

The Herald of Christ's Kingdom

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DANIEL THE BELOVED OF JEHOVAH

SERIES I

HIS CAPTIVITY AND EARLY EXPERIENCES IN BABYLON

"In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah came Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, unto Jerusalem, and he sieged it. And the king spake unto Ashpenaz the master of eunuchs, that he should bring certain of the children of Israel, and of the king's seed, and of the princes; now among these were the children of Judah, Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah."--Dan. 1:1, 3, 6.

IT IS quite reasonable to suppose that, in His youthful days, our Lord and Savior, being under the law, became very familiar with the contents of the book of Daniel. As He grew in years and increased in wisdom, and the solemn import of His divinely appointed mission became clearer to His mind, the prophecies of this book would be of very special, indeed, of enraptured interest to Him. We may be sure that the Divine care and providence over Him would so arrange matters that He would have access to the sacred writings, for it was in the making use of these that he grew in knowledge and wisdom and in favor with God. We can imagine with what intense interest He would meditate upon the words of the angel Gabriel to Daniel (chap.9), for in them He would learn definitely, as in no other of the sacred writings, of the Divine times and seasons of His ministry, of His rejection by His own nation, and of the appointed hour of His death. It is very evident that it was to this very prophecy He referred, when beginning His ministry He said, "The time is fulfilled and the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand." (Mark 1: 5.) It was undoubtedly one of those books referred to by Him in His words to the Emmaus disciples after His resurrection: "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 the things concerning Himself." (Luke 2:52; 24:26,27.) In the prophetic discourse given to His disciples a few days before His death while they were with Him on the Mount of Olives, He referred to Daniel's prophecy in the words: "When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the Prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand)."--Matt. 24: 15.

In some special features the book of Daniel is the most wonderful of all the Old Testament prophetic writings. It contains visions portraying the general outlines of over twenty five centuries of the history of Daniel's own people, the Jews, as well as that of the great empires and false religious systems of the world. It briefly traces the history of the suffering people of God, until their glorification with Christ in His Kingdom. The visions of the beloved disciple, St. John, recorded in the book of Revelation, and given about seven centuries later, are a continuation and fuller development of those of Daniel.

PROPHECY FULFILLED IN DANIEL'S DAY

In chapter one of the book of Daniel, which we now consider, we have no prophecy recorded, but rather a fulfillment of one, uttered over a hundred years before. It was uttered by Isaiah to Hezekiah, the king of Judah, and reads: "Behold, the days come . . . that 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." (Isa. 39:7.) It is quite certain that in Daniel and his companions this prediction was fulfilled, and that in suffering and privation Daniel was prepared for the place in which he became so conspicuous and notable.

The Divine purpose in having the events that are described in Daniel I recorded as an introduction to the remarkable dreams and visions of the book is evidently to make known to the reader who Daniel was; also to show how it happened that he, a Hebrew, came to be living in Babylon, so far away from his own beloved kindred and country. Furthermore, and doubtless of far greater importance, it was to make known to us, for our emulation, some of those sterling traits displayed by the youthful Daniel-traits that laid the foundation of a righteous character, which, when developed into manhood, made him the man so "greatly beloved" of God (Dan. 10:11), and the one specially chosen to represent Him in the king's palace in the great city of Babylon, and, by using his influence with the king, to be of assistance to His chosen people during their long captivity in that country. He lived through the entire period of their seventy years of servitude and captivity, and doubtless used his influence with Cyrus, the king of the Persian Empire, to aid them in their return to their native land. In answer to his earnest prayer, recorded in chapter nine, that Jehovah's favor might be restored to his nation, that they might resume again their worship of Him in their own country, that their beloved city and temple might again be rebuilt, and the desolations cease, the Angel Gabriel was specially sent from the Court of Heaven to inform him that his prayer was answered. At the same time he was to inform the aged Prophet concerning the time in history when their long looked for Messiah would appear, and to convey the sad information that another long period of judgment would befall the nation, because of its rejection of Him when, in the predicted time, He would come.-Dan. 9.

A noted writer on the book of Daniel gives as a title to his exposition of this first chapter, that of *The Forming Prophet*, because of its portrayal of those commendable, *formative* traits of character exhibited by Daniel when a youth of only about sixteen years.

A REMARKABLE ERA IN JEWISH HISTORY THE SEVENTY YEARS SERVITUDE START 606 B. C.

The time in the world's history when the incidents described in this chapter occurred, mark a most eventful period in the history of the Hebrews, of both their government and their people-indeed, in the affairs of all nations. We are informed in verse 1, that it was in the third year of Jehoiakim, king of Judah, that Nebuchadnezzar, the great commander of the Babylonian armies, laid siege to Jerusalem, captured the city, and carried away as captives to Babylon, some of the most intelligent and highly favored of the royal families and nobles of the kingdom of Judah, and also a part of the holy vessels of the temple. We learn from the Scriptures as well as from secular history, that this event occurred about 606 B.C., two years before the death of Nebuchadnezzar's father, who was an in'

valid at the time. Nebuchadnezzar seems to have been ruling at this time in association with his father. About two years after, in 604 B.C., Nebuchadnezzar became the sole ruler of what is commonly called in history the Second Babylonian Empire, which ruled all nations. Among the captives taken to Babylon at this time was the youthful Daniel, who, a few years later, as we have noted, became the great prophet of God, and one of the most noted and prominent statesmen in the affairs of Babylon; and for a brief period of years, after the overthrow of Babylon in 538 B. C. by the Medes and Persians, he was prominent in the affairs of the Medo-Persian Empire as well.

From a comparison of other Scriptures, we learn that Jehoiakim, the king of Judah, was permitted by Nebuchadnezzar, to continue on the throne of Judah -- no longer, however, as an independent sovereign, but as a servant, a vassal of the king of Babylon; and we have it definitely stated that this great calamity came upon the government and people of the Jews, as a judgment of Jehovah, and that Nebuchadnezzar was Jehovah's' servant in the execution of this judgment. "And the *Lord* gave Jehoiakim into his hand." (Dan. 1: 2.) It was at this time, about 606 B.C., that the Jewish nation lost its independence, and the predicted seventy years of servitude to the king of Babylon began. Thus commenced the long predicted judgment, which nineteen years later, about 587 B.C., culminated in the destruction of the City of Jerusalem and its temple.

This judgment-punishment upon the kingdom and people of Judah, which began with Jehoiakim, was predicted in a *general* way by Moses a thousand years before; and in a more specific way, over a quarter of a century before, in the days of Josiah, the king of Judah, who was the father of Jehoiakim, The good king Josiah, who saw the sad and terrible departures from God" on the part of the nobles and the people of Judah, sought earnestly and energetically to bring about a *permanent* reformation, but was unable to accomplish it. It was at this time that there was found, in the desecrated temple, hidden away amongst the accumulated rubbish, the book of the law of God. (2 Kings 22: 8.) The book was shown and read to the king, who, when he heard the words of the judgments written therein to come upon the nation because of their departures from the Divine precepts, was filled with sorrow and amazement, and immediately caused inquiry to be made of the Lord if it were possible that these judgments be averted.

JUDAH'S KINGS BECOME VASSALS

To this end, the high-priest and others were sent to inquire of the Prophetess Huldah. After she had sought in the usual appointed way to obtain the Lord's mind in the matter, she received from Him a special message to be delivered to the king Josiah. The substance of the message was that it was too late, that the punishment must come, that the judgments could not be stayed. However, the message also contained the comforting information that because of Josiah's tender solicitude for the people, and his own love and loyalty to Jehovah, he would be spared from seeing the judgments executed; that before they would begin to come, he would die, and be gathered to his grave in peace. (2 Kings 22: 14-20.) About twelve or fifteen years after this, Josiah was killed in a battle against the king of Egypt, and was buried amidst great lamentation and mourning.-2 Kings 23:29, 30; 2 Chron. 35:23-25.

After Josiah's death the people made his youngest son, Jehoahaz, king, and then the predicted judgments began to fall. Jehoahaz had reigned only three months, when the king of Egypt, came against Jerusalem, captured the city, removed Jehoahaz, and placed in his stead Eliakim, his older brother, on the throne, as the king's vassal, and changed Eliakim's name to Jehoiakim. Jehoahaz was taken to Egypt and died there. (2 Kings 23: 31-35.) Jehoiakim sat upon the throne of Judah as a vassal of the king of Egypt-for about three years. It was at the end of this time, in the third year of Jehoiakim, that the event described in Daniel 1: 1-3, occurred. (See also 2 Kings 24: 1.) The predicted judgments upon Josiah's sons had now begun. The events which followed were sad indeed to both the government and people of Judah, and briefly summed up are as follows:

Jehoiakim in his third year was made a servant or vassal of Nebuchadnezzar, and after serving him three years, rebelled.

As soon as Nebuchadnezzar was relieved in his conquest of other nations, he came again to Jerusalem with his armies and captured the city. Jehoiakim was then slain, and was denied a decent burial.--Jer. 22: 19; 36: 30.

Jehoiachin, a son of Jehoiakim, seems to have been placed on the throne by Nebuchadnezzar, and occupied it three months, at the expiration of which time Nebuchadnezzar's army came again and besieged the city, and Jehoiachin and, his mother voluntarily gave themselves up (2 Kings 24: 11-12), and were carried to Babylon, and Jehoiachin was placed in prison where he was confined during the remaining period of Nebuchadnezzar's reign, which was about 37 years, when he was released by Evil-merodach, Nebuchadnezzar's son and successor.--2 Kings 25: 27-30.

Jehoiachin's captivity which occurred about 598 B.C., is commonly called the great captivity, because at this time Nebuchadnezzar took away the treasures of 'the house of the Lord, and the treasures of the king's house, and cut in pieces all the vessels of gold which Solomon king of Israel had made in the temple of the Lord. He carried away all the princes and all the mighty men of valor, even ten thousand captives, and all the craftsmen and smiths; none remained save the poorest of the land. -2 Kings 24: 12-16.

EZEKIEL PROPHECIES IN BABYLON

It was at this second stage of the judgments of Jehovah, at the time of Jehoiachin's captivity, that the Prophet Ezekiel was carried away captive. Daniel, who at this time had been in Babylon about eight years, had become 'famous. About five years before this he had been called into the presence of the great king Nebuchadnezzar to make known and interpret the marvelous dream of empires, and as a reward for this, he was highly honored, as we read: "Then the king made Daniel a great man, and gave him many great gifts, and made him ruler over the whole province of Babylon, and chief of the governors over all the wise men of Babylon. Then Daniel requested of the king, and he set Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego over the affairs of the province of Babylon: but Daniel sat in the gate of the king."--Dan. 2:48, 49.

Shortly after Ezekiel was carried away, he was given visions in which the final judgments upon the nation of Israel were depicted. It is in connection with these revelations, that Jehovah spake the words to Ezekiel which show that at this time

Daniel had become famous everywhere. "Though these three men, Noah, Daniel, and Job, were in it, they should deliver but their own souls, by their righteousness, saith the Lord God." (Ezek. 14: 14.) And a little later in connection with the pouring out of the final judgment in Zedekiah's day, we have another utterance of Jehovah which, though addressed to the king of Tyre, are quite generally supposed to be also applicable to Satan, the great adversary of man. Understanding them to refer to the king of Tyre, we are doubtless to recognize that the utterance is ironical; however, they serve to show that Daniel was quite generally recognized as a wise man. "Thus hath said the Lord Eternal, Whereas thy heart was lifted up, and thou saidst, A god am I, on the seat of the gods do I dwell, in the heart of the seas; yet thou art but a man, and not God, while thou esteemest thy mind equal to the mind of God. Behold thou wast wiser than Daniel; no secret was obscure to thee." Ezek. 28:2-3.--Leeser's Translation.

When Jehoiachin was removed, Nebuchadnezzar placed Mattaniah, another son of Josiah and an uncle of Jehoiachin, on the throne of Judah, as his vassal, and changed his name to Zedekiah. (2 Kings 24: 17.) It was evidently Jehovah's purpose, had Zedekiah and the people continued obedient to God's servant, Nebuchadnezzar, to have allowed the *servile* government to continue, and to have permitted the remnant of the people to remain in the land until the whole period of the seventy-year servitude, which began when Daniel was carried away, was completed. (Jer. 27: 12-15.) However, Zedekiah, influenced by evil advisers, rebelled against Nebuchadnezzar, and in Zedekiah's eleventh year, and Nebuchadnezzar's nineteenth, the temple, as also the entire City, was destroyed, and the long period of desolation began, which did not fully end until about 520 B.C.--2 Kings 25; 2 Chron. 36; Zech. 1: 12.

DANIEL AND COMPANIONS SPECIALLY FAVORED BY THE KING

Having in the foregoing summed up in brief the fulfillment of the divinely predicted judgments, both of the servitude to Babylon, and the desolations, we now continue with chapter one, which takes up some of the experiences of the youthful Daniel and his companions. One of the first incidents that occurred after the Hebrew captives had become settled in Babylon was the giving of a command by Nebuchadnezzar 'to one of his officers to select from among the Hebrew captives those who were the most intelligent as well as prepossessing in physical appearance, etc., and to have them placed as students in the royal college for three years, to be instructed in the wisdom and learning of the Chaldeans that they might thus, become useful servants of the king. The Chaldean teachers. were especially noted in their studies of what is termed the occult sciences, and of astronomy, Nebuchadnezzar was doubtless familiar-with the special department of knowledge in which the Hebrews were reputed amongst the surrounding nations as being adepts. This was the ability of their Prophets to foretell future events--an ability which would be looked upon by Nebuchadnezzar as simply a natural gift, a department of human knowledge. He hoped evidently to take advantage of this Hebrew gift (as such it seemed to him) and thus. add to the fund of knowledge possessed' by his own wise men, astrologers, and soothsayers, etc.

Amongst those selected under these instructions of Nebuchadnezzar were Daniel and three of his companions. The first thing of significance that happened to Daniel and his three companions after their selection was the changing of their

names. Their Hebrew names were such as to be a continual reminder of their nationality, and, that which was of more importance, their relationship to the great Jehovah and the religion established by Him among their forefathers. They were given Chaldean names, evidently with the thought of influencing them to forget the God of their fathers and adopt the religion of the Babylonians, an idolatrous one. The name Daniel, which in the Hebrew tongue meant "God's judge" was changed to Belteshazzar; the latter in the Chaldaic signifying "Bel's prince."

Another thing that occurred was that of giving them food and drink from the king, Nebuchadnezzar's own table. This was doubtless intended for their good, and would most naturally be looked upon by these Hebrew youths as a favor; indeed, it might be considered as an honor, a mark of distinction. While doubtless Daniel and his companions appreciated the kindness and good intention of the king, there was associated with the partaking of this food, that which would mean the violation of their consciences. The Hebrew people when in bondage in Egypt were, to a considerable extent, led astray into idolatry, and after their deliverance by Jehovah, amongst the laws given them was one forbidding the eating of meat and the drinking of that which had been first offered to idols. Daniel and his three companions of course held firmly their allegiance to Jehovah and His laws; and on this account. this action of the king in providing for them food from his table became a severe test of conscience.

CONSCIENCE AS A FACTOR IN GOUS SERVICE

Obedience to conscience lies at the very foundation of. loyalty and faithfulness to God; indeed it is a mark of character, which if lacking means the loss of God's favor. There was evidently no thought of compromising with evil on the part of Daniel--no questioning in his mind concerning what he would do under the peculiar and trying circumstances. He had already, obtained great favor with the king's servant, as the narrative shows. Although he desired to show his appreciation of the king's favor, also that of the king's servant, yet we find that he had already purposed in his heart what he would do. It is, out of the abundance of the heart that the mouth speaketh; it is that which a man purposes in his heart that determines the character of the man. And so we read of Daniel, that he "purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's meat, nor with the wine which he drank." On this decision of Daniel another has truthfully and forcefully remarked:

"The question consequently was whether Daniel should consult his conscience or his appetite and comfort--whether or not he should let his religion go, and accept common cause with idolaters--whether he should relinquish fidelity to the throne of his Maker, or risk his good standing with the king, who was disposed to favor him. Had he been one of those easy-going Christians of our day, who, are ready to make any worldly pleasure, gain, or convenience an ample excuse for setting aside any claims or duties of religion, we should never have heard of any scruple on the subject; but then we never should have had the illustrious Daniel. It takes sterner stuff to make saints, prophets, and holy princes than that which shuts its eyes and asks no questions, and is content to accommodate itself 'to almost anything and any place. Abraham's conscience would not let him stay in Ur, though his going out would lead him he knew not whither. Moses' conscience would not allow him to accept Egypt's throne and riches, though it sent him an

exile for forty years in the wilderness. And any one who would be a true man of God must be willing to risk all, and even life itself, rather than go against conscience and the clear will of Jehovah.- The worldly-wise may call it squeamishness, and sneer at it as straining at gnats, that Daniel resolved not to defile himself with the viands of the king; but it was the great foundation stone of -all his greatness. It is even greater when exhibited in little things than in matters so imposing that there is scarcely room for trial. Daniel took his stand for God, conscience, and righteousness even in the little matter of his meat and drink, and thus laid the groundwork of a character which passed untarnished and unscathed through seventy years of political life, which outlived jealousy, envy, and dynasties, and which stands out to this day the brightest of all the, records of humanity. Elevated from his early youth to the presidency over all the colleges of Babylon's wise men, then to the judge's bench, then to the headship of all the governors of an all-conquering empire, and holding his place amid all the intrigues indigenous to Oriental despotism, through three successive monarchies; honored during all the [more than] forty years of Nebuchadnezzar's reign; entrusted with the king's business, under the insolent and sensual Belshazzar; acknowledged by the conquering Medes and Persians; the stay and protector of his people under every administration through all the dreary years of their long exile; dwelling with the great in the most dissolute as the most grand and powerful of all the old heathen cities; invulnerable to the jealousies and envies of plotting satraps, 'arid maintaining himself unspotted to the end, a worshiper of Jehovah in a court and empire made up of idolaters, Daniel's life presents an embodied epic of faith and greatness, and exhibits one of the rarest pictures ever shown in any one man. And yet the whole of it had its 'root and beginning in his youthful resolve, not to defile himself with the portion of the King's viands."

It is not our purpose to discuss the matter of why this restriction Was a part of the law covenant. It will be sufficient to say that Daniel lived under that law covenant. Certain kinds of animals were forbidden as food under that covenant; in fact any animal that had been offered up in idol worship. On this account to eat animal food from the table of Gentiles would involve a violation of the law; therefore, Daniel and his companions preferred to become vegetarians. They requested that there might be given them pulse to eat. With us today pulse means leguminous plants, as peas, beans, etc. "It is not a proper construction to limit this in its use in this instance to pulse, or that Daniel desired to live solely on peas and beans, but the fair interpretation is to apply it to that which grows up from seeds; such probably as would be sown in a garden, or as We would now express it, vegetable diet."

DANIEL AS AN EXAMPLE TO THE CHRISTIAN

Another trait of character exhibited by Daniel in connection with this matter is also worthy of our emulation as servants of God and followers of Christ. This was the kind, meek, and courteous way that he expressed his purpose to the chief of the eunuchs, who, was entrusted with the duty of carrying out the command of the king. It was in no offensive, self-assertive manner that Daniel chose to decline the food from the king's table, but rather were his words and manner of a character fitting to address a superior in office. True religion is always kind and courteous to all, and exhibits humility and meekness, especially when addressing those over

them officially. While it is inflexible in its determination to be true to God and conscience, it endeavors always to be amiable and courteous. Some Christians seem to think that they cannot be true to God and conscience without being rude, without exhibiting harshness toward their fellowmen, without upbraiding them for not seeing and doing as they do. Not so with Daniel. He did not begin in a passionate way to upbraid the king or his servant. Nor did he refuse in a supercilious manner the king's offer.. He did not show either by his manner or words that he felt insulted by the king's request. To do so would neither have recommended himself nor exemplified his religion in the eyes of the king, nor of his servant. Indeed, to have acted thus would have displayed a lack of that wisdom that is of God, and would only have made matters worse. He did not even begin by condemning the custom of the Babylonians, or denouncing their idolatrous religion; but rather in a modest demeanor, with a clear sensing of the situation, and with that humility of spirit that is considerate for the sincerity of others in their religious convictions, however wrong, and yet with a determination to be faithful to principle and to his God, he simply presented, in a mild and gentle manner, a request that he and his three friends might be permitted to live on a vegetable diet for ten days and thus prove that the object desired by the king would be better obtained by so doing. He thus showed not only his respect for the king, but also his confidence that God's favor would be with those who would thus honor his laws and statutes. Such was his confidence in God that he cheerfully committed himself to accept whatever should be judged right., if at the end of ten days, he and his companions, after living on such food, should not come out as fair and prepossessing in flesh as any of his fellow-school mates, who partook of the king's meat and drink. The results of these ten days food test were most gratifying as 'recorded in verse 15, and clearly demonstrated the wisdom of Daniel and his companions, as well as the fact that God was with them. "And at the end of ten days their countenances appeared fairer and fatter in flesh than all the children which did eat the portion of the king's meat."

The remaining portion of the chapter is devoted to that of recording the general happy results of the course of obedience on the part of the four Hebrews as we read: "Now at the end of the days [the three years] that the king had said he [the king's servant] should bring them in, then the prince of the eunuchs brought them in before Nebuchadnezzar. And the king communed with them; and among them all was found none like Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah: therefore stood they before the king. And in all matters of wisdom and understanding, that the king inquired of them, he found them ten times-better than all the magicians and astrologers that were in all his realm. And Daniel continued even unto the first year of Cyrus."--Dan. 1:18-21.

ANOTHER CONVENTION AT SPRINGFIELD

The dear brethren of Springfield, Mass., have expressed the earnest desire to have a convention in their city September 1, 2, and 3. These dates fall on Saturday, Sunday, and Monday. The latter being a legal holiday constitutes these dates very acceptable. We therefore make this early announcement of the matter that the friends of other Classes may have it in mind in connection with their plans for the summer. The sweet remembrances of previous conventions at Springfield and the

profitable seasons of fellowship there, warrant us in looking forward to this gathering in September in the belief that it will also prove to be an occasion of blessedness in the Lord.

Let us hope and watch and pray to this end. Further particulars will be announced later.

REVELATION EXPOSITIONS TO BE PUBLISHED

IT will doubtless be gratifying to many to learn that the conclusion has now been fully reached to proceed with the publication of the series of expositions on Revelation in book form. The response to our query on the subject has been such that the brethren are led to believe that the mind of the Lord has been clearly indicated favorably to their undertaking the project. Some of the friends may have felt a measure of disappointment that the matter has not gone forward -be fore this, yet doubtless the delay has been providential. While we have believed that the entire Revelation matter if published in a book would be the means of a great blessing to the brethren, yet we desired not to act hastily nor to be unduly anxious to issue a publication. And though it is now more than two years since we first considered the proposition, and while this appears to be quite a long delay, yet we believe it was the wisest course to act slowly in the matter and to wait un til there was marked evidence that it was the desire of the friends generally throughout the world and that it would be pleasing to the Lord. This evidence we feel that we now have, and the promised co-operation on the part of the friends by donations and orders, etc., is very much appreciated.

The preparation of the matter for the printers is now going forward as rapidly as possible and it is hoped that it may not be long till the copy will be in their hands. It is expected that the matter will fill two volumes of between 500 and 600 pages each.

Some who have communicated with us have enclosed remittance covering the amount of their contribution or order for the books; though the majority have not done so. As the project is being undertaken on the basis of a general co-operation, and as the printers will require a considerable of the amount in advance of our receiving the books, it will therefore be quite in order for all who find it convenient to advance the amount on their order or donation promised, in the near future, that thus having the necessary funds at hand there may not be any delay from this standpoint.

IN COMMEMORATION OF HIS DEATH

HE opportunity once more has come to Christian believers to observe the memorial of the death of their great leader, the Head and Forerunner of the Church which is His Body. Every year of progress in the Narrow Way brings a deeper sense of gratitude and love as upon the anniversary of the death of our Master we call forth the scenes of His earthly life and pilgrimage. How -wonderful is our privilege of hearing the Master say. Blessed are your eyes for they see and your ears for they hear! Indeed, we do see and hear marvelous things that lift us up to realms above. The things we have seen and heard have meant our

transference from the kingdom of darkness into the Kingdom of God's dear Son. And, as we by faith take our places as His footstep followers, bearers of the Cross after Him, we also are caused to realize that a cup has been poured for us, as the Father poured a cup for Him.

How appropriate that our Lord should on the eve of His death institute this beautiful Memorial! He desired His followers to keep ever in mind the source and means -of their justification through His broken body and shed blood. More than this, He desired that they might ever be mindful of the solemn and sacred engagement into which they have entered with Him and in which they have agreed to drink of His sacrificial cup and be broken as members of His Body, as saith the Apostle. For as oft as ye eat this bread and drink, this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till He come."

The Memorial observed by the Brooklyn Ecclesia on the evening of March 30 was indeed a solemn one. The review of Israel's Passover, then of our Lord's death, the significance of the emblems, together with the prayers and hymns of worship and thanksgiving all drew our hearts very close to the Master and caused us to appreciate more than ever the great fact that Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us.

Reports received from various quarters reveal the general observance of the Memorial Supper again this season-that as the brethren gathered in larger or smaller companies, they were richly blessed in realizing afresh their shares and privileges in the great purpose of redemption,

As each year brings us nearer to the realization of all our blessed hopes, let us guard with jealous care our present inheritance of the Spirit and grace of God in our hearts, that He may continue to show unto us His loving kindness, and ultimately account us worthy of His heavenly Kingdom and glory.

RUTH, THE FAITHFUL DAUGHTER

"Thy people shall be my People, and thy God my God."--Ruth 1: 14-22.

HUMAN nature is much the same every where and always. How many there are today who mistakenly seek to map out their plans for the present life in disregard of their highest interests, in disregard of the Lord's promises and the relationship which they have entered into by covenant with Him! How many there are who forget that the Lord's arrangement with all of His covenant people is that He will supervise their affairs and cause all things to work together for good to them!

A forceful lesson comes to our attention in the book of Ruth which we do well to heed. Somewhere about Gideon's time, when scarcity amounting almost to famine prevailed in Palestine, as a judgment of the Lord upon His people for some measure of coldness or unfaithfulness to Him and to their covenant, Naomi's husband determined to emigrate with his family to the other side of the Dead Sea--to the land of Moab. The Moabites were the descendants of Lot, nevertheless, the Lord marked out to His people Israel that they were not to be considered the children of Abraham--that they were not fellow-heirs of the promises made to Abraham, and, therefore, they were not subjects of special

dealings, disciplines, providences, etc., as were the Israelites. Naomi and her two sons went with her husband apparently without regret, to the land of Moab, hoping thereby to better the prospects of the family. It was a mistake, however, as she afterwards realized, to attempt to regulate their own affairs when they were specially under the Lord's protection and guidance.

As Israelites they should have esteemed the Divine promise's so highly that they would not have left the land of promise and the people of promise to commingle with those who were strangers to those promises and more or less idolaters. To be on the Lord's side amongst the Lord's people should have been esteemed far more important than earthly prospects. Instead of making temporal interests the chief concern.. Naomi's husband should have been making the religious interests of himself and family his chief concern, so that if he had been living in Moab under greater prosperity, he should rather have been willing to go into the land of promise amongst the Lord's people, though such a course would seem to mean a blighting of some of his earthly interests.

Naomi, however, is not to blame in connection with this matter; the responsibility rested with her husband, 'and it is evident that her heart was never fully in sympathy with the move, because about ten years subsequently, when her husband and two sons died, she promptly determined on a return to the Lord's people and to the land which He had given them.

CHOOSING THE BETTER PART

The Lord's people of spiritual Israel will do well to bear the thought continually in mind--that spiritual interests are to be given the preference always; that temporal affairs are to be managed and controlled from the standpoint of the everlasting welfare; from the standpoint of spiritual growth and development and prosperity; from the standpoint of the best interests and influences upon their children. They should not only hesitate to follow any suggestion that would take themselves and their families into unfavorable, godless surroundings, but they should determine that not under any consideration would they follow such a suggestion; that on the contrary the Lord's people should be their people, even though this meant less of the comforts and luxuries of this present life. It would surely mean greater spiritual blessings and favors for the present time, and persevering, it would mean the gaining of the glorious reward which our Lord has promised to the faithful who love Him more than they love houses and lands and kindred, etc.

Evidently Naomi's life and example and her faithfulness to the Lord had made an impression amongst those with whom she was specially in contact-her two daughters-in-law, both of whom resolved to go back with her to the land of Canaan. On the journey, however, she reflected that these two young women would be sacrificing much-leaving kindred, homes, acquaintances, customs, and good prospects to go with her to a land where they would be considered foreigners and probably be discriminated against. She therefore, urged them to return to their own people, to the religious worship, etc., to which they had been accustomed. She feared that their resolution to accompany her would result in disappointment later on. Her disinterested course in this matter reminds us very much of our Lord's words to some who proposed to become His disciples. He advised them first of all to sit down and count the cost; this He did, not because

He wished to stumble or to turn back any who had inclinations to follow in His footsteps, but because it is best on general principles that people should not undertake that in which their hearts are not fully and deeply interested; because, otherwise, they are sure to make a failure. They Who sit down and count the cost and then rejoicingly follow in the Lord's footsteps of suffering and trial, glad to be accounted worthy to suffer for His name's sake, and to walk in His footsteps-they alone are the kind who will gain the prize. Those who would follow without the spirit of sacrifice would be sure to miss the prize, and all the sacrificing they might do would be burdensome and measurably disappointing.

Naomi's argument appealed to one of her daughters-in-law, who did return to her Moabitish home, concluding that after all it would be too much of a sacrifice for her to part with her kindred, etc. Ruth, on the contrary, had come to love her mother-in-law so deeply and to respect her religion so thoroughly that although it cost a tear to part with home and kindred and to contemplate the trials of poverty in a foreign -land, she, nevertheless, fully resolved that such a home amongst those who revered the true God and were heirs of His promises was more to be esteemed than anything she was leaving. Her impassioned words to her mother-in-law are noted throughout the world as being amongst the most beautiful expressions of sympathy, kindness, and devotion. Some one has arranged them in poetic form, thus:

"Entreat me not to leave thee,
And to return from following after thee;
For whither thou goest, I will go;
And Where thou lodgest, I will lodge;
Thy people shall be my people,
And thy God, my God;
Where thou diest I will die, and there will I be buried.
The Lord do so to me, and more also,
If aught but death part thee and me."--Vs. 16, 17,

YE ARE THE EPISTLES OF CHRIST

A good and faithful, God-fearing, God-serving, God-honoring mother-in-law, Naomi surely was, to have so deeply interested Ruth in herself and in her God and in His promises to her people. There is a lesson here, not only for mothers-in-law, but for all of the Lord's people. Not. all are able to preach and to teach the, Word of God publicly or privately, but all can teach through their daily lives and glorify their Father in heaven in their bodies and spirits which are His, by living a godly life, by telling in the simplest manner of the hopes and promises which control their own hearts and inspire their own courage and devotion. The Apostle Paul had in mind this same thought of the general influence of life and character when he said, "Ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ." Our Lord had the same thought in mind when He declared, "Ye are the light of the world . . . Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." That Naomi had told her daughters-in-law respecting her God and His promises to His people is evident; but to have told them of this and not to have acted and spoken and lived in accord with this faith and hope, would have been contradictory and,, undoubtedly, never would have

influenced Ruth to forsake her own people and her father's house, and to cast in her lot with her mother-in-law and the Israelites.

Arrived at her home city, Bethlehem, Naomi, who had been well known ten years before, and whose friends probably never expected to see her again, was greeted by her name; but she replied, Call me no longer Naomi (which signifies lovable, pleasant), but call me rather Marah (which signifies bitter). She explained to them that the Lord's providences in respect to her affairs had been severe afflictions--the Lord had testified against her course--had not prospered her self and family in the course they had taken. No doubt later on she came to see that the Lord's afflictions upon her had really been for her good, bringing her back to the land of promise and to fellowship with her people, so that her last days were probably the best of her life.

So at times it may be with some of the Lord's spiritual Israelites; His chastisements and afflictions and disciplines may seem to indicate His displeasure, but really, from the standpoint of faith and knowledge, they may afterward be seen to have been blessings in disguise. However, much depends upon the way in which the Lord's disciplines are received. Had Naomi suffered herself to become sour and morose and rebellions against the Lord, no blessing would have followed her trying experiences; but the fact that she permitted these to draw her closer to the Lord and to His people formed the channel of her blessings. And this lesson also is easily applied by us all as spiritual Israelites to our experiences.

THE BLESSING OF DIVINE GUIDANCE

The remainder of the lesson gives us an insight into the customs of the time, and incidentally shows us how the Lord rewarded the noble character and faith of Ruth. That she did not come to Bethlehem with great expectations and selfish motives is evidenced by the fact that she set out to earn a living for herself and her mother-in-law. She was young and strong, and could, after the manner of the times, go into the harvest fields and glean such stray handfuls of the grain as were missed by the men who did the reaping. This was permitted by the Jewish law; the grain growing in the fence corners might be gathered by any of the poor for their own use. Providentially Ruth was guided in her humble efforts to make a living, to the field of a man who was a kinsman to Naomi, and to whom she (Ruth) was subsequently married and became one of the mothers in Israel, from whom descended King David and ultimately Mary, the mother of Jesus.

It is well that the Lord's people note even in this little incident something that may be helpful to them. We are to commit our way to the Lord and sincerely and unselfishly determine to follow the path of righteousness; then the Lord shall be our God; then His people shall be our people. Testings will come 'as to whether or not we are willing to do our duty in respect to the common affairs of life, laboring with our hands, providing things honest in the sight of all men. As we go forward in the line of duty, the Lord guides our steps and overrules in our affairs and brings us blessings, but if we fail to take the proper steps and to do with our might what our hands find to do, we miss the blessings.

The fact that these two women could journey from Moab to Bethlehem by themselves and without molestation, and the fact that Ruth, unknown and unpro-

tected, could safely glean in the fields without interference of any kind, speaks to us strongly of the general law and order prevalent amongst the Israelites -- the general recognition of the Divine law and the general conformity thereto. We are to remember, too, that at this time the laws were liberally administered, and that, so far as we are made aware, there was neither army nor police organization to enforce them. The people were comparatively free and evidently in some respects moral, noble, and trustworthy. This is illustrated further in the course of Boaz. How few employers of labor today, as they visit their farms, would be in any degree inclined to salute their laborers as Boaz did his, saying, "The Lord be with you!" And how few farm laborers of today would respond as did these of Boaz: "They answered him, The Lord bless thee." Evidently the employers and employees of our day could learn some profitable lessons from the past, notwithstanding the fact that Evolutionists would endeavor to convince us that back in the days of Boaz men must have been much nearer the monkey condition than today. The facts are to the contrary.

Furthermore, we notice the generosity of Boaz, that instead of dealing selfishly and miserly in respect to the gleanings of the woman, he gave directions to his servants that they purposely let fall an occasional handful when binding the grain, that Ruth's gleanings might thus be enlarged. Christian employers and employees need not to go back to the Jewish Law and to the customs of the Jews as illustrated by Boaz and his laborers; for we have a still higher law and much advantage every way over, them. If their knowledge of the Lord led them to kindly salutations and kindly actions, much more should the Christian's greater knowledge of the Divine will and his anointing of the Holy Spirit enable him to be kind, considerate, and affectionate toward others--doing good unto all men as we have opportunity, especially to the household of faith.

Finally,--It is unsafe to neglect to have the Lord for our God, and to neglect to make His people our people. Acceptance of the Lord means ultimately a change in all of life's interests and affairs if we would abide in His love and favor. The sacrifice of earthly things may cost us tears and heartaches at first; but eventually we will be more than compensated, as was Ruth, only in higher, spiritual blessings.

THE SHEPHERD'S CARE

THE SHEPHERD'S RESTORING AND GUIDING GRACE

"He restoreth my soul: He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake."--Psa. 23:3.

AS APPLIED to the Lord's sheep the words, "He restoreth my soul", may properly have reference to the way we are first led into the "paths of righteousness". Our life, soul, being, was forfeited under the Divine sentence, and by faith in the Great Shepherd, who laid down His own life for the sheep, faith in the merit of the precious blood, a restoration of soul, being, is granted. However this does not reach a state of actual or full accomplishment in this life, but is a reckoned one. We are counted perfect in Him--in the merit of the Great Shepherd. Thus we become His sheep; thus He becomes our Shepherd. We are counted holy

and acceptable to God through the merit of His sacrificial death, in order that we may follow in His footsteps and become living sacrifices, holy, acceptable to God which is a reasonable service. It is in this way that we are led into the paths of righteousness-right paths, paths that are advantageous to our development in righteousness. However, these paths are not always pleasant, but are frequently, from the natural standpoint, difficult and trying. This favor and blessing and opportunity comes to us not for our own sake, nor on account of any worthiness we may possess, but "for His name's sake."

FOR HIS NAME'S SAKE

This great privilege of being led out of the paths of sin, unrighteousness, selfishness, disfavor, into a place of, acceptance and favor, is well called a restoration. Strange as it may seem to us at first, this wonderful deliverance, purchased at so great a price--a price which manifested the wealth of His loving grace and interest in us, was not, we are told, for our own sake, but "for His own name's sake." This grand and blessed experience of having the great Shepherd, go before us through all the checkered scenes and experiences of life, through sickness and health, through adversity and prosperity, is not for our sake but "for His own name's sake." The world passes through these varied experiences and the Lord's "little flock" is not exempt from them. The Great Shepherd sees the necessity for His sheep to pass through these scenes, and to have these experiences in their journey to their Eternal Home, that they may attain that home, enjoy its blessedness, and, more important than all, that they may fill the places designated for them. His mighty love takes in all the wandering sheep of Adam's race. It is to manifest His great love and wisdom and mercy and power to all these, that this "little flock" is now being fitted and prepared. It is "for His name's sake" that He does this. His "name" stands for all that makes up His wonderful attributes, His character. To know of these will be the privilege of all in God's due time, and this knowledge will then be for their eternal good as it is for His "little flock" now. It will vindicate His character, and thus bring all to reverence, to honor, to praise and to magnify His great and holy name. The Apostle saw this, and expressed it when he said, "He has raised us up together and seated us together in the Heavenlies by Christ Jesus; in order that He might exhibit in those Ages which are approaching, the surpassing wealth of His favor, by kindness towards us in Christ Jesus." The words of the poet will then be realized by "whosoever will":

"Salvation! O the blessed theme
Shall fill the world with joy!
When all its mighty work is seen,
.Praise shall all tongues employ."

"He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for *His name's sake*". 'One has truthfully said: "He is pledged to do it for the sake of His own great name." It is the earnest desire of all the sheep that the Great Shepherd's name shall be magnified and honored. The name denotes the honor and character of God. "These are implicated; these are at stake; the right leading of the saint is guaranteed by their immutability." His name is "Wonderful". This name calls for the marvelous working and overruling of His almighty power for our highest good. His name is "Counselor". This requires that all His unerring wisdom be

displayed in leading us into those circumstances and conditions which will accomplish the end designed by Him for us. O beloved, what a wonderful state of grace it is to be able to say, "He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake"! What a blessed privilege when in prayer we come to Him, knowing something of the difficulties, the dangers, the snares, the pitfalls by the way, to say, Thou art leading me Savior, Master, Shepherd, "for Thine Own sake"!

"HE RESTORETH MY SOUL"

In addition to this application of the words, "He restoreth my soul," there may be another meaning. When in times of deep distress, in times of sore trial, in times of severe test, we become weak and begin to faint, the great Shepherd renews our strength, He restores. our soul, that we may be enabled to profit by the trials, to bear them with fortitude, and to endure unto the end. In a similar way this may be applied to the Good Shepherd Himself, when He was laying down His life for the sheep. When in Gethsemane, He knew that He was nearing the time when His great sacrifice was to be finished, and He realized as never before that not only His own soul, life, being, existence, but also the great Plan of salvation was at stake, and depended upon His perfect obedience unto death. May there not have come into His mind the query, Have I been perfect in every thought, word, and deed? Have I pleased the Father absolutely in everything? Will I be able on the morrow to endure perfectly the shame and ignominy of the trial before the Jewish tribunal, before Pilate, before Herod? It is only as we view the Gethsemane scene from this standpoint, that we can understand the words of St. Paul when referring to that dark hour: "Who in the days of His flesh, when He had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto Him that was able to save Him from death, and was heard in that He feared". He was heard, His prayer was answered, He was assured that up to that time He had been perfect, that He had pleased the Father, that He had been faithful to His covenant of sacrifice, and He was then and there strengthened in soul and being, and enabled to finish the great work, to endure the cross and despise the shame even unto death. "Wherefore God hath highly exalted Him" by a resurrection to the Divine nature, to sit at His right hand.

SIGNS AND CAUSES OF SPIRITUAL DECLINE

There is still another way that these words: "He restoreth my soul," may be applied. They are indeed very generally applied to restoring the straying, the wandering sheep back to the fold. Concerning the literal sheep, one has said: "In the Hebrew, the soul means the life or oneself. There are perilous places for the sheep on all sides, and they seem never to learn to avoid them. The shepherd must ever be on the watch. And there are private fields and sometimes gardens and vineyards here and there in the shepherd country; if a sheep stray into them and be caught there, it is forfeited to the owner of the land; so, 'He restoreth my soul', means, the shepherd brings me back and rescues me from fatal and forbidden places."

Referring to the Lord's true sheep, another has said: "These words are among the most precious of this priceless Psalm. They speak of the experience of many children of God, who are deeply conscious of the need of the restoring grace of the Good Shepherd. If He were alone followed, and if His influences upon us

were always instantly obeyed, there would be no need of restoration. But we are not always susceptible and obedient to the heavenly leadings; we easily relapse into states of lethargy and indifference, and it is necessary that we should be restored".

From various causes the Lord's sheep are liable to relapses, perhaps not relapses of the outer life and action, but relapses of the heart. We do not say that there need be such, for His grace is sufficient to keep us from these relapses; but there have been, and there are such deflections amongst His sheep. We are liable to spiritual decline, to lose our first love, and were it not for the Good Shepherd, we would fall back altogether into the world. Spiritual decline has its symptoms. One who has realized a close walk with the Great Shepherd, and who has experienced the blessedness of His fellowship, may not always discover immediately these signs. If he begins to do so, he is not always ready to admit it. However, the Heavenly Shepherd will not allow this state of things to go on; He keeps His watchful eye on His sheep, and causes a chain of providences to arouse him from his stupor, his lethargy.

The signs of spiritual decline are many, but are not always looked upon as such. One -who has realized the blessed rest that Jesus gives when coming to Him, weary and sad with the burden of sin, is not always conscious when this rest is lost. Those who have taken His yoke upon them and are learning of Him, in other words, those who have yielded themselves, their lives,, their all to Him and have found that deeper rest which comes through a realization of the Shepherd's loving interest and care, may not always be conscious immediately of its loss. We may take on a spirit of restlessness, a spirit of complaining, without being conscious of it. We may lose in a measure, great or small, our interest in His Word, in the things of His kingdom, and attribute that loss of interest to every other cause than the real one, which is that of spiritual decline. We may lose our testimony for the Master, our testimony against sin, and yet be unwilling to admit that it is any different with us than formerly. It is only when the watchful Shepherd, through some chosen agency, brings His word of truth to us in the power of His Spirit that we are able to see where we are, and acknowledge our deflection. It may be when we hear others who are deeply spiritual, and 'who are living near Him, relate their experiences and joys, that we are caused to see our true condition; or it may be when brought under the power of temptation, we discover our lack of strength or ability to lay hold upon the Lord, the source of our strength, and alas! yield. It may be that not until then do we realize the loss of our first love, of Divine strength, and flee to Him for forgiveness, and restoration.

"O! MAY NO EARTH-BORN CLOUD ARISE"

The causes of spiritual decline are many. Neglecting to confess our sins and shortcomings is a fruitful source of decline. "These things I write unto you that ye sin not", are words that we surely need to give heed to. However, it is equally as necessary to give heed to the words that accompany this exhortation: "If any man -sin we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous", and, "if we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." It has been truthfully said that "if there be a cause of disagreement, however trivial, among friends, they shrink from meeting; or if they meet, there is a cold ness and restraint, which are the more evident and painful in

proportion to the warmth and intimacy of their previous attachment. There can be no more heart union till the cause of estrangement has been probed, and the wrong confessed or the misunderstanding explained. And the same principle obtains in the relationship of the soul with God. When we sin there is generally a tendency to imitate Adam and Eve in their concealment beneath the foliage of the garden. ... Sin makes the thought of fellowship unwelcome. Similarly we have learned again and again that unconfessed sin casts a dark shadow over our fellowship with God, and makes it irksome or perfunctory. Then we begin to change the open heart for the averted one, and put on the shy look and the formal phrase. And if the sin is not instantly confessed and put away, the little rift within the lute will widen, until it makes the music mute."

THE SUBTLETY AND POWER OF SIN

A neglect of special times of communion with our Shepherd; a neglect of times of pouring out our soul in thanksgiving to Him; a neglect of gratefully remembering all the way the Lord our God has led us in the past, of His goodness and mercy toward us, will sooner or later result in leanness of soul, and a loss of real communion and of real spiritual joy.

We may even become so occupied, we may have our time so taken up with what we call serving Him, as to find no time for fellowship and communion. This is a very fruitful source of backsliding in heart, if not in life. There is no service that we can engage in for Him but what we need His counsel, His guidance, His assistance. It is not too much to say that we can do nothing without Him.

There are many other things that might be cited which tend towards backsliding in heart and life. While mingling with the world, as is necessary' more or less, we should never forget what we are by grace, whom we represent, and what our great mission is. While it will be impossible for us to have our conversation, when in the society of people of this world, always about religious matters, yet our words, our actions should be such as to show that we have learned of Jesus. We should be careful what we read, what we hear, and how we hear. Indeed the only safety from spiritual declension is the cultivation of the spirit of watchfulness and prayer concerning everything, to learn to pray without ceasing, to in every thing give thanks, to meditate upon His Word, to quench not the spirit, to despise not prophesyings, to *avoid every appearance of evil*.

And yet with all these exhortations, knowing that all these things are necessary to keep us in the life of abiding in Christ, we are prone to forget, to neglect them, and to find ourselves in need of His restoring grace. One of the first things, and often the most difficult, for a person in this condition to do, is to admit, to confess his need of this grace. How true are the words of an eminent writer on spiritual life, when speaking on this matter: "Just as we have met with people afflicted with an insidious and dangerous disease, who yet refuse to consider themselves so, and who fight against the desire of their friends to summon medical aid; so, one phase of spiritual decline is the attempt to turn aside all suggestions of its presence, although gnawing the vitals of the heart. Then follows the sad admission, extorted as the years go on, that things are not as they were, which is followed by the hopeless conclusion that they cannot be mended."

To such, how welcome are the words of the Good Shepherd, who has at last caused the straying sheep to realize the hopelessness of, its own efforts to restore again the joy, nay, the consciousness of favor and companionship once known: "He restoreth my soul." He restored David, He restored Peter, He will restore all His straying sheep. The poet has beautifully expressed the loving tenderness and power of the Great Shepherd to restore the straying sheep, when he says :

"Joy of the desolate, light of the straying.
Hope of the penitent, fadeless and pure!
Here speaks the Comforter, tenderly saying,
Earth hath no sorrow that Heaven cannot cure."

DIVINE LESSONS IN REPROVING OTHERS

The one and only place, for the straying one to find the restorative grace is at the mercy seat. The Good Shepherd, who laid down His life for the sheep, may use many different agencies in bringing the wanderer back to the fold, but there is but one place where the restorative remedies may be applied. It is where the blood has been sprinkled. It is there and only there that remission, restoration is found. The agency used may be an animate or an inanimate one. It may be a hymn, reminding of happy days past. It may be a little word spoken, a book on religious experiences, the influence of a life, a gentle rebuke, something that softens, something that breaks up and melts the indifference -- the icy coldness, something that humbles the pride and takes away the false shame of confession. As the writer just quoted has said:

"Let those who want to understand the whole philosophy of restoration read the marvelous story of the way the Good Shepherd restored the soul of His erring Apostle. We can only enumerate the stages here. He prayed for him, and warned him. From the midst of the rough crew that did their will on Him, 'He turned and looked at Peter'-not angrily, not harshly, but with the tenderest reproach. He gave a special message to the angels, that they should bid the women summon Peter amid the rest on the resurrection morning, showing how constantly he had been in the Savior's heart all through His sorrows. He met him alone on the world's first Easter-day, and permitted him to pour out the story of his sorrow unrestrained by the presence of any beside themselves. He gave him an opportunity of thrice attesting his love, to wipe out the memory of the thrice denial. *And this is not more than He, will do for any of us.*

"O, do not wait for days or weeks to elapse ere you apply to Him for restoring grace! But just as you are, dare to trust Him to do so now. Whilst the throb of passion is still beating high, and the deed of shame is recent, look up to Him, and claim forgiveness first, and in the same breath, ask Him to put you back immediately in the very place which you occupied before you fell. And then, though as yet no answering joy thrills your heart, you will be able to exclaim, in the assurance of faith, 'He restoreth my soul.' Yes, and for those who dare to claim it, there is another promise (one made to Israel of old) still more assuring, which tells us that, 'He will restore the years that the canker worm has eaten', giving back to us opportunities and privileges which we may have seemed to forfeit forever." *

* Meyer.

To be continued

SAMUEL: JUDGE AND PROPHET

Only fear Jehovah, and serve Him in truth with all your heart; for consider how great things He hath done for you." -- 1 Sam. 12: 1-5, 20-25.

SAMUEL the Prophet stands out on the pages of sacred history a very noble character--very similar in many respects to Moses. He had served the Lord and the people faithfully for a long period, and then, at the urgent request of the people, and with God's assent, he had anointed Saul their king. The latter had been received rather half-heartedly, but the battle with the Ammonites and the great victory which the Lord granted to His people on that occasion united their hearts to Saul who had been the visible leader in that victory and Samuel perceived that the right time had come for a public coronation of the king, and the formal transfer of allegiance to him as the Lord's representative in the temporal affairs of the nation. Accordingly, a general convocation of the people was called to meet at Gilgal--one of the several prominent places for public gatherings--one of the places at which Samuel was in the habit of holding court when, as a kind of supreme judge, he went at different seasons of the year to various parts of the territory of Israel to hear and to decide causes and differences which the elders of the tribes could not adjudicate satisfactorily.

SAMUEL ADMONISHES TO OBEDIENCE

Upon the assembling of the people, the Prophet Samuel opened his address (vs. 1-5) by calling upon God and the people to witness to his own rectitude of character in all of his dealings with them for the many years in which he had served them; to his justice in seeking to decide their various questions righteously; to his honesty, in that he never received even the smallest bribe, nor permitted anything to vitiate his judgment; neither had he been an oppressor of his people, but had always sought their good. With united voice the people concurred in the excellence and purity of his administration--a wonderful tribute, one which would be almost inconceivable in, our day, in which we find that even the best and noblest officials are sure to have enemies, traducers, backbiters, slanderers. We are not to suppose that Samuel was merely eulogizing his own administration, but are, rather, to attribute to such a noble character a nobler object. He wished to make a lasting impression with this address and this transfer of Authority to King Saul; and, to make his words more impressive and more effective in the interests of his successor and in the interests of the Lord's people, he impressed upon his hearers the fact that his entire life had been one of devotion, and that they might well understand that his words now were in full accord with all the course of his previous life. They would thus realize that he had their best interests at heart, that he was thoroughly loyal to the Lord, and that his example, as well as his advice, would be beneficial to them. Perhaps, too, he would thus set before the people a

standard of what they might look for and hope for from their new king, and set before the king a standard of the ideal after which he should pattern his rule.

Next, he called attention to God's faithfulness to them in the centuries past, from the time that he adopted them as His people and made a covenant with them through Moses and became their heavenly King. He recounted to the people the many deliverances which the Lord had wrought for them through various agents whom He had raised up. He would not wish them to think of the recent victory over the Ammonites as being the only one; but he desired that they recognize it, in common with all previous victories, as from the Lord, by whatsoever hand they were effected. He would have them discern that they exercised great ingratitude in forgetting that the Lord had, all this time been their King, and in preferring an earthly king to the government He had established. Nevertheless, now that God had granted their request and given them an earthly king, they must not fail to recognize that he was only the representative of their real King, the heavenly One. Otherwise, their condition would be deplorable in every way. They had the king of their choice and God had set him over them: let the matter thus stand, and from this new standpoint they should go on to make the best of their condition; and to do this, would be to give close attention, to the commandments of the Lord.

Obedience to the Lord would bring blessings both to the people and to their king, and disobedience and rebellion or any measure of irreverence toward the Lord and His commandments would bring upon them Divine disfavor and injury. Not that the Lord would vindictively render evil for evil, but the hand of the Lord would be against them in the same sense that the current of the river is against the persons who attempt to go contrary to it. Divine justice has its steady flow. It -is irrepressible; it opposes anything that comes against it, and favors anything that goes in harmony with it. We can recognize something of this principle in various laws of nature, as, for instance, gravitation. Let us also recognize that the principles of Divine government operate in a very similar manner. As fire burns the evil or the good when they come in contact with it, and as the law of gravitation operates in respect to all, whether good or bad, who come into the line of its influence, so the principles of Divine justice operate automatically.

STEPPING STONES TO HIGHER PLANES

Samuel proceeded to do a miracle before the people -- to cause a thunder shower in the middle of harvest. In Palestine they have the early and the latter rains. The spring rains usually end in April, and the fall rains begin in October or November. A writer on the subject says, "In ordinary seasons, from the cessation of the showers, in spring until their commencement in October or November, rain never falls, and the sky is usually serene." The wheat harvest which the Prophet pointed out to them as just in order, must have been the first of June and, hence, nothing could have been further from the expectation of the people than a thunder shower at that time. The bringing of it at the Prophet's announcement, was to remind the people how completely their affairs and interests were in Divine power. They were to discern that the recent victory need not have been theirs except as the Lord had been pleased to favor them and grant them the Victory; and that simply by bringing unfavorable showers upon their harvest, the entire fruitage of their labors of many months might be quickly spoiled and they be reduced to starvation, and in that way become more thoroughly subdued than by any foreign

invasion. The Prophet calls their attention to the wickedness of their course in the rejection of God as their King, and to this power of God, which could easily be exercised did He wish to requite them according to their dealings with Him.

The people saw the point. They discerned that if it were to rain a few days they would lose their all, they recognized that they were wholly in the power of God, and entreated Samuel to pray for them, confessing not only the wrongs they had done in seeking a king, but, also their sins: "We have added unto our sins."

As the Lord's mouthpiece, the Prophet assured the people that they need not fear God's taking vengeance upon them, notwithstanding their wrong course. On the contrary, they should more fully than ever determine to, turn to the Lord whole-heartedly, and let their mistake and the trials and difficulties that would come to them as a result of it prove a blessing to them in drawing their hearts nearer and nearer to the Lord, their true King, who never sought anything but their highest welfare. So it should be with us. If at any time we find that we have taken- a wrong course Which is irretrievable, we may expect it to bring the disappointments as the Lord foretold; but He may permit it to bring, as well, some blessings in the way of contrition of heart, and humility toward the Lord, and greater zeal, watchfulness, and faithfulness for the future. Thus, even some of the blunders of life may become stepping-stones to 'higher planes of grace and truth.

The sentiment of verse 22 is very beautiful, and, doubtless, was very encouraging to the Israelites in assuring them of God's continued love and favor to-ward them because of His having adopted them as His, people. Applying this verse to spiritual Israel, we may take great comfort from it, too. If it was a favor to natural Israel to be adopted as the Lord's peculiar people, as the house of servants, how much greater is the blessing to spiritual Israel, adopted of the Lord as the house of sons under the chief Son, Jesus;- "whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end!" (Heb. 3: 6.) It is well that the Lord's people be called upon to fear, to reverence, the Lord; but if. the Scriptures were entirely made up of commands and reproofs, the Lord's people would air surely have been discouraged long ago. On the contrary, with the reproofs and corrections, the Lord gives us very precious testimonies respecting His love and mercy, His goodness and longsuffering kindness, to encourage us. All the members of the Body of Christ laboring against the course of this world, and against public opinion, and against the weaknesses of their own flesh, and against the great adversary Satan, need spiritual encouragement--assurances that the Lord is for them. The Apostle points this out, saying, "If God be for us who can be against us?"--what will all the opposition against us amount to if God be on our side? He again encourages us with precious words, reminding us of the unchangeableness of God and the fact that He has already done great things for us and is preparing to do still greater things. If while we were yet sinners Christ died for the ungodly, much more shall His favor be with us now that we are adopted into His family and are seeking to walk in His ways. as members of the Body of Christ.

THE KEY-NOTE, FAITHFULNESS TO GOD

The grandeur of the Prophet's character shine's out in the twenty-third verse again: Re seems to have none of the petty animosities which some smaller creatures

might have under the circumstances, and Was a patriot to the core of His heart, as well as a faithful representative and ambassador of the Lord and mediator of His people. He says, practically: "Nothing that you have done toward me-rejecting me in choosing King Saul-shall in any manner or degree hinder my love for you and my prayers on your behalf. God forbid that it should! I should consider this a sin against the Lord who has placed me as a kind of representative of Him to you, and of you to Him; and I certainly would be failing of my duty and privilege did I neglect this important office of mediator. You may rely upon it. that I not only will refrain from pleading against you with the Lord, but that I will petition Him on your behalf."

The nobility of, Samuel's course may well be copied by the Lord's people under various circumstances in life. When those who are near and dear to us flag in their love and devotion, they need all the more our sympathy and our prayers; and, as our dear Master showed us, even. our enemies are to be prayed for and have our good wishes-that the Lord would grant them in His providence such opening of understanding, such experiences as in Divine wisdom would be for their highest welfare to bring them into full accord with Himself, and thus back into harmony with us and all who are in harmony with Him. The Prophet indicates that, although he was ceasing to be their judge and ruler, he would not cease to be their instructor in the good and right way so long as the Lord's providences might permit him to serve them, and so long as they would accept *his* aid.

Recurring, however, to the principal point of *his* instructions, he points out that reverence for the Lord serving Him in truth with all their heart, was not only a proper course, but a course which would bring them the Lord's blessing. And as a help to our flagging zeal, we should continually remind ourselves of the Lord's great blessings to us., As we learn to appreciate the goodness of the Lord, if rightly disposed at all, the influence will be to strengthen us and to make us more loyal to Him. Failing to seek with our whole heart the Lord's service after we have become His people and entered into covenant relationship with Him, receiving of His favors and blessings in this life, and also, by promise, in the life to come, would mean wickedness which, persevered in, will surely bring destruction. Faithfulness to God should be the key-note of all our desires. "Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in Thy sight, O Lord, my strength and my Redeemer."--Psa. 19: 14.

ENCOURAGING LETTERS

Dear Brethren in Christ:

I am greatly interested in the possibility of the Revelation series being published in book form by the INSTITUTE. I trust you may see your way clear to so publish these interesting and helpful articles. During the present industrial crisis I cannot state how much I may be able to co-operate with you in this project; but I will be glad to help in any way that I can.

I am sure the publication of the Revelation series in book form will fill a long-felt want amongst the Lord's people. The majority of the friends here are pleased with the prospect.

I cannot close without a word of appreciation of the other articles appearing in the columns of the HERALD. Those on chronology are especially helpful, and timely.

Let me say again that I trust that we may have the articles on Revelation in book form very soon. I heartily recommend the study of Revelation to the friends, confident they will receive a great blessing in harmony with our Lord's promise in Rev. 1:3.

With Christian love and continued prayers for our Lord's guidance,

Your brother in His service,

G. E. L.-Colo.

Dear Brethren:

Enclosed find twenty cents, for which please send me a package of assorted post cards. I would like, also, about twenty-five of the tract, "A Dark Cloud and Its Silver Lining."

I am so glad for this new tract, and wish we could have more of the kind that one could enclose with letters. I always try to send a bit of Truth in every letter I write; and the dear Lord has helped and blessed me wonderfully in making selections of tracts, poems, clippings, etc. Oh, how I do wish that the "radio sermon" published in the August 1st HERALD could be published in small tract form! It is so grand and comprehensive, I should love to distribute it everywhere - especially among my neighbors and friends.

I shall be very glad if the Revelation series is published. I am sure I would study these subjects more if they were to be had in convenient book form. It would be delightful to have them in the same beautiful style and binding as "THE DIVINE PLAN OF THE AGES." I pray daily that the will of the Father may be made known to you in this as well as in every other service which the INSTITUTE: may undertake. *Nothing else in life really matters, but just to know and do the will of God.*

I cannot contribute much toward this work, but, if the books are published, I will promise-to take a full set and pay for them in advance, and as many more as the Lord will let me.

Your sister in the One Hope,

Mrs. N. F. J.-Minn.

Dear Brethren:

I am writing to tell you how much I enjoy receiving the HERALDS. I have wanted to tell you before but have been hindered.

Some time ago, some of us became very hungry, and seemed even at the point of starvation, and very weary and sad; and when the first HERALD was put into my hands, how fearfully I opened it, "wondering." But, oh the joy! as I read, to perceive the same sweet spirit of the Master. When I had finished reading I thanked God that once more we were to have our, appetites appeased. I wrote 'you to offer my thanks, but tore the letter up, fearing I should put a stone of stumbling in your way, by "puffing" you up, and just thanked God, knowing He would reward you, if you only kept humble.

The articles in the HERALD bring comfort and joy, and the letters of the different ones presented often come as a little testimony meeting; and I felt I wanted you to know this, so am once more writing, praying that you may be kept holy and pure, and that you may manifest always that sweet spirit of humility which must be pleasing to our Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ our Lord. Manna, June 7.

I am your sister in Jesus' service,

Mrs. F. M. R.-Aus.

BEREAN STUDIES IN THE REVELATION

STUDY CLXXI--APRIL 8

BEHOLD I COME SPEEDILY--REV. 22:6, 7

(906) In what general light may we regard verses 6 to 21 of chapter 22? H121-135.

(907) What significance may we attach to the words of the angel, "These sayings are faithful and true," and to the fact that three times throughout the visions this asserveration is made? H '21-135.

(908) What is the force of the statement that it was the Lord God of the holy Prophets who had sent His angel to show unto His servants these things? H'21-135.

(909) Who is the speaker in verse 7? and what is the import of his language, "Behold I come quickly"? H '21-135.

(910) Why was. the Second -Advent of the Lord to be regarded as of such solemn import, and what special bearing should this doctrine have on the lives of footstep followers of Christ? H '21-135, 136.

STUDY CLXXII--APRIL 15

OBEDIENCE AND TRUE WORSHIP ENJOINED--REV. 22:7-10

(911) What is the import of the language "Blessed is he who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book"? Have any opposed the reading of the Revelation? H'21-136.

(912) What is implied in the statement "Keep the words of this prophecy"? And what is necessary in order to realize the blessing here promised? H '21-136.

(913) Why did the Apostle fall down to worship the angel who showed him those things? and why was it wrong for him to worship the angel? H '21-136, 137.

(914) What is the practical lesson to the followers of the Lord today in the fact that St. John was forbidden to worship the revealing angel? H '21-137.

(915) What is the lesson to be drawn from verse 10: "Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book"? Why were Isaiah and Daniel, in contrast with the command given to St. John, commanded to seal up their prophecies? H '21-137.

STUDY CLXXIII--APRIL 22

AT HIS COMING--REV. 22:11-14

(916) What connection would we logically see between the thought in verse 10 and that in verse 11, and why is there a special difficulty encountered in the interpretation of the latter? H '21-151.

(917) What is probably the correct thought intended to be conveyed in this language, "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still, etc."? and why would the Revelation vision not be expected to affect the world at the time referred to? H'21-151.

(918) What is the import of the announcement again, "Behold, I come quickly"? and of the further statement, "and My reward is with Me"? H '21-151.

(919) Briefly review the thought contained in verse 13, which is a repetition of that of chapter 1, verse 8. H '21-151.

(920) What is the significance of, and at what time do the words of verse 14 apply? H '21-151.

STUDY CLXXIV--APRIL 29

THE OFFSPRING OF DAVID, THE MORNING STAR--REV. 22:14-17

(921) What is meant by entering the Gates of the City? H '21-151.

(922) What general thought and lesson are we to gather from verse 15, describing those "without" the City? H '21-152.

(923) Explain the statement, "I am the root and offspring of David"? In what sense is this true? H '21-152.

(924) What is the significance of the expression, "the bright and morning star"? In what sense is this applicable to Christ? H '21-153.

925) Give a review of the thought suggested in verse 17, considered in a previous lesson in connection with verse 1. H '21-103, 153.

The Herald of Christ's Kingdom

THE ANNUAL MEETING OF THE PASTORAL BIBLE INSTITUTE, JUNE 2, 1923

ANNOUNCEMENT is now made of the regular annual meeting of the PASTORAL BIBLE INSTITUTE to be held on Saturday June 2, at 2 p.m. at the headquarters of the INSTITUTE, 177 Prospect Place, Brooklyn, N. Y. The charter of the INSTITUTE provides for this annual meeting for the purpose of electing directors for the ensuing year and for the transacting of such other business as may come before the members. The annual meetings heretofore have proved to be generally very interesting occasions, as the members are afforded an opportunity to hear reports of the INSTITUTE's activities, and, are given the fullest liberty to discuss any feature of the ministry that is desired.

The names of the brethren who have been serving as directors during the past year and whose term of office expires June 2, are as follows:

I. I. MARGESONH.
C. ROCKWELL
E. J. PRITCHARD
I. F. HOSKINS
P. L. GREINER
F. H. McGEE
J. L. COOKE

The charter of the INSTITUTE contains no provision for any brother to 'hold any office for life, nor longer than for one year. We believe the brethren are generally familiar with the fact, too, that any member of the INSTITUTE is eligible for nomination and election as director at the annual meeting, and that any member present at the meeting is free to make nominations for directors of any brother that he or she may choose. The provision was also added at the meeting two years ago, that the INSTITUTE shall publish annually in the HERALD at the time of the announcement of the annual meeting, the name and address of any member nominated by any Ecclesia as candidate to be voted on at the election. We have this year received from the class at Providence, R. I., the nomination of

Brother R. E. Streeter.

The brethren who have composed the directorate for the past year take this occasion to express their thanksgiving to the Lord and their appreciation of the assistance and co-operation of the brethren in the humble efforts that have been put forth to serve the Lord and His Cause. They have endeavored to keep in mind that it is the Master Himself that they desire to serve primarily, and it is hoped that what has been accomplished, though imperfect, is acceptable to the Lord if not to all the brethren. The results we leave with the Lord, well knowing that He is fully able to work out and accomplish all of His wise designs without the assistance of any of US.

In connection with this announcement of the annual meeting of the INSTITUTE, there are certain important items of which the friends are already aware, but which we will again note by way of remembrance. The charter and by-laws contain the following provisions:

1. Only those holding voting Certificates of Membership will be eligible to take part in the annual meeting or in the election (though others may be present). If you have made a, donation of five dollars at one time to the funds of the INSTITUTE, -and have not received a Certificate of Membership, you should notify us regarding the matter.

2. No voting Membership Certificate is transferable.

3. Any voting Membership Certificate in order to be valid for voting on June 2 must have been issued in the office of the! INSTITUTE not later than 20 days prior to the election, which this year would be not later than May 13.

4. It is not necessary for one holding a voting Certificate to be present in order to cast his vote. If any so choose, he may send in his proxy to the Secretary, or to another in attendance , but in so doing he must state on the proxy the names of the exact seven brethren for whom he wishes to cast his vote for directors, so that no discretion is left to the one using the proxy :as to the person for whom the vote is to be cast. A proxy form will be mailed to each member prior to the election. Please be sure to 'fill each blank space, including the space for the name of the one whom you desire to cast your vote for you:

While we could wish that all the brethren might attend this annual meeting, yet we know that not all will find it convenient; in fact, it will be impossible for many on account of the long distance-, and as indicated in item 4 above, those unable to be present may have a voice in the election Of the seven directors to -serve another year by giving their proxy to another to act for them.

It seems to us that all who are interested in this ministry and who appreciate that the INSTITUTE may be a means of much blessing in enabling the friends to unite their various talents, powers, and opportunities in the advancement of I the cause of the Truth and in building up one another, will recognize the importance of taking part in this annual meeting, either by, being present personally or in a representative manner, as indicated above.

"AND THE LORD HEARKENED AND HEARD"

ALL that was anticipated was surely experienced at the Convention held in Boston, April 21, 22. They were indeed two days of blessed and undisturbed fellowship in the Lord-of a kind that, we believe, has resulted in fresh courage and in an increase of a loving zeal toward the Lord and the brethren. Such results of course were especially sought and were the inspiring motive in coming together. It was evident too, that the brethren had assembled with hearts prepared both to give to others and to receive a blessing. The loving thoughtfulness on the part of the Class in Boston in warmly welcoming the brethren and making all comfortable was indeed appreciated.

As is the case at all of our conferences, the general intercourse, fellowship, and testimonies of the friends, clearly revealed the fact that all seemed to realize the necessity for great watchfulness, sobriety, purity of heart, and full consecration to God, in order to be accounted worthy to stand the severe tests of this evil day. And though, as noted in previous conventions in recent years, our gatherings seem

small in comparison with those of former times, yet this fact is full of solemn significance, and there is special satisfaction in realizing that the comparatively small numbers assembled at conventions in these days represent not the listless nor those who are merely superficially interested, and who would come largely out of self-gratification, but rather they are principally brethren who have passed through fiery tests and trials and who at great cost have taken their stand loyally and courageously. on the side of Truth, principle, honesty, and Christian liberty-the side of the Lord. It is thus manifested that those who have the true, convention-spirit in these days are those who out of deep and holy desire seek renewed strength from the Lord, whereby they may become more thoroughly fortified along spiritual lines and be the better enabled to succeed in living the victorious Christian life. The following is a brief extract from a letter received from a sister who refers to the blessing she experienced in attendance at the recent meeting in Boston:

"I want to add also that I am very thankful to my heavenly Father for the great blessings I received out of the several discourses. ... It was indeed a great joy to me to hear God's Word so ably and forcibly expounded again, after being isolated for more than two years. There are no Classes out here and I cannot get these people interested enough to start one. I have my studies and readings alone, and yet not alone for I feel and am sure that the Lord is always with me; He has promised never to leave me nor forsake me and I know I can always rely on Him in every time of need."

The addresses of the brethren, it can be truthfully said, were along the lines of pure and sound doctrine, embodying those messages which encourage to sobriety, moderation, and spirituality.

There were a good number of strangers present at the Sunday afternoon service who gave evidence of deep interest in the message of the coming of the great King and the establishing of His glorious. dominion under the whole heavens. It is hoped that the message of Truth found lodgement in some good and honest hearts, which will bring forth fruit to the praise of our heavenly Master.

Finally we return thanks to the Giver of all good gifts that by His kind providence Christians are still permitted to meet in conference and enjoy that fellowship of kindred minds so like to that above--a foretaste of the joys of the Kingdom.

BEREAN STUDIES IN THE REVELATION

STUDY CLXXV--MAY 6

"ADDING TO" AND "TAKING FROM THE PROPHECY"

(926) With regard to the language in verse 18, who is spoken of in the words, "For I testify unto every man," etc.? H '21-153.

(927) What is the import and object of the solemn affirmation Contained in this verse concerning those who "add unto these things"? Give an example of what would be "adding unto these things". H '21-153.

(928) What is the force of the further statement "If any man shall take away from the words of this prophecy"--how can any one take away from the prophecy? H'21-153,

(929) What is meant by the statements "God shall add unto him the plagues", and "God shall take away his part out of the book of life"? H '21-153.

(930) Have the warnings been timely, and does the history of God's people show that there have been those who have added to and taken away from the words of this prophecy? H '21-154,

STUDY CLXXVI--MAY 13

THE LAST PROMISE

(931) What is the significance of the expression "Surely I come quickly"? Why are these words repeated by the Savior? H '21-154.

(932) What is the import of St. John's response "Even so, come, Lord Jesus"? H'21-154.

(933) How have the masses of professing Christians throughout the Age viewed the doctrine of Christ's Second Coming?

(934) What effect has the hope of the Savior's return had upon the hearts of all true believers since the Apostle's day?

(935) What events and changes of great magnitude did St. John associate with the coming of the Lord? H '21-154.

DANIEL THE BELOVED OF JEHOVAH

SERIES 11

THE DREAM OF EMPIRES

THE second chapter opens with the statement that in the second year of Nebuchadnezzar he "dreamed dreams, wherewith his spirit was troubled, and his sleep brake from him and subsequently in this same chapter we read that Daniel was called into the King's presence to interpret one of his dreams. We meet with a seeming difficulty in the statement that this incident occurred in the second year of Nebuchadnezzar for the reason that in chapter one, verse 5, we read that Daniel had been at school for three years during the reign of Nebuchadnezzar, before being brought before the King. The question is, How could Daniel have interpreted the King's dream in the second year of his reign when he was not permitted to come into the King's presence till he had served three years at school. This seeming conflict is seized upon by skeptics and "Higher Critics", in an endeavor to discredit the Divine authority of the book of Daniel. The difficulty, however, is only a *seeming* one. All the Scriptures having a bearing on the matter have been previously considered in this journal and are seen to be in perfect harmony with one another and in accord also with the recorded facts of secular history. The third year of Jehoiakim, when Daniel was taken captive and began his schooling, was the year in which Nebuchadnezzar began his suzerainty over

the Jewish nation. This occurred before the death of Nebuchadnezzar's father. In other words, Nebuchadnezzar was reigning conjointly with his father at the time Daniel was carried away into Babylon. In the account in Daniel 1:1-3, Daniel calls Nebuchadnezzar "king", but it is doubtless partly by anticipation, Nebuchadnezzar became sole king at the death of his father, two years afterwards. He was what may be termed, co-regent with his father, who, because of sickness and infirmity, was unable to minister the affairs of state. He had been placed in command of the armies which he victoriously led. "Daniel had been two years in the school of the eunuchs when Nabopolassar died; and it was two years after his death, the second year of Nebuchadnezzar's sole regency, that the things narrated in this second chapter of Daniel occurred. The second year of Nebuchadnezzar's sole regency would then be the fourth from the time he began to share the regal administration, thus leaving no room for the difficulties and cavils which have been raised 'respecting the chronology of these events.'"

With this brief consideration of this chronological matter, we proceed to the consideration of this most wonderful dream of dreams.

NEBUCHADNEZZAR SEEKS ASSISTANCE. FROM OCCULT POWERS

"I have dreamed a dream, and my spirit was troubled to know the dream."--Dan. 2:3.

Such were the words of Nebuchadnezzar, the great king of Babylon, to his heathen councilors, over twenty-five hundred years ago. Why should he be troubled? Was he not occupying the highest position possible for man on earth? He was at this time monarch of, all the world. He had spared no expense in beautifying his Capital, and its grandeur and magnificence were heralded far and near. Its streets were broad and spacious, its gardens and parks were beautiful beyond description, its temples were all that art could make them, and his magnificent palace was one of the wonders of ancient times.

And not only this-he had spent immense sums in strengthening the City's fortifications, until its defenses were deemed impregnable. It was inclosed within a wall fifteen miles square, and according to Herodotus, 325 feet high and 86 feet thick. All the kings of the ancient world bowed in submission to him, and vied with each other to do him honor. Beyond this, he had been told by God's Prophet that his dominion had been delegated to him by the great Jehovah.--Jer. 27: 5-7.

Notwithstanding all this, Nebuchadnezzar, the great monarch, was pacing up and down in his palace with a perplexed and anxious countenance. It was affecting all far and near. All the inmates of his palace, and the dwellers in the city were being moved and troubled by it. His wise men and astrologers and soothsayers, who were employed to assist him in the management of the empire, and who professed to have supernatural vision, never before had such a difficult task set before them by the king. They had, once at least, expressed their utter inability to do the king's bidding; and in his anger he had decreed their death unless, by their incantations, they would help him in his sore distress.

The king had retired as usual- the night before, and in the early hours of the night had dreamed a dream. So startling and strange was it to him that he immediately awoke, and for the remainder of the night "his sleep brake from him." The dream made a powerful impression upon his mind, but it was in vain the next morning

that he tried to recall it. Because his magicians were unable to help him in the matter; they were all sentenced to death; and it was this that was causing so much fear and trembling in his palace. On other occasions his magicians and astrologers had seemingly helped him in his difficulties, and naturally he sought their aid at this time. But it was in vain, for no power which they professed to have was able to recall to the king's mind the startling transaction of his dream.

DANIEL'S OPPORTUNITY

Meanwhile another scene was taking place in the king's palace. A young and God-fearing Jewish captive, heard of the matter that was causing so much trouble and threatening the lives of so many. That young man was none other than Daniel. When the king's officer came to execute the decree of the king in putting the wise men to death, Daniel requested a stay of the sentence until he had time to seek his God, and discover the secret which was so agitating the king, and causing so much trouble in his palace. On communication with Nebuchadnezzar the request was granted. Daniel immediately sought his three companions in captivity; a prayer meeting was held, and in answer to their united petitions, the secret was revealed to Daniel in a night vision. As the strange vision, and the remarkable revelation from God of the future which it was designed to reveal, burst upon his mind, Daniel blessed the God of heaven, and said:

"Blessed be the name of God for ever and ever: for wisdom and might are His, and He changeth the times and the seasons; He removeth kings and setteth up kings; He giveth wisdom unto the wise, and knowledge to them that know understanding; He revealeth the deep and secret things; He knoweth what is in the darkness, and the light dwelleth with Him. I thank Thee, and praise Thee, O thou God of my fathers, who hast given me wisdom and might, and hast made known unto me now what we desired of Thee; for Thou hast now made known unto us the king's matter."--Dan. 2:20-23.

Daniel then requested of Arioch, captain of the King's guard, that he might be brought in before the King. With great haste was this young and humble servant of Jehovah ushered into the presence of the great monarch of Babylon, where doubtless were assembled his nobles and lords. This was one of the supreme moments of Daniel's life. It was also an hour of testing and trial--a test of his humility and of his loyalty to his God. But he stood the test, and before that vast assembly kept himself in the background, and bore a faithful testimony to the God of his fathers.

"Art thou able to make known unto me the dream which I have seen, and the interpretation thereof?" asked the king. Then Daniel answered, "The secret which the king hath demanded, cannot the wise men, the astrologers, the magicians, the soothsayers shew the king; but there is a God in heaven that revealeth secrets. ... but as for me, this secret is not revealed to me for any wisdom that I have more than any living, but for their sakes that shall make known the interpretation to the king, and that thou mightest know the thoughts of thy heart."

"As for thee, O king, thy thoughts came into thy mind upon thy bed, what should come to pass hereafter, and He that revealeth secrets maketh known to thee what shall come to pass."--Dan. 2:26-30,

THE VISION OF EARTHLY KINGDOMS

Then Daniel told the king the strange and remarkable dream -which had been the cause of so much anxiety and distress of mind to him. He told him that in his dream he beheld the colossal image of a man standing upon its feet, and towering high. It had a head of pure gold; its breast and its arms were of silver; its belly and thighs were of brass; its legs were of iron, and its feet were a mixture of potter's clay and iron. In the dream the brightness of this image seemed "excellent" to the eyes of the king, and its form was terrible to look upon. After beholding this strange sight, the attention of the king was attracted by another scene, even more strange and startling. Not far from the image was a mountain, and as his eyes rested upon it, he beheld as though without hands a gigantic stone was in process of being cut out, of its side. Suddenly as if impelled by an unseen power, he saw this stone descend, and with terrific force it struck the image at its base (its feet) and in an instant the entire structure fell and was crushed to powder, which was carried away by the wind. He then saw the stone assume gigantic proportions, becoming a great mountain and filling the whole earth.-Dan. 2:31-35.

It is no wonder that so startling a dream as this would trouble the mind of the king, and cause him to have no rest until it was recalled to his memory. The greatest wonder is that he should forget it; this was evidently according to a Divine intent also, and was designed to be more convincing to the king and his court, and all concerned, that it was a revelation from God, when afterwards it was supernaturally made known to the young servant of Jehovah. And now the fact that God had revealed the dream prepared the mind of the king to have confidence in the interpretation given by the same young prophet of God. Daniel had already told the king that by the dream the God of heaven desired to make known "what should come to pass hereafter", and "what should be in the latter days"; hence he was prepared to understand that in some mysterious way the dream was a symbol of future events.

Daniel next proceeded to unfold the significance of the dream. (Dan. 2:35-45.) He told the king that the great colossal image of a man which he had seen represented the whole period of man's dominion in the world, from the time of the dream to the time when that dominion should be taken away, and God Himself should set up a kingdom, which would be universal and eternal. The four different parts of the image-gold, silver, brass, and iron-were descriptive of the four universal kingdoms, each succeeding the other, and covering a larger part of this period. The feet and toes of iron and clay mixture indicated that the fourth empire after hearing rule for a while, would be divided. Daniel next proceeded to describe a particular feature of the closing period--a feature represented by this divided rule of the fourth kingdom-namely that strenuous efforts would be made from time to time to unite these lesser kingdoms into one again, but that these efforts would fail, because, like the potter's clay and iron of the image, they would not weld together. This is contained in the words: "And whereas thou sawest iron mixed with miry clay, they shall mingle themselves with the seed of men; but they shall not cleave one to another, even as iron is, not 'Mixed -with clay.'" There are two interpretations of this statement, both of which seem reasonable. One is that "the clay element blended with the iron in the feet represents the mixture of church and state." The other is that reference is had to the efforts put forth by the ruling families of these kingdoms to unite them by intermarriage.

THE DREAM UNFOLDED IN HISTORY

The king was then informed that his empire was described by the head of gold; that it was destined to be overthrown and to be succeeded by a second--the breast and arms of silver; that this was to be followed by a third--the brass of the image; and that this latter was to be succeeded by a fourth--the iron legs; and finally, that the fourth was to be broken up into lesser, weaker kingdoms--the feet and toes of iron and clay.

Over twenty-five centuries have passed since Daniel stood before the great heathen king of Babylon and explained this inspired dream. What have historians recorded concerning this eventful period? We answer, With one united voice they inform us that the first twelve hundred years of this period witnessed the rise and fall of the four universal empires of Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome; and that the last half of the twenty-five hundred years has witnessed the divided rule of Rome. To this there is not a single dissenting voice.

Who but God could have seen and made this wonderful forecast of the future? Who but He could have pictured its main outlines in so simple and clear a manner--so simple that a child can take it in, and yet so comprehensive in its unfolding that it fills the reverent mind with wonder and awe! It is indeed the very backbone of twenty-five hundred years of history; and it is the magic key that unlocks all prophecy covering this period. The details concerning the manner of the rise, the progress, and the overthrow of these vast empires, together with the divided fourth, are filled in by other prophecies, and form the subject matter of volumes, in their exposition.

DAVID, THE POET-KING

*"Surely goodness and loving kindness shall follow me
all the days of my life."--Psa. 23: 6; 1 Sam. 16: 1-13.*

THE story of the life of David is introduced to us with a remarkable contrast between the fresh hope, of his young life and the rejection of the self-willed, disobedient King Saul, whose course was rapidly descending toward the battlefield of Gilboa, where he met with ultimate disaster and death. It has been truthfully said concerning Saul that "the hot impatience that persisted in offering the sacrifice before Samuel came; his needless oath and ruthless proposal to take Jonathan's life; his flagrant disobedience to the distinct charge respecting Arnalek--all proved that he was not fit to act as God's vicegerent, and that he must be set aside." Still another has said "With every opportunity to make a success of his life, Saul had made it a failure through his disobedience to God's plain commands. There was nothing to be done but to, appoint another king, so clearly had Saul shown his baser characteristics, so determinedly had he chosen the wrong path."

The Lord's choice was David to succeed Saul, and this meant of course that the family of Saul, his sons, should not succeed him in the kingdom. It meant the Lord's selection of another family for the office of ruler in Israel and for His representative upon the throne. Samuel indirectly referred to, David, saying, "The Lord hath sought Him a man after His own heart, and the Lord hath commanded

him to be captain over His people, because thou [Saul] hast not kept that which the Lord commanded thee." (1 Sam. 13:14.) David, at the time of this lesson, was about twenty years old; consequently, the words of the Prophet just quoted must have been uttered about the time of David's birth.

Samuel mourned and prayed for Saul, and was apparently disappointed that this man, of whom he had expected such great things and under whose guidance he had anticipated great prosperity for Israel, should be rejected. Quite probably fearful forebodings of a civil war to result from the installation of a new king perturbed the Prophet's mind. He knew that Saul would not quietly submit to lay down in obedience to the Lord's arrangement, the scepter which he had taken up with so great modesty; his mental eye could see the probability of civil strife which might rupture the nation and, cause great trouble. He should have had greater trust in the wisdom and power of the Almighty, but his trouble was more or less like that which assails all of the Lord's people even today. The lesson from this to our hearts could be that we will implicitly trust the Lord to manage His own affairs: that we will trust Him where we cannot trace Him, and be obedient to His directions, and, so far from mourning at the execution of His plans, will rejoice, knowing that all things are working together for, good to them that love God--that all things will ultimately work blessings for those who are in accord with the Lord--blessings for the future life if not for the present.

When sent to anoint David, Samuel exhibited a power not elsewhere noticeable in his character. He did not hesitate to perform the, Lord's bidding, but intimated that he clearly understood it to mean the risk of his own life--that Saul would kill him as a traitor if he should anoint a successor to the kingdom. The Lord made it clear to him that it was not the intention to make the matter known at once, and directed him to go to Bethlehem and make a sacrifice there, and, incidentally, improve the opportunity of finding and anointing the One who, in due time, would be made known and exalted to the throne. At the time, he was merely to perform the initial work, which David's father and brethren would not understand, thinking" perhaps, that the anointing meant special blessing or a commission from the Lord to engage as one Of the members of the school of the prophets or something else of this kind. Quite probably, however, the Prophet privately informed David of the meaning of the anointing, just as he had privately informed Saul when he secretly anointed him to the office of king.

GOD'S CHOICE DIFFERENT FROM MAN'S

The lesson takes up the subject at the point when Samuel had arrived at the town of Bethlehem. The Elders were in fear, thinking that his presence signified some sin on their part or on the part of some of their fellow-citizens which God had sent him to reprove and to punish; hence, their inquiry whether or not he came peaceably--whether or not his presence meant a blessing or the infliction, of a penalty. Their fears were allayed when they heard that his mission was a peaceable one -- to offer a sacrifice there unto the Lord. Some time before this the ark had been captured by the Philistines, and the tabernacle services thus discontinued had not yet been re-established; for this reason this sacrificing was performed by the Lord's specially appointed Prophet. The command to the people of Bethlehem to sanctify themselves if they would be participators in the blessings of the sacrifice, signified that they should wash their persons and put on clean

clothes and draw nigh to the Lord with their hearts. Thus they typically represented that justification and sanctification which the Church of this Gospel Age enjoys. Samuel seen-is to have taken supervision of the family of Jesse to the intent that he might without public display find the man whom the Lord had chosen and anoint him to the office and give him the Divine blessing in preparation for it. Jesse properly introduced his sons to the Prophet according to the order of their birth-his eldest, Eliab, first; and as he was of fine appearance Samuel naturally assumed that he was the Lord's choice; but as he looked to the Lord for direction in -the matter, he got the response (in what manner we know not) which contains the essence of wisdom. judging from the human standpoint of appearance, age, ability, etc., Eliab was the most suitable person in Jesse's family to be the king over the nation; but not so in the Lord's sight. The Lord was looking at the heart and had already selected David as a man after His own heart, although at this time being under age, etc.. his father had not thought worth while to send for him to be present at the feast. As one after another appeared, and the Prophet found not him whom the Lord's spirit indicated as the one to be anointed, he inquired, "Are all thy children here?" when Jesse suddenly remembered that he had another boy, his youngest, in the field with his sheep.

"Man looketh on the outward appearance, but God looketh on the heart." These words appeal to all in connection with the High Calling of this Gospel Age, and year by year experience shows us its general applicability. We, too, as the Lord's messengers, are seeking for *those* to be anointed with the oil of gladness, the Holy Spirit, that they may be kings and priests unto God in the Kingdom He is about to establish, which will supersede present kingdoms. We too, like Samuel, might feel afraid to proceed with this work of anointing the successors of present institutions, did we not realize that the work of sealing the elect of the Lord, which is now in progress, is a secret work which the world cannot understand. Indeed, none understand this matter of the sealing, the anointing of the Holy Spirit, except those who have received it, and they are all of the David class. The name David signifies "beloved", and as it applied specially to our Lord and Master, of whom it is said by Jehovah, "This is my beloved Son", so also it applies to all the members of His body, each one of whom must be beloved, else he cannot be acceptable as a member. The Head says of such, "The Father Himself loveth you", and again He says that we should love one another as He has loved us. It is not too much to say that all who receive this anointing of the Lord must ultimately be of this David, or beloved, character -the spirit of love must be in them, love for the Lord and love one for the other, else they are none of His.

THE LORD'S ANOINTED OF THE SPIRIT

In seeking for the Lord's anointed who shall by and by reign in Millennial glory for the blessing of the world, as antitypes of David, we notice that as he was counted by his brethren too insignificant to be considered in this connection, so also are those whom the Lord is choosing and anointing for His heavenly Kingdom. Our Lord Jesus was disesteemed of His brethren, and when the suggestion was made that He should be the Lord's anointed, His people hid, as it were, their faces from Him-disdained Him, despised Him, and considered Him hopeless in respect to anything great or glorious-" as a root out of a dry ground." The same has been true respecting the members of His Body, the true elect

Church; they also have been despised and -rejected of men, and of them the Apostle declares, We are counted the filth and offscouring of the world; we, are counted fools all the day long, for Christ's sake. I Cor. 4:13.

Again He declares that "not many great, not many wise, not many learned, hath God chosen; but chiefly the poor of this world, rich in faith, to be heirs of the Kingdom." And this principle of the Divine selection of things that are not [esteemed amongst men], to bring to naught the things that are [esteemed by men], is noticeable all throughout this Gospel Age. Often have we, like Samuel, looked about us amongst men seemingly eligible to a place in the Kingdom--upon those who are high in position--socially, intellectually, morally, educationally--and in the esteem of men, and expect that surely the Lord would sanction their anointing with the oil of gladness, and grant them a knowledge of the truth pertaining to the Kingdom, etc., only to find ourselves mistaken, and to get a fresh lesson that God looketh not on the outward appearance but upon the heart. We concede that we are unable to read the heart, but we are fully satisfied to accept the Divine decision in such matters, and to trust that when in due time all the secrets of this present time shall be disclosed, we then shall be able to understand the meaning of the Lord's selections more completely than we do now--we shall then be able to see what a difference there was between the hearts of those the Lord accepted and the hearts of those outwardly humble, whom He did not so highly favor in respect to the Kingdom call. Meantime, we must simply wait and trust the Lord and accept His decisions, as expressed by our dear Redeemer when He said, "I thank thee, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because Thou hast hidden these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes: even so, Father; for so it seemed good in Thy sight."--Luke 10:21.

GOD HATH CHOSEN THE FOOLISH THINGS

Instructed respecting the Lord's methods, we are not to despise the least, the most ignoble or illiterate of those who give evidence of a purity and honesty of heart toward God, and to whom He seems to give the anointing of His Spirit and the "ear to hear." Rather, while making known the message to all as we have opportunity, we are to rejoice specially with those upon whom the Lord's favor is manifested, regardless of their earthly surroundings, etc. The Lord knoweth them that are His, and it is for us to recognize, to honor and to co-operate with all such, as the ambassadors and representatives of our Lord and Master.

Often have we thought as we have looked over a congregation of the Lord's people and beheld some not prepossessing in personal appearance, some not well-educated or refined, some ignoble, but, nevertheless, bearing the marks of the anointing of the Lord, the light of the truth shining in their faces, the confidence and hope of the truth inspiring them, and their lives indicating a transformation from the Kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of God's dear Son -- often have we thought of such, that had the Lord sent us forth to seek His Bride, we might have ignorantly passed by some of His choice jewels and have gathered in some whom He rejects as unworthy -- because we are unable to read the heart. This thought should make us very humble, gentle, and meek toward all, and very trustful of the Lord and very much inclined to look for His leading in respect to our labors as His servants, just as Samuel looked to the Lord in connection with the anointing of David.

Samuel's words, "We will not sit down until he come hither", referred to the feast of which they were about to partake. It was the custom that after the sacrifice had been offered, the sanctified persons present and those in spirit sharing. in the sacrifice might join in a feast, eating the flesh, and thus celebrating a communion with the Lord. It was this feast that Samuel decided should not be commenced until David's arrival-indeed, by reason of his being the Lord's anointed, he would be the most important one. present at the feast. Perhaps in this also we can see a figure of the Lord's blessing in the Divine Plan. A great feast of fat things has been designed for the whole world of mankind, but it cannot be participated in until the justifying and sanctifying sacrifice has been killed -and, more than this, the feast cannot be commenced until first the Anointed One shall come and shall receive the anointing. The anointing began with our Lord, the Head of the Church, and has throughout the Gospel Age been flowing down upon all the members of His Body, the Church. The sacrifice has been killed, and we, as members of Christ, have been participating in the sacrifice. Shortly the whole matter will be accomplished and then, as the Lord's Anointed, the feast of fat things will be spread--the Anointed One-Head and Body, being the principal in that great antitypical feast. It is as New Creatures that we are anointed; as New Creatures that we grow in grace and knowledge and love; and as New Creatures that, by and by, we shall be perfected in the First Resurrection and come to the throne with our Lord and Master as our Head.

THE SHEPHERD'S CARE

THROUGH DEATH'S DARK VALE

"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."--Psa. 23:4.

IT has been said that there is no verse in the Bible that is more familiar than this one -- no expression that has made so lasting and indelible an impression upon the human mind as the words, "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death." The words have generally been understood as picturing the close of life's journey-as a sunny pathway merging into a dark and gloomy valley., However, while this is not the true, the Scriptural thought, nevertheless, these words will ever be a reminder that life's earthly journey will end at last in what is looked upon by those who do not understand its cause, as earth's dark enigma and mystery-death. One has expressed this general thought: "This picture of the close of our lives, with a dark valley at the end of their sunny pathway, was hung up long ago in the halls of memory, as we first learned to lisp these venerable words, and though much has happened since then, it holds its place, and will while memory lasts."

While it is not our thought that the "valley of the shadow of death" means death itself, yet these words convey the thought that death is a reality. No matter what may be the view of death, the larger proportion of humanity instinctively realize a sense of terror and dread of death. Poets and theologians have endeavored to picture death in such a way as. to, remove this dread and fear but they have utterly failed. "The wages of sin is death," and until sin is removed, death will be feared

and looked upon with dread. Shakespeare has well expressed the thought of the natural apprehension respecting death: "But that the dread of something after death, the undiscovered country from whose bourn no traveler returns, puzzles the will, and makes us rather bear those ills we have, than fly to others that we know not of." The thoughtful 'man, though not a Christian, cannot think of death's approach without a feeling of seriousness and sobriety. It is not true, as many profess to believe, that death at its worst is only a shadow. The Scriptural thought is that death is a terrible reality.

ON THE JOURNEY TO DEATH

The Psalmist, however, is not here speaking of death, but rather of the journey thither. A beautiful translation of these words that retains the original poetic form in which they were first written, brings out very clearly the thought, that the "valley of the shadow of death" pictures the present life as a journey to death in which we have the comfort of the rod and staff :

"Though I may walk through death's dark vale,
I fear no hurt: for You are there;
Your rod and staff direct my way."

The Scriptural meaning of these words are thus most beautifully expressed: "All of our lives we have been in the *shadow* of this great valley of death. The valley was entered by our race, because of our first parents' disobedience. Our father Adam was once on the mountain top of life. He lost his footing there, and descended gradually the slopes into this valley of the shadow of death. We, his children were all born here. We are dying daily; we are surrounded by dying conditions. ... The shadow of death has been over the human family, and its accompaniments of sickness, pain, and sorrow have extended to every creature, so that the Apostle truly said: "The whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together, waiting for the manifestation of the sons of God -- waiting for the uplifting power of the Millennial Age, waiting for the sons of glory, Jesus Christ and His Church, to bring the promised restitution and uplifting out of the 'valley of the shadow of death', back to the heights of light and love and Divine likeness. The fear of evil, of trouble, of disaster hangs over the world and is accentuated by its ignorance of God and of the future. Satan, taking advantage of this spirit of fear, has so terrorized mankind with horrible pictures of purgatory and eternal torment, as to thoroughly separate the human heart, if possible, from its Creator, while feigning to be its shepherd. Under the influence of doctrines of devils the Adversary has made God's character and His Book repulsive to mankind in general, and well nigh quenched their love while fanning their fears."

However, it is to the Lord's sheep, and to these only that the words "Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil", apply. To such, death itself has been-robbed of its "sting". "The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." Such can walk calmly and without fear through this dark "valley of the *shadow* of death." And while it is true as the poet has said that even to the Lord's sheep, "Sometimes the shadows are deep, And rough seems the path to the goal," he "fears no evil."

The figure is evidently drawn from the life of an earthly shepherd and his sheep. The expression may have been suggested to David by incidents in his own life as a shepherd. When, in search of good pasture or of quiet resting places, he led his sheep "o'er moor and crag and fen"; or, perhaps at other times wending their way homeward they found the way leading through places of danger. Sometimes the path, suddenly turning downward, led into the dark vale below where, following the voice of their shepherd they were led further downward into a deep and narrow gorge overhung with frowning rocks. The steep precipice on the one side and the trees on the other shut out all but a few rays of sunlight even at noonday. Ravenous beasts lurked in the deep ravines, calling the more for the watchful care of the shepherd. Some such circumstances and conditions may have been in the mind of the Psalmist, when he wrote the words: "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death." He would recall how the frightened sheep would huddle together, and how his voice would calm their fears.

"I WILL NEVER LEAVE THEE"

How much like this at times is the pathway of the Christian. We have often to pass through dark valleys. It is in such experiences that we feel very deeply our need of drawing closer to our Divine Shepherd, and whisper, "*Thou art with me*". In the green "I am with thee", "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee", become very real and precious.

May not this account for the fact that at this 'point David in speaking of the Lord, changes the pronoun. Until we reach this verse he speaks of the Lord in the third person: "*He* maketh me to lie down in green pastures"; "*He* leadeth me beside the still waters", etc. Up to this time he is content to speak *about* Him, but at this point, recalling the dark valleys and deep gorges through which he led his sheep; how his familiar voice' calmed and quieted their fears; and how at such times the sheep much more attentively gave heed to his voice, may it not be that there is brought to his memory some of the dark and shadowy experiences he encountered in his own life in his endeavors to serve Jehovah; and how he felt himself, to draw nearer to the Great Shepherd, and whisper, "*Thou art with me*". In the green pastures and beside the still waters of life's journey, when things are pleasant with us, when the pathway is smooth and in the sunlight, or when in the quiet shady places, we can look out and see that the sun is shining, it seems enough to talk about the Good Shepherd and speak of Him as the One who sought us and found us and led us to these green pastures and quiet resting places; and so we say, "He leadeth me"; but as we move down into the dark valleys of trial and affliction, when nothing of an earthly nature can be found to comfort and remove our fears, we feel the need of drawing closer to our great Shepherd; and addressing Him in closer, more tender terms we say: "For *Thou art with me*". It is then that we realize as not at other times how precious is the promise: "When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee; when thou walkest through the fire thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flames kindle upon thee; for I am the Lord thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Savior."--Isa. 43: 2, 3.

TRUSTING GOD IN THE DARK

One has said: "We pass through many a valley of *shadow*, ere we reach *the* valley. And whenever we 'feel 'our souls overcast, we should stay to consider if* there be a cause arising from our neglect or sin. If there be, a moment's confession will bring us out again into the light. But if there be none, so far as we can tell, then let us be brave to plod on. Every step has been measured out for us, even as it has been trodden before us. And God is testing us, to see whether we can trust Him in the dark as well as in the light; and whether we can be as true to Him when all pleasurable emotions have faded off our hearts, as when we walked with Him in the light. There is a good purpose in all these shadowed valleys. They test the quality of the soul. They reveal our weak places. They unveil the stars that peer down through the interstices of a rock or tree. They make us follow the Shepherd closely, lest we lose Him. They teach us the value of the rod and staff. Blessed are those who do not see, but who yet believe; and -who are content to be stripped of all joy and comfort and ecstasy, if it be the Shepherd's will, so long as there is left to them the *sound of His voice*, and *the knowledge that He is near*."

The ancient Prophet of God seems to refer to such a possible experience when he says: "Who is among you that feareth the Lord [Jehovah], that obeyeth the voice of I His servant [Christ], that walketh in darkness, and hath no light? Let him trust in the name of the Lord, and stay upon his God."--Isa. 50:10.

The story is told of a small company of tourists in Switzerland, who in order to reach a certain place at a definite time found it necessary to make a very difficult and dangerous journey over one of the mountains. A guide was employed who was acquainted with the route, but the particular dangers to be encountered were not made known to the tourists. They were informed by the guide that it would be necessary to make the journey at night. To the minds of the travelers this seemed strange, as they most naturally would reason that daylight would be the proper, the best, and the safest time to take such a journey. It would most naturally seem to them that if they could see the dangers to be encountered, they would be better able to avoid or pass through them in safety. However, they were told by the guide that if they desired to fill their appointment they must trust themselves wholly to his care-he knew the way, he knew the dangers, and if they would place themselves under his care, he would bring them safely through. When the sun set behind the mountain, and darkness shut in all around, they started on their journey, the first few hours of which was up the mountain. They were then called by their guide, to halt. At this point the darkness seemed more and more intense, and they were unable to see any of the conditions that surrounded them. After they had rested a while, the guide proceeded to give them very particular instructions what next to do. One of the tourists was instructed to take hold of the guide's right hand; another to take hold of the one whose hand he held, and each in turn to do likewise until they were all standing side by side. The guide charged them that only when he gave the word for each step were they to move. He further told them that after they had begun to move, as he gave the word, each in turn should lean backwards and he, would find at his back a support which he was to lean hard against as he moved step by step, not forward, but to the side. The tourists not knowing what all this, meant followed implicitly the instructions of their guide. After a few moments, thus hand to hand, following their leader's commands, they were told that they might loosen hands as the danger was over. Proceeding a short distance further on their journey, they halted and encamped

until the morning, not knowing what the real danger was. When daylight came and the sun shone out bright and clear, the guide pointed to a place on the side of the mountain, where a very narrow path, scarce wide enough for one to stand, led around the side. Back of the path was a perpendicular wall of rock, and in front was a deep chasm which lie hundreds of feet below. That pathway, said the guide, you passed over last night. As the tourists from their position of safety gazed at the narrow path, the shelving rock behind and the deep chasm below, they then for the first time realized the danger they had encountered. They then realized how utterly impossible it would have been for them to have stepped with a firm tread that path in daylight.

While it may not be of frequent occurrence, yet there are times in the Christian's experience when he realizes that there is nothing for him to do but to trust in the naked promise that the Good Shepherd is with him. The word of promise then becomes truly as real as if we heard His voice, "I am with thee"; "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee." It is indeed well to be able to say, "What time I am afraid I will trust Thee", but it is much better to be able to say, "I will trust Thee and not be afraid." One has said: "The darkness is sometimes too dense for us to be able to see Christ. But faith can always be sure that He is there; not because of the evidence of sense or feeling, but because He has said, 'I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.' He cannot break His word. He has not left us alone. He is looking down upon us with unabated tenderness. The depths may sever Him from the apprehension of our love; but neither death nor life, nor height nor depth, can separate us from the strong grasp of His faithful and unchanging affection. Yes, 'the mountains may depart, and the hills be removed; but His kindness will not depart from thee, neither will the covenant of His peace be removed.'

THY ROD AND THY STAFF

While walking in the "valley of the shadow of death" it is inevitable that we encounter sorrow, and it is not difficult to realize that when passing through this valley, we stand in need of comfort. The road to the-Heavenly Jerusalem passes through "valleys of Baca, where eyes are red with weeping and tears brim into pools." These sorrows may be from different causes. The Psalmist continues to enlarge upon and further elucidate the different ways that the, Great Shepherd assists His sorrowing sheep. "Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death... Thy rod and Thy staff they comfort me." It is most natural for us to inquire how it is that these two badges of the Shepherd's vocation can possibly bring comfort in the dark hours of adversity and sorrow. The word rod in this text is from the Hebrew word *shebet*. Its meaning is a scepter. It is then the symbol of authority. It may be the authority of a king, or it may be that of a father. It is used in the latter sense in Prov. 22:15, "Foolishness is bound in the heart of a child, but the rod of correction shall drive it far from him." The rod is here the symbol of correction. It is used in this way also in Ezek. 20:37, which is part of a prophecy concerning Israel's restoration. Jehovah is addressing Israel of the latter times and speaks to them of His chastening rod. He tells them that "Like as I pleaded with your fathers in the wilderness of the land of Egypt, so will I plead with you saith the Lord God; and I will cause you to *pass under the rod*, and I will bring you into the bond of the covenant." How blessed to know that God is a Father to spiritual Israel; that we are the special objects of His fatherly care. All of His

spirit-begotten children need the rod of correction. "For whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth." But how different is the object to be obtained by our Heavenly Father from that of most earthly fathers. The inspired writer illustrating this point said: "We have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence; shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits and live? For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own Pleasure, but He for our profit, that we might be partakers of His holiness." (Heb. 12:9, 10.) How comforting it is to the child of God to know that in making use of the chastening rod, He does it in love, and "that like as a father pitieth His children so the Lord pitieth them that fear [reverence] Him; for He knoweth our frame, He remembereth that we are dust." The shepherd's rod being the symbol of authority and power, it is reasonable to suppose that it is also the weapon by which he strikes down our adversaries, 'even though the same rod at times may be heavy with chastisements for ourselves." The shepherd's rod, then, is used *both* for protection and correction. How comforting is the thought that we have such an Almighty Protector who administers the rod of correction for our eternal good.

But what is meant by the "staff"? The word staff is from the Hebrew word "*Mishenah*", It means a support, a stay. It is the same word that is used in Isa. 36:6. The words are addressed to Hezekiah, king of Judah, by the representative of the king of Assyria. "Lo, thou trusteth in the *staff* of the broken reed, on Egypt; whereon if a man, lean, it will go into his hand, and pierce it: so is Pharaoh, king of Egypt to all that trust in him." The Psalmist says: "This is my comfort in my affliction; for Thy word hath quickened me." (Psa. 119:50.) Again, we have St. Paul saying: "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.) The earthly shepherd used both the rod and the staff for protection and correction. With the point of the staff. the shepherd sometimes prodded the sheep that were careless, and with the crook he sometimes helped one out that had stumbled into the ditch. How glad we are to know that all power in heaven and in earth is committed unto our Shepherd and that under both His protecting and correcting care we are safe from all foes, and nothing can by any means do us harm, while we "walk through the valley of the shadow of death."

To be Continued

"PASS UNDER THE ROD"

I saw a young bride in her beauty and pride,
Bedecked in her snowy array,
And the bright flush of joy mantled high on her cheek,
For the future seemed smiling and gay,
As with woman's devotion she laid her fond heart
At the shrine of idolatrous love,
And anchored her hopes to this perishing earth
By the chain which her tenderness wove.
But I saw when those heart-strings were bleeding and torn
And the chain had been severed in two;
She had changed her white robes for the sables of grief,

And her bloom for the paleness of woe.
But the Healer was there, pouring balm on her heart,
And wiping the tears from her eyes;
He strengthened the chain He had broken in twain.
And fastened it firm to the skies.
There had whispered a voice, 'twas the, voice of her God,
"I love thee, I love thee! pass under the rod!"

I saw the young mother in tenderness bend,
O'er the couch of her slumbering boy,
And she kissed the soft lips as they murmured her name,
While the dreamer lay smiling in joy.
O! sweet as the rosebud encircled with dew,
When its fragrance is flung on the air,
So fresh and so bright to that mother he seemed,
As he lay in his innocence there.
But I saw when she gazed on that same lovely form,
Pale as marble, and silent and cold,
But paler and colder her beautiful boy,
When the tale of her sorrow was told.
But the Healer was there, who had stricken her heart,
And taken her treasure away,
To allure her to heaven He had placed it on high,
And the mourner will sweetly obey.
There had whispered a voice, 'twas the voice of her God,
"I love thee, I love thee! pass tunder the rod."

I saw then a father and mother who leaned
On the arm of a dear, gifted son;
And the star in the future grew bright to their gaze,
When they saw the proud place he had won.
Oh! the oncoming evening of life promised fair,
And the pathway grew smooth to their feet;
And the starlight of hope glimmered bright at the end,
And the whispers of fancy were sweet.
But I saw them again bending low o'er the grave
Where their heart's dearest hope had been laid,
Their star had gone down in the darkness of night,
And the joy from their bosom had fled.
But the Healer was there, and His arms were around,
And He led them with tenderest care,
While He showed them a star in the bright upper world;
'Twas their star shining brilliantly there.
They had each heard a voice, 'twas the voice of their God,
"I love thee, I love thee! pass under the rod."

ELIJAH, THE BRAVE REFORMER

"Choose you this day whom you will serve."--Josh. 24:15; 1 Kings 18:30-39.

THE name "Elijah" is said to be a compound' of the two common Hebrew names for the Deity, and means "Jehovah is my God." Elijah's home was Tishbe (therefore he was called "the Tishbite"), a place in Gilead, the wild, hilly, and thickly wooded region east of Samaria, to the east of the Jordan.

Little is known concerning his parentage or his mode of living before his sudden and startling appearance in the history. He was evidently a man of profound religious convictions, and had long grieved over the degradation of his people, for the nation was rapidly falling into the most debasing heathenism.

Following the death of Jeroboam there was a period of repeated insurrections against king after king who took the throne of Israel, until Ahab, of whom it is written, "Ahab, the son of Omri, did evil in the sight of the Lord, above all that were before him." Ahab's wife, Jezebel, was seemingly still more wicked than himself, and really instigated most of his evil deeds. It is a well recognized fact that a good wife can be a great help to her husband: the -history of Jezebel shows that a wife's influence for evil may be even more potent. It was during the reign of Ahab that as the Lord's servant and prophet, Elijah delivered the messages and did his marvelous works.

The work of establishing a new religion, which Jeroboam began, was ably carried on by his successors: and Ahab, influenced by Jezebel, his wife, seems to have outdone his predecessors not only to establish the new religion, but to exterminate the religion of Jehovah. He and his wife openly established the worship of Baal and slew the Prophets of Jehovah-the first religious persecution on record. Not only the out-spoken Prophet of the Lord who delivered the message, but all the

true Israelites who had respect to Jehovah, were obliged to hide from Jezebel's wrathful zeal for the worship of Baal.

Under Divine direction, Elijah appeared in the presence of King Ahab and delivered a message, saying, "As the Lord God of Israel liveth [who you seem to think is dead] before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word." At first, probably, the matter was considered a foolish boast, but when the dew and rain ceased and scarcity and famine resulted, the full purport of the judgment began to be understood, and the King sent hither and thither, everywhere, to find Elijah; presumably to induce him, either by entreaty or by cruelty, to lift from the land what he probably considered to be an evil spell or curse. But God had directed Elijah where to hide, in a place where he could himself be supplied with water, and where he could be fed by ravens.

GOD SPEAKS THROUGH HIS PROVIDENCES

Elijah's prediction of a famine was not merely a prophecy; rather, it was a declaration of a Divine judgment upon Israel. The object of the famine was to bring the Israelites to their senses-to show them that they were leaving the true God to trust in idols. The force and appropriateness of this particular kind of a judgment may be recognized, when we remember that the claim made for Baal was that he was specially the god of the forces of nature: his worship was presumed to bring *increase* in the home and in the field. The drouth and consequent famine would be a contradiction, therefore, of these claims made in the name of Baal, and would shatter faith in him, and prepare Israel to recognize and worship again the true God, Jehovah.

Meantime, Elijah, following the directions of the Lord, lived about two years at the brook Cherith, drinking of its waters, and fed there by the ravens.

The lesson to us is one of the Divine care and providence over those who are devoted to God's service. He who sustained Elijah can equally sustain us. The important question with each of us should be, Am I the Lord's servant, in the place and doing the work which He has directed? If so, our bread and our water shall be sure, and no good thing will He withhold from those who walk uprightly.--Isa. 33:16; Psa. 84:11.

Next Elijah was directed to a widow of Zarepath, across the border, in the Kingdom of Zidon. Our Lord refers to this, and incidentally confirms this entire piece of history respecting Elijah, the three and a half years of famine, and his visit to Sarepta.--Luke 4:26.

The three and a half years of drouth no doubt had an humbling effect upon King Ahab, as well as upon the people of Israel. No doubt they began to wonder where the matter would end; and to recognize it as more than an accident-as a judgment. The question would be whether it was a judgment from Baal or a judgment from Jehovah; for the people, as a result of their extended acquaintance with idolatry, had a comparatively weak faith respecting the unseen Jehovah, 'who permitted no image or likeness of Himself to be made or to be worshiped. The Lord's time had come for awakening Israel, and starting a reformation movement amongst them, and Elijah, who had been sought by the King throughout the surrounding nations, was instructed to present himself before Ahab, with a promise that rain should

follow; and was permitted to be the Lord's agent in drawing the attention of the people to the true God, who alone has power over the elements.

Although Ahab realized that the famine was a judgment of the Lord, nevertheless, after the custom of the natural man, he ignored personal responsibility, and affected to charge the evils to Elijah, saying to him, "Art thou he that troublest Israel?" It is always so with the faithful mouthpieces of the Lord. Since they cannot prophesy smooth things, but must present the truth in reproof of unrighteousness, therefore the world and the nominal Israelite hate them. They do not seem to realize that the difficulty lies in themselves, and their sins, and their separation from the Lord. But Elijah, humble yet unabashed, did not hesitate to tell the king the truth of the matter, assuring him that the trouble in Israel came from his own wrong course.

The drouth had so humbled Ahab that he did not re sent the Prophet's arraignment of his sin: perhaps also he hoped that through the Prophet's favor the embargo of the drouth and famine might be lifted. At all events he very promptly complied with Elijah's request that the people of Israel be assembled at Mount Carmel, together with the priests of Baal. Accordingly there was a great concourse to the flat, table-top of Mount Carmel, where Elijah awaited them, the king also coming with them; but Queen Jezebel sullenly remained at the palace in the capital city of Samaria.

THE OVERWHELMING DEFEAT OF BAAL

Elijah, full of zeal for the Lord, and full of indignation against the idolatry, and probably counseled respecting 'his course by the Lord, had a plan prepared by which to demonstrate to Israel which was the true God and which the false one. In the presence of the people he made a proposition to the priests of Baal for a contest to prove the question. This proposition was so reasonable, and the interest and expectation of Israel so great, that the priests of Baal dare not refuse. They, four hundred and fifty in number, were to build an altar and to make a sacrifice thereon to their god, Baal, while Elijah would build an altar and offer a sacrifice thereon to Jehovah, and whichever god would answer by fire would thus be attested as the true God. If Baal were powerful enough to answer the prayers of his priests and to accept the offering of the altar, then the people might understand that it was because Baal was offended with them that they had experienced the drouth and famine. But if Jehovah had the power, and would answer with fire, it would be proof to the people that the drouth and the famine were from Him, and signs of His indignation because they had worshiped Baal.

The proposition could not be rejected: the priests of Baal prepared their altar and their sacrifice, and had the advantage of the noon-day heat of a tropical sun, sufficient almost of itself to ignite the fat of the sacrifice. They desired and prayed that the test might be granted; they cut themselves with stones until the blood gushed out, claiming that it must be because some of them, as priests of Baal, had trespassed against him, that their prayers were not heard., They kept this up for hours, until near sunset-Elijah meantime, in the hearing of the people, pouring upon them the sharpest sarcasm -- the sarcasm of truth, not of falsehood. He suggested that they pray louder, as peradventure their god might .be a little deaf; he urged them to keep it up, peradventure Baal might be on a journey, or

attending to other business, or asleep. Thus he was giving to Israel in general the most telling lesson possible, considering their lethargy on religious subjects. He was preparing them for the final demonstration which he was about to give, that Jehovah is the true God, the only God who had power to answer both by fire and by water.

THE ANSWER BY FIRE

Mark how thorough the Prophet's faith in God, and how thoroughly he demonstrated, that there could be no room for deception in connection with his offering. Twelve stone crocks of water were poured upon the sacrifice and the wood, and filled the trench around about it; the sun was losing its power, and the offering was thoroughly drenched, and all things were thus ready for a thorough test of Jehovah's power to send down fire.

Elijah stated the matter to the people: "How long halt ye between two opinions? If Jehovah be God, follow Him; but if Baal be God, then follow him." The test was to show which was the true God, and which was the false god, and incidentally which the true and which the false prophets. Then Elijah prayed a beautiful and proper prayer. He did not say, "O Lord, cause Israel to know how great, I Elijah, am, as a prophet of the Lord," but "Hear me, O Lord, hear me, that this people may know that Thou art Jehovah God, and that Thou hast turned their heart back again [-recalling them again by their experiences and these signs to be Thy people]."

The answer by fire was prompt, and the effect upon the 'people great. They promptly acknowledged Jehovah, and slew the priests of Baal. Then, while Ahab and the people rejoiced in Elijah's promises that the long hoped for rain would come, and went to their homes to rejoice and feast, the Prophet remained upon the mountain to pray for that which God had definitely promised. Once he prayed, and sent his servant a distance to look for indications, but no answer. Again he prayed, and sent his servant again, but no evidence of response. After having been used of the Lord so mightily, in-the matter of the sacrifice, Elijah might have gotten to feel too much of his own importance, if his prayer for rain had been too promptly responded to. Opportunity was given for fear and doubt, that the Lord would fail to keep His engagement, respecting the rain. But knowing the sureness of the Lord's word, Elijah did not doubt; he prayed again and again, and sent his servant each time to see what evidences there were of the Lord's answer to the prayers, until finally when he had prayed for the seventh time, and inquired for a sign, the young man returned, saying that he saw a small cloud about the size of a man's hand. Then Elijah ceased his prayer, and realized that the beginning of the fulfillment had come.

There is a lesson in this also for the Lord's people of today, that, as our Lord said, "We ought to pray and not to faint," not to grow weary in looking for, asking for and expecting the spiritual blessings which the Lord has *promised us*. Many of the prayers which fail of fulfillment, fail because the petitioners ask amiss--ask for things which God has not promised. Others fail, be cause of lack of faith. The prayer of faith is that which is offered, "nothing doubting," and whose hope is based upon a definite *promise* of the Lord. For in stance, to us as New Creatures, the Lord has declared, "Your Heavenly Father is more willing to give the Holy

Spirit to them that ask Him, than are earthly parents to give good gifts [of an earthly kind] to their children." He that seeketh the spirit of holiness, the showers of Divine grace, findeth them. To him that knocketh, the stores of Divine favor shall be opened.

ISAIAH, THE STATESMAN-PROPHET

"Here am I; send me."--Isa. 6:1-8.

CONCERNING the time in which the Prophet Isaiah lived, little is revealed more than he has himself told us. In the superscription to his book (chapter 1 :1), the statement is made that he was the son of Amoz and that he discharged the prophetic office during the reign of the kings Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah. It is manifest also from the prophecies themselves that he delivered them during the reign of these kings. In chapter 6:1, it is expressly said that he was given a vision of Jehovah in the year in which Uzziah died. It is then evident that he must have begun his prophetic labors at least as early as during the last year of that king.

Albert Barnes, whose dissertations on both the Old and the New Testament are in some respects very luminous, has submitted some very interesting observations on the writings of Isaiah, which we believe will be found to be profitable and instructive in this connection:

"Isaiah, as we have seen, lived for the greater part of a century, and possibly even more than a century. It is probable also that for a period of more than seventy years he exercised the prophetic office. During that long period, important changes must have occurred; and a knowledge of some of the leading events of his time is necessary to understand his prophecies. Indeed a simple knowledge of historical facts will often make portions of his prophecies clear which would be otherwise entirely unintelligible. . . .

"The reign of Hezekiah stretched through a considerable portion of the prophetic ministry of Isaiah. A large part of his prophecies are, therefore, presumed to have been uttered during this reign. It is probable that to this period we are to attribute the entire series from chapter 13 to chapter 39 inclusive. The most important of his prophecies, from chapter 40 to chapter 66, I am disposed to assign to a subsequent period -to the reign of Manasseh."

ISAIAH PORTRAYS MESSIAH'S COMING GLORY

"It is not a violation of probability that Isaiah after the death of Hezekiah, being an old man, withdrew much from public life; that he saw and felt that there was little hope of producing reform during the impious career of Manasseh; and that, in the distress and anguish of his soul, he gave himself up to the contemplation of the happier times which should yet occur under the reign of the Messiah. It was during this period, I suppose, that he composed the latter part of his prophecies, from the 40th to the 66th chapter. The nation was full of wickedness. An' impious prince was on the throne. Piety was banished, and the friends of Jehovah were bleeding in Jerusalem. The nation was given up to idolatry. The kingdom was approaching the period of its predicted fall and ruin. Isaiah saw the tendency of

events; he, saw how hopeless would be the attempt at reform. He saw that the captivity of Babylon was hastening on, and that the nation was preparing for that gloomy event. In this dark and disastrous period, he seems to have withdrawn himself from the contemplation of the joyless present, and to have given his mind to the contemplation of happier future scenes. An interval perhaps - of some ten or fifteen years may be supposed to have elapsed between his last public labors in the time of Hezekiah, and the prophecies which compose the remainder of the book. During this interval he may have withdrawn from public view, and fixed his mind on the great events of future times. In his visions he sees the nation about to go into captivity. Yet he sees also that there would be a return from bondage, and he comforts the hearts of the pious with the assurance of such a return. He announces the name of the monarch by whom that deliverance would be accomplished, and gives assurance that the captive Jews should again return to their own land. But he is not satisfied with the announcement of this comparatively unimportant, deliverance. With that he connects a far greater and more important deliverance, that from sin, under the Messiah. He fixes his eye, therefore, on the future glories of the Kingdom of God; sees the long promised Messiah; describes His person, His work, His doctrine, and states in glowing language the effects of His coming on the happiness and destiny of mankind. As he advances in his prophetic descriptions, the deliverance from Babylon seems to die away and is forgotten; or it is lost in the contemplation of the event to which it had a resemblance--the coming of the Messiah -- as the morning star is lost in the superior glory of the rising sun. He throws himself forward in his descriptions; places himself amidst these future scenes, and describes them as taking place around him, and as events which he saw. He thinks and feels and acts as if in that period; his mind is full of the contemplation; and he pours out, in describing it, the most elevated language and the sublimest thoughts. It was in contemplations, such as these, I suppose, that he passed the close of his life; and in such visions of the glorious future, that he sought a refuge from the gloom and despondency which must have filled a pious mind during the early part of the reign of the impious and blood-thirsty Manasseh.

Isaiah was cotemporary with the prophets Jonah, Hosea, and Micah. They, however, performed a less important public part, and were not favored with visions of the future glory of the Church, like his. In a single chapter, however, the same language is used by Isaiah and by Micah. See Isaiah 2:2-4. Comp. Micah 4:1-4. In which Prophet the language is original, it is impossible now to determine. . . .

"Isaiah refers more fully to the times of the Messiah than any other of the Prophets. It is natural, therefore, to expect to find his writings often quoted or appealed to in the New Testament. The frequency of the reference, and the manner in which it is done, will show the estimate in which he was held by the Savior, and by the Apostles."

Our attention is drawn to Isaiah's vision revealed in chapter 6. The temple at Jerusalem, otherwise called the House of Jehovah, was the scene of the vision. But instead of the holy and most holy, the mercy-seat, the altar, the table of shew-bread, and the golden candlestick, everything was changed--a glorious Throne was there, and upon the Throne the Lord. On either side of Him, as representing the Divine attributes, stood the four seraphim, while the entire

temple was filled with His train of 'followers. The temple was full of glory-light and two of the seraphim cried, "Holy, holy, holy is Jehovah of Hosts." The two on the other side replied, "Let, the whole earth be full of His glory." Following this response the door-posts were shaken and an obscuring haze filled the temple, dimming the glory.

LET THE WHOLE EARTH BE FULL OF THE LORD'S GLORY

The signification of this vision we draw from the words of Jesus. He refers us directly to this vision. (John 12:41.) In fulfillment of the Divine promise Jesus appeared at His First Advent and tentatively offered Himself to Israel as their great King of Glory, the great Mediator of the New Covenant, promised them by Jehovah. (Jer. 31:31.) God knew that Jesus would be rejected; nevertheless the offer was, made. Had He been received and had He then taken to Himself His Messianic glory and power it would have meant that a sufficient number of the Jewish nation had received Him with their whole heart, so as to constitute the complete number of the 'Bride class, to be associates in the spiritual Kingdom. In that event there would have been no offer made to the Gentiles of joint-heirship with Messiah in His glorious Kingdom--Israel would have gotten the entire blessing. The Kingdom would have been established forthwith and the nation of Israel, accepting Messiah, would at once have become the channel of Divine blessing to all nations.

But when the voice declared, Let the whole earth be full of the Lord's glory, the unreadiness of the world to receive the message was indicated by the shaking of the door-posts and the darkness beclouding the glorious scene. The fulfillment of this we see in the fact that the Jewish nation, which is the doorway to this glory, was not in proper condition. A new door-way must be provided through which the glories of the King of kings will issue forth to the world. St. Paul declares that the shaking of anything, in a typical sense, represents its instability, its removal -- that something superior may be established in its stead. The Jewish nation was removed from its favored position and a new nation, a new doorway, a new channel of access between God and men has since been in process of establishment.

No other nation in the world was found more worthy than Israel of the honored position. Consequently, God proceeded to make a new nation composed exclusively of saints. As St. Peter. explains, "Ye are a royal priest hood, a holy nation." (I Peter 2:9.) First of all, the saintly Jews were taken, to be the nucleus of the new nation, spirit-begotten, heavenly. Subsequently, the selective processes having continued throughout this Gospel Age, with its close the Holy Nation will be completed by the power of the First Resurrection. Then everything will be in proper readiness, and the command, Let the whole earth be filled with the glory of Jehovah God, will go forth and the world will be blessed -natural Israel being promised a prominent share in connection with this grand work.

In the vision Isaiah recognized that the shaking of the door-posts and the obscuring mist signified an unpreparedness somewhere for the glory of the Lord and he cried out, recognizing his own imperfection and the imperfection of those with whom he dwelt. A glimpse of the Lord's glory showed his own defects and those of his neighbors.

This was the effect of Jesus' teaching upon all those who received His message. The Law shone out more resplendently than ever and they found that they violated it more than they had supposed-not only in deeds, but also in words and thoughts. The holy ones, as represented in Isaiah, took the matter to heart and humbled themselves before the Lord and acknowledged that they were not fit to be the teachers of men, but that the whole Jewish nation and all others were imperfect, and that any message which their lips could carry would be imperfect.

As Isaiah's lips were touched with a live coal from the altar, it illustrated how the saintly ones of Israel and from all nations during this Gospel Age have had the required blessing upon their lips and have proclaimed the Divine invitation, "Present your bodies living sacrifices, holy and acceptable to God." (Rom. 12:1.) This message, enkindled by the live coal from God's altar of sacrifice, has gone hither and thither throughout the world for eighteen centuries. It has not only taught a cleansing from sin, but a service to, God.

"HERE AM I; SEND ME"

Isaiah continued to be the type of the holy people. God has desired to send His message of grace and the invitation to sacrifice to all who would have the ear to hear. And the sanctified, whom Isaiah typified, have throughout this, Age said, "Lord, here am I; send me."

Our lesson further shows that the message of this Isaiah class would be unpopular. Few would hear; few would see; few would receive the blessing of forgiveness and begetting of the Holy Spirit. The Master and His Apostles began this proclamation. It has continued the same to this day.

But we are not in this to be discouraged. Only the "little flock," the pure in heart, the followers in the footsteps of Jesus, will get this blessing and be prepared to constitute the Kingdom class, the new doorway or threshold connecting the Divine Holy with the world of mankind.

Israel's experiences are used as the measuring line to show when the completion of the Church will be accomplished and the glory of the Lord shine forth upon Israel, and through Israel to all nations, peoples, kindreds and tongues, for a thousand years. That measuring line tells of the desolation of Israel's land, of its becoming utterly waste and of their removal from the land. The last verse of the lesson tells of how in the end there will come a sprout out of the roots--a holy Seed, a holy people, under Divine providence,. will be raised up. These holy ones of Israel, on this side the veil, will be the Ancient Worthies, who will be resurrected and enter into their reward as the earthly representatives of Messiah's Kingdom. (Heb. 11: 38-40; Psa. 148:11.) To these Princes will be gathered the faithful, loyal, holy of the Jews, the nucleus, the beginning of the earthly phase of the Messianic Kingdom.

THE FUTURE JUDGMENTS OF THE LORD

The Lord, through the Prophet, shows the means by which the righteous reign of the Messiah shall be inaugurated, in the statement, "He shall smite the earth with the rod of His mouth, and with the breath of His lips shall He slay the wicked." It is evident, then, that there will be not only poor., needing assistance and equity, but there will be wicked at the time the Kingdom is established. (Compare Mal.

5:1, 6; Rev. 19:15.) The rod of Messiah's mouth signifies the judgments which He has already expressed, and which have very largely gone unheeded by Christendom. "We remember His declaration, "He that rejecteth Me and receiveth not My words hath one that judgeth him; the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day." Christendom in general has admitted the righteousness of the Lord's Word, but those who attempt to live according to that Word are remarkably few. Consequently, when the time shall come that judgment shall be laid to the line, and righteousness to the plummet, and when this judgment shall begin at the nominal house of God, the nominal system in general will fall-will fall condemned under that Word.

The power by which the Lord shall accomplish the blessing of mankind, after He has crushed the power of evil and established the reign of righteousness is stated to us in this prophecy-it is to be by the spread of a knowledge of the Lord. The Apostle assures us (1 Tim. 2:4) that it is the will. of God that all men shall come to a knowledge of the Truth that they may be saved. He assures us that there can be no salvation without knowledge (Rom. 10:14, 15), consequently the knowledge of the Lord being very limited throughout this Gospel Age, only comparatively few of earth's mil lions have come to such a knowledge of Him as to permit them to exercise faith in God, and in the great sacrifice and pardon for sin which God has provided in Christ. But the fact that few in the present life have come to this knowledge shall not in any degree thwart the Divine Plan nor make the death of Christ on their behalf of no avail, for the Lord assures us that in due time the true light of the world, Jesus, shall lighten every man that cometh into the world -- this includes all the heathen, all those of imbecile mind , who could not grasp the Truth, and all the infants who die without a 'knowledge of the only name under heaven whereby we must be saved. God has thus made ample provision, first, in the redemption which is in Christ Jesus, our Lord, and secondly, in the Millennial Age which He has provided through Him, in which the knowledge of the Lord shall be caused to fill the whole earth.