that their plans they had made without trusting in the Lord and without true repentance, had fully succeeded. But now the greatest trouble of their long history of blood and tears is at hand. The land is once more stripped of its beauty.

Before them the land is as the garden of Eden,
And behind them a desolate wilderness,
Yea, and nothing can escape them.

The Lord uses these destructive hosts to humble His people, to show them that He is their help, when this great calamity is upon them. The symbolical language here is characteristic of other prophecies.

The earth trembleth before them;
The heavens shake,

The sun and the moon are darkened,
 And the stars withdraw their shining
 * * * * *
 For the Day of the Lord is great and very terrible.

Compare this with the following passages: Isa, 11:11; Hab, 1:6, 12; Zech, 14:3, 4.

Verses 12-17. Here is the Lord calling to His people to return unto Him with true repentance (compare with Hosea 5:15-6:1). And during that great tribulation there will be a truly penitent portion of the people who turn to Him in the manner described in this chapter. It is this remnant which will be saved in that day, while the impenitent part will be cut off in judgment. Ezekiel 20:38 and Zech. 13:8-9 speak of this. What Moses spoke long ago now takes place (Deut. 30:1-4). The many prophetic prayers recorded in the Psalms, as pointed out in the annotations of that book, will then be offered up by this godly waiting remnant (Psa. 44:13-14, 115:2-3, 79:9-10, etc.). This mourning and prayer for deliverance precedes the visible manifestation of the Lord in the day of His coming. When at last deliverance has come there will be another lamentation. This is found in Zech. 12:9-14 and in Rev. 1:7.

Verse 18. "Then Jehovah will be jealous for His land and will have pity on His people." Here is the great change. Up to this point we have seen nothing but calamity and judgments. Literal locusts had devoured the land--the types of nations which would prey upon the land. They came, and Jerusalem was trodden down by the Gentiles. The times of the Gentiles terminated in Jacob's trouble, out of which they are to be saved (Jer. 30:7). We saw their great repentance. Here is the answer from above. When their power is completely gone (Deut. 32:36), then will the Lord be jealous for His land and pity His people. Often this little word "then" is found in the prophetic Word marking the great change, from Israel's past judgments and rejection to deliverance and glory. The following passages should be carefully examined and compared with the 18th verse here: Isa. 14:25, 24:23, 32:16, 35:5-6, 58:8, 14, 60:5, 66:12; Ezek. 28:25-26, etc.

The Lord's personal manifestation is not mentioned here. The deliverance does not come apart from the second coming of our Lord. The entire prophetic Word bears witness to this. "Then shall the Lord go forth and fight against those nations as He fought in the day of battle. And His feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem" (Zech. 14:3-4). "When the Lord shall build up Zion, He shall appear in glory" (Psa. 102:16). "The Lord shall go forth as a mighty man, He shall stir up jealousy like a man of war; He shall cry, yea, roar, He shall prevail against His enemies" (Isa. 42:13).

Verses 19-27. Here is His gracious answer. He will bless their land and make it fruitful once more, as it used to be, the land flowing with milk and honey. It is foolish to spiritualize the terms corn, new wine and oil. Yet it has been done. one of the older commentators of this book says on this verse about corn, wine and oil, that it has been fulfilled in the church. The corn he applies to the body of Christ, the wine to the blood of Christ, and the oil to the Spirit. Earthly blessings, such as belong to His earthly people are exclusively in view. Then they shall be no longer a reproach among the nations. Inasmuch as they are still a reproach we know that this promise is still future in its fulfillment. The one from the north will be overthrown and pass away forever. That all this cannot mean the Babylonian captivity and the small remnant which returned to the land may be learned from the statement "no longer" a reproach.

Because the Lord does all this they are commanded to rejoice, the children of Zion, which does not mean a spiritual Zion, but God's only true Zion. The early and the latter rain is restored to the land. Of late this term, too, has been strangely misapplied. It has been claimed that the early and latter rain mean spiritual blessing. The early rain, it is said, means the day of Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit was poured out, and the latter rain, these deluded people tell us, is another Pentecost, a greater manifestation of the Spirit. This latter rain, they teach, consists, according to their conception, in a restoration of "Pentecostal gifts" and is especially evidenced in making strange sounds, which, it is claimed, is the original gift of tongues. This unscriptural teaching has led to all kinds of fanaticism and worse things than that.

Nowhere in the Bible is there warrant for us to believe that "the early and latter rain" has a spiritual significance. To say

that the early rain and the latter rain typify blessings and manifestations of the spirit of God, peculiar to the opening of this present age and to its close is extremely fanciful and cannot be verified by the Scriptures. It is strange that even men who seem to possess considerable light have endorsed this kind of exposition, which has worked such harm among so many Christian people. There is absolutely no prediction anywhere in the New Testament that the present age is to close with "a latter rain" experience, a time when the Holy Spirit is poured out and that in greater measure. This age, according to divine revelation, ends in apostasy and complete departure from God and His truth (2 Thess. 2:3-12). After the Holy Spirit came on the day of Pentecost, for the formation of the Church, the body of Christ, there is nowhere to be found a promise in the Church Epistles that another outpouring is to take place, by which a part of the Church is to get into possession again of the different sign gifts. The enemy of souls has made good use of these distorted teachings to bring in his most subtle delusions.

The rain has altogether a literal meaning. Read carefully the following passages for a confirmation: Lev. 26:4; Deut. 11:14-17; 1 Kings 8:33-35 and Jer. 3:3.

Then all the harm done by the locusts, the army the Lord used in judging His people, will be restored. "And My people shall never be ashamed" (verse 27). This again is sufficient proof that all this remains unfulfilled.

Verses 28-32. This interesting passage invites our closest attention. The almost general interpretation of this prophecy has been that it found its fulfillment on the day of Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit was poured forth. Most expositors confine the fulfillment to that event while others claim that Pentecost was only the beginning of the fulfillment and that the event which occurred once continues to occur throughout this Christian age. We quote from one of the best commentaries. "But however certain it may be that the fulfillment took place at the first Christian feast of Pentecost, we must not stop at this one Pentecostal miracle. The address of the Apostle Peter by no means requires this limitation, but rather contains distinct indications that Peter himself saw nothing more therein than the commencement of the fulfillment, but a commencement indeed, which embraced the ultimate fulfillment, as the germ enfolds the tree; for if not only the children of the apostles' contemporaries but also those that were afar off--i.e., not foreign Jews, but the far off heathen, were to participate in the gift of the Holy Spirit, the outpouring of the Holy Spirit which commenced on Pentecost must continue as long as the Lord shall receive into His kingdom those that are still standing afar, i.e., until the fullness of the Gentiles shall have entered the kingdom of God."

There is, however, no Scriptural foundation for the statement that the outpouring of the Holy Spirit commenced on Pentecost must continue throughout this present age. The Holy Spirit came on the day of Pentecost. He was poured out once, and nowhere in the New Testament is there a continued or repeated outpouring of the Holy Spirit promised. The difficulty with interpreting this great prophecy of Joel of having been fulfilled on Pentecost and being fulfilled throughout this age is that which follows in the next two verses. Wonders in heaven and on earth, fire, pillars of smoke, a darkened sun and a blood-red moon are mentioned, and that in connection with the day of Jehovah, which, as we have seen is the great theme of Joel's vision. These words have been generally applied to the destruction of Jerusalem, which followed the day of Pentecost. The spiritualizing method has been fully brought into play to overcome the difficulties the 30th and 31st verses raise. The terrible day of Jehovah, it is claimed, is the destruction of Jerusalem. Thus we read in the commentary of Patrick and Lowth: "This (verse 30) and the following verse principally point out the destruction of the city and the temple of Jerusalem by the Romans, a judgment justly inflicted upon the Jewish nation for their resisting the Holy Spirit and contempt of the means of grace." We quote another leading commentator on Joel 2:30, Dr. Clarke. He states: "This refers to the fearful sights, dreadful portents and destructive commotions by which the Jewish polity was finally overthrown and the Christian religion finally established in the Roman empire. See how our Lord applies this prophecy in Matthew 24:29 and the parallel texts." And in verse 31 ("the sun shall be turned into darkness") Clarke says "it means the Jewish polity, civil and ecclesiastical, shall be entirely destroyed." Others give these words the same spiritualized meaning. These learned doctors tell us that Joel 2:30 and 31 relate to the destruction of the nation, and the civil and ecclesiastical polity of the Jews! This is a fair example of the havoc which a Bible interpretation makes, which ignores the great dispensational facts revealed in the Word of God. But inasmuch as the 32nd verse, the last verse in this second chapter of Joel, reveals that there shall be deliverance in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem after these signs and wonders, and the continuation of the prophecy in the third chapter shows the judgment of the enemies of the people Israel, God's ancient people, such

interpretations appear at once as fundamentally wrong.

It is strange that all these expositors use the word "fulfillment" in connection with this prophecy, saying, that Peter said that the day of Pentecost was the fulfillment of what is written by Joel. But the Holy Spirit did not use the word "fulfillment" at all. He purposely avoided such a statement. In so many passages in the New Testament we find the phrase "that it might be fulfilled," but in making use of the prophecy in Acts, chapter 2, this phrase is not used and instead of it we read that Peter said, "But this is that which was spoken by the Prophet Joel" (Acts 2:16). There is a great difference between this word and an out and out declaration of the fulfillment of that passage. Peter's words call the attention to the fact that something like that which took place on the day of Pentecost had been predicted by Joel, but his words do not claim that Joel's prophecy was there and then fulfilled. Nor does he hint at a continued fulfillment or coming fulfillment during this present age. The chief purpose of the quotation of that prophecy on the day of Pentecost was to point out to the Jews, many of whom were scoffing, that the miraculous thing which had happened so suddenly in their midst was fully confirmed by what Joel had foretold would be the effect of the outpouring of the Spirit. The outpouring of the Holy Spirit had taken place, but not in the full sense as given in the prophecy of Joel. He came for a special purpose, which was the formation of the Church and for this purpose He is still on earth.

Without following the events on Pentecost and their meaning it is evident from the entire prophecy, which precedes this prediction of the outpouring of the Spirit, that these words have never been fulfilled. We might briefly ask, What is necessary according to the contents of this second chapter in Joel, before this prophecy can be accomplished? We just mention what we have already learned before in our exposition. The people Israel must be partly restored to their land, that great invasion from the north, bringing such trouble to the land must have taken place, then there must also have come the intervention of the Lord and He must be jealous for His land and pity His people, then at that time this great outpouring of the Spirit of God will take place. It stands in the closest connection with the restoration of Israel. The promises which are Israel's (Rom. 9:4) may be grouped into two classes, those which pertain to the land, earthly blessings and supremacy over the nations, and spiritual blessings, such as knowing the Lord, walking in His ways, being a kingdom of priests and prophets. The earthly blessings are accomplished by the power of Jehovah when He is manifested as their deliverer and the spiritual blessings will be conferred upon them by the outpouring of the Spirit.

The word "afterwards" with which this prophecy is introduced refers to the same period of time as the phrase "in the latter days," that is, the days when the Lord will redeem His earthly people and be merciful to His land.

Therefore when the Holy Spirit came on the day of Pentecost it was not in fulfillment of Joel's prophecy. This prophecy has never been fulfilled nor will it be fulfilled during this present age, in which the Church is being formed, which is the body of the Lord Jesus Christ. After this is accomplished the Lord will begin His relationship with His earthly people, when He appears in His day then they will experience the fulfillment of this great prediction.

There are numerous passages in the Old Testament which shed interesting light upon this future outpouring of the Spirit (see Isa. 32:15, 44:3-4, 59:19-21; Ezek. 36:27-28, 37:14, 39:29).

Verse 32. The great coming outpouring of the Spirit upon all flesh will result in salvation. It is blessedly true now that "whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved," but it will be also true in that day. The word our Lord spoke, "salvation is of the Jews" will find its largest fulfillment. The nations will then be joined to the Lord in the kingdom (Zech. 2:11).

III. THE EVENTS OF THE DAY OF THE LORD: ISRAEL'S ENEMIES JUDGED AND THE KINGDOM ESTABLISHED

CHAPTER 3

1. The judgment of the nations (3:1-8)

2. The preceding warfare of the nations and how it ends (3:9-16)
3. Jehovah in the midst of His People (3:17-21)

Verses 1-8. The first verse specifies the time when Jehovah will do what He announces in the two verses which follow. It will be in those days, in that time, when the captivity of Judah and Jerusalem is brought back. Clearly then up to this time this cannot yet have been, for the captivity of His people is not yet ended. They are still scattered in the great dispersion among the nations of the earth, The time is future when the captivity of Judah and Jerusalem is brought back. Israel, the ten tribes are not mentioned here, but they are included in the prophecy; they will likewise be brought back. Joel only mentions Judah, because His prophecy was addressed to Judah and Jerusalem. The captivity, or dispersion, which is the same thing, of the people Israel will not end till divine power accomplishes it according to the many promises in the Word of God. And when at last the heavens are silent no longer and Jehovah in His power begins to fulfil His promises and their captivity ends, it will mean judgment for the nations.

It is Jehovah Himself who speaks, what He is going to do in that day, when He arises and has mercy on Zion. "I will also bring together all nations and will bring them down into the valley of Jehoshaphat." How the Lord will bring these nations together and then accomplish His purpose is revealed in verses 9-12. We therefore pass it by for the present till we reach the second part of this chapter. But here is also the place mentioned where this great judgment of nations will be executed. It will be in the valley of Jehoshaphat. The word means translated "Jehovah judges." This name occurs elsewhere in the Word of God. King Jehu was the son of Jehoshaphat and he was the son of Nimshi (2 Kings 9:2). Significant names of the king who had to judge, for Jehu means "He is Jehovah;" Jehoshaphat, "Jehovah judges;" Nimshi, "Jehovah reveals."

In 2 Chronicles 20 we read the account of King Jehoshaphat's victory over hostile nations. But the place where this took place is not the valley of Jehoshaphat, but it was called "Berachah," that is blessing. We mention this for some expositors have claimed that the place where King Jehoshaphat brought judgment upon these nations is the valley of which Joel speaks.

The valley of Jehoshaphat must be looked for in the immediate vicinity of Jerusalem. It is generally placed in the valley of the Kidron on the East of Jerusalem. It may not yet be in existence. In Zechariah 14 we read of the same events which are here predicted. When the Lord appears His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives in that day. The Mount of Olives will then cleave in the midst and there will be formed a very great valley (Zech. 14:4). This great valley may be the valley where the Lord judges the nations.

In the valley of Jehoshaphat the Lord will deal with the nations and His judgment will be on account of His people and heritage Israel. The nations scattered them and divided His land. They treated His people like slaves, casting lots for His people, sold a girl for wine and drank it.

The great sin of the nations, the Gentile world-powers, is the sin against Israel. This is repeatedly mentioned by God's prophets. The foundation of the judgment of the nations of which our Lord speaks in Matthew 25 is likewise the treatment of the Jew. Read also Psalms 79:1-3, 83:1-6; Isaiah, 29:1-8; 34:1-3; Jeremiah 25:13-17; Zechariah 1:14-15, 12:2-3.

In Joel's day such wickedness as described here of casting lots for His people and selling boys and girls was partially known. The Philistines had done this, as well as Tyre and Sidon. But these words were fulfilled during the Babylonian captivity and in that great dispersion which was brought about by the Roman Empire. After the destruction of Jerusalem in the year 70 the very thing happened spoken by the prophet. Nearly a million and a half of human beings perished in Jerusalem and the land in that awful warfare. Over 100,000 were taken prisoners. These hundred thousand Jews were disposed by Titus according to Josephus in the following manner: "Those under seventeen years of age were publicly sold; of the remainder, some were executed immediately, some sent away to work in the Egyptian mines (which was worse than death), some kept for public shows to fight with wild beasts in all the chief cities; only the tallest and most handsome were kept for the triumphal procession in Rome." Jews were sold for so small a price as a measure of barley; thousands were

thus disposed of. And what else could we add from the history of centuries, the cruel and terrible persecutions God's heritage suffered, the thousands and tens of thousands massacred, tortured, outraged and sold as slaves. Have we not beheld but recently similar horrors in Germany? And that history is not yet finished. Outbreaks of hatred against the heritage Israel are still to come and the time of Jacob's trouble soon to come will eclipse all their former suffering. It will be a time of trouble such as has not been from the beginning of the world until now nor ever shall be (Matt. 24:21). The day will come when the Lord will judge the nations for the evil they have done.

Verses 9-16. This is a prophecy showing what precedes the judgment of these nations. The judgment hosts of the Lord, the angels, are seen coming down, then He appears in all His majesty, while sun and moon are darkened. It is a great dramatic scene which the Spirit of God unfolds. We arrange it, adding the different speakers, to bring out its full value:

The Lord speaking:

Proclaim this among the nations;
Declare a war,
Arouse the mighty ones,
Let all the men of war draw near, let them come up!

Beat your ploughshares into swords,
And your pruning hooks into spears.
Let the weak say, I am strong.

Come together
All ye nations round about
Gather yourselves together.

The Prayer of the Prophet:

Thither cause Thy mighty ones to come down,
O Jehovah!

The Lord speaking:

Let the nations arise and come up
To the valley of Jehoshaphat,
For there will I sit to judge all the nations round about.

The Lord to His judgment hosts:

Put in the sickle,
For the harvest is ripe;
Come--Tread!
For the wine-press is full,
The vats overflow;
For their wickedness is great.

The Prophet beholding the gathering:

Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision!
For the day of Jehovah is at hand in the valley of decision.

The sun and the moon are darkened
And the stars withdraw their shining.

And Jehovah shall roar from Zion
And send forth His voice from Jerusalem,

And the heavens and the earth shall shake;
 But Jehovah will be a refuge for His people
 And a fortress for the sons of Israel.

Throughout the prophetic Word we read that great nations confederated will oppose God and His purposes when this age closes. There will be a great western confederacy, the restored Roman Empire. (See annotations on Dan. 2 and 7.) There will also be a great northeastern alliance of nations. This is in view here. Consult Psalm 2, 68:1-6; Isaiah 29:1-8, 34:1-3; Jeremiah 25:29-33; Ezekiel 38, Zechariah 12, 14, and Revelation 19:19. Judgment then falls upon these opposing nations. The judgment is mentioned as reaping and treading the winepress, the same as in Revelation 14:14-20.

Verses 17-21. Like nearly all the other prophetic books Joel ends with the vision of the kingdom and the Lord dwelling in the midst of His people. He will appear in all His glory. Jehovah will be a refuge for His people. Then they will come to that knowledge which they so long refused, that the delivering Jehovah is their God. But the Jehovah who appears there is none other than the Lord Jesus Christ, the one who was in their midst and who was delivered by the people to be crucified. What a day it will be when "They will look upon Him whom they have pierced and mourn for Him" (Zech. 12:10). He will dwell in Zion, the mountain of glory. The glory from above will find a resting place on that holy hill. There He will be enthroned as King (Psa. 2:6). From there the glory will be spread over all (Isa. 4:5-6; Psa. 68:16). "For the Lord hath chosen Zion; He hath desired it for His habitation. This is my rest forever; here will I dwell for I have desired it" (Psa. 132:13-14). It is the literal Zion and not something spiritual. Even good expositors of the Bible have missed the mark. One good commentator says: "For Zion or Jerusalem is of course not the Jerusalem of the earthly Palestine, but the sanctified and glorified city of the living God, in which the Lord will be eternally united with His redeemed, sanctified and glorified Church." Such exposition emanates from ignorance of God's purposes with His earthly people and in not dividing the Word of Truth rightly.

Joel speaks also of the judgment which will fall upon Egypt in that day. Isaiah also tells of judgment, but through him we learn that Egypt will turn to the Lord and the Lord will graciously heal Egypt (Isa. 19). Judah will abide forever. His people will be cleansed. Jehovah, our ever blessed Lord, will dwell in Zion. The happy and glorious state of the land and the whole earth during the millennium is thus tersely stated. For when He reigns there will be righteousness and peace; glory will cover the earth as the waters cover the deep. Thus ends the great vision of Joel, the son of Pethuel. May the eye of faith behold these blessed revelations and may we live in anticipation of what is soon to be.

THE BOOK OF AMOS

The Annotated Bible

Arno Clement Gaebelein

THE PROPHET AMOS

INTRODUCTION

A few years before the prophet Hosea began to witness against the apostasy of the house of Israel, the ten tribes, and announced the coming judgment, there appeared in Bethel, the seat of idolatry a peasant by the name of Amos. He was not a citizen of the ten-tribe kingdom, but belonged to Tekoa, a small town in the south country of Judah. We learn from the book that he was a herdman and a gatherer of the fruit of the sycamore trees. Some have thought he was a man of wealth, in possession of large flocks of sheep and herds of cattle, but this cannot be confirmed. He was just an humble peasant and while engaged in his calling, not being a prophet or the son of a prophet, the Lord suddenly called him to leave his work and said unto him "Go, prophesy unto My people Israel" (chapter 7:14-15). Amos means "bearer" or "burden." In obedience to this command he appeared in Bethel to discharge his prophetic duty and deliver the messages of Jehovah to the people. It was a strange occurrence that a prophet should come out of Judah to prophesy to Israel, it probably attracted wide attention, for such a thing had never happened before nor after. It greatly aroused Amaziah, the priest of Bethel, who reported the case to Jeroboam, the king of Israel. The message the priest sent to the king was the following: "Amos has conspired against thee in the midst of the house of Israel, the land is not able to bear all his words. For thus saith Amos, Jeroboam shall die by the sword, and Israel shall surely be led away captive out of their land" (7:10). Evidently the priest did not await the king's answer for he tried to intimidate the prophet and drive him away, but Amos was a man of courage, he boldly resisted the priest and announced the fate of the priest and his family.

The Time of His Prophecy

There is no difficulty with the age in which he prophesied. This is stated in the opening verse of the book. "In the days of Uzziah, King of Judah, and in the days of Jeroboam, the son of Joash, King of Israel, two years before the earthquake." Jeroboam II became king in the fifteenth year of the reign of Amaziah, King of Judah. Jeroboam reigned forty-one years. As Amaziah reigned over Judah twenty-nine years and was followed by Uzziah, Jeroboam's reign was during fourteen years of Amaziah's reign and covered twenty-seven years of Uzziah's reign. Amos' activity was during the period when Uzziah was king in Judah, in the second half of Jeroboam's reign. The earthquake which is mentioned, two years before which Amos began his work, cannot be placed chronologically. It is also mentioned by Zechariah (14:5). The time then is around 810-782 B.C. As we have shown in the introduction to Joel, Amos knew Joel's prophecy, because Joel preceded him by at least a half a century. Amos was therefore somewhat earlier than Hosea and part of his ministry was contemporary with Hosea.

The Characteristics of His Times

Under the reign of Jeroboam II the northern kingdom of Israel flourished as never before nor after. There was a great external prosperity. Therefore, we find that the prophet mentions the rich, their great wealth and luxury, their arrogant pride and self-security and the oppression of the poor. Underneath it all was an awful moral corruption, the fruit of the false worship. In this state of prosperity, immorality and false worship they did not dream of any coming calamity whatever. Such were the days in which the herdman of Tekoa appeared upon the scene to give an inspired testimony

against the nation.

The Style of Amos

Attention has been called to the fact that the prophet's style and composition show the former herdman in the use of certain words and in many figures and similes drawn from nature and rural life. But he also shows a very close acquaintance with the Mosaic law and the history of the people to whom he belonged. The style also shows great rhetorical power, great depths of thought, and truly poetic expressions.

"Amos expressed his thoughts in words taken from the great picture book of nature, which, being also written by the hand of God, so wonderfully expresses the things of God. Scarcely any prophet is more glowing in style, or combines more wonderfully the natural and the moral world, the Omnipotence and Omniscience of God" (Dr. Pusey). Augustinus selected Amos as an illustration of unadorned eloquence. And another learned scholar speaks of him thus, "Let any fair judge read his writings, thinking not who wrote them, but what he wrote, and he will come to the conclusion that this herdman is in no wise behind the very chiefest prophets; in the loftiness of his thoughts and the magnificence of his spirit, nearly equal to the highest; and in the splendor of his diction and the elegance of the composition scarcely inferior to any" (Bishop Lowth, *De Poesi Sacra*).

He gives us a splendid example of inspiration. The Lord called him, gave him the message, filled the simple herdman with the wisdom from above so that he burst out in these eloquent utterances. At the same time the Lord in using him as His mouthpiece did not set aside his personality, he uses his shepherd idiom, and the truth of God is expressed through him in the terms of nature, with which he, as a child of nature, was so familiar.

The Message of Amos

The message concerns chiefly Israel, the ten-tribe kingdom, their spiritual and moral condition, yet Judah is also noticed by him, as well as the different nations, surrounding Israel, their Gentile enemies. The book consists of the prophecies he uttered in Bethel, which follow the two introductory chapters. The people are reprov'd and their sins uncovered; judgment for them and for the nation is announced. The end of the book brings in the promise of deliverance and restoration. The great prophecy in the ninth chapter (9:11-12) was quoted by James in the first great church-council in Jerusalem (Acts 15).

The Division of the Book of Amos

The book of Amos consists of three parts. The first part comprises the two opening chapters which form the introduction to the book. In them we find the judgments announced in store for the nations surrounding Israel, but Judah and Israel are also included. From the third chapter to the end of the sixth is the second part. Here are recorded four prophecies given by the Lord through Amos. Three of them begin with "Hear this Word" and the last in chapter six begins with "Woe." The third part, chapters seven to nine, give the five visions which Amos had. The first two judgment visions were not carried out on account of the intercession of the prophet. The third vision is that of the plumb-line; the fourth, the vision of the basket with ripe fruit. In the last vision he beheld the Lord standing alongside of the altar, ready to smite. The conclusion of the ninth chapter is a prophecy concerning the restoration of Israel, the rebuilding of the tabernacle of David and the blessings of the kingdom. We follow this division.

I. JUDGMENT OF THE NATIONS, JUDAH, AND ISRAEL (1-2)

II. THE PROPHETIC MESSAGES UNCOVERING THE CONDITION OF THE PEOPLE (3-6)

III. THE FIVE VISIONS OF THE PROPHET (7-9)

Analysis and Annotations

I. JUDGMENT ANNOUNCED AGAINST THE NATIONS, JUDAH, AND ISRAEL

CHAPTER 1

1. The introduction (1:1-2)
2. Damascus (1:3-5)
3. Philistia (1:6-8)
4. Tyre (1:9-10)
5. Edom (1:11-12)
6. Ammon (1:13-15)

Verses 1-2. It has been pointed out that Amos does not say like so many of the other prophets, "the Word of the Lord which came unto me," but he begins his prophecy with the statement "the words of Amos." The fact of divine inspiration, however, is expressed in the next words "which he saw." His messages, like the messages of all the prophets, were given to him in vision. As stated in the general introduction to this book, this first verse determines the exact time when the herdman of Tekoa appeared with his message. The earthquake mentioned must have been a disastrous one, for there was a great flight of people (Zech. 14:5).

Then follows his first utterance which Joel recorded in his prophecy, "the LORD roars out of Zion." Inasmuch as Joel prophesied in Judah and Amos appeared from Judah in Bethel of the ten-tribe kingdom, this sentence Of coming judgment was probably unknown to his hearers. He sounded the alarm at once as to the coming judgment on account of which the shepherds would mourn and the beautiful, luxurious Carmel would wither, it would bring disaster upon all.

Verses 3-5. Six nations are mentioned against which judgment is announced, five in this chapter and Moab in the beginning of the second. Eight times we read "saith the LORD." Then in each judgment prediction we find the phrase, "for three transgressions or four ... I will not reverse it." The meaning of it is that the measure is full and that the judgment cannot be averted. Fire is prominently mentioned as the mode of judgment. These nations were the enemies of Israel. The Syrians were the great enemies of Israel and treated them with awful cruelties. The threshing of Gilead with iron instruments took place when Hazael of Damascus conquered the land east of Jordan (2 Kings 10:32-33; 13:7). Hazael murdered Ben-hadad and Elisha predicted all the horrible things he would do to Israel. When the man of God wept and Hazael asked him the reason, Elisha answered, "Because I know the evil that thou wilt do unto the children of Israel; their strongholds wilt thou set on fire, and their young men wilt thou slay with the sword, and wilt dash their children, and rip up their women with child" (2 Kings 8:12). Damascus was broken and the predicted judgment came. It was executed through the King of Assyria, Tiglath-Pileser, who drove the Syrians back to Kir, from which they had come (2 Kings 16:9).

Verses 6-8. Philistia is represented by Gaza. They also mistreated Israel and sold them into the hands of Edom. (2 Chron. 21:16). The cities of Philistia; Gaza and its palaces would be consumed by fire. There would be an end to the Philistines, "the remnant of the Philistines shall perish saith the LORD."

Verses 9-10. Tyrus, the capital of Phoenicia, had also sinned against Israel by delivering them into the hands of their great enemy Edom. Their sin was especially heinous because David and Solomon had made a covenant with the King of Tyre, hence no King of Judah or Israel had ever warred against Tyre (2 Sam. 5:11; 1 Kings 5:1-5).

Verses 11-12. Edom was closely related to Israel, yet they hated more than the heathen nations hated Israel. At every opportunity Edom expressed this hatred by deeds of cruelty. What an awful record! "He did pursue his brother with the sword, and did cast off all pity, and his anger did tear perpetually, and he kept his wrath forever." In Obadiah we find more concerning Edom.

Verses 13-15. Wicked Ammon had tried to exterminate the people for selfish reasons "to enlarge their border." What horrible deeds to rip open women with child! Nor is this confined to the barbarous warfare of 3,000 years ago; the same was done in other wars down to our own days. Judgment would overtake them also.

In meditating on these terse judgment messages we must remember while these nations of the past have ceased existing as nations, and the predicted judgment came long ago, that these nations are typical of the other nations, who also sin against Israel and whose judgment will come "in that day."

CHAPTER 2

1. Moab (2:1-3)
2. Judah (2:4-5)
3. Israel (2:6-16)

Verses 1-3. So fierce was the hatred of Moab that they dishonored the bones of the king of Edom. "Moab burned the bones of the king of Edom into lime" (see 2 Kings 3:26-27). The fire or judgment came upon Moab and her glory, too, departed like the glory of the other nations.

Verses 4-5. While the measure was full of these nations, who had heaped transgressions upon transgressions, Judah and Israel were as guilty, yea, even more guilty, than these nations. The same significant phrase "for three transgressions and four" is used in connection with both. If the punishment of the nations could not be held back, but had to come, so Judah and Israel could not escape. Judah's sin was the rejection of the law of the Lord; instead of listening to the voice of the Lord and to His prophets, they hearkened to the false prophets, who, with their lies, caused them to err, and the children walked in the evil footsteps of their fathers. The sin of Judah was apostasy. That is the great sin today among the professing people of God, Christendom. Fire was to devour the cities and palaces of the nations and fire was to come upon Judah and the palaces of Jerusalem. Nebuchadnezzar fulfilled this prophecy.

Verses 6-16. Inasmuch as Amos was sent to Israel the indictment and judgment of them occupies more space than the rest. Verses 6-8 give a description of their sins. The poor suffered through their covetousness, they lived in unspeakable vileness, they were idolatrous. Those who were condemned by judges and paid their fines furnished the money to the judges to buy wine for their heathenish orgies.

Then the Lord reminds them of all His mercies and loving kindness in the past. He destroyed the Amorite; He led them through the wilderness to possess the land. He instituted the Nazarite. In spite of all these manifold mercies they continued in their evil ways, grinding the poor, defying God and His law and in their moral depravity.

Behold, I will press you down As the full cart presses the sheaves. Then shall flight be lost to the swift, And the strong shall not confirm his strength, And the hero shall not save his life. He that beareth the bow shall not stand, And the swift-footed shall not save, And the rider of the horse shall not save his life.

II. THE PROPHETIC MESSAGES UNCOVERING THE CONDITION OF THE PEOPLE

CHAPTER 3 The First Discourse

1. There is cause for judgment (3:1-8)
2. The coming judgment visitation (3:9-15)

Verses 1-8. "Hear this word that the LORD hath spoken against you, O children of Israel, against the whole family which I brought up from the land of Egypt, saying, You have I only known of all the families of the earth, therefore will I

punish you for all your iniquities." This is the solemn beginning of the special messages addressed to the nation by the humble herdsman of Tekoa. The Lord had singled them out from the other nations. He had separated them unto Himself. With His mighty power and outstretched arm He had delivered them from the house of bondage and brought them to the land promised unto their fathers. He had revealed Himself and made known His will to them exclusively. He had entered with them into covenant and called them to be a kingdom of priests and a holy nation (Exodus 19:6). Hence their responsibility was very great, for the degree of relationship is always the degree of responsibility. The divine election of the twelve tribes does not insure against punishment, but that intimate relationship into which the Lord had entered with Israel broken and violated by sin, demanded a correspondingly great punishment. To whomsoever much is given of him shall much be required. Our Lord expressed the same truth in Matthew 11 when he denounced the cities in which great miracles had been done and they believed not and declared that it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the day of judgment than for them.

To demonstrate the rightful cause of judgment Amos speaks now in a number of brief similes. There are six of them in the form of questions. "Can two walk together, except they be agreed?" Fellowship is only possible on the ground of separation; a holy God demands a holy people. In their state of licentious idolatry and gross injustice the Lord could not own them. Then follow brief questions indicating that which would happen to them. Like a roaring lion, or a young lion, the Lord would come upon them. They will be caught in a snare and a trap. The blowing of the trumpet denotes that evil was to come upon them. "Shall there be evil in a city, and the LORD has not done it?" It is hard to believe that certain men have taken this statement and teach on account of it that God is the author of moral evil--of sin. The context shows that this is not in view here at all. A holy God who cannot be tempted with evil, who is light and in whom there is no darkness at all, does not put moral evil in the world. The evil is of a punitive character such as invasion by hostile forces, the sword, the famine and the pestilence.

And the Lord Jehovah will do nothing, but He revealeth His secrets unto His servants, the prophets. These secrets are made known to us in the prophetic Word and not, as some claim, in special visions. The Spirit of God, the author of the Word, shows to God's people in His Word things to come (John 15:15; 1 Cor. 2:10-16). The result of such knowledge of the secrets of the Lord concerning the future is stated in 2 Peter 3:17, "Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness." (See also 2 Peter 3:14).

Verses 9-15. This paragraph begins with a striking call. The speaker is the Lord and He addresses the prophets and commands them to cry in the palaces of Ashdod (Philistia) and in Egypt so that they may see and know the wicked acts of Samaria, and thus bear witness against Israel. Thus the Lord exposed them to their enemies. Then the coming adversary is announced who would encircle the land and humiliate the proud nation, so that her palaces would be spoiled. Then the herdsman speaks in a parable familiar to him from his life as a shepherd. When the beast of prey devours a sheep the shepherd must bring proof of it, so he is anxious to recover a part of the slain animal and tries to snatch away from the devouring lion either the legs of the sheep, or even a small piece of the ear, so as to show the rest was eaten by the lion. Such would be the case with the people in their luxurious living, and only a small remnant is to escape the coming slaughter by the lion, the Gentile world power. The transgressions of Israel will be visited; the idol altars of Bethel will be overthrown in that visitation and all their prosperity and luxury would then end and instead of living in winter and summer houses, they would become homeless.

CHAPTER 4 The Second Discourse

1. Divine threatening and irony (4:1-5)
2. Yet have ye not returned unto Me (4:6-11)
3. Prepare to meet thy God (4:12-13)

Verses 1-5. The prophet addresses them as "kine of Bashan, that are in the mountain of Samaria." The cows of Bashan were noted for their sleek and well-fed condition, feeding on the choicest of pasture. The term is descriptive of Israel's

prosperous condition as well as their beastly character. They were selfish and cruel, for they oppressed the poor and crushed the needy. It seems that women are mostly here in view, which explains the fact that the comparison is with kine and not with bulls. They asked their masters to supply them means for debauchery. But what happens to dumb cattle would happen to them in their luxurious and selfish life. They would be taken with hooks and their posterity with fishhooks, and they would be taken away. The last sentence of verse 3 is correctly translated "Ye shall be cast away to Har (mountain) Monah." It has been surmised that this means Armenia.

Then follows a statement of bitter irony. "Go to Bethel and sin; at Gilgal multiply transgression." Go on in your idolatry in these sacred places of your past history! In Bethel the Lord had revealed Himself to the progenitor Jacob; in Gilgal on the banks of the Jordan, the reproach of Egypt had been rolled away (Joshua 5), and these favored places were now the scenes of their wicked idolatries. It is also mockery when the prophet says, "Offer a sacrifice of thanksgiving with leaven," for leaven always typifies sin.

Verses 6-11. The Lord had sent different chastisements upon them at different times. There had been famines, drought; yea, it had rained here and there, while lots of ground received rain others remained parched, so that they might recognize in it the hand of God. He smote them with mildew and blasting; the locusts came and devoured vegetation; there were frightful pestilences and other judgments, but they did not return unto Him. Five times in this paragraph we find the same statement, "Yet have ye not returned unto Me." They were an impenitent nation and hardened their hearts as Pharaoh did. They were incorrigible, though they knew that through His mercy they were "as a firebrand plucked out of the burning."

In the book of Revelation we read of a similar condition in the coming days when the Lord deals with the earth in the decreed and revealed judgments. It is written that the inhabitants of the earth, in spite of these judgments falling upon the earth, do not repent of their sins.

Verses 12-13. And now they were to come face to face with Himself as the judge.

CHAPTER 5 The Third Discourse

1. The lamentation (5:1-3)
2. Seek the Lord and ye shall live (5:4-15)
3. The wailing (5:16-20)
4. The captivity announced (5:21-27)

Verses 1-3. This chapter begins with a lamentation over the fallen daughter of Israel. "She shall no more rise" has been used as an argument against the future and literal restoration of Israel. The prophet has only the present government of God over that generation in view and does not deny at all a future rising as so abundantly predicted in the prophetic Word. "There is none to raise her up, " nor could she raise herself up. But the day will come when the Lord in grace will raise her.

Verses 4-15. Here the Lord entreats Israel once more to desist from her idolatrous way and to seek Him instead of the worship at Bethel and Gilgal, for judgment would surely be executed there. "Seek ye Me and ye shall live." Then again, "Seek the LORD and ye shall live," and in case of disobedience, He, whom they refused, would fall like fire upon the house of Joseph. The house of Joseph is mentioned because the tribe of Ephraim was the most powerful tribe in the kingdom of Israel, and Joseph was the father of Ephraim. Again they are told to seek Him "Who maketh the seven stars (the Pleiades) and Orion." These two great constellations were well known to the ancients (Job 9:9; and 38:31). And He also turneth the shadow of death into morning and darkeneth day to night. This is an illustration of the judicial actions of the Lord. As in nature He turns night into day, and the day into dark night, so He turns the deepest misery and sorrow into joy and happiness, and changes the bright day of prosperity into the night of woe and disaster. He is the Lord of judgment, who controls the waters of tribulation and wrath, the floods of judgment, and makes them pass over the earth.

Verses 10-13 give a description of the moral condition of Israel. They were unrighteous and loved the ways of

unrighteousness; if the judge in the gate judged righteously they hated him for it, those who spoke uprightly they abhorred. The poor they trampled into the dust and extorted the distribution of corn from them. They had built fine houses of hewn stone, but they were not to enjoy them nor the wine from their pleasant vineyards (Deut. 28:30, 39). The Lord knew their transgressions and the greatness of their sins.

Still there was hope, for the Lord is merciful and slow to anger. Judgment is His strange work. Therefore once more we hear His pleadings, "Seek good and not evil that ye may live, and so the LORD God of hosts shall be with you, as ye have spoken." "Hate evil and love good!"

Verses 16-20. As judgment comes there shall be wailing in the streets, wailing with the husbandman, and there will be wailing in all vineyards as the Lord passes through in His judgment. "For I will pass through thee" reminds us of Egypt in the passover night when the Lord passed through Egypt to smite. And now the death wail was soon to be heard in the midst of His people.

And still another evil was in their midst. Some of them brazenly desired the announced "day of the Lord," the day of His manifestation to come. It originated in their false boast that they are the covenant people. They knew from the former prophets that the day of the Lord would rid them of their enemies, then Israel would be fully redeemed and blest and the Lord's glory would be manifested in the sight of the nations. Such was Joel's vision concerning "that day." Such was their false hope while they lived on in sin. But the herdsman, Amos, pronounced a woe upon them for desiring that day. What good will that day be to the impenitent nation? It is a day of darkness and not light. Then follows a parable such as a child of nature, as Amos was, would make. He describes a man who flees from a lion and fortunately escapes; but then he meets a bear, him he escapes likewise. Exhausted he reaches his house, and like one about to faint, he leans his hand on the wall; a small serpent out of the crevice bites him and he perishes miserably. So would the day of the Lord overtake them. How different it is with the true believer. He desires, not the Day of the Lord, but the coming of Him, who has promised His own, "I will come again and receive you unto Myself, that where I am ye may be also."

Verses 21-27. The Lord despised their outward worship; their feast days and different offerings were not well pleasing in His sight. It was all a hollow pretense of honoring Him, and all their songs were hateful to Him.

But this departure from Him was not a new thing in their history. They were always a stiffnecked people. Even in the wilderness did they not bring Him sacrifices and offerings, but instead they bore the tabernacle of Moloch and Chiun (or the booth of your king and the pedestal of your images, the star of your gods). Then follows the verdict, "Therefore will I cause you to go into captivity beyond Damascus, saith the LORD, whose name is the God of Hosts."

CHAPTER 6 The Fourth Discourse

1. Woe to them that are at ease in Zion (6:1-6)
2. The punishment announced (6:7-14)

Verses 1-6. This woe concerns the great men, the chiefs of the nation, who were sunk into a godless self-security, and dreamt on in their darkness, while the clouds of judgment were gathering above them. They were to go from Calneh to Hamath and then down to Gath of the Philistines. Calneh was built by Nimrod in the land of Shinar (Genesis 10:10); Hamath was the capital of a Syrian kingdom, and Gath the center of Philistia. These places were the places of vileness and corruption. But were the kingdoms of both Judah and Israel any better than these?

While some desired the day of the Lord others put it far off, they refused to believe that judgment was impending. It was so in Ezekiel's time when the people said "The days are prolonged and every vision faileth" (Ezekiel 12:22). So it is in Christendom. The evil servant (Matthew 24) says "My Lord delayeth His coming, and as a result he acts outrageously. What were the results in Israel when the evil day was put far off? They committed violence; violence increased in the land. They lived luxuriously on beds of ivory and ate the best of the flock. They danced and made merry; they drank wine but

none was exercised over the hurt of Joseph, the spiritual condition of the people.

Verses 7-14. They were now to go away as captives. There should be utter desolation. There would be a multitude of dead, so that they could not follow their ancient custom in burying them; they would have to burn them. Then the one who burns the corpses asks the last person in the house whether there is any one still with him, and the answer is No, but keep silence! For the name of the Lord is not to be invoked. It means that the speaker fears that the other one might mention the name of the Lord and in doing so bring down upon himself an additional judgment. Everything is to be smitten. What they had done could no more secure blessing and salvation than horses could run upon a rock and one plowing upon a rock with oxen. The nation which is announced in the last verse is the Assyrian.

III. THE FIVE VISIONS OF THE PROPHET

CHAPTER 7 Three Visions and the Opposition Against Amos

1. The vision of locusts (7:1-3)
2. The vision concerning the fire (7:4-6)
3. The vision of the plumbline (7:7-9)
4. Opposition against Amos (7:10-17)

Verses 1-3. In the first vision Amos saw how the Lord prepared locusts (not grasshoppers as in the A.V. They started in with their destructive work, just as they did in the day of Joel. Then Amos interceded in behalf of the sinful nation, "O Lord, GOD, forgive, I beseech Thee, by whom shall Jacob rise for he is small?" He confessed and pleaded forgiveness, acknowledging their helplessness. With such a spirit the Lord is well pleased and the praying prophet received the answer from the Lord, "It shall not be, saith the LORD."

Verses 4-6. He beheld a furious fire sweeping everything before itself so that it even devoured the great deep, the floods of water. This represents a more severe judgment than the previous one. This judgment also was kept back by the intercession of the prophet. But when the time came for judgment by the Assyrian, symbolized by the locusts and the fire, no intercession could change it. Tiglath-Pileser and Shalmaneser finally made an end of the sinful ten tribe kingdom.

Verses 7-9. He saw the Lord standing upon a wall with the plumbline to see if the wall was straight. The test by God's Word and God's holy law shows that all is crooked and must be condemned. Therefore, the announcement, "I shall pass by it no more. And the high places of Isaac shall be desolate, and the sanctuaries of Israel shall be laid waste; and I will rise against the house of Jeroboam with the sword." The false worship and the monarchy in Israel will be completely swept away by the judgment.

Verses 10-17. This is an interesting and instructive occurrence. Amaziah, the apostate priest at Bethel, who had charge of the idol worship, accused the prophet falsely before King Jeroboam. It was a religious political accusation. Thus the enemy accused Jeremiah also (Jeremiah 37:14-15); he did the same with our Lord and His apostles. At the same time Amaziah, the priest, sent an insulting message to Amos, saying, "Seer, go and flee into the land of Judah, and eat there thy bread; there thou mayest prophesy." He tried to intimidate him, urging him to return to Tekoa in Judah where he came from. He received a courageous answer from the herdman-prophet. "I am no prophet, nor a prophet's son, but I was a herdman and a gatherer of sycamore fruit. The LORD took me from following the flock, He said unto me, Go and prophecy to My people Israel."

The insinuation was that Amos prophesied for the sake of a living. Amos refutes the false charge and then announced the doom of the false priest and the doom of his family.

CHAPTER 8 The Fourth Vision: The Basket With Summer Fruit

1. The vision (8:1-3)
2. Israel ripe for judgment (8:4-10)
3. The coming days of famine (8:11-14)

Verses 1-3. In his fourth vision the prophet beholds a basket of summer fruit. The Hebrew shows that it was a basket filled with ripe fruit. The ripe fruit is a symbol that Israel was ripe for the harvest of judgment. The message of the Lord to the prophet is, "The end is come upon My people Israel; I will not again pass by them any more." The songs would be changed into howling lamentations and many should be slain.

Verses 4-10. Once more the wealthy and prosperous portion of the nation is addressed, their sinful practices are exposed and it is shown that they were ripe for judgment. The rich oppressed the poor; they took away from the poor what belonged rightfully to them. They cheated by making the measure small and increased the price. They were the profiteers of that time. They also used false balances. Then they sold the refuse of the wheat. All may be compared with James 5:1-6 where the same conditions are pictured, prevailing in Christendom, before the Lord comes. For all this they did the land would have to tremble and every one mourn.

"And it shall come to pass in that day, saith the Lord GOD, that I will cause the sun to go down at noon, and I will darken the earth in the clear day." Much nonsense has been written on this verse especially from the side of the Adventists, as if there has been a certain time "a dark day" in fulfillment of this prophecy. Some expositors have made of it a mere eclipse of the sun. The verse, while it has a certain application to that generation, whose glory should end like the sun going down at noon, has its final meaning in the coming day of the Lord, which all the prophets announced. It is the same our Lord predicts in Matthew 24:29-30. For Israel the bitter day of mounting, lamentation and woe would come.

Verses 11-14. A great famine is announced. It is not to be a famine for bread, or thirst for water, but a famine of hearing the words of the Lord. His Word and the light of His revelation is to be completely withdrawn from them. The Word of the Lord which they despised they would then desire to seek in vain. They will wander hither and thither from sea to sea, from the north to the east; they shall run to and fro to seek the Word of the Lord and shall not find it. Such was the case with them when the cruel Assyrian power took hold on them and carried them away. Such a judgment too is fast approaching for Christendom which in its apostasy rejects the Word of the Lord, turns to fables, till the day comes when the Spirit will leave and as a result there will be a famine of the Word, no comfort and no help for those who are ripe for judgment.

CHAPTER 9 The Passing of a Kingdom and the Coming of the Kingdom

1. The fifth vision: The passing of a kingdom (9:1-10)
2. The coming of the kingdom (9:11-15)

Verses 1-10. In his fifth vision the prophet saw the Lord standing by the altar. He utters His word. The description of what is to take place is very vivid. He stands by the altar and the people are assembled before Him. He smites the lintel of the door, so that everything trembles and the building falls upon them, cutting all of them in the head and none can escape. Even if they break into sheol (not hell, but the world of spirits in the unknown regions), from thence His hand will take them; if they climb into heaven, He would bring them down. If they hide themselves on the top of Carmel He would search for them and take them out. If they conceal themselves from His sight in the bottom of the sea, He would command the serpent to bite them. It is to be an all consuming judgment with no possibility of escape.

Even as they went into captivity the sword of judgment would follow them. "Thence will I command the sword, and it shall slay them; and I will set Mine eyes upon them for evil, and not for good." He is the Lord who has all power to do this (verses 5-6). They had degraded themselves down to the level of the heathen nations, hence they were unto Him like the Ethiopians. Then He calls them "the sinful kingdom." This kingdom is to pass away from the face of the earth, there is no hope for its restoration. But the Lord in mercy promises that the house of Jacob is not utterly to be destroyed. In His own time He will assemble the outcasts of Israel with dispersed Judah and lead them back to their land. In the meantime they

will be sifted among all nations, as wheat is sifted in a sieve, but not the least grain shall fall on the ground. The sinners of His people will die by the sword.

Verses 11-15. While the sinful kingdom, the ten-tribe kingdom of Israel, is passed away and will never come into existence again, there is another kingdom which will come, into which Judah and Israel will be gathered with the nations of the earth. This kingdom of heaven, promised to David, is now announced by the prophet. "In that day will I raise up the tabernacle of David that is fallen, and close up the breaches thereof; and I will raise up its ruins, and I will build it as in the days of old." This prophecy is quoted by James in Acts 15:15-16 at the first great church council held in Jerusalem. On that occasion the Holy Spirit used the prophecy of Amos to unfold the program of God concerning the future. Yet there is no church council, no general conference, general assembly or general association which reckons in any way with that which the Spirit of God has laid down as the program of the future. We learn from the passage in Acts that during this age the Gentiles are visited to gather out from among them a people for His Name (the Church). When this is accomplished the Lord returns, and, as a result of His return, the restoration of the tabernacle of David takes place: that is, the kingdom will be restored to His people, the kingdom of heaven comes and the Lord Jesus Christ will be enthroned as its king upon the throne of David. Then the conversion of the world will take place.

This is seen here in the passage before us. Verse 12 tells us that when the tabernacle of David is raised up, when "that day" has come, His people restored and saved will possess the remnant of Edom and all the nations. The last three verses of the prophecy of Amos describe the millennium in its earthly blessings. It also shows the permanent blessing and glory into which redeemed and restored Israel has entered, "They shall no more be pulled up out of their land which I have given them, saith the LORD thy God."

THE BOOK OF OBADIAH

The Annotated Bible

Arno Clement Gaebelein

THE PROPHET OBADIAH

Introduction

Of Obadiah we know nothing but his name, which means "servant of Jehovah." There are numerous men mentioned in the Old Testament by that name, but it is impossible to identify any one of these with Obadiah, or to trace him. "The silence of Holy Scriptures as to the prophet Obadiah stands in remarkable contrast with the anxiety of men to know something of him. They hoped that Obadiah might prove to have been the faithful protector of the prophets under Ahab; or the son of the Shunamite, whom Elijah called to life, or the Obadiah whom Jehoshaphat sent to teach in the cities of Judah, or the Levite who was selected, with one other, to be the overseer set over the repair of the temple in the reign of Josiah. Fruitless guesses at what God has hidden! God has willed that his name alone and this brief prophecy should be known in this world" (Dr. Pusey).

Inasmuch as nothing is known of this man of God, nor anything stated under whose reign he uttered his prophecy, the guesses about the time he lived are numerous and very contradictory. The critics have assigned to Obadiah dates removed from each other by above 600 years. We quote again from Pusey's commentary: "The punishment of Edom the prophet clearly foretells, as yet to come; the destruction of Jerusalem, which, according to our version is spoken of as past, is in reality foretold also. Unbelief denies all prophecy. Strange, that unbelief, denying the existence of a jewel--God's authentic and authenticated voice to man--should trouble itself about the age of the casket in which the jewel rests. Yet so it was. The prophets of Israel used a fascinating power over those who denied their inspiration. They denied prophecy, but employed themselves about the prophets. Unbelief denying prophecy had to find out two events in history, which should correspond with these two events in this prophet--a capture of Jerusalem and a subsequent judgment of Edom. And since Jerusalem was first taken under Shishak, king of Egypt, in the fifth year of Rehoboam 970 B.C., and Josephus tells us that in 301 B.C. Ptolemy Lagus treacherously got possession of Jerusalem, unbelieving criticism has a wide range in which to vacillate. And so it reeled to and fro between these two periods, 970 B.C. and 301 B.C."

Obadiah does certainly not belong to the prophets of the captivity, nor to the post-Exilic prophets. The position given to him in the Hebrew arrangement of the prophetic books bears witness to that. The internal evidence shows that he is one of the earliest prophets, if not the earliest. If we turn to Jeremiah 49:7-22 we find a very striking similarity between the words of Jeremiah and the words of Obadiah concerning Edom. The question is whether Jeremiah used Obadiah's words or Obadiah made use of Jeremiah's message. It has been pointed out that it is a peculiar characteristic of Jeremiah that he often leans upon the utterances of the earlier prophets, and in his writing their thoughts, words and symbols are often reproduced. Compare Jeremiah 47 with Isaiah 14:28-32; Jeremiah 47 with Isaiah 15 and 16; Jeremiah 49:1-6 with Amos 1:13-15, etc. When we point out this characteristic of the book of Jeremiah we do not mean to say that this man of God was a copyist, who slavishly copied the utterances of the earlier prophets. He had the books, or scrolls, of the earlier prophets before himself and the Spirit of God led him to use them; thus the Spirit of God repeated through Jeremiah the testimony of his predecessors and confirmed their God-given utterances. Jeremiah knew and possessed the prophecy of Obadiah, so that we can say with certainty that Obadiah is earlier than Jeremiah.

Now, Obadiah in his utterance lays bare the wicked behavior of Edom in a time when Judah and Jerusalem were

plundered by hostile forces. The statement of some of the critics that the eleventh verse means only the taking of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar is an assumption. The fact is the prophet does not speak of the destruction of the city, but that Jerusalem was plundered.

Can this historically be located? There can be no question but it must have reference to the time when the Philistines and the Arabs invaded the city in the reign of King Jehoram. Then the Edomites threw off the Judean supremacy (2 Kings 8:20-22; 2 Chronicles 21:8-10). They also planned a great massacre of the Jews who were in the land of Edom at that time (Joel 3:19; Amos 1:11). It was then that the treacherousness of Edom and its evil spirit became fully manifested. But there can be no question, as we show in the annotations, that the description of their evil spirit against their kin includes the after history, the fall of Jerusalem under Nebuchadnezzar, the opposition of Edom during the times of the Maccabees and the future revival and doom of Edom. It is, therefore, quite well established that Obadiah lived and uttered his prophecy during the reign of Jehoram.

Analysis and Annotations

The brief prophecy of Obadiah is composed of two parts: Verses 1-16 concern Edom and its destruction and verses 17-21 reveal the establishment of the kingdom in Israel and Israel's restoration and victory. We shall give brief annotations to assist in the understanding of this prophecy by making a threefold division:

1. Edom's humiliation and ruin (verses 1-9).
2. Edom's sin against Israel and the day of the Lord (verses 10-16).
3. The kingdom of the restoration of Israel (verses 17-21)

Verses 1-9. In order to understand Obadiah's prophecy, Edom's origin and history must be taken into consideration. The Edomites were the offspring of Esau. Of him it was said that Esau the Elder should serve Jacob the younger. The character of Esau was soon manifested and his offspring soon became powerful. In Genesis 36 we read of the generations of Esau, who is Edom; there the dukes, the national chiefs, are prominently mentioned. Long before Israel had kings, Edom had such rulers, "And these are the kings that reigned in the land of Edom before there reigned any king over the children of Israel" (Gen. 36:31). In Exodus 15 we read of the dukes in Edom being amazed and in Numbers 20 of the King of Edom. His outrageous behavior towards the kin of Edom is recorded in Numbers 20:14-21. Though the children of Israel promised not to drink the waters in the territory of Edom, or take their fruit without paying for it, Edom refused to give Israel passage; while Israel turned meekly away from Edom. Thus Edom branded itself as the enemy of the people of God. They had an undying hatred against the children of Israel, the sons of Jacob. They had an envious dislike of the people of God. Later it was attacked by Saul and conquered for David by Joab (2 Sam. 8). During the reign of Jehoram (or Joram) they revolted and gained independence.

When Judah and Israel began to decline Edom became more and more arrogant and rejoiced in the evil which came upon the people of God. Their dwelling place was the former possession of the Horim, a race which lived in caves in the mountainous region, much like the prehistoric cave dwellers on the North American continent. Edom possessed then the so-called troglodyte dwelling places cut into the cliffs of sandstone; these rocky habitations were suited to their warlike character and gave them the shelter they needed. Hence they are mentioned in verse 3 as "dwelling in the clefts of the rock." The ruins of Petra still bear witness to its former grandeur. The wickedness of Edom continued and when the Chaldeans came to destroy Jerusalem they also seemed to have shown their hatred. We read in Psalm 137:7, "Remember, O Lord, the children of Edom in the day of Jerusalem, who said raze it, raze it, even to the foundation thereof." They were also in evidence during the Maccabean period and later in the person of Herod the Great, an Edomite, reigned in Jerusalem. The judgment pronounced upon Idumea, their dwelling place, has found a startling fulfillment.

But this does not end the story of Edom; there will be a future revival of Edom and an ultimate history. This will be at the close of the age, when the Lord regathers all Israel and Judah and ten tribes will be reunited, then and before Edom will appear once more in prominence. No one knows where and what Edom is today. One might almost surmise that the Turk

must have some connection with Edom in his horrible hatred and outrages against the Armenians, who, as it is claimed by some, may contain remnants of the ten tribes. But all this is mere speculation. When God's time comes the Edomite will manifest their national, undying hatred against the sons of Jacob, but Israel victorious will lay their hand on Edom (Isa. 11:14).

We read of this future judgment upon the country of Edom, Idumea, in Isaiah 34:5:

"And all the host of heaven shall be dissolved, and the heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll, and all their hosts shall fall down, as the leaf falleth off from the vine, and as a falling fig from the fig tree. For My sword shall be bathed in heaven; behold it shall come down upon Idumea, and upon the people of My curse, to judgment." It is unfulfilled to the present time, but it will be fulfilled when "the LORD, hath a sacrifice in Bozrah, and a great slaughter in the land of Idumea" (verse 6), that is, in the future day of the Lord. As the context shows in Isaiah 34:8, it will be that day, "For it is the day of the LORD'S vengeance, and the year of recompense for the controversy of Zion." Then comes the utter desolation of Edom (Isa. 34:9-17; see also Ezek. 25:12-14; 35; Isa. 63:3 and Lam. 4:21-22). While Obadiah's prophecy has been partially fulfilled, it awaits its final accomplishment in the day of the Lord.

The prophecy begins with the announcement that tidings had come from the Lord which was heard by the prophet and by the people; an ambassador is sent forth among the nations to summon them to go up in battle against Edom. The hour for Edom's overthrow has come. The Lord has made them small among the nations. It was pride which brought them low so that they would be greatly despised. As the dwellers in the rocks they thought themselves secure and boasted of it by saying, "Who will bring me down to the ground?" But the humiliation of Edom had been decreed by the Lord and no power could arrest its execution. Their nests were high as the eagles, yea, even so high that their habitations seemed to be among the stars, yet the Lord would bring them down. His destruction would be complete; the spoilers would not be like the thieves, who steal till they have enough; or like the grape-gatherers who leave something behind. There would be a clean sweep, everything searched out, even the hidden things. Even those in whom they trusted, with whom Edom made a covenant would deceive them and prevail against Edom. Those with whom they made an alliance and gave hospitality would turn against Edom and prove treacherous, though they had eaten bread with them. Their friends of the heathen nations, whom they stirred up against Israel, would forsake them completely and the Lord would destroy the wise out of Edom and understanding out of Mount Esau. Even the wise men will not be able to help them; their wisdom and understanding will not avail. Teman is mentioned because it was known for its wise men; Eliphaz, who spoke so well to Job was a Temanite (Job 4:1). And the prophet Jeremiah in his testimony against Edom wrote, "is wisdom no more in Teman? Is counsel perished from the prudent? Is their wisdom vanished?" (Jer. 49:7). But now their wise and valiant ones would be cut off by slaughter.

Verses 10-16. Her sin of violence against her brother Jacob comes now in special remembrance. On account of it shame would cover them and they would be cut off forever. When Jerusalem was in trouble and the Philistines and Arabs plundered the city (2 Chron. 21:16-17), they stood on the other side and revolted (2 Chron. 21:8-10). And more than that, they joined in plundering the city. Thus it was afterwards when the Babylonians came against Jerusalem, Edom rejoiced; they spoke proudly. Perhaps what is recorded in verses 12-14 happened repeatedly. They stretched out their hands for the possession of God's people. They placed themselves at the crossroads to cut off the fugitives and delighted to deliver up into the hands of their enemies the remnant which was left.

All this will be repeated once more, when another great prophecy will be fulfilled and Jerusalem is once more surrounded by hostile nations (Zech. 14:1-5). Not a few superficial Bible students thought when Jerusalem was captured during the war, and all looked bright for political Zionism, that the promises were now being fulfilled. There is coming another siege of Jerusalem, preceding the glorious appearing of the King of Israel, our Lord. That siege is prophetically described by Zechariah. Among those nations will be found Edom once more. Once more they will manifest their malice and hatred against Jerusalem.

Then, to show the link of connection between the future and the past, the prophet announces the day of the Lord. "For

near is the day of Jehovah upon all nations." This day has not yet been. There have been judgments upon nations like Egypt, Babylon and others, nations which were nations of power and culture, which have fallen under the dealings of a righteous God; these judgments of the past did not bring that day which Obadiah announced, of which Joel after him so fully speaks. The day of the Lord upon all nations is future. When it comes it will mean judgment for all nations, including Edom, Moab and others named in the Scriptures of Truth; and that day will be immediately followed by an age of blessing and glory such as the earth and race had never known before. It will bring divine retribution. "As thou hast done will they do unto thee." The nations of the earth will have to drink of the cup of His fury and wrath.

Verses 17-21. The final section of Obadiah's brief prophecy concerns the kingdom, the victory over the enemies and the restoration of His people. Mount Zion will come into its own; there will be deliverance and there shall be holiness. What God had promised to be the remnant of His people will be accomplished, and they will be a holy people and then hold their possessions, all that the Lord in His infinite grace had promised unto them. The house of Esau will be consumed, so that none shall be remaining of Esau, while Israel will occupy Edom's territory.

The saviours mentioned in the last verse of this prophecy (or deliverers) must mean the chosen instruments which go forth to teach all nations and make known the glory of the King in their midst. For "the kingdom shall be the LORD'S."

THE BOOK OF JONAH

The Annotated Bible

Arno Clement Gaebelein

THE PROPHET JONAH

Introduction

The question as to the reality of the person of Jonah is answered by 2 Kings 14:25. In this passage we find him mentioned as the prophet who prophesied during the reign of Jeroboam II. His name means "dove," and his father's name Amittai means "the truth of the Lord." He was from "Gath-Hepher"--the winepress of the well is the meaning of these two words. Thus Jonah also belongs to the earlier prophets and the book bearing his name, written by himself, occupies the right place in the Old Testament. A Jewish tradition states that Jonah was the son of the widow at Zarephath, whom Elijah raised to life; but this is only an invention with no evidence whatever.

The Book and Experience of Jonah

The book of Jonah is of a different nature from the books of the other Minor Prophets and their personal experiences and activities as reported in the historical books. The book of Jonah has no direct prophecies in it, yet the experience it records is a great prophecy.

We do not give the contents of the book in this introduction, but shall follow all in the annotations. As is well known, the miraculous history of the book of Jonah has been widely attacked by infidelity. When the Old Testament was translated into the Greek (the Septuagint) heathen philosophers and other writers ridiculed it and made sport with the book. Their objections and ridicule are reproduced in the school of the destructive criticism. We hear that men who boast of great scholarship declare that Jonah never lived, that the story of the book of Jonah is an imagination of some great literary genius. Says that archcritic, Canon F.W. Farrar, in *The Expositor's Bible*: "Of Jonah we know nothing more. For it is impossible to see in the book of Jonah much more than a beautiful and edifying story, which may or may not rest on some surviving legends." But as some one has said, it requires less faith to credit this simple excerpt from Jonah's history than to believe the numerous hypotheses that have been invented to deprive it of its supernatural character. The great majority of these hypotheses are clumsy and far-fetched, doing violence to the language, and doing despite to the spirit of revelation. These infidel inventions are distinguished by tedious adjustment, laborious combinations, historical conjecture and critical jugglery.

Some critics who do not want to reject altogether the story of Jonah, suppose that it may have had some historical basis, though in the form we have it today is fanciful and mythical. Another critic regards it as a dream Jonah had in the ship. Still another critic views the book as an historical allegory, descriptive of the fate of Manasseh, and Josiah his grandson. What wild fancy this critic indulged in may be seen from the fact that he compared the ship to the Jewish monarchy, while the casting away of Jonah symbolized the temporary captivity of Manasseh!

Many critics treat it as an allegory based upon the Phoenician myth of Hercules and the sea-monster. To quote a few more, simply to show what foolish things the darkened mind of man, who thinks he has attained scholarship, can invent in order to disprove the truth of God, we mention the theory that when Jonah was thrown into the sea he was picked up by a ship having for a figurehead the head of a great fish. Another one says that probably Jonah took refuge in the interior of a

dead whale which was floating about near the spot he was cast overboard.

The great majority of the critics today deny the historicity of the book of Jonah and claim that its material has been derived from popular legends, that it is fiction with a moral design. The moral lessons and its religious meaning have even a wider range than these hypotheses. The theories do not merit a special refutation.

Is it History or Myth?

There is nothing in the account which would justify any critic to charge it with being allegory. It is cast in the form of a narrative and has all the literary characteristics of a personal experience. The sole reason why the critics have classed it with myths and deny its authenticity is the miraculous element in the book. Any one who believes in an omnipotent God, a God who does wondrous things, will have no difficulty whatever in accepting this book as a true history. We might also add that all the earlier Jewish sources confirm the historicity and literalness of the book of Jonah. Furthermore, the book is very simple and pure Hebrew.

The Highest Evidence

The highest authority that Jonah lived, and had the experience recorded in this account is the Lord Jesus Christ. The words which He spoke, who is the Truth, are plain and unimpeachable. There can be no secondary meaning; "For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the whale's belly, so shall the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. The men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it, because they repented at the preaching of Jonah, and behold, a greater than Jonah is here" (Matthew 12:40-41). Our Lord tells us that there was a prophet by the name of Jonah and that he had the experience related in the book which bears his name. To deny this is tantamount to denying the knowledge and the truthfulness of God. This is exactly what sneering critics do. They have even gone so far as to say that if our ever blessed Lord knew better than He spoke, He acted thus for expediency's sake, so as not to clash with the current opinions among His contemporaries. Others boldly say that He did not know, for He had not access to the sources which are at our command today. In other words the destructive critic claims to have more knowledge than the Lord Jesus Christ possessed in His days on earth.

Professor A. C. Zenos (in the Standard Bible Dictionary) says: "The New Testament does not commit Jesus Christ or its own authors to one or the other of the contending theories." This is a poor statement. The Lord Jesus did commit Himself fully to the historicity of Jonah. The New Century Bible, a destructive work, makes the following declaration: "We are not to conclude that the literal validity of the history of Jonah is established by this reference"--that is, the words of our Lord in Matthew 12:40. But the man who wrote this overlooked the fact that the Lord in all His allusions to the Old Testament events always speaks of them as actual, literal events, and, therefore, establishes their literal validity. For instance, "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness" ... "As it was in the days of Noah ..." "As it was in the days of Lot." Then in the next verse in Matthew's Gospel, the Lord speaks of the queen of the south's visit to Solomon as a real, literal fact. Why then should He not have spoken of the history of Jonah as a literal fact?

The truth is that the Lord Jesus Christ placed such emphasis upon the book of Jonah because it foreshadowed His own experience as the Redeemer, and because He knew of what apostate Christendom would do with this book and its record. There is no middle ground possible; either this book of Jonah is true, relates the true and miraculous history of this prophet, or the Lord Jesus Christ is not the infallible Son of God. His person and His work stand and fall together with the authenticity of Jonah.

"Our Lord singled out this particular miracle about Jonah, which has been thought of great difficulty, and affixes to it His own almighty stamp of truth. Can you not receive the words of the Lord Jesus Christ against all men that ever were? The Lord Jesus has referred to the fact that Jonah was swallowed by a great fish, call it what you will--I am not going to enter into a contest with naturalists, whether it was a shark, or a sperm-whale or another. This is a matter of very small account. We will leave these men of science to settle the kind (if they can); but the fact itself, the only one of importance

to us to affirm, is that it was a great fish that swallowed and afterwards yielded up the prophet alive. This is all one need to affirm the literal truth of the fact alleged. There is no need to imagine that a fish was created for that purpose. There are many fishes quite capable of swallowing a man whole. But the fact is not only affirmed in the Old Testament, but reaffirmed by our Lord Himself and applied to Himself. Any man who disputes this must give an account before the judgment seat of Christ" (W. Kelly).

The Typical-Prophetic Meaning of Jonah

The typical-prophetic meaning of the story of Jonah is authorized by the words of the Son of God. His experience typifies the death, the burial and the resurrection of our Lord, as well as the gospel message which goes forth to the Gentiles. Furthermore, Jonah's experience is prophetic also of the entire nation. The annotations will enter more fully into these interesting and important foreshadowings.

The Division of the Book

The division of the book is very simple. We maintain the chapter division as made in the authorized version.

Chapter 1 gives the record of Jonah's commission, his disobedience and the consequences.

Chapter 2 contains his prayer and his deliverance.

Chapter 3 has the account of his obedience in preaching to Nineveh.

Chapter 4 contains the account of Jonah's discontent and correction.

Analysis and Annotations

CHAPTER 1 The Commission of the Prophet ,His Disobedience, and the Consequences

1. The commission (1:1-2)
2. The disobedience (1:3)
3. The consequences (1:4-17)

Verses 1-2. The record begins with the same word with which all historical books in the Bible begin, like Joshua, judges, Ruth, Samuel, etc. The commission given to Jonah was to go to Nineveh, that great city, and to cry against it on account of its wickedness.

Nineveh was the great capital of the Assyrian nation; it is mentioned for the first time in Genesis 10:11. Its great size is mentioned in chapter 3:3, where we read it was "three day's journey." Ancient Greek and Roman writers state that it was the largest city in the world in that day. All these statements of its enormous size have been verified by modern excavations. The word of the Lord came to Jonah to visit this city and deliver the message. Seven times the phrase "the word of the LORD came to Jonah" is used in this book.

Verse 3. Jonah rose up at once, but instead of going to the east towards Nineveh he fled in the other direction. Tarshish in Spain was his goal. It is also stated that he fled from the presence of the Lord. This cannot possibly mean that he fled from the presence of Him whom he knew as the omnipresent One. The Psalm of David which speaks of this expressly was then in the possession of Israel, and Jonah must have known it: "Whither shall I go from Thy Spirit? Or whither shall I flee from Thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, Thou art there: if I make my bed in sheol, behold, Thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; even there shall Thy hand lead me, and Thy right

hand shall hold me" (Psalm 139:7-10). He did not flee from the presence of the Lord in the sense of escaping His knowledge and authority. It means that he left the land of Israel where Jehovah dwelt; he fled from the service-commission he had received.

If we look for a motive of this disobedient prophet we find it given in the book itself. In chapter 4:2 we read, "Therefore I fled before unto Tarshish, for I knew that Thou art a gracious God, and merciful, and slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repentest Thee of evil." But why should he fear that God might be merciful to Nineveh and save the city? It was undoubtedly a national spirit which possessed the prophet. It has been suggested that the prophet knew that the Assyrian would be used by the Lord as the instrument to punish Israel and that he thought if Nineveh would perish the people Israel might be saved. Inasmuch as God might show mercy to Assyria, Assyria would then be used as the rod upon Israel, and for this reason he was disobedient to the commission. But the direct prophecy that the Assyrian would be the staff in the hand of the Lord to bring judgment upon Israel was made through Isaiah (chapter 10), and that revelation had not yet been given, for Jonah lived before the prophet Isaiah. It was rather the fear Jonah had as a Jew that the conversion of the Gentiles might rob his nation of the distinction of being the nation of election, to whom Jehovah had revealed Himself exclusively. He therefore went to Joppa where he engaged passage on a ship which was to bring him to Tarshish, which he never reached. It was at Joppa where centuries later another Jew, who was also jealous for his nation, had a vision which made it clear that the gospel should be preached to the Gentiles. That Jew was Peter (Acts 10).

Verses 4-1 7. No sooner had the ship set sail but a terrible tempest arose, sent by the Lord. The danger of shipwreck was imminent. The heathen mariners became terrified and besides crying each one to their gods, they threw the wares overboard to lighten the ship, so that it might weather the storm. But we do not read anything about Jonah calling on his God. Was it an evil conscience which led him to seek sleep in the sides of the ship? Or did he seek sleep because he was in despair? Or was his action produced by the calmness of faith, that he knew himself in the hands of the Lord? Perhaps his action shows more than anything indifference and an astonishing self security.

The shipmaster aroused him from his sleep, asking him why he slept and demanded that he call upon his God. The lot is cast and it fell upon Jonah. He might have confessed before but he waited as long as he could. The questions they asked him he answers readily. He confesses that he is a Hebrew, that he fears the Lord, the God of heaven, the creator of sea and land. His confession filled them with fear; they also knew that he had been disobedient for he told them about it. It was a noble confession and shows that though he had fled from the presence of the Lord his heart still clung to Him. He answered the question, what shall we do unto thee, that the sea may be calm unto us? by pronouncing his own sentence. "Take me up, and cast me forth into the sea; so shall the sea be calm unto you; for I know that for my sake this great tempest is upon you." Again we must say these are noble words. He is ready to sacrifice himself and trusts the Lord and His mercy. After the mariners made an unsuccessful attempt to row the ship to land, and calling upon the Lord not to lay upon them innocent blood, they cast Jonah into the raging sea, and the sea became calm. As a result the heathen sailors feared Jehovah exceedingly, offering a sacrifice unto Him and making vows, while the Lord prepared a great fish to swallow up Jonah, in whose belly Jonah remained three days and three nights. Some have stated that the Lord created a special sea-monster for this purpose, but the Hebrew word does not mean "create", it means "appoint." It certainly was not a whale, for whales rarely ever are seen in the Mediterranean sea, nor can a whale swallow a human being on account of the narrowness of its throat. It was probably a species of sea-monster frequently found in that sea and known by the scientific name *squalus carcharias*, which can easily swallow a human being whole. But the miracle was not that such a fish came up from the depths of the sea and swallowed the prophet, but that Jonah was miraculously preserved in the fish.

The Typical Application

1. Jonah is a type of the Lord Jesus Christ. As already pointed out in the introduction the words of our Lord sanction this application. But as He said when He spoke of Solomon "a greater than Solomon is here," so He also said "a greater than Jonah is here."

We point out a few of the applications and contrasts. Jonah was sent with a message of judgment; the Son of God came

with the message of love and salvation. "For God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved" (John 3:17).

Jonah was disobedient, acting in self-will, fleeing from the presence of the Lord. The Son of God was obedient; He never did His own will but the will of Him that sent Him. The words He spoke were not His own. "The word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's who sent me." He always had the Father set before Himself and was uninterruptedly in His presence.

Jonah, indifferent and self-secure, was fast asleep in the ship while the storm raged and the ship was in danger of going down. The Lord Jesus was asleep in the ship on Galilee, and though the ship was filling with water He was undisturbed, knowing that He was safe. He did what Jonah did not and could not do. He rebuked his fearful disciples and rebuked the wind and the waves; the storm was suddenly hushed.

Jonah bore a faithful witness; but how much greater is His witness. He is called "the faithful Witness" (Rev. 1).

Jonah sacrificed himself in order to save those who were about to perish. But how much greater His sacrifice! Jonah's fate came upon him on account of his sin and disobedience. The Lord Jesus Christ did not suffer for His sins, for He had none, being the Holy, the Sinless One. He died exclusively for others and died for the ungodly. But did Jonah actually die? Did death fasten upon him? Was his body miraculously preserved so that it did not see corruption? Was it a literal resurrection when the fish vomited him out? Jonah did not die physically. But his experience typifies the death and the burial of Christ, and also His physical resurrection. How could Jonah have prayed and cried to the Lord out of the belly of the fish if his physical life had ceased? It was a miracle, however, that Jonah was kept alive.

The three days and three nights have troubled a good many expositors. Not a few teach that in order to bring together the three days and three nights during which our Lord was in the grave, He must have died either on Wednesday or Thursday. The three days and three nights must be interpreted according to Hebrew usage. In Luke 24:21 we read that the two who met the risen Lord said, "And beside all this, today is the third day since these things were done." That was on the first day of the week. Reckoning back, Saturday would be the second day and Friday the first day, the day on which Christ died.

2. Jonah is a type of the Jewish Nation. In the Jewish synagogical ritual the book of Jonah is read on the Day of Atonement. The writer is indebted to an old orthodox Jew for the information why this story is read on their great day of fasting and prayer. He said, "We are the Jonah." Like Jonah the nation was called to bear witness to the Gentiles. And as Jonah did not want the knowledge of Jehovah to go to the Gentiles, so the Jews filled with national pride of being the elect nation opposed God's purposes. (See Acts 13:6-12, 44-52; 14:19-20; 17:5-9; 18:12, etc.)

Disobedient as Jonah, the nation left the presence of the Lord. Jonah engaged passage on a merchant-ship, and the Jew became a trafficker. Like as it was with Jonah, storm and disaster came upon the nation after their great act of disobedience, when they rejected Christ, and opposed His purposes. Like Jonah, in the midst of all their troubles they did not deny, nor deny now, their nationality, their faith in God; they also confess in some of their prayers, at least the orthodox Jews, why it is that they are in trouble, that they have sinned and turned away from the Lord.

Jonah was cast overboard into the sea. The sea represents the nations; that is where the Jews were cast. As a result of the casting away of Jonah the heathen sailors turned to the Lord and sacrificed unto Him. In Romans 11:11 we read, "through their fall (the Jews) salvation came to the Gentiles to provoke them to jealousy." The belly of the fish represents the grave of the Jews among the nations. They became nationally and spiritually dead. But as the fish did not digest Jonah, so the nations have not digested the Jew. They remain unassimilated, just as Balaam predicted, "This nation shall dwell alone and not be reckoned among the nations." The national preservation of Israel is one of the great miracles in history, just as the preservation of Jonah in the belly of the fish was a miracle.

CHAPTER 2 Jonah's Prayer and Deliverance

1. The prayer (2:1-9)
2. The deliverance (2:10)

Verses 1-9. Some expositors have called attention to the fact that the prayer is not one offered up for deliverance, but it is a thanksgiving for the accomplished deliverance. But this is answered by the opening verse of this chapter, in which we are told that he prayed unto the Lord his God out of the fish's belly. When he found that he had escaped the death he anticipated and that the power of God kept him alive, he realized that the Lord his God would also deliver him; in faith he praised Jehovah for the coming deliverance. His prayer is composed almost entirely of sentences found in Psalms. We give the references. Verse 2 reminds of Psalms 18:6, 7 and 120:1. The word "hell" is the Hebrew "sheol," the unknown region. See also Psalm 30:3. Verse 3 contains a quotation from Psalm 42:7, "All thy waves and billows passed over me." In connection with verse 4 consider Psalm 31:22. Verse 5 is found in Psalm 18:4, except the seaweed which crowned his head as he went into the deep; also Psalm 69:2. The thanksgiving in verse 6, "Yet hast Thou brought up my life from the pit, O LORD, my God" is closely allied to Psalm 30:5. The first part of verse 7 is from Psalm 142:3 (marginal reading) and 143:4. The second part is found in Psalm 5:7 and 18:6. The eighth verse reminds of Psalm 31:6 and the ninth verse is to be connected with Psalm 42:4.

The last utterance before the Lord commanded the fish is a triumphant shout, "Salvation is of the LORD," a truth which many preachers in Christendom do not know.

Verse 10. The God of creation manifested His power over His creation by impelling the fish to release its prisoner. The place at which the fish vomited out Jonah is not mentioned; it was probably not very far from the seaport Joppa where he embarked.

The Typical Application

1. As to the Lord Jesus Christ. Our Lord went into the jaws of death and died the sinner's death, the substitute of sinners. Most of the passages from the Psalms which Jonah embodied in his prayer are prophetic predictions of the sufferings of Christ. He cried to God for deliverance and was heard. (See Hebrews 5:7) The answer was His resurrection. Over His blessed head passed the waves and billows of a Holy God, when as the substitute He hung on the cross. He knew more than Jonah could ever know what it meant, "The sorrows of death compassed me, and the floods of ungodly men made me afraid." The Sixty-ninth Psalm is Messianic and the words Jonah used, "I sink in deep mire where there is no standing; I am come into deep waters, where floods overthrow me," tell us of the deep sufferings through which He passed. While Jonah's head was wound about with the seaweeds of the deep, our Lord bore the crown of thorns, the emblem of the curse, upon His blessed head.

It was on the third day that the fish vomited out Jonah. The third day is marked in the Word of God as the day of resurrection. (See Genesis 1:11-13; Hosea 6:1-3.) On the third day our Lord left the grave behind and rose from among the dead. We quote a helpful paragraph on the question of the three days and nights:

"So our Lord Jesus, though by Jewish reckoning three days and nights in the grave, literally lay there but the whole of Saturday, the Sabbath, with the part of Friday not yet closed, and before the dawn of Sunday. For we must always remember in these questions the Jews' method of reckoning. Part of a day regularly counted for the twenty-four hours. The evening and the morning, or any part, counted as a whole day. But the Lord, as we know, was crucified in the afternoon on Friday; His body lay all the Sabbath day in the grave; and He arose early on the Sunday morning. That space was counted three days and three nights, according to sanctioned Biblical reckoning, which no man who bows to Scripture would contest. This was asserted among the Jews, who, fertile as they have been in excuses for unbelief, have never, as far as I am aware, made difficulties on this score. The ignorance of Gentiles has exposed some of them when unfriendly to cavil at the phrase. The Jews found not a few stumbling blocks, but this is not one of them; they may know little of what is

infinitely more momentous; but they know their own Bible too well to press an objection which would tell against the Hebrew Scriptures quite as much as the Greek." (Wm. Kelly, Jonah)

2. As to the Nation. The prayer for deliverance and Jonah's deliverance by the power of God foreshadows the coming experience of the remnant of Israel. There is coming the time of Jacob's trouble in the closing years of this age. Then a part of the nation will call upon the Lord. Their prayers are also pre-written in the book of Psalms, and when finally they acknowledge that "salvation is of the LORD," and He appears in His glory, to turn away ungodliness from Jacob, the Lord will bring them out of their spiritual and national death. He will speak to the fish, the nations, and they will give up the Jews. Then comes the third day of their restoration. (See Hosea 6:1-3.)

CHAPTER 3 Jonah Preaching in Nineveh

1. The repeated commission and Jonah's obedience (3:1-4)
2. The repentance and salvation of Nineveh (3:4-10)

Verses 1-4. And now after Jonah's death and life experience the Word of the Lord came unto Jonah the second time, telling him to arise and go to Nineveh to preach there what the Lord would command him. And now he is obedient. Jonah arrived in the great city of three days' journey, and advancing a day's journey into it he cried out his message, "Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown." Following is the objection of higher criticism as to this statement: "If we were reading a historical description the narrative would be full of difficulties. A strange prophet announced the impending destruction as he traveled through the vast city for one day, and the huge population immediately believed and repented. The king, who is not named, heard, put on sackcloth, sitting in ashes. If this were history, Jonah did what no prophet, no apostle, what Christ Himself never did. Never did a day's preaching bring a vast strange city to repentance. But we repeat, it is not history; it is a story with a meaning, an allegory; it is the great announcement that God cares for the heathen world, and calls it to repentance, and whenever men anywhere repent, His compassion is kindled towards them" (New Century Bible). We reserve the answer to the supposed difficulties in this historical account for the typical unfolding of this event.

Verses 4-10. The people of Nineveh believed God. The news that a strange prophet had appeared with the message of doom must have spread like wildfire and hundreds upon hundreds must have passed it on so that in a very short time it reached every nook and corner of the great city; it reached the palace of the king and the prisoners in the dungeon. That this is real history has been confirmed by archaeology. For just about that time Nineveh was in great trouble and facing a crisis, which made them eager to believe the message and return to God. They evidenced their faith by a universal fast and humiliation before God. The king laid aside his royal robe and humiliated himself as every one of his subjects did. He issued a proclamation to abstain from food and drink, in which the dumb creation was included. What a solemn time the great city had, when hundreds and thousands humbled themselves and when the lowing and groaning of the domestic animals was heard throughout the city. The people acknowledged all their wickedness and turned away from their evil ways and deeds of violence, expressing the hope of God's mercy. "Who can tell if God will turn and repent, and turn away from His fierce anger, that we perish not." And God answered and was merciful to them.

The Typical Application

1. As to the Lord Jesus. Jonah who typifies in his experience the death, burial and resurrection of our Lord, preached the message as one who had been in a grave and came to life out of that grave. In Luke 11:29-30, 32, our Lord makes the application: "For as Jonah was a sign unto the Ninevites, so shall also the Son of Man be to this generation ... The men of Nineveh shall rise up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it, for they repented at the preaching of Jonah, and, behold, a greater than Jonah is here." Christ was not preached as a Saviour to the Gentile world till He had died and risen from the dead. The Greeks who inquired after Him (John 12) received no answer. But the Lord spoke of Himself at that time as the corn of wheat which was to die to bring forth the abundant fruit. Christ died for the sins of His people Israel, "for that nation," but He also died as a member of the nation, from which He came according to the flesh, so that He might rise and become the Saviour of the Gentiles. Christ preached as having died for our sins, buried and risen on the

third day, is the true gospel and carries with it the power of God in the salvation of sinners.

2. As to the Nation. The third day is the day of Israel's spiritual and national resurrection. When that day comes converted Israel will be, according to God's gifts and calling, a holy nation, a nation of priestly functions, a kingdom of priests. They are then fit to show forth the Lord and His glory, and to bring the message, not of judgment, but of life and glory, to the nations of heathendom. The statement in the New Century Bible quoted above is quite correct in one particular-- that "Jonah did what no prophet, no apostle, what Christ Himself never did"--that never a day's preaching brought a vast strange city to repentance. And we might add that no preaching today, during this age, can ever bring such results. The case is unique; it never happened again, that a man who was disobedient, who turned against the divine commission, became a castaway, was miraculously preserved and delivered, led a great world city to God and to true repentance. But if we take into consideration the fact that this true history is a prophecy, all these invented higher critical difficulties vanish altogether. When the nation is reinstated in the land, filled with the Spirit, they will fulfill their calling and go forth in bringing the message to the nations of the world. Then Matthew 28:19 will be accomplished. Then and not before will the world be converted, and all the nations will be joined in the kingdom to Israel, His kingdom people.

And as for repenting Nineveh there came a day of joy and gladness, as animal creation in that city ceased its lowing and groaning, so will come the day of joy and gladness for this poor world, "in that day" when even groaning creation will be delivered of its groans and moans.

CHAPTER 4 Jonah's Discontent and Correction

1. Jonah's discontent (4:1-3)
2. The correction (4:4-11)

Verses 1-3. All that had happened displeased Jonah exceedingly and he was very angry. Did he feel that he had lost his prestige as a prophet, having announced the overthrow of Nineveh, when it did not happen? What he feared had come true; God had been merciful to this great city and they were now enjoying what he considered Israel's exclusive inheritance. Instead of rejoicing in the great exhibition of God's mercy towards such a wicked city, he was angry. Like Elijah, in the hour of despondency he requests to die. "Therefore, now, O LORD, take, I beseech Thee, my life from me; for it is better for me to die than to live." The trouble with Jonah was that he thought only of himself, and, as another has said, "the horrid selfishness of his heart hides from him the God of grace, faithful in His love for His helpless creatures."

Verses 4-11. The Lord God who had been so merciful to Nineveh is now merciful to His angry servant the Prophet. "Doest thou well to be angry?" How great is the patience and kindness of the Lord, even towards them who fail! Jonah leaves the saved city evidently in disgust, and finds on the east side a place where he constructed a booth and sat there waiting to see what would become of the city. He evidently expected still an act of judgment. Then comes the lesson. The Lord God who had prepared a fish to swallow the disobedient prophet now prepared a gourd to provide a shade for him. This gourd, a quipayon, is a very common plant in Palestine. The Creator whose creation is so wonderful, manifested the Creator's power in raising up this plant, for the relief of His servant, in a sudden manner. And Jonah was exceedingly glad. Then God prepared a worm which destroyed the gourd. When the morning came and the sun beat upon the head of the prophet he fainted, and once more wished in himself to die. Alas! if the prophet had been in the right place before the Lord he would have accepted the gourd as evidence of His loving care, and when the worm destroyed the plant so that it withered he would have equally acknowledged his Creator-God and not have murmured. He might have said with Job, "The LORD gave, the LORD has taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD." Jonah in his selfish impatience found fault with God. It is still the common thing amongst professing Christians.

And when God asked him, "Doest thou well to be angry for the gourd?" the poor finite creature of the dust answered the Creator, "I do well to be angry, even unto death." Then comes the lesson. Not God, Elohim, the name of Him as Creator, speaks, but it is Jehovah, the Lord: "Thou hast had pity on the gourd, for the which thou hast not laboured, neither madest it grow; which came up in a night, and perished in a night: and should not I spare Nineveh, that great city, wherein

are more than six score thousand persons that cannot discern between their right hand and their left; and also much cattle?" If Jonah felt pity and was angry because of a small vine he had not planted nor made to grow, should not God with greater right have mercy upon His creatures, whom He created and sustained? Jonah is silenced; he could not reply. The last word belongs to Jehovah, who thus demonstrated that in His infinite compassion He embraces not Israel alone, but all His creation, the Gentile world and even animal creation.

"Most touching and beautiful is the last verse of the book, in which God displays the force and supreme necessity of His love; which (although the threatenings of His justice are heard, and must needs be heard and even executed if man continues in rebellion) abides in the repose of that perfect goodness which nothing can alter, and which seizes the opportunity of displaying itself, whenever man allows Him, so to speak, to bless him--the repose of an affection that nothing can escape, that observes everything, in order to act according to its own undisturbed nature--the repose of God Himself, essential to His perfection, on which depends all our blessing and all our peace" .

THE BOOK OF MICAH

The Annotated Bible

Arno Clement Gaebelein

THE PROPHET MICAH

Introduction

When the prophet Jeremiah was in danger of being put to death for his faithful testimony, certain of the elders rose up and said, "Micah the Morasthite prophesied in the days of Hezekiah, King of Judah; and spake to all the people of Judah, saying, Thus saith the LORD of hosts: Zion shall be plowed like a field, and Jerusalem shall become heaps, and the mountain of the house as the high places of a forest" (Jer. 26:18). This is the testimony of the book of Jeremiah to Micah, who prophesied under the reign of Hezekiah, as well as Jotham and Ahaz. The first verse of the book of Micah gives us this information. While Jonah was a Galilean, Micah was a Judean. He came from Moresheth-Gath, which distinguishes him from another prophet of the same name, Micah the son of Imlah. (See 1 Kings 22:8; Micaiah is the same as Micah.) The name Micah means "who is like the LORD?"

Prophesying mostly in Jerusalem during the reigns of Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah, he was contemporaneous with Isaiah. Though his name is not mentioned in the prophecy of Isaiah, his message is the same as the message of Isaiah, in describing the moral corruption of their times, and the Messianic prophecies. The following passages will confirm this:

Micah 1:9-16 and Isaiah 10:28-32; Micah 2:1-2 and Isaiah 5:8; Micah 2:6, 11 and Isaiah 30:10,11; Micah 2:12 and Isaiah 10:20-23; Micah 3:5-7 and Isaiah 29:9-12; Micah 3:12 and Isaiah 32:14; Micah 4:1 and Isaiah 2:2; Micah 4:4 and Isaiah 50:19; Micah 4:7 and Isaiah 9:7; Micah 4:10 and Isaiah 39:6; Micah 5:2-4 and Isaiah 7:14; Micah 5:6 and Isaiah 14:25; Micah 6:6-8 and Isaiah 58:6-7; Micah 7:7 and Isaiah 8:17; Micah 7:12 and Isaiah 11:11.

Thus the Lord gave the same witness through the mouth of these two. Of course Isaiah was the leading figure. But Micah did not copy him, but as the Holy Spirit came upon him he uttered his prophecies bearing witness to the same truths Isaiah had spoken. The style of Micah's writings is different from the style of Isaiah. "This may be all explained by the vivacity of his own individuality, and the excited state of his mind, passing as he does rapidly from threatening to promise, from one subject to another, and from one number and gender to another." But his words are never deficient in clearness, while in other respects he comes quite near to the style of Isaiah.

The prophetic horizon of Micah is very much restricted. The magnificent sweep of Isaiah, looking forward to the great and glorious consummation in the kingdom, is lacking in Micah. The question of the exact time when Micah uttered his prophecies, what was spoken during the reign of Jotham, during the reign of Ahaz or Hezekiah, is unessential, and we do not follow it in this introduction.

His Message

The book consists of three great prophetic discourses which all begin in the same way, with the command to hear. "Hear all ye people," chapter 1:2, the first discourse. The second discourse, chapter 3:1, "Hear, I pray you." The third discourse, chapter 6: 1, "Hear ye now what the LORD saith." In the first prophetic message he predicts the destruction of Samaria, the ten-tribe kingdom, and the captivity of Judah. The second message is a message of reproof of the leaders of

the nation, the heads of Jacob and the princes of the house of Israel, followed by a denunciation of the false prophets. This is followed by the vision of the coming glory in the last days and the restoration of Israel. In this second discourse the coming ruler of Israel and His birthplace are announced; what He is and the kingdom He will establish in the midst of His people. Here is the message of hope and glory.

The third discourse contains a very solemn pleading with His people. Jehovah tells them again of all His loving kindness. He tells them He has a controversy with them; He speaks to them of His rightful demands. It is a most eloquent outburst. The last part contains an assurance that the Lord will surely have compassion upon His people, while their enemies will be overthrown to lick the dust. One of the greatest words of praise in the Scriptures is found in the last three verses. It contains Israel's hope and is a prophecy of the time when the Redeemer shall return and turn away ungodliness from Jacob and remember their sins no more.

The three prophetic discourses of Micah the Morasthite give a progressive message. The book begins with the threatening judgment; it leads on towards the Messianic salvation and glory, and finally the exhortation and reproof--to return unto Him, to repent, and the assurance of His compassion and forgiveness.

Analysis and Annotation

THE FIRST PROPHETIC MESSAGE

CHAPTER 1

1. The introduction (1:1)
2. Judgment announced (1:2-5)
3. The destruction of Samaria (1:6-7)
4. The lamentation of the prophet over the coming judgment (1:8-16)

Verse 1. This introduction tells us two things. In the first place, we learn that this book contains the word of the Lord that came to Micah, the Morasthite; in the second place, we are told when Micah exercised his office. As stated in the introduction, he was contemporary with Isaiah, probably for about twenty-nine years. Criticism has attacked the authorship of this book also. Since criticism began, with Ewald, to question the unity of this little book, it has raged with increasing violence, until Professor Cheyne, improving on Robertson Smith in the Encyclopedia Britannica, concludes: "In no part of chapters 4-7 can we venture to detect the hand of Micah." There is no need to answer such statements. The unity of the book of Micah is fully demonstrated by the message it contains. If chapters 4-7 were not written by Micah, will the critics give us light on who the author is?

Verses 2-5. The opening message is sublime, it is an appeal to all the nations, the whole earth and all that is in it, to listen to the witness of the Lord Jehovah against them, the witness which comes from His holy temple. The other Micah (Micaiah, the same as Micah) the son of Imlah, uttered similar words (1 Kings 22:28). He next describes the Lord coming out of His place, the place where He dwells in mercy, to come down and tread upon the high places of the earth. He is coming to judge; He is coming in wrath. The nations are to hear it, that the judgment is for the transgression of Jacob and for the sins of the house of Israel. On verse 4 see Psalm 18:7-10; Psalm 68:8 and Judges 5:4. The near fulfillment was the double judgment which came upon the two kingdoms, the kingdom of the ten tribes, Samaria, and the kingdom of Judah. But the description of the coming of the Lord in judgment also relates to that great future event, the day of the Lord.

Verses 6-7. The sin of Israel was Samaria, it originated there and consisted of idol worship; the sins of Judah were the high places in Jerusalem. (See Jer. 32:35.) Complete destruction of Samaria would come with this announced judgment and all her graven images would be broken to pieces, and her whoredoms burned with fire (Joel 2:3; Hosea 2:7).

Verses 8-16. Here is the lamentation of Micah as directed by the Spirit of God, not only over the fate of Samaria, but

over Judah as well. He weeps for both Samaria and Judah. "I will wail and howl; I will go stripped and naked; I will make a wailing like the jackals, and a mourning like the owls (ostriches)." It shows how these men of God entered in a whole-souled manner into the divine revelations they received. It created deep soul exercise. This must be the result of faith in the prophetic word with all His people at all times. In verse nine the prophet speaks of one who comes to execute the threatened judgment. "He is come unto the gate of my people, even to Jerusalem." This enemy is the Assyrian whom Micah beholds advancing and who came before the gates of Jerusalem. (See Isa. 10.) The Assyrian was used in ending the kingdom of Israel; Babylon under Nebuchadnezzar was the instrument used against Judah and Jerusalem. Sennacherib came against Jerusalem, but it was Shalmaneser, king of Assyria, who carried Israel away into captivity. Isaiah's prophecy enters more fully into this. He describes both the Assyrian and the Babylonian power. And both will appear again at the close of the times of the Gentiles. The little horn of Daniel's prophecy in chapter 7, the head of the confederated nations, the revived Roman Empire, corresponds with the final King of Babylon, while the final Assyrian is the other little horn in Daniel 8. (See annotations on Dan. 7 and 8).

Verses 10-13 correspond to Isaiah 10:28-34; it is a description of the advance of the Assyrian. The coming disaster is not to be published in Gath, that is, the Philistines are not to hear of it. (See 2 Sam. 1:20.) There is a remarkable play of words in these statements. It may be literally rendered as follows: "Weep not in Weep-town; in Dust-town (the meaning of Aphrah) roll thyself in dust"; then a contrast, "in Beauty-town (Saphir means beauty) be in nakedness and shame; and in March-town (the meaning of Zaanana) march not forth."

The inhabitant of Maroth waited anxiously for good, but evil came from the LORD unto the gate of Jerusalem (Maroth means bitterness). In the Assyrian cylinder, known as Taylor's cylinder, Sennacherib mentions the great gate of Jerusalem.

Then follows a call to Lachish to escape. "Bind the chariot to the swift beast." Lachish was a fortified city, as the excavations have shown, and was taken by Sennacherib. Here is still another play of words in the original. Lachish means "Horse-town," so that it can be translated "Bind the chariot to the horse, O inhabitant of Horse-town." It has been suggested that the sin mentioned in connection with Lachish was that "the horses of the sun" in connection with idolatry were kept there (2 Kings 23:11).

In verse 14 the prophet mentions his home town Moresheth-gath; there is to be a parting gift for she shall go into captivity. And Achzib will not keep the invader back; Achzib means a lie--the "Lie-town" shall be a lie to the kings of Israel, a false hope.

The heir who is to possess Moreshah is the Assyrian, and "the glory of Israel shall come even unto Adullam," the nobles of Israel shall gather in the cave of Adullam, like outcasts. (See 1 Sam. 22:1.)

They were now to mourn, expressed in making themselves bald (Job 1:20; Isa. 15:2; 22:12; Jer. 16:6), for they are gone into captivity.

CHAPTER 2

1. The guilt and punishment of Israel (2:1-11)
2. The future restoration (2:12-13)

Verses 1-11. In the first two verses the special sins of Israel are mentioned, the same as in Amos--idolatry, covetousness and oppression. Therefore punishment is to fall upon them. There would be a doleful lamentation: "We be utterly spoiled: he changeth the portion of my people; how does he take it away from me!" Their fields would be divided. Nor did they listen to the true prophets; they gave ear to the false prophets who flattered them. It is interesting to note that the sentence, "Prophecy ye not, thus they prophesy," literally translated is, "Do not sputter, thus they sputter." They did not give out the real message, but they sputtered out their own words. These false prophets tried to prevent the true prophets from announcing the judgment of the Lord.

Then comes a passionate appeal: "O, thou that art named the house of Jacob, is the Spirit of the Lord straitened? Are these His doings? Do not my words do good to him that walketh uprightly?" He still appeals to their consciences. The Spirit of God does not change, nor was it His doings, when the nation drifted into idolatry and judgment was impending. Still, if they but walked uprightly His words would surely do them good. But they had risen as an enemy against Him; and yet the Lord, in spite of all, called them "My people."

Verses 12-13. In this prophecy Christ is announced as the Breaker, the One who goes before them, clears the way, and removes every obstacle out of the way. In verse 10 we read, "Arise ye, and depart; for this is not your rest." The true rest for His people Israel comes when the King comes and brings with Him the promised blessing and glory. Then the remnant of Israel will be gathered, "and their king shall pass before them, and the Lord at the head of them." It is a great prophecy of the ultimate restoration of Israel. "We must not exclude all allusion to the deliverance of the Jewish nation out of the earthly Babylon by Cyrus; at the same time, it is only in its typical significance that this comes into consideration at all, namely, as a preliminary stage and pledge of the redemption to be effected by Christ."

THE SECOND PROPHETIC MESSAGE

CHAPTER 3

1. Address to the godless princes and judges (3:1-4)
2. Address to the false prophets (3:5-8)
3. The verdict of judgment (3:9-12)

Verses 1-4. The second prophetic message of Micah contains the great Messianic prophecies. But first the prophet gives a description of the degradation of the nation, the moral corruption of the leaders and judges, as well as the false prophets. It is all summed up in one sentence, "who hate the good, and love the evil." The princes and judges robbed the people, treated them like cattle (verse 3). For these unjust deeds the Lord would not hear them when they cried in the hour of their need, and would hide His face from them.

Verses 5-8. The false prophets were mostly responsible for these abominations, just as today the false in Christendom, the deniers of the faith, destructive critics and others, are responsible for the conditions in the professing Church. They make the people err. While they bite with their teeth, that is, being fed, they cried "peace" to their patrons; and those who did not support them, by putting food in their mouths, they fought and denounced. There would be night for them, with no vision; darkness would come upon them. They would be ashamed and confounded; the covering of the lips was a sign and emblem of mourning and silence. Such will be the fate of all false prophets and teachers.

The eighth verse is a magnificent outburst of God's true prophet, Micah's confession. As the true prophet he was full of power by the Spirit of the Lord, and thus filled he declared unto Jacob his transgression and to Israel his sin.

Verses 9-12. What Micah had announced in the preceding verse he does now. He tells the heads and rulers that they build Zion with blood and Jerusalem with iniquity. He speaks of the influence of money. judges acted for reward, priests taught for hire, and prophets prophesied for money. The verdict of judgment is mentioned in Jer. 26:18. This prophecy was fulfilled when Babylon conquered Jerusalem. And when finally the returned remnant rejected the Lord of Glory, their King, Zion and Jerusalem became once more heaps, as he announced, "Jerusalem shall be trodden down by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled."

CHAPTER 4

1. The future of glory (4:1-5)
2. The restoration and the final victory (4:6-13)

Verses 1-5. The last verse predicted the long desolation and ruin of Zion. This is followed at once by a great prophecy of the future of glory in store for Zion. Isaiah also uttered this great prediction. Not that Micah copied Isaiah, nor Isaiah Micah, but the same Spirit gave to the men the same prophecy. It concerns the latter days, which means the coming of Messiah's kingdom on earth. These days are not yet here. To apply these words, even in a spiritual way, to the present age, or to the Church, is a serious mistake. The house of the Lord is not the Church, but the house in Jerusalem, to which in the kingdom the nations will come to worship the Lord of hosts. The nation will be judged and rebuked by Him whose glorious throne will be established in Jerusalem. Then, and only then, comes the time of universal, world-wide peace. How blind Christendom is in not seeing in what connection the favored text concerning peace on earth stands! It will be "in that day" when "they shall beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks." The prediction of our Lord that throughout this age, down to its end, nation would lift up sword against nation, is then ended, and another order of things begins; for then "nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more." What peace and prosperity will then follow! It is described in the fourth verse, "But they shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig tree; and none shall make them afraid: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it."

Verses 6-13. The regathering of all Israel then takes place. Not the boasting, proud, infidel, portion of the nation as it is today. Reform Judaism and the other apostates in the nation will suffer judgment in the future as they did in the past. But there is a feeble, God-fearing remnant, and to that remnant belong the promises. "In that day, saith the LORD, will I assemble her that halteth, and I will gather her that is driven out, and her that I have afflicted." In His grace He will make the remnant a strong nation and reign over them in the established kingdom. To Zion shall return "the first dominion," that is, the reign and power and glory that was manifested in the monarchy under David and Solomon; only it will be greater than David's or Solomon's kingdom.

All this is preceded by her sorrow and captivity. It must be noticed that verse 10 goes beyond the Babylonian captivity, for it could not be said that the Lord redeemed in that past captivity Israel from the hands of her enemies. Nor was it true then that many nations were gathered against her. The Babylonian captivity is a type of the greater dispersion throughout this present age. When it ends, as it will end, the Lord will then redeem His people and deal in judgment with the opposing nations which finally gather against Jerusalem. (See the annotations of the last chapters of Zechariah.) He gathers the nations for the harvest time, when the sheaves are to be threshed. The daughter of Zion is to trample on them and beat them, and the grain, the riches of the Gentiles, will be consecrated unto the Lord. In connection with verses 11-13 the following Scriptures should be read and studied with the annotations: Joel 3; Ezekiel 38; Zechariah 12.

CHAPTER 5

1. The siege and the smitten judge (5:1)
2. The smitten judge: Who he is (5:2)
3. The events of the future: (5:3)
4. The Rejected One, the Shepherd of Israel (5:4-6)
5. The remnant of Jacob and the kingdom (5:7-15)

Verse 1. This interesting chapter presents difficulties, but they all vanish if we view all in the light of the future as revealed in the prophetic Word. Here it is necessary to divide the Word of Truth rightly, or we shall never find our way through this great Messianic chapter. The daughter of troops gathers herself in troops to besiege Jerusalem. It is the Assyrian army gathering before the city. But it is not the Assyrian of the past, whose invasion both Isaiah and Micah describe prophetically, but it is the Assyrian of the future, the great troubler which invades the land of Israel at the end-time, the time of Jacob's trouble, the great time of travail and final deliverance. This last invader, the king of the north (see Joel 2), besieges Jerusalem. And the reason of it all, their long history of trouble, culminating in the great tribulation, is the rejection of the judge of Israel. It is the Messiah, our Lord. They despised Him, insulted Him, smote Him with a rod upon the cheek. He is called the judge of Israel, because the judge held the highest official position in Israel; the king of Israel held this office. The smiting upon the cheek was considered the greatest disgrace; thus Zedekiah smote the prophet

Micaiah upon the cheek and asked him, "Which way went the Spirit of the LORD from me to speak to thee?" (See 1 Kings 22:24 and Matt. 26:67, 68). In Job 16:10 we read Job's complaint, "They have gaped upon me with their mouth, they have smitten me reproachfully upon the cheek; they have gathered themselves together against me."

Verse 2. This great verse is a parenthetical statement, giving a description of the judge of Israel. It shows forth Him who is to be the Ruler and the Judge, the Redeemer and the King. It is the passage which the chief priests and the scribes quoted to wicked Herod, when he demanded to know where Christ should be born (Matt. 2:4-6). This great prophecy was therefore known when our Lord was born to predict the birth of the Messiah, in fact, the Jews always believed this. But after He was born and lived among them and was rejected by them they attempted deliberately to explain it away, and invented fables to accomplish this. It was Tertullian, and other prominent teachers of the early Church, who argued with the Jews, that if Jesus was not the promised Messiah, the prophecy given by Micah could never be fulfilled, for none of David's descendants was left in Bethlehem.

But here is more than an announcement of the birthplace of Christ. We have a wonderful description of His Person. He is to be the Son of David, coming out of David's city, destined to be the Ruler in Israel. But He is more than a descendant of David, "His goings forth have been of old, from everlasting." Even this plain announcement has not been left unattacked by the infidel critics. Dr. R.F. Horton in his comment on this passage says the following: "We are not called on to explain away this wonderful and solemn forecast, especially when we have seen it in the Babe of Bethlehem, who came into the world out of the bosom of the Father. Micah could not understand his own deep saying; but how foolish of us to discredit it when history has made its meaning plain."

Here we have His deity fully revealed as well as His humanity; He is the God-Man. In this passage Micah's testimony harmonizes with Isaiah's in chapter 9:6, 7.

Verse 3. The meaning of this verse becomes plain if we connect it with the first verse and treat the second verse as a parenthesis. They smote the judge of Israel upon the cheek, they rejected the Lord of Glory, and as a result God gave them up. "Therefore will He give them up, until the time when she that travaileth hath brought forth; then the remnant of His brethren shall return to the children of Israel." It is often applied to the birth of Christ and connected with Revelation 12, the birth of the manchild. There can be no question that the manchild in the chapter of Revelation is Christ, and the woman described is Israel; but its exegetical meaning is in connection with the last days, when Israel will be in travail pains to give birth to the remnant, so prominently mentioned in prophecy. Since the nation rejected the Messiah they have had nothing but suffering, but the great travail pains come in the future. "For thus saith the LORD: We have heard a voice of trembling, of fear and not of peace. Ask ye now, and see whether a man doth travail with child? Wherefore do I see every man with his hands on his loins, as a woman in travail, and all faces are turned into paleness? Alas! for that day is great, so that none is like it, it is even the time of Jacob's trouble, but he shall be saved out of it." (Jer. 30:5-7). That godly remnant turning then to the Lord, born in that future travail, are called here "His brethren." They are the same of which our Lord spoke in the description of the judgment of nations, which He executes when sitting upon the throne of His glory. (See Matt. 25:31.) That remnant will resume their place as and with Israel, not becoming a part of the true Church, which is then no longer upon the earth, but having all the earthly Jewish hopes realized in the kingdom, of which they are the nucleus.

Verses 4-6. This refers to His second coming. He will stand and feed in the strength of Jehovah, for He is the LORD; and they (saved Israel) shall abide. Yea, more than that, "He shall be great unto the ends of the earth."

How beautiful is the opening sentence of the fifth verse! "This Man shall be peace (or our peace)." Of Him Isaiah spoke, too, as "the Prince of Peace," and that "of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end." David in his great prophetic psalm (72:7) concerning these coming days speaks of "abundance of peace." Zechariah likewise in predicting the future says, "He shall speak peace to the nations" (Zech. 9:10). He made peace in the blood of His cross and for all who trust in Him He is peace, "for He is our Peace."

Here it concerns the peace He has and gives to His restored people Israel. He will be the peace for them, when the Assyrian, the king of the north, enters their land, and by His power will strike down the invader. Who are the seven shepherds and the eight principal men? They will be those who will be used in that day to stem back the invading hosts. Who they are is unknown, but it will be known at the time of fulfillment. Then Assyria, the land of Nimrod, as well as all opposing world powers will be completely ended.

Verses 7-15. The restored and blessed remnant of Jacob will possess a double character. They will be used in blessing and refreshing among the nations, "as dew from the LORD, as the showers upon the grass." On the other hand, they will be in the midst of many people as a lion and as a young lion, to avenge unrighteousness and opposition. All the adversaries and enemies of Israel will be cut down and cut off (Num. 24:9; see exposition of Balaam's parables at the close of annotations on Numbers). All the instruments of war will be done away with, as well as witchcrafts and the soothsayers. Spiritism, Christian Science, theosophy and all the other demon cults flourishing now, and still more before He comes, will find their ignominious end. Idolatry, the graven images, and the standing images will be abolished. Before the Lord comes the evil spirit of idolatry will once more seize hold on Israel, that is, among the apostates. (See annotations on Matt. 12:43-45.) While all this refers to Israel it also includes the rest of the world. All offences will be gathered out of His kingdom. The better rendering of verse 15 is, "And I will execute vengeance in anger and fury upon the nations which hearkened not." That is, during the end of the age God sent forth a testimony to the nations and those who hearkened not will fall under the wrath of the lion of the tribe of Judah.

THE THIRD PROPHETIC DISCOURSE (6-7)

CHAPTER 6

1. The words of Jehovah to His people (6:1-5)
2. Israel's answer (6:6-7)
3. The moral demands of Jehovah (6:8)
4. The Lord must judge them (6:9-16)

Verses 1-5. This chapter is cast in the form of a controversy. The utterance has been called by some the most important in the prophetic literature. It is hardly this, nor is, as critics claim, the eighth verse a definition of religion, "the greatest saying in the Old Testament."

The beginning is sublime, "Hear ye now what Jehovah saith!" The prophet is to arise and contend before the mountains so that the hills may hear his voice. The mountains and the enduring foundations of the earth are to hear the controversy the Lord has with His people and how He pleads with Israel.

Then follows the tender loving pleading of Jehovah, who still loves His people, in spite of their wickedness, "O My people, what have I done to thee?" What matchless condescension! The Lord whom they had rejected, from whom they had turned away, does not denounce them for their sins, nor does He enumerate them, but He asks whether He had been at fault. Had He done anything amiss towards them? Had He wearied His people? He is willing that they should testify against Him. Had He done anything that they should get tired of Him? We may imagine a pause here, as if He were waiting for an answer. But there is no answer.

He continues to speak. He had brought them out of Egypt, redeemed them out of the house of bondage; He had given them Moses, Aaron, and Miriam, by whom He led them. He reminded them of Balak, King of Moab, and Balaam, the son of Beor, who wanted to have Israel cursed. But what had Balaam been forced to say? "How shall I curse whom God has not cursed!" What a faithful, loving God He had been to them.

Verses 6-7. Here the people speak, but it is significant that they do not address the Lord, who had spoken to them by the prophet. They knew themselves guilty and condemned. So they address the prophet and ask what to do. "Wherewith shall I

come before the LORD, and bow myself before the high God? shall I come before Him with burnt offerings, with calves of a year old? Will the LORD be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousand rivers of oil? Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?" For generations they had brought burnt offerings, thousands of rams and rivers of oil. But it was nothing but an outward worship; inwardly they remained the same. But they were willing to do more in this outward service, even to the sacrifice of the firstborn. Isaiah 1:10-18 is an interesting commentary to these questions, showing how the Lord despised these ceremonies of a people who were evil doers and corrupters. (See also Psalm 50:7-23.)

Verse 8. The prophet gives the answer of Jehovah. "He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?" Where has God made the demand? In the law. There is no more deadly error than to hold up this verse as the essence of the gospel and the one true, saving religion. Yet this we hear today on all sides. But the most loud-mouthed advocates of this "saving religion" practise what the Lord demands the least. And there is a good reason for it. Israel did not act in righteousness, nor did they love mercy, nor did they walk humbly in fellowship with the Lord. Why not? Because they were uncircumcised in their hearts. To do right, to love mercy, to walk in humility with God is impossible for the natural man; in order to do this there must be the new birth, and the new birth takes place when the sinner believes and expresses his faith in true repentance. Only a blind leader of the blind can say this verse is the gospel, and that faith in the deity of Christ and in His atoning, ever blessed work on the cross is not needed. Israel never has been anything like this which Jehovah demands. The day is coming when the Lord in His grace will give them a new heart and take away the stony heart, and fill them with His spirit. (See. Ezek. 36.)

Verses 9-16. The Lord speaks again and puts before them once more their moral degeneration. Wicked balances, deceitful weights, the deeds of unrighteousness. They were destitute of mercy, for they were full of violence, lies and deceit. Therefore judgment must now fall upon them.

CHAPTER 7

1. The prophet's complaint (7:1-6)
2. Confession, prayer and thanksgiving (7:7-20)

Verses 1-6. It is the prophet's voice complaining over the conditions of the people. But he is also the typical representative of the remnant during the time of travail in Zion. It is to be noted that our Lord quotes from this portion of Micah. (See Matt. 10:21, which dispensationally applies to the future remnant.) In the midst of the conditions the prophet describes we read that his refuge was prayer, looking to the Lord with the assurance that He will hear. "Therefore I will look unto the LORD; I will wait for the God of my salvation; my God will hear me" (verse 7). This will be the attitude of the godly Israelites during the time of trouble.

Verses 7-20. It is Israel speaking in the remnant, represented by the prophet. The enemy is addressed; at the time of Micah it was the Assyrian, the type of the end Assyrian; but it includes all the world powers in their anti-Semitic attitude. The real Israel has always had this comfort, founded on the fact that God's gifts and calling are without repentance, that they are the elect nation, that their fall must be followed by a spiritual and national resurrection (Rom. 11). Hence they say, "Rejoice not against me, mine enemy; when I fall I shall rise again; when I sit in darkness, the LORD will be a light unto me." This will be the case when their greatest darkness comes in the end of the age (Isa. 60). It is a willing submission to the chastisement of the Lord expressed in verse 9; they acknowledge their sins and once more declare, "He will bring me forth to light, and I shall behold his righteousness.

This is followed by a prophetic declaration. The day is coming when her walls will be built again, and in that day shall the decree be far removed. The latter statement may mean the same which the prophet Jeremiah reveals in chapter 31:31 to the end of the chapter. The old decree, or law, will end, and there will be the new covenant into which Judah and Israel enter "in that day." Then the nations will gather to restored Israel in the kingdom. (Compare verse 12 with Isa. 60:3-10.)

In the meantime the land will be desolate, as it is now, the fruit of their evil doings, till the day comes when the wilderness will be a fruitful field (Isa. 32:16) when the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose (Isa. 35:1).

Once more the prophet's voice is heard in supplication. The prayer in verse 14 is answered by the Lord in verses 15-17. The Lord will show again in that day the marvelous things as He did in their past redemption out of Egypt. The nations, their enemies, will be witness to it; they will be humiliated in the dust.

The three concluding verses belong to the greatest in the Old Testament Scriptures. Here we listen to a great praise and outburst of adoration. "Who is a God like unto Thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of His heritage? He retaineth not His anger forever, because He delighted in mercy. He will turn again, He will have compassion upon us; He will subdue our iniquities; and Thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea. Thou wilt perform the truth to Jacob, and the mercy to Abraham, which Thou hast sworn unto our fathers from the days of old."

Such will be the future praise of the remnant of His heritage, when the Deliverer comes to Zion and turns away ungodliness from Jacob, when the covenant with them will be consummated and their sins will be taken away (Rom. 11:26, 27). Once a year orthodox Jews go to a running stream and scatter into it bits of paper and small articles, repeating while they do it these three verses (the so-called Tashlik ceremony). It is but an outward act, yet testifying that there is still faith in Israel. It will be a glorious day when God forgives them their sins and remembers them no more.

THE BOOK OF NAHUM

The Annotated Bible

Arno Clement Gaebelein

THE PROPHET NAHUM

Introduction

Nahum's history is unknown. All we know of him is that he was an Elkoshite. His name means "comforter." Some have identified Elkosh with a village of similar name which is in existence today, not far from the site of ancient Nineveh, on the eastern banks of the Tigris. There the grave of Nahum is shown, adored alike by nominal Christians and the followers of Mohammed. But careful research has shown this to be absolutely without any foundation whatever. No one knew anything about that grave till about the sixteenth century of our era. It is the Elkosh which existed in Galilee and which is still known as a little village. Nahum, like Jonah, was a Galilean.

The Date of Nahum

The opening verse does not give a hint as to the time Nahum lived and prophesied. Critics, on account of some Assyrian expressions found in the book have put the date later. From internal evidences we can ascertain the date without difficulty. Judah and not Israel is addressed by Nahum. There is no reason to assume that he lived in exile and uttered his prophecy in the land of Assyria. He spoke in the land of Israel, probably in Jerusalem. The most significant passage which gives us important information is chapter 1:11: "There is one come out of thee (out of Assyria) that imagineth evil against the LORD, a wicked counsellor." Who was this wicked counsellor, who imagined evil against the Lord? There can be but one answer. A wicked counsellor came out of Assyria, the mouthpiece of its reigning King Sennacherib. His name was Rab-shakeh. He blasphemed and defied the God of Israel. His vile words are recorded in 2 Kings 18:26-27. The description of Nahum fits this Assyrian villain. We are justified in placing Nahum in the period of Hezekiah; he was therefore contemporary with Isaiah and Micah.

There is an interesting link between Jonah, Micah and Nahum. Jonah was sent with the message to Nineveh about one hundred and fifty years before Nahum prophesied. Through his message Nineveh turned to the Lord. Isaiah and Micah prophesied concerning the same Assyrian power, the capital of which was Nineveh. They witnessed the Assyrian attack upon Jerusalem and Jehovah's intervention in behalf of His people. They saw the downfall of the kingdom of Israel through Assyria and were well acquainted with the wickedness of the Assyrian. And then came Nahum from Galilee, and the Spirit of God gave through him the great message of the coming complete destruction of Nineveh.

Assyrian History

A knowledge of Assyrian history, and its great capital, Nineveh, is needed for a better understanding of Nahum's prophecy. It is strange that ancient writers like Ctesias, the physician of Artaxerxes, Mnemon, and Diodorus Siculus have but little to say about Assyria, and many identified Assyria with Babylonia. The infidel critics have seen their defeat in this respect. Not believing the Bible, they trusted in the historical accounts of pagan writers, and assuming that they were right discredited the Word of God, only to find out afterward that the Bible is right and the heathen historians were wrong. For instance, Isaiah mentions in chapter 20 Sargon, king of Assyria. Because the secular historians know nothing of such a king, they sat in judgment upon the Word of God. They denied that such a king ever existed, thinking that the statement by

Isaiah is an invention. It was then proven that Sargon was a great warrior, the father of Sennacherib, and that Isaiah gave a true record.

Hezekiah, the King of Judah, under whom Nahum as well as Isaiah and Micah prophesied, had paid tribute for many years to Assyria. When he revolted an Assyrian army appeared in the land, by which over forty Judean cities were captured. Jerusalem itself was saved by divine intervention (Isa. 37:36). Sennacherib, who had sent the expedition against Jerusalem, being murdered by his own sons in 681 B.C. (Isa. 37:38). His successor was Esarhaddon, who besieged Sidon and carried its treasures to Nineveh. Assurbanipal succeeded him to the throne and made his son Shamash-shumukin regent of Babylon, for Babylon was then an insignificant power. Here we must remember that when Babylon was next to nothing in world history, Isaiah had predicted its coming greatness and conquest of Jerusalem by the Babylonian power. Under Assurbanipal the ancient and great capital of Upper Egypt was captured, which is mentioned by Nahum in chapter 3:8, 10; that is, No-Amon is Thebes. Assurbanipal conquered many countries and nations; he razed Susa, and immense treasures were carried off to Nineveh. During his reign every year saw a cruel war, and ruin and carnage were spread in every direction. The captives were treated in a horrible manner, with all kinds of torture. The nations suffered terribly under this wicked monarch, so that when finally Assyria fell the nations rejoiced, as mentioned by Nahum at the conclusion of his prophecy. "All that hear the bruit of thee shall clap hands over thee; for upon whom hath not thy wickedness passed continually?" After Assurbanipal Assyria declined. He was followed by Assur-etil-ilani and Sin-shar-ishkun, and finally Assyria and its great and proud capital were conquered by Nabopolassar, the father of Nebuchadnezzar and Cyaxares. This happened about 625 B.C., just about ninety years after Nahum announced the destruction of Nineveh.

The Message of Nahum

His prophetic message concerns exclusively Nineveh. Critics have put question marks over against certain parts of this book, while other critics have contradicted their fellow critics. In fact, if one wishes to find theories and assumptions, wild guesses and fanciful hypotheses, the camp of the rationalist is the place. The unity and integrity of the prophecy of Nahum is beyond controversy. As the opening verse announces, it is the burden of Nineveh.

Typically Nineveh stands for the world powers to the end of the times of the Gentiles, and its overthrow foreshadows the overthrow of the final world powers.

The Division of Nahum

The three chapters of which Nahum is composed give us the correct division of his prophecy. In the first chapter we find the purpose of God is dealing in judgment with the oppressor of Israel. The second chapter describes the overthrow, the plundering, and destruction of Nineveh. The third chapter shows the guilt and the well-deserved judgment and ruin of Nineveh.

Analysis and Annotations

CHAPTER 1 The Purpose of God in Dealing with the Assyrian Oppressor

1. The superscription (1:1)
2. Jehovah's majesty in judgment (1:2-6)
3. His people comforted and assured (1:7-13)
4. The judgment of Assyria and the result (1:14-15)

Verse 1. The burden of Nineveh; it means that there is to follow a weighty prophetic oracle concerning the great world city of Nineveh whose dimensions are given by Jonah, which have been confirmed by excavations. The next sentence gives us the definite information that what follows in the book is the vision of Nahum the Elkoshite.

Verses 2-6. It is a sublime description. God is a jealous God. The jealousy of God has for its source the love of His elect people. (See Zech. 1.) "For thou shalt worship no other god; for the Lord, whose name is jealous, is a jealous God" (exodus 34:14). He is jealous over His people lest they serve other gods. And because He is a jealous God, a holy, a sin-hating God, He must be an avenger of what is against His character. He will take vengeance on His adversaries and reserveth wrath for His enemies. Destructive criticism has invented an infidel theory as if the God of wrath and vengeance were the product of the mind of man, and that Jehovah is some tribal deity, corresponding to the tribal gods of the surrounding heathen nations. Thus criticism rejects the Jehovah of the Bible and invents its own god, rejecting the threatenings of coming wrath and judgment as taught in the Old Testament and in the New in connection with the coming of the Lord, branding these revelations the result of the false apocalyptic teachings of the Jews. God is the God of Love, as much as He is the God of Wrath. He must be that or He would not be the God of Light and Holiness. He cannot afford to let evil go on forever. He is the Lord slow to anger. His patience is great, but He will not acquit the guilty, who continue to sin and do evil. Verses 2 and 3 describe His righteous government. Then follows a beautiful poetic description of His majesty, a description suited to the finite mind of man.

In whirlwind and storm is His way, And clouds are the dust of His feet. He rebuketh the sea and drieth it up And empties all the rivers. Carmel, Bashan, and Lebanon are thinned out, And the Flower of Lebanon languisheth. Mountains quake before Him And all the hills melt away; And the earth is consumed in His presence, The world and all that dwell therein. Before His indignation who can stand? And who can abide His fierce anger? His fury is poured out like fire. And the rocks are thrown down by Him.

What to the mind of man is more imposing than the towering storm-clouds, and what more terrifying than the onrushing whirlwind, which lays low the forest? Man, the creature of the dust, steps upon the dust of the earth, to which man returns in the hour of death. But Jehovah has the clouds as the dust of His feet. If He arises in His righteous wrath all will be swept before Him, and the mountains, symbolical of the kingdoms of the earth, will quake before Him, and the pride of man will be humbled in the dust. (Isa. 2).

Verses 7-13. While in the foregoing section God speaks of His own character in dealing with evil, He now gives comfort and assurance to those who trust in Him, that is, to His people. He knoweth them, the comfort all His people have at all times, the Lord knoweth them that are His, and as our Lord said, "I know my sheep." For such the Lord is good and a stronghold in the day of trouble. But His enemies will feel His wrath. "But with an overrunning flood He will make an utter end of the place thereof (Nineveh) and darkness will pursue His enemies."

In the prophetic application we must look beyond the horizon of Nahum's time and the judgment of Nineveh. The day of the Lord brings the final overthrow of the proud world powers, and the remnant of His people will have in the Lord a refuge, while the judgment floods sweep over the earth (see Psa. 46).

On the ninth verse many expositors have erred in their interpretation. It is also addressed to Israel. "What do ye imagine against the LORD?" Do you imagine that the Lord is not going to do it? Will He repent of His judgment purpose? No! He who has spoken "will make an utter end," and to His people it is spoken "affliction shall not rise up the second time."

Then a description of the Assyrian in verse 10. They are entangled like thorns, so that they will find no escape when the judgment overtakes them, while they are drunk with wine in their carousings. Like the dry stubble are they to be devoured. Rab-shakeh, as mentioned in our introduction, is the one who came out of Assyria against Jerusalem with evil imaginations. The better translation of verse 12 is, "Though they be strong, and likewise many, even so shall they be cut down, and he (the Assyrian) shall pass away."

The second half of the twelfth verse concerns His people. "Though I have afflicted thee, I will afflict thee no more." One can see at once that the "no more" demands a future fulfillment. For, while it is true, the Assyrian did no longer afflict Israel, yet affliction upon affliction has been their lot. But there comes the day when all afflictions will cease. "For now I will break his yoke (the yoke of the Assyrian) from off thee (Israel) and I will burst thy bonds asunder."

Verses 14-15. The fourteenth verse gives the judgment commandment as to Assyria and Nineveh. They are vile, and the God who declared His character in the beginning of this message, is going to act accordingly.

The result is stated in the last verse of this chapter. "Behold, upon the mountains the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace! O Judah, keep thy solemn feasts, perform thy vows; for the wicked shall no more pass through thee; he is utterly cut off." The prophet beholds how the messengers rush over the mountains with the good news. Judah and Jerusalem are delivered. Peace has come. Praise and thanksgiving are heard in Zion.

We must not overlook the similar passage in Isaiah 52:7. "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace, that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation, that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth! ... Break forth into joy, sing together, ye waste places of Jerusalem; for the LORD hath comforted His people, He hath redeemed Jerusalem. The LORD hath made bare His holy arm in the eyes of all the nations; and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God." This was spoken in connection with Babylon's overthrow, but its wider application and meaning is future. The overthrow of Babylon and Nineveh did not result in the glorious things spoken of by Isaiah and Nahum. Not then did the ends of the earth see the salvation of God, nor was Jerusalem redeemed, nor God as King enthroned in Zion. It is all yet to come. When that day comes, the messengers will go forth from Jerusalem and declare the good tidings to the nations of the world. The good news of the kingdom will be heralded far and wide, in the beginning of the millennium, and then the abiding, abundant peace will come, so that all the nations see the salvation of the God of Israel. The wicked, opposing powers of the world will then be no more.

CHAPTER 2 The Overthrow, Plundering and Destruction Of Nineveh

1. The capture of Nineveh announced and described (2:1-10)
2. The completeness of the judgment (2:11-13)

Verses 1-10. This great prophecy was literally fulfilled some ninety years after Nahum had spoken. When these words were spoken Nineveh was in the zenith of her glory. Who told Nahum the Elkoshite that the proud world city would undergo such a sack and be completely wiped out? Who moved his pen to give such a vivid description of what would take place? There is but one answer--the Spirit of God. How was the prophecy fulfilled? Cyaxares of the Medes had surrounded Nineveh in the north. Nabopolassar of Babylon entered into an alliance with Cyaxares against the Assyrians, which was sealed by the marriage of the daughter of Cyaxares, Amunia, with the son of Nabopolassar, that is, Nebuchadnezzar, who appeared then as the colleague of his father, till the Lord called him as the instrument of judgment upon Jerusalem and he became the head of the Babylonian monarchy (Dan. 1:1). They made an assault upon Nineveh. The Assyrian king, a son of Assurbanipal, collected all his forces into the lower part of the immense city. Three times the forces of the Assyrian sallied forth from the city and inflicted severe punishment upon the besieging armies, and Nabopolassar had great difficulty in keeping the Median forces from flight. The Assyrians after these successes abandoned themselves to great carousings, as stated in Nahum 1:10. But during that night they were attacked by the besiegers and driven back behind the walls. Then the troops which were under the command of the brother-in-law of the Assyrian king were routed and driven into the river Tigris. The main part of Nineveh was still safe. In the third year of the siege the river which surrounded the city became its enemy. Great rains had fallen and suddenly there was a tremendous flood which broke down the walls surrounding the city. This was predicted by Nahum in this chapter in the sixth verse. The king despaired of saving his life. He had sent his family north, and when all hope was gone he shut himself up with all his treasures in the royal citadel and burned himself with them. Then the victors entered into the city, and, after securing an immense booty, which was carried to Babylon and Ecbatana, the Babylonians set fire to the sacked city, and destroyed it completely by fire.

The prophet in the beginning of this chapter addresses Nineveh; he urges that she make ready to defend herself, for he that dasheth into pieces has appeared before her walls. It was the Lord who had used the Assyrian to bring judgment upon Israel and upon Jacob, but now the time had come for the restoration of their former excellency. The Authorized Version gives the wrong sense, and the second verse is correctly rendered: "For the LORD bringeth again the excellency of Jacob,

as the excellency of Israel; for the emptiers have emptied them out, and marred their vine branches." Then the besieging army is described. Here we read of their glittering arms, their fast racing chariots, which dash along like lightning.

We have heard even reputable Bible teachers make the statement that Nahum predicted the automobiles racing along our streets. Such fanciful, far-fetched and arbitrary applications of the Word of God do immense harm. Nahum does not anticipate the automobile, but gives a picture of the besiegers of Nineveh with their chariots, drawn by swift horses.

In verse 5 the Assyrian king is seen turning to his army, as he sees the chariots dashing along the highways and broadways which lead to the city; he counts his worthies, his generals and captains. And the army suddenly called, in making haste stumbled along in disorder and made haste to reach the walls. As stated above, the sixth verse was fulfilled when the river became a flood and undermined the foundations of the walls, so that the besiegers could enter in. And when Babylon fell, under the grandson of Nebuchadnezzar, the river also was the means of defeat, for the enemy had diverted the river Euphrates and through the dry river-bed entered the city.

The word "Huzzab" in the seventh verse has led to a great deal of discussion. Some claim that it is the name of the queen of Nineveh; others that it is a symbolical name of the city; archaeology throws no light upon its meaning. We believe the word "Huzzab" should be translated, "it is determined." Then the sentence reads, "It is determined; she is made bare and led away captive; and her maids moan like the doves, smiting upon their breasts."

The flight of the population of Nineveh is pictured in the eighth verse. Like as a pool of water empties when the sluices are opened, so they flee. The soldiers cry "Stand! Stand!" but there is a panic. They rush away and none looks back.

In the next two verses the plundering of the city is predicted. Silver and gold is taken away. There seems to be no end of all the glorious things which were heaped together in Nineveh. The city is emptied; hearts melt, courage is gone; there are tottering knees and pale faces.

Verses 11-13. Is it a sarcastic question which is asked, "Where is the den of lions?" What has become of her proud boastings of being the Queen-City of the nations?

Then Jehovah speaks of the completeness of her judgment and overthrow. "Behold, I am against thee, saith the LORD of hosts, and I will burn her chariots in the smoke, and I will cut off thy prey from the earth, and the voice of thy messengers shall no more be heard."

CHAPTER 3 Nineveh's Guilt and Well-Deserved Judgment

1. The great wickedness of Nineveh (3:1-7)
2. Her fate to be like the fate of No-Amon (3:8-13)
3. Her well-deserved and complete judgment (3:14-19)

Verses 1-7. Nineveh was a bloody city, for her kings never knew peace, but were constantly at war. The Hebrew Ir-Damim means "city of blood drops." They boasted of making the blood of their enemies run like rivers. It was a city full of lies and rapine. Her word could not be trusted; she broke truces and covenants and deceived nations with lying promises of help and protection. As stated in the second chapter, she was ferocious as a lion and the prey never departed.

But she received as she had sown. The next two verses give again the scenes of carnage during her judgment hour.

The cracking of the whip; And the noise of the rattling wheels; The prancing of the horses, And the dashing chariots.

The horseman mounting, And the flashing sword, And the glittering of the spear And the multitude of the Slain; And

the heaps of the corpses. There is no end of dead bodies; They stumble over their corpses.

And why? "Because of the multitudes of the whoredoms of the well-favored harlot, the mistress of witchcrafts, that selleth nations through her whoredoms, and families through her witchcrafts." She made herself attractive as a harlot does, to ensnare and beguile weaker nations. Like all these ancient cities she was filled with witchcrafts, that is, sorceries. The power of darkness manifested itself in the dominion of evil spirits, which Nineveh courted. Spiritism, as advocated today by men of research and culture, of the type of Oliver Lodge and Conan Doyle, and a multitude of others, is not a new thing. Egypt, Babylon, and Nineveh and other centers of paganism were filled with occultism, the practice of which hastened their doom; as the doom of our age will be consummated through the influence of the same evil powers.

Then Jehovah speaks again, as the God of retribution and judgment. These are solemn words.

Behold! I am against thee, saith the Lord of hosts; And uncover thy skirts over thy face, And display to the nations thy nakedness, And to kingdoms thy shame! And I will cast vileness upon thee, And disgrace thee And make thee a gazing-stock. And it shall come to pass, That all that look upon thee Shall flee from thee, And say, Nineveh is laid waste; Who will lament over her? Whence shall I seek comforters for her?

She had acted the harlot and now she receives the punishment of a harlot, which consisted in exposing her in public. She would be a gazing-stock for nations and kingdoms, as the righteous God stripped her of all and exposed her shame. There would be no one to lament over the vile mistress of witchcrafts.

Verses 8-13. "Art thou better than No-Amon that dwelt by the rivers? Waters were round about her; her bulwark was the sea and her wall was of the sea. Ethiopia and Egypt were her strength, and there was no limit; Put and Lubim were thy helpers." No-Amon was an Egyptian city, known to the Greeks by the name of Thebes. The judgment of No-Amon, or, as it is also called, "No," was announced by the prophet Jeremiah. "The LORD of Hosts, the God of Israel saith, Behold I will punish the multitude of No, and Pharaoh and Egypt, with their gods and their kings, even Pharaoh and them that trust in him" (Jer. 46:25). Ezekiel likewise had spoken of this great Egyptian city (Ezek. 30:14-16). There existed an immense temple there in honor of the god of No, the building had great facades and columns and covered a large space; the ruins which are left are still most wonderful to look upon. It was situated on the upper Nile some four hundred miles from Cairo, and was built along the river front. On the other side of the river was the city of the dead, the Necropolis, with a long line of temples, devoted to the worship of former Pharaohs, and behind these temples were thousands of tombs, many of which have been uncovered by the spade of the explorer. The cuneiform monuments tell of the fate of Thebes. Though she was defended by the strong men of Ethiopia and of Egypt and Phut, and the Libyans, nothing could avert her doom. She was carried into captivity, her young children were dashed in pieces, and her great men were bound in chains. Could then Nineveh hope to escape? The fate of No-Amon was a prophecy of Nineveh's fate. She was even more wicked than the Egyptian city. Her fate is described in verses 11-13.

Verses 14-19. Dramatically the prophet calls upon Nineveh to draw water for the siege, to secure clay for brick to repair the breaches in the wall. But all would be useless, for the Almighty had decreed her downfall. The fire would devour the proud city, the sword do its havoc in cutting them off. Let them be as numerous as the cankerworm (see annotations of Joel 1), make thyself as many as the locusts, which come in immense swarms, and it will be all to no avail. Her great commerce, her merchant-princes, were a vast host, like the stars of heaven, but all would soon be devastated, as the cankerworm spoileth and then flies away. Their crowned ones, the chiefs in authority, would all be scattered just as the sun-rise scatters the locusts and swarms of grasshoppers to a place unknown. Their shepherds, the leaders and rulers, under the King of Assyria, would sleep in death, while the population wandered homeless over the mountains, with none to gather them.

Nineveh's ruin is complete and irreparable. All who hear of her fall rejoice and clap their hands.

THE BOOK OF HABAKKUK

The Annotated Bible

Arno Clement Gaebelein

THE PROPHET HABAKKUK

Introduction

There is a very interesting diversity among these minor prophets. Hosea starts with the command of the Lord for a symbolical action to show Israel her spiritual whoredoms. Joel plunges in at once to describe the judgment of the land by the locusts and leads on to the day of the Lord. Amos begins with the announcement of the judgment of the surrounding nations, while Obadiah is chiefly concerned with the judgment of Edom. Jonah is different from all the rest in his miraculous experience, while Micah has a character of his own. Nahum, as we saw, has the one great message of the doom of Nineveh, and brings comfort to God's people. Habakkuk again is different from all the rest. In nature God displays as Creator a wonderful diversity, and so in His revelation His Spirit uses every instrument in His own way, as it pleases Him.

Of Habakkuk the same holds good as with most of the other minor prophets; we know nothing of the particulars of his life. It does not matter much. God knows these holy men, whom He called to make known His will and the future, and He has kept the record of their lives, as He keeps the record of all of our lives.

His name means "to embrace," but it has the double meaning "to embrace" and "being embraced." He embraced his own people and embraced God in prayer, then "being embraced"--God answered him. Dr. Martin Luther gave a very striking definition of his name, which cannot be improved upon. "Habakkuk signifies an embracer, or one who embraces another, takes him into his arms. He embraces his people, and takes them to his arms, i.e., he comforts them and holds them up, as one embraces a weeping child, to quiet it with the assurance that if God wills it shall soon be better."

It has been assumed that he probably sprang, like Jeremiah and Ezekiel, from a priestly family, for at the end of the great ode, at the conclusion of the book, he states--"to the chief singer on my stringed instruments," from which we may gather that he was officially qualified to take part of the temple service. But Isaiah 38:20 seems to contradict this.

An apocryphal book, "Bel and the Dragon," states that Habakkuk was miraculously transported to Daniel, who had been cast a second time to the lions by Cyrus. This and other legends are without any foundation at all, and need not be examined, for they are worthless.

The Date of Habakkuk

As it is with Nahum, so it is with Habakkuk, the superscription does not fix a definite date, but the contents of the book do not leave us in doubt about the time when this man of God prophesied.

In the sixth verse of the opening chapter we read, "For, lo, I raise up the Chaldeans, that bitter and hasty nation, which shall march through the breadth of the land, to possess the dwelling places that are not theirs." He therefore prophesied at the time when the Chaldeans, or as they are also called the Babylonians, were coming into power, and soon to be used against the house of Judah, as the Assyrian was used in judgment with the house of Israel. He prophesied during the reign

of Josiah, that is at the very close of his reign, and a few years before Nineveh was destroyed, which elevated the Babylonians to the place of prominence. Some have put the date into the reign of Manasseh, the father of Josiah, but this is too early. Josiah died on the battlefield, and after his son Jehoahaz had reigned three months, Pharaoh-necho, who had slain Josiah, made Eliakim, the son of Josiah, king over Judah, and gave him the name of Jehoiakim. (See 2 Kings 23:28-37.)

The Message of Habakkuk

The language which Habakkuk used is extremely beautiful. Professor Delitzsch speaks of it as follows: "His language is classical throughout, full of rare and select turns and words, which are to some extent exclusively his own, whilst his view and mode of presentation bear the seal of independent force and finished beauty. Notwithstanding the violent rush and lofty soaring of the thoughts, his prophecy forms a finely organized and artistically rounded whole. Like Isaiah, he is, comparatively speaking, much more independent of his predecessors, both in contents and form, than any of the other prophets." "Everything reflects the time when prophecy was in its greatest glory, when the place of the sacred lyrics, in which the religious life had expressed itself, was occupied, through a still mightier inter-position on the part of God, by prophetic poetry with its trumpet voice." Much in his message is in the form of communion with the Lord. He begins with the familiar heart-cry, "O LORD, how long shall I cry?" He receives an answer, which announces the coming of the Chaldeans, to which again the prophet replies. Then he said, "I will stand upon my watch, and will set me upon the tower, and will watch and see what He will say unto me" (chapter 2). Then he receives another answer. The judgment of Judah by the Chaldeans as well as the overthrow of the Chaldeans, on account of the deification of their power, is the prophetic message with which he starts.

Sublime is the great lyric ode contained in the third chapter, which begins with a prayer (chapter 3). It is one of the greatest descriptions of the theophany, the coming of the Lord, which the Spirit of God has given. He comes in glory and in wrath; the wicked are overthrown, His people are saved. It waits for its great fulfillment when our Lord Jesus Christ shall be revealed from heaven in flaming fire with His holy angels.

The Division of Habakkuk

The division is very simple. Chapter 1 forms the first part and gives the coming invasion of Judah by the Chaldeans. In chapter 2 the "woe" is pronounced upon the Chaldeans and their destruction is predicted. The third chapter contains the vision of the coming of the Lord, with which all the ungodly world powers terminate, and the dominion of the Gentiles ends.

Inasmuch as the Authorized Version contains numerous incorrect renderings, we give a complete text in a metric version.

Analysis and Annotations

CHAPTER 1 The Judgment of Judah Through the Chaldeans Announced

1. The prophet's cry to Jehovah (1:1-4)
2. The answer (1:5-11)
3. The prophet's plea (1:12-17)

Verses 1-4. The prophet begins his message with a prayer-cry to Jehovah. He whose name is "the embracer" embraces the Lord and cries to Him on account of the conditions prevailing in Judah. The Spirit of God stirred up the heart of Habakkuk on account of the moral conditions in Judah. He is jealous for Jehovah's glory, which manifested itself in hating the evil. "There is no prophetic delivery among the twelve lesser books more peculiar and characteristic than that of Habakkuk. It has no longer the occupation with the enemy as its main feature, although the enemy is referred to; but for its

prominent topic we find the soul of the prophet, as representing the faithful among Judah, brought into deep exercise, and indeed a kind of colloquy between God Himself and the prophet, so as to set out not only that which gave him trouble of heart, but also divine comfort, as well as into exulting hope into which he was led by the communications of the Spirit of God."

Like Jeremiah, the weeping prophet, Habakkuk is deeply stirred on account of the declension among the people of God, and that led him to cry to Jehovah, to tell Him all about it. He begins with "How long, O LORD." It is the cry of the saints of God in all generations. We, too, in the midst of the increasing apostasy, the perilous times, cry to Him, "How long, O Lord." He had cried and there seemed to be no answer. Heaven was silent. And with him the righteous among the Jews had cried for help and for a change of conditions, under which they were suffering affliction. Wickedness and violence were evident on all sides. Strife and contention were the continued order of things. They injured each other wherever they could. The law of God was completely flouted; there was no more justice, and the wicked compassed about the righteous.

Verses 5-11. Jehovah speaks and answers the complaint of His servant. He is going to raise up the Chaldeans to chastise His wayward people. The Lord is calling on His people, that they should see now what He was going to do. "Behold ye among the nations, and regard, and wonder marvellously; for I work a work in your days, which ye will not believe though it were told you." The meaning is that they should look around among the nations, the faithless ones among the Jews, and see how the storm would gather and ultimately break over the head of the house of Judah. He would work a judgment work, which they would not believe, it would be an unparalleled occurrence, amazing and terrible. This passage is quoted by the Apostle Paul in Acts 13:41 and applied to the unbelievers and despisers of the gospel. In the quotation the Spirit of God led the Apostle to omit the address to the nations, and substituted for it "Ye despisers." While in Habakkuk's day God was about to work a work of judgment, which the unbelievers would not believe when they heard of it, we note that Paul preached the gospel; he has reference to speaking to the Jews in the synagogue; preached the gospel unto them, and they did not believe. Then He worked a work which they would not believe, in sending that gospel far hence to the Gentiles (Acts 28) while the unbelieving Jews would be dispersed among the nations.

In verse 6 the instrument of chastisement is announced, and afterward described. A new power would arise, the Chaldeans. They would make an invasion, and possess dwelling places which were not theirs, that is, they would set out for a widespread conquest and take away the dwelling place of Judah. They were to be the instrument in the hand of God to mete out judgment to the Jews and humble them, as well as other nations. The Chaldeans, called in Hebrew Hakhadsim were of Semitic origin, springing from Kesed, the son of Nahor, and brother of Abraham (Gen. 22:22). Jeremiah, who also announced the Chaldean invasion, speaks of them in the following manner: "Lo, I will bring a nation upon you from afar, O house of Israel, saith the LORD, it is a mighty nation, an ancient nation, a nation whose language thou knowest not, neither understandest what they say. Their quiver is an open sepulchre, they are all mighty men. And they shall eat up thine harvest, and thy bread, which thy sons and thy daughters should eat, they shall eat up thy flocks and thine herds, they shall eat up thy vines and thy fig trees; they shall impoverish thy fenced cities, wherein thou trustest, with the sword. Nevertheless, in those days, saith the LORD, I will not make an end of you" (Jer. 5:15-18). Their terrible onslaught is here compared to the swiftness of the leopards, their fierceness with the prowling evening wolves, and their horsemen in their dash with the eagle's flight. They come for violence and know no defeat, for their faces are always forward. They make prisoners like the sand, and mock all attempts to check their advance; kings and princes are ridiculed and all strongholds are quickly reduced.

But as he is victorious the Chaldean becomes proud and forgets that he was but used as an instrument in the hand of God to deal with those who had done evil. As a result, they imputed their power to their own god, and do not give God the honor and the glory. His own might is his god. Then comes the day when the Lord takes the Chaldean in hand for judgment and deals with him, as He dealt with other nations. Nebuchadnezzar, the first great king of Babylon, after his humiliating experience, acknowledged the God of heaven, but his grandson Belshazzar praised the Babylonian idol-gods, at his licentious feast, dishonoring the temple vessels. Then followed the judgment of the Chaldeans in the overthrow of Babylon.

Verses 12-17. The prophet had listened to the terrible announcement from the lips of Jehovah, what was to befall his nation. How it must have shocked the man of God! But he knows the comfort and expresses it in faith at once. "Art Thou not from everlasting, O Jehovah, my God, my Holy One? we shall not die!" He knows Jehovah as the faithful God, the covenant-keeping God. Such a God will surely not permit the nation, to whom He has pledged His Word, to be wiped out. His faith lays hold on that and he realizes that the Lord is using this enemy for correction, to chastise His people. And furthermore in his plea he says, "Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, Thou canst not look upon injustice." Would He, the righteous God, look on unconcerned at the wicked deeds of the Chaldeans? Can He remain silent to all their deeds of violence? If such is the case, the prophet asks next, "Why lookest Thou upon the treacherous; why art Thou silent when the wicked destroys?" It is the voice of the godly remnant here, seen suffering with the nation. It brings before us the same question concerning the suffering of the righteous.

The Chaldean took men as if they were fishes, as a fisherman puts out the net and the drag, so they catch men by the net and the drag. Gathering in the people with their wealth, he rejoices and is glad. Then the prophet takes up the statement given by the Lord that the Chaldean would offend, and fall by his pride, and the worship of his false gods, he sacrifices to his net; he burns incense; he makes the thing which prospers him his idol, his god. Is this then to go on continually? Shall he who empties his net, and throws it out to catch more, to do this again with the nations forever?

Such was the plea of Habakkuk, after the announcement of the coming chastisement of the Jews by the Chaldeans. He knows that the affliction could not continue forever, for God is a covenant-keeping God, and of purer eyes than to behold evil, a holy and a righteous God.

CHAPTER 2 The Ungodliness of the Chaldeans and Their Destruction

1. The waiting prophet and the message he received (2:1-4)
2. The five-fold woe upon the Chaldeans (2:5-20)

Verses 1-4. It seems there was no immediate answer to the plea of the prophet. He then speaks to himself and expresses his attitude. "I will stand upon my watch, and set me upon the tower, and I will wait to see what He will say to me, and what I shall answer as to my complaint." He watches like a sentinel upon a watchtower for the answer the Lord will give him. It does not mean that the prophet actually ascended a tower, but he expresses his innermost attitude by the symbol of the watchman. He remained silent and eagerly looked for the reply.

How long he waited is not stated. But the answer came, for the Lord never disappoints His inquiring and waiting servants. He is told to write the vision and make it plain upon the tablets, that he may run that readeth it. Thus the Lord spoke to him and gave him the vision, which he was to write in plain characters upon tablets. The effect should be not that he that runneth may read (as it is sometimes misquoted) but that he that readeth may run. The prophetic Word is always plain. It is far from being the deep and complicated portion of God's truth that some make it, but it needs an ear opened by the Spirit of God. Prophecy believed is a great stimulating agent to Christian service, even as it is stated here, that the reader of the vision runs to spread the message.

In the next place we hear of the certainty of the vision. It is for the appointed time. It hastes toward the end, and shall not lie. The prophet is commanded to wait for it, though it tarry, and then receives the assurance that it will surely come and not tarry. These are important instructions by which many a believer might profit. God has an appointed time for all His purposes and their fulfillment. He cannot be hastened, for His schedule was made before the foundation of the world. When the appointed time comes all visions will be accomplished. It hastens toward the end. That end is the end of the times of the Gentiles, which began with the rising of the Babylonians, and the first great king, Nebuchadnezzar, the golden head in the prophetic image of Daniel 2. When the end of the times of the Gentiles comes, the world-power then, final Babylon as revealed in the last book of the Bible, will be judged and the Lord will be manifested in all His glory. The prophet's business is, as well as that of every believer, to wait for it and not be disturbed if there is delay, for the assurance is given that it will surely come and not tarry. And here faith can rest.

Part of this is quoted in the Epistle to the Hebrews. "For yet a little while, and He that shall come will come, and will not tarry" (Heb. 10:37). From this quotation we learn that the vision which will surely come is a person, the Lord Jesus Christ. He is the center of every vision and without Him there is no vision. The Septuagint translation is the same: "If He tarry wait for Him, for coming He will come and not delay."

In the fourth verse, which may properly be taken to be the opening statement for the vision which follows, the all importance of faith in the vision is made known. The proud one who is mentioned must primarily be applied to the haughty Chaldean, but it is equally true of the unbelieving, proud Jew, and of the nominal Christian. The proud, the puffed up one, his soul is not right within him, and God resisteth the proud, while he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.

"But the just shall live by faith." Criticism has not left this matchless sentence untouched. The higher critic Davidson labors to show that the Hebrew word for faith (Emunoh) means faithfulness, dealing in faithfulness in money matters, that is, one who deals honestly. According to his statement the verse means if an Israelite, or anybody else, does right he will live. But in Genesis we read, "Abraham believed the LORD and He counted it to him for righteousness." As every intelligent Christian knows, there was no law then, and the New Testament in the testimony of the Holy Spirit makes it plain that this is the gospel of grace in which the ungodly are justified; justified by faith. Interesting is the quotation of the sentence "the just shall live by faith" in the three passages of the New Testament Epistles.

Romans 1:17 quotes this sentence. In this passage the emphasis is upon the word "just." The theme of Romans is the righteousness of God, at least in the opening chapters. It shows how a person, a lost and guilty sinner, becomes righteous, and as such is saved. "For by grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast."

In Galatians 3:11 the emphasis is upon the word "faith." "But no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, as it is evident: for, the just shall live by faith."

In Hebrews 10:38 the emphasis is upon "live." "For yet a little while, and He that shall come will come, and will not tarry. Now the just shall live by faith, but if any man draw back, My soul shall have no pleasure in him."

Verses 5-20. The Lord uncovers the wicked conditions prevailing among the Chaldeans. God had allowed the people whom He loved to be chastised by an evil instrument; they were to be crushed by injustice and by the actions of the cruel invader. But the character and conduct of the oppressor, the Chaldeans, was not unknown to Him, as the prophet expressed it, "Who is of purer eyes than to behold evil." And now the righteous Lord announces the five-fold woe upon the wicked world-power. While all this applies primarily to the Chaldean, it is likewise a prophecy concerning the future. The world powers remain the same to the end of the times of the Gentiles. It was true then, as it is true now, and will be true in the future throughout this present age, "The world lieth in the Wicked One." There is no improvement to be looked for among the world powers, and as we have seen so frequently in the study of the prophets, the end of the age brings still greater opposition and defiance of God, with a corresponding moral decline. We see therefore in these verses a description of the world conditions down to its very end. The word "wine" does not need to be interpreted in a literal way, though drunkenness was one of the sins of the Babylonians. They were inflamed with an ambition for conquest, as a drunken man is inflamed with wine. This intoxication made them treacherous, haughty, restless: like death, which is never satisfied, so they are never satisfied; constantly pressing on they spoil the nations, gather prisoners, and act in violence. How can God permit this to go unjudged?

Then follows a taunting song in verses 6-7. Divine retribution is coming for them. The spoiler is going to be spoiled. It is the retribution which may be read in all history, which still continues, for of nations it is true as of individuals, "Whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap."

The second woe is on account of their covetousness and their self aggrandizement. Like Edom, they were possessed by

an abominable pride to make their nest high, they imagine self-security, thinking they can avert "the power of evil." But their proud plans were to result in shame; their security would end in collapse and confusion. It is well known how Nebuchadnezzar manifested this spirit. One day this proud monarch walked in the palace of the kingdom of Babylon. "The king spake and said, Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for the house of the kingdom, by the might of my power and for the honor of my majesty?" The humiliation which came upon the king is prophetic. Thus the Lord will humble the proud world-power into the dust (Dan. 4).

Then comes a third woe. Verses 12-14 are of special interest, for they give us a picture of a godless civilization and its appointed end. Their cruel oppression, their ungodly gains, had built up a magnificent city. Excavations have shown what a marvelous civilization was in force when Babylon was mistress of the world. But the foundations of it all were iniquity and the blood of victims. Is it any better today? We have seen the top-notch of a boasted civilization, steeped in iniquity and defiance of God, suddenly collapsing and producing a war of horrors and cruelty which makes the conquests and atrocities of the Chaldeans pale into insignificance.

And how true it is today, "The peoples labor for the fire, the nations weary themselves for vanity." The day is approaching when this civilization will be swept away, and before the better things come, the kingdom is established and He reigns whose right it is, there will be the fires of judgment. And after that it will be true, as it cannot be true before, "The earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea."

The fourth woe shows the corruption which held sway in the Babylonian empire. Drunkenness here is a figure of the utter prostration of the nations which the Chaldeans had conquered; they stripped them in their wicked endeavors of all they possessed. They spread a shameless dissolution in every direction. For this they will have to drink the cup of fury from the hand of the Lord, and shall be covered with vile shame, so that their glory will be blotted out.

The fifth woe is on account of their idolatry. They worshipped wood and stone. Nebuchadnezzar set up his golden image in the plain of Dura and demanded worship for it. The spiritual Babylon, Rome, is a well-organized system of idolatry which goes on undiminished. Finally the age ends in idolatry, for the image of the beast of Revelation 13 is still future.

"But the LORD is in His holy temple; let all the earth keep silence before Him." First, by way of contrast, their idols are dumb; Jehovah, the God of Israel, is the living God. He is in His holy temple; from there He takes notice of the doings of men. He is the Sovereign, the only Potentate; the nations are as a drop of a bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance (Isa. 40:15). "It is He that sitteth upon the circle of the earth, and the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers; that stretcheth out the heavens as a curtain, and spreadeth them out as a tent to dwell in" (Isa. 40:22).

But this closing verse of the chapter of woe has a prophetic meaning. When at last the world-power is dethroned, when the Lord returns, He will take His place as King of Kings. He will be in His holy temple, and then all the earth will keep silence before Him.

CHAPTER 3 The Vision of the Coming of the Lord

1. The prophet's prayer (3:1-2)
2. The coming of the Lord for judgment and redemption (3:3-15)
3. The effect upon the prophet (3:16-19)

Verses 1-2. Once more we hear the voice of the man of God in prayer. Shigionoth is the plural of Shiggaion, and is found in the superscription of Psalm 7. Its meaning is "loud crying." The connection with the seventh Psalm is interesting. In that Psalm God appeared to David as the God of judgment, the righteous God who must save His righteous people and condemn the wicked. (See Annotations on Psalm 7.) The prophet had listened to the message and penned it as we have it in the preceding chapter. It struck terror to his heart and he trembled. Therefore he pleads for a revival of the Lord's work

in the midst of the years. He must have taken a hasty glance over the past history of his people, how God had worked in their behalf in Egypt, redeemed them, led them forth, and the many evidences of the display of His power in behalf of the elect nation. And now, in the midst of years, he asks a revival of this work, the interposition of Jehovah, that He may be known in His power. The text is often quoted in pleading a revival among the dead conditions of Christendom. But it is a revival of the work of the Lord in a very different sense of the word, as we have indicated.

He knows that wrath is on the way. Not only wrath for the Chaldeans, but for his people, that the unbelieving, the apostates, would also have to face the judgment. Therefore he pleads, "In wrath remember mercy." Such is the way of God always. Judgment is His strange work, and mercy is mingled with His judgments. It will be so in connection with the winding up of this present age, when judgment wrath sweeps over the earth, and especially Israel's land; He then will have mercy upon His people. The time of wrath will be His time of mercy, the covenant mercies promised to Israel. "Thou shalt arise and have mercy upon Zion, for the time to favor her, yea, the set time, is come." And when will that be? When the Lord shall build up Zion; He shall appear in His glory (Psa, 102:13-16).

The great inspired ode which follows is one of the greatest sections of prophecy. It is a wonderful theophany the Spirit of God describes. Wrath and mercy are manifested, so that it is an answer to the prophet's plea. "In wrath remember mercy."

It has been said, "The poet describes a great storm, advancing from the south, the region of Paran and Sinai. In the dark storm clouds he conceives Jehovah to be concealed; the lightning flashes which illumine heaven and earth disclose glimpses of the dazzling brightness immediately about him; the earth quakes, the hills sink, and the neighboring desert tribes look on in dismay" (Canon Driver). Thus higher criticism, reduces one of the sublimest inspired prophecies, concerning the future appearing of the Lord, to the level of poetry.

The great description of His coming must be linked with similar prophecies (Deut. 33:2; Psa. 18:8-19, 33, 34; Psa. 68:8, 34; Psa. 77:17-20). The great ode, cast in the form of a Psalm, begins with the statement that God cometh from Teman and the Holy One from Mount Paran. Moses in his prophetic blessing also begins with a similar declaration. "The LORD came from Sinai, and rose from Seir unto them; He shined from Mount Paran, and He came with the thousands of His saints (angels); from His right hand went a fiery law for them." Just as He was manifested when He had redeemed them out of Egypt, and constituted them His Kingdom people at Sinai (Exodus 19), so will He appear again to deliver the remnant of His people from the dominion of the world-power, and judge them as He judged Egypt. He comes from the direction of Edom, for Teman is the southern district of Idumea, while Paran is more southward. Isaiah also beheld him advancing from the same direction. "Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah?" (Isa. 63:1-6). It is unfortunate that the Authorized Version has "God came from Teman," when it is "God cometh," not a past but a future event. After this opening statement the first Selah is put. This means to pause and to lift up. We are to pause and meditate, and then to lift up our hearts and voices in praise and thanksgiving. It is found seventy-one times in the Psalms and three times in this chapter of Habakkuk.

His glory covers the heavens, while the earth is filled with His praise. Heaven and earth reflect the glory of the Coming One. How all this corresponds with the divine statements concerning His coming in the New Testament does not need to be pointed out. He comes in power and great glory, in the clouds of heaven, as Daniel beheld Him in the night vision, and as our Lord testified Himself. Brightness fills the sky as He appears in person, while out of His hand glory rays emanate, the hiding of His power. The picture is evidently taken from the rising sun, which shoots forth great rays, heralding its ascending. As Delitzsch remarks, "His hand" means in a general sense, as signifying the hand generally, and not a single hand only. May we not have here a hint of His hands pierced once, but now emanating glory? Before Him goes the pestilence, indicating the trouble which precedes His coming, when the four apocalyptic riders bring war, famine, pestilence, and death in judgment for this earth.

With the sixth verse He draws nearer. Up to this point in the theophany He is described as coming forth, like the sun out of His chamber, heaven and earth reflecting His glory, but now He stands and measures the earth; He looks and the

nations tremble, while all creation is affected, and earthquakes shake down the mountains.

Then the prophet sees the tents of Cushan in affliction and the curtains of Midian tremble. Cushan means the Ethiopians, and the Midianites inhabited the Arabian coast along the Red Sea. The past is seen as a prophecy of the future. As He once came at Sinai, when the mountains shook and the hills trembled, and as once the tidings of the Red Sea disaster inspired terror among the neighboring nations, so will it be, only on a larger scale, when He comes in great power and glory.

The verses which follow (verses 8-15) are in the form of an address to God. The rivers and the seas, and the mountains feel His wrath; they represent symbolically the nations and the world-powers. He is seen marching in anger through the earth and in His fury treading down the nations. It is a majestic picture the Spirit of God gives of that coming day of wrath and judgment.

But while He comes thus, executing wrath and judgment upon the ungodly, He comes in mercy. He goes forth for the salvation of His people, for the salvation of Thine anointed, that is, the elect nation and the God-fearing, waiting remnant of the last days (Psa. 105:15). And there will be on the earth in that day the head of the house of the wicked, the ungodly head, the man of sin, the heading up of all apostasy and opposition to God. His doom is predicted in verse 13, followed by another *Selah*, like verses 3 and 9.

Verses 16-19. The prophet now speaks of his own feeling, which reflects the feeling of the godly among the Jews when this great theophany becomes history. There is fear and trembling in view of the coming tribulation. When he heard it he trembled; he is completely prostrated. He desires rest in the day of trouble, the day when the final enemy of God's people marches through the land. Then faith is triumphant, and in one of the most magnificent outbursts the prophet declares his confidence in his God (verse 17). Such will be the faith of the godly who pass through the time of great trouble. Finally he rejoices in the God of his salvation and declares his hope that his feet will be like hinds' feet to escape to the high places. Even so the remnant of Israel will be delivered. We leave the application to the Church-saints with the reader.

THE BOOK OF ZEPHANIAH

The Annotated Bible

Arno Clement Gaebelein

THE PROPHET ZEPHANIAH

Introduction

Zephaniah is the last of the prophets before the captivity, according to the arrangement of the Hebrew Bible. Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi are post-exilic. His name means "Jehovah hides." His genealogy is traced back for four generations. Zephaniah was the son of Cushi, the son of Gedaliah, the son of Amariah, the son of Hizkiah. We have therefore more information concerning him than of most of the other minor prophets. There must be a reason why these four generations are given. We believe the reason is to show that he was of royal descent, the great-grandson of the pious king of Judah, Hezekiah. Hizkiah is the same as Hezekiah in the Hebrew. Jewish tradition as well as the reliable rabbinical sources confirm this. The objection that the royal title is not given in connection with Hizkiah is insignificant; at any rate "king of Judah" is mentioned in connection with Josiah in the first verse of this book of Zephaniah, so that it may have been left out in connection with Hizkiah on purpose. As to his personal history we have no further information. It seems as if the Lord has hidden for a good reason these details of His chosen instruments.

The Date of Zephaniah

The date is given in the first verse. He prophesied in the days of Josiah the king of Judah. We are therefore not left in doubt about the time in which he exercised his office as prophet; he was the contemporary of Jeremiah and Micah. As to the exact time during the reign of Josiah in which Zephaniah prophesied, we can be quite sure that it was during the time of the reformation instituted by the king, that is between the twelfth and eighteenth year; yet the reformation was still in process and not yet fully completed. The temple must have been purified from the idol abominations, for Zephaniah presupposes the maintenance of the temple worship.

The Message of Zephaniah

To understand the message we must consider the character of the times in which the prophet lived, and the conditions in Judah. We have done so already in connection with the annotations on Jeremiah, but add here another description. As already stated a great reformation was in progress, which, like all reformation, ended in deformation, producing a reaction which plunged the house of Judah into the final apostasy. It seems the reformation was mostly an outward one; in their hearts the people still had a longing for the idols and the abominations connected with them (1:4). We shall point out in the annotations some of the details of the evils prevailing at that time.

Like the other minor prophets, judgment is announced first, followed by exhortations to repentance, with the promises of glory for the remnant of His people when the day of Jehovah is passed and the Lord is King over all the earth. He proclaims the judgment to come for the whole earth, as well as upon Judah and Jerusalem, and then gives a fuller description of the day in which that judgment is to be executed, the still future day of Jehovah. As we have seen, Obadiah and Joel are the earliest prophets, and both announced the day of Jehovah. The last of the prophets before the captivity bears his additional testimony to the same day, describing it as a day of wrath, of trouble and distress. This is the first chapter.

In the second chapter the exhortations begin. He exhorts the nation to repent and to seek the Lord, so that they might be hid in the day of the Lord's anger. Then he announced that the day is surely coming upon all the nations, and that the isles of the nations will not escape.

In the third chapter the prophet shows how the Lord will deal in judgment also with the ungodly among His people. He announces His purpose concerning the nations with the expectation that the godly remnant among the Jews will fear Him then, and receive instruction and wait for Him.

Then follows the joyous message of the future salvation of the elect people. It will be a poor afflicted remnant which trusts in the Lord, which, born again, will be a holy people separated from evil. This is followed by the singing times. "Sing, daughter of Zion; shout, O Israel; be glad and rejoice with all thy heart, O daughter of Jerusalem. The LORD hath taken away thy judgments, He hath cast out thine enemy; the King of Israel, even the LORD, is in the midst of thee; thou shalt not see evil any more."

The Division of Zephaniah

Like Nahum's prophecy, Zephaniah's is one great prophetic utterance. The division into three chapters, as given in the Authorized Version, is the correct arrangement, with the exception of the first eight verses of chapter 3, which should be added to the second chapter. The subdivisions will be pointed out in the analysis and annotations.

Analysis and Annotations

CHAPTER 1 The Day of the Lord, the Day of Judgment

1. The judgment of all the world (1:1-3)
2. The judgment will destroy the evildoers in Judah (1:4-13)
3. The day of the Lord (1:14-18)

Verses 1-3. The first verse is the superscription, and tells us, as pointed out in the introduction, of the connection of Zephaniah and the date of his prophecy.

Then comes the announcement of the judgment. It is to consume all things from off the face of the land, man and beast, the fowls of heaven, the fishes of the sea, and end the stumbling blocks of the wicked, that is, their idols and idol worship. The land is not to be understood as being Israel's land exclusively; it means the earth. That the judgment vision of Zephaniah has a wider scope than the land and the people is fully confirmed by other passages. The great day comes upon men everywhere (1:17); it is universal (2:4-15); all the isles of the nations are mentioned (2:11).

Verses 4-13. It will fall especially upon the house of Judah and Jerusalem. In the verses which follow we have a description of the moral conditions of the Jews when Josiah started his reformation, which prophetically gives us a picture of the conditions among the Jews when this age closes, and a portion of them is back in the land of their fathers, as they are attempting to get it back now through political Zionism.

The hand of the Lord will be stretched out upon Judah and Jerusalem. The remnant of Baal will be cut off and the Chemarim, with the priests. Idolatry, whatever remains of it, should then be completely abolished. "Baal" was the idol of god of the Phoenicians and Canaanites; the word means "lord" or "possessor." With the worship of this god licentious practices were connected. Chemarim is the name of the idolatrous priests which conducted the high places, appointed for this service by the kings of Judah (2 Kings 23:5). In verses 5 and 6 other forms of idolatry are mentioned. They worshipped the hosts of the heavens from housetops. They worshipped the stars, and studied their movements as if they could give them help and a revelation. Astrology, so widely practiced among civilized nations today, is an old cult (2

Kings 21:3, 5; Jer. 8:2; 19:13). Others used the Holy Name of Jehovah, and at the same time they used the name of Malcham. All was a turning back from Jehovah and dishonoring His Name.

As to the future curse of idolatry among the Jews, the passage in Matthew 12:43, 45, the words of our Lord, gives us the full information. The unclean spirit there is the spirit of idolatry, from which the Jews in their dispersion are free; the unclean spirit has left the house, but it is to return, and the last state is worse than the first: "Even so shall it be also unto this wicked generation." They will worship the man of sin, the masterpiece of Satan, who in the end of the age will take his place in the temple of God (2 Thess. 2).

The day of the Lord is at hand; a statement which verifies our interpretation that this prophecy refers to the future day. The Lord has prepared His sacrifice and bidden his guests. It is the supper of the great God, to which He invites His guests. Read in connection with this Revelation 19:17-18. What that day will bring is described in verses 8-13. All the evil doers will be dealt with by the Lord.

Verses 14-18. The great day of the Lord is now more fully described. It is the day when the announced judgment will take place. Higher criticism sees nothing but some invasion of the land by hostile forces. But it is the same great day, the culmination of the past ages, when Jehovah is revealed, so vividly described in Joel 2:11. On that day the voice of the Lord will be heard (Psa. 29; Isa. 66:6). When that day comes the mighty man will cry out in bitterness, for he is unable to save himself from the judgment tempest. In two verses the prophet describes vividly the greatness of that day.

A day of wrath is that day, A day of trouble and distress, A day of ruin and desolation, A day of darkness and gloom, A day of clouds and cloudy darkness; A day of the trumpet and the war cry Against the fortified cities, And against the lofty battlements.

Thomas of Celano used in 1250 the Vulgate translation of the first sentence "Dies irae, dies illa" in writing his famous judgment hymn. It is well to compare Scripture with Scripture about that day. (For instance verse 15 with Joel 3; Amos 5:18, 20; 8:9; Isaiah 13:10, and many other passages.) When that day comes the wicked will perish; distress will be upon all. They will walk like blind men, that is, trying to find a way to escape, but not able to find one. Nothing will be able to deliver from the fury of that day, neither silver nor gold will avail anything.

CHAPTERS 2-3:8 The Call to Repentance in View of the Judgment

1. The call to repentance (2:1-3)
2. The judgment of the Philistines (2:4-7)
3. The judgment of Moab and Ammon (2:8-10)
4. The judgment of the other nations (2:11-15)
5. The woe and warning to Jerusalem and His people (3:1-8)

Verses 1-3. As we found it in Joel, so it is here. In view of the coming of the day, the call goes forth to the nation to humble themselves and to repent. On the near horizon in Joel the Assyrian invasion was threatening. In Zephaniah it is the Babylonian power. But all points to the future day of the Lord. They are to gather themselves together. The word used for "gather" has the meaning of gathering stubble or wood for burning. In their unbelief they were worthless as stubble and dry wood, fit for the burning. The phrase "not desired" has been translated "which does not turn pale." But this cannot be sustained. The better meaning is "unashamed."

The second verse gives the reason why they should humble themselves and be ashamed of all their evil doings. Because the decree of judgment has gone forth, the fierce anger of the Lord in His day is about to pass as the chaff. This is followed by the appeal to seek the Lord. This is addressed to the meek in the land, the godly remnant which fears the Lord, both in Zephaniah's day and in the end of the age, when "that day" comes. They are meek and seek to keep the statutes and judgments of the Lord in a righteous life. Still they are exhorted to seek meekness. For it is this, meekness and lowliness,

that pleases the Lord. The promise is held out that they would be hid in the day of the Lord's anger. Zephaniah means "hidden by the LORD" or "whom the LORD hides;" His name comes into play as a comfort that the godly will be hid in the day of the Lord. In Isaiah we have a more direct word about this. "Come, My people, enter thou in thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee; hide thyself as it were for a moment, until the indignation be overpast" (Isa. 26:20). This has often been used as a proof text that the true Church is not to pass through the great tribulation period. But it has nothing whatever to do with the Church, but is the promise given to the godly remnant (Rev. 12, the preservation of the seed of the woman). It is the teaching of the New Testament that the true Church will be taken to her heavenly abode by the coming of the Lord for His saints (1 Thess. 4:13-18; 2 Thess. 2).

Verses 4-7. Judgment is to come in that day upon Gaza and Ashkelon, upon Ashdod and Ekron, the chief cities of Philistia. The inhabitants of the seacoast, the nation of the Cherethites, and all the land of the Philistines, will undergo judgment. The seventh verse gives the connection with the opening message of the chapter, the call to repentance. "And the coast shall be for the remnant of the house of Judah; they shall feed thereupon; in the house of Ashkelon shall they lie down in the evening; for the LORD their God shall visit them, and turn away their captivity." Because the remnant is to possess this territory when Philistia is judged they ought to repent and seek the Lord. That this is still unaccomplished hardly needs to be pointed out. It was not fulfilled in the remnant which returned from the Babylonian captivity. Since the day of their rejection, when they rejected Christ, they have been out of the land. Here is a prophecy of ultimate blessing to the remnant in the day of the Lord, when they will be regathered.

Verses 8-10. Moab and Ammon had sinned against Israel, they reviled them and magnified themselves against their border. Their judgment is announced, as it is in the former prophets, like Joel, Amos, and Ezekiel. Moab will be overthrown like Sodom, and Ammon will become like Gomorrah. Then when the judgment of Moab and Ammon finally takes place, as it will in His day, the remnant of His people shall spoil them, and the remnant shall possess them. It is obvious this also remains to be fulfilled.

This judgment of Moab and Ammon is the harvest which their pride and self-exaltation has brought to them (verse 10).

Verses 11-15. The Lord, in that day, will be terrible unto all these nations. The idol gods will all be abolished. In their place He alone will be worshipped (Zech. 14). All the isles of the nations will turn in worship to Him. The Ethiopians, the African nations, will fall under the judgment. He will stretch out His hand against Assyria, the power of the north, including both the Assyrian which then was and the Assyrian of the end-time, still to come. It is evident from verse 13 that when Zephaniah penned these words Nineveh had not yet fallen. Her utter desolation is predicted by Zephaniah as it was predicted by Nahum. The fate of Nineveh announced was literally accomplished. And some day all the proud cities of the nations, steeped in iniquity, will also fall as Nineveh was dethroned from her place of mistress of the world.

Chapter 3:1-8. The filthy, polluted and oppressing city is Jerusalem. Four charges are laid against her.

1. She obeyed not the voice. 2. She received not correction. 3. She trusted not in the Lord. 4. She drew not near to her God.

And because she was untrue to her God and Lord, oppressive cruelty and evil persisted. It was the outcome of her wrong attitude toward the Lord. Her leaders, the princes, were like roaring lions, devouring the prey. Her judges in oppressing the poor were like ravening wolves, ferocious and destructive. How all this fits Christendom today. There is disobedience to the Lord, no faith in Him, no humiliation and no repentance. Hence the moral conditions of today.

Their prophets and priests were also corrupt, as we have learned before in the former prophets. Yet the holy and just Jehovah was in the midst of them. Yet the unjust was not ashamed, but continued in evil-doing.

Then Jehovah addresses the nation: "I have cut off nations; their towers are desolate; I have made their streets waste, that none passeth by; their cities are destroyed, so that there is no man, that there is none inhabitant. I said, Surely thou wilt fear me, thou wilt receive instruction; so their dwelling should not be cut off; howsoever I punished them, they rose early,

and corrupted all their doings." But they did not heed His plea. They did not take warning from what happened to other nations.

CHAPTER 3:8-20 Judgment and Glory

1. The waiting for the end (3:8)
2. The glory that follows (3:9-20)

Verse 8. "Therefore wait for me, saith Jehovah, for the day when I arise for the prey; for my determination is to gather the nations, to assemble the kingdoms, to pour upon them mine indignation, all my fierce anger; for all the earth shall be devoured with the fire of my jealousy." This verse leads us back to the opening exhortation of this chapter. They are as a nation to wait for Him, till the day comes in which He arises to execute the judgment of the nations. It has been a long waiting. Centuries have come and gone; His earthly people have been the wanderers among the nations of the world, where they have been a byword and a curse, yet witnesses for Him also. Still they are waiting for "that day," the day which closes the times of the Gentiles, when the stone strikes the great man image and becomes a mountain filling the whole earth (Daniel 2).

Verses 9-20. The opening verse of this glory section has been variously interpreted. It has been used by the "Pentecostal-delusion" as being a prophecy concerning their imagined gift of tongues restoration. In the first place it must be noticed that in the Hebrew the word people is in the plural. We read therefore this verse as follows: "For then will I turn to the nations a pure lip, that they may all call upon the name of Jehovah, to serve Him with one shoulder." Luther paraphrased this verse in the following way: "Then will I cause that nations to be preached to otherwise, with friendly lips, that they may call upon the name of the Lord." But this interpretation is not sustained by the text. It means that the nations which escaped the judgment-wrath of the day of the Lord will be converted, and as a result of their conversion they will call upon the Lord with pure lips; all idolatry will cease and all serve the Lord as one man.

While the peoples in verse 9 are the Gentiles, the suppliants in verse 10 are Jews brought back from the dispersion. They are brought back by the converted Gentiles as an offering unto the Lord (Isa. 66:20). When that takes place the restored nation will not have need to be ashamed for all their doings, for the Lord in infinite grace will have cleansed them from their iniquity, and now they are no longer proud and haughty, but a remnant humbled, trusting in the Lord. The great chapter in Ezekiel tells us of the conversion of this remnant (Ezek. 36). They will then be a righteous nation, do no iniquity, nor speak lies. The speaking of lies, the use of deceit, is one of the traits of the Jews today, and has often been responsible for their sufferings among the Gentiles. But when that day comes the deceitful tongue will not be found in their mouth. They will feed and lie down and none shall make them afraid. They have become once more "the sheep of His pastures, gathered by the Good Shepherd. The time of singing and rejoicing has come.

Sing, O daughter of Zion! Shout, O Israel! Be glad and rejoice With all thy heart, O Daughter of Jerusalem.

Jehovah has removed thy judgments; He has cast out thine enemy; The King of Israel, Jehovah, Is in the midst of thee, Thou wilt see evil no more.

In that day it shall be said to Jerusalem, Fear not, Zion, let not thy hands be feeble.

Jehovah, thy God is in the midst of thee, A mighty One who saves; He rejoices over thee with gladness; He rests in His love; He rejoices over thee with singing.

What a glorious day that will be! It will be glory for Him and glory for His people. The great prophetic song recorded by Isaiah (chapter 12) will then be heard in the midst of His redeemed people. The great Psalms of praise and worship will fill Jerusalem. Judgments are forever gone; no enemy will threaten them again. He Himself is in their midst, none other but He whom their fathers delivered once into the hands of the Gentiles, over whom they cried, "His blood be upon us and our

children." He is King. The throne of His father David is now filled. The Mighty One saves, and rejoices over His redeemed people. He has the travail of His soul to the full and is satisfied.

Then He will make them a name and a praise among all the peoples of the earth. Thus ends the great message of Zephaniah, the great-great-grandson of the pious King Hezekiah.

THE BOOK OF HAGGAI

The Annotated Bible

Arno Clement Gaebelein

THE PROPHET HAGGAI

Introduction

Between Zephaniah and Haggai is the period of the captivity of the house of Judah in Babylon. Haggai is the first of the three post-Exilic prophets, though not the most prominent one, which is Zechariah.

Haggai means "my feast," or perhaps "the Festal one." Nothing is known of his personal history. He is mentioned in Ezra, chapter 5:1 and 6:14. The first verse of the book which bears his name gives us the date of his prophecy. It was in the second year of Darius the king. The king is Darius Hystaspes, and the year is 520 B.C. Two months later young Zechariah began to lift up his voice likewise. It seems that Haggai's prophetic office extended over four months only. Some have concluded from chapter 2:3 that he must have known the first temple. If he saw that temple he must have been at least 80 years old, if not older, when he prophesied. But the passage upon which this supposition rests does not necessarily imply this. He was probably born in the captivity, and a young man like his greater associate Zechariah.

The Times of Haggai and Zechariah

In order to understand the prophecies of Haggai as well as Zechariah, the history contained in the book of Ezra must be carefully studied. The reader will consult the introduction to the book of Ezra and the annotations on the different chapters.

We mention here but a few of the leading historical facts of this period. After the remnant had returned from Babylon the feasts commanded by the law were first of all reinstated. Then in the second year, 535 B.C., the foundations of the new temple were laid. It was a time of rejoicing and a time of sorrow. What was this second temple in comparison with the first house? (See Ezra 3:12, 13.) There were tears of joy and tears of sorrow. Then the building of the temple was neglected for a time. There were three causes. The indifference, the faintheartedness of the people, and the oppositions from the enemy. The Samaritans, a mongrel race (Ezra 4:1, 9, 10) offered, after the foundation of the temple had been laid, to form an alliance with the Jewish remnant, and to assist them with it. When the proposal was nobly rejected they employed political means to dwarf the rebuilding of the house of the Lord, by misrepresentations at the Persian court. Their schemes, after some time, seemed to be quite successful, when in reply to their petition to Artaxerxes, 522 B.C., they were told that the building of the temple must be stopped. Artaxerxes was a pretender, known in history as Pseudo-Smerdis. During the remainder of his reign the building was completely stopped; but it lasted about a year only. His successor, Darius Hystaspes (521. B.C.) was more favorable to his Jewish subjects. It was then that Haggai and Zechariah urged the continuation of the building of the temple in their prophetic messages. But the slow progress in the building of the temple was altogether chargeable to the intrigues of the Samaritans. The remnant was negligent in this matter to a great extent. During the time when the house was unfinished many Jews had used their means in erecting fine dwellings and beautifying them; they acted in a selfish, indifferent manner.

The harvest also had turned out very poor, the blessing of the Lord was lacking in all that they did, therefore the prophet spoke then and told them that all was an expression of the displeasure of the Lord in neglecting His house. "Ye have sown much and bring in little; ye eat but ye have not enough; ye drink, but ye are not filled with drink, ye clothe you,

but there is none warm; and he that earneth wages, earneth wages to put it into a bag with holes" (1:6).

These were outward circumstances which led the Spirit of God to call Haggai to the prophetic office.

The Message of Haggai

The purpose of his message has been stated in the preceding paragraph. But the message goes far beyond his time, and like the former prophets, leads up to the time of glory. He speaks of the Messiah, our Lord, as the desire of all nations, and of the times when all nations shall be shaken; when another house is to be filled with the Lord's glory. This passage is quoted in Hebrews 12:26, 27, and will be more closely examined in the annotations. Our postmillennial brethren in their expositions have explained all these promises as being realized in the Church. The second temple is, according to their views, a prophecy concerning the Church. In the language of one: "He announces that the time is not far off when the privileges of Jehovah's worship shall be extended over all the earth, and that the treasures of all nations will then be brought to adorn this temple, and exalt its glory above the departed splendor of the former house, while peace and prosperity shall reign among the unnumbered worshippers." But inasmuch as none of the prophets knew anything whatever about the body of Christ, the Church, in which there is neither Jew nor Gentile, this interpretation is incorrect. The Church is the mystery which was not made known in former ages (Eph. 3). Hence Haggai did not describe the Church under the term of the temple, but his prophecy reaches beyond the church-age to the day of the Lord, when all nations will be shaken, and the Lord will return and bring with Him the promised glory.

The message of Haggai is written in a very simple style, quite different from the style of the pre-exilic prophets. He makes frequent use of interrogatives.

The Division of Haggai

The two chapters contain five addresses. The first address in chapter 1:1-11 is one of reproof and warning, to arouse the remnant from the apathy into which they had drifted in the building of the temple. The second address in chapter 1:12-15 was made when the people responded to his appeal, assuring them of the presence of the Lord in their obedience. The third address in chapter 2:1-9 contrasts the glory of the first house with the greater glory of the second house and introduces the distinctively Messianic glory. The fourth address in chapter 2:10-19 contains moral instructions and the assurance of blessing. The last address, the conclusion of the message of Haggai, points still more prominently to the day of the Lord, when heaven and earth is to be shaken and the kingdoms of the nations will be overthrown. In the last verse, Zerubbabel, the servant of Jehovah, is a prophetic type of our Lord.

Analysis and Annotations

CHAPTER 1:1-11 Haggai's First Address

1. The introduction (1:1)
2. The reproof (1:2-6)
3. Consider your ways (1:7-11)

Verse 1. Darius Hystaspes had been king one year and had entered upon the second year, 520 B.C., when, in the sixth month, in the first day of the month, the word of the Lord was given by Haggai. It was addressed to Zerubbabel, the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and to Joshua, the son of josedech, the high-priest. Zerubbabel and Joshua were the prominent civic and religious leaders of that day. Zerubbabel was the son of Shealtiel (which means asking of God in prayer). Zerubbabel (sown in Babylon) was of royal seed, in direct line of descent from David. In Ezra this princely leader is called by his Persian name Sheshbazzar. In the genealogy of Luke 3:27 he is called a son of Neri, a descendant of David through his son Nathan; he is also called a son of Pedaiiah. These divergent statements have been satisfactorily explained by the law of the Levirate marriage (Deut. 25:10).

Joshua is mentioned several times in Zechariah. He was the first high-priest after the captivity, and is called in Ezra and Nehemiah Jeshua, the name Joshua transcribed into Greek. He and Zerubbabel are prophetic types of our Lord as the King-Priest. Joshua was the son of Josedech (Jehozadak) the high-priest who was taken by the Babylonians into captivity (1 Chron. 6:15), and was the grandson of Seraiah, who was put to death by Nebuchadnezzar at Riblah, after the capture of Jerusalem.

Verses 2-6. His message starts with the excuse which the people offered for the apathy in the things of God. "This people say, The time is not come, the time that the LORD'S house should be built." The Lord does not address them as "My people," but in a way which is deprecatory. It was an empty excuse, that His time had not yet come; in reality they were cold towards the cause of the Lord, and sought their own things in place of it. In their indifferent spirit they probably took the relation to Persia, produced by the Samaritan interference, as the ground of their opinion, that it was not the time to come and finish the task. They were an ungrateful people and should have known better. The Lord, who had announced through Isaiah that Cyrus should be born and say, "Let Jerusalem be built," who raised up Cyrus, whom the prophet had named so many years before he was born; the Lord who had brought them back to the land and prospered them, would certainly give them the victory over all their enemies and make the building of the house possible. They hid behind the unreasonable excuse, it is not the time. How often the same excuse has been used by the professing people of God in our age!

Then the Lord answers them. "is it a time for you yourselves to dwell in your ceiled houses, while this house lieth waste?" They had begun well, as we read in Ezra 3, when they set the altar upon its bases. But now they had departed from their endeavor; the interest in the one thing had waned, and selfish aims were substituted. They were living in luxurious houses, while His house was completely neglected, it was in a waste condition. The insincerity of their vain excuse was therefore exposed.

Then comes the exhortation to consider their ways (literally: set your heart upon your ways). Had it been profitable for them? No. Ever since they left off building His house bitter disappointment had been their lot. All their self-seeking brought them no gain, but steady loss. The Lord's blessing, given to His earthly people concerning earthly things, had been withholden. They had sown much seed; there was a scanty return. They had not been satisfied in eating or drinking. Their clothing was insufficient. The wages they earned may have been good wages, but it was as if they put them in a bag with holes; the great part of them was lost. While all this must be considered on the ground of the Jew, the principle nevertheless holds good for us as well. "But seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you" (Matt. 6:33), also refers primarily to the believing Jew, yet it has its application for us. The heart of the believer must always seek Him first. The life of a child of God must always be devoted to Him and the things of God. Our business is to care for His things; His gracious business is to care for us in all things. Neglect of the things of God always brings the same bitter disappointment.

Verses 7-11. Consider your ways; the Lord spoke again. And now He commands them to go to the mountains and fetch wood and to build the house. He declares that He will take pleasure in it and that He will be glorified. How graciously He craves the whole-heartedness of His people and their full devotion to Himself. It is in worship, indicated by the building of the house, that we glorify Him. It is worshippers the Father seeketh, worshippers in spirit and in truth (John 4).

On account of their neglect, neglect of Himself and the honor of His Name, as centered in the house, He could not give the blessing He is so willing to bestow upon His people. He withheld the dew and the rain; He prevented the fruitfulness of the fields, and all else was stunted, on account of their attitude toward Him.

"It was Jehovah who blighted their selfish efforts. He was dealing with them on account of their unbelief and neglect. It was not because He loved them not, but because He did. 'Whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth.' When the Lord allows persons to go away without rebuke, it is the sure sign that all practical bond is broken--if any bond did exist--that He now disowns them, for a time at least. Hence these very chastenings of the Jewish

remnant were the proof that His eyes were still over them, and that He felt their negligence of Him and resented--in divine faithfulness--the failure of His people in the care of His glory" (William Kelly).

CHAPTER 1:12-15 The Second Address

The spirit of God carried home the burning message of rebuke, and that happened which did not happen with the generation before the captivity. They considered their ways. They took it to heart. They knew the Lord had spoken, and that He was right, the rebuke well earned. Happy are all those who act always in this way, who humble themselves and are obedient to the Lord. It is a refreshing scene which the twelfth verse records. They all united, Zerubbabel, Joshua, and all the remnant of the people. There was not one dissenting voice. They all obeyed the Lord and the words of the prophet.

"Then Haggai, the LORD'S messenger, spoke again in the LORD'S message unto the people." It is striking how it is made prominent that he did not speak of himself, but was the Lord's messenger and brought the Lord's message. Would to God that all those who claim the dignity of a minister of the gospel were all the Lord's messengers, and spake nothing but the Lord's message. The greatest curse in Christendom today is the man who claims to be the Lord's servant, but has no message from the Lord, for the reason that he has lost faith in the Word of God.

Another has pointed out the fact that Haggai is the one prophet who is directly called Jehovah's messenger. He is the least of the post-exilic prophets, yet the Lord puts this honor upon him. In spite of his inferior style, according to the critics, the Lord owns him by this title of distinction.

And what was his message at this time? "I am with you, saith the LORD." That is the content of the second address; just one sentence. But what a sentence it is! What assurance it brings to the heart, and how it inspires faith to action. "I am with you, saith the LORD." Such is our blessed assurance. "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the age." And as we look to Him and trust Him there is power.

The result was a mighty revival in the good work. The Lord stirred them up through His Word, the brief message He sent. Every true revival begins the same way. It has been well said, "I am with you, is the saving principle for faith in the weakest possible day, and let me add, what had they better in the brightest day?"

CHAPTER 2:1-9 The Third Address

Over a month later, after a good deal of work had been done, the prophet delivered his third message. He is commanded to speak to the same company, headed by Zerubbabel and Joshua; but here the remnant of the people, the exiles who had returned, is also included. If we consult Ezra 3:12 we find that many old men, who had seen the temple of Solomon, burst out in weeping when the small foundation was laid for the new temple. A similar feeling possessed the people when they resumed the temple work after Haggai's first message. In comparison with the former temple, so grand and glorious, the new temple was a feeble and insignificant affair. The prophet begins his message by asking, "Who is left among you that saw this house in its former glory, and how do you see it now? Is it not in your eyes as nothing?" No doubt there was additional weeping when the prophet asked these questions.

Haggai then becomes the prophet of comfort and of hope. "Yet now be strong" is in literal translation, "And now be comforted, O Zerubbabel, saith Jehovah; be comforted all the people of the land, saith Jehovah; for I am with you saith the LORD of Hosts." They were discouraged on account of the smallness of their cause. It is then when the Lord delights to comfort and to cheer his trusting people. He was with His people, though now no longer a mighty host as of old, but only a small remnant; yet He had not forgotten the Word which He covenanted with them, when He brought them out of Egypt with an outstretched arm. "My Spirit abideth among you; fear ye not." And that should be enough. His Spirit was dwelling with them to execute His work, and be their strength. The gift of the Spirit in New Testament times is something greater than this. After the finished work of our Lord and His glorification, the third Person of the Godhead came in person to indwell every member of the Body of Christ.

Verses 6-9 contain the great prophecy concerning the future. It takes us beyond the time of Haggai, past this present age, and puts before our hearts the same great and glorious day when Christ comes again, when there shall be greater glory and peace. The question is, who is the desire of all nations? It merits a closer examination, for the critics have labored to explain away the Messianic meaning of this sentence and rob it of its true meaning. For instance, Canon Driver, in The New Century Bible makes the following comment: "The desirable things of all nations shall come, i.e., their costly treasures will be brought to beautify the temple." The Hebrew is a peculiar phrase; the subject is a noun, feminine, singular; the predicate is a plural masculine. The word "chemdath"--desire, is the same as used in Daniel 11:37, the desire of women. If literally translated it would read thus: "And the desire of all nations, they shall come." The Septuagint therefore translates it, "the choice things of all nations shall come;" others have rendered it in the following ways: "The things desired by all nations shall come," with the interpretation that it is the gospel; "all the Gentiles shall come with their delightful things;" "the beauty of all the heathen;" "they shall come to the desire of all nations;" "with the desire of all nations;" the "choicest of all nations (that is the best of them) will come," etc. With all these suggested renderings of the difficult phrase there can be no question that it points to Christ, and must be interpreted as a great Messianic prophecy. The most ancient comments are on this line altogether. Christ is the object of the desire of all nations. This does not necessarily mean that He is subjectively the desire of the nations, but He is objectively, for through Him alone the nations can be blest and receive the righteousness and peace which they need.

First, the announcement is made, "I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land." Have these convulsions been? While there have been shakings of kingdoms in the political sense, and the earth has often been shaken physically and otherwise, this prophecy is yet to be fulfilled. The Holy Spirit bears witness to it in the New Testament, for we read in Hebrews 12:26-28, "Whose voice then (at Sinai in a physical manifestation) shook the earth; but now He hath promised, saying, Yet once more I shake not the earth only but also heaven. And the word, Yet once more, signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that are made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain. Wherefore, we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved (the coming kingdom and not the church) let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear." This settles the question as to the futurity of this prophecy. Critics have objected to this interpretation on account of the statement that this universal shaking is to be in "a little while." They apply it therefore to the nearer political events of that period. But the future in prophecy is often foreshortened, and besides this, the little while is not man's little while, but God's; with Him a thousand years is as a day. Furthermore, in the political events of the times which followed the restoration of the Jews from Babylon not all nations were involved. The prophecy before us declares, "I will shake all nations;" this, too, is future. The Messiah, spoken of next as "the desire of all nations," came the first time, but His coming did not bring the blessing and glory to nations as predicted here, nor did the promised peace come. He made peace in His sacrificial death; the foundation for "peace on earth" was then laid, as well as for the great future blessing of all the nations. But the Jews delivered Him into the hands of the Gentiles, and the Gentiles treated Him as did the Jews. In anticipation of His rejection He said, "Think not that I am come to bring peace, but the sword." Then followed the present age, unknown with its mystery, the church, to the prophets. It will close with the shaking of all nations, when the King-Messiah will appear again and bring the promised blessing to all nations. The silver and gold, which belong to the Lord, will then be brought by the nations. (Isa. 60:5).

It is important to read the ninth verse in the right way, as our Authorized Version is incorrect. It does not say in the Hebrew, "The glory of this latter house shall be greater than the former," but the Hebrew is, "The latter glory of this house shall be greater than the former, saith the LORD of hosts; and in this place will I give peace, saith the LORD of hosts." The house of course is the temple. The visible glory dwelt once in the former house; the day is coming when there will be greater glory, the day of His glorious manifestation; then in connection with His coming and that coming restoration, He will give peace.

CHAPTER 2:10-19 The Fourth Address

A few months later Haggai delivered another address of moral instruction and admonition. The question the prophet asks first is answered by the priests negatively. This is followed by a second question, "If one that is unclean by a dead body touch any of these, shall it be unclean?" This they answered affirmatively; for he that is defiled puts defilement upon

everything he handles. When they had given the right answers, the prophet makes the moral application. "So is this people, and so is this nation before me, saith Jehovah; and so is every work of their hands; and that which they offer thereon is unclean." All their works and offerings were unclean, because they were in that condition. They had to be cleansed first. Separation from evil, from that which defiles, was therefore demanded. So it is today. The order is "cease to do evil" and then "learn to do well." We are, as Christians, no less exhorted to purge ourselves, to separate from evil, and then to become fit vessels for the Master's use.

And then the Lord challenges them to prove Him, to see if they separate from evil, are wholly for Him, how faithful He is going to be to them. "From this day," the day of a true return to the Lord followed by obedience and separation, "I will bless you."

CHAPTER 2:20-23 The Fifth Address

The final address of Jehovah's messenger is altogether prophetic. It is addressed exclusively to Zerubbabel, the governor, a son of David. He tells the princely leader that the heavens and the earth will be shaken; it is the same as in verse 6. When that comes the throne of the kingdoms will be overthrown; the power of the kingdoms of the nations (the ten kingdoms; Dan. 2) will be destroyed, for in that day, the falling stone, typifying the second coming of Christ, will make an end of Gentile dominion. The battle of Armageddon will take place and end the military power of these nations. Zerubbabel, the son of David, is the type of Christ, the Son of David. He will then receive the throne of His father David. He will be made a signet. The signet-ring was among those nations a mark of honor. It was given by monarchs to their prime-ministers, conferring all authority upon them. Thus the Lord Jesus Christ is pictured as receiving from God the rule and authority.

THE BOOK OF ZECHARIAH

The Annotated Bible

Arno Clement Gaebelein

THE PROPHET ZECHARIAH

Introduction

Zechariah is the great prophet of the restoration, and, as stated in the introduction to Haggai, was contemporary with him. The prophecies in both books are dated. These are as follows:

In the sixth month of Darius's second year: Haggai 1

In the seventh month of the same year: Haggai 2

In the eighth month, the same year: Zechariah 1

In the ninth month, the same year: Haggai 2

In the eleventh month, the same year: Zechariah 1-6

In the fourth year of Darius, ninth month: Zechariah 7-14

Zechariah is named in Ezra 5:1 and 6:14; he was of priestly descent, which we learn by consulting Nehemiah 12:4, 16. His name means "Jehovah remembers." He was the son of Berechiah, which means "Jehovah will bless;" and his grandfather's name was Iddo; Iddo means "the appointed time." These are significant names; one might say the great prophetic message of Zechariah is given in these three names in a nutshell. For the covenant-keeping God remembers His people, which the visions and messages of Zechariah show. When He remembers them He will bless them, but it will be at the appointed time, and the appointed time has not yet come, hence the greater part of Zechariah remains unfulfilled.

He was born in Babylon, and when he returned to the land of his fathers he was a child. In his vision he is addressed as a young man, so that he was quite young when called into the responsible position of a prophet. As to the historical setting of his prophecies, it is the same as Haggai's, and we refer the reader to what we have said there.

According to ancient sources he lived to be a very old man, and was buried alongside of Haggai in Jerusalem; but this cannot be verified. Jewish tradition says that he was a member of the great synagogue, and took an active part in providing for the liturgical service of the new temple. The Septuagint version of the Old Testament ascribes to him the composition of Psalms 137 and 138, and to Haggai and Zachariah Psalms 145-148; and the same do other versions like the Peshito and the Vulgate. Some expositors have been so superficial in their statements that they identified him with the Zechariah who was slain by Joash of Judah, between the temple and the altar, as mentioned in 2 Chronicles 24:20-23.

His Great Message

Zechariah in his message does not rebuke the people on account of their slackness in building the house of the Lord, as we learned Haggai did, though his great prophecies were given to encourage the remnant in their work. The horizon of Zechariah's visions and prophecies is far more extended than the horizon of the other minor prophets. He covers the entire future of Israel and leads onward from his days to the time when Messiah comes to Jerusalem, when His own received Him not. He pictures the condition of the nation after the rejection of Christ, and then leads up to the time of His return and the happy results which follow the repentance of the remnant, when they shall look upon Him whom they pierced.

The Gentile world-powers, as prophetically announced in Daniel's great visions, are seen by him as domineering over Jerusalem; and how the Lord will finally deal with these powers. The last siege of Jerusalem, and what is connected with that siege, the tribulation, the deliverance by the visible coming of the Lord, and the resultant kingdom, concludes his book. It is indeed a complete prophetic history of Israel and the times of the Gentiles from the captivity to the end of these times. His book has rightly been called by the same name as the last book of the Bible, the Apocalypse--an unveiling. And there are certain features which identify Zechariah in some measure with the book of Revelation. Zechariah may well be placed alongside of Isaiah and Daniel.

The Messianic Predictions in Zechariah

Zechariah has more to say about Christ, His person, His work and His glory than all the other minor prophets combined. We mention here the more direct predictions found in the book; there are others, which will be pointed out in the annotations.

I. He speaks of Christ as "the Branch." This is one of the names of our Lord revealed to Isaiah and Jeremiah (Isa. 4:2; Jer. 23:5). Zechariah speaks of Him twice under this title, in chapters 3 and 4. II. A great prediction concerning Christ is found in the sixth chapter, when the prophet is commanded to order the crowning of the high-priest, symbolical of our Lord, who is the crowned King-Priest. III. In chapter 9:9-10 we have the familiar passage quoted in the New Testament concerning Christ's entrance into Jerusalem. In this passage the first and the second coming of our Lord are blended together. IV. He speaks of Him as the Shepherd, and the price of His betrayal, the thirty pieces of silver, also quoted in the New Testament. Chapter 11:12, 13 and Matt. 27:9, 10. V. Another great Messianic prophecy is recorded in chapter 12:10. Here His death on the cross is predicted, and that He is the pierced One, on whom they shall look, on account of whom they shall yet mourn. (See John 19, and Revelation 1.) VI. Still another prophecy relating to the sufferings of Christ is chapter 13:7. The sword is to awake against the Man, who is the fellow of God; that sword is to smite Him. VII. Finally, we mention the passage in the last chapter, where the prophet describes Him as coming for the salvation of His waiting people, and that His feet in that day shall stand on the Mount of Olives. It is He who was seen last standing on the Mount of Olives, with the promise of His return "in like manner."

As stated before, these passages are the prominent ones, but not by any means all the predictions concerning Israel's Messiah.

There is an interesting Jewish work on Zechariah, the Yalkut of Zechariah. It gives interesting comment on his prophecies. The great teacher Abarbanel confessed his inability to interpret these visions. How could he with his denials that Jesus of Nazareth is the Christ? And the much honored Jewish exegete, Solomon Ben Jarchi, declared "his prophecy is very abstruse, for it contains visions resembling dreams, which want interpreting; and we shall never be able to discover the true interpretation until the teacher of righteousness arrives."

That teacher, the Holy spirit, has come. He guides us now into all truth; He makes plain things to come, as revealed in the prophetic Word. By comparing Scripture with Scripture, and avoiding the "private interpretation" against which Peter warns (2 Peter 1) we understand the visions, which two of the greatest Hebrew scholars and teachers declared unexplainable.

The Division of Zechariah

For a correct understanding of the book, the correct divisions must be first of all ascertained. We give, therefore, first the scope of the book. After an introduction comprising the first six verses of the first chapter, we have the record of his great night-visions.

1. The Vision of the Man upon the Red Horse Among the Myrtles (1:7-17) 2. The Four Horns and the Four Smiths (1:18-21) 3. The Man with the Measuring Line (Chapter 2) 4. The Vision concerning the Cleansing of the High-Priest (Chapter 3) 5. The Vision of the Candlestick with the Two Olive Trees (Chapter 4) 6. The Vision of the Flying Roll (5:1-4) 7. The Woman in the Ephah (5:5-11) 8. The Vision of the Four Chariots (6:1-8)

Some have made ten visions out of it instead of eight; there is no need for that. The vision which they divided is the one in chapter 1:18-21. But this is one vision; and so is the vision in chapter 4. After these visions had been given the young prophet was commanded to make crowns of silver and gold and crown the high-priest. It was a great symbolical action, foretelling Him, who wore on earth the crown of thorns, and who will be crowned with many crowns when the night is gone and the day breaks.

This is the first section of the book. The second section is contained in chapters 7 and 8. It is a kind of parenthesis. Questions concerning certain fasts had been asked by the prophet; they were answered by the Lord and their interesting answers are recorded in these two chapters.

The third section is contained in chapters 9-14; it is the most majestic part of the book. It is arranged in two parts, each beginning with the phrase "The Burden of the Word of the Lord." The first burden is chapter 9:1 and the second is chapter 12:1. It reveals in a remarkable manner the future of Jerusalem, so intensely interesting to every true believer in our significant times. We follow this threefold division in our analysis and annotations.

Analysis and Annotations

1. THE NIGHT VISIONS

CHAPTER 1

1. The introduction (1:1-6)
2. The first night vision (1:7-17)
3. The second night vision (1:18-21)

Verses 1-6. The first utterance of Zechariah concerns the past. "The LORD hath been sore displeased with your fathers." They were a disobedient, stiff-necked people. The pre-exilic prophets had called them to repentance, but they did not hearken. Then he gives the message to turn to the Lord, with the promise that He will turn to them; they should not be like their fathers. And their fathers, where were they? They had passed away like the disobedient ones in the wilderness; God's judgment and displeasure had overtaken them and they perished.

Verses 7-17. After this opening message with its call to return, delivered probably before the assembled congregation, the prophet received his great night-visions. These were not mere dreams, but the things he describes passed before him in divine vision. He beheld them in one night. They were not only given in one night, but just as one followed the other with out interval, so are they closely connected, giving progressively coming events. There is, of course, to a certain extent in some of these visions the message of hope for the Jewish remnant of that day, but the visions concern the future, and can only be understood in the light of other prophecies concerning the end of the age and the glorious future of Israel and Jerusalem. To apply them to the Church produces the greatest possible confusion. We shall see how these visions concern the Gentiles first and the overthrow of the world-powers, followed by the blessings and glory promised to Israel, which all will be given to the nation in the day when Gentile dominion ceases forever. When the visions end, the morning comes

after that memorable night of revelation, the command to crown the high-priest is given.

Without quoting the text in full we give the interpretation of each vision. He beheld an army of riders upon different colored horses, led by a man riding a red horse, who is the center of the vision. There is an interpreting heavenly messenger, to whom the prophet turns to find out who the riders are. They do not represent the Persians, as some expositors have stated; they are angels. It is the man upon the red horse who speaks. "These are they whom the Lord hath sent to walk to and fro through the earth." The riders upon the horses give their report to the man in the middle. "Behold, all the earth sitteth still and is at rest."

Who is the rider upon the red horse? He is called the "Angel of the LORD." There is no question but that the rider and the Angel of the LORD are the same person. And the Angel of the LORD in the Old Testament is an uncreated Being; He is the Son of God in His pre-incarnation glory. There are three very good reasons for this interpretation. 1. The color red identifies him with our Lord. He is the Lamb of God who shed His blood in redemption; He is the Lion of the tribe of Judah (Rev. 5) who will arise in judgment upon the nation in the coming days of vengeance and trample His enemies under foot (Isa. 63). 2. He is the Leader as well as the Center of the heavenly hosts; they are subject unto Him; all things are in His hands. 3. He makes intercession, which marks Him as the one who is the intercessor before God in behalf of His people. Our larger exposition of Zechariah quotes the Jewish interpretation (Studies in Zechariah, pp. 11-12).

The report of the angelic hosts was that the earth sitteth still and is at rest. The nations were at rest, in the state of prosperity; but His people is in trouble, the land of promise under Gentile rule and dominion. While the cities of the nations were increased and had plenty, the city of the King was under the hoof of the Gentiles; His people suffered. Such is the condition of things throughout the time of the Gentiles. In our comment, written in 1899 we made the following remarks:

"Prosperity, universal prosperity, and with it universal peace, is the cry at the close of another century, and will be more so as we advance towards the end of this age. Civilization, world conquest, commercial extension, and a universal peace, seem to be the leading thoughts among the nations of our times. Truly it is realized by some that our boasted civilization, liberty and prosperity, is nothing but a smoldering volcano which may burst open at any moment and make an end of all boasting; but the majority of the people even in Christendom are sadly deluding themselves with idle dreams. And what of God's thoughts and His eternal purposes? What of His oath-bound covenant promises? They are being misinterpreted, set aside and forgotten. Thus it will continue till the climax is reached, so clearly foretold in the Second Psalm."

This forecast has come true; the great war has come and gone and now the age is rapidly approaching its predicted end.

Then follows in the vision the intercessory cry of the Angel of the LORD. It concerns in the first place the indignation of the seventy years. But that dispersion is the prophetic type of their greater dispersion. What was true then concerning the nations and the state of Jerusalem, is true of the present and future. The nations helped forward their affliction by hating the Jew. The great sin of the nations is Anti-semitism, which is the result of not believing the Word of God. The hatred of the Gentiles will culminate in the end of the age in coming against the partially restored nation, as we shall learn at the close of our prophecy. Then the assurance is given that the Lord in His jealousy will remember His people and Jerusalem will be chosen and Zion comforted.

Verses 18-21. He saw next four powerful horns, the emblems of the powerful Gentile nations who have scattered Judah, Israel, and Jerusalem. The four horns are the same four world-powers announced in Nebuchadnezzar's dream and in Daniel's vision (Daniel 2, and 7). They are symbolized by the locusts in their four stages (Joel 1). Four smiths appear in the vision to fray them and to cast them out. The vision teaches two facts: first, the horns will be broken and cast down; and in the second place, God has for every power which has sinned against His people a corresponding instrument, to overcome and to break into pieces.

CHAPTER 2

1. The man with the measuring line (2:1-2)
2. The message of the third night vision (2:3-9)
3. The glorious kingdom (2:10-12)

Verses 1-2. The third night vision is one of the coming glory. The number three stands in the Word of God for resurrection, life from the dead. Thus in Hosea, concerning Israel, "After two days Thou wilt revive us, and on the third day Thou wilt raise us up" (Hosea 6:2). In this third vision Zechariah sees the glorious restoration of Israel, which has been the burden of so many prophecies, and the glory which is connected with that restoration. In this night vision Zechariah hears of a restoration and of a glory which has never yet been fulfilled in the history of God's people. Those teachers of the Word who see in Zechariah's night visions nothing but fulfilled prophecy, cannot answer certain questions satisfactorily, and their only refuge must be a spiritualizing of this restoration. Another thought before we take up this third vision. The vision of restoration comes after the enemies of Israel have been cast down. That prophecy might be fulfilled; prophecy about a believing, suffering Jewish remnant; prophecy concerning Jacob's trouble, etc., a mock restoration, generally termed a restoration in unbelief, is to take place. There can be no doubt whatever that we are privileged to see the beginning of this restoration of part of the Jewish nation to the land of the fathers in unbelief. It is one of the signs of the nearness of that event for which the Church hopes, prays and waits: "our gathering together unto Him." The world and the lukewarm Christian do not see it, but he who loves the Word and lives in the Word, has eyes to see and a hearing ear, and knows what is soon coming. The true restoration, however, will only come as it is seen so clearly in these night visions after the enemies have been overcome, the horns cast down, the image smashed--in other words, after the Lord has come.

First stands the man with the measuring line. He is to bear witness to the coming enlargement of Jerusalem. Similar visions where measuring takes place are found in Ezekiel 41, where the future temple is measured, and in Revelation 11 a reed is given to John to measure the temple of God, which is the temple erected by the Jews in unbelief during the tribulation period. Here it is the measuring of the city.

Verses 3-9. The angel who had talked with Zechariah was met by another angel. He brings the message to Zechariah, who is addressed as "this young man." The coming restoration and enlargement of Jerusalem is announced. The city is to be inhabited as villages, which denotes the peace and safety which Jerusalem will enjoy in the day of her true restoration. It will be the temptation for the enemy, Gog and Magog, to invade the land. (See Ezek. 38, and 39.) The invasion of Gog and Magog in Revelation 20 is after the millennium; the one in Ezekiel is in the beginning of the millennium [i.e., end of the tribulation. Ed.]. Then Zechariah hears in the message that the Lord will be Himself a wall of fire unto Jerusalem; He will be the glory in the midst of her. Glory and defence are combined, they always go together (Isa. 4). This was not the case in the restored Jerusalem after the captivity. It is altogether future. What a glory it will be when every eye sees Him, when His visible glory will be once more established in the land, from which its knowledge spreads over the earth till it covers all, like the waters cover the deep! (Habakkuk 2:14). Then they are summoned to return from the land of the North. Millions of Jews are living and suffering in the great land of the north, Russia. In that day they will return to the old homeland. They will escape out of the clutches of Babylon, the final Babylon. He calls the believing remnant the "apple of His eye." He will guard and keep them.

Verses 10-12. The singing times have come (Zeph. 3). Zion rejoices for He dwells in their midst (Isa. 12). Then the nations are joined to the Lord in that day, not to the Church, for the true Church is in glory, but they will be joined to Israel in the kingdom. The third vision closes with an exhortation similar to the one in Habakkuk 2. All flesh is to be silent before the Lord. Now is the time when God is silent. The flesh speaks now, for it is man's day. But our God shall come and not keep silent (Psa. 60). Then all the flesh, with its fruits, will have to be silent before Him in that day.

CHAPTER 3

1. The fourth night vision (3:1-5)
2. The message of the vision (3:6-10)

Verses 1-5. The fourth vision is like the first and second, closely connected with the foregoing one. It gives the crowning event of Israel's restoration. The prophet recognizes in the figure, which is seen by him, Joshua the high priest, who is standing before the angel of the Lord, while at his right hand stands Satan to oppose him. Joshua was not clothed with his clean, priestly robes, but he wears filthy garments. Jehovah rebukes Satan and terms Jerusalem a brand plucked from the fire. After the accuser is rebuked, the filthy garments of the high-priest are removed, his iniquity is forgiven, and he is clothed with festal raiment. The prophet is so carried away with the vision that he asks that a clean mitre is to be put upon his head. And now, after the high-priest is thus clothed, the Angel of the Lord charges him with an important message: If thou wilt walk in My ways and keep My charge, thou shalt judge My house and also keep My courts. I will give thee access among those standing here, etc. The servant--the branch--is promised, and the stone which is laid before Joshua is to have seven eyes. The iniquity of this land is to be removed in one day, and the vision closes with the peaceful scene, every man inviting his neighbor under the vine and under the fig tree.

The high-priest Joshua in this vision stands as a type of the sinful nation and her priestly calling. Like Joshua in filthy garments, the nation is unclean and defiled. Yet in spite of his filthy garments Joshua was still the high-priest. The gifts and calling of God are without repentance; Israel, in the purposes of God, is still the priest. In the vision Satan is seen, true to his name, the accuser.

He is the enemy of Israel. He has tried in the past to hurt and to destroy the nation of destiny. He knows the purposes of God concerning Israel better than many a learned doctor of divinity, and therefore, he has opposed that people and opposes them still. His opposition has been mostly through nations. How much could be said on this topic! The end of this age will reveal the enemy of Israel, the adversary, as never before in the history of the world. There is to be war in heaven; Michael and his angels going forth to war with the dragon; and the dragon warred, and his angels, and they prevailed not, neither was their place found any more in heaven. And the great dragon was cast down, the old Serpent, he that is called the Devil and Satan, the Deceiver of the whole world, he was cast down to the earth and his angels were cast down with him (Rev. 12:7-9). His wrath will be directed against Israel and Jerusalem. It is the time of which Daniel spoke. "And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of Thy people; and there shall be a time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation, even to that same time (Dan. 12:1)." Once more Satan will try to destroy the people, but the Lord shall rebuke him. Israel will be again, as so often before, like a brand plucked out of the fire. So it has been in the past. Way back when Israel was in Egypt and God was about to send the deliverer, He called Moses from out of the burning bush--Israel's true type, burning, but never consumed. Oh, how the fire of persecution and adversity has been raging, but again and again the hand of God snatched the burning brand out of the fire at the right moment. The Lord who hath chosen Jerusalem will rebuke Satan. This has not yet come. The coming Lord will commission an angel out of heaven, having the key of the abyss and a great chain in his hand. And he will lay hold on the dragon--the old serpent which is the Devil and Satan--and bind him for a thousand years, and cast him into the abyss and shut it and seal it over him (Rev. 20:1, 2). Then follows the cleansing of Israel and the new charge, all so clearly given in this vision.

The filthy garments are removed by those that stand before the angel of the Lord. The iniquity is taken away, and in place of the filthy garments there is the rich apparel and the fair mitre upon the head. How blessedly all this is waiting for its fulfillment in Israel's regeneration! When He appears after the times of overturning, He whose right it is, His people Israel will be found by Him in true penitence, acknowledging their offence. It will be a national repentance, a mourning on account of Him, which Zechariah describes in detail in the twelfth chapter.

Verses 6-10. Israel was disobedient and did not keep the first charge. It is now repeated, and gives Israel's future calling after their cleansing. It will be threefold. 1. Judging in the house of the LORD, and from there ruling and judging nations, for Israel will be the head of the nations. The Church will then not be on earth, but occupy her glorious place in the new Jerusalem above the earth. 2. Israel will keep His courts. That is, Israel will attend to the millennial temple, which will become the house of prayer for all nations, which all the former temples were not. 3. Israel will have places to walk amongst those who stand by, that is, among the nations, in priestly ministry. The saved remnant will then be "men which are a wonder," the miracles of His grace and power. Then the servant, the Branch is announced; a definite Messianic prediction. The stone engraven, with seven eyes upon it, must also mean the redeemed nation, the foundation of the

kingdom, filled with His Spirit, for we read in connection with it, "I will remove the iniquity of that land in one day." A picture of the conditions of peace and prosperity in the kingdom concludes the fourth night vision.

CHAPTER 4

1. The fifth night vision (4:1-10)
2. The questions of the prophet answered (4:11-14)

Verses 1-10. There was a rest for the prophet between the fourth and fifth night vision. He had fallen into a deep sleep. He may have been overcome by the grand and important visions, and is now awakened by the angel with the question, "What seest thou?" The new vision is a very striking one. A golden candlestick appears before the seer. An oil receiver is seen on top, from which the oil flows to the seven lamps of the candlestick through seven pipes. Two olive trees stand alongside of the candlestick and hang their fruit-laden branches over the golden bowl, filling it with oil, which flows through the seven pipes into the seven lamps. The question of the prophet, "What are these, my lord?" is answered by the angel with this statement, "This is the word of Jehovah to Zerubbabel, saying, Not by might and not by power but by My Spirit, saith the LORD of Hosts. Who art thou, Oh great mountain, before Zerubbabel? Be a plain! He shall bring forth the top stone with shoutings of grace, grace unto it.... The hands of Zerubbabel who have laid the foundation shall also finish it, and they shall rejoice and see the plummet in the hand of Zerubbabel--even the seven. The eyes of the LORD shall run to and fro through the entire earth."

The Church in the New Testament is typified by a candlestick. The oil is the emblem of the Holy Spirit. But this is not in view in this vision.

We call attention to the fact that the vision is one which speaks of perfection, completion, fullness. The perfect and divine number seven is found three times in the vision, seven lamps, seven pipes and seven eyes. The seven lamps are united to one stem, this is union, and above it, is a golden bowl. The Spirit conquers, and not power or might does it, but His power. The great mountain becomes a plain. The top stone is brought forth and crowns the building which is finished by Zerubbabel. Shoutings, "Grace, grace, unto it," are heard, and the seven eyes run to and fro through the whole earth. It is a vision of fullness and accomplishment. The candlestick shines and sheds its glorious light, its pure gold glitters and reflects the light of the seven lamps. The bowl is filled with oil, and the two olive trees give a continual supply. The high mountain removed, the temple finished, joy and victory abound. The candlestick in the vision is exactly like the one in the tabernacle, only the two olive trees are something new. The candlestick in the tabernacle represents Christ, the light of the world, and is likewise a type of the Jewish theocracy. Theocracy, the government of this earth by the immediate direction of God, is once to be established, and when it is, it will be like a bright and glorious candlestick shedding light and dispersing the darkness. We think the Yalkut on Zechariah (a Hebrew commentary), is not so very far out of the way when it says, "the golden candlestick is Israel." It seems to us very clear that the vision represents the Jewish theocracy restored, Israel in their glorious inheritance as the light of the world.

Verses 11-14. The prophet asks two questions concerning the two olive trees and the branches which gave the oil through the golden pipe. The two olive trees, filled with the supply of the Spirit, are in all probability the two witnesses of Revelation 11. Their testimony is given during the second half of the last seven years of the times of the Gentiles, Daniel's seventieth week (Dan. 9). It is the time of the great tribulation and these two witnesses stand in close relation with the establishment of the kingdom. See annotations on Revelation.

CHAPTER 5

1. The sixth vision (5:1-4)
2. The seventh vision (5:5-11)

Verses 1-4. The three remaining night visions are of a different character. The first visions the prophet had were visions

of comfort for Jerusalem and the dispersed nation, the overthrow of Babylon and all their enemies, divine forgiveness and the theocracy restored. Now follow the last three visions, and these are visions of judgment. Judgment precedes Israel's restoration, and is very prominently connected with it.

The sixth night vision is the one of the flying roll. The prophet's eyes seem to have been closed after the fifth vision, for we read, "And I lifted up my eyes again." The flying roll he sees is twenty cubits long and ten cubits broad. The interpreting angel tells the prophet that it is the curse that goeth forth over the face of the whole land; for every one that stealeth shall be cut off on this side according to it, and every one that sweareth shall be cut off on that side according to it. The LORD of hosts has brought it forth and it is to enter into the house of the thief, and into the house of him that sweareth by His Name to a falsehood, and it shall lodge in the midst of His house and consume it, both its wood and its stone.

That this vision means judgment is evident at the first glance. Ezekiel had a similar vision. "And when I looked, behold, an hand was sent unto me; and, lo, a roll of a book was therein; And he spread it before me; and it was written within and without: and there was written therein lamentations, and mourning, and woe (Ezek. 2:9, 10)." Ezekiel was to eat that book. This reminds us at once of the books in Revelation (chapters 5 and 10), which are likewise connected with God's judgments in the earth. The flying roll is written on both sides, signifying the two tables of stone, the law of God. Stealing and swearing falsely are mentioned because the one is found on the one side of the two tables of stone, and the other on the other side. However, it is no longer "Thou shalt not," but on the flying roll are written the curses, the awful curses against the transgressors of God's law which are now about to be put into execution. The curse is found in its awful details, as it refers to an apostate people in Deuteronomy 27 and 28. The roll is of immense size, and on it are the dread curses of an angry God. The vision must have been one of exceeding great terror. Imagine a roll, probably illumined at night with fire, moving over the heavens, and on it the curses of an eternal God--wherever it moves its awful message is seen; nothing is hid from its awe-inspiring presence. It reminds one of the fiery handwriting on the wall in the king's palace. Surely such an awful judgment is coming by and by, when our God will keep silence no longer. One of the sublimest judgment Psalms, the Fiftieth, mentions something similar to this flying roll. "When thou sawest a thief then thou consentedst with him, and hast been partaker with adulterers. Thou givest thy mouth to evil, and thy tongue frameth deceit. Thou sittest and speaketh against thy brother, thou slanderest thine own mother's son. These things hast thou done, and I kept silence; thou thoughtest that I was altogether such a one as thyself. but I will reprove thee, and set them in order before thine eyes" (Psalm 50:18-21). The flying roll stands undoubtedly in connection with wickedness, theft, and false swearing, as it is found in so many forms in unbelieving Israel, but it finds also a large application in the judgment of wickedness throughout the earth in the glorious day of His appearing.

Verses 5-11. The angel commands the prophet to lift up his eyes to behold another startling vision. What are the leading figures in the vision? An ephah--which is a Jewish measure standing here for commerce. The eyes of all the land (or earth) are upon it. Commercialism is very prominent in Revelation in connection with the full measure of wickedness, the climax of ungodliness. In Revelation 18 merchants are mentioned who have grown rich through the abundance of her delicacies. Then the merchants are seen weeping, for no man buys their merchandise any more. And then a long list follows, including all the articles of modern commerce. Compare this with the awful description of the last times in James 5. Rich men are commanded to weep and howl, for miseries are come upon them. They heaped treasure together for the last days, and it was a heaping together by fraud, dishonesty in keeping back the hire of the laborers. They lived in pleasure (luxuriously) and were wanton. Indeed, here is that burning question of the day, capital and labor, and its final outcome, misery and judgment upon commercialism, riches heaped up, and all in wickedness. In Habakkuk 2:12 the woe of judgment of that coming glory of the Lord is pronounced upon him that buildeth a town with blood and established a city by iniquity! The people are seen laboring for the fire and wearying themselves for vanity. Luxuries increase, riches, etc., are mentioned in the second and third chapters of Isaiah, chapters of judgment. Other passages could be quoted, but these are sufficient for our purpose. They show us that the climax of wickedness as it is in the earth when judgment will come, and Israel's time commences once more, will be connected with commerce, riches and luxuries. The ephah points to this.

In the second place let us notice that in the midst of the ephah there is seen a woman. She is called wickedness. The Hebrew word wickedness is translated by the Septuagint with "anomia". We find that the Holy Spirit uses the same word in 2 Thess. 2:8, and then shall be revealed in the wicked one (anomia) whom the Lord Jesus will slay with the Spirit of His

mouth. The woman in the ephah personifies wickedness. She has surrounded herself with the ephah and sits in the midst of it. Have we not here the great whore having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication? Undoubtedly. This woman is the type of evil and wickedness in its highest form. Let us glance at that wonderful description of that woman in Revelation. She is the great whore sitting upon many waters. She sits upon a scarlet colored beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns. The woman is arrayed in purple and scarlet decked with gold, precious stones and pearls. Upon her forehead is seen her name, Mystery, Babylon the Great, the mother of harlots and abominations in the earth. She is drunk with the blood of the saints. The woman in the ephah represents the same great whore, Babylon the Great. This becomes at once clear when we take into consideration that the woman in the ephah is carried swiftly away and a house is built for her in the land of Shinar, and it shall be established, and set there upon her own base. Now the land of Shinar is Babylonia. But while in Revelation 17 the mystical Babylon is seen, in the eighteenth chapter there is another Babylon, the final great political-commercial world system; it is still future, not very far away, for we see that the trend of modern events is towards such a combination. The vision of the ephah and the woman evidently sealed up in it may denote the overthrow and judgment of the final Babylon.

CHAPTER 6

1. The eighth vision (6:1-8)
2. The crowning of Joshua, the High-Priest (6:9-15)

Verses 1-8. The last vision is the vision of the four chariots. We notice the similarity with the first night-vision. The visions opened with the hosts of heaven upon red, speckled, and white horses. It was a vision of judgment for the Gentiles and a vision of comfort to Israel. In this last vision the chariots of judgment are seen sweeping over the earth. It seems to denote judgment in its final accomplishment. The riders of the first vision may be termed the beginning of God's dealing with the nations, but the chariots put the divine judgment decrees into operation.

The riders halted in a valley amidst a myrtle grove, but the chariots rush forth to execute their terrible work from between two mountains of brass. These mountains mean undoubtedly Mount Moriah and the Mount of Olives. They rush through the Valley of Jehoshaphat. The brass is mentioned to denote the firmness and stability of these mountains, which shall never be moved. We do not think that in the four chariots there is an allusion to the four world-powers. The judgment of them is now come. The stone is falling and smiting the image at its feet and pulverizing it, putting it completely out of existence. The chariots are God's powers, agencies for judgment in the earth, which will pass swiftly along, shown by the fast running chariots. In Rev. 6 the seven seals are opened, and there go forth the four terrible riders upon white, red, black, and pale horses. The riders in the Apocalypse are the riders which go through the earth during the great tribulation, but in the eighth night vision of Zechariah we see the chariots of God's wrath. The vision falls in the time when the heaven opens and He appears riding upon a white horse, His name Faithful and True, coming in righteousness to judge and to make war. Wonderful vision of Him who is clothed with a vesture dipped in blood! He is followed by the armies of heaven upon white horses, all clothed in fine linen white and clean. "And out of His mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it He should smite the nations, and He shall rule them with a rod of iron, and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of almighty God" (Rev. 19).

The angel interprets to the prophet that the chariots are the four spirits of the heavens which go forth from standing before the Lord of the earth. These agencies for wrath were with God, standing before Him, the Lord of all the earth, but now at His command they descend to scatter death and destruction. They go forth in sets, and the north country and south country both so prominent in the prophetic word are mentioned. The bay horses, however, are not confined to one direction, they go through the entire earth. At last in the judgment of the land of the north the spirit is caused to rest. The overthrow of the enemies of Israel is complete and the spirit is quieted. How long may the wrath last and for how long may the chariots do their deadly work? Perhaps longer than we think. The millennial reign of Christ, as foreshadowed in the bloody rule of David, followed by the peaceful reign of Solomon, may teach us lessons in this direction. The night visions have ended. They may be termed the Apocalypse of Zechariah. Daniel, Zechariah, and Revelation go together in a wonderful harmony and explain each other. Alas! that just these three parts of the Bible should be so little studied and so

little understood.

Verses 9-15. The memorable night with its great visions was gone. The first streaks of the morning heralded the coming dawn. Then the Word of the Lord came to the young prophet commanding him to make crowns of silver and gold and crown Joshua, the High-Priest.

Some consider this to be the ninth vision of the prophet. It is, however, the word of the Lord which comes to the prophet. There can be no doubt but the command was actually carried out and Cheldai (robust), Tobiah (God's goodness), and Jedaiah (God knows), gave their silver and gold, and crowns were made out of it and placed upon the head of Joshua the high-priest. But the action had a much deeper meaning. It was a highly typical one. It must have astonished Joshua and the people to hear such a command, for the royal crown did not belong to the high-priest but to the descendant of David. He must have understood that the whole command had a symbolical bearing. Joshua hears it from the Word of the Lord that another person is only typified by him, "Behold the man whose name is the Branch." It is this man the Branch who will be a priest upon the throne. This, of course, is our Lord Jesus Christ. The name of the high-priest Joshua is in itself very significant, for the meaning is, God is salvation, Saviour, Jesus. Pontius Pilate was fulfilling prophecy when he stood there leading out Jesus of Nazareth before that tumultuous multitude, and when he said "Behold the man." If the assembled Jews had known the Scriptures they would have recognized the phrase. But how did He then come forth? He wore a crown of thorns upon His meek and loving brow, and the people gazed into the blood-stained face of the Lamb of God now ready to be placed upon the altar and slain. But once again it will sound forth, "Behold the man," for when He appears it will be after He has gathered His saints, and then He will come as the Son of Man in the heavens, and the sign of the Son of Man will be seen there. He will be crowned again, too, but not with the crown of suffering and shame, but with the crowns of glory. Thus He is seen in Revelation 19:12 as wearing many crowns.

He comes to build the temple of Jehovah, bearing majesty, sitting and ruling upon His throne. He is now the builder of the spiritual temple, which is composed of living stones (Eph. 2:21, 1 Peter 2:5). But when He comes again there will be the building of another temple. It is now no longer His Father's throne but His own, upon which He is a priest as well. The King of Kings and the Lord of Lords has now taken possession of His inheritance. The times of overturning are over and He whose right it is has come. There is a very instructive thought in the fact that the persons of the exile, as mentioned above, were to bring the silver and the gold out of which the crowns were to be made. The time will come when the whole exiled nation, so long scattered and peeled, though even in dispersion, the richest nation of the earth, will bring their silver and gold, their glory and their all and lay it at the feet of the King.

II. QUESTIONS CONCERNING CERTAIN FASTS

CHAPTER 7

1. The question (7:1-3)
2. The reproof (7:4-7)
3. The lessons of the past (7:8-14)

Verses 1-3. Nearly two years had passed since Zechariah's great visions, and during that time the people had been obedient to the vision and built the house. Soon the ancient worship was to be resumed. A question arose in the minds of the people concerning certain Jewish days of fasting. The principal day was the day set apart in memory of the destruction of Jerusalem by the Babylonians. It was kept on the ninth day of the fifth month (the ninth of Ab, still kept by the Jews). The question came to the prophet through two men who bear foreign names--Sherezzer (Prince of the Treasury) and Regemelech (the official of the king). The question was, "Should I weep in the fifth month, separating myself, as I have done these many years?" They had wept in Babylon on that day (Psalm 137).

Verses 4-7. The word of the Lord comes now to the prophet. The message is for all the people and for the priests. The two fasts are mentioned. The one in the fifth month as already stated was the one in remembrance of the destruction of the

city. The fast of the seventh month was kept on the anniversary of the murder of Gedaliah at Mizpah (Jeremiah 41). But why did they keep these fast days? Why do they keep these days indeed still? The Lord asks, "Is it unto Me, unto Me?" No, it was not for the honor and glory of God, but their own selfish interests were at the bottom of it. Indeed God had never asked them to fast. These institutions were man-made, and highly displeasing to Jehovah. And is it not so now, not alone with the Jews but with Christendom? oh, the man-made institutions and outward observances which only dishonor God and are for the selfish interests of the people! The eating and drinking, the fast being over, was not unto the Lord, but unto themselves. It was obedience the Lord required. Had they listened to the words spoken by the prophets they would not have been in captivity, there would have been no need for a solemn fast. Unbelief was at the bottom of it all, and so it is still with the nation in dispersion.

Verses 8-14. Here are moral lessons and instructions. They were to execute true judgment, show mercy and compassion, oppress not the widow nor the fatherless, the poor or the stranger. These were His demands in the past, but their fathers did not listen, and as a result the judgment of the Lord came upon them and they were scattered with a whirlwind. History has repeated itself. What happened in the past happened again.

CHAPTER 8

1. The restoration announced (8:1-3)
2. The peace of Jerusalem (8:4-5)
3. The return to the land (8:6-8)
4. The blessing of the land and the people (8:9-23)

Verses 1-3. The answer is now given to the question, and it is an answer which none of the petitioners expected. The answer is closely linked with the third night vision in chapter 2, for here is an enlarged prophecy concerning the restoration of Jerusalem. Jehovah was jealous for Jerusalem. The wrath fell upon the Gentiles and He poured out His fury upon them (which of course is future). When that has taken place He returns unto Zion and establishes His dwelling place in the midst of His people. Then Jerusalem is no longer trodden down by the Gentiles. Her name is a new name, "the City of Truth." How different from the other names she bore in her humiliation! She was called an unclean woman (Lam. 1:8, 17); a harlot and a murderer (Isa. 1:21); Sodom and Egypt (Rev. 11).

Verses 4-5. The misery of Jerusalem was great while under judgment. All will be changed "in that day." The city will have peace and prosperity and be largely inhabited. Hence there will be no more need to weep over her past fate and desolation, for greater glory has come.

Verses 6-8. They all return to the land. In the second chapter the north country was mentioned (Russia); and their return announced. Here the east and the west are named, the far east, India, China, Japan; and the West, the European countries and America.

Verses 9-23. What a contrast with the former days of judgment and dispersion and misery! For before these days there was no hire for man, nor any hire for beast.... Little fruit was had from the ground; there was nothing for man and beast.... Neither was there any peace to him that went out or came in on account of the affliction.... There was no rest, no peace, but uncertainty and affliction. Those that went out from the land had no peace, and they that came into the land found no peace. The curse said, No rest for the sole of their feet, and how literally it has been fulfilled. Again the people seek a resting place in the land without their God and their Saviour, all in the confidence of the flesh. They will succeed in their restoration plans only to find themselves at last in greater difficulties and facing worse afflictions than ever before. Then every one will be against his neighbor (verse 10). Money spent by the millions in building channels for irrigation, planting of trees and vines, building railroads, etc. (just what modern Zionism proposes and has undertaken to do), may succeed in transforming the land in spots into a fruitful garden, but the time of Jacob's trouble will sweep that all away. The Lord will be gracious to the very land in the day of His manifestation. There will be a time of peace, the vine will give her fruit, the ground her increase, the heavens their dew.

The curse will then be changed into a blessing and the remnant will be a holy people. Fast days become feast days; national calamities of the past are forgotten, and in the place of weeping there is praise and worship. The songs of praise with which the book of Psalms closes will undoubtedly then be sung by the restored nation. This great restoration chapter closes with a vision of the conversion of the whole world (verses 20-23). The nations are seeking the Lord of Hosts in Jerusalem to pray before Him. Then the Jew will no longer be a dishonored person among the Gentiles, but they will be the messengers of the King among the nations; and they will gladly take hold of the skirt of the Jew to be taken by him to Jerusalem.

II. THE TWO PROPHETIC BURDENS--THE GREAT PROPHECIES OF THE FUTURE

I. The First Burden (9-11)

CHAPTER 9

1. The burden of the land of Hadrach (9:1-8)
2. Zion's King of Peace (9:9-12)
3. The near-event of the invasion by Antiochus Ephiaphanes (9:13-17)

Verses 1-8. The final section of Zechariah is of still greater interest. The Deliverer, King Messiah, is revealed in this section as suffering, rejected, pierced, slain. The great finale leads us up to the great conflict and final siege of Jerusalem. We do not enter into the inventions of criticism, which claim that these great prophecies are less authentic than the first part of Zechariah.

The land of Hadrach against which the first burden in chapter 9 commences cannot be correctly located. Its closer connection with Damascus and Hamath shows that the land of Hadrach must have been a province of the Syrian kingdom then in existence. The Phoenician Cities Tyre and Sidon are next, and then mention is made of four Philistine cities. Against these, Syria, Phoenicia and the cities of the Philistines a great calamity and overthrow is prophesied by Zechariah. They are conquered by the hosts of an enemy, and the rich treasures of Tyre are heaped together in the streets--silver as the dust and gold as the mire--the bulwarks are smitten, and she herself consumed by fire. From there the conquest goes on rapidly to the Philistinian cities, and the King of Gaza perishes. The question arises, What conquest and calamity is this? Is it accomplished or is it still future? History records one great conqueror who rapidly overthrew the countries and cities mentioned in this burden. Alexander the Great and his expedition so successfully carried on is undoubtedly meant here. All students of the prophetic Scriptures know how prominently he likewise stands out in the book of Daniel. The young monarch, after the battle of Issus, besieged and quickly captured Damascus. Sidon was easily taken, but Tyre resisted him some seven months and was burned to the ground. Gaza and the other cities came next. Thus the burden of the word of Jehovah as uttered here by Zechariah was literally fulfilled in the Syrian conquest of Alexander the Great. However, history tells us that the armies of the youthful monarch passed by Jerusalem a number of times without doing harm to the city. This is remarkable, and in accord with the prophecy of Zechariah, for we read in the eighth verse, "And I will encamp against mine house, against the army, against him that passes through and returns, and no oppressor shall come over them any more, for now I have seen it with mine eyes."

But this prophetic burden leads us up also to the final days, for we read here the promise that "no oppressor shall come over them any more." This brings it in connection with the final coming deliverance of Israel, and the final destructive visitation upon their enemies.

Verses 9-12. A great prophecy follows. The true King of Israel comes here before us in His humiliation, and coming exaltation.

Rejoice greatly, daughter of Zion, Shout aloud, daughter of Jerusalem; Behold thy king cometh to thee, Just and having

salvation; Meek and riding upon an ass, Even upon a colt, the she-ass's foal; And I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim, And the horse from Jerusalem, And the battle bow shall be cut off, And He shall speak peace unto the nations, And His dominion shall be from sea to sea, And from the river to the ends of the earth. As for thee also, for the sake of thy covenant blood, I send forth thy prisoners from the waterless pit, Return to the stronghold--Prisoners of hope Even today I declare I will render double unto thee.

This stands in contrast to the Grecian conqueror, and it needs no proofs that the coming King whom Zechariah beholds is the King Messiah. The Jews acknowledge it as such. One of the greatest Jewish commentators (Rashi) says: It is impossible to interpret it of any other than King Messiah. An interesting fable is based upon this prophecy, and well known among orthodox Jews. Rabbi Eliezer says, commenting on the words lowly and riding upon an ass, "This is the ass, the foal of that she-ass which was created in the twilight. This is the ass which Abraham our father saddled for the binding Of Isaac his son. This is the ass upon which Moses our teacher rode when He came to Egypt, as it is said, And he made them ride upon the ass (Exodus 4:20). This is the ass upon which the Son of David shall ride." Other interesting quotations could be given from Jewish writings, but this is sufficient to show that the Jews believe it to be a Messianic prophecy. And what blindness that they do not see Him who is the Messiah; but is not the so-called "higher criticism" existing today in Christendom being taught in churches and schools, and that there are no Messianic prophecies in the Old Testament, much greater blindness? Alas! so it is, and the outcome can be nothing else in the end than the denial of the divinity of our Lord, or Unitarianism.

Every reader of the New Testament knows that this prophecy is quoted in the Gospels. In the Gospel of Matthew we read (chapter 21:5): "All this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, Tell the daughter of Sion, Behold thy King cometh unto thee, meek, and sitting upon an ass, upon a colt the foal of an ass." The context shows a great multitude crying, Hosanna to the Son of David: Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest. But soon the cry is changed unto, This is Jesus the prophet from Nazareth of Galilee. Notice the Holy Spirit quoting from Zechariah leaves out the sentence, "He is just, having salvation." This is not an error, but it is the divine right of the Spirit who gave the prophecies in olden times to apply them correctly in the New Testament. In the Gospel of Mark in the eleventh chapter there is likewise the description of Christ's entry into Jerusalem, but Zechariah is not quoted. The same is true of the account given by Luke, chapter 19, and here He is mentioned as the King that cometh in the name of Jehovah, peace in heaven, and glory in the highest. In the fourth Gospel, chapter 12:15, the account of His coming to Jerusalem is much shorter than in the other Gospels. It says there, "Fear not, daughter of Zion; behold, thy King cometh, sitting upon an ass's colt." We see from this that the four Gospels give each an account of the entry of the Lord into Jerusalem; two of them quote from Zechariah and the other two do not. The quotations themselves are different from the prophecy in Zechariah 9 in two respects. The first words, Rejoice greatly, are not at all used. In Matthew it is, Tell the daughter of Zion, and in John, Fear not, daughter of Zion. The sentence, "He is just and having salvation", is left out in both.

A superficial exposition of the Word claims that Zechariah's prophecy was fulfilled in the event recorded by the Gospels. As far as His entry into Jerusalem is concerned, riding upon the colt the foal of an ass (and note in Matthew it is shown that both the colt and the ass are brought to Him. He could ride, of course, only upon one, but the she-ass had to go along in fulfillment of prophecy), and the way He came, meekly, in this respect the prophecy was fulfilled. This entry of the Son of Man into Jerusalem was His formal presentation to Jerusalem as its King, but, as stated above, the Messianic cry of welcome, Blessed is He, soon changed into, Jesus the prophet from Nazareth in Galilee, and that again in the final cry of rejection, Crucify Him, crucify Him! There was no salvation for Israel then, and no kingdom for Him, hence no rejoicing is mentioned in the quotations.

It is His second coming to Jerusalem as the Son of Man in His glory which will bring the fulfillment of Zechariah 9:9-11. True, the colt, the she ass's foal, will not be the animal He rides, but He will come upon a white horse followed by the armies of heaven. He comes then truly for Jerusalem, fulfilling the prophecy, "Just is He having salvation" (marginal reading, victory). There will be again the welcome cry of the one hundred eighteenth Psalm, "Blessed is He that cometh in the name of Jehovah," preceded by the plea, "Hosanna, save now."

The tenth and eleventh verses show clearly that the prophecy is yet to be fulfilled and can be only fulfilled in the coming of the Son of Man in His glory. One of the reasons why modern Judaism rejects Jesus of Nazareth, and does not believe Him to be the promised Redeemer, is in this prophecy. Rabbi F. De Sola Mendes, of New York, brings in a little book, "A Hebrew's Reply to the Missionaries," the following argument: "We reject Jesus of Nazareth as our Messiah on account of His deeds. He says of Himself, 'Think not that I am come to send peace on the earth; I came not to send peace but a sword,' etc. But we find that our prophets ascribed to the true Messiah quite different actions. Zechariah says (9:10), He shall speak peace to the nations. Jesus says He came to send the sword on the earth; whereas, Isaiah says of the true Messianic time, 'They shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation; neither shall they learn war any more.'"

Of course the Jew is right in expecting the literal fulfillment of this prophecy, and it will be fulfilled when He comes again and the restoration of all things will follow, as spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets.

When He appears again, in like manner as He went into heaven, that is not for His saints but with His saints, there will be peace for Ephraim and for Jerusalem, and the kingdom is then restored to Israel, that is, to the house of Judah and the house of Israel. The chariot, the horse, and the battle-bow will be cut off. Not alone will He bring peace to the covenant people but to the nations. He will speak peace. "And He shall stand, and shall feed His flock in the strength of the LORD, in the majesty of the name of Jehovah His God, and they shall abide; for now shall He be great unto the ends of the earth. And this man shall be our peace" (Micah 5:4, 5). There will be abundance of peace (Psa. 72:7). His dominion will be from sea to sea and to the ends of the earth.

The prisoners of hope to be released, by the blood of the covenant, from the pit wherein there is no water, is the nation whose captivity is now ended. How strange that people should take a passage like this and interpret it as meaning the restitution of the wicked and the ungodly from the pit. There is nothing taught in the Word like that which some people term a larger hope. The restitution (restoration) of all things is not left to the fanciful interpretation of the human mind, but is clearly defined by the Word itself, as spoken by the prophets. In the vision of the dry bones in Ezekiel 37, Israel's complaint is, Our hope is lost. But when He is manifested, who is indeed the Hope of Israel, the prisoners (the captives), will be released and cleansed. "Refrain thy voice from weeping and thine eyes from tears.... there is hope for thy latter end, saith the LORD, and thy children shall come again to their own border" (Jer. 31:17). The exhortation to return to the stronghold follows. Israel will then sing, "He brought me up out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and He set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings" (Psa. 40:2). Double will be rendered unto them, as promised, "Speak to the heart of Jerusalem, and cry unto her that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned, that she has received of the LORD'S hand double for all her sins" (Isa. 40:2). "For your shame ye shall have double, and for confusion they shall rejoice in that portion; therefore in their land they shall possess double; everlasting joy shall be unto them" (Isa. 41:7).

Verses 13-17. The scene changes once more. One of Alexander's successors, Antiochus Epiphanes, and the Maccabean victory is the topic of these verses. On this invader see Daniel 8, where he is predicted as the little horn and his abominable work there is fully described. He entered "the pleasant land," the land of Israel. A bitter struggle commenced, for Antiochus tried to exterminate the Jews, and their religion as well. Every observance of the Jewish religion was forbidden, the Sabbath had to be profaned, and unclean food had to be eaten. Idols were set up in the temple. Instead of the Jewish feasts, the feasts of idols, with all their shocking abominations and immoralities, were introduced, and the Jews were forced to join in them. Thousands suffered martyrdom. But all at once a few people stood up against the abominations, the Maccabeans, and in a struggle lasting about twenty-five years, they fought successfully against the enemies.

This terrible visitation of the land and the wonderful victory of the Maccabeans are foretold by the prophet in the closing verses of the ninth chapter. We will quote the passage:

I bend for me Judah and fill the bow with Ephraim, And I will stir up thy sons, Zion, against thy sons, Greece, And make thee like the sword of a mighty man. Jehovah shall be seen over them, And His arrow shall go forth like lightning-- And the Lord Jehovah shall blow the trumpet. He shall go with whirlwinds of the South. The LORD of Hosts shall cover

them; They shall devour and tread down slingstones, And they drink and make a noise as from wine, And they shall be filled like bowls, as the corners of the altar. And Jehovah their God saves them in that day, as the flock of His people; For jewels of a crown shall they be, glittering over His land, For how great is His goodness and how great His beauty! Corn shall make the young men flourish, and new wine maidens.

But again we have to remark that this prophecy is only partially fulfilled. The terrible tribulation of the land of Judah when Antiochus Epiphanes invaded the land is but a type of the great tribulation, the time of Jacob's trouble. The remnant of Israel will then be victorious. Thus everything is seen in this chapter in a past fulfillment, but only partial, and in it a future fulfillment, which will be complete.

We cannot leave this chapter without calling attention to the blessed statement:

For jewels of a crown they shall be, glittering over His land.

The slain who suffered martyrdom are meant, and all those who fought for Jehovah's name and honor. May not the statement in Hebrews 11 refer to this time? "Others had trials of mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment: they were stoned, they were sawn asunder, they were tempted, they were slain with the sword; they went about in sheepskins, in goatskins: being destitute, afflicted, evil entreated, of whom the world was not worthy, wandering in deserts and in mountains and caves and the holes of the earth" (Heb. 11:36-38).

And all will find a repetition during the coming tribulation. But the time for reward has not yet come. The throne of glory is not yet revealed, and the jewels, the saints made up in a crown, glittering over the land, are not yet seen. But the assurance is given, "They shall be Mine, saith the LORD of Hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels" (Mal. 3:17).

The first verse of the next chapter is misplaced; it belongs to the close of chapter 9. When the time of blessing comes, the latter rain will fall upon the land and produce the promised fruitfulness.

CHAPTER 10:2-12

1. The apostasy of Israel in the last days (10:2-4)
2. The victory over the enemies (10:5-7)
3. Deliverance and restoration (10:8-12)

Verses 2-4. Idolatry was the great sin of both Judah and Israel. They practiced the occult things of heathendom and worshipped their false gods; they had teraphim used for divination. On account of this the wrath fell upon the former generations, and the Lord's anger was kindled against their leaders, the shepherds, and they were dispersed. We have called attention before to Matthew 12:43-45, the passage in which the Lord Jesus announces that the unbelieving part of the nation will return in the last days to the unclean spirit of idolatry, only in a worse form than before. Many of the unbelievers amongst the Jews in our days turn to the witchery of Christian Science; they adopt also that Satanic system known as Spiritism. But the apostates will go beyond that. They will finally accept the Devil's master production, the man of sin, and worship him (2 Thess. 2; Rev. 13; Dan. 9:27). Then the Lord will punish these goats. At the same time there is a remnant which will stand aside from these future idolatries; they will fear the Lord and not enter into a covenant with the beast (see annotations Daniel 9:27). The second half of the third verse in this chapter belongs to this remnant: "The LORD of hosts visits His flock, the house of Judah, and makes it like His state-horse in the war." He will use them and finally deliver them.

The fourth verse is of much interest. "From him will be the cornerstone, from him the nail, from him the battle-bow, from him every ruler goeth forth at once" (corrected translation). The nail in the oriental house is a large pin, often very beautifully ornamented, and the most costly things are hanged thereupon. "And I will fasten him as a nail in a sure place and he shall be for a glorious throne to his father's house. And they shall hang upon him all the glory of his father's

house" (Isa. 22:23, 24). The Shemoth rabbah, a Jewish interpretation, says on this verse, "this is King David; as it is said, the stone which the builders rejected is become the chief cornerstone." Some say it is spoken concerning the Lord, that He is the cornerstone and the nail. It refers to Him, no doubt, but what is spoken of Him finds also a fulfillment in restored Israel. Thus Israel is yet to be the cornerstone upon which everything rests in the earth, and the nail upon which hangs the glory.

Verses 5-7. The great final victory is announced in this section. They shall fight and conquer, for the LORD of hosts is with them as of old. They will be saved out of the time of Jacob's trouble, "For I have mercy upon them; and they shall be as though I had not cast them off; for I am the LORD their God, and I will hear them." Ephraim will be there, the restored ten tribes.

Verses 8-12. They will be delivered in that day, redeemed and restored. Let us notice that the eleventh verse must be applied to the Lord. He is with them in the sea of affliction, as He was with them in Egypt and went before them in the pillar of cloud.

CHAPTER 11

1. The judgment of the land, the temple and the slaughter of the flock (11:1-6)
2. The true shepherd set aside and rejected (11:7-14)
3. The foolish shepherd (11:15-17)

Verses 1-6. This chapter presents a dark prophetic picture. We have seen in the preceding chapters the blessings and mercies in store for the Israel of the future. The visions and prophecies have revealed their national and spiritual restoration, the overthrow of their enemies, the destruction of the world-powers, the establishment of the theocracy and the blessings of the kingdom. What precedes this coming glory is now more fully unfolded, and the rejection of the Shepherd of Israel is predicted. The first six verses concern the judgment as the result of that rejection. For a complete exposition see our "Studies in Zechariah," where we also give the interesting Jewish comments on this passage. They apply it mostly to the destruction of the temple.

The correct interpretation is that it includes all the devastation of the land, the burning of the temple, the slaughter of the flock, the spoiling of the shepherds, the Jewish leaders and the complete overthrow of the land and of the people. How awful the fulfillment of the prophecy has been! The Lord's voice, full of tears cried, long after Zechariah's mournful vision, "If thou hadst known, at least in this thy day, the things which belong to thy peace, but now they are hid from thine eyes! For the days shall come upon thee that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side. And shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee, and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another." The measure was full. After terrible wars amongst themselves, the fire advanced in the direction of Lebanon, in the form of the Roman army full of vengeance, spreading ruin and misery wherever they went, till after a long and dreadful siege Jerusalem fell, the temple was burnt, and over a million human beings were slain. Not one stone was left upon another. Up to now this judgment has been the most appalling, the tribulation then the greatest; but there is another tribulation coming of which the former destruction of Jerusalem is but a faint type, and that tribulation which is even now so close at hand will find a climax in the day of wrath, the day of vengeance of our God. The next verses (4-6) speak of the flock of slaughter and the last attempt divine love made to save the doomed nation.

Verses 7-14. The prophet acts again symbolically in taking two staves, one called Beauty, the other Bands. Much has been written on this interesting but difficult passage. The first sentence speaks of divine love. The true Shepherd came, the Messiah, and He fed the flock of slaughter, the poor of the flock. He looked on the multitudes and was moved with compassion, for they were scattered, like sheep without a shepherd. The prophet as representing the true Shepherd has two staves. The one is named Beauty; or, as we read in the margin, graciousness. The second one is named Bands. The Shepherd carries a staff to protect and to guide His flock. God's mercy and favor are clearly indicated in these two staves. The first one, Beauty, which is cut asunder first, and that before the wages of the Shepherd, the thirty pieces of silver, are

given, stands no doubt for the gracious offer with which the King, preaching the kingdom, came among His people, to His own. He proclaimed that which prophets had spoken before, God's mercy and love, long promised, now to be carried out. He Himself had come to redeem His people and deliver them from their mighty enemies as well as from the false leaders. But the offer, the kingdom preaching, is rejected, the staff, Beauty, is cut asunder, the covenant with the peoples (Amim in Hebrew), His own, is now broken. The kingdom is to be taken away and given to another nation. After the breaking of the staff, Beauty, there comes the giving of the wages, the thirty pieces of silver. The Shepherd who broke the staff is treated like a slave.

The second staff in His hands, Bands, speaks of union, binding together, bringing into fellowship. It typifies the priestly side of the good Shepherd who died for the flock. This staff is broken after the thirty pieces of silver were given for Him, and cast into the temple. They cried, Away with Him! we have no King save Caesar! Crucify Him! His blood be upon us and upon our children! The cross bears the superscription, This is Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews, and from the lips of the rejected King and Shepherd there came the prayer for His people, Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do. The doom came not at once upon the nation. Once more the love of the Shepherd is preached to the miserable sheep, and the remission of sins offered in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, but it ends in rejection too; no bringing together into One followed. The foolish shepherd appears next, and after him the good Shepherd will appear again with His two staves, Beauty and Bands, kingdom and mercy, bringing and binding together. He will then be a Priest upon His throne. This interpretation is the most satisfactory one, and in harmony with the entire scope of Zechariah's visions and prophecies.

Who are the three shepherds to be cut off in one month by the Shepherd? The three shepherds are not persons, but they stand for the three classes of rulers which governed Israel, and were in that sense shepherds. We read of these shepherds in Jeremiah 2:8, priests, rulers and prophets. The Lord likewise mentions them in Matthew 16:21, elders, chief priests and scribes. When He came He was indeed weary with them, and denounced their hypocrisies and wickedness. They in turn hated and abhorred Him, and conspired to put Him to death. The Lord Himself cut them off. He pronounced His woes and judgments upon them, but the judgment was not at once carried out. When Jerusalem was taken, their rule came to an end and they were cut off.

But there are mentioned the wretched of the flock that gave heed unto the Shepherd, and they knew that it was the word of Jehovah. These wretched ones are the faithful ones who followed the Shepherd, the small remnant (compare with chapter 13:7). The others who rejected the King and the Shepherd were indeed not fed, but were dying and cut off.

The wages of the good Shepherd, thirty pieces of silver, and these thrown into the house of Jehovah to the potter is to be considered next. Thirty pieces of silver was the price of a slave who had been killed. If the ox gore a manservant or a maidservant, the owner shall give unto their master thirty shekels of silver (Exodus 21:32). Oh, what unfathomable love! The Lord from heaven became like a slave. The love He looked for He found not. It was refused to Him, and instead He was insulted, mocked, and treated like a miserable slave. There was one of the twelve who was called Judas Iscariot. He went to the chief priests and said, What are you willing to give me, and I will deliver Him unto you? And they weighed unto him thirty pieces of silver (Matt. 26:15). The money at the command of Jehovah is thrown away by the prophet with indignation into the house of Jehovah, to the potter. Perhaps the prophet never knew the real significance of his act, but we know it from the New Testament. "Then Judas which betrayed Him, when he saw that He was condemned, repented himself and brought back the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, saying, I have sinned in that I betrayed innocent blood. But they said, What is this to us? See thou to it. And he cast down the pieces of silver into the sanctuary, and departed and hanged himself. And the chief priests took the pieces of silver and said, it is not lawful to put them into the treasury since it is the price of blood. And they took counsel and bought with them the potters' field to bury strangers in. Wherefore that field was called the field of blood unto this day. Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremiah, the prophet, saying, And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the price of Him that was priced, whom certain of the children of Israel did price, and they gave them for the potters' field, as the Lord appointed me" (Matt. 27:3-10). How striking the fulfillment. However, here is a difficulty. In Matthew it is stated that Jeremiah spoke the prophecy, and Zechariah's name is not mentioned at all. How can this be explained?

The prophecy certainly as it was fulfilled was not given by Jeremiah at all, but through Zechariah. There can be no doubt that his name should appear here instead of Jeremiah, but that Jeremiah's name is quoted must have a meaning. Let us notice that it does not say in Matthew 27 that it was written by Jeremiah, but it is stated that it was spoken by Jeremiah. Is there anything in Jeremiah which can be linked with this prophecy? We have indeed in Jeremiah a similar action of the prophet, corresponding to Zechariah 11:13, and which is seen fulfilled in the gospel. Read Jeremiah 18 and 19. The word "Tophet" used there means an unclean place, a burial ground. Jeremiah's name appears in Matthew's Gospel, to call attention to the fact that Jeremiah also spoke of the same event, the rejection of the true Shepherd.

Verses 15-17. The foolish shepherd is the false Messiah, the man of sin, the son of perdition. The prophet impersonates him likewise. He no longer holds the staves of Beauty and Bands, but has the instrument of the foolish shepherd to wound and to hurt. This false Christ is the opposite from the true Christ. The true Shepherd came to seek, to save, to feed, to heal, and to gather; the false shepherd does the opposite.

The True One rejected, the nation becomes the prey of the foolish shepherds. Poor, blinded Israel! How many wicked shepherds they have had, and how often the prey of wicked leaders. False Messiahs appeared among them again and again to find strong and numerous following. Still the foolish shepherd, the last one, the very embodiment of Satan himself, the accuser, has not yet come. Forerunners there have been many. Herod was one of them, but not that man of sin, the son of perdition who will appear and be worshipped as a God, right before the King of Kings and the true Shepherd of His flock appears to slay that wicked one with the breath of His mouth and the brightness of His coming (2 Thess. 2). The Lord said, I am come in My Father's name, and ye receive Me not; if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive (John 5:43). That one who comes in his own name has not yet come, and when at last he is here, it will be for Israel the time of greatest trouble and tribulation for all them that inhabit the earth. During the war interpretation of prophecy went to seed with some who saw in the deluded German Kaiser a fulfillment of this passage, because he had a withered arm. Such foolish inventions are deplorable, for they bring the study of prophecy into disrepute. The third section of our chapter finds its complete fulfillment in the Antichrist, the false Messiah, the beast, the little horn, the leader of the enemy, the false prince of Israel; thus the foolish shepherd is called throughout the prophetic word. The dreadful punishment will be executed upon the foolish shepherd in the day of the Lord's coming with His saints for the salvation of his people Israel.

The eleventh chapter in Zechariah is the darkest in Israel's history. The night began with their apostasy and rejection of the Lord of Glory, their own brother, their loving Shepherd, the Lord Jesus Christ. It ends in darkness greater still under the regime of the foolish shepherd. But the morning cometh after that dark night, and Israel's sun will never set again.

II. The Second Burden of Zechariah (12-14)

CHAPTER 12

1. Jerusalem's conflict and victory (12:1-9)
2. The vision of the pierced One and its results (12:10-14)

Verses 1-9. The second burden begins with this chapter. It is wholly unfulfilled with the exception of the prophecy at the end of chapter 13 concerning the Shepherd who was smitten. The great future events recorded in these closing chapters of Zechariah are the following: The victory of Jerusalem, the overthrow of the hostile nations from the west (the nations which constitute the revived Roman Empire), the outpouring of the Spirit upon the remnant, the appearing and the vision of the Pierced One, the national repentance, the cleansing of the people, the invasion from the north, the appearing of Christ standing upon the Mount of Olives, the establishment of the kingdom and the glory of Jerusalem. Historically no such gathering of all nations against Jerusalem can be located. It is all prophetic, and so intensely interesting in the days we write, for these things are "about to come to pass."

Behold, I make Jerusalem a cup of reeling To all the nations round about: Upon Judah also shall it be, In the siege against Jerusalem. And it shall come in that day, I make Jerusalem A burdensome stone for all the peoples; All that are

burdened with it shall be wounded; All the nations of the earth shall gather against it.

This does not take place till the end of the age is reached, the end which begins after the true Church is taken to glory. Then the nations satanically blinded will form the confederacy which in prophecy is the reconstruction of the Roman Empire, seen in the second chapter of Daniel under the symbol of the two feet and ten toes, and in Daniel 7 under the symbol of the ten horns with the little horn. In Revelation 13 it is the beast with the ten horns. The Jews will have to return first, at least a goodly number of them, and repossess the city.

In 1899 the author wrote as follows: "An exodus of Jews will take place, the land will become theirs, and the well laid plans and schemes of the present time will be carried out. Political combinations will be their chief hopes for success." This anticipated return is now a historic fact as one of the chief results of the great war (WWI). When finally the Jews think that they have reached the goal of their fleshly, unbelieving hopes, their greatest trouble begins. There is yet to appear the beast who makes a covenant with them. But according to Daniel's great prophecy (Dan. 9) the covenant will be broken in the middle of the seventieth week. Then the beast heads the armies of the nations to come up against the land and against Jerusalem (see Rev. 19:19). They will lay siege to the city, but the Lord announces that these nations shall be cut to pieces. It is the time when the stone strikes the feet of the prophetic image in the second chapter of Daniel, the great battle of Armageddon. Verses 4-9 describe that day. Jehovah will smite these nations and all these hostile forces will be overthrown.

Here also is given the order of how the Lord will save the remnant of His people. Those who live in tents outside the city will be saved first; Jerusalem comes next. The purpose is that the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem may not exalt themselves over the rest of Judah. The house of David in this vision is mentioned five times. We have the glory of the house of David in verse seven, the strength of David and the supremacy of it in verse eight. The spirit of grace and supplication is given to the house of David, and the family of the house of David will mourn. Jews have a tradition which states that the last descendant of the house of David died in Spain centuries ago. There are no genealogies at present to prove that the kingly house of David is extinct or not, but the prophecies like the one we have in consideration, and many others which speak of the prominence of David and the house of David in the day when Jehovah will be manifested, make it very clear that among the wandering sons of Israel there are yet lineal descendants of the house of David. If they do not know it themselves, Jehovah knows it, and they will know it through Him. The feeble ones, literally the stumblers, among His people in that day of manifestation will be like David. What a hero David was! A man of war and strength conquering always and never conquered. And now the stumbler in Israel, the weakest one, will have strength and courage like David. And David shall be as God, as the angel of Jehovah before them.

Verses 10-14. This is another great Messianic prophecy mentioned in the New Testament. In John 19:37 it is written, after the blessed side of our Lord had been pierced, "And again another Scripture saith, They shall look on Him whom they pierced." It is significant that the Holy Spirit speaking in the preceding verse, "that the Scripture be fulfilled," avoids this well known phrase in the verse we quoted and does not say that the looking on Him has been fulfilled. It was not then fulfilled, nor is it fulfilled during the age of Gospel preaching, but its fulfillment comes in the day which is prophetically described in the verses before us. Matthew 24:30 and Revelation 1:7 refer also to this portion of our chapter.

We do not follow the rationalistic reasonings of the school of criticism on this passage, nor do we mention the many question marks which these modern infidels have put over against this great prophecy. One of the mildest critics, Canon Driver, says: "The passage is, however, one of those which our ignorance of the circumstances of the time makes it impossible to interpret as a whole satisfactorily or completely. As the text stands the speaker must be, of course, Yahweh, and it is, no doubt, true that the Jews had pierced Him metaphorically by their rebellion and ingratitude throughout their history.... 'They pierced Him literally as the crowning act of their contumacy, in the Person of His Son on the cross' (T.T. Perowne; quoted by Driver), but these considerations do not explain the passage here." The New Testament quotations as given above are to any believer sufficient evidence that the Lord Jesus Christ is meant, and therefore explain the passage fully.

What a day it will be when the Spirit of grace and supplication comes upon the remnant of His people, when He appears in the clouds of heaven, when they shall see Him and know Him by the pierced side. The great vision of Saul on the road to Damascus will then be repeated; the young Pharisee saw Him as one "born out of due season." He was in his experience the earnest that the remnant of the nation to which Paul belonged would some day pass through the same experience. (See Studies in Zechariah, pp. 120-125.) A great mourning follows. It will be like the mourning in Hadad-rimmon in the valley of Megiddon (2 Chron. 35:22-27 and 2 Kings 23:29). What a day of repentance it will be when this takes place.

CHAPTER 13

1. The cleansing (13:1)
2. The blessed results of the cleansing (13:2-6)
3. The smitten Shepherd (13:7)
4. Salvation and condemnation (13:8-9)

Verse 1. This verse is misplaced; it belongs to the preceding chapter. It is a prophecy of the cleansing of the repenting portion of God's earthly people. The fountain of cleansing, so beautifully expressed by Cowper:

There is a fountain filled with blood, Drawn from Immanuel's veins, And sinners plunged beneath that flood, Lose all their guilty stains--

was in existence through all the centuries of Israel's long dispersion. But the nation in blindness did not believe. Now all is changed. Their guilt is pardoned; all unrighteousness and iniquity is taken away. The Redeemer has come and turned away ungodliness from Jacob (Rom. 11:26, 27). The prophetic Word is filled with promises concerning this future cleansing of the remnant of the nation (Psa. 103:1-4; Isa. 33:24; Ezek. 39:29; Isa. 59:20, 21; Isa. 45:19).

Verses 2-6. The cleansing is followed by the cutting off of the names of the idols, so that they will no longer be remembered. The false prophets and the unclean spirits, which had control during the great tribulation will be cast out and forever pass away. We have seen before in the 10th chapter that Israel will return to idolatry in the last days. The unclean spirit of idolatry which was cast out will at last return with seven others and will find the house empty, swept, and garnished. And the evil spirit, with the seven others more evil than himself, will enter in and dwell there, so that the last state of Israel becometh worse than the first. This will happen to this evil generation. This section of the 13th chapter makes it very clear that when the fountain is opened against sin and uncleanness, that idols will have been in the land, and false prophets prophesy there immediately before the manifestation of the Lord from heaven; for how could the names of the idols be cut off from the land if there were none there? Palestine may well be put down now as the great centre of false worship. Greek and Latin crosses are seen on all sides in Jerusalem and other places, while saints, holy houses, and places are worshipped and adored.

On the spot where the LORD'S house stood, there stands today the mosque of the false prophet. All is idolatry. Of course when the Lord returns these false temples will be destroyed, and the Greek and Latin idolatries, as well as Islam, will forever pass out of existence. There will be a purging of the land from these abominations. This may be included in the prophecy here. Still, it is the people of Israel who are especially concerned in the prophecy before us. The land has often been the scene of idol worship, and the people engaged in that which Jehovah despises. It will be so again, only in a much worse form, when false prophets who are inspired by the unclean spirit and demons themselves will be their guides.

We must look to Revelation for a key. It is well known to all students of the prophetic word that all which comes after the third chapter in the last book of the Bible is future still. We are yet in the things which are present. When the Lord has taken the Church to Himself then the great visions, tribulations, wrath, and judgment will be fulfilled. Aside from the scenes in heaven we learn from Revelation the events in the earth during the great tribulation which ends with the wrath from heaven. Now in the 9th chapter and the 20th verse of Revelation we read, And the rest of mankind which were not

killed with these plagues repented not of the works of their hands that they should not worship demons and the idols of gold, and of silver, and of brass, and of stone, and of wood, which can neither see nor hear nor walk.

Who is the person mentioned in verse six? In Studies in Zechariah we speak of this man as representing the counterfeit Christ, imitating the true Christ. But after more careful consideration we have come to the conclusion that this view is untenable. It is Christ Himself. He is here contrasted with the false prophets. It is the Pierced One. After they look upon Him they will inquire about those wounds in His hands and He will answer them, revealing the story of His rejection. This leads to the prophecy in the next verse.

Verse 7. This certainly is Christ, whose rejection, more than His rejection by His own, is here revealed. It is the same as in Isaiah 53, the suffering One, who is a man, and called My Fellow, the fellow of Jehovah of Hosts, Jehovah Himself, who speaks here, and what does He speak? The sword is to work against His Shepherd and against His own Fellow. The blessed mystery of the atonement is thus brought out. Indeed it is the heart of the Gospel here. "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish but have life eternal." The Lord laid on Him the iniquity of us all. It speaks of Him, the forsaken One, the Son of God, forsaken in the hour of His agony, the sword upon Him and against Him. In the New Testament we find the passage quoted in the Gospel of Matthew, 26th chapter and 31st verse: "Then saith Jesus unto them, all ye shall be offended because of Me this night; for it is written, I will smite the Shepherd and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad."

Verses 8-9. There is a very misleading idea among many students of prophecy as if the statement of Romans 1:26, "all Israel shall be saved," meant that all the Jews will receive the blessing and the glory on that coming day of salvation. Some of the evil systems, like the Russell cult (International Bible Student Association), go so far as to teach that there will be a resurrection of all the ungodly Jews of past generations for a second chance. This passage silences these unscriptural theories. The promise of restoration and glory belongs to the godly, the believing and repenting remnant. The mass of Jews, who call themselves "Reform Jews," who in reality are infidels, because they deny the Word of God and have completely discarded the faith in a coming Messiah, will be cut off. The third part (the remnant) only will be saved.

CHAPTER 14

1. The last conflict and the manifestation of the Lord (14:1-5)
2. The complete salvation (14:6-11)
3. The punishment of the enemies (14:12-15)
4. The conversion of the world (14:16-19)
5. The holiness of Jerusalem (14:20-21)

Verses 1-5. Post-millennialism has tried to find some explanation of this chapter, but has failed. The common view that the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans in the year 70 A.D. is the burden of this prophecy is ridiculous. We read that "all nations will be gathered against Jerusalem." Is this true of the destruction of Jerusalem under Titus? It was only one nation. Did the Lord then go forth and fight against the Romans? No! He used the Romans in judgment. Did His feet stand at that time upon the Mount of Olives? Did He come and all the saints with Him? Were the results of the year 70 the results predicted in the rest of this chapter? Any intelligent Christian must see how foolish it is to interpret this passage as having seen its fulfillment in the destruction of Jerusalem.

Nor is it true that previous sieges have fulfilled this chapter. Ptolemy Soter took Jerusalem about 315 B.C.; Antiochus the Great took the city in 203 B.C.; the Egyptian Scopus in 199 B.C.; Antiochus Epiphanes in 170 B.C. There were other sieges besides. But none of these sieges is predicted here. It is future.

What siege then is it? Some premillennial expositors have a very convenient way of calling everything "the battle of Armageddon" and claim that the twelfth and the fourteenth chapters predict one and the same event. But this is erroneous. It is not the beast, the head of the ten kingdoms, the Roman revived Empire. The details of prophecy concerning the last

events can only be understood by distinguishing between the leaders of opposition. There is the beast, the political head of the western nations, the little horn of Daniel 7. He is in league with the second beast, coming out of the earth, with two horns like a lamb (Rev. 13). This is the false Christ, the man of sin, who is also called in Revelation the false prophet. He has his seat in Jerusalem, where he poses as Israel's Messiah-King and is worshipped as such. Then there is another, the king of the north, typified by the Assyrian, the great invader whom Ezekiel also describes. This king of the north is the sworn enemy of the one who is in Jerusalem, that is the false Messiah; they hate each other. The king of the north heads the confederacy of nations from the East, Russia, Persia, Gomer and different Asiatic nations. Then Jerusalem is finally attacked by these nations. It is this final attack which is described in this chapter (see Joel 2). But then the Lord goes forth, and fights against those nations, as when He fought in the day of battle (Exodus 14; 2 Chronicles 20:15-17). He manifests His kingly power and glory in the defense of His city and His people. His feet stand in that day upon the Mount of Olives, the place so well known in His earthly life, the place from which He departed to go back to the Father. A great physical upheaval takes place, for the mountain splits in the center, toward the east and west, forming a great valley between. The earthquake mentioned is the same to which Amos refers (Amos 1:1). All this has never been; it is future, and the details of it will probably only be understood at the time of its fulfillment. The valley will be the avenue of escape, and the divided Olivet mountain will be ever after a witness to the literal fulfillment of God's Word.

"And Jehovah my God shall come, and all the saints with Thee." Different manuscripts and versions have instead of "with Thee"--"with Him." But the difficulty is cleared up when we consider that it is the Seer who addresses Jehovah, whose feet shall stand on the Mount of Olives. Zechariah bursts out in speaking to Him, "And Jehovah my God shall come, and all the saints with Thee." What a glorious manifestation it will be when He is present and all His holy angels with Him!

Verses 6-11. Verses six and seven have been rendered in different ways, and have been differently interpreted.

And it shall come to pass in that day That the light shall not be with brightness and with gloom, And the day shall be one. It shall be known unto Jehovah. Not day and not night. And at evening time there shall be light.

We believe that this passage means the physical phenomena in nature which are always connected with the day of the Lord (Amos 5:18; 8:9; Joel 2:31; Matt. 24:30, and other passages). Changes will then occur which will mean that the present order of day and night are superseded by another order, so that when the evening time comes it will be light. That day will Just be one day of light and glory. The glory light will probably be shining throughout the thousand years, and cover the earth as the waters cover the deep.

From verse eight we learn that living waters shall go out from Jerusalem (Ezek. 47). This must be interpreted as a literal fact, and likewise as a symbol of the great spiritual blessings. "From the holy city go forth westward and eastward the waters which are destined to heal the long miseries of a world groaning under Satan's thralldom, themselves the effect and symbol of the rich blessing which Jehovah then diffuses far and wide, and this above all the changes ordinary in nature; in summer and in winter it shall be. Drought and frost will not affect them; neither will the obstruction of the hilly ground toward the west; the waters shall flow as steadily toward the great sea on the west as to the Dead Sea on the east." The Lord Jesus Christ, Jehovah, then shall be King over all the earth; and His Name shall be one. His throne is established over the earth and He rules the nations in righteousness. In that day of His glorious manifestation His Name will be revealed as the One who on earth declared "I and the Father are One"; He will be known as the One Lord and God, and worshipped as such. All idolatry is at an end and the abominations connected with it are abolished. Confusion is forever ended (Zeph. 3:9).

Other physical changes in the land are indicated in verse ten, and from verse eleven we learn that there shall be no more curse and that Jerusalem shall dwell safely.

Verses 12-15. This is the description of the dreadful punishment which will befall the enemies in that day. It is to be read in connection with the third verse, the Lord fighting against those nations, and the punishment will be upon them

when He appears. Thus it is seen in Revelation 19. He appears, and after His appearing there is the scene of punishment of the enemies. "And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice to all the birds that fly in midheaven, Come and be gathered unto the great supper of God; that ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses and them that sit thereon, and the flesh of all men, both free and bond and small and great" (Rev. 19:17, 18).

"And they shall go forth, and look upon the carcasses of the men that have transgressed against Me; for their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched; and they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh" (Isa. 66:24).

Verses 16-19. It is clear from this passage that some nations, or representatives of nations, will be left of those who came against Jerusalem. They, with all the other nations of the world, will then know the Lord and worship Him. The temple will then stand in Jerusalem as the house of glory and a house of prayer for all nations. There will be a perfect worship, grand and glorious, and it will not be confined to Israel, but the nations will join it. We may learn perhaps from this verse that the Lord will leave every year once His place on His throne over the earth and come down to Jerusalem and show Himself in His glory before the worshipping multitudes in the earth, as He is seen in the New Jerusalem above. The occasion is the feast of tabernacles. It is the millennial feast. It is a feast kept in remembrance of Israel's journey through the wilderness for forty years and all their subsequent wanderings. It stands also for the ingathering of the full harvest. It is a feast of joy, praise, and thanksgiving. The Jews keep it to the present day, though few know the full meaning of it. Every year when it comes again they read this 14th chapter of Zechariah. It is strange indeed. What a glorious feast that will be, kept there in Jerusalem, when the fullness at last has come! The fullness of the Gentiles has been gathered in, and is in the New Jerusalem; the fullness of Israel has come in the earth, and their receiving has been life from the dead, and Gentiles know the glory of the Lord. Some find a difficulty here in the fact that it is stated that the nations, the residue of men, are to come up to Jerusalem, and the difficulty is that it will be impossible for all of them to do that. It is not at all necessary that every individual must go up to Jerusalem once in a year. Perhaps every nation will send representatives to the feast of tabernacles, and they come in the name of the different nations and bring their presents. This seems to be indicated in the visit of the wise men from the East, who came to Bethlehem to worship the new-born King (Matthew 2). They brought gold, frankincense and myrrh. In Isaiah 60:6 we read of the coming of the Gentiles to Jerusalem when the Lord has come again. They shall come from Sheba; they shall bring gold and frankincense (the myrrh is left out here, for it speaks of suffering), and shall proclaim the praises of the Lord. As the wise men who came to Bethlehem were representatives of nations, so during the Millennium the nations will send delegations to the feast of tabernacles. What a scene that must be! How crowded Jerusalem will be by those from Greenland and from the interior of Africa, from India and the islands of the sea, as well as from the nations which composed the Roman empire. The ends of the earth have seen the salvation of God, and now their praise is heard in the city and mingling with the psalms sung by His own redeemed people.

On the other hand verses 17-19 acquaint us with the fact that even during the coming age of the kingdom-glory there will be disobedience among the nations, which will be fully demonstrated at the close of the Millennium, when a final revolt takes place.

Verses 20-21. The most holy person in Israel, the high-priest, carried the inscription, "Holiness to Jehovah" around his mitre, but now even the little bells of the horses bear that inscription. In that temple which stands during the Millennium, sacrifices will be brought, but there will be no difference in the vessels which are used in Jerusalem, the meanest and smallest will be holy. In one word, all will be holy, all will be consecrated to Jehovah. What a perfect service that will be of the people which are then, in truth, a holy people. Application can be made of this to believers now. Surely everything the saint has, and his whole life, must be thus consecrated to Jehovah, to the Lord. No Canaanite will be there, nothing unclean. The Vulgate translates the word Canaanite with merchant. It stands, however, for everything that is unclean and an abomination. The city will be completely purged from it.

And of the New Jerusalem it is written, "There shall in no wise enter into it any thing unclean, or he that maketh an abomination and a lie, but only they that are written in the Lamb's book of life.... Without are the dogs, and the sorcerers, and the fornicators, and the murderers, and the idolaters, and every one that loveth and maketh a lie" (Rev. 21:27 and

22:15).

THE BOOK OF MALACHI

The Annotated Bible

Arno Clement Gaebelein

THE PROPHET MALACHI

Introduction

We know nothing of the person of this prophet. His name only is given in the record. Critics have therefore doubted whether Malachi is really the personal name of the prophet, and many believe that it is merely an ideal name, given to the unknown person, on account of his message. Malachi means "my messenger" or "the messenger of Jehovah." The Targum Jonathan, an Aramaic paraphrase, adds after the name of Malachi, "Cujus nomen appellatur Ezra scriba," whose name is called Ezra the Scribe, thus claiming that the great and good Ezra is Malachi. But why should Ezra hide behind an assumed name? This is unworthy of the man, and more so of the Holy Spirit. Many of the leading expositors have accepted the theory that Malachi is the official name of the prophet, whoever he may have been. One of the reasons for this theory is that "the first verse does not contain any further personal description, and that nothing is said about his father or place of birth." But Obadiah and Habakkuk show the same omissions. Nor is it true that nothing was known historically of a person by name of Malachi. The Talmud has a statement which makes Malachi a member of the great synagogue, to which also the two post-exilic prophets Haggai and Zechariah belonged. Other traditions claim that he was of the tribe of Zebulun, born in Supha. There is no reason to doubt that Malachi is the real name of the prophet.

The Date of His Prophecy

This also has caused a great deal of dispute. That he prophesied after the captivity has never been doubted. Furthermore, the reading of his utterances makes it clear that he prophesied after Haggai and Zechariah. We learn that the temple has been completely finished, and the temple worship with priests has been restored for a number of years. After Ezra and Nehemiah's beneficent influence had passed the people went into a decline, and the conditions which the prophet rebukes were the results of backsliding. The abuses which were corrected by Ezra and Nehemiah had taken hold upon the people again. The exact time can hardly be fixed. It seems by comparing Malachi 1:8 with Nehemiah 5:15 and 18 that Nehemiah was no longer governor when Malachi exercised his office.

The Message of Malachi

As the last prophetic voice of the Old Testament, Malachi, in unison with all other prophets, announces the coming of the Messiah and Points once more to Him. The next prophetic voice, after the four hundred silent years, is the voice in the wilderness, the herald of the King, of whom Malachi predicted that he should come. But the message of Malachi is overwhelmingly condemnatory. "The great moral principle unfolded in this book is the insensibility of the people to that which Jehovah was for them, and to their own iniquity with respect to Jehovah--their want of reverence for God, their despal of Jehovah. Alas! this insensibility had reached such a point that, when the very actions which proved their contempt were laid before their consciences, they saw no harm in them. Nevertheless, this did not alter the purposes and counsels of God, although it brought judgment upon those who were guilty of it" (chapter 1:2, 6, 2:14, 3:7, 13, Synopsis of the Bible.).

It is unquestionably true that the spirit manifested by the people in Malachi's day assumed later the concrete forms

expressed by the two leading sects of Judaism, when our Lord was on earth, the Pharisees and the Sadducees. "The outward or grosser kind of idolatry had been rendered thoroughly distasteful to the people by the sufferings of the exile; and its place was taken by the more refined idolatry of dead-work righteousness, and trust in the outward fulfillment of the letter of the divine commands without any deeper confession of sins, or humiliation under the Word and the will of God." It has been well stated that "Malachi is like a late evening, which brings a long day to a close; but he is also the morning dawn, which bears a glorious day in its womb." The shadows are dark, but there is the rising of the Sun of Righteousness, still to take place, when all shadows flee away.

But beside the apostate masses of the people, steeped in a dead formalism, there is seen in the book of Malachi the faithful remnant. It is interesting to follow this remnant, we have so often mentioned in our annotations, through the entire Jewish history, past, present and future. There was always a godly remnant. We see that remnant in the wilderness wandering of Israel; there was a remnant during the period of the judges, and in every other period, like the sad days of Ahab's wicked rule, when despondent Elijah desired to die, and the Lord informed him that there were seven thousand who had not bowed the knee to the image of Baal. There was a remnant when Jerusalem was captured by Nebuchadnezzar: a remnant returned from the captivity, and when the returned exiles degenerated, as seen in Malachi, there were still the few left who assembled together and whom the Lord owned.

In Romans 11 we read that at the present time, during this age, there is likewise a remnant according to the election of grace. It is not a small remnant, who, during this age, turn to the Lord, believe on Christ and thus become members of the Body of Christ, in which there is neither Jew nor Gentile. And when the age closes, and the nation faces the final calamity in the great tribulation, and the acceptance of the false Christ, there will be that godly remnant, as we have so often shown in our comments on the prophetic word.

The Lessons for Our Age

The Jewish age with all its glorious manifestations of the Lord in behalf of His people Israel, and the great revelations given by the prophets of the Lord, did not improve in its development and become a better age. Neither does our age improve and become better, the age in which God has revealed His best and offers to man the riches of His graces in the Person of His blessed Son our Lord. It ends as Old Testament times ended, in failure and apostasy. The moral conditions of the Jews in the days of Malachi are the moral conditions of Christendom. But as then, so there is now, a remnant of God's own, who are faithful to Him, and whom He acknowledges as His true Church.

The Division of Malachi

We divide the prophecy of Malachi in six sections: 1. Jehovah's Love for His People (1:1-5). 2. The Rebuke of the Priests (1:6-2:9). 3. Rebuke of the Social Conditions (2:10-16). 4. The Announcement of the Messenger and the Day of the Lord (3:1-6). 5. Rebuke for Defrauding the Lord (3:7-15). 6. The Remnant and the Concluding Prophecy (3:16-4:6).

Analysis and Annotations

1. Jehovah's Love for His People

CHAPTER 1:1-5

The message of Malachi begins with the sublime statement, "I have loved you, saith Jehovah." It is the message to Israel. This love is written large on every page of their history. A former prophet gave the message from the Lord, "You only have I known of all the families of the earth" (Amos 3:2). And long before that Moses had told them, "Only the Lord had a delight in thy fathers to love them, and He chose their seed after them, even you above all people, as it is this day" (Deut 10:15). And the man of God in his final utterance burst out in praise, "Yea, He loved the people" (Deut. 33:3). And this generation, brought back through His mercy from Babylon, the generation that had listened to the marvelous

words of Haggai and Zechariah, could brazenly answer back, "Wherein hast Thou loved us?" How deep they had sunk! Greater still is the insensibility of nominal Christendom which rejects, yea, despises, the great love wherewith He has loved us in the gift of His Son.

Then the Lord in infinite patience answered them, "Was not Esau Jacob's brother? saith Jehovah: yet I loved Jacob, and hated Esau, and laid his mountains and his heritage waste for the dragons of the wilderness." This takes us back to Genesis, but in vain do we look for this statement in that first book of the Bible. Though it is quoted also in Romans 9, it is nowhere to be found in connection with the story of the birth of the twins. The late scholar, William Kelly, has expressed the whole matter so well that we can do nothing better than to quote his excellent comment. "It is only in Malachi that He says 'Esau have I hated.' I could conceive nothing more dreadful than to say so in Genesis. Never does Scripture represent God as saying before the child was born and had manifested his iniquity and proud malice, 'Esau have I hated.' There is where the mind of man is so erroneous. It is not meant, however, that God's choice was determined by the character of the individual. This would make man the ruler rather than God. Not so; God's choice flows out of His own wisdom and nature. It suits and is worthy of Himself; but the reprobation of any man and of every unbeliever is never a question of the sovereignty of God. It is the choice of God to do good where and how He pleases; it is never the purpose of His will to hate any man. There is no such doctrine in the Bible. I hold, therefore, that, while election is most clearly taught in the Scriptures, the consequences that men draw from election, namely, the reprobation of the non-elect, is a mere reproduction of fatalism, common to some heathen and to all Mohammedans, the unfounded deduction of man's reasoning in divine things." With these good words we agree perfectly. The hatred against Esau is mentioned in this last book, because it was well-deserved, after all the opposition and defiance of God the descendants of Esau, Edom, had manifested. But the love wherewith Jacob was loved was undeserved. His love for His people had been fully manifested, as well as His displeasure against Edom by laying his mountains and heritage waste, and all their attempts at reconstruction failed. God was against him on account of Edom's wicked ways.

2. The Rebuke of the Priests

CHAPTER 1:6-2:9

The priests, the religious leaders of the people, are described first in their evil ways, and rebuked. But the rebuke includes the entire people, for it is true, "like priests like people." The Lord called Israel to be His firstborn son, and therefore, nationally, He is their Father. He is the Lord, and Israel called to be His servant. But they had not honored Him, as a son should honor the father by obedience; they did not fear Him, but despised His Name. This charge brought forth from the side of the priests another brazen statement, the result of their hypocritical self-righteousness. They answered back, demanding proof of the charge by saying, "Wherein have we despised Thy Name?" They seemed to be hardened in their consciences, though they kept up outward appearances. Such, too, is the religious condition in much of Christendom. Another charge follows, the charge that they offer polluted bread, which brought forth the retort, "Wherein have we polluted Thee?" They had considered the table of the Lord contemptible; instead of offering upon the altar the very best, as demanded in the law, they showed their contempt by bringing the blind, the lame and the sick, a thing which they would never have done to an earthly governor, who would have been sorely displeased at such an insult and rejected their person on account of it. They had treated the Lord of Hosts shamefully in their worship. Is it different in Christendom? Under such conditions, even if they were to pray to Him to be gracious, would He, or could He, regard their persons and listen to their prayers (verse 9)?

Verse 10 has often been interpreted to mean that the priests were covetous and demanded money for every little service, the opening of doors and the kindling of a fire. It has another meaning. The better rendering is, "O, that some among you would even shut the doors of the temple." The doors are the doors which lead from the outer court into the holy part. The Lord declares that it would be more profitable if they would shut these doors, and kindle no longer a fire upon the altar for nought; in other words, He wishes that the whole outward worship might be stopped. The last sentence of this verse shows this is the correct interpretation. "I have no pleasure in you, saith the Lord of Hosts, neither will I accept an offering at your hand." Nor has He today any pleasure in the unscriptural worship of ritualistic Christendom, or the dead, Spiritless

worship of an apostate Protestantism.

The next verse (verse 11) is a prophecy. Is it fulfilled today, during this age? We think not; it refers to the millennial age. Critics say that the passage refers to the worship of God among the heathen, under different names, as expressed lines by a poet (Pope):

Father of all! in every age,
In every clime adored,
By saint, by savage, and by sage,
Jehovah, Jove or Lord.

Canon S.D. Driver says on this passage, "It is a tribute to the truer and better side of heathen religion." It is no such thing. But why should it not be applied to this gospel age, in which among all nations His Name is known and called upon? There is a statement which excludes this interpretation: "and in every place incense shall be offered unto My Name, and a pure offering." The Romish Catholic Church uses this passage as one of her proof texts for that abomination, the Mass. In the canons of the Council of Trent we read that "the Mass is that pure sacrifice which the Lord predicted by Malachi should be offered to His Name in every place." Another prominent writer declares that it is "the bloodless sacrifice of the New Testament, the holy sacrifice of the mass." All this is Satanic invention. It is true the Name of the Lord is known among the nations, but no incense, sacrifice or offering is connected with the worship of the Lord in the true Church. For His heavenly people the earthly sacrifices and incense, offering and priesthood, are all passed; and more than that, these things would be inconsistent with their heavenly standing and calling. It will be different during the age to come, the Millennium. The last chapters of Ezekiel reveal the fact that with the millennial worship in the millennial temple incense and offerings are connected. The prophecy of the eleventh verse will be fulfilled during the millennium. Now His Name is not universally great among the Gentiles; it will be otherwise when the Lord Jesus Christ has come back.

Then follow additional expostulations on account of these conditions. In the second chapter the priests are again addressed. If they do not hear, do not lay it to heart, if their consciences are not aroused, to give glory unto His Name, He would curse their blessings; yea, they had been cursed already; He would punish them severely for their contempt. Levi and the covenant with him is especially mentioned, on account of his faithfulness at the time when the golden calf had been set up by Israel in the wilderness, in contrast with Aaron who gave way to the demand of the people. But what a contrast between Levi and the priests in Malachi's day! For the priests' lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth, for he is the messenger of the Lord of Hosts. Such is the calling of the priest. But they had departed out of the way; they caused many to stumble at the law; they had corrupted the covenant of Levi. Therefore the Lord made them contemptible and base before all the people.

3. The Rebuke of the Social Conditions

CHAPTER 2:10-16

The priests were corrupt, and with their bad example the people were likewise corrupt. It is the prophet who speaks in verse 10. The One Father was Jehovah, with whom the nation was in covenant relation. They had one Father, and they were one as a nation. By profaning that covenant they dealt treacherously every man against his brother. The abomination in social life, by which the covenant was profaned, and the holiness of the Lord outraged, was the marriage with the daughters of the heathen. They had put away their own Israelitish wives in order to enter into these unholy alliances. The Jew acted faithlessly toward his brother, both when he contracted a marriage with a heathen woman, and when he put away his legitimate wife, and thereby desecrated the covenant of the fathers, i.e., the covenant that Jehovah made with their fathers when He chose them to be a separated people. Those who have done this will surely be cut off. Verse 13 describes the weeping and the tears of the abandoned Jewish wives; it is the same condition, only worse, which is recorded in Ezra and Nehemiah. All was an abomination unto the Lord. Over fifty years ago a writer called attention to the divorce evil in the United States. He wrote then:

The frequency of divorce in the United States, so that in one of the States divorce is allowed for "misconduct," reveals the same state of things existing now, as was here condemned by Jehovah, and must bring with it the same evils, and the same punishment. What tongue can adequately tell, what heart conceive, the untold misery from this cause, especially to the deserted wives, and the children left without a mother's care! How little is the indissoluble nature of the marriage relation regarded! and the fact, that the Lord was the witness of it, and will be a swift witness against those who violate it! The Saviour only allows of one cause of divorce, and regards divorce for any other as adultery.

Since then this evil has increased a hundredfold or more among professing Christians, so that it threatens to undermine the home and all family life. It is the sign of the rapid disintegration of our nation.

And yet rebuked for these social conditions and wicked deeds, they could ask another, "Wherefore?" They were so hardened that they could not see why they were to blame. The difficult fifteenth verse refers to the marriage relation, in which God makes of twain one. He made the woman for man, though He had the residue of the Spirit, the creative power by which He might have made many women for one man. And wherefore one? that is, one woman for the man--that He might seek a godly seed, to perpetuate those who are godly, which is counteracted by divorce, such as they had practiced. It seemed as if the remnant who feared Him were being influenced by these corrupt practices, hence the warning. "Therefore take heed to your spirit, and let none deal treacherously against the wife of his youth."

4. The Announcement of the Messenger and the Day of the Lord

CHAPTER 3:1-6

In this chapter and in the next we have the prophecies of Malachi as to the Messiah and His forerunner. The last verse of the preceding chapter belongs rightly to this chapter. "Ye have wearied the Lord with your words. Yet ye say, Wherein have we wearied Him? When ye say, Every one that doeth evil is good in the sight of the Lord, and He delighteth in them; or, Where is the God of judgment?" It is this last bold question, produced by their arrogant pride and self security which opens the way for the prophetic message in this chapter. "Where is the God of judgment?" The answer is, "Behold, I will send My messenger, and he shall prepare the way before Me; and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to His temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in; behold, He shall come, saith the Lord of hosts." The first announcement of the messenger, who goes before the Lord, is quoted in Matthew 11:10; Mark 1:2; Luke 1:76 and 7:27. Isaiah, too, had spoken a similar prophecy in chapter 40:3. This prophecy was fulfilled in the person of John the Baptist, as the herald of His first coming; still this prophecy considered in the light of the prophecy in the next chapter, concerning the coming of Elijah, remains yet to be fully accomplished. John the Baptist was not Elijah; Elijah is still to come and do his work preceding the coming of the Lord. The messenger is followed by the Lord, the Messenger, or Angel (the meaning of the Hebrew word) of the Covenant. The word Lord is here the word Adon with the article, always used of God. It is the Lord God who comes, and His official title is "The Angel of the Covenant." Many expositors have blundered here in that they imagined the word covenant means the new covenant of which the Lord Jesus is the Mediator (Heb. 9:15). But it is not the truth. The Messenger of the Covenant is the same "Angel of the Lord" who appeared frequently in Israel's past history, and generally in the form of a human being. The Angel of the Lord is the Son of God in His preincarnation manifestations, and He is announced here as the Angel of the Covenant. The nation believed in His coming, and in the question "Where is the God of judgment?" they had asked for Him. That there was a partial fulfillment of this prophecy when our Lord, the Messiah of Israel, came unexpectedly in the temple, must not be overlooked, but that it was the fulfillment of these words is not true. It will be accomplished in the day of His Return, preceded by another messenger. Their question "Where is the God of judgment?" will then be fully answered, and what it will be we read in the next two verses (verses 2 and 3). He will purge the nation of the dross, beginning with the sons of Levi. It is the same as in Zechariah 13:9. John the Baptist announced the same also, and when he gave his inspired testimony of the purging of the threshing floor and the burning of the chaff with unquenchable fire (Matt. 3:12) he referred not to the first coming of Christ, but to His second coming.

As the result of this judgment in store for the nation, when the sorcerers, the adulterers, the false swearers, and the

oppressors will be dealt with, we read in the fourth verse "Then shall the offering of Judah and Jerusalem be pleasant unto the Lord, as in the days of old, and as in former years."

5. Rebuke for Defrauding The Lord

CHAPTER 3:7-15

Another rebuke is administered. They were always a stiff-necked people, never obedient to His ordinances. His gracious call to return unto Him, and the promise that He will return unto them is answered by "Wherein shall we return?" They had robbed God of what was His right. The tithes and offerings which He demanded in the law covenant had been withheld. On account of it the blessing was lacking and curse was upon the nation. Then follows a command to bring all the tithes into the storehouse, the challenge to prove Him, the assurance of abundant blessing. It is strange that even those who have a good knowledge of truth, the dispensations and the heavenly position of a Christian, should fall back upon this verse and claim that it is binding and should be practiced among believers. For a system like Seventh Day Adventism, a system which has perverted the gospel of grace, which denies God's oath-bound covenants with Israel, which claims to be the true Israel, the system to which applies the term "the synagogue of Satan, who say that they are Jews and are not;" for such a cult to make this command a binding law is not surprising. But well taught believers should never look upon this passage as in any way in force today. True Christian giving, like everything else in the life and service of a true believer, must be done, not by law but through grace, under the direction of the Holy Spirit. Nowhere in the New Testament is there anything said about tithing. A believer must be a cheerful giver, giving as the Lord has prospered him, communicating to others, doing good, remembering the poor, ministering in temporal things to those who minister in spiritual things; but all this giving must be under the direction of the Spirit of God.

The day will come when His earthly people will minister to the wants of the Lord's house (a Jewish term), so that there will be an abundant supply for sacrifices. That will be in the future day of their restoration, when the devourer will be rebuked (verse 11). It is at that time, when the millennium has come, that all nations will call them blessed, when they shall be a delightsome land (Isa. 62:4). This has never been since it was written by the pen of Malachi.

6. The Remnant and the Concluding Prophecy

CHAPTER 3:16-4:6

In the midst of all these moral conditions, the apostasy of the masses, we find a pleasing picture of a godly portion, whom the Lord mentions in a special manner. There were those who feared the Lord. They had no sympathy with the wicked practices of their brethren; they did not share the contempt and unbelief manifested by the rank and file of the people. They were drawn together by the Spirit of God; they had fellowship one with another. They came together to think upon His Name, to honor Him, to read His Word, to call unto the Lord. And the Lord heard; He was pleased with them, and He is represented as recording their names in the Book of Remembrance, the bookkeeping in glory (Psa. 56:8). He has a special promise for such. "And they shall be Mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up My jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him."

Such a remnant of godly ones was in existence in Malachi's day, and when they passed away others took their places. The Lord preserved such a godly seed in every generation throughout the four hundred silent years. And when that silence was broken, by the Angel's message to the ministering priest Zechariah, we see such a remnant on the threshold of the New Testament. Good old Anna and Simeon, the shepherds and others belonged to this waiting, God-fearing remnant. And so it will be before His second coming. A similar remnant will then be on earth awaiting His glorious return.

It is so in Christendom. Departure from the faith soon manifested itself in the professing church. Decline followed decline, till the awful Romish apostasy was consummated. But in every generation the Lord kept a people separated unto Himself. The Reformation came, followed by revivals and recovery of truth. But the Spirit of God does not predict that

this age ends in universal acceptance of the truth and universal righteousness and peace, but He predicts a universal apostasy. But even then He has a remnant true to Him. That remnant is seen prophetically in the Church message to Philadelphia (Rev. 3).

In the fourth chapter is the final message of the Old Testament Prophetic Word. The day, that coming day of the Lord, so often mentioned in every portion of the Old Testament, is once more brought before us. It is the day of fire, the day of reckoning with the wicked, who will be consumed like stubble. But that day brings not only the fire of judgment, the winding up of "man's day," the dethronement of evil, but it will be the day of the sunrise. "The Sun of Righteousness shall arise with healing in His wings." The Sun of Righteousness is the Lord Jesus Christ. It is the beautiful symbol of His personal, visible, and glorious coming to usher in that day, which will last for a thousand years, in which He will rule in power and glory. The Old Testament knows nothing of His coming as the Morning Star. That coming is exclusively revealed in the New Testament in relation with the Church. The Morning Star precedes the sunrise. Even so, before that day comes, before the great tribulation, with wrath poured out, He comes for His saints as the Morning Star. The Church does not wait for the rising of the sun, but for the rising of the Morning Star. While the world sleeps, and the world-church dreams its idle dreams, true believers look for the Morning Star. Some day we shall see that glorious Morning Star, when suddenly He descends with that long promised shout.

When the Sun of Righteousness arises, He will bring healing and blessing. His waiting earthly people, the remnant, will be filled with joy and gambol as calves, while the wicked will be trodden under foot.

The whole chapter is a future prophecy. While there has been a partial fulfillment of the first verse of the third chapter, everything in this concluding chapter awaits its fulfillment. Elijah the prophet is announced. John the Baptist came in the Spirit and power of Elijah, but he was not the Elijah promised here. If ye will receive it, said our Lord, this is Elijah who should come. It was a testimony to faith and not the fulfillment of Malachi's prophecy. If the Jews had accepted Christ, John would have been Elijah. Our Lord bears witness to this. "Elias truly shall come first and restore all things. But I say unto you, That Elias is come already, and they knew him not, but have done unto him whatsoever they listed. Likewise shall also the Son of man suffer of them." When the age closes another one will appear, the Elijah announced by Malachi, who does his work of restoration before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord. His work will be carried on among the people Israel. Deceivers and impostors have occasionally arisen who claimed to be this Elijah; the most prominent in recent years is the Dowieite delusion of Zion City. Such is the havoc produced by not dividing the Word of Truth rightly.

The close of the Old Testament prophetic Word is majestically solemn. In the beginning of the Old Testament stands written the sin and the curse which came upon the race through the fall of man. The final testimony in Malachi speaks of Him who comes to take the curse upon Himself, the promised Christ; who comes to deal with the wicked, who comes to bless and to remove that curse. The New Testament which follows tells us of Him and of His matchless work, the fullness of redemption and the all-sufficiency of Grace. And the final New Testament book shows the consummation, the coming judgments, the righteous judgments of the Lord, and the fulfillment of all "which was spoken by His holy prophets;" ending with the great words, "Surely I come quickly! Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus!"