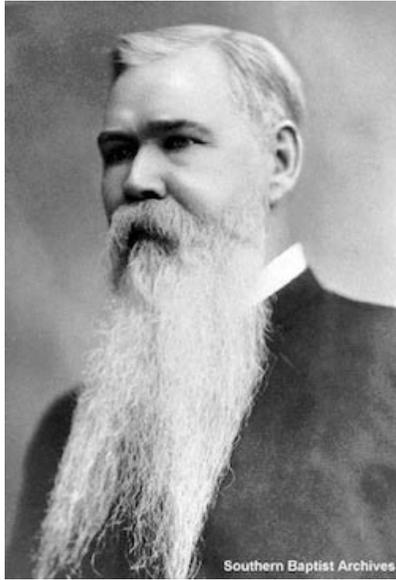


AN INTERPRETATION OF THE ENGLISH BIBLE



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**THE PROPHETS
OF THE
ASSYRIAN
PERIOD**

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I. INTRODUCTION – THE PROPHETS IN GENERAL

We now take up a new section of the Old Testament which, according to Hebrew classification of the books, is called the Later Prophets.

The literature on this section is abundant but largely radical in its nature. Therefore it is most difficult to find books on this section which we can commend to an English Bible student. Generally speaking, the old commentaries are safe but the student may read most of the modern books on the prophets with discrimination.

For the background there are two books which should be studied carefully. First, Wood's *Hebrew Monarchy*, which is the best of its kind, since it not only gives a fine harmony of Samuel, Kings, and Chronicles, but also inserts the pertinent passages from the Psalms and the prophets in their chronological order. Second, Crockett's *Harmony of Samuel, Kings, and Chronicles*, which is much more convenient than Wood's *Hebrew Monarchy*, because of its size. This we use as a textbook in our studies of the Hebrew monarchy and the divided kingdom. In most instances the author accepts the chronology of this work by Crockett.

As to the commentaries, there are many among the older ones which are excellent, but only a few may be mentioned here.

First, the expository part of "The Pulpit Commentary" is generally sound and good. Second, the "Bible Commentary" is excellent, especially its introductions. It is conservative and practical for the average student of the English Bible, though its notes on archaeology are not up to date. Third, Hengstenberg is one of the author's favorites. He is scholarly and conservative. Fourth, Pusey on the minor prophets is the best. He is also scholarly and conservative. Fifth, Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown's commentary is a good, brief, critical commentary.

Among the later writers on the prophets might be mentioned as valuable, Orelli's *Old Testament Prophecy*, Elliott's *Old Testament Prophecy*, Delitzsch's *Messianic Prophecies in Historical Succession* and Beecher's *The Prophets and the Promise*. Others will be named in connection with some of the books in this INTERPRETATION.

This period extends from Samuel to Malachi, a period of over seven hundred years. The special mission of the prophetic order was to serve as a counterpoise to the despotism of the monarch and to the formalism in the priest. A study of the history of this period reveals a strong tendency toward Oriental despotism on the part of the monarch and a very great degeneracy on the part of the priesthood. The immediate work of the prophet was to check the tendency to despotism on the part of the monarch by being God's mouthpiece to the king, and to counteract the degeneracy of the priesthood by becoming the speakers for God, and to be the religious instructors of the people.

The word "prophet" is derived from a Greek word which is a translation of the Hebrew and means "bubbling over." The Greek word is prophetes, which is derived from the Greek pro and phanai, meaning "to speak for," i.e., to speak for another. So, etymologically the word, in its parts, expresses the following ideas: Pro means (1) "beforehand," (2) "in public," (3) "in behalf of," or "for"; phanai means "to speak." Hence the etymological meaning, "to speak for" or to speak for another. Therefore a prophet is "one who speaks to men, on behalf of God, the message he has received from God, through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit." The message may relate to the past, present, or future, according to the principles of inspiration. If it relates to the future it is called predictive prophecy.

The words used for "prophet" are as follows:

(1) The Hebrew word nabhi the most common word in Hebrew for prophet, means a "speaker." The word of God came to the prophet and he spoke it to men. See Jeremiah 1:2,11; Ezekiel 1:3 et multa al.

(2) A common word for "prophet" in the days of Samuel was ro'eh, which means a "seer," and is used to express the vision, insight, and foresight of the prophet. See 1 Samuel 9:9.

(3) The Hebrew word chozeh was used for an authoritative messenger, who received supernatural visions and so, was called a "seer." See Amos 1:1; Isaiah 1:1; Obadiah 1:1; Nehemiah 1:1.

(4) Several other terms were used to designate the prophet, such as "man of God," "servant of Jehovah," "messenger of Jehovah," et al.

The psychological process in the inspiration of the prophet is stated very clearly by Dr. Sampey, of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, as follows:

The canonical prophets claimed to be under the influence of the Spirit of God. Their message was from Jehovah. We cannot understand fully the psychology of the prophets when inspired. Their mental processes were stimulated and guided by the Spirit, who clothed them with power. Imagination, memory, and reason were no doubt heightened, as well as intuition and spiritual insight. The Spirit of God chose proper men for his purpose, and then turned to account all their powers. The mind of the prophet perhaps varied from the extreme of trance and ecstasy all the way to a quiet thoughtfulness over which the Holy Spirit preaided. Saul, wallowing on the ground under uncontrollable excitement, and Balaam, stalking forth with closed eyes to seek enchantments, are not fair specimens of prophets. The prophets had little in common with dancing and howling dervishes.

Many prophecies, or predictions, receive successive fulfilments, though there is a fulfilment higher and greater than all the rest. This we call the "perspective" of prophecy. In general, Orelli's statement holds good: "A prophecy can only be regarded as fulfilled when the whole body of truth included in it has attained living realization."

1. The prophets before Moses and the biblical proof for each:

(1) Enoch (Jude 14f.)

(2) Noah (2 Peter 2:5)

(3) Abraham and other patriarchs (Gen. 20:7; 27:27-29; 49)

2. The prophets in the age of Moses:

(1) Moses (Deut. 18:18-22; 34:10-12)

(2) Miriam and Aaron (Ex. 15:20; Num. 12)

(3) The seventy (Num. 11:24-29)

(4) Balaam (Num. 22-24)

(5) Joshua (Josh. 1; 23; 24)

3. The prophets in the period of the judges:

(1) Deborah (Judg. 4-5)

(2) An unknown prophet in the days of Gideon (Judg. 6:8)

(3) An unknown prophet in the days of Eli (I Sam. 2:27-36).

4. The prophets from Samuel to the division of the kingdom:

(1) Samuel (I Sam. 3:20, et al)

(2) Companies of prophets (I Sam. 10:10-12; 19:20-24)

(3) Gad (I Sam. 22:5 et al)

(4) Nathan (2 Sam. 7-12)

(5) David (Psalms 110; 2; 22; Acts 2:30)

5. The prophets from the division of the kingdom to the time of Elijah:

(1) Ahijah of Shiloh (1 Kings

(2) Man of God from Judah at Jeroboam's altar (1 Kings 13:1)

(3) Shemaiah (1 Kings 12:21-24)

(4) Iddo the Seer (2 Chron. 12:15)

(5) Azariah (2 Chron. 15:1)

(6) Hanani {1 Chron 16:7-10)

(7) Jehu (2 Chron. 19:1-3) 6. The prophets in the period of Elijah and Elisha:

(1) Elijah (1 Kings 17:1 to 2 Kings 2-17)

(2) Micaiah (1 Kings 22:8)

(3) Unknown prophet (1 Kings 20)

(4) Jahaziel (2 Chron. 20:14-17)

(5) Eliezer (2 Chron. 20:37)

(6) Elisha (2 Kings 2-8)

There are three great periods of the canonical prophets, via: The Assyrian Period, the Chaldean Period, and the Persian Period. The canonical prophets are:

1. The Assyrian Period:

(1) Obadiah

- (2) Joel
- (3) Jonah
- (4) Amos
- (5) Hosea
- (6) Isaiah
- (7) Micah
- (8) Nahum

2. The Chaldean Period:

- (1) Zephaniah
- (2) Habakkuk
- (3) Jeremiah
- (4) Ezekiel
- (5) Daniel

3. The Persian Period:

- (1) Haggai
- (2) Zechariah
- (3) Malachi

In the Assyrian period there appeared the schools of the prophets, Zechariah, the son of Jehoiada, the man of God in 2 Chronicles 25:2-10, the nameless prophet of 2 Chronicles 25:15-16, another Zechariah in 2 Chronicles 26:5; then follows Oded and Huldah, the

prophetess. In the Chaldean and Persian Periods the canonical prophets alone appear and fill the foreground of the picture while the false prophets fill the background.

There are three distinct elements for which a student of the prophets should look. The first element is the message to the prophet's own age. In order to understand this message as it was for the people of their own age, the student must get the background thereof, or the conditions in which they lived. The second element is that of prediction, or things foretold. In considering these we will find that many of them were immediately fulfilled, that others were fulfilled later and that many still await fulfilment. The third element to be looked for is the living message to our own age. They spoke the will of God and uttered age-abiding principles which have application now as surely as when they were first spoken. For these the student of the prophets should carefully look.

Certain things should be remembered in a study of the prophets:

1. The standpoint of the prophet was always that of the sovereignty of God. There are many tones in the prophecies. There is much thunder, yet very much of tenderness, but always in obedience to the vision of an enthroned God they uttered their messages.
2. Their protest against things which were contrary to the will of God was without compromise. They knew nothing of the word "expedient," but they knew a great deal of the word "obedient." They had but one thing to say to men, namely, that if, individually or incorporate, or national life, they were not living in submission to the will of God they were in the place of certain and irrevocable ruin.
3. Their intention was always that of bringing glory to the name of Jehovah. Their aim was to restore the people of God to the true relation to him in order that his name might be glorified.

4. With varying notes and emotions, every song raised by these prophets was a song of hope, a song which came out of their profound conviction that God could not be defeated, but that his purpose of love must come to ultimate accomplishment.

In the interpretation of prophecy it must be remembered:

1. The very nature of the prophet's function made it necessary that his utterances should contain "dark sayings" and enigmas. He was a special messenger of the invisible king to uphold the constitution of his kingdom on earth. His message had regard to the principles, and administrative measures, of divine government, and it inevitably followed that it would often have to be couched in analogical language: in figures, symbols, parables, and allegories. This mode of teaching left the insincere, unbelieving, and formalist to confine themselves within the narrow limits of literalism, but it rewarded the patient and docile seeker of God with warning, enlightenment, and comfort, as we find so often in the teachings of our Lord.

2. A right understanding of the Pentateuch is indispensable to the proper construing of these "dark sayings." The law supplies the basis of the prophetic word, and the great mass of legal teaching was conveyed in the form of typical history and emblematic ordinances.

3. As time went on, the history of the nation gave birth to fresh illustrations of the character of God, and provided additional material for prophetic allegory.

In considering predictive prophecy there should be especially recognized:

1. The failure of the Chosen People.

2. The coming Messiah.

3. The establishment of the kingdom of God by the Messiah himself.

4. The final restoration of the Jews.

5. The Messiah's kingdom must ultimately be established over the whole earth.

There is a special fitness in the arrangement of the prophetic books as we have them in the Hebrew Bible and in our English versions. The book of Isaiah ranges over the whole field of prophetic vision. Beginning with a reiteration of the terms of the Mosaic covenant and eliciting no signs of repentance it proceeds to record against the people a sentence of reprobation, then the instrument by which God's chastisement should be inflicted is declared. Then describing the overthrow of Samaria and Judah's extreme peril he assures Judah of a remnant of safety for all future time. He promises the coming one whose name should be "Immanuel," "Wonderful," etc., "a sure Foundation," "the Servant of the Lord," a new covenant and "a new heaven and a new earth." When we look at the breadth and grandeur of the vision of Isaiah we need no further reason for acquiescing in the existing order. All the rest of the prophets fall within this scope and present one harmonious plan of revelation.

To illustrate the one ruling purpose which pervades all the prophets, we take the book of Jonah. The history of Jonah's mission proves:

1. That, if Israel failed in her mission to diffuse the grace of God over the whole world, God was able, if he so willed, to work by them even as reluctant agents, for the publishing of his word among the Gentiles.

2. That the ready reception of that word by the people of Nineveh was a pre-intimation of what was thereafter to take place on a larger scale.

3. That the sparing of Nineveh was an encouragement to Israel that they too would be spared, if they only repented.

4. That if, on the other hand, they should not repent, "the men of Nineveh would rise up in the judgment and condemn them."

5. That this reformation of the Ninevites made them the more suitable for being employed as "the rod of God's anger," in the punishment of Israel.

6. That in all this there was nothing arbitrary; that the divine procedure was regulated throughout by the supreme rule of right, as illustrated in the cases of Sennacherib and Hezekiah, respectively, and in which is illustrated also the saying, "mercy rejoices against judgment."

Not a few have come forward in recent times purporting to be interpreters of the prophets, who do not so much as admit the possibility of such a thing as a genuine prophecy. The assumption rests on the contention that it is inconceivable that God should communicate to man any foreknowledge, or pre-vision, of future events. This doctrine is generally introduced as if it were an axiomatic truth, the answer to which is that it cannot be axiomatic since many who have been eminent for scientific ability, philosophic insight and practical intelligence have believed that such communication has actually taken place. Therefore it can have no claim to being an axiom. Neither is their assumption capable of proof, by either deduction or induction. For a deductive proof it would have to be shown) either that God has not the power to impart such knowledge, or that he did not purpose and will to do so. To assert the first is to limit the Almighty. To assert the second, a man must needs be himself omniscient. "Who hath known the mind of the Lord?" As to induction, it may be boldly affirmed that an inductive process, legitimately performed, on the facts supplied by the Bible, establishes incontestably that men have foretold future events which lay beyond human knowledge and which have found a most remarkable amount of verification in the history of Jesus Christ and the formation of Christendom.

These naturalistic interpreters have come to the conclusion that these prophecies are much later in date than is generally conceded. They do not agree among themselves but the general tendency among them is to place much of our canonical prophetic literature into post-exilic times. This is clearly the result of their reasoning from the mere assumption that it is incredible that God should reveal future events to man in our studies of the prophets we shall follow the chronological order as given in Sampey's Syllabus. Each book will receive special attention in the interpretation as to authorship, date, etc.

QUESTIONS

1. What section of our Bible do we commence in these studies?
2. What can you say, in general, of the literature on this section?
3. What helps commended and what the special feature commended, or what the reservation in each case?
4. What the time limits of the prophetic period and what the special mission of the prophets?
5. What is the definition of the word "prophet"?
6. By what words or terms were the prophets known? Give an illustration of each.
7. What can you say of the psychological process in the inspiration of the prophets?
8. What can you say of prophecy and fulfilment, in general, and what says Orelli as to fulfilment of prophecy?
9. Who the prophets before Moses and what the biblical proof?
10. Who the prophets in the age of Moses and what the proof?

11. Who the prophets in the period of the judges and what the proof?
12. Who were the prophets from Samuel to the division of the kingdom? Cite proof.
13. Who the prophets from the division of the kingdom to the time of Elijah and what the proof?
14. Who the prophets in the period of Elijah and Elisha and what the proof?
15. What three great periods of the canonical prophets and who the canonical prophets of each of these periods?
16. What other prophets contemporary with the canonical prophets?
17. What the three distinct elements for which a student of the prophets should look?
18. What certain things should be remembered in a study of the prophets?
19. What important considerations in the interpretation of prophecy?
20. In considering predictive prophecy what may especially be recognized?
21. What the special fitness in the arrangement of the prophetic books as we have them in the Hebrew Bible and in our English versions?
22. Illustrate the one ruling purpose which pervades all the prophets by the book of Jonah.
23. What the naturalistic speculation with reference to this view and what the reply to such contention?

24. To what conclusion have these naturalistic interpreters come with respect to the date of many of these prophecies?

25. What the order that we shall follow in our studies of the prophets?

II. THE BOOK OF OBADIAH

Obadiah 1-21

Following the chronology of Sampey's *Syllabus* we commence our studies of the prophets with Obadiah.

This name means servant or worshiper of Jehovah and is found to be of frequent occurrence in the Old Testament, but cannot be identified with any other. His father's name is not given. So, it is utterly impossible to know much about him. It has been determined with a good degree of certainty that he was a prophet of Judah.

The vision of Obadiah against Edom, or the punishment of Edom for its cruel and unbrotherly conduct toward Judah at the time of some great national calamity is the theme of his prophecy.

The date of this prophecy is a matter of great dispute. The time, according to the various scholars, ranges from 840 B.C. to 588 B.C. and some place it even later, but the author prefers the earlier date which places it shortly after the invasion of Judah and the plundering of Jerusalem by the Philistines and Arabians. This occurred in the reign of Jehoram (2 Chron. 21:16-17; compare 2 Kings 8:20ff.). The description of this event is brief, but doubtless many other captives were taken besides the royal family as herein indicated.

The attitude of Edom toward Israel was one of perpetual hostility. The history of this hatred for Israel commences with the trouble between Jacob and Esau, after which Esau settled the country about Mount Seir, afterward called Edom. Here Esau dispossessed the Horites, the original inhabitants. At the time of the Exodus the Edomites refused to permit the Israelites to pass through their territory and then continued in this state of hostility after the occupation of Canaan. This attitude toward Israel is seen in the succession of events in their history. They never lost an opportunity to show their dislike for the descendants of Jacob. It is this hatred

which found expression in the time of Obadiah in their rejoicing at Israel's calamities for which Obadiah pronounces the curse upon them.

The style of Obadiah is remarkably original. He uses many words and forms found nowhere else. The language is full of thought and pregnant with meaning. It has a vigor, terseness, and rapidity which carry the reader along and place him by the prophet's side in fullest sympathy. One special characteristic of this prophecy is that of the close connection of its members without a break or interruption.

There are several other passages of Scripture which should be studied in connection with Obadiah:

1. Joel 2:23 to 3:19, in many particulars, seems to parallel Obadiah and, in all probability, Joel was acquainted with the prophecy of Obadiah and refers to it in 2:32. A close study of the two prophecies reveals a striking parallel in them. Whether Joel borrowed from Obadiah, is a disputed question. However, the evidence seems to indicate that he did. If this be true, then the date of Obadiah is practically settled as being that of 840 B.C. rather than later.

2. Jeremiah 49:7-22 is, doubtless, an expansion of Obadiah 1-9. A careful inspection of the two prophecies leads to the conclusion that Obadiah is the original from which Jeremiah borrowed.

3. Ezekiel 35:1-15, Lamentations 4:21, Psalm 137:7, all seem to parallel the feeling of Obadiah expressed in Obadiah 10-18, yet they doubtless refer to a different occasion though they have a similar cause, viz: the perpetual attitude of hostility of Edom toward Israel.

A brief outline, or analysis, of Obadiah is as follows: Introduction:

1. The title (1a)
2. The theme (1b) I. A judgment announced (1c-9)

1. The summons of the nations (1c-2)
2. Edom, though proud and secure, shall be humbled (3-4)
3. The destruction shall be complete (5-9) II. A reason assigned (10-16)
 1. The charge specified (10-11)
 2. A prohibition of the repetition of such offenses (12-14)
 3. The day of restitution at hand (15-16) III. A victory assured (17-21)
 1. The forces in general (17-18)
 2. The work of each in particular (19-20)
 3. The kingdom established (21)

There is a summons in verses 1-2 to the nations to arise against Edom and bring her to desolation. The reference is not very clear but the passage refers to someone, as seen by the prophet in the vision, going among the heathen to stir them up against Edom.

In verses 3-4 we have a description of their pride. They were irreligious, proud, and self-centered. The position of the Edomites was secluded, they being dwellers of the mountains and living in houses hewn in rocks on the mountainsides. Their dwelling places were like the nests of eagles in the clefts of the highest rocks and almost inaccessible to an enemy. Petra, the capital, lay completely hidden in a rocky defile some two miles long, and could easily be defended by a handful of men. This remarkable place has been most graphically described by a late traveler. This description may be found in the "Pulpit Commentary" and the student will do well to read it. Note the comparison in verse 4.

The completeness of the desolation here foretold is described by contrasting it with the work of thieves, robbers, and grape-gatherers in which the prophet shows that, unlike the thief or the grape-gatherer, the destroyer will not leave anything of them but will bring them to complete desolation.

The prophet assigns as the reason for their desolation the fact that Edom had sided with the enemy against Israel and had rejoiced at the calamity of God's people in their defeat; he issues a prohibition against the repetition of such acts, and then he shows that the measure of their penalty should be their own treatment of Israel in view of the approaching day of restitution for the nations.

In this dark picture of the destruction of Edom and the other nations the prophet holds out the hope of Israel's final victory over all the nations. According to this prophecy a remnant shall escape and shall become a fire and the house of Joseph a flame while Esau shall be as stubble. As fire burns stubble, so shall Jacob and Joseph consume Esau. Then follows a description of the details of the work of desolation out of which shall come the establishment of the kingdom of Jehovah over the whole earth.

The question naturally arises just here as to the fulfilment of these several prophecies. There are three of these that now claim our attention. (1) The conquest of the Edomites by the heathen on account of their cruelty to the Jews at the time of the capture of Jerusalem by the Philistines and Arabians. (2) A second conquest of them and utter extermination by the Jews. (3) The subsequent expansion of the Israelitish nation and the triumphant glories of Zion.

The first of these was to be effected by the heathen which is not very easily found in history on account of the loss of Edom's historical records from 588 to 312 B.C. At the latter date we find the Nabataeans, a people of the Chaldean race and origin, in full possession of Edom. It was this people who made Petra famous for its buildings and commerce, but just when they got possession is not

known. Josephus tells us of an invasion of this country by Nebuchadnezzar about five years after the destruction of Jerusalem. Probably he conquered this country and transported the Chaldeans and settled them there, upon which the Edomites established themselves in southern Judah where they were afterward exclusively found. This history fulfils the first prophecy.

The fulfilment of the second prophecy, viz: the conquest of Edom by the Jews, may be recognized more distinctly. Judas Maccabeus overthrew the Edomites at Arabattine and John Hyracanus captured the cities Adna and Marisa and subjugated all the Idumeans. He allowed them to remain where they were on the condition that they would be circumcised and adopt the Jewish customs. This they did and thus lost their nationality, but they still hung together as a party who were plundered by Simon of Gerasa. The few Edomites left were slain at the capture of Jerusalem and there was "not any remaining of the house of Esau; for Jehovah had spoken it." Now what of the expansion of the Israelitish kingdom? The promise that an escaped remnant should occupy Mount Zion was literally fulfilled at the return under Zerubbabel but the idea of the expansion was not. It had a typical and partial fulfilment in the days of the Maccabees but this expansion idea finds its fuller completion in Christianity and will be consummated in the millennium.

There are several important lessons in this book for us:

1. There is the lesson of the family feud, which is usually the most bitter and the most difficult to settle. Let us remember the lesson of Jacob and Esau.
2. There is the lesson of the dangers of pride and arrogance. Truly, "pride goeth before a fall."
3. There is the lesson of false confidence. No one is secure against the law of retribution. The clefts of Petra may be too difficult for man to scale but nothing can withstand God.

4. There is the lesson of God's method of dealing out his wrath. "Though the mills of God grind slowly, yet they grind exceeding small." Edom received what she had given.

5. There is the lesson of hope in a dark hour. God's plan and purpose are not accomplished in a day but he will see to it that no prophecy shall fail. Let Israel of today learn the lesson of patient, persistent pursuit of God's plan for her, and his glory will cover the earth as the waters cover the sea.

QUESTIONS

1. Who was Obadiah?
2. What the theme of his prophecy?
3. What the date and circumstances of this prophecy?
4. What was the attitude of Edom toward Israel and what the history which evidences this attitude?
5. What of the general character of the book?
6. What other passages of Scripture should be studied in this connection. and what their relation to Obadiah?
7. Give a brief analysis of the book.
8. What the summons of verses 1-2 and what the reference here?
9. What the characteristics of the Edomites and what of the place of their security?
10. How is the completeness of the desolation, which is here foretold, described?
11. What reason did the prophet here assign for such desolation, what prohibition issued and what the measure of their penalty?

12. What hope for Israel's victory does the prophet here hold out to the people and how is it to be realized?

13. What can you say of the fulfilment of these several prophecies by Obadiah?

14. What the lessons of the prophecy of Obadiah?

III. THE BOOK OF JOEL

Joel 1:1 to 3:21

Helps commended: (1) Hengstenberg, (2) Pusey.

Many men of different periods of the history of Israel bore the name Joel. All that we know of Joel, the prophet, is gleaned from the book of his prophecies and that is little indeed. He was the son of Pethuel, a man otherwise unknown to us. From a study of the prophecies of Joel we learn that he was almost certainly an inhabitant of Judah and Jerusalem. He was well acquainted with the services of Jehovah's Temple. His name means "Jehovah is God" and thus indicates something of the religious convictions of his parents. There is a legend that he was born at Beth-horon, ten miles northwest from Jerusalem, and that he was buried there. We know not the grounds on which this tradition rests and therefore cannot determine these things with any degree of certainty.

Nowhere in the Scriptures are we told just the time when Joel lived and prophesied. The date of his prophecy becomes, therefore, purely a question of literary and historical criticism. Like Obadiah, we find an earlier and a later date assigned to it. The earlier date is 830 B.C., or the reign of Joash; the later date assigned is after the exile. The author prefers the earlier date as being far more consistent with the internal evidence.

The occasion of this prophecy is determined according to the position taken with reference to the interpretation of the "locusts." Those who believe that the locusts referred to by Joel were real, not symbolical locusts, find the occasion of the book to be the entire desolation of the land of Judah by a plague of locusts, while those who hold to the symbolic meaning of the word "locusts" make the occasion of the book the great sins of Judah in turning away from Jehovah. As the author holds to the symbolical theory of the locusts he sees the occasion of this prophecy to be the decline of Judah which is so evident in the latter part of the reign of Joash (see

history of his reign) and which calls forth this great summons of the people by the prophet to repentance or to the judgments that would follow.

The canonicity of this book has never been called in question. It is classical and almost matchless in style. Joel is the prince of prophets as to description. His description of the army of locusts, the battle of Jehoshaphat, the outpouring of the Holy Spirit and the suffering of brute creation is unequaled in literature. It is impossible to read his prophecies and not be impressed with his culture and literary skill. The Hebrew scholars tell us that his book is a fine specimen of pure classic Hebrew. With the strength of Micah it combines the tenderness of Jeremiah, the vividness of Nahum) and the sublimity of Isaiah.

This prophecy was given to Judah. There is no mention of the Northern Kingdom. The name "Israel" (2:27; 3:2, 16) refers to the whole people, while the author mentions Zion, Judah, and Jerusalem many times.

The analysis of this book consists of the title and three main divisions, as follows:

The title (1:1)

I. The coming of the locusts (1:2 to 2:27)

1. An unusual desolation (1:2-4)

2. A call to mourning (1:5-14)

3. Forebodings of the "day of Jehovah" (1:15-20)

4. The alarm sounded in view of the approaching day (2:1-3)

5. A description of the army and their destructive work (2:4-11)

6. A promise of forgiveness and blessings upon the condition of repentance (2:12-17)

7. Repentance vouchsafed and the blessings assured (2:18-27)

II. The coming of the Holy Spirit (2:28-32)

1. The spirit poured upon all flesh and the results (2:28-29)

2. The perspective of the final judgment day (2:30-31)

3. A hope for God's remnant (2:32)

III. The coming of judgments (3:1-21)

1. A summons to the battle of judgment and the reason (3:18-21)

2. The result of the judgment here and the hope of Israel (3:14-17)

3. Judah's final victory over all and her final cleansing (3:1-21)

In the title to this book we have one of the three common formulas of introduction to the prophets:

1. "The word of Jehovah that came to Joel." This formula is found in Jeremiah 1:2; Ezekiel 1:3; Hosea 1:1; and Zechariah 1:1.

2. "The vision of [author's name]," is found in Isaiah 1:1; and Obadiah 1:1.

3. "The burden of [author's name]," is found in Nahum 1:1; and Malachi 1:1.

Lamentations and Daniel have no formal introduction, the former being an elegy in poetic form and the latter being regarded by the Jews as history rather than prophecy. These formulas are significant of the authority by which the prophet spoke and the point of view from which the prophecy is considered, whether "the word of

Jehovah," "the vision of [the prophet]" or "the burden [or oracle of Jehovah.]"

In the interpretation of the coming of the locusts it must be kept in mind that Joel is an apocalypse and therefore these locusts must be considered apocalyptic. What the author sees is a swarm of locusts and he describes them as such. So the coming of these locusts is not to be understood literally, but allegorically and, therefore, symbolically. The four invasions here are invasions by locusts under four different names, and represent the curses of the four national powers, viz: Syro-Babylonian, Medo-Persian, Greco-Macedonian, and Roman. This corresponds to the apocalypse of Daniel in which is set forth the relation of Israel to these same powers. Joel I sets forth the chastisements sent upon the Jews and the reasons therefore. The book is a book of judgments showing the divine order, viz: "Judgment begins at the house of God." These judgments are in a series of four, one after another, as indicated by the locusts. They begin with the Babylonian captivity and culminate in the destruction of Jerusalem and the taking away of the Jewish nation by the Romans.

The arguments showing that the literal view of the plague of locusts is inconsistent are as follows:

1. They are described as "the northern" scourge and locusts never came to Palestine that way.
2. The priests are directed to pray, "Give not thine heritage to reproach, that the heathen should rule over them" (2:17).
3. The scourge is to be destroyed "because he hath done great things," or literally, "hath magnified to do" (2:20), an expression unsuitable to irrational creatures.
4. The figurative expressions used in connection with the locusts, viz: The fire and the flame and beasts being desired to rejoice in the

tree. These expressions are unquestionably figurative; therefore, the whole may be so regarded.

5. The imagery goes beyond the plague of locusts, in that (1) the people are terrified, (2) the air is darkened and (3) they enter the city (2:6, 9-10).

6. The effects are greater than would be produced by mere locusts, in that (1) the meal offering is destroyed, (2) the fruits of more than one year are destroyed and (3) the plague is described as worse than any that was remembered (1:2, 9; 2:2).

7. Locusts could not have been driven at once into the Dead Sea and the Mediterranean.

8. The day of the Lord is identified with the scourge, and is far beyond the plague of locusts (2:1, 11).

9. The locust is used elsewhere in the Bible symbolically, to represent a curse (Rev. 9:3-11).

According to this position the prophet announces a complete desolation of the land, as if locusts had laid it waste. Upon the occasion of this approaching curse he calls for mourning and penitence. Then he gives the foreboding of the "day of Jehovah" and orders the sounding of an alarm and follows that with a masterful description of an invading army and its destructive work. In 2:12-17 the prophet holds out the hope of forgiveness and blessings if they will really repent; at verse 18 he introduces the prediction which stretches across the messianic age to the introduction of the millennium. In verse 23, we have the promise of "the teacher of righteousness" (marginal reading) as in 2 Kings 17:27; Job 36:22; Proverbs 5:13; Isaiah 9:15; 30:20; Habakkuk 2:18. So the order here seems to be (1) Christ comes, "the teacher of righteousness," (2) come Pentecost and the Holy Spirit, (3) comes the destruction of Jerusalem which is the climax of the "day of the Lord" on the Jewish people.

In 2:28-32 we have the first distinct prediction of the advent of the Holy Spirit, fulfilled on the day of Pentecost, following which is the far distant judgment day, adumbrated by the destruction of Jerusalem from which destruction escapes a remnant who are specially called of Jehovah (see Isa. 1:9; and Rom. 11:5).

In 3:1-21 we have a forecast of the judgments on the anti-Christian nations. First, there is a summons to the battle of judgments in which God pours out his wrath upon these nations because of their treatment of his people, Israel. This accords with Isaiah 66:5-6; Daniel 11:36-45; Zechariah 14:11-15; and Revelation 19:11-21, in which is described the great battle of Jehoshaphat at which the Jews are to be converted, a result of the interposition of God, as described here in 3:14-17. This ushers in the millennium in which Judah (or the prince of Judah) will win the victory over the world in bringing in the Messiah's kingdom and disseminating the knowledge of him to the ends of the earth.

There appears in this book for the first time the expression, "The day of the Lord," which refers to the time of God's judgments and has partial fulfilment in the destruction of Jerusalem, then another in God's judgments on the ungodly nations above described, and then finds its final and complete fulfilment at the last great judgment.

There appears also, for the first time in this book, the idea of the fountain. This idea expands as we follow it through the Bible to its fulfilment. Here it is briefly stated, showing its source and its objective; the valley of Shittim with no interpretation given. In Ezekiel 47:1-12 we have the idea very much enlarged, showing this fountain developed into a great river which symbolizes the river of life presented in Revelation 22:1-2. Then in Zechariah 13:1 we have an additional idea presented, viz: that it is "for sin and uncleanness" from which we derive the beautiful hymn, "There is a fountain filled with blood." The fulfilment of this idea is found in Christ's teaching in John (4-7), where he refers to the work of the Holy Spirit in salvation and in life.

There are two other ideas that appear in this book for the first time which have already been explained, viz: The coming of the Holy Spirit and the battle of Jehoshaphat and the conversion of the Jews.

Some of the most important lessons of this book are as follows:

1. God's retribution for disobedience. This is plain from the calls to repentance and the threatened judgments in the book.
2. God's long forbearance toward a gainsaying and disobedient people, showing that his "mercy endureth forever."
3. God's blessings of the Holy Spirit. They are for all people in all ages. Though he selected and elected one nation as his own peculiar people, yet "whosoever calleth on the Lord shall be saved."
4. God's blessing of final victory for his cause and people. Evil may triumph and Jerusalem be trodden down for a time but the promises of God are sure and the Jew, though rejecting his Messiah and scattered to the ends of the earth, shall eventually accept this Messiah and become a mighty factor in the spread of his kingdom.

QUESTIONS

1. Who was Joel?
2. What the date of this prophecy?
3. What the occasion of this prophecy?
4. What of the canonicity of this book?
5. What of the style and character of the book?
6. To whom was this prophecy given and how do you explain the use of the name "Israel" in 2:27; 3:2, 16?
7. What the essential points in the analysis of this book?

8. What formula of introduction found in the title to this book and what the three formulas found in the introductions to the prophets?
9. What the interpretation of the coming of the locusts?
10. What the arguments showing that the literal view of the plague of locusts is inconsistent?
11. According to this position, then how interpret 1:2 to 2:27?
12. What promise in 2:28-32 and where do we find the fulfilment?
13. What the judgments of 3:1-21 and when their fulfilment?
14. What ideas appear for the first time in Joel and what their application?
15. What the most important lessons of this book?

IV. THE BOOK OF JONAH

Jonah is both the author and the hero of the book by this name. He was the son of Amittai, a reference to whom is also found in 2 Kings 14:25: "He [Jeroboam II] restored the border of Israel from the entrance of Hamath unto the sea of the Arabah, according to the word of Jehovah, the God of Israel, which he spake by his servant Jonah the son of Amittai, the prophet, who was of Gath-hepher." There can be no doubt as to the identity of this Jonah and the one mentioned in Jonah I: 1 since this name occurs nowhere else as the "son of Amittai, the prophet." This passage not only accords with Jonah 1:1 in giving the father's name but it also gives us Jonah's place of residence and the times in which he prophesied. The place of his birth was Gath-hepher, a town in Zebulun (Josh. 19:13) about three, miles northeast of Nazareth which shows that he was a prophet of the Northern Kingdom. The time in which he lived is clearly shown to be the reign of Jeroboam II, the "Indian Summer" of Israel's history after the division of the kingdom (2 Kings 14:23-29).

There are several traditions relating to Jonah. (1) It is claimed by some that "Jonah" means grieving and "Amittai" means true, from which arose the improbable opinion that Jonah was the son of the widow of Zarephath, whom Elijah raised to life, because of what she said when she received him from the dead (1 Kings 17:24). (2) It is also supposed by some that Jonah was the boy who attended Elijah into the wilderness. (3) There is another tradition that he was the young man sent to anoint Jehu. (4) And singularly enough, there is the tradition that he was the husband of the Shunammite woman who extended hospitality to Elisha. (5) Respecting his burial place, there is a tradition that he was buried near Nineveh and another, that he was buried at Gath-hepher, his birthplace. It is needless to say that these traditions are without foundation in history but they indicate somewhat the impress of this striking character upon the literature of the world.

There is a reference to this prophecy of Jonah in Tobit 14::4-6, 15, an apocryphal book, in which Nineveh is said to have been overthrown according to this prophecy of Jonah. There are three references to Jonah the prophet in the Koran, viz: In chapter X, p. 157, there is a reference to the repentance of the Ninevites at the preaching of Jonah; in chapter XXXVII, p. 338, there is an account of Jonah's commission, disobedience, and experience in the sea; in chapter LXVIII, p. 421, there is a reference to his sea experience, God's mercy to him and his election unto righteousness. In Josephus' Jewish Antiquities IX, 10:1-2, we have an account of Jonah's prophecies, both to Jeroboam II and his call and prophecy to Nineveh. He adds several items of detail to the story of Jonah's extraordinary experience in the sea, giving his objective as Tarsus in Cilicia and the point of landing as the Euxine Sea. There is little weight of authority to these statements but they indicate a conviction as to the historicity of the book of Jonah.

There are three legends that illustrate the extraordinary features of the book of Jonah, viz: (1) Hesione and Hercules, (2) Andromeda and Perseus, and (3) Saint George and the Dragon. These legends, the scenes of which are located on the Mediterranean Sea, reflect, perhaps, the impression made upon the ancient mind by this story of Jonah.

There are several scriptural references to the book, viz: 2 Kings 14:25; Matthew 12:39-41; 16:4; Luke 11:29-30, the import of which is that the book is historical and that Jonah is typical of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The purpose of this book is threefold: (1) To teach the bigoted Israelites that salvation is for the Gentiles as well as for the Jews; (2) to give a genuine lesson on repentance, ½ as illustrated, (a) in Jonah, (b) in the Ninevites and (c) in God himself; (3) to typify Christ. I

The occasion of this prophecy against Nineveh was the moral corruption of the Ninevites, "For their wickedness is come up before me" (1:1). To this, other prophets add their testimony: "Woe

to the bloody city I" (Nah. 3:1). "This is a joyous city that dwelt carelessly, that said in her heart, I am, and there is none else besides me" (Zeph. 2:15).

The annals of Assyria are nothing but a register of military campaigns, spoils, and cruelties. Their monuments display men of calm and unmoved ferocity, whose moral and mental qualities are overborne by the faculties of the lower, brutal nature." – LATARD, *Nineveh and Babylon*, p. 631.

The style of this book is simple, pure Hebrew. The author believed that God prepared everything and the book bears the stamp of a simple, truthful narrative. It is not prophecy, in the strict sense of the word, but history, inserted among the prophets because written by a prophet. There is no moralizing and no reflection. The tale is told graphically and has quite a dramatic interest, advancing in regular stages to the conclusion, and leaving an impression upon the mind as though its various scenes had been enacted before the eyes of the reader.

The miraculous element of the book is twofold: (1) the physical, (2) the moral. The physical miracles are the experience of Jonah in the sea and the incident of the gourd.

The moral miracle is the salvation of the Ninevites. There are three great doctrines illustrated in the incidents of the book. (1) There is the great doctrine of the resurrection set forth in this book symbolically. No one can doubt this who reads Matthew 12:39-41. (2) There is set forth here in the most dramatic action the great doctrine of genuine repentance. Man and beast together wear the symbols of penitence. (3) There is here illustrated God's great, forbearing mercy, and loving-kindness. See his forbearance toward wicked Nineveh and his great loving kindness as here displayed toward a lost world.

Nineveh, the great city here referred to, was founded by Nimrod, a descendant of Ham (Gen. 10:11; Micah 5:6), as a colony from

Babylon which is proved by the monuments of Assyria. After this simple statement in Genesis the record is silent respecting Nineveh for a long time. The next mention of these people we find in the prophecy of Balaam (Num. 24:22, 24), that Assyria should carry Israel away captive and the ships from Greece should afflict Assyria. The next reference to Assyria is found in Psalm 83:8 which finds its historical reality in 2 Chronicles 20:1-4. This is an account of Assyria under Shalmaneser II joining with Moab and Ammon against Israel under Jehoshaphat at which time the Israelites were victorious. This is the real beginning of Assyria's strength and greatness. Her power is now beginning to be felt for the first time in her history. This brings us in the Bible account of Assyria up to the time of Jonah and Jeroboam II, where Nineveh again enters by name on the biblical record. This reappearing of the name Nineveh is incidental, and shows that the Bible does not profess to give an orderly and systematic history of the world. The record here in Jonah says that Nineveh was a "great city." It was located on the Tigris River and in the shape of a parallelogram, sixty miles around and three days' journey on a straight line through it. Its walls were sixty feet high, with 1,500 towers, 200 feet high. The walls were broad enough on top to receive three chariots driving side by side. It is almost certain that this city was larger than Babylon, especially if we include in the estimate its suburbs. Jonah calls it "an exceeding great city of three days' -journey" and with 120,000 infants, all of which indicate that Nineveh was no ordinary city.

Nineveh was destroyed by the combined forces of the Medes and Babylonians, the Median king being Cyaxares and the city was complete. Xenophon with 10,000 Greeks passed by it two centuries later and did not even mention it, unless he referred to it as one of the "uninhabited" cities of which he speaks. The remains of this city must have been in evidence in the days of the Roman emperors, since Tacitus refers to a Nineveh on the Tigris, and there is another reference to it as late as the thirteenth century.

The ruins now present a rampart and foss, four miles in circuit, with a moss-covered wall about twenty feet high. The archaeologists in recent years have done much to make Nineveh live before the minds of this generation. Their discoveries of the libraries have thrown a flood of light on the history of these people of the Far East; but the Bible account of Nineveh and the rest of the Oriental empires remains unmolested. The Ninevites worshiped the fish god and in excavating in this vicinity many stone images of a fish have been found with a man coming out of its mouth. There is evidently a connection between Jonah's experience and these stone images. This seems to be a confirmation of the story of Jonah as a sign to the Ninevites. Since they worshiped the fish god, the Lord accredited Jonah unto them by means of such a miracle as would leave no doubt in their minds as to the superior power of Jehovah over their object of worship.

There is an abundance of literature on this book but I will name only a few of the very best helps to its interpretation. The boat commentaries are Pusey's *Minor Prophets* and the "Pulpit Commentary." The "Expositor's Bible" is the worst that could be mentioned. Dr. A. J. Rowland's monograph on Jonah is very fine. The article on Jonah in Smith's *Bible Dictionary* is a pretty fair article. Sampey's *Syllabus* is fine. A sermon on Jonah by Melville, a Scotch preacher, is able and good. Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown, and Matthew Henry are also good.

The chapters constitute the divisions of the analysis of this book, as follows:

- I. Jonah's mission, disobedience, and punishment (1:1-17)
 1. His call, commission, and flight (1:1-3)
 2. God's intervention and Jonah's revelation (1:4-10)
- II. Jonah's prayer, thanksgiving, and deliverance (2:1-10)

1. His prayer (2:1-7)

2. His thanksgiving (2:8-9)

3. His deliverance (2:10)

III. Jonah's recall, obedience, and success (3:1-10)

1. His recall (3:1-2)

2. His obedience (3:3-4)

3. His success (3:5-10)

IV. Jonah's displeasure and correction (4:1-11)

1. His displeasure (4:1-5)

2. His correction (4:6-11)

The word "now" (v. 1), is the same word in the Hebrew that is translated "and" at the beginning of several of the historical books and forms a connecting link, thus showing a continuation of history, or, as in this case, connecting revelation with revelation.

We come across the expression, "the word of Jehovah," in our Bible first in Genesis 15:1 and there it means the Son of God, the Logos of John 1:1. There seems to be the same meaning here. The word of Jehovah came "saying."

We find three parallels in the Bible to Jonah 1:2, "their wickedness has come up before me," viz: (1) the case of Cain, (2) the case of the flood, and (3) the case of Sodom and Gomorrah, in each of which most solemn judgment followed. The striking difference in this case and those mentioned above is the repentance of the Ninevites which moved God to repentance and averted the awful judgment.

In his going from the presence of Jehovah, Jonah renounced his prophetic office; he went away from "standing before Jehovah"; gave up his credentials and "took to the woods" (waters), to Tarshish, a city in Spain, far away from the Jehovah country. Thus he thought to leave the land of Jehovah was to get away from the call of Jehovah. Alas! many a man has tried the policy of Jonah to his own sorrow. Jonah did not want to go to Nineveh, (1) because of his hatred for the idolatrous Gentiles, (2) because of his fear that God would show them mercy and his prediction would be discredited, (3) because of Nineveh's growing strength and if spared she would become Israel's rival and (4) because, perhaps, he feared ill treatment at the hands of the cruel and ferocious Assyrians.

In 1:4, "he paid the fare thereof," we have a picture of the preacher renouncing his call of God upon which he must pay his own way, a hard fare indeed when one has lost the divine favor. But he sends a messenger after him, viz: a storm, and sometimes the fires of affliction are kindled all about him and sore distress comes upon him. God must be obeyed. See Psalm 107:23-32. But what the significance of "cast forth the wares" (1:5)? This expression illustrates the fact that there is something to do besides to pray. Work is the handmaiden of prayer. Jonah's being asleep is an illustration of a man who is guilty of sin, more especially the backslider. Sin stupefies and therefore they need to be aroused. A fine text: "O sleeper, arise." Casting lots was one way of finding out the will of Jehovah. Compare Acts 1:26 et multa al. This was simply a method of casting the vote. Jonah, understanding fully that the trouble was all on account of him, asked that they dispose of him by casting him into the sea and let him take the chance for his life, but the sailors saw only death for Jonah in such procedure and were not willing to take the risk of having upon them innocent blood. As the last resort they yielded.

There are three distinct things affirmed in 2:16, which need special notice, viz: (1) that they feared Jehovah, (2) that they offered sacrifice unto Jehovah, and (3) that they made vows, the explanation

of which is, that Jonah had convinced them that Jehovah had brought the storm and therefore he was the one who was to be appeased. As to the nature of their fear, sacrifice, and vows we are not told but we are not to suppose that it was the reverential fear that brings salvation. It is probable that they acknowledged Jehovah as one of their gods after this event but there is nothing here to show that they accepted Jehovah as the only God to the exclusion of their own gods.

The fish that swallowed Jonah may have been a whale of the kind found in the Mediterranean Sea which is able to swallow a man whole, or it may have been the white shark of the same waters, as it is sometimes found in this section twenty-five feet long and has been known to swallow a man whole, and even a horse. There have been found in this sea three kinds of sea-animals that could easily swallow a man, viz: the Great Spermaceti Whale, the White Shark, and the Rorqual, one specimen of which has been found in this sea seventy-five feet long. So the contention that no whale or fish that could swallow a man is found in these parts is utterly baseless.

Jonah's hymn is evidently made up of quotations from other passages of Scriptures which a comparison of the following passages will prove: Jonah 2:2 equals Psalm 120:1; Jonah 2:3 equals Psalm 42:7 and 18:4; Jonah 2:4 equals Psalm 31:22; Jonah 2:5 equals Psalm 18:40, 5; Jonah 2:7 equals Psalm 18:6 (last clause) and 142:3; Jonah 2:8 equals Psalm 31:6-7. These correspondences could not have been fortuitous: the one poet must have had sounding in his mind the language of the other. Jonah evidently was well acquainted with the Psalms. "Lying vanities" in 2:8 means idolatry and indicates a strong characteristic of heathen worship.

The second commission to Jonah is recorded in 3:1-2: "And the word of Jehovah came unto Jonah the second time, saying, Arise, go unto Nineveh, that great city, and preach unto it the preaching that I bid thee." The circumstances of this second commission are as follows: Jonah had had his extraordinary experience in the sea and

had, doubtless, returned home, allowing sufficient time for the news of this great and singular event to reach Nineveh, thus preparing the way for Jonah's preaching by accrediting Jonah to them in a way that would impress them with the superiority of Jonah's God over their fish god. There are three distinct things here relative to God's relation to the ministry that need to be emphasized, viz: (1) God calls his ministers by a direct appeal to them: "and the word of Jehovah came unto Jonah, saying"; (2) God selects the field of labor for his ministers: "Arise, go unto Nineveh, that great city"; (3) God gives the message: "and preach unto it the preaching that I bid thee." This is a fine example of what the preacher ought to be, viz: God-called, God-appointed, and God-instructed. With these three essentials in his life and work the minister knows no failure.

The "yet" in 3:4 indicates an implied promise; that this was not an announcement of an absolute decree of God, but was a conditional decree. God repented when they repented. Note that there are three particular cases of repentance in this book: (1) the preacher repents; (2) the people repent; (3) God repents. Observe the order. When the preacher repents, the people generally repent, and when the preacher and the people repent, God always repents. The "yet" here indicates God's attitude toward a sinner. Though he thunders the law of Sinai over the sinner's head, it is only that the sinner may be prepared to hear the voice from Calvary. "Yet forty days and "Nineveh shall be overthrown," but the "forty days" furnish space for repentance.

"Believed God" in 3:5 is equivalent to "believed on God" and is saving faith, as with Abraham. Fasting and sackcloth are external evidences of repentance. In 3:7 we see the call to real fasting and repentance. In 3:8 the animals lowing for fodder were crying to God. The prayers of the people and the crying of the cattle make a powerful appeal to God. But praying and crying were not enough. "Let them turn every one from his evil way and from the violence that is in his hands" and show by this his real earnestness, as in the New Testament exhortation: "Let him that stole steal no more but return what he has stolen." Restitution is a law of forgiveness. This

passage is equalled in the New Testament by John the Baptist's preaching and Paul's preaching at Ephesus. This is both a moral and spiritual miracle. It is the biggest case of conversion in the Old Testament on a foreign field. Jonah was the first foreign mission preacher and had but one credential. Some say people cannot be moved religiously by fear but it is a mistake. People are influenced both by the fear of punishment and by the hope of reward. The motive in Luke 15 is "Joy in heaven." "Ye shall likewise perish except ye repent." Preach love always, but don't leave out hell.

Jonah was much displeased with and angry at the Lord's attitude, but the Lord dealt gently with him giving him the lesson of the gourd (4:6-11). It was not right for Jonah to be angry at what God did, nor is it ever right to be angry at what God does, especially in the salvation of the people. In this connection he gives the reason for his unwillingness to go to Nineveh at the outset, but he was wrong in his attitude toward the people of Nineveh. This attitude culminated in madness at Jehovah's attitude toward them and went to the extent of wishing for death. But it is a very cowardly thing to wish for death under such circumstances.

To this foolishness of Jonah the Lord answered that Jonah's regard for the gourd was but a small matter compared to his regard for the 120,000 infants and the much cattle of Nineveh. This is a beautiful lesson of God's attitude toward the irresponsible and gives us a splendid Old Testament view of God's attribute of mercy.

As Jonah, after his resurrection, became a missionary to the Gentiles, so Christ after his resurrection declared his "all authority" and commissioned his church to go to the ends of the world. The resurrection had a marvelous effect in enlarging the commission.

QUESTIONS

1. What the traditions relating to Jonah?
2. Who was Jonah and what the time of his writing?

3. What references to this book in literature and what the testimony in each case?
4. What three legends may be mentioned as illustrating the extraordinary features of the story of Jonah?
5. What the scriptural references to the book and what the import of their teaching?
6. What the purpose of this book?
7. What the occasion of this book and how is it proved from the history of Nineveh?
8. What of the style and character of the book?
9. What of the miraculous element of the book?
10. What doctrines illustrated by the incidents of the book?
11. Give an account of Nineveh.
12. What the form of idolatry in Nineveh at this time and what the evidence of Jonah's impress on the Ninevites?
13. What helps on this book commended?
14. What the analysis of this book?
15. What is the force of the word "now" of verse I?
16. Where do we first find the expression, "the word of Jehovah," in the Bible and what does it mean there?
17. What parallels to Jonah 1:2, "their wickedness is come up before me," do we find elsewhere in the Bible and what striking difference in this case?

18. What is the meaning of "Jonah rose up to flee unto Tarshish from the presence of Jehovah"?
19. What Jonah's reasons for not wanting to go to Nineveh?
20. What the meaning and application of 1:4, "he paid the fare thereof"?
21. What the significance in 1:5 of "cast forth the wares"?
22. What the suggestion from Jonah's being asleep?
23. What of casting lots in 1:7?
24. What the remedy for the case as proposed by Jonah and how did it meet the approval of the sailors?
25. How do you explain, their fearing Jehovah and sacrificing unto him?
26. What of the fish that swallowed Jonah?
27. What the relation of Jonah's hymn to other passages of Scripture?
28. What the meaning of "lying vanities" in Jonah 2:8?
29. What Jonah's second commission, what its circumstances and what three things in this commission, illustrative of God's relation to the minister and his work?
30. What is the force of "yet" in 3:4?
31. What the points of 3:5-10?
32. How did Jonah receive the fact of the conversion of the Ninevites and God's mercy to them and how did God deal with him?

33. Was it right for Jonah to be angry, what the extent of his madness and what do you think of his wish?

34. What was Jehovah's answer to all this foolishness of Jonah?

35. How is the relation of the resurrection and the commission of Christ illustrated in this book?

V. THE BOOK OF AMOS - PART I

Amos 1:1 to 2:16

Amos, the author of the book by his name, was a native of Tekoa, a herdsman and a dresser of sycamore trees. He was not educated for a prophet but was called by the Lord from his rural employment to bear his message to the Northern Kingdom (Amos 1:1; 7:14).

Tekoa, the home of Amos, was a city about twelve miles south of Jerusalem, six miles south of Bethlehem, built for defense by Rehoboam (2 Chron. 11:5-6). It was situated on an eminence, beyond which (south) there was no village, not even crude cottages or huts. Such is the vast wilderness which stretches to the Red Sea and the borders of the Persians, Ethiopians, and Indians. The country is a dry, sandy soil and full of shepherds that make amends for the barrenness of the land by the multitude of their flocks. Its elevation gave it a wide prospect. On the west is seen the sweep of the range from Mizpah to Hebron; on the east, the wilderness of Judah; on the north, Bethlehem; to the right, in the bottom of a wild ravine, is the cave of Adullam. Farther down, on the shores of the Dead Sea, are "the cliffs of the wild goats," from whose side springs the fountain of Engedi. Beyond the Dead Sea is the wall-like ridge of Moab, and to the south, the ruddy-tinted mountains of Edom. Now a mournful and solitary silence broods over that wonderful panorama. Tekoa now lies in ruins covering four or five acres, without building sufficient to shade a man from the scorching sun. Such was the surroundings of the boy, Amos, who used the geographical peculiarities of his native land with telling effect in his prophecies.

The date of his prophecy is given in Amos I: 1: "In the days of Uzziah king of Judah, and in the days of Jeroboam the son of Joash king of Israel, two years before the earthquake." This was early in the eighth century B.C., or about 760 B.C., but the date cannot be fixed with exactness. The earthquake referred to is mentioned in only one other place (Zech. 14:5), and from this the exact date cannot be ascertained.

The occasion of these prophecies is found in the history of the times in which he wrote. It was when Israel and Judah both enjoyed great prosperity and there was much indulgence in the luxuries of wealth by the upper classes while the poor were suffering from their extreme poverty. The moral condition of the people was terrible. Crime was perverted, and almost every form of iniquity abounded in the land. The nations round about were also corrupt and Judah had turned away from the law of Jehovah. There was enough in the vision of Amos from his lofty position at Tekoa to stir his righteous soul into an outburst of denunciation. Such was the occasion of his prophecy.

The canonicity of the book of Amos is abundantly supported by both Jewish and Christian writers.

The force, beauty, and freshness of the images freely employed by Amos are very evident. Oratorical in style, graphic in description, powerful in thought, observation, and expression he exhibits a wonderful natural ability. The very simplicity of his language makes it impressive. In simple, unadorned eloquence, in structural regularity, in natural vigor, and in loftiness of thought, Amos reaches a well-grounded eminence, and the author of such writings was in no wise behind the very chiefest of the prophets. His prophecy is after the model of a well-ordered discourse.

The second verse gives his text: "Jehovah will roar from Zion, and utter his voice from Jerusalem; and the pastures of the shepherds shall mourn, and the top of Carmel shall wither." It is taken from Joel 3:16 and indicates the denunciatory nature of his message.

The outline is simple in its general features. There are three main divisions and a conclusion.

Introduction

1. Title, author, and date (1:1)

2. The text and subject (1:2)

I. Denunciations of the nations (1:3 to 2:16)

1. Syria (1:3-5)

2. Philistia (1:6-8)

3. Phoenicia (1:9-10)

4. Edom (1:11-12)

5. Ammon (1:13-15)

6. Moab (2:1-3)

7. Judah (2:4-5)

8. Israel (2:6-16)

II. Proclamations to Israel (3-6)

1. Jehovah's verdict and sentence (3)

2. Jehovah's indictment and summons (4)

3. Jehovah's judgment and woe (5-6)

III. Revelations for all (7:1 to 9:10)

1. The locusts – judgment threatened and restrained (7:1-3)

2. The fire – judgment threatened and restrained (7:4-6)

3. The plumb line – judgment determined (7:7-9)

4. Historical interlude – conflict with Amaziah (7:10-17)

5. The basket of fruit – judgment imminent (8:1-14)

6. Jehovah himself – judgment executed (9:1-10) Conclusion – restoration (9:11-15)

The subject of the prophecy of Amos is judgment, or national accountability. This is indicated by his text: "Jehovah will roar from Zion," which means that God would soon spread terror, like wild beasts when they roar, or that he would soon display his power in executing judgment. The next clause of the text is a parallel thought in which the figure is extended. At the sound of God's voice all nature withers.

"For three transgressions . . . yea, for four," introducing the denunciations of the nations, is a favorite phrase of the prophet used, not to express a definite number of transgressions, but means many, or multiplied transgressions, a definite number being put for an indefinite number. (See Job 5:19 for a parallel case.)

Fire is used in these several denunciations to symbolize all the severities of war (see Numbers 21:28), and as an emblem of God's wrath (see Deuteronomy 32:22). However, in some instances here it has a literal fulfilment in the devouring flame itself.

The charge here brought against Syria is that they threshed Gilead with threshing instruments of iron, the account of which we find in 2 Kings 10:32-33; 13:3-7. The judgment here denounced with the destruction of their city and the captivity of the people, which was fulfilled when Tiglath-pileser took Damascus, carried the people captive to Kir, and slew Rezen, the king (2 Kings 16:9).

The charge preferred against Philistia was that she had carried captive the whole people, meaning that neither age nor sex was spared (2 Chron. 21:16; 28:18), and delivered them over to Edom. The judgment denounced was the complete destruction of the Philistines, which was fulfilled at different times and by different parties. Gaza was taken by Sennacherib, by Pharaoh-Necho, and by Alexander the Great. Ashdod was taken by Uzziah, by Sargon's chief, Tartan, and by Psammetichus, king of Egypt, and finally

destroyed by the Maccabees (1 Mace. 5:68; 10:77-84; 11:4). Ashkelon was taken by Sennacherib who also took Ekron. There seems to have been a more distinct fulfilment of the prophecies relating to these cities by Hezekiah (2 Kings 18:8; Isa. 14:29). The remnant of the Philistines perished at the hands of the Assyrians (Isa. 20).

The charge against Phoenicia (Tyre) was that they had delivered up all their captives to Edom and had disregarded the brotherly covenant made by Hiram with David and Solomon. The judgment denounced was Tyre's destruction, which was fulfilled in the thirteen years' siege by Nebuchadnezzar and its final and complete destruction by Alexander the Great.

The charge preferred against Edom was that of his perpetual hatred against his brother, Jacob, and consequent pursuit of Israel without pity. The judgment denounced was a fire upon Teman and Bozrah, the two principal cities of Edom. This was fulfilled by Nebuchadnezzar when he captured these cities and invaded Egypt.

The charge preferred against Ammon was her cruelty to the people of Gilead, which occurred, perhaps, in connection with the cruelties perpetrated by Hazael, king of Syria (2 Kings 8: 12; 10:33; cf. 2 Kings 15:16 and Hos. 13:16). The punishment denounced upon Ammon was the destruction of Rabbah and the captivity of their king, perhaps meaning their god, Molech. This prophecy was fulfilled when the city was taken by Nebuchadnezzar, either at the time of the destruction of Jerusalem, or in the course of his Egyptian invasion.

The charge preferred against Moab was that "he burned the bones of the king of Edom into lime," which was done, doubtless, in connection with Israel or Judah, and may have been when the Edomites joined Jehoram and Jehoshaphat in the league against Mesha, the king of Moab (2 Kings 3:7, 9). There is a Jewish tradition that after this war the Moabites, in revenge for assistance which the king of Edom had given to the Israelites, dug up and

dishonored his bones. This sacrilegious act was meant to redound to the disgrace of Israel. Hence this prophecy against Moab. The judgment denounced was that Moab should be destroyed, which was fulfilled when Nebuchadnezzar conquered this country (Jer. 27:3, 6).

The charge preferred against Judah was that he had rejected the law of Jehovah, and had not kept his statutes; that their lies had caused them to err, after which their fathers had walked. The judgment denounced in this case was that Jerusalem should be destroyed, which was literally fulfilled by Nebuzaradan, the captain of Nebuchadnezzar's guard (2 Kings 25:8-12). Amos 2:4 shows that Judah was already in 'possession of God's law but had broken his statutes. This refutes the radical theory as to the date of the writing of the Pentateuch. The charge preferred against Israel was fourfold: (1) injustice; (2) hardness of heart toward the poor; (3) incest; (4) luxury combined with idolatry. The judgment denounced here against Israel was the severest oppression and the most degrading captivity, which found fulfilment in the captivity wrought by Shalmaneser, king of Assyria (2 Kings 17:6).

The prophet in this connection cites several incidents in the history of Israel which should have taught them that God was their defender and preserver when they humbled themselves before him and kept his law. These examples are: (1) the destruction of the Amorites; (2) their deliverance from Egypt and forty years in the wilderness; (3) God gave them prophets and Nazarites of their own sons to instruct and lead them in the right ways. There is here an additional charge, twofold: (1) they had caused the Nazarites to drink wine and (2) they had refused to let the prophets prophesy.

The passage, 2:11, is important since it shows that there were prophets and Nazarites long known in Israel before Amos – another refutation of radical criticism.

In general, there is a difference between the sins of Judah and Israel for which they were all punished. The heathen were punished for cruelty or inhumanity in some form; Judah, for forsaking the law of

Jehovah; Israel, for covetousness, injustice, lasciviousness, sacrilege, and forgetting Jehovah's kindness and rejecting his messengers. This is positive evidence that all nations as well as individuals are under the law of retribution.

QUESTIONS

1. Who was Amos?
2. What can you say of the city of Tekoa?
3. What the date of his prophecy?
4. What the occasion of the prophecies?
5. What of the canonicity of the book of Amos?
6. What the character of this prophecy?
7. What was his text and where did he get it?
8. What was his outline?
9. What the subject of this discourse and what the meaning of "Jehovah will roar from Zion"?
10. What the meaning of the phrase, "For three transgressions. . . . yea, for four," introducing the denunciations of the nations?
11. What the meaning of "I will send a fire, etc." used so frequently in these denunciations?
12. What the charge against Syria here denounced, what the judgment and when fulfilled?
13. What the charge preferred against Philistia, what the judgment denounced and when fulfilled?

14. What the charge against Phoenicia, what the judgment and when fulfilled?

15. What the charge against Edom, what the judgment and when fulfilled?

16. What the charge preferred against Ammon, what the judgment denounced and when fulfilled?

17. What the charge preferred against Moab, what the judgment denounced and when was it fulfilled?

18. What the charge preferred against Judah, what the judgment denounced and when was it fulfilled?

19. What the importance of 2:47

20. What the charge preferred against Israel, what the judgment denounced against her and when was it fulfilled?

21. What lessons of history here cited by the prophet and what additional charge brought against Israel?

22. What the importance of 2:11?

23. What, in general, the difference between the sins of the heathen nations and the sins of Judah and Israel for which they were all punished?

VI. THE BOOK OF AMOS - PART 2

Amos 3:1 to 9:15

Helps commended: (1) "Bible Commentary," (2) "Pulpit Commentary," (3) Pusey's Minor Prophets, (4) "Benson's Commentary."

The section, 3:1 to 6:14, consists of three parts, or three distinct addresses, each commencing with the words, "Hear this word."

The first address consists, in particular, of the verdict and sentence of Jehovah against all Israel, and is divided as follows: (1) a principle stated (3:1-8); (2) a reason assigned (3:9-12); (3) a sentence announced (3:13-15).

The principle stated in 3:1-8 is that an effect proves a cause. This principle is enforced by seven illustrative questions, viz: (1) communion proves agreement; (2) the lion's roar proves the prey; (3) the cry of the young lion proves the prey possessed; (4) the fall of the bird proves the bait; (5) the springing of the snare proves the bird to be taken; (6) the sounding of the trumpet proves the alarm; (7) calamity in the city proves Jehovah. The application of all this is made by the prophet bringing in his text, as follows: "The lion [Jehovah] hath roared; therefore I fear. The Lord hath spoken, therefore I prophesy."

In 3:9-12 we hear the prophet giving a special invitation to the Philistines and Egyptians, Israel's inveterate enemies, to assemble in Samaria to witness the great wickedness and destruction of Israel because they did not do right, storing up violence and robbery in their palaces, and whose tumults and oppressions abounded toward the people. The judgment to follow was to be like the work of the lion devouring his prey.

The sentence announced (3:13-15) is the complete destruction of Israel, and the thoroughness of its execution is indicated by the

sentence of destruction against its objects and places of worship and the smiting of the habitations of the rulers, showing the complete desolation of their city, Samaria.

The second address consists, in particular, of an indictment and a summons of Jehovah, and its parts are as follows: (1) the king of Bashan threatened (4:1-3); (2) a sarcastic command (4:4-5) ; (3) a list of providences (4:6-11); (4) a summons to an account (4:12-13).

In 4:1-3 we have Jehovah's threat against the carousing and oppressive women. Bashan was famous for its flocks and herds. The proud and luxurious matrons of Israel are here described as like the cattle of Bashan, because the cattle of the pastures of Bashan were uncommonly large, wanton, and headstrong by reason of their full feeding. These women because of their luxuries were oppressing the poor and crushing the needy. How perverted their natures must have been from the true instincts of womanhood! But such is the effect of luxury without grace. How depraved and animal-like to say, "Bring and let us drink," but such are the marks of a well-developed animal nature. No wonder that just here we should hear Jehovah's oath and threat announced: "they shall take you away with hooks," indicating their humiliation in contrast with their present luxury and pride. How true the proverb: "Pride goeth before a fall."

In 4:4-5 we have a sample of the prophet's sarcasm, commanding the people to multiply their offerings in their transgression at Gilgal and Bethel, the two most prominent places of worship in Israel. At these places they worshiped the calf after the pattern of Jeroboam 1.

In 4:6-11 there are mentioned five distinct providences of the Lord as follows: (1) a scarcity of food, or a famine, perhaps the famine of 2 Kings 8:1; (2) a severe drought; (3) a blasting with mildew; (4) a pestilence; (5) a destruction of cities. The express purpose of all these was to turn the people unto Jehovah. This is an everlasting refutation of the contention that God's providences do not come into the realm of the temporal. He sent the famine, he sent the drought, he sent the blasting and mildew, he sent the pestilence, and he

overthrew the cities, and why not believe that he "is the same yesterday and today, yea and for ever" (Heb. 13:8)? A great text is found in Amos 4:11, and also in Amos 4:12.

In 4:12-13 we have the summons to get ready to meet a powerful and angry God. He had exhausted his mercy and chastisements to bring them back but all these things had failed, after which he calls them to meet him in judgment. So we may say that God is now in Christ exhausting his mercy and visiting the world with chastisements and when all has failed, he says to the one who has rejected his mercy and treated lightly his visitation, "Prepare to meet thy God," and it is appropriate to say that we may prepare to meet God in Christ, or we must meet him in judgment out of Christ, and out of Christ, "God is a consuming fire."

The third address consists of repeated announcements of judgments, with appeals to turn and do good, and its parts are as follows: (1) a lamentation, an exhortation, and a hope for the remnant (5:1-15) ; (2) another lamentation, a woe, a disgust, and a judgment (5:16-27); (3) another woe, an abhorrence, and a certain judgment (8:1-14).

In 5:1-15 we have a lamentation, an exhortation, and a hope expressed. The lamentation is that of the prophet himself, over the condition of Israel and the judgment already decreed. The exhortation is to repentance and to seek the true God. The hope is, that through repentance, a remnant of Israel may be saved. In 5:16-27 we have another lamentation, a woe, a disgust, and a judgment. The lamentation in this instance is that of the people when Jehovah comes in judgment upon the land; the woe is pronounced upon the hypocrite who wishes for the day of Jehovah, for it will be to him an awful day; the disgust here is that of Jehovah at their feasts, offerings, and music, because of their sins, and the judgment denounced is their captivity, beyond Damascus, or their captivity by the Assyrians. In 6:1-14 we have another woe, an abhorrence and a certain judgment. The woe in this passage is to the rich, luxurious oppressors who feel secure; the abhorrence is that of Jehovah for the

excellency, or pride, of Jacob. As a result of it all there is denounced against Israel again her certain doom and the extent of it particularly noted.

Amos 7:1 to 9:10 consists of revelations for all Israel, conveyed by means of visions. The several parts of this section are as follows: (1) the locusts, (2) the fire, (3) the plumb line, (4) the basket of fruit, (5) Jehovah himself. In 7:1-3 we have the prophet's vision of the locusts which are represented as eating the grass of the land, the latter growth after the king's mowing. This signified a threatened judgment, which is the threatened invasion of Pul (Tiglathpileser II) (2 Kings 15:1-17ff.), but it was restrained by the intercession of the prophet, at which Jehovah repented and judgment was arrested.

In 7:4-6 we have the prophet's vision of fire which is represented as devouring the deep and was making for the land. This signified a threatened judgment more severe than the other, which is the second invasion of Tiglath-pileser II, who conquered Gilead and the northern part of the kingdom and carried some of the people captive to Assyria (2 Kings 15:29). This, too, was restrained by the intercession of the prophet, at which God repented and arrested the judgment.

In 7:7-9 we have the prophet's vision of the plumb line in the hand of Jehovah by which he signified that justice was to be meted out to Israel and that judgment was determined. So the prophet holds his peace and makes no more intercession. This judgment was irremediable and typified the final conquest by Shalmaneser.

Just after the vision of the plumb line there follows the incident of the interference of Amaziah, the priest of Bethel. This Amaziah was an imposter, and yet held the position of priest. He reported to Jeroboam what Amos was saying, advising his exile. He, moreover, attempted to appeal to the fear of Amos, and advised him to flee to Judah. The answer of Amos was full of dignity, born of the consciousness of the divine authority of his mission. He declared that he was no prophet, but that Jehovah had taken him and spoken

to him; thus he had become a prophet in very deed. Then he prophesied against Amaziah declaring that God's judgment would overtake him and Israel.

In 8:1-14 we have the vision of a basket of ripe, summer fruit which indicates that the people were ripe for judgment and that judgment was imminent. Jehovah declared that the end had come; that he would not pass by them any more. This announcement was followed, on the part of the prophet, by an impassioned address to the money-makers, in which he declared the effect of their lust for gain, viz: they swallowed the needy and caused the poor to fail. He described the intensity of that lust, thus: the new moon and sabbath were irksome. Then follows a figurative description of judgment, which declared Jehovah's perpetual consciousness of these things and his consequent retribution. The final issue of judgment the prophet declared to be a famine of the words of the Lord, as a result of which there would come eager and fruitless search, followed by the fainting of youth because of their thirst for a knowledge of God. All this finds fulfilment in the events which followed in the history of Israel. They were deprived of prophets and revelations after Amos and Hosea, and the captivity came according to this prophecy, during which they had no prophets in the strange land of their captivity. This is a foreshadowing of Israel's condition today. She rejected the Messiah and for these two thousand years she has been without a prophet, priest or Urim and Thummim, no revelation from God to cheer their dark and gloomy hearts.

In 9:1-10 we have the vision of God himself standing beside the altar which symbolizes judgment executed, though there was no symbol, or sign. We hear the manifesto of Jehovah himself. It is one of the most awe-inspiring visions of the whole Bible. The message proceeded in two phases: First, an announcement of judgment irrevocable and irresistible; secondly, a declaration of the procedure so reasonable and discriminative. Jehovah is seen standing by the altar, declaring the stroke of destruction to be inevitable, and all attempts at escape futile, because he has proceeded to action. While

the judgment is to be reasonable and discriminative, the claims in which Israel had trusted were nothing. They became as the children of the Ethiopians. The Philistines and the Syrians had also been led by God. The eyes of Jehovah were on the sinful kingdom and the sifting process must go forward but no grain of wheat should perish.

In Amos 9:11-15, we have a most consoling conclusion of this prophecy in sundry evangelical promises, after so many very severe and sharp menaces.

The phrase, "In that day," refers to the time after the events previously mentioned had been fulfilled and extends into the messianic age. See Acts 15:16. But what does the prophet mean by raising up the tabernacle of David? The promise, doubtless, at least in the first place, was intended of the return of the Jews from the land of their captivity, their resettlement in Judea, rebuilding Jerusalem, and attaining to the height of power and glory which they enjoyed under the Maccabees. This restoration was an event so extraordinary, and the hope of it so necessary to be maintained in the minds of the Jewish people, in order to their support under the calamity of their seventy years of captivity, that God was pleased to foretell it by the mouth of all his prophets. This prophecy however must be extended to the days of the Messiah, and to the calling of the Gentiles to the knowledge of the true God, according to Acts 15:16. They did not possess the remnant of Edom until after their restoration in the days of Hyrcanus, when they made an entire conquest of Edom, but the statement which follows, viz: "and all the nations that are called by my name," goes farther into the future and, at least, intimates the salvation of the Gentiles.

In 9:13 we have the promise of the blessings of grace to come in the messianic age in which the reaping shall be so great that the reapers cannot get out of the way of the sowers. This we see fulfilled now sometimes in a small way but these times of harvest are but the firstfruits of the harvest which is to follow, especially, the harvest that is to follow in the millennium. The promise of 9:14-15 will find

its complete fulfilment at the return of the Jews to their own land and their conversion which will usher in the millennium and extend the glorious kingdom of our Lord.

QUESTIONS

1. Of what in general, does the section, 3:1 to 6:14 consist and how does each part commence?
2. Of what, in particular, does the first address consist and what its parts?
3. What is the principle stated in 3:18, how illustrated and what the application?
4. In 3:9-12 who were invited to witness Israel's doom, what the reason assigned and what was to be the character of the judgment to come upon Israel?
5. What the sentence announced in 3:13-15, and how is the thoroughness of its execution indicated?
6. Of what, in particular, does the second address consist and what its parts?
7. What the force and application of "ye kine of Bashan" and what the threat against them?
8. What of the sarcastic command of verses 4-5?
9. What the items of providence cited and what their purpose as expressed by the prophet in 4:6-11?
10. What the summons of 4:12-13, and what application may be made of such texts in preaching?
11. Of what, in particular, does the third address consist, and what its

12. What the lamentation, what the exhortation and what the hope, of 5:1-15?

13. What the lamentation, what the woe, what the disgust, and what. The judgment of 5:16-27?

14. What the woe, what the abhorrence and what the certain judgment of 6:1-14?

15. Of what, in general, does the section, 7:1 to 9:10, consist, and what are its several parts?

16. What is the vision of locusts and what its interpretation?

17. What the vision of fire and what its interpretation?

18. What the vision of the plumb line and what its interpretation?

19. What historical incident follows the vision of the plumb line and what the several points of the story in detail?

20. What the vision of the basket of fruit, what its interpretation and what the prophet's explanation following?

21. What the vision of God himself and what its interpretation?

22. What, in general, the prophecy of 9:11-15?

23. What the meaning of the phrase, "In that day"?

24. What does the prophet mean by raising up the tabernacle of David?

25. When did they possess the remnant of Edom?

26. What the meaning of 9:13?

27. What the fulfilment of 9:14-15?

VII. THE BOOK OF HOSEA - PART I

Hosea 1:1 to 4:5

Books commended: (1) "Pulpit Commentary," (2) "Bible Commentary," (3) "Cambridge Bible," (4) Sampey's *Syllabus*. Hosea, the prophet, was one of three who bore this name. The other two were Hoshea, afterward called Joshua (Num. 13:8-16), and Hoshea, the last king of Israel. These are shortened forms of the name "Jehoshea" which means, the Lord is my help, but the short form means savior, or deliverer. Hosea, the prophet, was a son of Beeri, but we know nothing of Beeri; nor do we know where Hosea was born or buried. We know that he was a prophet of Israel and, perhaps, was a native of the Northern Kingdom, but his tribal relation is only a guess with much uncertainty. He had frequent messages for Judah as well as for Israel, and at first he praised Judah but later on he warned and threatened her.

In the title Hosea is said to have prophesied "in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah, and in the days of Jeroboam, the son of Joash, king of Israel." Now the reign of these kings of Judah covered a period of one hundred and twelve years; so he must have lived to be quite an old man. Hosea probably commenced his prophetic work in the latter part of the reign of Jeroboam and in the early part of the reign of Uzziah, and extended it through the reigns of Jotham, Ahaz, and into the reign of Hezekiah, which would give us a period of fifty or sixty years for his work, say from 780 B.C. to 725 B.C., about fifty-five years. The internal evidence fully corroborates the statement of verse 1.

The period covered by his prophetic utterances was undoubtedly the darkest in the whole history of the kingdom of Israel. Political life was characterized by anarchy and misrule. The throne was occupied by men who obtained possession by the murder of their predecessors and the people were governed by military despotism. Zechariah was slain after a reign of six months; Shallum, after only one month. A dozen years later Pekahish was assassinated by Pekah, who met the

same fate at the hands of Hoshea. All these were ungodly rulers, and the morals of the nation were sinking to the lowest ebb. The conditions were terrible in the extreme; luxurious living, robbery, oppression, falsehood, adultery, murder, accompanied by the most violent intolerance of any form of rebuke. The language of the prophet is influenced by the confusion about him in the nation and the disgrace of his own home. Then Israel being situated midway between Egypt and Assyria, two factions existed: one favoring alliance with Egypt; the other, with Assyria. Such were the circumstances which furnished the occasion of this prophecy.

The genuineness and canonicity of the prophecies of Hosea have never been widely called in question, nor has the book of Hosea been successfully distributed among the several authors differing in character, culture, and date, a division of labor which has played a great part in the criticism of other prophets. The book of Hosea, of a date and authenticity unquestioned, is a witness of the utmost value for previous portions of the Old Testament. A number of allusions put it beyond all reasonable doubt, that Hosea, in the eighth century before Christ, had in his hands a Hebrew literature identical with much of which we possess at this time.

In this book we find several allusions to the history of Genesis: (1) Adam's sin in paradise and expulsion therefrom (Hos. 6:7) ; (2) the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah (Hos. 11:8) ; (3) God's promise to Abraham (Hos. 1:10); (4) Jacob's experience (Hos. 12:3-4:13:15).

In Exodus, besides general allusions to Moses, we have the following verbal references: (1) Hosea 1:11 is a reference to Exodus 1:10; (2) Hosea 2:17, to Exodus 23:13. The curse denounced in Leviticus 26:14ff. is alluded to in Hosea. 7:12. The sin in the matter of Baal-peor discussed in Numbers is alluded to in Hosea 9:10.

There are several verbal citations of passages in Deuteronomy: (1) Deuteronomy 31:18, in Hosea 3:1; (2) Deuteronomy 17:8-13, in Hosea 4:4; (3) Deuteronomy 19:14; 27:17, in Hosea 5:10, and in many other instances. So we can find allusions to Joshua, Judges,

and Samuel, showing that all these books were in the canon of sacred Scriptures in the time of Hosea just as we have them today.

Many of the finest passages in Hosea, practically all of the promises, are treated by the radical critics as interpolations by later writers; most of the references to Judah are stricken out, and the historical allusions to great men and events in the past are also cut out. This is revolutionary criticism and completely reverses the message of Hosea. There is not a scintilla of evidence to justify such a mutilation of "this book.

To show the fallacy of the radical critic theory of the Pentateuch I take the following from Sampey's *Syllabus*:

Professor James Robertson, in his able work on the Early Religion of Israel, has delivered heavy blows against the current radical theory of the origin of the Pentateuch, by emphasizing the following facts concerning Amos and Hosea, who are admitted by all parties to have lived and labored in the eighth century, B.C.:

1. These prophets had a rich vocabulary of moral and theological terms, implying a high degree of religious culture prior to their time.
2. They displayed literary skill such as would argue for a high development of the Hebrew language and literature before their time.
3. Both of these prophets, as well as Micah and Isaiah, far from regarding themselves as pathfinders in thought and practice, speak of their work as a return to the law of God given in former times. They plainly regard themselves as reformers, not innovators. These three lines of argument unite in favoring a date for the Pentateuch much earlier than that assigned by Wellhausen and his school.

Hosea, of all the prophets, is the most difficult to translate and interpret. His style is marked by obscure brevity; his mind was so aflame with the fiery message which he brought that he did not stop

to weigh words for the sake of clearness. Jerome says, "Hosea is concise, and speaks in detached sentences." The prophet felt too deeply to express himself calmly. Amos 1-3 is in prose; the rest of the book is rhythmical, but almost destitute of parallelism, a general characteristic of Hebrew poetry. The first three chapters are symbolical and strikingly graphic; the rest is literal, that "he may run who reads," i.e., "run through it in reading."

This book naturally divides itself into two parts: a shorter one (1-3), and a longer one (4-14), as follows:

ANALYSIS HOSEA – SPIRITUAL ADULTERY

I. The preparation of the prophet (1-3)

1. His domestic relations and the symbolical import (1:2 to 2:1)

(1) His orders, his marriage, and his family (1:2-9)

(2) His vision of hope (1:10-2:1)

2. His domestic tragedy, a revelation (2:2-23)

(1) The charge explained (2:2-7)

(2) The severity of love (2:8-13)

(3) The tenderness of love (2:14-20)

(4) The promise of enlargement (2:21-23)

3. His reclamation of Gomer and its revelation (3:1-5)

(1) His orders (3:1)

(2) His obedience (3:2-3)

(3) His vision of future Israel (3:4-5)

II. The preaching of the prophet (4:1 to 14:8)

NOTE: Of all the parts of the Bible, this, perhaps, is the hardest to analyze. Sampey says, "These chapters defy logical analysis," and Bishop Lowth calls them "scattered leaves of a sibyl's book." This section consists of detached selections from Hosea's prophecies, without regard to logical order. They are perhaps more chronological than logical. There have been several attempts to analyze these chapters but all alike seem to have been baffled with the difficulty of the task. The author ventures, as a kind of analysis to guide us in our study of this section, the following selected outline:

1. Pollution and pursuit (4:1 to 6:3)
2. Pollution and punishment (6:4 to 10:15)
3. Pollution and pity (10:1 to 14:8)

On the three main views of the marriage of Hosea I take the following from Sampey's *Syllabus*:

1. That the whole is an allegory or parable. This is the view of Calvin, who objects to an actual marriage of the prophet with an unchaste woman on the ground that it would discredit him with the very people whom he wished to influence. He says: "It would have then exposed the prophet to the scorn of all if he had entered a brothel and taken to himself a harlot." Calvin insists that the expression "wife of whoredom" could mean nothing less than a common prostitute. He replies to the argument that this was an exceptional case by saying that it seems inconsistent with reason that the Lord should thus gratuitously render his prophet contemptible. He thinks the expression, "Children of wantonness," also militates against the literal view. Calvin seems to think that the woman referred to in the third chapter was different from the one named in the first, but that we are not to imagine a real occurrence in either case. Calvin's interpretation, in detail, of the language of

Hosea seems to be greatly weakened by his theory of the imaginary character of the marriage.

2. Some think that Hosea actually married a woman who was leading an unchaste life; that she bore three children to him and then lapsed into her old life once more, sinking into a condition of slavery from which she was bought by Hosea and restored to his home, though not at first to the full intimacy of married life. This view, it must be confessed, would seem the most natural to a plain reader. The chief objection is moral. How could the Holy God direct a pure-minded prophet to form such an unnatural union? Some authorities think that Hosea's language, in describing his marriage has been colored by his later experiences; and that he has interpreted God's command to him to marry in darker words by reason of the experiences which followed the union. However that may be, it seems exceedingly difficult to believe that God would direct His prophet to marry a woman already living in unchastity.

3. Others hold that Hosea was directed to marry a woman given to idolatry, an idolatry which was often associated with licentiousness, although his bride was not an actually unchaste woman at first, but only a spiritual adulteress. She bore to the prophet three children, to whom symbolical names were given. Later on, idolatry brought forth its natural fruitage, and Hosea's wife became an actual adulteress. Whether she then deserted Hosea, or whether he divorced her, we are not told. Now Hosea could understand why Jehovah was grieved with unfaithful Israel to the point of casting her off. The unspeakable love and compassion of God for His unfaithful spouse prepared Hosea in some measure to obey the divine command to recover his own unfaithful wife and restore her to his home.

The third view has more to recommend it than either of the other two. Hosea's bitter domestic sorrow became an object-lesson for himself and his people. His heart was almost broken by shame and grief, but he was thereby fitted to portray the heinousness of

apostasy, on the one hand, and, on the other, Jehovah's tenderness and compassion toward His unfaithful people.

In 1:2-9 we have set forth the condition of the people of Israel at this time and their relation to Jehovah. There are several words and phrases in it that need explanation. "When Jehovah spoke at the first" means the beginning of Hosea's prophecies in the latter part of the reign of Jeroboam II, and refers to God's first command to him. "Gomer" means failing, or consummation and indicates the decline of Israel at that time because of her sins. "Jezreel," the name of the first-born means scattered by God and is contrasted with "Israel" which means, prince with God, i.e., "Jezreel" indicates a prophecy of Israel's scattering which was fulfilled in the destruction of the house of Jehu in which God would avenge the awful deeds of Jehu though he did his work at the command of God, but with the spirit of vengeance and with no thought of the glory of God. The kingdom of Israel, though spared about fifty years, soon ceased, when her bow, the symbol of her strength, was broken in the valley of Jezreel by Shalmaneser, king of Assyria, & Israel was scattered.

Then a daughter was born to Gomer whom the prophet was instructed to call "Lo-ruhamah," which means hath not obtained mercy and as applied to Israel at this time, signifies that God had visited her in her wickedness; that Israel was pass-ing beyond the hope of mercy and pardon. Then the prophet contrasts with this condition of Israel the mercy of Jehovah to Judah which was fulfilled in the destruction of Sennacherib's army and the extension of the life of Judah one hundred and thirty-two years beyond that of Israel. This prophecy concerning Judah was, doubtless, intended to encourage the faithful in Israel.

Then followed a third child born to the woman, whom the prophet was instructed to name "Loammi," which means not my people and indicates Jehovah's complete rejection of Israel because of her violation of the marriage covenant. So the prophet's children symbolized, step by step, the sad gradation of Israel's fast-coming

calamity. The name, "Jezreel," scattered of God, denotes the first blow dealt to them by divine Providence, from which it was possible for them by repentance to recover; "Loruhamah," without mercy, imparts another and heavier blow, yet not beyond all hope of recovery; but "Loammi," not my people, puts an end to hope, implying the rejection of Israel by the Almighty. The national covenant was annulled; God had cast off his people who were left hopeless and helpless, because of their sinful and ungrateful departure from the fountain of all blessing.

In 1:10 to 2:1 we have set forth clearly the promise of the return and conversion of the Jews. There is, perhaps, a primary fulfilment in the return under Zerubbabel and Joshua but the larger and clearer fulfilment is yet to be realized in the gathering of the Jews and their consequent conversion at which time the millennium will be introduced and the great multitudes of spiritual Israel here referred to will be converted. Then Jezreel will be reversed in its application and made to apply to the planting of Israel in her own land; and right where they are now said not to be God's people they shall be called God's people. Israel and Judah shall have one head, the Messiah, and not only will Jezreel be reversed in its application, but also the names of the other two children will lose their negative meaning, and, instead of Loruhamah and Loammi, there will be Ammi, my people and Ruhhamah, the beloved. Such will be the conditions of fellowship on their return. This accords with Romans 9:26-27 and other New Testament quotations.

The charge against the Israelites in 2:2-7 is their idolatries in which they have forgotten him and their obligations to him. The mother here is Israel taken collectively and is represented as a wife, unfaithful to the marriage relation. The threat of stripping her naked is in accord with the Oriental custom of dealing with the harlot, which is the method also of the Germans in dealing with an adulteress. This is described by Tacitus thus: *Accisis crimibus nudatam coram propingius expellit domo maritus*. Her children are the children of Israel individually who are also barred from the

privileges of the covenant and there are no blessings for them. Her lovers mentioned here are her idols to which she had turned for support, for which the Lord pronounces the curse upon them, that will turn them back to himself.

The severity of Jehovah's love for them is shown in 2:8-13. For her disregard of Jehovah's blessings, and attributing them to Baalim, he removes them and subjects Israel to the most severe chastisements, here described as "nakedness," "shame," "mirth to cease, her feasts, her new moons, and her sabbaths, and all her solemn assemblies," the waste of the land, the visit of the days of Baalim, etc., which are expressions of the severity of his love to bring Israel to repentance. The fulfilment of these predictions we find in part in the conditions of the captivity but the author believes the reference here to the feasts and solemn assemblies to include the fulfilment of them by Christ on the cross as expressed in Colossians 2:14-17.

The passage, 2:14-20, is in contrast with the preceding paragraph and should be translated: "Notwithstanding, I will allure, etc.," which expresses Jehovah's kindness to Israel in her captivity, which is intended to allure her to return to him. He shows here his tender love for Israel by making her troubles valley of Achor) the door of her hope. The new relation is expressed by the word, "Ishi," which means my husband instead of "Baali," my master. These terms are appellatives and should not be translated as proper names. There is a play upon the word, "Baal," by which it is made to express their former relation to Jehovah as servant and master, because of Israel's going after Baalim, as if to say, "If you make Baal your God, then I will be to you as Baali, i.e., master, but in this captivity I will take Baalim out of your mouth." This is one of the blessings of the captivity, viz: The permanent cure of Israel of all forms of idolatry.

Then his love finds expression in the covenant with the beasts of the field, the doing away with war and the establishing of the betrothal relation in perfect righteousness. The covenant with the beasts here seems to correspond exactly with Isaiah 11:6-9 in which there is a

clear reference to the messianic age, and does not find its larger fulfilment until the millennium. May the good Lord hasten the time when No strife shall rage, nor hostile feuds Disturb these peaceful years; To plowshares men shall beat their swords, To pruning-hooks, their spears. No longer hosts, encount'ring hosts, Shall crowds of slain deplore; They hang the trumpet in the hall, And study war no more.

In 2:21-23 we have a clear and distinct promise of the conversion of the Jews and their consequent evangelization (together with Gentile Christians) of the world in the millennium. The blessings of this period are given in the terms of both the temporal and the spiritual, the temporal referring to the response of the heavens and the earth to the call of God and his people in giving blessings and the spiritual blessings are expressed in the sowing of Israel among the nations and the blessings upon them who were not God's people. This certainly comprehends the time of the millennium in which the Jews shall play such a signal part in the evangelization of the world, as expressed in Romans 9:23.

Chapter 3 sets forth God's command to Hosea to go and buy back Gomer, his unfaithful wife, who had been sold as a slave, the prophet's prompt obedience and his vision of future Israel. This is an illustration of God's great and boundless love for depraved unfaithful Israel, though like the unfaithful wife, she had forsaken Jehovah, her husband. The prophet kept her many days exercising the restraint upon her necessary to bring her to repentance. So the prophet explains that the children of Israel shall abide many days without king, etc., after which they shall return and seek Jehovah, their God, and shall have his favor upon them in the latter days.

There was a partial fulfilment of verse 4 in the period of the captivity, but surely there is a clear prophecy here of the long period of the tribulation which followed the Jewish rejection of the Messiah and which will continue until the Jews shall look on him whom they have pierced and by faith embrace him as their long looked-for

Messiah. As we behold the Jew today we see him "without king, and without prince, and without sacrifice, and without pillar, and without ephod or teraphim," but after many days he shall turn and seek Jehovah his God and David (Christ) his king and in the days of their ingathering will be the joy of the harvest.

QUESTIONS

1. Who was Hosea?
2. What the date of his prophecy?
3. What the occasion, or circumstances, of his prophecies?
4. What of the genuineness and canonicity of this book?
5. What its relation, in general, to the sacred canon?
6. What allusions do we find in this book to the book of Genesis?
7. What allusions to the history in Exodus?
8. What allusion to Leviticus?
9. What allusion to Numbers?
10. What allusions to Deuteronomy?
11. How do the Radical Critics deal with the book of Hosea?
12. What the relation of Amos and Hosea to recent theories of radical criticism respecting the origin of the Pentateuch, as shown by Prof. James Robertson?
13. What can you say of the character and style of this prophecy?
14. What the outline, or analysis, of the book?

15. What the three main views of the marriage of Hosea and which is the more commendable?
16. What is the interpretation and application of 1:2-9?
17. What the promise of 1:10 to 2:1?
18. What the charge against Israel as revealed in the domestic tragedy of 2:2-7 ?
19. How is the severity of Jehovah's love for them shown in 2:8-13, and what the fulfilment of the predictions contained therein?
20. How does Jehovah show the tenderness of his love in 2:14-20 and what the fulfilment of its predictions?
21. What the promise of 2:21-23 and when the ideals here set forth to be realized?
22. What the contents of chapter III and what is revelation?
23. What the fulfilment of the predictions of 3:4-5?

VIII. THE BOOK OF HOSEA - PART 2

Hosea 4:1 to 14:9

What has previously been presented in figure and symbol in the first section of the book is now plainly and literally stated. Jehovah's controversy with Israel is set forth in Hosea 4:1-5. Someone has called this "The Lord's Lawsuit" in which he brings grave charges against Israel for sins of omission followed by sins of commission. The sins of omission which led to the sins of commission are that there were no truth, no goodness, and no knowledge of God in the land. These omissions led to the gravest sins of commission, viz: profanity, covenant-breaking, murder, stealing, and adultery. The evidence in this case was so strong that there was no plea of "not guilty" entered, and Jehovah proceeded at once, after making the indictment, to announce the sentence: Destruction!

This verdict of destruction was for the lack of knowledge, which emphasizes the responsibility of the opportunity to know. They had rejected knowledge and had forgotten the law of Jehovah, and as the priests were the religious leaders and instructors of the people, the sentence is heavy against them, but "like people, like priest" shows the equality of the responsibility and the judgment. There is no excuse for either. He who seeks to know the agenda, God will reveal the credenda. The sentence is again stated, thus: Rejection, forgetting her children, shame, requite them their doings, hunger and harlotry. Such a sentence hung over them like a deadly pall.

In 4:11-14 whoredom and wine are named together, not by accident but because they are companion evils, which is the universal testimony of those who practice either. Here they are said to take away the understanding, or as the Hebrew puts it, the heart. Both are literally true. That the understanding is marred and blighted by these evils is evidenced in the case of the thousands who have rendered themselves unfit for service anywhere by wasting their strength with wine and harlots. That the heart, the seat of affections, is destroyed by these evils witness the thousands of divorce cases in our courts

today. By such a course the very vitals of man are burnt out and he then becomes the prey to every other evil in the catalogue. Let the youth of our country heed the warning of the prophet. Here Israel, engrossed with these sins, is pictured as going deeper and deeper in sin and degradation until they pass beyond the power of description. Notice that the Lord here holds the men responsible and pronounces a mighty invective against the modern double standard of morals. In God's sight the transgressor is the guilty party, whether man or woman.

Though Israel has played the harlot, Judah is warned in 4: 15-19 that she may not follow the example of Israel. The places of danger are pointed out and the example of Israel is used to enforce the warning. Israel is stubborn; Ephraim is joined to his idols; let him alone. Israel is wrapped in the winds of destruction and shall soon be put to shame, therefore, take heed, Judah.

There are several notable things in the address of 5:1-7: First, the whole people – priests, Israel, and the royal house – was involved in the judgment because each one was responsible for the existing conditions, their great centers of revolt against Jehovah being pointed out as Mizpeh, east of the Jordan; and Tabor, west of the Jordan. Second, the fact that Jehovah himself was the rebuker of them. God is the one undisputable judge and he will judge and he will judge them all. Though the mills of God grind slowly, Yet they grind exceeding small; Though with patience He stands waiting, With exactness grinds He all,

Third, God's omniscience: "I know Ephraim, and Israel is not hid from me." So he knows us and there is nothing hid from him. Fourth, men are hindered from turning to God by their sins. Fifth, positive instruction awaits the sinner (v. 5). Sixth, sacrifices and seeking are too late after doom is pronounced. Repentance must come within the space allotted for it; otherwise, it is too late.

The cornet and trumpet in 5:8-15 signifies the alarm in view of the approaching enemy. In the preceding paragraph the prophet

signified their certain destruction and now he indicates that it is at hand, again assigning the reason, that Judah had become as bold as those who remove the landmarks, and Ephraim was content to walk after man's commandments. Then he shows by the figure of the moth and the woodworm that he is slowly consuming both Israel and Judah, but they were applying to other powers for help to hold out and that the time would come when he, like the lion, would make quick work of his judgments upon Israel and Judah; that they will not seek him till their affliction comes.

Paragraph 6:1-3 is the exhortation of the Israelites to one another at the time of their affliction mentioned in the last verse of the preceding chapter and should be introduced by the word, "saying," as indicated in the margin of 5:15. The expressions, "He hath torn" and "he hath smitten," evidently refer to the preceding verses which describe Jehovah's dealing with Israel and Judah as a lion. This exhortation represents them after their affliction, saying to one another, "Come, and let us return unto Jehovah," etc. The "two days" and the "third day" are expressions representing short periods, not literal or typical days. They are then represented as pursuing knowledge which is the opposite to their present condition in their lack of knowledge. Now they are perishing for the lack of knowledge but then they will flourish as land flourishes in the time of the latter rain. There is a primary fulfilment of this prophecy in the return after the captivity but the larger fulfilment will be at their final return and conversion at which commences the revival destined to sweep the world into the kingdom of God. As Peter says, it will be "the times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord" (Acts 3:19).

A paraphrase of Hosea 6:4-11 shows its interpretation and application, thus: "O Ephraim, O Judah, I am perplexed as to what remedy next to apply to you; your goodness is so shallow and transitory that my judgments have to be repeated from time to time. I desire goodness, i.e., works of charity, the right attitude of life, and the proper condition of the heart, rather than sacrifice. But instead of

this you have, like Adam in the garden of Eden, transgressed my covenant and have dealt treacherously against me, as in the case of the Gileadites and the case of the murderous priests in the way to Shechem, and oh, the horribleness of your crimes! and, O Judah, there is a harvest for you, too."

In the charges against Israel in 7:1-16 the prophet gives the true state of affairs, viz: that the divine desire to heal was frustrated by the discovery of pollution, and by their persistent ignoring of God; that the pollution of the nation was manifest in the king, the princes, and the judges; that Ephraim was mixing among the people and had widespread influence, over the ten tribes, yet he was as a cake not turned; that he was an utter failure, being developed on one side, and on the other destroyed by burning; that he was unconscious of his wasting strength and ignored the plain testimony of the Pride of Israel; that as a silly dove, he was indicating fear and cowardice. Then the prophet concludes the statement of the case by a declaration of the utter folly of the people whom God was scourging toward redemption, to which they responded by howling, assembling, and rebelling.

Now we take up chapter 8. From the statement of the case the prophet turned, in verses 1-14, to the pronouncement of judgment by the figure of the trumpet lifted to the mouth, uttering five blasts, in each of which the sin of the people was set forth as revealing the reason for judgment. The first blast declared the coming of judgment under the figure of an eagle, because of transgression and trespass. The second blast emphasized Israel's sin of rebellion, in that they had set up kings and princes without authority of Jehovah. The third dealt with Israel's idolatry, announcing that Jehovah had cast off the calf of Samaria. The fourth denounced Israel's alliances and declared that her hire among the nations had issued in her diminishing. The fifth drew attention to the altars of sin and announced the coming judgment.

These judgments in detail are given in chapter 9. Its first note was that of the death of joy. Israel could not find her joy like other peoples. Having known Jehovah, everything to which she turned in turning from him, failed to satisfy. How true is this of the individual backslider! The unsatisfied heart is constantly crying out, Where is the blessedness I knew, When first I saw the Lord? Where is the soul-refreshing view Of Jesus and his word?

The second note was that of actual exile to which she must pass: back to the slavery of Egypt and Assyria and away from the offerings and feasts of the Lord. The third was that of the cessation of prophecy. The means of testing themselves would be corrupted. The fourth declared the retributive justice of fornication. The prophet traced the growth of this pollution from its beginning at Baal-peor, and clearly set forth the inevitable deterioration of the impure people. The fifth and last was that of the final casting out of the people by God so that they should become wanderers among the nations.

In chapter 10 we have the prophet's recapitulation and appeal. This closes the section. The whole case is stated under the figure of the vine. Israel was a vine of God's planting which had turned its fruitfulness to evil account and was therefore doomed to his judgment. The result of this judgment would be the lament of the people that they had no king who was able to deliver them, and chastisement would inevitably follow. The last paragraph is an earnest and passionate appeal to return to loyalty.

Some things in chapter 10 need special explanation: First, note the expression here, "They will say to the mountains, Cover us; and to the hills, Fall on us." This furnishes the analogue for the final destruction of the world and the judgment as given in Luke 23:30 and Revelation 6:16. Here the expression is used to indicate the horrors of the capture and destruction of the kingdom of Israel, the sufferings and distress of which are a foreshadowing of the great tribulation at the end of the world.

Second, the reference to Gibeah in 10:9 needs a little explanation. This sin of Gibeah is the sin of the shameful outrage which with its consequences is recorded in Judges 19-20. That sin became proverbial, overtopping, as it did, all the ordinary iniquities, by its shameless atrocity and heinousness. By a long-continued course of sin, even from ancient days, Ephraim had been preparing for a fearful doom.

The third reference is to Shalman who destroyed Betharbel (10:14). There are several theories about this incident. Some think that "Shalman" is a short form of "Shalmaneser," that Shalmaneser IV, who in the invasion which is mentioned (2 Kings 17:3) fought a battle in the valley of Jezreel, in which he broke the power of Samaria in fulfillment of Hosea 1:5 and about the same time stormed the neighboring town of Arbela, but who this "Shalman" was and what place was "Betharbel" are only matters of uncertain conjecture. All that is positively known is that the sack of Betharbel had made upon the minds of the Israelites an impression similar to that which in the seventeenth century was made far and wide by the sack of Madgeburg.

According to our brief outline the title of section 11:1 to 14:8 is "Pollution and Pity." This third cycle of the prophecy sets forth the pity which Jehovah has for his sinning people, and contains a declaration of Jehovah's attitude toward Israel notwithstanding her sin. Chapters 11-13 are for the most part the speech of Jehovah himself. He sums up, and in so doing declares his sense of the awfulness of their sin, pronouncing his righteous judgment thereupon. Yet throughout the movement the dominant notes are those of pity and love, and the ultimate victory of that love over sin, and consequently over judgment. Three times in the course of this great message of Jehovah to his people (11:1 to 13:16), the prophet interpolates words of his own.

This message of Jehovah falls into three clearly marked elements which deal: (1) with the present in the light of past love (11:1-11);

(2) with the present in the light of present love (12:7-11) ; (3) with the present in the light of future love (13:4-14).

The prophet's interpolations set forth the history of Israel indicating their relation to Jehovah, and pronounce judgment. They form a remarkable obligate accompaniment, in a minor key, to the majestic love song of Jehovah, and constitute a contrasting introduction to the final message of the prophet. The first of them reveals the prophet's sense of Jehovah's controversy with Judah, his just dealings with Jacob, and, reminiscent of Jacob's history, he makes a deduction and an appeal (11:12 to 13:6). The second traces the progress of Israel to death (12:12 to 13:3). The third declares their doom (13:15-16).

Then in general, Jehovah's message in 11:1-11 is as follows:

In this first movement, Jehovah reminded the people of his past love for them in words full of tenderness, setting out their present condition in its light, and crying, "How shall I give thee up?" Which inquiry was answered by the determined declaration of the ultimate triumph of love, and the restoration of the people.

There are two incidents of Israel's history cited in this first part of Jehovah's message. The first incident cited is the calling of Israel out of Egypt, which is quoted in Matthew 2:15 and applied to our Lord Jesus Christ as a fulfilment of this prophecy. Hosea clearly refers to the calling of Israel out of Egypt, the nation being elsewhere spoken of as God's son (Ex. 4:22; Jer. 3:9). But there is evident typical relation between Israel and the Messiah.

As Israel in the childhood of the nation was called out of Egypt, so Jesus. We may even find resemblance in minute details; his temptation of forty days in the desert, resembles Israel's temptation of forty years in the desert, which itself corresponded to the forty days spent by the spies (Num. 14:34). Thus we see how Hosea's historical statement concerning Israel may have been also a prediction concerning the Messiah, as the Evangelist declares it was. It is not necessary to suppose that this was present to the prophet's

consciousness. Exalted by inspiration, a prophet may well have said things having deeper meanings than he was distinctly aware of, and which only a later inspiration, coming when the occasion arose, could fully unfold – BROADUS on Matthew 2:15.

The second incident in the history of God's people cited is the destruction of Adman, Zeboim, Sodom, and Gomorrah, all of which are mentioned in Deuteronomy 29:23 as destroyed by Jehovah for their wickedness. The warning is a powerful one to Ephraim, or Israel, who are here threatened with destruction.

The prophet's message in his first interpolation (11:12 to 12:6) is a lesson from the history of Jacob showing Israel's relation to him. The prophet here goes back to the earliest history of Jacob showing God's dealing with him from his conception to his settlement at Bethel, where God gave him the promise of a multitude of descendants. This bit of history includes the struggle between him and Esau before birth, and his wrestling with the angel.

In 12:7-11 Jehovah sets out their present sin in the light of his present love. The sin of Ephraim and its pride and impertinence are distinctly stated and yet over all, love triumphs. Jehovah declared himself to be the God who delivered them from Egypt, and who would be true to the message of the prophets, to the visions of the seers and to the similitudes of the ministry of the prophets. There is an allusion in verse 7 to Jacob's deception of Isaac, which characteristic seems to have been handed down to his posterity, as here indicated.

In the prophets second interpolation (12:12 to 13:3) he traces the progress of Israel to death, beginning at the flight to the field of Aram, through the exodus from Egypt and the preservation to the present, in which Ephraim was exalted in Israel, offended in Baal and died. Their certain doom is here announced.

Then follows Jehovah's message in 13:4-14 in which he sets forth the present condition of Israel in the light of his future love. Sin

abounds, and therefore judgment is absolutely unavoidable. Nevertheless, the mighty strength of love must overcome at last.

There are several things in the passage worthy of special note. First, the allusions here to Jehovah's dealings with them from Egypt to their destination in Canaan, their exaltation and his destruction of them. Second, the allusion to their history under kings, beginning with Saul, whom he gave them in his anger and whom he took away in his wrath. The statement may apply to the long line of kings of the Northern Kingdom, but it fits the case of Saul more especially and throws light on the problem of Saul's mission as king of Israel. Third, the promise of their restoration under the figure of a resurrection (13:14), which is quoted and applied to the final resurrection by Paul (1 Cor. 15:55) and which shows the typical import of this passage. It is like a flash of light in the darkest hour of despair.

Dr. Pusey on this passage has well said:

God by his prophets mingles promises of mercy in the midst of his threats of punishment. His mercy overflows the bounds of the occasion upon which he makes it known. He had sentenced Ephraim to temporal destruction. This was unchangeable. He points to that which turns all temporal loss into gain, that eternal redemption. The words are the fullest which could have been chosen. The word rendered "ransom" signifies rescued them by the payment of a price; the word rendered "redeem" relates to one who, as the nearest of kin, had the right to acquire anything as his own by paying the price. Both words in their exactest sense, describe what Jesus did, buying us with a price . . . and becoming our near kinsman by his incarnation. . . . The words refuse to be tied down to temporal deliverance. A little longer continuance in Canaan is not a redemption from the power of the grave; nor was Ephraim so delivered.

The expression, "repentance shall be hid from mine eyes," means that God will never turn from his purpose to be merciful to Israel.

In the prophet's last interpolation (13:15-16) he goes back to the death sentence showing the complete destruction of Ephraim and Samaria by the Eastern power, Assyria. The reference to Ephraim's fruitfulness goes back to the promise of Jacob to Joseph, "He shall be a fruitful bough," though Ephraim had turned this fruitfulness to evil and thus is brought to desolation.

Chapter 14 gives us the final call of the prophet with the promise of Jehovah. The call was to the people to return because they had fallen by iniquity. It suggests the method of returning, as being that of bringing words of penitence, and forsaking all false gods. To this Jehovah answered in a message full of hope for the people, declaring that he would restore, renew, and ultimately reinstate them. There is no question but that this final word of prophecy has a reference to the return from the exile but that this return does not exhaust the meaning of this prophecy is also very evident. The larger fulfilment is to be spiritual and finds its expression in the final conversion of the Jews as voiced by Peter: "Repent ye therefore, and turn again, that your sins may be blotted out, that so there may come seasons of refreshing from the presence of the Lord" (Acts 3:19).

The book closes with a brief epilogue, which demands attention to all the prophet has written, whether for warning, or reproof, or correction in righteousness, or encouragement to piety and virtue. Like the dictates of the Word, so the dispensations of his providence are to some the savor of life, to others the savor of death. So it is added that, while the righteous walk therein, in them the wicked stumble.

In closing this chapter I will say that Hosea occupies a period of transition in developing the messianic idea from the earlier prophets to Micah and Isaiah, in whose writings abounds the messianic element:

(1) Hosea, like Amos, predicts the destruction of the kingdom of Israel, but he looks beyond it to a brighter day, when the children of Israel will be as the sand of the sea in number, will be accepted of

Jehovah as sons and daughters, and Judah and Israel will have one head, Christ (Hos. 1:10 to 2:1, et al).

(2) Hosea's experience with an unfaithful wife is an object lesson of God's forgiveness of Israel. Their spiritual adultery must lead them into exile but Jehovah will betroth Israel to himself in righteousness, and take the Gentiles into the same covenant (Hos. 2:2 to 3:5; Rom. 9:25-26).

(3) Hosea 11:1 was fulfilled in the return of Joseph and Mary from Egypt with the babe, Jesus (Matt. 2:15). So Jesus the antitype of Adam, Israel, and David.

(4) Hosea 11:8-11 expresses Jehovah's promise to restore Israel.

(5) Hosea 13:14 is a messianic promise foreshadowing the resurrection.

(6) Hosea 14:1-8 is a messianic promise of Israel's final repentance, God's reinstatement of them and their abundant blessings in the millennium.

I quote Dr. Sampey: In general, the earlier prophets describe clearly a terrible captivity of Jehovah's people, to be followed by a return to their own land, where they were to enjoy the divine blessing. The everlasting love and compassion of Jehovah are repeatedly described, and the future enlargement of Israel is clearly set forth. The person of Messiah, however, is not distinctly brought before the reader. Isaiah and Micah will have much to say of the character and work of the Messiah Himself

QUESTIONS

1. What the character of this division, as contrasted with the first three chapters of Hosea?

2. What Jehovah's controversy with Israel as set forth in Hosea 4:1-5?
3. Why the verdict of destruction, as set forth in Hosea 4:6-10?
4. What two practices are named together in Hosea 4:11-14, and what their effect upon the mind of man?
5. What warning to Judah in 4:15-19?
6. What the notable things in the address of 5:1-7?
7. What the significance and the application of the cornet and trumpet in 5:8-15?
8. What the interpretation and application of 6:1-3?
9. Paraphrase Hosea 6:4-11 so as to show its interpretation and application.
10. What the charges against Israel in 7:1-16?
11. How does the prophet pronounce judgment and what the significance in each case (Hos. 8:1-14)?
12. Describe these judgments in detail as given in chapter 9.
13. State briefly the prophet's recapitulation and appeal (Hos.10:1-15).
14. What things in chapter 10 need special explanation, and what the explanation in each case?
15. According to our brief outline what the title of section 11:1 to 14:8, and what in general, are its contents?
16. What the general features of the message of Jehovah?

17. What the general features of the prophet's interpolations?
18. What, in general, is Jehovah's message in 11:1-11?
19. What two incidents of Israel's history cited in this first part of Jehovah's message, and what their interpretation and application?
20. What the prophet's message in his first interpolation (11:12 to 12:6)?
21. What, in general, Jehovah's message in 12:7-11?
22. What allusion to an incident in the life of Jacob in this passage?
23. What the substance of the prophet's second interpolation (12:12 to 13:3)?
24. What, in general, Jehovah's message in 13:4-14?
25. What things in the passage worthy of special note?
26. What the prophet's message in his last interpolation (13:15-16)?
27. What the contents of chapter 14?
28. Give a summary of the messianic predictions in the book of Hosea.

IX. THE BOOK OF ISAIAH - PART I – AN INTRODUCTION

Helps Commended: (1) Sampey's *Syllabus*. (2) "Bible Commentary." (3) "Pulpit Commentary." (4) Urquhart's "Biblical Guide," Vols. VI and VII. (5) Smith's *Dictionary of the Bible* – Article, "Isaiah." (6) Jamieson, Fausset and Brown. (7) *Isaiah One and His Book One*, Douglas. (8) *A Harmony of Samuel, Kings and Chronicles*, Crockett.

Of Isaiah's personal life we know almost nothing. His name means "the salvation of Jehovah," and it was not uncommon, since several others bore the same name. It was of singular appropriateness in this case because it was "the salvation of Jehovah" which he was commissioned to preach. He has rightly been called "the evangelical prophet," and he ranks with such luminaries as Moses, Joshua, Samuel, David, Elijah, and Elisha. Yet, neither he nor his personal concerns are obtruded upon our notice. We have to search for hints and indications, and it is only when we have pondered these that the manner of the man is revealed to us. In his literary productions we find the evidence of a high type of culture. He, in all probability, was a product of the schools of the prophets and, undoubtedly, he was by far the best educated of all the prophets. He was one of the greatest personalities of his time, and no one can fail to see the deep devotion, the wholehearted consecration, and the richly endowed nature of the man.

Of his family we have a few hints. His father's name was Amoz, not Amos, the prophet, whose name differs from Amoz, both in its initial and in its final letter. Amoz, according to Jewish tradition, was a brother of King Amaziah, but this tradition is hardly to be credited, since it would make Isaiah too old. Isaiah was married, and his wife is known as "the prophetess," perhaps meaning only that she was the wife of a prophet. Isaiah tells us that he had two sons, She-ar-jashub and Ma-her-shal-al-hash-baz, the first named being the elder of the two by many years.

There is a tradition of the rabbis that Isaiah lived to the reign of Manasseh and then suffered a most horrible martyrdom. Isaiah, having resisted the wicked acts of Manasseh, was seized by his orders, placed between two planks, and killed by being "sawn asunder." This mode of punishment is mentioned in Hebrews 11:37, and perhaps alludes to Isaiah's fate. This tradition was accepted as authentic by Justin Martyr, Tertullian, Lactantius, Jerome, and Augustine, and is likely true.

As to his character, we can certainly say that he was uncompromising in his attitude toward all four of the ungodly "kings with whom his ministry had to do, with respect to all that bears upon religion. He was frank in dealing with the evils of his day, concealing nothing and keeping back nothing in order to court favor. He was unscrupulous in his treatment of his adversaries, denouncing in the strongest terms their injustice, their oppression, their grasping covetousness, their sensuality, their pride, and their haughtiness. He was sympathetic toward all nations in their calamities and sufferings, rejoicing in their prosperity and in their admission into the kingdom of the Messiah. He was sarcastic enough when the occasion demanded it. -He was profoundly religious, manifesting a deep devotion, a spiritual reverence and wholehearted 'consecration) rarely found in any man.

Isaiah's official position was historiographer at the Hebrew court during the reigns of Jotham and Hezekiah, a good position, admitting him to familiar intercourse with the Jewish monarchs and indicating that his dwelling place was Jerusalem. In this capacity he wrote an account of the reign of Uzziah and also one of the reign of Hezekiah which accounts were embodied in the book of the Kings, and perhaps, he wrote the history of the reigns of Jotham and Ahaz also, though the record does not say so. But his main office was that of prophet, preacher, psalmist, instructor, intercessor, evangelist, and apocalyptic seer. His book of prophecies is the only literary work of his that has come down to us, besides those parts of his histories

which were selected by inspiration for our books of Kings and Chronicles.

Of his call to the prophetic office we have no record, unless we so regard the call recorded in chapter 6 of his prophecy. But this can hardly be regarded as his initial call, since there is no sufficient reason for his postponing the account of such an event, to this point, if it had been his first call. The reason for this vision here at this particular point seems to be that the dark picture of the first five chapters necessitated a vision of the powers operating above, just as in John's case when he had seen the great imperfections of the "seven churches" of Asia. Jesus then showed him the powers working over and in these imperfect churches to accomplish God's purpose to light the world through the churches, though they were very poor prospects for such a task from the human point of view. According to this view, Isaiah's initial call is left unrecorded, as in the case of so many of the other prophets.

Isaiah tells us that his prophetic career extended over the reigns of four kings, viz: Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, which is admitted to have been one of unusual duration. We do not know how many years of Uzziah's reign it included but we have evidence that his work extended far into the reign of Hezekiah, and, perhaps, through it or beyond it. If then we allow two years for his work in Uzziah's reign, sixteen years for Jotham's reign, sixteen years for Ahaz's reign, and twenty-nine years for Hezekiah's reign, we have a period of sixty-three years for his prophetic work. It may have been longer than this but it could not have been very much shorter. In such an extension of one man's service there must have been more than what one might describe as "the happy chance of a long life," for in divine arrangements there are no chances. The purpose of it is obvious, as the period in which the prophet served and the character of his work suggest. Isaiah is the Moses of Israel's new era. This is a crisis in the history of God's people, just as at the time of Elijah and Elisha. Then the nation was threatened with destruction. So in the time of Isaiah, and in order that God's people might be guided, and

that even the darkest heart might understand, the prophet called for by the crisis of the hour was provided, and his ministry was so prolonged and so glorious as to challenge and to fix the attention of many generations.

There were certain antecedent events in the history of Israel which culminated in the crisis of Uzziah. First, in Solomon's time intercourse, which had been suspended with Egypt for about four hundred years, was renewed, which led very soon to a violation of the law (see 1 Kings 4:26; Deut. 17:16; Isa. 2:7; 31:1) and was rapidly followed by disastrous consequences. Solomon lived to see his bitter enemies, Jeroboam and Hadad, welcomed at the court of Pharaoh, and the next generation not only saw a king of Egypt capture Jerusalem and despoil the Temple and the palace, but they witnessed the establishment of Apis worship over the whole of the Northern Kingdom, in the form of Jeroboam's "calves of Dan and Bethel."

Secondly, the descent from this was easy, and not more than sixty years from the division of the Kingdom, another and more decided form of apostasy was introduced into Samaria by Ahab's fantastical queen, the Sidonian Jezebel, which was afterward carried to Jerusalem by her daughter, Athaliah. This very much endangered both nations and it seemed that the hope of the cause of truth and holiness had vanished, and a pall of gloom overshadowed both kingdoms. But the battle was not over, for at this terrible crisis came Elijah and Elisha who turned back the tide of sin, but their victory was not complete, for of one king after another in the Northern Kingdom it was said, "From after the sins of Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, he departed not."

Thirdly, this easy descent was followed until the prosperous reign of Jeroboam II, when the awful sentence was pronounced, "Ephraim is joined to his idols; let him alone," and about this time, or just before, Joel was directed to proclaim that the "day of the Lord" was drawing near, and that it was "great and very terrible." From this time the

spiritual decline was marked, notwithstanding the many threatenings from the Lord, though the nation was prosperous in many ways, temporarily. Uzziah's heart was lifted up with pride, which is the taproot of infidelity. He had respect toward the traditional religion, but he was without faith or real devotion. At last the secret unbelief broke out into a deed of extreme audacity, unequalled since the days of Korah. Uzziah went into the holy place and insisted that he had the right to burn incense. The punishment followed immediately and it was signal. Uzziah was smitten with leprosy and was isolated in a "several house," excluded from society to the day of his death. Such are some of the most important antecedent events which culminated in the crisis of Uzziah.

Thus the monarch was stricken, but the people were no less criminal than the king, and they, too, must be put away from communion with the Holy One, whom they had rejected. That is the proposition with which Isaiah had to deal at the opening of his ministry. So he brought to Judah God's final offers of mercy, set before them the fearful consequences of continued impenitence, told them of the intent of the law and the worthlessness of an imposing ritual without the love of God, and he promised full and free pardon with all the covenant blessings, if only they would repent and obey. But the offer was rejected and the prophet received a new commission to them, viz: the judicial sentence, dooming the nation to exile and the land to desolation.

While this was righteous retribution, it was a measure of mercy as well. For by this means holy love was working out its gracious design. While the ban was uttered the execution was stayed by the zeal and piety of the faithful remnant, the "holy seed." Through the prophet good Hezekiah and his people turned to God with decision and uprightness and the power of Assyria was not allowed to touch Judah. In this crisis of danger, when the nation seemed to be in its last gasp, Isaiah performed for it the office which Moses had performed of old, that of intercessor, and a deliverance was granted them, second in importance only to that original deliverance from

Egypt. This is the outward seal of the first cycle of his prophecies, viz: Isaiah 1-39.

The prophet shows us the world full of sin and enveloped in gross darkness, whose inhabitants are the lawful captives and prey of the terrible one. Selfishness, greed, and oppression crush the helpless. Covetousness joins house to house and lays field to field until the poor have no room for homes. Debauchees rise up early in the morning to follow strong drink and sit up late at night to inflame themselves with wine. Their fame is to be expert in mixing strong liquors and to be mighty in drinking them. The wicked draw iniquity with cords of falsehood and sin as with a cart rope. They put darkness for light and light for darkness. Repudiating all modesty and humility for inordinate conceit, they become wise in their own eyes and prudent in their own sight. Justice, righteousness, and equity are outlawed. Hell enlarges its desire and opens its mouth without measure. Even the chosen nation has become a brood of vipers, formalists, hypocrites, thieves, and robbers. Chastisement has vainly beaten them. The whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint. There is no room to place another stroke. From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it. Only wounds and bruises and putrefying sores. The land is desolate, and the people, perishing for lack of knowledge grope and shudder under the shadow of death.

There are two facts which show this to be a remarkable epoch, whether as regards Israel or the world at large:

1. The historical event standing in the center of the book, viz: the destruction of Sennacherib's army took place 710 B.C., which is exactly midway between Israel's complete occupation of Canaan (1445 B.C.) and John the Baptist's announcement that the kingdom of heaven was at hand (A.D. 25). Then if we bisect the interval between the first erection of the tabernacle at Sinai (1490 B.C. and the burning of the Temple in A.D. 70), the middle point will fall again on the year 710 B.C.

2. This same year, 710 B.C., is also the starting point of a great political movement in the Gentile world. In that year the foundation of the Median monarchy was laid in a very singular manner, viz: Deioces was elected king by the free choice of the Median tribes, on account of his reputation for justice. This occurred soon after Shalmaneser had placed a portion of the Israelitish captives in the cities of the Medes. Is there not a connection between these two facts? At any rate the rise of the Median kingdom was one of the most influential events in ancient history. To it, in a large measure, is attributable the overthrow of Nineveh, the conquest of Babylon by Cyrus and the establishment of the Medo-Persian Empire, whose influence on the later history of Asia and Europe is incalculable.

The canonical prophets who preceded Isaiah were Obadiah, Joel, Jonah, and Amos; his contemporaries were Hosea, in the Northern Kingdom and Micah, in the Southern Kingdom. Sampey says:

Isaiah's prophetic ministry covered the stirring period during which Assyria, under the leadership of Pul, Shalmaneser IV, Sargon, and Sennacherib, repeatedly invaded Syria and Palestine. From his watch-tower Isaiah surveyed the nations, from Assyria and Elam on the east to Egypt and Ethiopia on the southwest, and Jehovah asserted by the mouth of His prophet, His sovereignty over all the earth.

As a writer, Isaiah transcends all the other Hebrew prophets. With a lofty and majestic calmness, a grandeur and dignity of expression, an energy and liveliness of style, he admirably adapts his language to his subject matter, employing striking images, dramatic representations, pointed antitheses, play upon words, strong utterances, vivid description, amplification and elaboration here and there, wherever needed. Hengstenberg says, "His style is simple, and sublime; in imagery, intermediate between the poverty of Jeremiah and the exuberance of Ezekiel."

The book of Isaiah, as it has come down to us, presents a certain composite character. There are three main parts of it. The first thirty-

five chapters, almost wholly prophetic, are followed by four chapters which are historical, and the last twenty-seven chapters are like the first part, prophetic. There is a marked contrast in subject matter and style, and the different sections into which each of these parts divides itself show that they are compilations rather than continuous and connected compositions. The general arrangement of the book seems to be chronological. The form of the first and third sections is largely poetical parallelism, with, however, a freedom unshackled by undue restrictions. The book as a whole is one of the most remarkable and important in the sacred volume. All agree in extolling its power, beauty, and attractiveness and acknowledge its commanding moral and spiritual eminence. Even in bulk it is very important. Jeremiah is the largest, Ezekiel is a little larger than Isaiah, while the twelve minor prophets, taken together, are considerably shorter than Isaiah.

In order to be able to rightly interpret Isaiah the student should be familiar with the following:

1. The history of God's people in general up to the times of Isaiah. In setting forth the kingly and priestly character of our Lord Isaiah ranges over the whole field of the earlier Scriptures, referring, not only to the several books of the Pentateuch, but to the historical books, the Psalms, the Proverbs, the Song of Solomon, and the writings of the earlier prophets. So he, who is most conversant with these earlier Scriptures, has the best key for opening the great prophecy before us, and will enter with the profoundest appreciation of the references and allusions which are made to it in the New Testament.

2. The history of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, as given in Crockett's *Harmony of Samuel, Kings and Chronicles* (pp. 293-329). This gives the history of the times in which, and the peoples to whom, he prophesied.

3. The history of all the foreign nations mentioned in his prophecies: Babylon, Assyria, Philistia, Moab, Syria, Ethiopia, Egypt, Edom,

Arabia, and Phoenicia. There may be found a fairly good article on each of these nations in Smith's *Dictionary of the Bible*.

A very simple outline of the book of Isaiah, by Dr. Sampey, is the following:

Introduction: Title, Author, and Date, 1:1.

I. Prophecies of Judgment, 1:2 to 35:10:

1. Book of Mingled Rebukes and Promises, 1:2 to 6:13;
2. Book of Immanuel, Chs. 7-12;
3. Book of Foreign Prophecies, Chs. 13-23;
4. First Book of Judgment, Chs. 24-27;
5. Book of Zion, or Book of Woes, Chs. 28-33;
6. Second Book of Judgment, Chs. 34-35.

II. Historical Interlude, Chs. 36-39:

1. Sennacherib's Invasion, Chs. 36-37;
2. Hezekiah's Sickness and Embassy from Babylon, Chs. 38-39.

III. Prophecies of Peace, Chs. 40-66:

1. Theology – The Purpose of Peace, Chs. 40-48;
2. Soteriology – The Prince of Peace, Chs. 49-57;
3. Eschatology – The Program of Peace, Chs. 58-66.

The last twenty-seven chapters of the book constitute one grand messianic poem, subdivided into three books, the first and the

second closing each with the solemn refrain, "There is no peace, saith Jehovah, to the wicked," and the third expressing the thought more fully, "Their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched; and they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh." Each of these books consists of three sections of three chapters each, chapter 53 thus becoming the middle chapter of the middle book of this great prophetic poem, the very heart of the prophetic writings of the Old Testament. And the central verses (5-8) of this central chapter enshrines the central truth of the gospel: He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; The chastisement of our peace was upon him; And with his stripes we are healed. (Read also verses 6-8.)

There are five passages in the book itself which indicate the time of the prophecies of the book in general and its several parts in particular, viz: 1:1; 6:1; 7:1; 14:28; 36:1. The first verse seems to imply that some portion of the book is to be allotted to each of the four reigns there mentioned. This, combined with the indications of time contained in the above named passages, leads to the following general distribution of Isaiah's prophecies:

1. In the reign of Uzziah (1-5)
2. In the reign of Jotham (6)
3. In the reign of Ahaz (7:1 to 14:27)
4. In the first half of Hezekiah's reign (14:28 to 39:8)
5. In the second half of Hezekiah's reign (40-66) The above outline is what the way marks, set up by the prophet himself, seem to point to, with which also the internal evidence is in accord.

In Sampey's *Syllabus* may be found a most excellent analysis for the more minute divisions of the book, in which are hints as to dates, doctrines, criticisms, etc.

QUESTIONS

1. Who was Isaiah and what of his family?
2. What the tradition concerning his death?
3. What can you say of his character?
4. What his official position and what literary works did he write?
5. What of the call of Isaiah to his prophetic office?
6. What the length of his prophetic career and what its special significance?
7. What the preceding events in the history of Israel which culminated in the crisis of Uzziah?
8. What the national crisis in Uzziah's time and what was Israel's relation to it?
9. What the moral conditions of the world at this time?
10. What can you say of this period in the world's history?
11. What canonical prophets preceded Isaiah, what ones were contemporary with him and what foreign relations at this time?
12. What can you say of the style and diction of the book of Isaiah?
13. What can you say of the character of the book as it has come down to us?
14. What should a student Study in order to rightly interpret Isaiah?
15. Give an analysis of the book of Isaiah.
16. What the artistic features of the third part of the book?

17. What dates indicated in the book itself and according to these, what the time of each part thus indicated?

18. Where may the student find an extended and detailed analysis of Isaiah?

X. THE BOOK OF ISAIAH - PART 2 – THE AUTHORSHIP

The question of "two Isaiahs" was not mentioned, or thought of, until the twelfth century A.D., when Aben-Ezra, a Jew of naturalistic tendencies, first ventured to suggest that the prophecies of Isaiah 40-66 might not be the actual work of Isaiah. Previous to this date and again from his time to near the close of the eighteenth century, not a breath of suspicion was uttered; not a whisper on the subject was heard. The book of Psalms was known to be composite and the book of Proverbs bore on its face that it consisted of, at least, four collections, but Isaiah was universally accepted as a work of one author. Toward the close of the eighteenth century Koppe, a German writer, in his translation of Bishop Lowth's Isaiah adopted the suggestion of Aben-Ezra, and thus was started the theory that Isaiah was not the real author of the prophecies contained in chapters 40-66 of the book ascribed to him. The work of an entirely different prophet, living toward the close of the Captivity, he said, had been attached by some accident to the genuine prophecies of Isaiah and had thenceforth passed by his name. The theory thus started was welcomed by other Germans of the rationalistic school and shortly it could boast of many renowned scholars, including the great Hebraist, Gesenius. The simple theory of "two Isaiahs" thus started, an earlier and a later, one contemporary with Hezekiah, the other with the later captivity, whose works had been accidentally thrown together, has been elaborated and expanded, chiefly by the labors of Ewald, in a wonderful way. Ewald traces in the book of Isaiah, as it has come down to us, the work of at least seven hands. Nor did it reach the final outcome of the separatist hypothesis started by Koppe, in the theory of Ewald. It has gone on until now they say that the whole book of Isaiah, first and last, is a mosaic, or patchwork, the production of no one knows how many authors, brought gradually to its present condition. However, it is consoling to note that along beside this school of the "radicals" runs the long line of defenders of the integrity of the book. In this list may be mentioned, to their everlasting credit, many of the greater lights, like

Hengstenberg, Delitzsch, Dean Payne Smith, and a host of the lesser lights.

It is amazing to learn that, in the last analysis, the original and sole ground of this critical attack is the infidel assumption that prediction is an impossibility. It is quite true that other reasons are assigned but they are afterthoughts. Isaiah's authorship of one portion and another was, and is, denied on the ground that Isaiah could not have foreseen the events which these portions describe. This is summed up under two heads: (1) that the author of chapters 40-66 takes for his standpoint the time of the Babylonian captivity, and, speaking as if that were present, from thence looks forward into the subsequent future; (2) that he has a knowledge of the name and career of Cyrus, which a prophet living two centuries before could not possibly have had. The theory was subsequently further supported by alleged differences between the style and diction of chapters 1-39 and chapters 40-66, which were declared to necessitate different authors, and to mark chapters 40-66 as the production of a later age. It is now, as never before, conceded that there is nothing in the contention that it is a point of philology, but that prophecy does not have anything to do with the supernatural, though some of the critics state the philological argument as corroborative evidence (see Driver's argument and the reply thereto in Sampey's *Syllabus*).

It was soon found that the theory could not stop with the last part of the book, for there were predictions of the fall of Babylon, of the most definite kind (13; 14; 21). These then must, in consistence, also be taken away from Isaiah. But it was observed that chapter 34 had many verbal resemblances to chapter 13, and that chapter 35 was almost a miniature of the second part. Consequently, these must also be removed. Following up this method they have come at last to assign the following, to which most of the objectors agree, to Isaiah: Isaiah 1-12; 14:24-32; 15-20; 21:11-17; 22-23; 28-33, and the rest of the book they say was written by four or five unknown prophets, living in Babylon near the end of the captivity, who were worthy of having their productions associated with those of Isaiah, yet of

whose names and of whose existence even, no trace whatever has been preserved. A thing unthinkable!

The assumption of the radical critics, viz: that it is inconceivable that God should communicate to man any foreknowledge, or prevision, of future events, let us consider in the light of the following facts:

1. Isaiah did undoubtedly, in the acknowledged chapters, predict in the most clear and positive terms the future desolation of the land (see 3:8, 25-26; 5:13-14, 17, 24; 6:11-12; 7:23-25; 17:9; 32:13-14).

2. Isaiah, in the unquestioned chapters, distinctly foretold that Assyria, after sweeping like a flood over Samaria, would bring Judah into the utmost peril of a like catastrophe, but would be buried back and be overthrown (see 8:7-8; 10:5-34), the fulfilment of which is well known.

3. Whoever the writer of chapters 41-48 was, he claimed the right of speaking in God's name about the distant future. This claim is put prominently forward, is urged repeatedly, is elaborately asserted as a proof of divine prescience, and is made the crucial test of Jehovah's being the only true God, seeing that prevision of a remote contingent, future event is possible only to him who both knows, and can control, all the antecedents of the event (see 41:21; 42:9; 43:9-10; 44:7-8, 24-28; 45:1-13, 20-21; 46:9-11; 48:3-8, 12-16).

4. It is undeniable that the great prophecy in chapters 52-53 had a unique realization in the person and work of our Lord Jesus Christ.

5. This dictum is at variance with the whole course of the history of redemption from its commencement to its consummation. Starting with the first promise of the Saviour in Genesis 3:15 and coming on down through the whole series of divine revelations of the Messiah as the hope of the world, one cannot escape the impression that the historical fact of the prophetic Christ is too firmly rooted in the

world's history to be ignored, against which the groundless assertions of naturalism are powerless.

The naming of Cyrus was the earliest objection to the genuineness of the book of Isaiah, but there is not so much made of this at present as formerly. They say, "Of course God could have foretold the name of Cyrus one hundred and fifty years or more beforehand, but this would have been against his way of acting." Now let us see whether the revelation of a name beforehand is against God's manner of acting. The recorded instances which offset this theory are, Ishmael, Isaac, Josiah, Jesus, John the Baptist, and Isaiah's own son. If it be urged that these are names of persons who were soon to be born, and very different from that of the case of Cyrus, it may be answered that the length of time may have been unknown to Isaiah. Besides, in the case of Josiah there was a longer time than in that of Cyrus. The time element is a very poor escape for an objection. If God foreknows an event, it does not matter as to the length of time. A thousand years are to him as one day, and it is just as reasonable that he should foretell an event or give a name two thousand years beforehand as it is that he should announce the name of a child to be born one year hence.

In Sampey's *Syllabus* we have Driver's three independent lines of argument which he says converge to show that the last twenty-seven chapters of this book are not the work of Isaiah, as follows:

First, the argument from the analogy of prophecy; second, the literary style is different from that of Isaiah; third, the theological ideas differ from those found in chapters 1-39.

According to Driver, the prophet speaks always, in the first instance, to his contemporaries. The prophet never abandons his own historical position, but speaks from it. Now the author of Isaiah 40-66 alludes repeatedly to Jerusalem as ruined, to the sufferings of the Jewish captives among the Chaldeans, to the prospect of an early return to Judah. The author speaks not to the contemporaries of

Hezekiah, but to Jewish exiles in the days of Cyrus. Therefore he must have lived in the days of Cyrus.

We cannot admit the fundamental axiom of Dr. Driver for it not only begs the whole question, but also contradicts the teaching of an inspired apostle. Cf. 1 Peter 1:10-12, especially verse 12. Dr. Driver's statement, though containing much truth, is too broad. Though put forward as a general principle arrived at by inductive reasoning, it is seemingly opposed by Isaiah 13:2 to 14:23; 24-27; 34; 35; 40-66. Then he says that the vocabulary is different, many words occurring in 40-66 that are not found in the undisputed prophecies of Isaiah (e.g., "My chosen," "praise," both as a verb and substitute, "pleasure," "good will," etc.). Besides, many words occur frequently, and often with different shades of meaning, which are found only once or twice in the undisputed prophecies (e.g., "isles," "nought," "to create," etc.). Moreover, certain words and idioms occurring in 40-66 point to a later period of the language than Isaiah's age. On the other hand, the undisputed prophecies of Isaiah use repeatedly certain expressions which are never found in 40-66, and certain other phrases that occur quite seldom.

While Dr. Driver has shown great skill in the selection of words and phrases, his list is too small to count for much, and it can be counterbalanced by a list of striking words and phrases that are common to chapters 1-39 and 40-66. (Most recent critics assign but little force to this argument from vocabulary.)

His style argument from the grammatical peculiarities is as follows: Chapters 40-66 employ a participial epithet with the divine name quite often (40:28; 42:5, etc.). The relative particle is more frequently omitted than in the undisputed sections.

It may be well to remember that one's style may be somewhat modified after the lapse of years, and that a polished and elaborate composition intended only to be read may differ from brief notes of public discourses.

His style argument, based on the rhetorical repetition of words (40:1; 43:11, etc.) may be answered as follows: Here again let us bear in mind the literary leisure with which this finished production was wrought out. Moreover, chapters 1-39 have examples of repetition, 1:9-10 (Sodom and Gomorrah); 2:9-17 (brought low); 29:1 (Ariel, Ariel); 21:11 (Watchman, what of the night? Watchman, what of the night?)

For the items of his style argument from the literary features and for his theological argument see Sampey's Syllabus. As to external, or historical, evidence of the unity of Isaiah, it is not pretended by anyone that there is anywhere the slightest trace of doubt existing on the subject in ancient times, the evidence of which is all one way. Now, I will give a few of the items of this evidence:

1. The second part of Isaiah is referred to by the son of Sirach as a distinctive portion of Isaiah, 220-180 B.C. (See Eccl. 48:22-25.)
2. In the Jewish canon, in the Septuagint and in all other ancient versions the book is one whole.
3. Thirteen of the Haftarah's, or Prophetic Lessons, read in the synagogues on sabbath days, fesitvals, and fasts were taken from the second part of the book of Isaiah. This arrangement dates 170 B.C.
4. Josephus mentions it as a received tradition among the Jews and Cyrus issued his edict for the rebuilding of the Temple (Ezek. 1:2) after he had been shown Isaiah's prophecy respecting himself (see Josephus Jewish Antiquities XI. 1). This statement is strongly confirmed by the edict itself: "The Lord God of heaven . . . hath charged me to build, etc." This is the only way Cyrus' language can be accounted for.
5. All the Jewish authorities refer constantly to part two as Isaiah's. Indeed for two thousand and four hundred years, with one exception, no one is known to have hinted at the possibility of a doubt on the subject,

There are several Old Testament quotations from the book of Isaiah which bear upon the question of the unity of the book:

1. Zephaniah 2:15 is a quotation of Isaiah 47:8, 10. But Zephaniah wrote in the reign of Josiah, between 630 B.C. and 625 B.C., while Judah was still a kingdom. The words, "I am, and there is none beside me," are identical in the Hebrew of both passages.

2. Nahum 1:15 is a quotation of Isaiah 52:7. The reader will here note the identical expressions in the two passages. Here, as in the preceding case the fact of quotation is undoubted. But Nahum lived not long after Isaiah. Therefore "the second Isaiah" was in existence shortly after the close of Isaiah's ministry, and was recognized as a part of the Scriptures.

3. Jeremiah 31:35 is a quotation of Isaiah 51:15. Here again the resemblance is too marked to be treated as accidental. The connection in both passages is similar and the correspondences are strikingly impressive. If it be suggested that "the second Isaiah" may have quoted from Jeremiah, let it be also remembered that the "Great Unknown," the "Deutero-Isaiah" and one of the so-called "assured results" of higher criticism, has never been regarded by any one of their school as being poor in imagination, or deficient in language, but in both of these respects he has been assigned the noblest place in all the prophetic band. But the words are in Isaiah's style and the evidence is overwhelming in favor of Jeremiah's quoting Isaiah rather than Isaiah's quoting Jeremiah.

There are nine quotations: from the last twenty-seven chapters of Isaiah in the New Testament, as follows: Matthew 3:3; 8:17; 12:17; Luke 3:4; 4:17; John 1:23; 12:38; Acts 8:28 and Romans 10:16-20. The bearing of these quotations on the question of the unity of Isaiah resolves itself into the question of New Testament inspiration. If we grant the inspiration of the New Testament, then this nine fold witness is final and proves that Isaiah wrote the book that bears his name.

There are two New Testament references to the book of Isaiah in which they clearly include the second part, viz: Luke 4:17 and Acts 8:30-34. These are distinct references to the book of Isaiah as the passages clearly show and indicate that there was no thought in New Testament times of a mosaic, or patchwork, Isaiah.

There are many links that bind Parts I and 2 together but we will give only a few to show the line of argument. Compare the following references from the undisputed parts of the first thirty-nine chapters with the reference in the last twenty-seven chapters 1:11, 13 with 66:3; 6:1 with 57:15 and 66:1; 66:5-7 with 57:15 and 66:2; 2:2-3 with 56:7 and 60:12-14; 2:11, 17 and 5:15-16 with 40:4; 5:19; 14:24, 27; 19:12; 23:8-9 and 28:29 with 40:13-14; 44:26; 46:10; 59:9 and 64:4, and so on. (For an extended list of these connecting -links between the two parts of Isaiah see "Bible Commentary," pp. 15-18.) These instances with the many others cited in the list referred to, are irreconcilable with the contention for the dual authorship of the book of Isaiah, and prove beyond question that one author wrote both parts, which constitute a closely woven garment, the threads of each part running into the other, making them both a compact, literary, historical, theological unit.

Here the question naturally arises, Why were the historical episodes in chapters 36-39 introduced just here? The answer is obvious. In chapters 36-37 we see Jerusalem besieged and a strong enemy judged, and we see the godly in Israel overwhelmed, but clinging to God for help. Let us remember that the object of these last chapters is to console and we have the obvious typical significance of these historical facts. They furnish a historical starting point for the men of Isaiah's time, and a historical background to our own time, and are of immense importance to both. Chapter 38 tells of Hezekiah's sickness and miraculous recovery, which led to a political alliance in which God's counsel was not sought, and to the captivity in Babylon as shown in chapter 39. So chapters 36-37 form a starting point and a background for the consolations, and chapters 38-39 show why the consolations are needed. In the order of events here we see Judah

delivered from Assyria and having a revival, after which it stumbled again, to trust in the arm of flesh and to go to the old pollution of conformity to a godless world around, which again points to Babylon. Thus the account, from the entry of Sennacherib upon the historical stage to Isaiah's prediction of the exile to Hezekiah, is all the real beginning of the second part of the book. So when we read chapter 39, the last vestige of the critics' case vanishes.

It is urged that in chapters 40-66 the prophet occupies a Babylonian viewpoint, but already in chapter 39 we have the Babylonian viewpoint. Here we are confronted with the incidents of the exile. We see the young Judaic princes, "eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon." Could the prophet stop here? Would he not have a message for Judah as it stood before the lifted veil? Yea, the first Isaiah had here gone too far not to become the second Isaiah.

And this is not all. Hezekiah has already had his peaceful end. He has received his consolation, but the people of the captivity are in gloom and despair. So Jehovah bursts forth in the opening verse of the second part, "Comfort ye, comfort ye my people." The closing words of chapter 39 make the opening words of chapter 40 a necessity. Radical criticism has never so certainly and fully sealed its own final condemnation as when it ventured to draw its great dividing line between the close of chapter 39 and the opening of chapter 40.

QUESTIONS

1. Give a brief statement of the rise & progress of the adverse criticism of the book of Isaiah.
2. What the ground of this disintegration theory?
3. What the progress of this theory as it relates to the first part of the book and what sections of it do these radicals attribute to Isaiah?

4. How does the assumption of the radical critics, viz: that it is inconceivable that God should communicate to man any foreknowledge, or prevision, of future events, correspond with facts?

5. How does the radical critic theory respecting the naming of Cyrus correspond with the facts of revelation? 6, What are Driver's three independent lines of argument which he says converge to show that the last twenty-seven chapters of this book are not the work of Isaiah?

7. What Driver's argument from the analogy of prophecy and what the reply?

8. What Driver's style argument based on the vocabulary and what the reply?

9. What his style argument from the grammatical peculiarities and what reply?

10. What his style argument from the rhetorical repetition of words & reply?

11. What the items of his style argument from the literary features and what the reply to each seriatim?

12. What the external, or historical, evidence of the unity of Isaiah?

13. What the Old Testament quotations from this book and what their bearing on the unity of Isaiah?

14. What the New Testament quotations of the last twenty-seven chapters of the book of Isaiah and what their bearing on this question?

15. What the New Testament references to the book of Isaiah in which they clearly include the second part?

16. What the argument for the unity of Isaiah based upon the close relation of the parts of the book?

17. What the argument for the unity of Isaiah based upon the position of the historical part of the book?

XI. THE BOOK OF ISAIAH - PART 3

Isaiah I :1 to 5:30

There are three things suggested by the word, "vision," in the title, viz:

1. Being a vision, it will frequently speak of events, that are yet future, as if they had already occurred, e.g., 3:8; 5:13.
2. What is seen in vision must be subject to the laws of the perspective. To illustrate: One who views a series of mountains from a distance may see a number of peaks, which are many miles apart, as one object. Thus in the fulfilment of prophecy, there may be a primary fulfilment and a long distance from that, the larger fulfilment. But they appear to the eye of the prophet as one fulfilment because they are in line with each other. A notable instance of this is seen in the case of the anti-Christ. Antiochus Epiphanes, the first one, was followed by the papacy; then after him comes the World Secular Ruler; and last comes the man of sin, who fills out the outline of all the ones who have preceded him. 3. It is, as a whole, one vision. It consists, indeed, of various parts, but from the outset they present the same vision. Though the visions are greatly diversified in size, form, coloring, and other details, they are in essential character only one vision.

This vision was "concerning Judah and Jerusalem" and yet it embraces a vast variety of nations and countries. There is a primary reference here to Judah versus Israel, but in the scriptural sense, all this prophecy is "concerning Judah and Jerusalem," i.e., the people and city of God. Other nations and countries are spoken of only as they are related to Judah and Jerusalem, or at any rate to the people of God symbolized in those names. The first chapter is the preface to the whole book, whose standpoint is the covenant as set forth in Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 28-32, being especially modeled on Deuteronomy 32, the song of Moses, and consists of "The Great Arraignment," divided into four well-marked messages, in each of

which Jehovah is introduced as himself speaking directly to his people. The divisions are as follows: 2-9; 10-17; 18-23; 24-31.

The first message (2-9) opens with an invocation to heaven and earth to hear Jehovah's indictment against his people, and it contains (1) a charge of rebellion against their nourishing father; (2) a charge of brutish ignorance, indifference, and ingratitude, such as the ox and the ass would not have shown their owners; (3) a charge of corruption and estrangement from Jehovah; (4) a charge of unyielding stubbornness which rendered the chastisement of Jehovah ineffective though stroke upon stroke had fallen upon them until there was not place found on the body for another stroke; (5) a penalty of desolation of their land and the captivity of the people; (6) a hope of an elected remnant who would be purified by the coming affliction upon the nation.

In this paragraph we have a picture of severe chastisements, not of the depravity of human nature, though sin in Israel has, of course, led Jehovah to chastise his rebellious son. In verse 9 we have mention of the remnant left by Jehovah. This is the first mention of it and gives us the key to the hope of Israel in this dark hour, a favorite doctrine with Isaiah and Paul.

The second message of the first chapter (10-17) contains the charge of formality without spirituality in their religion. They are compared to Sodom and Gomorrah though they abound in their ritualistic service. After showing his utter contempt for this formality without spirituality, Jehovah exhorts them to return to him. The ceremonial is not condemned here, except as it was divorced from the spiritual. The prophet insists that ritual and sacrifice must be subordinated to faith and obedience. This is in harmony with the teaching of Hosea 6:5-6; Micah 6:6-8; and Jeremiah 7:4ff., 21ff., et al. In verse 13 here we have the mingling of wickedness with worship which is an abomination. A real reformation is twofold: (1) cease to do evil; (2) learn to do well. Human activity is emphasized in verses 16-17, while divine grace is set forth in verse 18.

The third message of this chapter (18-23) is a message of" offered mercy and grace, with an appeal to their reason and an assurance of cleansing from the deepest pollution of sin. There is a back reference here to the promises and threatenings of the Mosaic covenant (Lev. 26; Deut. 30) in which life and death were set before them with an exhortation to choose. There is also a renewed charge here contained in the sad description of the moral degradation of Zion (w. 21-23) in which Jerusalem is called a harlot and her wickedness is described as abominable.

The fourth message in this chapter (24-31) is a message of judgment on the ungodly. This judgment is both punitive and corrective. God avenges himself on his enemies and at the same time purifies his people, especially the holy remnant, and restores them to their former condition of love and favor. But the utter destruction of transgressors and sinners is positively affirmed, the sinner and his work being consumed. Sin is a fire that consumes the sinner. Therefore sin is suicidal. Isaiah 1:9 is quoted by Paul in Romans 9:29 and is there used by him to prove his proposition that, though Israel was in number like the sands of the sea, only a remnant should be saved. The remnant of the election of grace is both an Old Testament and a New Testament doctrine, as applied to the Jews.

Someone has called chapters 2-5 "the true and the false glory of Israel." In chapter I the prominent idea is Justice coming to the help of rejected mercy, and pouring out vengeance on the sinful; in chapters 2-5 the idea is one of mercy, by means of justice, triumphing in the restoration of holiness. The characteristic in chapter I is its stern denunciations of the Sinaitic law, while the reference to Psalm 72 is subordinate; the characteristic of 2-5 is that, though the menaces of the law are still heard in them, it is only after the clearest assurance has been given that the prophecies of 2 Samuel 7 and Psalm 72 shall be realized.

That chapters 2-5 belong to the time of Uzziah, is the natural inference from 1:1 and 6:1. The contents of the chapters are such as

to thoroughly confirm this obvious view. They refer to a period of prosperity (2:6-16) and luxury (3:16-23); when there was great attention to military preparations (2:7, 15; 3:2) and commerce (v. 16), and great reliance on human power (v. 22). Above all, it is only by remembering how, "when Uzziah was strong, his heart was lifted up" (2 Chron. 26:16), and he invaded the holy place, that we can fully appreciate the emphatic assertion of God's incomparable exaltation and inviolable sanctity which prevails throughout this section.

In 2:1 we have the title to chapters 2-5 and it shows that the message is for Judah and not for Israel. In this sense it means the same as in 1:1. The main body of chapter 2 (7-22) is an expansion of 1:31, "the strong one shall be as tow." Verses 2-4 are intensely messianic and give an assurance that, amidst the wreck of Solomon's kingdom and earthly Zion, as herein described, the promise made to David shall stand firm. It is the promise of this scripture that a time shall come when controversies shall not be settled by war; they shall be settled by arbitration, and the arbiter is the glorious One of the prophecy, and the principles of arbitration will be his word, the law that goes forth from his mouth. Cf. Micah 4:1-5. We may never know whether it is Isaiah or Micah that is borrowing, or whether both alike quote from some earlier prophet. This glorious and far-reaching prediction has not yet been completely fulfilled. This is the first messianic prophecy of Isaiah, the pre-eminently evangelical prophet.

But what is meant here by "the latter days"? I cite only two scriptures, which tell us exactly what is meant. John, in his first letter says, "this is the last day," or the last time, that is, the times of the gospel are "the latter days." The prophet, Joel, says, "It shall come to pass in the last days," or the latter days, "That God will pour out his Spirit," and we know from the New Testament that this was fulfilled in Jerusalem on the first Pentecost after the resurrection of our Lord. It is settled by these words of God that "the latter days" in the Old Testament prophecies are the gospel days of the New Testament. Let us remember that the gospel days are the last days.

There is no age to succeed the gospel age. Whatever of good is to be accomplished in this world is to be accomplished in the gospel days, and by the means of the gospel. All this universal peace arbitration, knowledge of the Lord and his kingdom come by means of this same gospel.

I shall not cite the scriptures to prove it, but it is clearly established by the New Testament that the "mountain of the Lord's house" here is the visible, not invisible, church of our Lord Jesus Christ, which he established himself, empowered it through the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, and it is through the instrumentality of that church that the great things of this prophecy are to be brought about. This passage distinctly says, "Out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem." Our Saviour came, established his church, and then said, "Go into all the world, etc." and "Ye shall preach the gospel to all nations beginning at Jerusalem." The instrument then, by which these things are to be accomplished is just the gospel which we preach and which people hear and by which they are saved.

It is here prophesied that the nations shall be impressed with the visibility of the Lord's house, the church, and shall say, "Come, ye, and let us go to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob." They shall be enlightened by the light of the church, which being full of the Holy Spirit shall catch the eye of the nations and attract them. Then will they say, "Come and let us go up to the house of the Lord." The purpose of all this shall be that he may teach them. The church is God's school and God himself is the teacher) and they are taught the principles of arbitration.

The arbiter of the nations, as here described, is the Lord Jesus Christ, the daysman betwixt the nations. He and the principles of his gospel alone can bring about such a state of things that "there shall be war no more." The result of this arbitration will be universal peace (v. 4). This shall be a glorious consummation when will be settled by arbitration controversies of every kind whether between

nations or individuals, and righteousness shall prevail throughout the whole world. God's means of preparation of the nation for the great future, as just shown in the messianic prophecy, are his judgments. These only can prepare the nation for this great future (2:5 to 4:1), the items of which are (1) the sins to be visited and (2) the classes of objects to be visited by these judgments. The sins to be visited by these judgments (2:5-9) are soothsaying, heathen alliances, luxury, militarism, and idolatry.

The objects against which these judgments are to be brought (2:10 to 4:1) are everything proud and lofty:

1. Inanimate things that minister to pride, such as cedars and oaks, mountains, military defenses, ships and idols (2:10-21).

2. Men, especially the ruling classes (2:22-3:15). In 3:4 we have a picture of weak, foolish rulers. Cf. verse 12. The ruling classes were especially to blame for the growing sin and corruption of Judah. They were "grinding the face of the poor."

3. Women, for pride and wantonness (3:16 to 4:1). Here let us recall the indictment of the cruel, carousing women by Amos (4:1-3), and the words of Hosea about the prevalence of social impurity in his day (Hos. 4:2, 13-14). Isaiah dumps out the entire wardrobe of the luxurious sinner of the capital city. What a pity that wicked Paris should set the fashions for Christian women!

After this blast of judgments then follow the messianic prosperity, purity, and protection (4:2-6), a beautiful picture on a very dark background. Here we have the first mention of the 'key word, "Branch," in "the Branch of the Lord."

The subject of chapter 5 is the vineyard and its lessons, and the three essential things to note are: (1) the disappointing vineyard and its identification; (2) a series of woes announced; and (3) the coming army.

The prophet shows great skill here in securing attention by reciting a bit of a love song and then gliding gradually into his burning message to a sinful people. The description of this vineyard in the text is vivid and lifelike, showing the pains taken by the owner in preparing, tending, and guarding it. The great pains thus taken enhanced the expectation and, therefore, the disappointment. So, in despair and disgust he destroyed the vineyard and made its place desolate.

The prophet identifies the vineyard with Israel and Judah which had their beginnings, as a nation, with Abraham, and from the day of its planting it was under the special care of Jehovah. He always gave it the most desired spot in which to dwell, both in Egypt and in Canaan, but it never did live up to its opportunities and more, it never did yield the fruits of justice and righteousness, but instead, oppression and a cry. These general terms give way to the particular in the woes that follow. There are six distinct woes pronounced (5:8-23) against sinners in this paragraph, as follows:

1. Woe unto the land monopolies. This is a picture of what may be observed in many parts of the world today. Monopolies lead to loneliness and desolation. God is against the land shark. For a description of conditions, similar to Isaiah's, in England, see Goldsmith's *Deserted Village*, in which are found these lines: Ill fares the land, to hastening his a prey, Where wealth accumulates and men decay.

2. Woe unto the drunken revelers. This is a vivid picture of wine with its accompaniments and results. People inflamed with strong drink relish a kind of music which is not very religious. These musical instruments are all right but they were put to the wrong use. Intoxicating drinks not only pervert the instruments of the Lord, but they make their subjects disregard the works and rights of Jehovah. In verse 13 we see the effect of spiritual ignorance, which is captivity, perhaps the Babylonian captivity, or it may refer to Israel's captivity already begun. Sheol in verse 14 refers to the place of the

departed, the underworld in which the "shades" rested. Here the picture is that of the increasing multitudes in the spirit world because of their disobedience here and God's destruction of them, after which their land becomes the pasture for the flocks of foreign nomads.

3. Woe unto the defiant unbelievers. This is a picture of the harness of sin, and awful effect produced on those who follow its course. They are harnessed by it and rush madly on in their defying of the Holy One of Israel.

4. Woe unto the perverters of moral distinction, calling evil good, and good evil, putting darkness for light, and light for darkness. Their moral sense is so blunted that they cannot make moral distinctions, as Paul says in Hebrews, "not having their senses exercised to distinguish between good and evil."

5. Woe unto the conceited men, perhaps their politicians. They are often so wise that they cannot be instructed, but they can tell us how to run any kind of business, from the farm to the most intricate machinery of the government. They may have never had any experience in the subject which they teach, yet they can tell those who have spent their lives in such service just how to run every part of the business down to the minutest detail. But they are really "wise in their own eyes and prudent in their own sight."

6. Woe unto drunken officers, who justify the wicked for a bribe and pervert justice. When one is once allowed to look in upon our courts of justice (?) he can imagine that Isaiah was writing in the age in which we live. He goes on to show the just punishment that they were destined to receive because of their rejection of the law of Jehovah and because they despised the word of the Holy One of Israel.

The conditions herein set forth (5:25-30) reach beyond those of the Assyrian invasion and find a larger fulfilment in the carrying away of Judah by the Chaldeans. Here Jehovah is represented as giving

the signal and the call to the nations to assemble for the invasion of Judah and Israel, which may apply either to the Assyrians or to the Chaldeans and, perhaps, to both. Then the prophet describes the speed with which they come and do their destructive work, which may apply to the march of the Assyrians against Samaria and the Chaldeans against Jerusalem. (For minute details of description see the text.) The prophet closes his description of this invading army (or armies) and their destructive work, with Israel in the deepest gloom, which was fulfilled in three instances: (1) the capture of Samaria by the Assyrians; (2) the capture of Jerusalem by the Chaldeans; (3) the final destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans. Perhaps all three of these events are in the perspective of the prophet's vision, which constitute the dark picture and disappointing gloom with which he closes chapter 5 and section I of his book.

Chapter 6 gives us Isaiah's encouraging vision of Jehovah. The preceding section closed in the deepest gloom; the light of prophecy only made the darkness more fearful. Already the heir of David's throne, Uzziah, had been "humbled" by God's stroke, "cut away" as a withered branch, excluded from the house of the Lord, and continued till death "unhealed of his plague." The prophet had delivered his message faithfully, but being only a man, he was conscious of the failure of his message, and therefore, at such a time he needed the comforting revelation of Jehovah, just such as the vision of chapter 6 affords. Thus Jehovah, as he comforted Abraham, Jacob, Moses Joshua, Elijah, the twelve, Paul, and John, in their darkest hours by a vision of himself, so here he comforts Isaiah in his gloom of despondency.

A brief outline of chapter 6 is as follows:

1. The heavenly vision, a vision of the Lord, his throne, his train, the seraphim with six wings each and saying, "Holy, holy, holy, is Jehovah of hosts." These creatures are God's attendants and the six wings represent the speed with which they fly in carrying out his behests, but when in divine presence four of them were used for

another purpose. One pair veiled the seraph's face from the intolerable effulgence of divine glory; another pair veiled his feet, soiled in various ministrations, which were not meet for the all-pure presence.

2. The sense of unworthiness produced by the vision and the symbolic cleansing which encouraged him in his mission. Here the prophet acts very much as Job and John did when they saw his holiness, crying out, "unclean." This is a most natural result from the contrast between relative and absolute holiness. Job maintained his integrity until he saw the Lord and then he was ready to say, "I abhor myself and repent." So John fell at the feet of the glorious Son of God as one dead, and Peter said, "Depart; I am a sinful man." With these examples before us we may conclude that he who boasts of his holiness advertises thereby his guilty distance from God.

3. The offer for service, which naturally follows such a preparation as Isaiah had just received. This, too, is an expression of renewed courage, in the face of such a dark prospect.

4. The message and its effect. He was to preach with the understanding that his message would not be received and that the hearer, because of this message, would pass under the judicial blindness. This passage is quoted by our Lord (Matt. 13:14-15) to show the same condition in his day and that the responsibility for this condition did not rest upon the prophet or the preacher but that it was the natural result of an inexorable law, viz: that the effect of the message on the hearer of it depends altogether upon the attitude of the hearer toward the message. Them that reject, it hardens and them that accept, it gives life. Thus it has ever been with subjects of gospel address, but the message must be delivered whether it proves a savor of life unto life or of death unto death.

5. The terrible judgments to follow. Here the prophet asks, "How long is to continue this judicial blindness?" and the answer comes back, "Until cities are laid waste, etc." This includes their captivity in Babylon, their rejection of the Saviour and consequent dispersion,

and will continue until the Jews return and embrace the Messiah whom they now reject until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in.

6. The final hope expressed. This is the hope of the "remnant," "the holy seed." This was Isaiah's hope of Israel in his day; it was Christ's hope of Israel in his day; it was Paul's hope of Israel in his day, and is it not our hope of Israel in our day? "The remnant according to the election of grace."

QUESTIONS

1. What three things suggested by the word, "vision," in the title?

2. How do you explain the fact that this vision was "concerning Judah and Jerusalem" and yet it embraces a vast variety of nations and countries?

3. What relation does chapter I sustain to the whole book, what its standpoint, after what is it modeled, and of what does it consist?

4. What the contents of the first message?

5. What expressions in this paragraph worthy of note and what their application?

6. What the second message of chapter 1 (10-17)?

7. What the third message of this chapter (18-23), what the back reference here and what the renewed charge?

8. What the fourth message in this chapter (24-31) and what in particular, the hope here held out to Judah?

9. What New Testament quotation from this chapter and what use is there made of it?

10. What the nature of the contents of chapters 2-5 and what the relation of this section to chapter 1?

11. To what period of time does the section (2-5) belong and what the proof?
12. What the title to this section and what does it include?
13. What the close relation of chapters 1-2?
14. What the assurance found in the introduction (vv. 2-4) and how does this passage compare with Micah's prophecy on the same point?
15. What is meant here by "the latter days"?
16. What is meant by "the mountain of the Lord's house"?
17. What means shall be used by the church in accomplishing these results?
18. What spirit of inquiry is here awakened?
19. To what purpose shall all this be?
20. Who is to be the arbiter of the nations, as here described?
21. What the result of this arbitration?
22. What God's means of preparation of the nation for the great future, as just shown in the messianic prophecy, and what, in general the items of judgment?
23. What the sins to be visited by these judgments (2:5-9)?
24. What the objects against which these judgments are to be brought (2:10 to 4:1)?
25. What shall follow these judgments on God's people (4:2-6)?

26. What is the subject of chapter 5 and what the three main points in it?
27. Describe the disappointing vineyard.
28. Identify this vineyard and show its parallels in history.
29. Itemize the woes that follow (5:8-23) and note the points of interest in each case.
30. What the coming army as predicted in 5:25-30 and what the parallels of this prophecy and its fulfilment?
31. What the subject of chapter 6 and what its relation to the section (2-5) and what its bearing on the condition of Judah at this time?
32. Give a brief outline of chapter 6 and the application of each point.

XII. THE BOOK OF ISAIAH - PART 4

Isaiah 7:1 to 10:14

In the outline the section, Isaiah 7-13, is called the book of Immanuel, because the name, "Immanuel," occurs in it twice and it is largely messianic. There are four main divisions of this section preceded by a historical introduction, as follows: Historical introduction (7:1-2)

I. Two interviews with Ahaz and their messages (7:3-25)

II. Desolating judgments followed by salvation (8:1 to 9:7)

III. Jehovah's hand of judgments (9:8-10:4)

IV. The debasement of the Assyrians and the salvation of true Israel (10:5 to 12:6)

There are certain items of information in the historical introduction, as follows:

1. That the date of this section is the "days of Ahaz," king of Judah.

2. That, during this reign, Rezin, king of Syria, and Pekah, king of Israel, attempted to take Jerusalem but failed.

3. That the confederacy between Syria and Ephraim caused great fear in Judah on the part of both the king and the people. By the command of Jehovah Isaiah, with his son, Shearjashub, went forth to meet Ahaz, at the end of the conduit of the upper pool, in the highway of the fuller's field to quiet his fear respecting the confederacy of Rezin and Pekah, assuring him that their proposed capture of Jerusalem and enthronement of Tabeel, an Assyrian, should not come to pass because Damascus and Samaria had only human heads, while Jerusalem had a divine head who was able to and would destroy their confederacy within sixty-five years, which

included the work of Tiglath-pileser III, Shalmaneser IV, Sargon, Sennacherib, and Esarhaddon. The last named completed the destruction of the power of the ten tribes by placing heathen colonists in the cities of Samaria (2 Kings 17:24; Ezek. 4:2). Then the prophet rested Ahaz's case on his faith in Jehovah's word and promise. This challenge of faith to Ahaz is beautifully expressed by the poet, thus: Happiest they of human race To whom our God has granted grace To read, to fear, to hope, to pray; To lift the latch and force the way.

It seems that Ahaz silently rejected Jehovah's proposition of faith. So Jehovah, to give him another chance and to leave him without excuse, offers, through his prophet, to strengthen Ahaz's faith by means of a sign, allowing him to name the sign to be given. But Ahaz made "a pious dodge" because of his contemplated alliance with Assyria, saying that he would not tempt Jehovah. Then the prophet upbraids the house of David for trying the patience of Jehovah and announces that Jehovah will give a sign anyway, which was the child to be born of a virgin, after which he goes on to show that the whole land shall be made desolate. Jehovah will summons the nations to devastate the land. Then he gives four pictures of its desolation as follows: (1) Flies and bees; (2) the hired razor; (3) one cow and two sheep; (4) briars and thorns.

Signs were of various kinds. They might be actual miracles performed to attest a divine commission (Ex. 4:3-9), or judgments of God, significant of his power of justice (Ex. 10:2), or memorials of something in the past (Ex. 13:9, 16), or pledges of something still future, such as are found in Judges 6:36-40; 2 Kings 20:8-11 et al. The sign here was a pledge of God's promise to Ahaz of the destruction of Damascus, and Samaria and comes under the last named class. But as to its fulfilment there is much discussion, the most of which we may brush aside as altogether unprofitable. The radical critics contend that Isaiah expected a remarkable deliverer to arise in connection with the Assyrian war and deny that this refers at all to our Lord Jesus Christ. There seems to be no certain or

common ground for mediating and conservative critics themselves. There are two main views held: (1) That a child was to be born in the days of Isaiah who was to be a type of the great Immanuel. They say that verses 15-16 favor this view. Now if the birth was to be natural, it seems to have a double sense, or else a very poor type. If there were a miraculous conception of a type of Christ in those days all records have been lost. At least, it is impossible to locate definitely the wonderful person who was to prefigure the real Immanuel. (2) That the reference is solely to the birth of Jesus Christ. But how could this be a sign unto Ahaz? Here we note the fact that this language respecting the sign is addressed to the "house of David" and therefore becomes a sign to the nation rather than to Ahaz alone. The time element of the prophecy hinges on the word, "before." It is literally true that before this child grew to discern good and evil, the land of Damascus and the land of Israel had been laid waste. The text does not say how long before but the word, "before," is used to express the order of events, rather than time immediately before. A good paraphrase of the prophecy would be, "O house of David, I will give you a sign: Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel, but before the child shall know to refuse the evil and choose the good, Syria and Israel shall be forsaken and Jehovah will bring upon thee, and upon thy people, days unlike any that have come since Ephraim rebelled in the days of Jeroboam." All this took place before the child was born who was to be the sign unto all people, the Lord Jesus Christ. This is the idea of Genesis 3:15: "The seed of the woman [not of the man] shall bruise the serpent's head," and forecasts the doctrine of the incarnation, a doctrine essential to the redemption of the world. Of one thing we may be assured, viz: Never was this prophecy fulfilled until Jesus Christ was born of the virgin Mary. Of him old Simeon said, "He shall be set for a sign which is spoken against." So we can plant ourselves squarely on Matthew 1:23 and say, "Here is the fulfilment of Isaiah 7:14."

The significance of "the fly," "the bee," "the razor," "the cow and two sheep," and "briers and thorns" is important. The fly is here

used to designate the Egyptian army which was loosely organized, something like the looseness with which flies swarm. The bee refers to Assyria whose armies were much better and more compactly organized than the Egyptian army, something like the order with which bees work. The hired razor refers to the king of Assyria, who had been hired, as it were, by Samaria to help them, meaning that this was to be the power by which Jehovah was going to accomplish his work of destruction upon Samaria and Damascus. The "cow and two sheep" signifies the scanty supply of animals left in the land after this desolation which was so clearly foretold. The "briers and thorns" represent the deserted condition of the country, in which the lands that were once tilled and valuable, would then become overgrown with briers and thorns.

There are three subdivisions of the section, 8:1 to 9:7, as follows:

1. The twofold sign of the punishment about to fall upon Damascus and Samaria.
2. The invasion of Judah.
3. Jehovah's light dispels the darkness.

The twofold sign was the sign of the great tablet and the child's name, which was intended especially for the doubters and unbelievers in the nation, as the sign, in the preceding chapter, of Immanuel, "God with us," was sufficient for the reassurance of the faithful. This was a sign that would be verified in two or three years and at once placed the king and people on probation, forcing them to raise the question, "Shall we continue to look to Assyria for help, or shall we trust the prophet's word about Assyria, Rezin, and Pekah?" The writing on the tablet and the child's name were identical, meaning "Plunder speedeth, spoil hasteth," from which sign and the obligations involved in its verification there was no escape. It was fulfilled in three or four years when Pekah was assassinated and Rezin slain by the king of Assyria.

The prophet describes this invasion as the waters of the Euphrates coming first against Damascus and Samaria because they looked to Rezin and Pekah rather than to Jehovah's resources for relief, and bursting through them, who had been the breakwater for Judah against this flood, it would sweep on into Judah and overflow it.

Then the prophet (8:9-10) invites the people of the East to make an uproar and to devise all means possible for the destruction of Judah, but it would all come to nought, for God was with his people. Immanuel was their hope and is our hope. As Paul says in Romans 8:31, "If God is for us, who is against us?"

As shown in 8:11-15, their real danger was not in invading armies, but in unbelief. Jehovah was to be their dread. He would be their sanctuary, their refuge, if they only believed on him. If not, he became a stone of stumbling or a snare unto them. This thought is amplified in the New Testament in many places (see Luke 2:34; Rom. 9:33; 1 Peter 2:8, et al). The meaning of 8:16-18, "Bind thou up the testimony, etc.," is Jehovah's order to Israel to write the prophecy and to tie it up in the roll for the generations of his people to follow. Isaiah then expresses his abiding confidence in his and his children's mission in being signs in Israel, looking to him for his favor.

The warning and exhortation (8:19-22) were given them in view of their coming troublous times when they would be tempted to turn to other sources of information rather than God's revelations, which would lead them into greater darkness and confusion. A case of its violation is that of King Saul. When God refused to hear him because of his sin, he sought the witch of Endor, which in the light of this passage illustrates the operations of modern spiritualists.

Across the horrible background of chapter 8 the prophet sketches, in startling strokes of light, the image of a coming Redeemer, who brought light, liberty, peace, and joy to his subjects. The New Testament in Matthew 4:15-16, tells us that the light, liberty, peace, and joy of the prophecy were fulfilled in the land of Zebulun and

Naphtali when Jesus and his disciples came among the people dwelling around the Sea of Galilee and preached his gospel and healed their sick and delivered their demoniacs. That his gospel was light, a great light. All knowledge is light. Whatsoever maketh manifest is light. And this gospel brought the knowledge of salvation in the remission of their sins. It revealed their relations toward God. It revealed God himself in the face of Jesus Christ. It discovered their sins and brought contrition and repentance. It revealed a sin-cleansing and sin-pardoning Saviour. Its reception brought peace by justification and brought liberty by dispossession of Satan. And with light, liberty, and peace came joy unspeakable.

The central text of this passage is, "For unto us a child is born and unto us a son is given." The "for" refers to the preceding context, which tells us that she who was under gloom shall have no more anguish. That the people who walk in darkness behold a great light. That the land of Zebulun and Naphtali on which divine contempt had been poured is now overflowed with blessings. That with light has come liberty, and with liberty peace, and with peace joy – and the joy of harvest and of victory, for this child is born. The coming of this child is assigned as the reason or cause for all this light, this liberty, this peace, this joy. Marvelous child to be the author of such blessings. Humanity is unquestionably here. It is a child, born of an earthly mother. But mere humanity cannot account for such glorious and eternal results. A mere child could not bear up under the government of the world and establish a kingdom of whose increase there should be no end.

The names ascribed to our Lord in 9:6 cannot be Alexander, Caesar, or Bonaparte. Their kingdoms were not of peace, light, joy, and liberty. Their kingdoms perished with themselves. But what is this child's name? It staggers us to call it: His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace! If this be not divinity, words cannot express it. And if it be divinity as certainly as a "child born" expresses humanity, then well may his name be "Wonderful," for he is God-man. Earth, indeed,

furnished his mother, but heaven furnished the sire. And if doubt inquire, how can these things be, it must be literally true as revealed and fulfilled later: "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee, therefore, also the Holy One who shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God."

In particular these names give us the following ideas of him:

1. "Wonderful, Counsellor" indicates the matchless wisdom with which he taught and lived among men. In all that concerns the glory of Jehovah and the welfare of his people, we may rely implicitly on the purposes and plans of this Deliverer.
2. "Mighty God" means the living and true God and refers to his omnipotence in carrying out his plans and purposes. He is not only God, but he is Almighty God, at whose command were the powers of the universe, "head over all things unto the church," making "all things work together for good to them that love God."
3. "Everlasting Father" means "Father of eternity" and refers to his divinity, whose "goings forth are from of old, from everlasting."
4. "Prince of Peace" refers to his mission in the nature of his kingdom. He is not only a mighty hero but his kingdom is a kingdom of peace.

The promise here concerning his kingdom is that it is to be an everlasting kingdom, administered in peace and righteousness (v. 6).

The title of section 9:8 to 10:4 is "Jehovah's hand of judgment," and is suggested from the fact that this section is divided into four paragraphs, or strophes, each one ending with the sad refrain, "For all this his anger is not turned away, but his hand is stretched out still," i.e., for further chastisement. The special themes of these four paragraphs, respectively, are as follows:

1. 9:8-12, The loss of wealth, followed by repeated invasion.

2. 9:13-17, The loss of rulers.

3. 9:18-21, The devouring fire of their own sinfulness.

4. 10:1-4, A woe unto perverters and their utter helplessness.

The loss of wealth is described in 9:8-12. The prophet introduces this section by saying that the Lord had sent word to Jacob and it had lighted up Israel, i.e., this message of destruction was mainly for Israel, who were standing stoutly in the face of God's chastisements, by substituting one thing for another destroyed by Jehovah. The prophet assures them that God has not exhausted all his means and that he will use Syria and Philistia to complete the work of desolation.

Then the loss of their rulers is described in 9:13-17. The prophet introduces this strophe with a complaint that Jehovah's chastisements had been ineffective in turning Samaria to himself. Then he goes on to show that Jehovah would cut off from Israel the head, i.e., the elder, and the tail, i.e., the lying prophet; that he would destroy all without mercy because they were all profane.

The devouring fire of their own sinfulness follows in 9:18-21. The prophet here likens wickedness unto a devouring fire, which devours briars and thorns, then breaks out in the forests and rolls up its column of smoke. A very impressive picture of the course and penalty of wickedness, as it goes on to full fruitage in its destruction of those who practice it, until without discrimination it devours alike the neighbor and the kinsman.

In 10:1-4 the prophet brings a heavy charge against this class, that they rob the poor and needy, and devour widows' houses, making them their prey. What a picture of perverted justice! Because of this awful corruption there will be no hope for them before the enemy in the day of Jehovah's visitation and desolation. They shall bow down under the prisoners and fall under the slain. A graphic description of their humiliation is this, yet, "For all this his anger is not turned

away, but his hand is stretched out still." A sad wail and a gloomy picture from which we joyfully turn to another section of the book, in which we have the enemies of Jehovah's people brought low and the true Israel of God exalted. But this will follow in the next chapter.

QUESTIONS

1. What the title of Isaiah 7-12 in the outline and why is it so called?
2. What the outline of this division?
3. What the items of information in the historical introduction?
4. Give an account of the first meeting with Ahaz and the message of the prophet in connection with it.
5. Give an account of the second meeting with Ahaz and the message of the prophet in connection with it.
6. What is the meaning of Jehovah's sign to Ahaz and when was the prophecy of this sign fulfilled?
7. What the significance of "the fly," "the bee," "the razor," "the cow and two sheep," and "briers and thorns"?
8. What three subdivisions of 8:1 to 9:7?
9. What the twofold sign of the punishment about to fall upon Damascus and Samaria and what the significance of it?
10. Describe the picture of the Assyrian invasion as given here by the prophet in 8:5-8.
11. What hope of defense against this invading power does the prophet hold out to Judah in 8:9-10?
12. In what was their real danger as shown in 8:11-15?

13. What was the meaning of 8:16-18, "Bind thou up the testimony, etc."?
14. What the special pertinency of the exhortation of Isaiah respecting familiar spirits in 8:19-22 and what Old Testament example of the violation of its teaching?
15. What the fulfilment and interpretation of the great messianic prophecy in 9:1-7?
16. What the names ascribed to our Lord in 9:6 and what the significance of them in general and in particular?
17. What promise here concerning his kingdom?
18. What the title of section 9:8 to 10:4 and what suggests it?
19. What the special themes of each of these four paragraphs?
20. How is the loss of wealth in 9:8-12 described?
21. How is the loss of their rulers in 9:13-17 described?
22. How is the devouring fire of their own sinfulness in 9:18-21 described?
23. How is the woe against perverters of righteousness in 10:1-4 here described?

XIII. THE BOOK OF ISAIAH PART 5

Isaiah 10:5 to 12:6

The general theme of this section is the abasement of the Assyrians and the exaltation of Israel, and the main divisions are:

1. The Assyrian exalted and then abased (10:5-27)
2. Judah humbled and then exalted (10:28 to 12:6).

There are five distinct paragraphs in the first division:

1. The Assyrian was the rod of Jehovah, though he did not so think purpose it, and threatened Jerusalem because of his successes (10:5-11).
2. His abasement decreed because he took the glory to himself and became exalted (10:12-14).
3. Jehovah's right to abase Assyria is the right of the hewer over the ax and the sawyer over the saw, therefore the punishment will be complete (10:15-19).
4. The remnant will be encouraged when they see Jehovah's destruction of their enemies (10:20-23).
5. Jehovah's exhortation to his people not to fear the Assyrians, for he meant good to them by this correction, but now he was about ready to stretch forth his hand to destroy their enemies, just as he had saved his people in their past history from their enemies (10:24-27).

There are five distinct items also in the second division:

1. A vivid description of the invading Assyrian, indicating his course and progress through the land and his threat against Jerusalem (10:28-32).

2. A prophecy of the destruction of the proud Assyrians by Jehovah himself (10:33-34).

3. A shoot out of the stock of Jesse becomes the Deliverer, the Prince of Peace (11:1-10).

4. The return of Jehovah's people from all lands (11:11-16).

5. The song of the redeemed (12).

The last three items are messianic and need very careful and extended consideration which we now take up. An appropriate text with which to introduce this great messianic prophecy is a passage from Acts:

Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said. It was necessary that the word of God should first be spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles. For so hath the Lord commanded us, saying, I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldest be for salvation unto the ends of the earth. – ACTS 13:46f.

The single point in this passage to which attention is called, is the fact that Paul calls a prophecy, that the gospel should go to the Gentiles, a command; that what is prophesied by the Spirit of God becomes a command resting upon the children of God. He says, "We turn to the Gentiles, for so hath the Lord commanded us, saying, I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles." Now if a prophecy of the giving of the gospel to the Gentiles is a command upon God's people, then a prophecy of the ultimate conversion of the Jews becomes also a command resting upon his people.

Now let us look at Isaiah II: "And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots." In the book of Job it is said: "There is hope of a tree, if it be cut down, that it will sprout again; that through the vapor of water it will sprout and it will bring forth and bear." We have seen that illustrated hundreds

of times when from the stumps of trees that have been cut down shoots will spring up and make new trees. This means that the royal line of David, who was the son of Jesse, had fallen under great misfortune and under the curses of God for their sin, and that the house of David was brought very low. It was, as if it were a tree cut down. Now, when it seemed to be utterly gone, there should come out from the stump of that Davidic tree a tender branch, and that branch should become a fruit-bearing tree that would be more remarkable than the original tree itself. Jesse's home was Bethlehem, and in the New Testament times the family of David had gotten so low that Mary and Joseph, who both belonged to it, were able to present as offerings only a pair of turtle doves, indicating their great poverty. Joseph was a carpenter and a very poor man. Now, when they came to Bethlehem and Christ was born, that, according to a multitude of scriptures which I will not take time to cite, was the springing up of the sprout from the stump of the tree of Jesse.

Verse 2 says: "And the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom .and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord." This was fulfilled at his baptism, when coming up out of the water he prayed, and the Spirit of God descended upon him in the form of a dove. This was his anointing, and John says that on that day he received the Spirit of God without measure. All people upon whom the Spirit of God had descended before that time had received it in a limited degree, a measured degree) but the fulness of the Spirit's power by the anointing rested upon the Lord Jesus Christ, so that it might be called the "spirit of wisdom and of understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord." He himself in Nazareth, where he had been brought up, read a passage from this same prophecy of Isaiah, where the spirit of the Lord was promised to rest upon him, and declared that on that day that prophecy was fulfilled in their midst; that he stood before them as the fulfilment of the prophecy of Isaiah, and that the Spirit of the Lord had anointed him to preach the gospel to the poor, to give sight to the blind, to give deliverance to the imprisoned, those that were in

bondage, and to preach the acceptable year of the Lord, that is, the jubilee year, the fiftieth sabbatical year, that antitype of the Old Testament which prefigured the millennial day, when the trumpet should be blown throughout the ends of the earth, announcing that all bondage was ended, that all prison doors were open, that all the burdens and ails that flesh was heir to were to be removed. He announced that through his induement of the Spirit he came to preach that. Consequently the next verses say that this Spirit of induement shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord; and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears; but with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth; and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth; and with the breath of his lips shall slay the wicked.

The life of our Lord as set forth in the Four Gospels illustrates all that is here foretold. Never before in the history of the world had there come one whose initiative perception of the realities of things was so vast; who was never misled by an apparent state of affairs, but who looked through all seeming and all masks to the very heart of things, so that he never made a mistake. He read the heart of every man that came and propounded a question to him. He understood the motive that was back of the question, and in making his reply to these inquiries he never for one moment used a flattering term, but he laid bare the secrets of the innermost heart, and all he said was in righteousness. When cases came before him in which the great were oppressing the small, in which the rich were grinding the poor, in which the hypocrite was taking advantage of the simple, in all these cases he reproved as the oracle of God. He swept away the subterfuges under which men disguised their real nature, and unveiled the iniquity of their purposes, and no earthly position and honor, no gathering of the multitude upon one side of the question, ever deterred him from speaking the plainest and simplest truth without fear, without favor, and without partiality. The earth had never been so reproved with equity for the meek. The lowly ones found in him their everlasting friend, a tower of strength, and the

exalted ones found in him their mightiest enemy, when their exaltation was based not upon merit and not upon truth, but upon a fictitious or adventitious circumstance.

The prophecy goes on now to tell the ultimate results:

The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall go to the pasture; their young ones shall lie down together, and the lion shall eat straw like an ox. And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice' den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.

Now, here is a fulfilment that has not yet come – the prevalence of the knowledge of God over the whole earth and such an acceptance of the teaching of Jesus Christ as shall put an end to the strifes and bitterness of time; in the imagery here put forth, as if a cow and a bear should go out to the pasture together; as if a lion's nature should be so changed that he should eat grass like an ox; as if a leopard and a kid should lie down together, the kid without a fear, and the leopard without the lust of the kid's blood; that a baby, perfectly helpless, a little child, sucking child, should put out his hand upon a venomous reptile, and a child a little older, a weaned child, should thrust his hand into the den of a basilisk, or cockatrice, as it is here called.

Now, these figures indicate to us what is called the millennial times, the thousand years in which wars will cease and differences between peoples will be settled by arbitration, and according to another prophecy in this book, that Jesus Christ shall be the Arbiter between the nations, that is, that there will come a time when the principles presented in the gospel of Jesus Christ, and not the principles adopted at the Hague Conference, shall be the basis of the settlement

of differences between nations. It is a long way to that time now. but it will come.

It is the logical and inexorable result of the world's full acceptance of the teaching of Jesus Christ. The hope of every Christian is turned to that time, and no matter how sinister, for the time being, may be the portents on the political sky, nor how gloomy the forebodings of the pessimistic mind, yet the true Christian is heart fired by faith and is essentially an optimist. He sees the good times coming. He does not believe that this world is going to destruction. He does not believe that God has vacated the throne of government, or allowed to slip from his hand the reins of government) but that on high, above all mutations of time and clouds and fogs and dusts of earth's battle, in a serenity that is never clouded, he looks down calmly upon what seems to be the ceaseless perturbations of time, knowing that in his own way, retaining his control of every spring of activity, of every source of power and of the ultimate forces of nature and morals, he is bringing things to pass in a way that is perfectly irresistible. Every word of God ever spoken in the past, that was to be fulfilled up to the present time, has been fulfilled literally, and we shall see the fulfilment of this prophecy in due time.

The second part of the chapter, whose connections with Romans 11 would be apparent is as follows:

And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the peoples, to it shall the Gentiles seek; and his rest shall be glorious. And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall set his hand again the second time to recover the remnant of his people, which shall be left, from Assyria, and from Egypt, and from Pathros, and from Cush, and from Elam, and from Shinar, and from Hamath, and from the islands of the sea.

This is a distinct prophecy, connecting the gathering together of dispersed Israel in some way with that period of millennial peace and glory. It is to be in connection with that prevalence of the knowledge of the Lord that will fill the whole earth; not the first

gathering, as when he led Israel out of Egypt; not the first gathering from Babylon, as when by the command of Cyrus the captives were ordered to return to their own land; not the first time, from Elam or Cush, whose kings issued decrees, that is, the decree of Cyrus, the decree of Darius Hystaspes, the decree of Artaxerxes, and the second decree of Artaxerxes, all bearing upon the return of the Jews to their native land. That was the first time. Now he says it shall come to pass in that day, that is yet ahead of us, that "A second time I will gather the dispersed of Israel from all the lands of the earth," mentioning Cush, or Ethiopia, Egypt, Persia, and Assyria. This gathering will certainly come.

He says, "And he will set up an ensign for the nations, and will assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth. The envy also of Ephraim shall depart." Ephraim, that is, the Ten Tribes, always envied Judah, and that envy had to do with the partition of the kingdom and the calamities that came upon the divided nation. Now when this gathering takes place the Ten Tribes shall this time be without envy against Judah, and "Judah shall not vex Ephraim. And they . . . shall fly upon the shoulder of the Philistines on the west . . . and the children of Ammon shall obey them." That is to say, the Gentiles shall become nursing mothers and fathers to the Jewish people, and this gathering of the Jewish people shall be brought about through the action of the Gentile nations. That is yet to be fulfilled.

Whether the initiation of the movement shall take place by England, or Germany, or the United States, we do not know, but the Word of God, which has never failed, will yet bring about a change of the sentiment of Gentiles toward the Jewish people. The reproach of being a Jew will be taken away. For a long time the name of a Jew has been a stench in the nostrils of other nations. The Romans hated him. The Greeks hated him. The Russians hate him today. The Germans hated him. The English kings ground him to powder. From all parts of the world the hand of the oppressor has been stretched forth to smite the Jew. Now it is the prophecy of God that through

the intervention of Gentile nations these despised Jewish people shall be gathered together.

Two thousand years have passed away since they cut off their Messiah and he cut them off, but Paul says, "Hath he cast them off forever? God forbid." When they fell in betrayal of their Messiah did they fall forever? He affirms positively that they did not. They fell, but it was in the purposes of God only to allow the opening of a door of salvation to the Gentiles. Three years and a half after the crucifixion of Christ the gospel that had for the past seven years been preached exclusively to Jews took a different direction, and from that time on we have no historical account of any great number of Jews being converted. Multitudes of them were converted from the time of Christ's baptism to the time of Saul's persecution – three thousand in one day, five thousand another day, great multitudes at other times, so that we may reasonably conclude that at least a hundred thousand Jews were converted in the seven years lasting from the beginning of the public ministry of Christ, at his baptism, when he was received and anointed, to the persecution under Saul of Tarsus, which turned the attention of the church to the Gentile world, and from that time on the thousands of converts have come from the Gentiles. The kingdom of God had been taken from the Jews and given to the Gentiles. Now, says the apostle Paul, Is that permanent? When they stumbled that way did they fall finally? He says, "No"; that stumbling was not final, because the gifts and callings of God are without any change of mind, and he has not utterly cast off his people, but he has permitted their fall to bring about the salvation of the Gentiles, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in.

But the Jews will be cut off as long as the great period of evangelization lasts among the Gentiles; just that long Jerusalem shall be trodden under foot of the Gentiles. The Jew shall not occupy his holy land, nor his ancient city, but there will be a full measure ultimately, when because of sin on the part of the Gentiles the glorious opportunities that are enjoyed today will be taken away;

when we have allowed our hearts to wax cold and our faith to become dim, and have turned away from that induement of power which comes by the Holy Spirit, and trust to money, and trust to personal influence, and trust to human eloquence; when we have shut our eyes to the shining of the galaxy of perfect stars that are blazing in the darkness. Then the fulness of the Gentiles will have come.

Another result is here described: "And the Lord shall utterly destroy the tongue of the Egyptian sea." The tongue of the Egyptian sea is the Red Sea which projects away up into Egypt, and when, in the olden time the captives were brought out of Egypt, with the wind God divided the tongue of that sea, and they passed over dry shod. Now, something similar to that will occur in the later times: "And the Lord shall utterly destroy the tongue of the Egyptian sea, and with his mighty wind shall he shake his hand over the river, and shall smite it into seven streams, and make men go over dry shod."

When these Jews were approaching their Holy Land in the olden time, the Jordan was swelling in its flood, with full banks, and by the voice of God the river was cut in twain, and the people passed over it. Now, by miracles as astounding as the Red Sea and the passage of the river Jordan, shall the difficulties and obstacles in the way of the gathering of the Jewish people be removed in the later time. "And there shall be an highway for the remnant of his people, which shall be left, from Assyria; like as there was for Israel in the day that he came up out of the land of Egypt." The King of Persia gave an order when the Jews were allowed to return, that men should be sent to prepare a way for them to go, and all of the officers of the Persian government along the entire line of the passageway to the Holy Land were commanded, by money and every kindness, to facilitate the passage of these people back to their ancient home. Now, in the time spoken of here, from every land of dispersion there shall be a highway, an easy traveling path, for the returning Jewish remnant. It is this conversion of the Jews that shall usher in the millennial times.

Zechariah's testimony to this event is clear and that shall be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet Zechariah: "I will pour upon the house of David) and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplication; and they shall look unto me whom they have pierced; and they shall mourn for him as one mourneth for his only son." Their mourning in that time shall be greater than their mourning when King Josiah died in the battle of Megiddon. There the independent monarchy of the Jews died a royal death. After that time the three descendants of Josiah were mere dependents upon Babylon. Consequently the mourning of the Jews when Josiah died was the greatest mourning in their history. Jeremiah wrote an elegy on him. Now, says this prophecy of Zechariah, They shall ultimately be so convicted of their sins by the outpouring of the spirit of God upon their hearts that they shall see the Messiah whom they have pierced, and the mourning that they will experience will be greater than the mourning in which they indulged when King Josiah died. The prophecy then goes on to state that in that day there shall be opened up for the house of Israel and the seed of David a fountain for sin and uncleanness. That is the prophecy upon which Cowper wrote the hymn that lingers on the lips of all congregations which praise God: There is a fountain filled with blood, Drawn from Emmanuel's veins, And sinners plunged beneath that flood Lose all their guilty stains.

Now this prophecy declares that that fountain in that day shall be opened for the Jews. Gentile sinners already for two thousand years have been plunging into its cleansing stream, but Israel standeth afar off, a people under ban, an outcast, stricken and forlorn people, the contempt of the nations of the earth. But the full tide of millennial glory can never come until these Jews be converted.

I cited that passage in Acts 13, which said that when God prophesied that Jews should become a light to the Gentiles, that operated as a commandment upon his church to preach the gospel to the Gentiles; so now when God prophesies the future salvation of the Jewish people, and that operates as a commandment upon us to turn our

attention to the salvation of the Jews, knowing that that is the last barrier between us and that glorious time when the leopard and the kid shall lie down together, when the cow and the bear shall go off together to the same pasture, when the lion shall eat straw like an ox, when the helpless babe will need no protection though coming in contact with the most ravenous wild beast or the most venomous serpent, because the power to hurt is taken away from all of God's holy mountain, and the old paradise time has come back, when Adam and Eve without fear mingled with the beasts, and they even passed in review before them. The lion did not crouch at his coming, the tiger did not glare upon him with malignancy, but the fear of man was on all of the brute creation. Sin came and destroyed the majesty of man and brought about a war between the man and all the beasts of the field, and brought a curse upon the earth, so that it produces thorns and briers. Now, in the millennial times the disabilities which attach to present life, the misfortunes which come, the wars whose thunders today shake the Orient and whose echoes frighten the Occident, shall cease. God speed that day, when hatred shall lie down to ashes, when envies and jealousies and strifes have come to an end; when this world, this errant globe, that through sin swung out of its orbit of allegiance to God, and wandered rebelliously and darkly into space, shall feel the centripetal attraction of the sun of righteousness, and by the attracting power of the Son of God shall be brought back to its place among the realms of the universe and chaos is ended, and order and harmony restored.

The prophet goes right on from chapter II into the song of the redeemed, which is a perfect little gem of literature and reminds us of the song of Miriam and Moses on the banks of deliverance from the Egyptians, or the great song of deliverance from the apostate church as we have it in Revelation. Here they sing of Jehovah's goodness and his comfort, his salvation and his strength, his excellence and his greatness. They are now drawing water out of the wells of salvation and rejoicing in their triumphs over their oppressors. That will be a glorious, good day for God's people when the Jews accept the Messiah and add their joyous hallelujahs to the

chorus of the redeemed. Then will they make glad the city of God in publishing the good tidings to earth's remotest bounds. Ye pilgrims on the road To Zion's city, sing: Sing on, rejoicing every day In Christ th' eternal King.

QUESTIONS

1. What the general theme of this section?
2. What the main divisions of this section?
3. What the several items of the first division, 10:5-27?
4. What the several items of the second division, 10:28 to 12:6?
5. What would be an appropriate text with which to introduce this great messianic prophecy?
6. What the single point of the application of this passage to the matter in hand?
7. Explain the "rod out of the stem of Jesse" and its application.
8. Explain verse 2: when fulfilled, what the proof and what the results?
9. How are all these things here foretold illustrated in the life of our Lord?
10. What the ultimate results as here foretold?
11. What can you say of the fulfilment as to the final results?
12. What is indicated by this prophecy, how to be realized, and what its bearing on the Christian's outlook?
13. What the prophecy of the second item of the chapter and with what other scripture is it connected?

14. When is this to be realized and what gathering is this to be?

15. How is all this to be brought about, i.e., by whom and what to be one of the glorious results?

16. How long now since the Jews were cut off, how, when, and why and what hope does Paul hold out to the Jews?

17. How long are the Jews to be cut off and what will indicate the approach of the end of the Gentile dispensation?

18. What another result and what its meaning?

19. What Zechariah's testimony to this event?

20. What is our relation to this great future event?

21. What the nature and contents of chapter 12?

XIV. THE BOOK OF ISAIAH PART 5

Isaiah 13-23

This section is called "The Book of Foreign Prophecies," because it treats of the foreign nations in their relation to Judah and Israel.

There are ten foreign nations here mentioned, as follows: Babylon, Assyria, Philistia, Moab, Damascus, Ethiopia, Egypt, Dumah, Arabia, and Tyre, with second prophecies against Egypt, Ethiopia, and Babylon, and one thrown in against Israel, Judah) Jerusalem, and Shebna, each. This Shebna was probably a foreigner. He was to be degraded from his high office and Eliakim was to take his place.

The radical critics assign to this section a much later date because of the distinctly predictive prophecies contained in it. There is no question that it reflects the condition of Babylon long after the time of Isaiah, and unless one believes heartily in supernatural revelations, the conclusion that it was written much later than the time of Isaiah, is unavoidable. The author accepts it as a prophecy of Isaiah and holds tenaciously to the theory of the unity of the book.

In chapters 13-23 the prophet gives us a series of judicial acts on various surrounding peoples, each of whom embodied some special form of worldly pride or ungodly self-will. But Asshur-Babel was conspicuous above all the rest. After fourteen. centuries of comparative quiet, she was now reviving the idea of universal empire, notwithstanding the fact that Nimrod's ruined tower stood as a perpetual warning against any such attempt. This was the divine purpose, that God might use it for his own instrument to chastise, both the various Gentile races, and especially his own people, Israel. This was the "hand that is stretched out upon all the nations" (14:26), to break up the fallow ground of the world's surface, and prepare it for the good seed of the kingdom of God. Not only are these chapters (13-23) thus bound together inwardly, but they are also bound together outwardly by a similarity of title. We cannot

detach chapters 13-14 from what has gone before without injury to the whole series, because

1. It is only in these chapters that we have the full antithesis to the mighty overflowing of the Assyrian deluge in chapters 7-8, and 10.

2. Chapter 12 is a fit introduction to chapters 13-14, in that the deliverance of Zion, so briefly alluded to in chapter 12, requires a further view of the enemies' prostration, which these chapters supply. In 14:2-27 we find the song of triumph analogous to Exodus 15, rather than in chapter 12.

3. Isaiah 14:27 seems to be a fit termination of the section which began with 7:1.

4. There are many verbal links that connect these chapters with the preceding chapters. For example, take 10:25 and 13:3; 10:27 and 13:5; 9:18 and 13:13, et multa al.

5. The complete cutting off of Ephraim foretold in chapter 7 requires a fuller revelation of the divine purpose concerning Asshur-Babylon, as its counterpoise and this is found in chapters 13-14.

From 14:28 we infer that this prophecy was written toward the end of Ahaz's reign. At that time spiritual darkness had won the conquest of the whole world. The "lamp of God" was now dark in his tabernacle. Hoshea, king of Israel, was the vassal of Shalmaneser, king of Assyria, and Ahaz had long ago surrendered himself to Tiglath-pileser. So the light of prophecy, with such a background, was very luminous now. Assyria was at this time at the height of her power, but Isaiah tells with distinctness that Assyria shall be broken in pieces in the Holy Land, and it is certain that Assyria received just such a blow in the defeat of Sennacherib's army.

The prophet also saw the doom of Babylon, the city which was at this time the real center of the empire. He even mentions the instruments of the destruction, commencing with the Medes, who

were not at this time an independent nation. Nothing can be more definite than Isaiah's statements as to the absolute ruin of the "Golden City," which prediction at the time must have seemed to violate all probability. Yet we have abundant evidence that it was all fulfilled, both regarding the nearer event of its capture by the Medes and also the ultimate desolation of its site.

The significant word with which each of these prophecies opens is the word "burden" which has here its original and ordinary meaning. This original meaning of the word seems to be supplied from 2 Kings 9:25, where it is used to mean the divine sentence on Ahab: "Jehovah laid this burden upon him." The appropriateness of its use here is in the fact that the prophecy to which it is prefixed is usually denunciatory in character, and always so in Isaiah. It is easy to see that it here means a grievous threatening oracle. It is claimed by some that this word is used elsewhere in a good sense, as in Zechariah 12:1 and Malachi 1:1, but upon close examination of these passages in their connection it will be seen that they are denunciatory and that the word has its primary meaning in these instances also.

The reason that Babylon was given first consideration among the enemies of God's people seems to be the fact that a divine revelation came to Isaiah at this early date (725 B.C.) showing that Babylon was to be the great enemy to be feared, as the ultimate destroyer of Judah and Jerusalem, the power that would carry the Jewish people into captivity. The main points of the denunciation against her are as follows:

1. The instruments of God's destruction of Babylon are the far-away nations, which God himself will assemble for this work of destruction (13:2-5).
2. The vivid description of the sweeping devastation, which is all inclusive in the objects of its vengeance (13:6-16).

3. The Medes are named as the instruments to begin this work, and the permanent effects of the desolation to follow (13:17-22).

4. The reason for all this is God's favor to Jacob who had been oppressed by these foreigners (14:1-2).

5. Israel's parable of exaltation over Babylon reciting their oppressive work and God's intervention which humbled Babylon and exalted Israel (14:3-20).

6. The final announcement of Babylon's doom and the permanency of its desolation (14:21-23).

The prophecy against Assyria under this first burden consists of God's oath of assurance to his people that his purpose already foretold concerning Assyria should stand. Babylon in the first part of the prophecy is presented as the most formidable enemy of God's people, but it had not yet become so fearful then. But Assyria was their dread at this time. So Isaiah comes nearer home to meet their present need and assures them that they need not fear the Assyrian for God's purpose concerning him should stand.

There are several things in this burden that call for special consideration:

1. In 13:2-5 the prophet speaks of the mustering of the host to battle as if it were then in the process of assembling, indicating the vividness of it all to the prophet's mind as present, though it was only a vision of the future.

2. In 13:3 Jehovah speaks of his "consecrated ones," clearly referring to the Medes and Persians. Now in what sense were they "consecrated ones"? It means that they were the instruments of his purpose, set apart for the specific work of executing his judgment. They were consecrated, or set apart, by the Lord for this work though they themselves were ungonscious of the function they performed. There are many illustrations of such use of men by the

Lord recorded in the Scriptures, two notable examples of which are Cyrua and Caesar Augustus.

3. In 13:10 there is a reference to the darkening of the heavenly luminaries. This is an expression of Nature's sympathy with the Lord. When he is angry, the lights of the heavens grow dark, as at the crucifixion of our Lord, and as it will be at the end of the world. So it is often the case in the time of great judgments. There seems also to be a special fitness in the expression here in view of the importance attached to the signs of the heavenly bodies by the Chaldeans at this time.

4. The desolation described in verses 20-22 is witnessed by every traveler of today who passes the site of this once glorious and proud Babylon.

5. In 14:9-11 we have the glad welcome given to these Babylonians in their entrance into the lower spirit world. The inhabitants of this region are represented as rising up to greet and welcome these unfortunate Babylonians. The idea of personal identity and continued consciousness after death is here assumed by the prophet.

6. In 14:12 there is a back reference to the fall of Satan who, before his fall, was called Lucifer. Here Babylon in her fall is represented as Lucifer) the bright star of the morning from heaven. Our Saviour refers to the incident of Satan's falling also in Luke 10:18, and we have a like picture of him in Revelation 12:7-9, all of which must be considered in the light of the analogue of Satan's fall when he sinned and was cast out of heaven.

7. In 14:25 Jehovah says he will "break the Assyrian in his land," which refers to the destruction of Sennacherib's host from which Assyria never recovered. In verse 26 the Lord explains that Assyria was the hand that he had stretched out for chastisements upon the nations of the world as they were related to Judah and Israel.

The series of burdens from 14:28 to 23:18 may be viewed as an unrolling of the "purpose concerning the whole earth," just mentioned in 14:26. Though the prophet stands on his watchtower and turns his eye around to the different points of the horizon and surveys the relation in which each nation stands to the advancing judgment, his addresses to the nations must be thought of as chiefly meant for the warning and comfort of Israel, which had too often adopted the sins of those whom she was meant to sanctify.

The burden of prophecy against Philistia is a warning to Philistia, following closely upon the death of Tiglath-pileser which brought great rejoicing to Philistia, because they thought the rod that smote them was broken. The prophet here reminds them that out of the serpent's root there would come forth the adder. In other words, there would arise from Assyria an enemy far more deadly than the one who had been cut off, and instead of being a mere serpent he would be a fiery flying serpent. The reference is, probably, to Sargon who took Ashdod, made the king of Gaza prisoner and reduced Philistia generally to subjection. At this time the poor of Israel would feed safely, but Philistia was to be reduced by famine and the remnant slain by the Assyrians who are here referred to as "a smoke out of the north." Then God's people will answer Philistia's messengers that Jehovah had founded Zion and in her the afflicted would take refuge.

Some critics say that the bulk of the prophecy against Moab (15:1 to 16:12) is quoted by Isaiah from an earlier writer, and that he merely modified the wording and added a few touches here and there. To this we answer that speculations of this kind are in the highest degree uncertain and lead to no results of any importance whatever. What matters it whether Isaiah quoted or not? There is no proof that he did and it makes no difference if he did. The author will contend that Isaiah was the original author of these two chapters until the critics produce at least some proof that he quoted from an earlier author.

A brief outline of these two chapters is as follows:

1. A vivid picture of Moab's overthrow (15).
2. Moab exhorted to flee to the house of David for shelter, but refuses to make the right use of his affliction (16:1-12).
3. A confirmation of the prophecy and its speedy fulfilment (16:13-14).

For the picture of Moab's overthrow the reader may read chapter 15. It is a vivid account of this overthrow and cannot be well improved upon.

In 16:1-5 we have an exhortation to Moab to take refuge with the house of David. Perhaps there is here an implication that Moab is not safe in his relation to Israel but that there would be safety for him if he would take shelter under the wings of Judah. Anyhow, there is a promise to Moab that he might find shelter and security, if only he would comply with the conditions herein set forth. But the pride of Moab was the cause of his downfall, which was utterly complete and accompanied by great wailing (16:6-8).

The prophet was moved to pity and tears for Moab upon witnessing such desolation and sadness as should come to this people. No gladness, no joy, no singing, and no joyful noise was to be found in his borders (16:9-12). Such a prophetic sight of Jerusalem made Jeremiah the weeping prophet and moved the blessed Son of God to tears. "Your house is left unto you desolate" is the weeping wail of our Lord as he saw the sad fate of the Holy City.

The time set here by the prophet for the humiliation of Moab is exactly three years, strictly measured, as a hireling would measure the time for which he would receive his pay, the fulfilment of which cannot be determined with certainty because we do not have the exact date of the prophecy, nor do we know which one of the different invasions that would fulfil the conditions is really meant.

Considering the date given in 14:28 we may reasonably conclude that the date of this prophecy was in the first or second year of Hezekiah's reign, and may have had its fulfilment by Shalmaneser, who besieged Samaria in the fourth year of the reign of Hezekiah, sending a detachment to these eastern parts of the country.

It is said that Damascus has been destroyed and rebuilt oftener than any other Eastern city. This may account for the fact that Damascus, treated so severely by Tiglath-pileser, was again in a position to attract the attention of Shalmaneser when he advanced against Samaria. In the time of Jeremiah the city had been rebuilt, but we do not hear of any more kings of Damascus.

The burden of prophecy against Damascus includes two prophecies concerning Israel and Judah and one concerning Ethiopia, and the main points of this prophecy are the ruin of Damascus (17:1-3) ; only a remnant left to Jacob who would look to Jehovah, because he had forgotten the God of his salvation (17:4-11) ; the multitude of the heathen invaders suddenly destroyed (17:12-14) ; Ethiopia's interest in these movements, and her homage to Jehovah according to which she sends a present to him (18:1-7).

There are several things in this burden that need special attention:

1. The language referring to the overthrow of Damascus is not to be pressed too far. Damascus was besieged and temporarily destroyed, but it revived. See Jeremiah 49:23-27; Ezekiel 27:18; and the New Testament references. Damascus is still a city of importance.
2. In 17:12-14 we have an account of the sudden destruction of the Assyrian army which was literally fulfilled in the destruction of Sennacherib's host (2 Kings 19:35-37).
3. There is some controversy as to what nation is referred to in 18:2, 7, but it is surprising that there should be such controversy, since the evidence is overwhelming that the nation here mentioned was Ethiopia. This is a region south of Egypt and far up the Nile. The

inhabitants, though black, were not ignorant and weak, but a nation of vigor and influence in the days of Isaiah. Cf. the Abyssinians.

4. The act of homage to Jehovah by Ethiopia as mentioned in 18:7 is not given and therefore not easily determined and can be ascertained only with some probability. There is evidence that Ethiopia was intensely interested in the downfall of Sennacherib which is prophesied in this connection, therefore, it is probable that the present was sent to Jehovah in connection with Ethiopia's alliance with Israel which existed at this time. It is true that the conditions in Egypt at the time Isaiah gave his prophecy against it were not favorable. The government and idolatry were most securely established and the things predicted seemed most improbable, from the human point of view.

Then what the reason for a prophecy against Egypt at such a time as this? The men of Ephraim and some in Judah were at this time bent on throwing themselves upon Egypt for protection against Assyria. This was both wrong in itself and impolitic. So Isaiah was hedging against such alliance by showing the coming humiliation of the power to which they were looking for aid.

There was an element of hope in this prophecy for the Israelites. The tender sympathy expressed for penitent Egypt in 19:20-23 must have assured the Israelites that if they would return to their God, he would be entreated of them and heal them.

The prophecy against Egypt in 19:1-4 is a prophecy relating to the political condition of Egypt, in which Jehovah will cause civil strife and confusion, destroying the power of their idols and the wisdom of their wise, and will place over them one who is a "cruel Lord" and a "fierce king."

The fulfilment of this prophecy is found in the internal strife in Egypt during the days of Tirhakah and Psammetichus iii the early part of the seventh century B.C. and the conquering of Egypt by Esar-haddon, who was decidedly a "cruel prince" and treated Egypt

with severity, splitting it up into a number of governments, yet this prophecy has been referred to Sargon, to Cambyses, and to Darius Ochus, and some think it is applicable to the successive rulers of Egypt, generally, viz: Chaldean, Persian, Greek, Roman, Saracen, and Turkish. But this is not probable.

The picture in 19:5-10 is a picture of the distressful condition of Egypt while passing through the trying ordeal just prophesied. Then follows (19:11-15) a picture of the confusion of the wise men of Egypt as their wisdom is turned into folly.

There are five happy effects of this judgment on Egypt, in stages which reach a happy climax:

1. The Egyptians are stricken with fear because of Jehovah and because of the land of Judah, similar to the fear that came upon them when they were visited with the ten plagues (19:16-17).
2. Egypt shall learn the language of Canaan and swear unto Jehovah. The language here referred to is the Hebrew which was spoken largely in the country after the introduction of so many Jews there. The "five cities" represents, perhaps, the low and weakened condition of Egypt after the judgment is visited upon it (19:18).
3. The worship of Jehovah is established in Egypt (19:19-22). This was literally fulfilled in the building of the temple at Leontopolis by Onias IV, with special license from Ptolemy Philometor, to whom he is said to have quoted this passage from Isaiah. Here was offered sacrifice to Jehovah and the oblation, according to this prophecy. Through the Jewish law and influence the idolatry of Egypt was overthrown and they were prepared for the coming Saviour, whom they received through the evangelization of the missionaries in the early centuries of the Christian era.
4. The consequent union of Egypt and Assyria in worship (19:23).

5. The unity and equality of the nations in blessing. This and the preceding stage of this happy effect finds a primary fulfilment in the wide-spread influence of the Jews over Syria and the adjacent countries under the Syro-Macedonian kings, as well as over Egypt under the Ptolemies. But a larger fulfilment is to be found in the events at Pentecost, which sent devout men back from Jerusalem into Egypt and Libya on one side, and into Parthis, Media, Elam, and Mesopotamia, on the other, to tell how God, having raised up his Son Jesus (the Prince and Saviour), had sent him to bless the Jews first, and in them all nations.

The prophecy of chapter 20 is a prophecy against Egypt and Ethiopia, who were the hope of Israel in alliance, to be delivered from Assyria, which the prophet labored to prevent. It consists, (1) of the historical circumstance. This is related in verse 1) which gives the date at the year in which Tartan came to Ashdod, etc. (2) Isaiah's symbolical action and its meaning (2-4). This was a common occurrence with the prophets. Here the action symbolized the humiliating captivity of Egypt and Ethiopia which was fulfilled either by Sennacherib or by Esarhaddon and Ashurbanipal. (3) The reason for this visitation upon Egypt and Ethiopia, viz: Israel looked to these powers instead of Jehovah and they could not be blessed while they were in alliance with backslidden Israel. So the Lord was taking care of Israel in his dealings with Egypt and Ethiopia.

"The burden of the wilderness of the sea" (21:1-10), is a prophecy against Babylon and contains a vivid description of the marshalling of forces against Babylon for her destruction, the overwhelming sympathy of the prophets, the expelling of sensual security, instructions to the Lord's watchman, the fulfilment, and the final declaration. The forces marshalled for her destruction are the Medes and Elamites under Cyrus and the prophet leaves us not in doubt that the reference here is to Babylon. There can be no mistake that this prophecy has its fulfilment in the capture of Babylon by Cyrus. All this is because of her relation to Israel and therefore the

encouragement of God's people and the glory of the one eternal Jehovah.

"The burden of Dumah" is generally conceded to be a prophecy against Edom, because the word "Seir" occurs in it as the place from which the one is represented as calling to the prophet. The word "Dumah" means silence and is used allegorically, "of the Silent Land" of the dead (Psalm 94:17), and refers here, perhaps, to the silent or low state of Edom at this time. In this burden someone is represented as calling to the prophet out of Seir, "Watchman, what of the night?" To which the watchman replied, "There is a brighter day ahead, but it is to be followed by a period of darkness for you; if you will repent, you may do so."

The prophecy against Arabia is a prophecy of the desolation to come upon Arabia and her borders, deranging their commerce and causing flight and privation, which would be accomplished in one year. The date of the prophecy is not very well determined but the fulfilment is found in Sargon's expedition into Arabia during which the caravans had to leave their regular routes and "take to the woods."

"The burden of the valley of vision" (22:1-25) is a prophecy against Jerusalem in which we have set forth a vivid picture of the revellings of the city (1-4) ; then a description of an outside foreign army threatening the city, causing surprise, and a hasty preparation for the siege (5-11); instead of humbling themselves, putting on sackcloth and weeping, and appealing to God's mercy, they try to drown care in drink and sensual enjoyment (12-14) ; then follows the degrading of Shebna from his high office and the placing of Eliakim in his position (15-25). The events herein described were fulfilled either in Sennacherib's siege of Jerusalem or in that of Nebuchadnezzar. There are some difficulties in fitting this prophecy to either siege and in matters where we have such limited knowledge it does not become us to be dogmatic. Some parts fit one better, and other parts fit the other better, but all things considered, the author is inclined to believe that this prophecy refers to the Assyrian invasion.

There are three distinct paragraphs given to the burden of Tyre (13): (1) The greatness of Tyre as a city of commerce and the wail of distress for the fate of the city; (2) Jehovah's purpose to cause this destruction and stain the pride of all her glory; (3) Babylon, an example of what will come to Tyre and the promise of Tyre's returned prosperity after seventy years. After this period Tyre will revive and be of service to Jehovah's people. The first part of the prophecy fits into the history which shows the many reverses of this city and may refer to the Babylonian siege specifically. The last part of the prophecy may have its fulfilment in the orders of Cyrus to the Tyrians to rebuild the Temple, and the Tyrian ships were of incalculable aid in disseminating Judaism before Christ and Christianity since Christ.

QUESTIONS

1. What is the section (Isaiah 13-23) called and what the appropriateness of the title?
2. What the foreign nations mentioned in this book of prophecies and what additional prophecies thrown in?
3. What the position of the radical critics relative to this section?
4. What the connection between the parts of this section?
5. What the special connection between chapters 13 and 14 and the preceding section?
6. What the date of the prophecy in chapters 13-14, what the conditions both in Israel and Judah, and also in the other nations, at this time, and what the sure light of prophecy in this dark hour?
7. What the significant word with which each of these prophecies opens, what its meaning, and what its appropriateness in this connection?

8. Why was Babylon given by the prophet first consideration among the enemies of God's peoples and what the main points in this denunciation against her?
9. What the prophecy against Assyria under this first burden and why put in here?
10. What the special things to be noted in this burden?
11. How may the series of burdens from 14:28 and 23:18 be viewed and what the object of the warnings?
12. What the burden of prophecy against Philistia and how is the destructive work upon the country here described?
13. What say the critics of this prophecy against Moab (15:1 to 16:12) and what the reply?
14. Give a brief outline of these two chapters.
15. Give the picture of Moab's overthrow?
16. What the exhortation and promise to Moab in. 16:1-5?
17. What the cause of the downfall that was to follow?
18. How did this sight of the future destruction of Moab affect the prophet and what examples of other such sympathy in the Bible?
19. What the time fixed for the humiliation of Moab and when its fulfilment?
20. What is a remarkable characteristic of Damascus, and for what does it account?
21. What does this burden against Damascus include and what the main points in it?

22. What are the things in this burden that need special attention?
23. What the conditions in Egypt at the time Isaiah gave his prophecy against it?
24. What is the reason for a prophecy against Egypt at such a time as this?
25. What element of hope in this prophecy for the Israelites?
26. What the prophecy against Egypt in 19:1-4 and when was it fulfilled?
27. What the picture in 19:5-10?
28. What is set forth in 19:11-15?
29. What the important and happy effects of this judgment on Egypt?
30. What the prophecy of chapter 20 and what its contents?
31. What "The burden of the wilderness of the sea" (21:1-10), and what its striking points?
32. What is "The burden of Dumah" and what its interpretation?
33. What the prophecy against Arabia and when the fulfilment?
34. What "The burden of the valley of vision" (22:1-25), and what the salient points in the prophecy?
35. What the outline of the burden of Tyre and what the salient points of the interpretation?

XV. THE BOOK OF ISAIAH PART?

Isaiah 24-27

This section (Isa. 24-27) is called, in our outline of the book of Isaiah, "The First Book of Judgment." In this section we emerge out of the prophecies relating to the typical forms of national life, as in the preceding section, into others of a broader character, which concern the world at large. In this we have the deluge of divine justice taking in the whole world. The central people, Israel, first, and then all the surrounding people have been laid low, and the silence of death reigns. Yet in the remote parts of the earth songs arise, songs of hope of the future glory of Jehovah, the king, as he swallows up death forever, so that they who dwell in the dust, awake, arise, to live forever. Israel's recovery is as life from the dead, to the surrounding nations. In chapter 24 we have a deep elegiac tone, but in chapters 25-27 we have the sound of the triumphant songs of the righteous. Of this section Sampey says, "Whatever may be the historical setting and exact fulfilment of these chapters, like the book of Revelation, they contain many magnificent pictures and glorious promises, and a sense of the divine presence that make them of permanent value."

The chapters constitute the divisions of this section. Chapter 24 is a picture of the terrible judgments to come. Chapter 25 sounds out the glorious triumph of Jehovah over sin and death. Chapter 26 is a song of praise to be sung in the land of Judah for Jehovah's defense of Zion, the overthrow of the proud city and the deliverance of his people. Chapter 27 is the pronouncement of Judgment against the oppressor on behalf of Israel. To sum up, we have (1) World-Judgments, (2) A Song of Triumph, (3) A Song of Praise, and (4) Judgment upon the Oppressors of Israel.

The broad sweep of this section reminds us of the prophecy of Joel. Man's sin has infected the whole earth, therefore, the punishment must include the whole world and its inhabitants.

There is a word of frequent occurrence in this section. It is the Hebrew word for "earth," here translated "land" in some instances. There is some difficulty in deciding just how it should be translated: whether it should be translated "land" or "earth" uniformly, or whether the translation should vary. Some passages seem to favor the use of the word, "land," and others the word "earth." Dr. Day in the "Bible Commentary" says, "The truth appears to be this: The land of Israel was a miniature of the world. Its recovery from the moral pollution of the idolatrous races was a historical prelude of a like recovery of our earth."

The temple congregation was a type of the New Testament church, which in turn is a type of the "glory church," and the visible king, a type of the "king of all the earth." In Israel was the germ of blessing for all nations. Consequently, if Israel's light was eclipsed, the whole world was darkened. When Israel languished under a curse, the "everlasting covenant" appeared to be annulled, or at least suspended. So in the use of this word Isaiah seems to comprehend the whole earth as involved in Israel's mission. If the land of Israel was doomed to desolation, then the whole earth became "waste and void." (Cf. Jer. 4:23.)

In Isaiah 24:1-12 we have (1) a universal catastrophe in which there is a complete emptying of the earth and equalizing of its inhabitants; (2) the causes of it, which are the transgression of the laws, the violation of the statutes and the breaking of the everlasting covenant; (3) the manifestations of it in sadness and gloom, everywhere, all means of joy perverted and desolation on every hand; (4) the promise of the remnant, which is compared to the gleaning after harvest.

Now this question arises: What the laws transgressed, the statutes violated, and the covenant broken, in 24-5? The laws, statutes, and covenant, referred to in this passage seem to antedate the Mosaic law and to include the laws, statutes, and covenant which were in the very constitution of things. Law, in its last analysis, is the intent

or purpose of the Creator with respect to the thing created. So the law of man is God's purpose for man in his very being. There were statutes for man expressed in the history and covenants prior to the Mosaic code. There was God's covenant with Adam for the whole race, renewed in Noah and particularized in Abraham. It was an everlasting covenant, comprehending the redemption of a lost race. So the world here is presented as violating every vestige of law which it had received to this time.

We have in 24:14-20 the songs of the remnant in many parts of the world and especially from the sea, i.e., the Mediterranean Sea, and its isles, but these songs are ineffective in view of the awful distress upon the earth, which represents a mighty upheaval to come, before Jehovah, through the remnant, shall become the recognized, universal king. The reference here to the sea and its isles corresponds to the fact that it was on the Mediterranean coasts that the first Christian churches arose, whose songs have been drowned many a time by the din of war.

In 24:21-23 we have a picture of Jehovah's overthrow of the kings of the earth and his own glorious reign in Mount Zion, and is clearly a reference to the great conflict which will immediately precede the millennium. The kings of the earth shall be engaged in one mighty struggle after which the Messiah will be received by the Jews and then will be ushered in the great reign of our Lord through the converted Jews who become the flaming evangelists of the world. This glorious period we have presented again in the closing part of the book, in the prophet Zechariah and in other parts of the Old and New Testaments. The title of chapter 25 is "A Song of Triumph" and it is vitally related to the preceding chapter as an effect is related to a cause. The prophet in the closing part of chapter 24 proclaims the final establishment of the kingdom in the heavenly Zion and now he is carried away by the sense of exultant gladness into a triumphant song of which this chapter is the expression.

This chapter divides itself into three parts: (1) a thanksgiving for deliverance (1-5) ; (2) a commemoration of blessings granted (6-8) ; (3) an exultation in the security obtained (9-12).

Isaiah seems to get his pattern for this song from the "Song of Moses" (Ex. 15) which contains many of the phrases in Isaiah's song here.

The word "city" in verse 2 is here used distributively and does not point to any particular city. The prophet is referring to all those cities which have been the enemies of Jehovah. The words "palace" and "strangers" are used in the same way.

The blessings of this glorious triumph of Jehovah are to be celebrated by a feast of fat things. This idea is presented in many other scriptures, as in the case of Lazarus in Abraham's bosom and the picture which our Lord gave, thus: "They shall come from the east and from the west, from the north and from the south, and shall sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in my kingdom."

Then what the "covering" and the "veil" of verse 7? This is the glass through which Paul says we see darkly. It includes the Jewish veil of Judicial blindness and the veil of prejudice and misconception of all people in their natural state. Blessed time, when it shall be removed and we shall see face to face. The swallowing up of death here makes us think of Hosea's prophecy: "I will redeem them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death: O death, I will be thy plagues; O grave, I will be thy destruction." Otherwise, this is the first clear announcement of the resurrection, and it was a marked advance on the dim light respecting the future, .as realized by God's people hitherto. This puts us alongside of Paul, and the wiping away of tears, etc., places us with John on Patmos where he saw Paradise regained and the glorious bride adorned for her husband. A glorious outlook, yet to be realized. The exultation expressed here is an exultation in the salvation of Jehovah, with the complete destruction of Moab.

But who is Moab here and why should the name be so used in this instance? Moab is used symbolically to represent the degradation of Zion's remaining enemies. The following are some of the reasons why Moab may have been chosen:

1. Moab sought to bring a curse on Israel by the help of Balaam's sorceries, and although these were ineffectual, yet the artifice suggested by Balaam of seducing Israel by means of the licentious rites of Peor, did bring heavy chastisement upon the people. Moab stood at the entrance of Canaan to prevent Israel, if possible, from entering upon its inheritance, and thus it acted the very part of the serpent's seed.

2. The mountains of Moab, beyond the Dead Sea, rise up as if in rivalry with those of Judah) from which they are separated by the Dead Sea. So between Moab and Zion was "a great gulf fixed," like that fixed by divine judgment between Abraham and Dives.

3. Moab, the child of Lot, the offspring of a dark deed of unconsciousness superinduced by intoxication, stands as the mystical representative of the corrupted and sensual world. Now the theme of chapter 26 is a song of praise to be sung in the land of Judah. In the preceding song the prophet poured forth his own thankfulness for the prospect of Zion's glorious redemption and triumph, but in this he represents the redeemed themselves in the glorified state singing praise to God for the same.

The purpose of this prophetic revelation was strictly practical. It was for the comfort and admonition of that existing generation. In every age the people of God must have the characteristic of patient faith and upright obedience, which is very greatly expanded in the progress of divine revelation.

A synopsis of this chapter is as follows:

1. The New Jerusalem versus the Old, 1-7.

2. The desire of the righteous is for Jehovah versus the perverseness of the wicked, 8-10.
3. The prosperity of Jehovah's people versus the destruction of their enemies, 11-15.
4. Israel's barrenness versus her hope in the resurrection, 16-19.
5. An exhortation to Israel to hide till Jehovah's indignation be past, 20-21.

The points worthy of note in 1-7 are:

1. The two cities mentioned in this paragraph are set over against each other. The first is the New Jerusalem which is abundantly described by John in Revelation 21, while the second is the Old Jerusalem which is here 'represented as laid waste, trodden under foot as we see her today.
2. The expression of and exhortation to implicit faith in Jehovah as an object of peace and confidence is characteristic of Isaiah. From Isaiah 26:4 I preached a sermon once on the theme, "The Rock of Ages," combining with this text Psalm 61:2, "Lead me to the rock that is higher than I." This is the outline followed:
 1. The Foundation (1 Peter 2:6; Isa. 28:17)
 2. The Shadow (Isa. 32:2)
 3. The Fortress (Psalm 18:2)
 4. The Water (1 Cor. 10:1-4)
 5. The Cleft (Ex. 33:21-23)
 6. The Rock of Ages: (a) everlasting to me; (b) everlasting for all of every age.

7. Trust in the Lord forever, for he is a "forever [everlasting] rock."

3. A suggested translation of verses 3-4 is the following: "A mind (imagination) stayed (on thee) thou keepest in perfect peace; because in thee it trusts (is confident). Trust ye in Jehovah forever, for Jehovah is an everlasting rock." A poet has beautifully expressed this lofty idea thus: As some tall cliff that lifts its awful form, Swells from the vale, and midway leaves the storm, The round its breast the rolling clouds are spread, Eternal sunshine settles on its head.

The passage (8-10) expresses the longing of the righteous for the display of Jehovah's judgment against the wicked and corresponds to the New Testament teaching that God's people are to leave vengeance to him and await God's own time for its display. To this end we have the parable of the unjust judge, and the cry by the martyrs under the altar, "How long, Master, the holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?" is an expression of this same desire.

In verse 19 is the expression of Israel's faith in God's promise, a foundation stone of the doctrine of the resurrection. It certainly suggests a resurrection of individuals, and not merely a return of material prosperity, as in Hosea 6:2; Ezekiel 37; Daniel 12:2.

The lesson of verses 20-21 is distinctly a call to prayer and patient waiting on God. The opening of the door of the prayer chamber in times of distress is the opening of a door into another world, a scene of serenity and elevation. In the presence of him who seeth in secret are the most difficult problems solved. That which opposes us is overcome by the new energy of the Spirit here imparted. Let us here listen to the poet Prayer ardent opens heaven, lets down a stream Of glory on the consecrated hour Of man in audience with Deity; Who worships the great God, that instant joins, The first in heaven, and sets his foot on hell.

The title of chapter 27 is "Judgment upon the Oppressors of Israel" and the parts, or natural divisions, of this chapter are as follows:

1. A triple vengeance on the oppressors of Israel and the protection of Jehovah's vineyard (1-6).
2. Jehovah's dealing with Jacob a chastisement instead of vengeance, and for the purpose of his purification (7-11).
3. The homecoming of the exiles (12-13).

The meaning of the oft-recurring phrase, "In that day," in this chapter, is significant. This expression here refers to the time of God's vengeance heretofore described, when God is visiting the enemies of his kingdom in vengeance, as stated in 26:21. There is evidently a variation in the time referred to in the different instances of its use, since all the prophecies of the chapter do not refer to the same period of time. So each instance of its use will have to be determined by the context, just as in its use in other scriptures.

The meaning of "Leviathan" in verse I is a very difficult question to answer. Some deny the possibility of identification of the powers represented by these symbols; others identify them as three world powers: Leviathan, the swift serpent; Leviathan, the crooked serpent; and "the dragon of the sea," making the first refer to Assyria, the second to Babylon, and the third, to Egypt. There seem to be points of identification sufficient for such an explanation, as the swift serpent, referring to Assyria with its long, swift Tigris; the crooked serpent, referring to Babylon with its winding Euphrates; and the dragon, referring to Egypt, the land of darkness, for which the dragon stands.

There is a sharp contrast in 27:1-6 between God's dealings with Leviathan, the enemies of the kingdom, and his dealing with Jacob. The one shall be punished into destruction and the other shall take root, blossom, and bud. The passage (2-6) is a companion picture of 5:1-7, a joy song set over against a dirge. Both vineyards refer to God's people, the former to Israel nominally, the latter to Israel really. This is the holy remnant spoken of so often in Isaiah, but now flourishing and prosperous.

The contrast in 7-11 is a contrast in the purpose and extent of punishment upon Judah and Israel and the enemies of Judah and Israel. In the one case it was to be without measure, but in the other it was "in measure"; or without restraint in the one case, the purpose was purely punitive, while in the other it was to purify by chastisement.

There is an important lesson of verse 9 which is a lesson on the conditions of forgiveness. These chastisements of Jacob were looking to his repentance. Jehovah was looking for the fruits of repentance, viz: the putting away of sin and idolatry. The child's verse is, after all the best theology and practical godliness: Repentance is to leave The sins we loved before; And show that we in earnest grieve By doing so no more.

The prophecy of verses 12-13 is a prophecy of the homecoming of God's scattered people. As a fruit gatherer Jehovah will gather them from the Euphrates to Egypt. He will give the signal of the trumpet and they shall be gathered from the remote countries of Assyria and Egypt. This prophecy had a partial fulfilment in the return of the Jews after the captivity but in this return they did not come mainly from Assyria and Egypt. There was a larger fulfilment in the gospel trumpet sounded on the day of Pentecost which was heard and heeded by representatives from these countries here mentioned, but the complete fulfilment of this prophecy is doubtless, to be realized when the signal of our Lord shall call these scattered Jews from the East and from the West, from the North and from the South, and thus assembled in their own land the veil that has so long bedimmed their eyes shall fall from their faces and they shall behold, by faith, him whom they have pierced. Then shall come the blessed time when "they shall worship Jehovah in his holy mountain at Jerusalem," a glorious anticipation.

QUESTIONS

1. What is Isaiah 24-27 called in our outline of the book of Isaiah?

2. Give a brief introductory statement of this section, showing its nature in the light of the preceding section.
3. What the outline of the section
4. The broad sweep of this section reminds us of what other prophecy?
5. What word is of frequent occurrence in this section, what its meaning, and what the significance of its use here?
6. What the contents of 24:1-13, and what their interpretation?
7. What the laws transgressed, the statutes violated, and the covenant broken, in 24:5?
8. What the contents and interpretation of 24:14-20?
9. What is the picture in 24:21-23?
10. What the title of chapter 25 and what the relation of this chapter to the preceding one?
11. Give a brief analysis of this chapter.
12. Where does Isaiah seem to get his pattern for this song and what the proof?
13. What city is referred to in verse 2?
14. How are the blessings of this glorious triumph of Jehovah to be celebrated?
15. What the "covering" and the "veil" of verse 7?
16. What announcement here as to the resurrection and further blessedness?

17. How is the exultation expressed?
18. Who is Moab here and why should the name be so used in this instance?
19. What the theme of chapter 26?
20. What the character of this son in contrast with the preceding one?
21. What the purpose of this prophetic revelation?
22. Give a synopsis of this chapter.
23. What the points worthy of note in 1-7?
24. What is expressed in 8-10?
25. What is suggested by verse 19?
26. What the lesson of verses 20-21?
27. What the title of chapter 27?
28. What the parts, or natural divisions, of this chapter?
29. What the meaning of the oft-occurring phrase, "In that day," in this chapter?
30. What is the meaning of "Leviathan" in verse 1?
31. What the contrast in 27:1-6?
32. What the contrast in 7-11?
33. What the important lesson of verse 9?

34. What the prophecy of verses 12-13 and when the complete fulfilment of it?

XVI. THE BOOK OF ISAIAH - PART 8

Isaiah 28-33

"This section, Isaiah 28-33, is called "The Book of Zion," or "The Book of Woes." The time of this prophecy is the reign of Hezekiah. In the preceding section the prophet contemplated the judgments which were to come in the course of the ages, upon the nations of the world, but in this section he is brought back to his own time and people.

Quite a long time has elapsed since the prophet first foretold the destruction of Samaria (7:17; 8:4-8), but the crisis is now close at hand. The northern invaders who have been held back by the divine order so long, are now ready to be let loose, and the "crown of Ephraim's pride" is about to be buried to the ground. At this solemn period a most important work must be accomplished in Judah, if Jerusalem is to be saved from Assyria. This must be a religious and moral preparation for a divine intervention, which was necessary for her salvation. This indeed had been begun by Hezekiah but it would not prove permanent unless followed up by a steady culture and patient discipline. This was now the task of Isaiah, the prophet. In order to do this he must alarm the "sinners of Zion," reprove the infidel, stir up the worldly and careless to repentance, assure the men of Judah, who trusted in their political schemes of alliance with Egypt, that God would bring their schemes to nought, all this without unduly disheartening the poor and the meek. On the other hand, the faithful disciples were to be cheered. They were to be told that their hope was in the stone which Jehovah had laid in Zion; that Jehovah himself would defend Jerusalem; that the Holy City should be as & tabernacle whose stakes should be secure, and all this without fostering a reliance upon external privileges. This was no mean task, but the prophet rose to the demand of the hour. The prophetic word went forth, giving warning to the rebellious, confirming and establishing the true hearts, and putting all on probation.

The word which determines the natural divisions of this section is "Woe," which occurs at 28:1; 29:1; 29:15; 30:1; 31:1 and 33:1. The divisions are as follows:

1. Woe unto Samaria (28)
2. Woe unto Ariel [Jerusalem] (29:1-14)
3. Woe unto the worldly-wise (29:15-24)
4. Woe unto the rebellious (30)
5. Woe unto them that go down to Egypt (31-32)
6. Woe unto the destroyer (33)

This outline does not coincide with Dr. Sampey's, but it has the merit of following the author's divisions rather than the chapter divisions.

In 28:1-6 we have the woe unto Samaria, "the crown of the pride of the drunkards of Ephraim." This is a solemn warning to Samaria of her speedy downfall. Then the prophet turns to Judah and pronounces the woe upon Jerusalem because she has followed the example of Samaria. This he gives in a series of pictures: In 7-8 we have the drunken priests and prophets, revelling in their self-indulgence and failing in their visions and judgments. In 9-10 we hear them mocking Isaiah in his message, saying, "His words are but repetitions, suited to sucking babes." "For it is precept upon precept, precept upon precept, line upon line, line upon line; here a little, there a little." Then in 11-13 the prophet retorts that God would speak to them by men of strange lips, the Assyrians, because he had offered them rest and they would not hear. So now the words of Jehovah would be to them, "precept upon precept," etc., that they might be broken, snared, and taken. In 14-22 there is a severe arraignment of the rulers of Jerusalem, who had made, or were about to make, secret arrangements with Egypt which, as they thought,

would secure Judah against injury at the hands of the Assyrians. This the prophet calls a covenant with death and an agreement with Sheol, and instructs them that their boasted arrangements would fail completely in the time of trial; that Egypt, their refuge would be a refuge of lies and Assyria, the overflowing scourge, would pass through the land and carry all before it; that only those resting on the precious cornerstone would be secure; that in the time of this vexation of the land, their bed which they made would not suffice, for the decree of destruction had already gone forth. In 23-29 is a parable to comfort believers, to the end that God's wisdom in dispensing judgment and mercy may be inferred from the skill which he gives to the husbandman. But this he left to their spiritual insight to discover.

Two passages of this chapter are quoted in the New Testament:

1. Verse 11 is quoted by Paul in 1 Corinthians 14:21 to show that the gifts of the baptism of the Spirit, just as the work and message of the prophet, were for a sign.
2. Verse 16 is quoted in several places in the New Testament and applied to Christ, as the stone of stumbling for the Jews in all ages.

Verse 20 may be used in accordance with the context here to show how futile it is for a man to turn away from God's plan, in the matters of salvation, to the devices of men. When the testing time comes, the bed is found to be too short and the covering too narrow.

In 29:1-4 we have the prophet's address to Ariel (Jerusalem) in which he predicts her siege by a terrible army and her great humiliation during that siege. In 5-8 is the vivid description of this vast host coming up against Jerusalem, but just as the enemy expects to capture her, the host of them is scattered. As it is with one who dreams, so shall it be with this multitude of besiegers. In 9-12 is a description of Israel's awful judicial blindness visited upon them by Jehovah because of their sins. All prophecy is to them as a sealed book. In their blindness they cannot read the message. What a

picture of the effects of sin! This reminds us of the picture of Jerusalem which was drawn by Christ. The natural man cannot understand divine revelation. The educated and the uneducated are alike helpless. Over against this stands the contrast of verse 18. In 13-14 we have the cause stated. They are in this state because of the condition of their hearts. With the lips they honored God, but their hearts were not with him. How significant is the application of this truth to all our worship and service! In 17-21 is the prophecy that this condition shall not always pertain to them. The day will come when this condition shall be reversed. The deaf shall hear the words out of the book and the blind shall see. To many this was fulfilled in the days of Christ, but we look ahead of us for the full fruition of this great promise. In 22-24 is the climax of the vision in which the marvels of God's grace upon the sons of Jacob are exhibited. God speed the day of its realization!

The prophetic description here (1-8) fits well the historical events of Sennacherib's siege and the poem, "The Destruction of Sennacherib" by Byron is the best poetic description of this event. Two passages from this chapter are quoted in the New Testament:

1. Verse 10 is quoted by Paul in Romans 11:8 where it is used to show the judicial hardening of Israel which lasted to Paul's day and will continue till the fulness of the Gentiles be come in.
2. Verse 13 is quoted by our Lord in Matthew 15:8-9 to upbraid the Jews for their hypocrisy and following the commandments of men, showing that the conditions which existed in Isaiah's time existed also in Christ's time.

Chapter 30 consists of an exposure of the alliance with Egypt. In 1-5 we have the plain prediction that the alliance with Egypt, then forming, would be of no assistance to Judah. The prophet in 6-17 states the oracle with great power, showing the sin and evil effects of trusting in Egypt rather than in Jehovah. In 18-26 there is set forth the hope of the future success of God's people when he shall be gracious to them and confer upon them marvelous prosperity. In 27-

33 we have another vision of the supernatural overthrow of the Assyrians.

In verse 33 we have the image of a funeral pyre on which the king of Assyria is to be consumed. Topheth was a place in the valley of Hinnom, that was desecrated by idolatrous human sacrifices (Jer. 7:31; 1 Kings 23:10). This was fulfilled, not by the death of Sennacherib in Judah, but by the destruction of his army there, and his own death at home twenty years later (881 B.C).

Chapter 31 is a brief summary of what has been so frequently set forth about Samaria, Jerusalem, and Assyria. The points are as follows: (1) Those who trust in the Egyptian alliance shall fall; (2) Jerusalem shall be protected by divine love; (3) the Assyrian shall be driven away in terror. In verses 4-5 Jehovah represents himself as a lion and a mother bird, a picture of his power and tenderness.

By all scholars Isaiah 32 is accounted messianic. It must be considered as a whole in order to understand its parts. It tells us under what king justice shall be rendered in human government, and what influences shall bring about an appreciation of this justice in the hearts of the people, and what shall be the effects of the righteousness rendered by this government and appreciated by these people under this divine influence.

The righteous King is our Lord Jesus Christ, the true Governor of this world. "A king shall reign in righteousness." We have never yet on this earth been blessed with a perfect human government. We do not know experimentally what a genuinely good government is, whose ruler rules according to principles of exact righteousness and uses his office for the benefit of the governed, and to subserve the ends of justice; nor have we ever seen a people whose hearts would properly appreciate that kind of a government, who really desire it or who are willing to work for it and willing to submit to it. The conditions call for a righteous King and righteous subjects. Granted these two and the effect is righteousness, peace, and confidence forever.

We may conceive in our minds of an ideal king whose scepter is a righteous scepter, who loves righteousness and hates iniquity, who holds an even balance when he administers justice, who has no respect to men's persons, who is a terror to evildoers and as the shadow of a high rock in a weary land to the oppressed. We may conceive of such a ruler, but in earthly governments, we have never known him. We may conceive of a people in their hearts desiring such a government, voting for it, supporting it, on demand sacrificing whatever they have to its maintenance, and then joyfully resting under its benign influence. What a sweet picture to the contemplative mind! Such a king, such a people, and peace and quiet throughout the land, perfect confidence, no doors locked at night, no hired policemen, no standing armies, no dread of burglars or assassins, no distrust in business, engagements, perfect confidence! It is a charming conception. God's Word declares that this conception shall be realized on this earth; that "a king shall reign in righteousness, and all of the rulers shall rule in judgment."

The influence that prepares the people for that kind of a government is here distinctly set forth. It is said that "thorns and briers shall come up on the land of my people until the spirit be poured out from on high." Without the influence of God's Spirit the people themselves are not prepared for a righteous administration of affairs. They have what they want. If they wish to promote the wicked they promote them. If they wish to be placed in bondage to the covetous they yield their necks to the yoke. The people are not prepared for good government. And what things disqualify them for living and working for such a government? We get at the disqualifications by ascertaining from this chapter what the blessings are which the Spirit confers by way of preparation.

The first blessing specified is that under the influence of the Spirit they shall see clearly: "the eyes of them that see shall not be dim." This refers to the moral perceptions. Where there are no clear perceptions of right or wrong, where the vision is clouded, everything else will be wrong. If the moral sense of the people be

distorted in vision, it will see light as if it were darkness, and darkness as if it were light; it will call a churl a liberal man, and a liberal man a churl; it will label things contrary to their essence and nature. If the eye be not single our very light is darkness, and how great is that darkness! So that we have as the first effect of the Spirit poured out on the people, that they shall see clearly.

It is now painful and humiliating, distressingly so, to get any ten or twelve men or women together and submit for their consideration a question involving morals, and see how variously they look at it. They do not see clearly. And particularly they do not see clearly with reference to the outcome of things. They look at immediate results. They look at present effects. They judge of things by what may immediately follow their performance. They do not project their vision far enough, and they are unable to do it on account of their moral blindness. So the prophet in the middle of this chapter calls on the women to hear his discussion. We do well to recall the words of the apostle Peter concerning the Christian graces, the fruits of the Spirit:

For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins" – 2 PETER 1:8-9.

Yes, he that lacketh these things is dim-eyed. His vision will be blurred. He cannot see things afar off. First of all, therefore the outpoured Spirit enlightens the eye, the moral eye. It makes us see things as they are in the sight of God. If a man is a miser, a covetous man, a churl, we see him to be that way. He appears so to us. He does not seem to be a liberal man. Oh, when the Spirit is poured out then no longer will the liberal man be called a churl and the churl a liberal man. There are examples that may be known and read of all men in every community, of those whose hearts are as hard as a millstone, hearts that have never been melted, never known any

mercy, never felt one heartthrob of joy in ministering to the necessities of the distressed, and yet the community stands off and bows before them, and calls them the liberal men of the community. When the Spirit of God is poured out, clearness of vision will be given, and men will see a soul just as easily as they can see a body and the soul that is black will look black, the soul that is shriveled and miserly will look so, and the soul that is slimy and obscene and foul will appear to be so. That is the first effect. Now if people have not that vision, how can they love a righteous king? How can they love a righteous government? How can they desire evenhanded justice? How can they wish to be rid of favoritism, nepotism, and every other form of mischief in government, seeing their eyes are dim and their vision distorted? Clear vision distorted! Clear vision, that is first. They shall see clearly.

The second effect of the out-poured Spirit is, "The ears of them that hear shall hearken." They shall hear distinctly and see clearly. To hear distinctly! You know there is such a thing as hearing and not hearing, "having ears to hear and hearing not," what is called in the Bible an "uncircumcised ear." An ear that does not hearken to what? To the divine voices, to the voice of wisdom speaking on the streets, speaking in places of business, speaking in places of pleasure, speaking in the family circle, speaking in the church and in the Sunday school, the voice of God. The whole earth is filled with the voices of God. As the psalmist says: There is no speech nor language; Where their voice is not heard. Their line is gone out through all the earth; And their words to the end of the world.—PSALM 19:3-4.

But if the people have not a hearing ear what matters it about a voice? "Incline your ear and come unto me. Hear and your soul shall live," exhorts the prophet. The giving heed to the monitions of God's Spirit, to the declarations of his Word, the submitting to the voice of God as the end of controversy, we must have that, to see clearly, to hear distinctly. The right kind of a conscience will hear the faintest whisper of God. God will not have to speak aloud. God will not

have to send storms and earthquakes and pestilence and famine and blasting and mildew and other judgments to secure attention. If they have the hearing ear, though God speaks in the stillness of the night, that ear hears his whisper, and like a little Samuel rising up from his bed, saying, "Speak Lord, thy servant heareth."

Oh, for the ear that will hearken to God's Word, to righteousness. The evil-minded may devise a most mischievous falsehood, a shameful, sensational scandal, without the shadow of foundation in fact, and then with tongue set on fire of hell whisper his story of malice and, behold, the whole earth hears it. They have the ear set for hearing such things. But the good deed has no sound, seems to create no air waves, attains to no publicity. No wonder Paul said, "Whatsoever things are good, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are of good report, think on these things." But they do not hear them. To get an audience, to come within the range of the ear of the world, speech must have a different character.

The third effect of the Spirit is "the heart of the rash [the hasty] shall understand." That means to choose wisely. And what a blundering world this is, as to the choices made! All the time going to the forks of the road, so many times taking the wrong road, so many times preferring the worse to better things, so many times electing that which will bring shame instead of that which will bring honor. Every day there are put out before men and women multitudes of things from which to make a selection. Which will you take? And just see how they do take the poisons, how they take the rubbish, and the degraded, and that which tends downward, and that which debases. Oh, for choice God-guided! And that must come to the people. The hasty! Yes, when Spirit-guided the hasty need never apologize, thus: "I beg your pardon. I was inconsiderate. I acted unthoughtedly. I was indiscreet in that." If we had the clear vision, if we had the hearing ear, then could we decide quickly on a moral question, and decide right. Even the heart of the hasty would be able to understand.

The fourth blessing is to speak plainly. What does the record say? "The tongue of the stammerer shall speak plainly." Now, it is a somewhat ludicrous conception, and yet it does present the truth in a very striking manner. In a time of urgency, where one needs an utterance at once, and clean-cut, how a sharp question confounds a stammering man! It throws him into a fit of agitation. He tries to say something and stammers and stutters, and every kind of an answer seems hanging on the end of his tongue, and he cannot say anything. So there are moral stammerers. Ask him, "How do you stand on this question?" and he begins to stammer at once. It distresses one to listen. We feel like crying out: "Oh, speak plainly! Tell where you are. Don't stutter all over a world of morals. Do say one plain, straight-out word." We are cursed with moral stuttering.

The church is cursed with it. Try some time to find out the attitude of even God's people on a perfectly plain question of morals, or of doctrine, or of practical righteousness, and hear them begin to answer, "Well, I don't know. Some people think it is this, and some people think it is that." And thus they go limping around, stuttering over it. Do we not know that if the Spirit of God was poured out to give us clear moral vision, so that we could see things as they are, and the hearkening ear, so that God's whisper would be louder to us than the devil's thunder – do not we know that if we had that wiseness of heart to choose as quick as lightning between good and evil, that there would not be any stuttering speech? A man would speak right up and say: "Here is where I stand; let there be no mistake about it."

We have found the effects of the outpoured Spirit to be clear vision, acute hearing, wise choice, and plain talk. But work follows qualification. The outpoured Spirit exhorts: "Sow beside all waters." The "sowing beside the waters" refers to that planting of rice and wheat in the overflowed waters, as in the overflow of the Nile. They go out in boats when the water covers the whole surface of the country, and they sow it down – "cast your bread upon the waters," i.e., your bread seed. And then they bring the cattle, and drive them

up and down, tramping the seed down in the slime so that when the waters recede it has been plowed under by the feet of the stock.

"Blessed are ye that sow beside all waters, driving thither the feet of the ox and of the ass." That simply means covering it under. "Cast your bread upon the waters." A distant blessing then that cornea from the outpouring of the Spirit in this ideal government set forth in this prophecy will be that every piece of land fertile enough to grow grain will be sowed down with grain. "Sow beside all waters," that is, cast your seed on every spot of earth that can sprout the seed and make it bear a crop.

To bring the thought a little more closely: Where we have a righteous king, and a people who are endowed with clear vision, hearing distinctly, choosing wisely, and speaking plainly, these people will occupy every foot of ground which God commands them to occupy. They will let no spot of earth remain without a crop, if it can bear a crop.

But look at society as it stands, even Christian societies! You say, "Here is water out here. God has sent the overflow laden with rich soil in solution, which the receding waves deposit. Come, let us sow seed by that water." "No, no; I have my little pond here at home. I must sow in this home pond, this and this only. I will not sow out yonder. Let the waves come and deposit the fertile soil, and the earth wait expectantly for seed to be deposited in its glowing bosom, ready of itself to make it send up the ripening grain that shall bless the earth with bread, all in vain. I won't sow out there."

What a miserable Christian! What an infinitesimal soul that man has! God brings soil for bread seed, and says, "Go forth, bearing precious seed; go forth casting your bread seed upon the waters; sow beside all waters," and the delinquent church says, "I cannot hear that; I cannot hear that now. We have heathen at home – the Greeks are at our door. I don't believe in sowing in waters that are far off." No, and he doesn't believe in sowing in them at home. That is nearer the truth. He does not believe in any sowing at all. The root -of the

matter is not in him. The spirit of the Lord Jesus Christ doesn't reign in his soul; for where the spirit is poured out from on high, and they have the vision of clearness, and the hearkening ear, the wise choice, and the unstammering tongue, they will not stop to consider the clouds. They will not stop to ask whether this or that shall prosper. They will not stop to talk about the narrow circumference of their own field, but they will say, "Lord God, let me send out thy word wherever hearts are hungering and souls are in bondage; wherever the devil throws his black pall of midnight and superstition over the hearts and souls of the people. Oh, God, let me by thy grace send them light to shine in the darkness! Oh, let me hold up my light higher and throw its radiance farther." That is the spirit of the Christian. "Sow beside all waters."

A final fruit of the spirit is: The liberal deviseth liberal things, and in liberal things shall he continue. "Ye did run well for a season," says Paul. What hindered you? Why did you stop? What warranted it? Has God's plan been modified? Have Christ's desires abated? Is heaven full? Is the ground of salvation all pre-empted? Are the corridors of deliverance crowded so that there is no room for another one? Is Jesus Christ satisfied? Has he seen all of the travail of his soul that he wanted to see? No. There is room yet; the desire of God for human salvation is unabated; the needs of the lost are increased; the hell that threatens them is nearer to them. Oh, it is near. The damnation is not lingering. It is coming stealthily as the footfall of a tiger, or the spread of a pestilence, but coming nearer and deadlier than before, and we say, "Let us call a halt in liberal things."

"Thorns and briers shall come up on the land of my people until the spirit be poured out from on high." But if the spirit be poured out from on high, and we see clearly, and hear distinctly and choose wisely and speak plainly and sow beside all waters and devise liberal things and continue in liberal things, then that is heaven on earth. The kingdom of heaven has come. Christ is reigning whenever that has come to pass. And the nearer we approach it the nearer we are to heaven. Louder than the big guns of our battleships,

louder than the voice of many waters, louder than mighty thunder should be the acclaim of God's people, saying, "Hosanna to the Lambi Hallelujah! The Lord God omnipotent reigneth, and let the earth rejoice."

Isaiah 33 is a woe against the Assyrian invaders. The prophet, after the great messianic ecstasy in the preceding chapter, comes back to his own times again to take another start. At first he deals with the local situation picturing the invading army of Assyrians, the desolation of the land by them and the awful distress in Jerusalem. Then follows the prediction of the miraculous deliverance of the city and the destruction of the enemy, upon which sinners are made to tremble and the inhabitants of Zion rejoice in quiet confidence by reason of Jehovah's protecting presence. There are several messianic gleams in this chapter, as "the king in his beauty," "Zion, . . . Jerusalem . . . a quiet habitation, . . . a place of broad rivers and streams," where there is no sickness and the "iniquity of the people is forgiven"

The historical background for this prophecy is the invasion of Sennacherib's host, the desolation of the land, and the threat of Jerusalem, all of which is described in 2 Kings 18:13 to 19: 37. The essential items of this history are as follows: Sennacherib received at Lachish the stipulated tribute from Hezekiah, but then he demanded the unconditional surrender of Jerusalem. He captured many cities and had broken up all travel. Hezekiah's ambassadors came home weeping. Then Sennacherib sent an army against Jerusalem to enforce his demands, but Rabshakeh, though skilful in speech, failed to get the keys to Jerusalem. He returned to Sennacherib whose army was visited by Jehovah and destroyed. Sennacherib returned to his own land and was smitten while worshiping in the house of Nisroch his god.

In Isaiah 33:1-6 we have the woe pronounced against the destroyer, showing his destruction, at which he would cease dealing treacherously. Then follows a prayer by the prophet to Jehovah in

which he exalts Jehovah as the God of their salvation and the destroyer of the enemy. In this exaltation of Jehovah the prophet gets a glimpse of glorified Zion, filled with righteousness and justice, a city of stability and abounding in salvation, wisdom, knowledge, and the fear of Jehovah. Thus he gives the general outlines of the things which are to follow. In 7-12 we have the particulars of what the prophet has just stated in general, viz: the shouting of the enemy without, the weeping of Hezekiah's ambassadors, the waste and desertion of the highways, Sennacherib's disregard of his covenant and his spoiling of the cities, the languishing of the land, specifying the destructive work of the Assyrian army, at which point he presents Jehovah as rousing himself, delivering his people and disposing of the enemy, as thorns cast into the fire.

In verses 13-16 is a description of the effects of this intervention of Jehovah, upon the sinners and the citizens of Zion in which the prophet again leaps upon the messianic heights to show us the characteristics of a true citizen of the New Jerusalem, whose everlasting dwelling place is with Jehovah.

In verses 17-24 the prophet assures us that, in that glorious state, we shall see the King in his beauty, we shall behold a universal kingdom, whose inhabitants shall muse on the days of terror and their triumphs over their many adversaries. Then he invites them to look upon Zion and contemplate her security, her king, her broad streams, her feasts and her inhabitants, who are never sick, but are in the joy of the fellowship of their majestic Lord, who reigns forever and ever.

The characteristics here given by the prophet of a true citizen of Zion are very similar to those given by the psalmist in Psalm 15. This true citizen is herein described as righteous, upright in speech, hating oppression, rejecting bribes, stopping his ear to murderous suggestions, and closing his eyes to sinful sights, a blessed ideal yet to be realized. How different now! We are vexed in our righteous

souls to behold the unrighteousness, the prevarication, the oppression, the graft, the murders and sinful sights in the present order of things. But this must give way to the principles of the majestic and beautiful king who will reign forever in justice and righteousness.

QUESTIONS

1. What is the section, Isaiah 28-33, called in our outline and what the date?
2. What the difference in the character of this and the preceding section?
3. What the conditions under which this prophecy was delivered, what Isaiah's task and how did he meet it?
4. What the key word which marks the natural divisions of this section and what the divisions thus marked?
5. Give a brief synopsis of chapter 28, showing its interpretation.
6. What two passages of this chapter are quoted in the New Testament, what use made of them in each case and what use may be made of verse 20 as touching the plan of salvation?
7. Give a brief synopsis of chapter 29, showing its interpretation.
8. What the fulfilment of 1-8 and what the best poetic description of the destruction of Sennacherib's army?
9. What two passages quoted from this chapter in the New Testament, and what use made of them there?
10. Give a brief statement of chapter 30 with the important points of interpretation.
11. What is the meaning of verse 33?

12. What the nature of chapter 31 and what the points contained therein?
13. What the nature of chapter 32, what in general its contents, how does the ideal set forth correspond with present conditions and what the ideal state herein contemplated?
14. What the influence that prepares for this ideal and what its importance?
15. What the first blessing of the Spirit herein specified?
16. What the general condition now respecting moral and spiritual vision and the lesson of Peter on this point?
17. What the second effect of the outpoured Spirit and what the importance of it? Illustrate.
18. What the third blessing of the Spirit and what its importance? Illustrate.
19. What the fourth blessing of the Spirit and what its importance? Illustrate.
20. What the fifth blessing of the Spirit? Explain and illustrate.
21. What the sixth blessing of the Spirit and what its importance?
22. What the nature and contents of chapter 33?
23. What the historical setting of this chapter?
24. Show the progress of this prophecy from the local conditions to the broader messianic phases of the kingdom.
25. What are the characteristics, here given by the prophet, of a true citizen of Zion?

XVII. THE BOOK OF ISAIAH – PART 9

Isaiah 84-39

Isaiah 34-35 form an appendix to the preceding parts of the book, setting forth the storm of God's wrath upon the whole world, and the face of nature in its sweetest forms and brightest colors, after the storm is over.

They constitute the counterparts to one great picture. The first part contains a denunciation of divine vengeance against the enemies of God's people and the second, a description of the glorious state of things after the execution of these judgments is finished. The awful picture, with its dark lurid hues, prepares the way for the soft and lovely portraiture of the blessed condition which follows.

This section opens with a call to all nations and people, the earth and the fulness thereof, the world and all things therein, to hear the prophet's message concerning Jehovah's indignation, which shows that the judgments to follow embrace the whole world.

There are three distinct paragraphs in chapter 34. In verses 1-7 we have announcement of the final judgment upon the whole world, including Edom as the leader. In verses 8-15 we have the details of the judgment upon Edom as the ideal representative of the world. In verses 16-17 the prophet appeals to the written word.

The allegorical view of the use of the word, "Edom," in this chapter is in no way inconsistent with the existence of a basis of historical fact, therefore we adopt this view for the following reasons:

1. The invitation shows that the message to be delivered was on universal interest and application, yet the language is parabolical in kind.
2. The allegorical character of chapter 35 is undeniable, but the two chapters are linked together by the very phraseology'. As the Zion of

chapter 35 is the ideal "city of God," so the Edom of chapter 34 must include all who hate and persecute the mystical Zion.

3. The names, "Edom and Bozrah," occur in another allegorical passage (63:1-6).

4. Edom, the surname of him who "despised the birthright," was a fitting designation for those who profanely slighted their privilege as God's special people.

5. The context is admittedly figurative, but if the lambs, bullocks, and goats be symbolical, then the unclean animals that are to occupy their places should be so, too.

6. In Hebrews 12:16-17 Esau stands as the type of profane and sensual-minded men, who are identified with those against whom Moses warned Israel in Deuteronomy 29:18-23. The idea is further carried out in the next paragraph. In verses 8-15 we have the more detailed account of God's vengeance against the enemies of Zion, which is likened unto that upon Sodom and Gomorrah. This, of course, is not literal, but typically represents the punishment of God's dreadful vengeance upon all his enemies while Edom is here again made the type. Verse 10 shows that this curse is to be everlasting in its typical aspect while the following verses show that Edom, as an example of such destruction, was to be literally and perpetually laid waste, and history verifies this prophecy respecting Edom.

The book referred to in 34:16 is the book of Moses and perhaps includes the earlier prophets which had written in them the threatenings against the ungodly. At this time the Pentateuch and history of Joshua and Judges, and the history of the reigns of the kings up to this time had been written and preserved, but the reference is very likely to the Pentateuch, primarily, which was complete in one book and kept in the ark of the covenant. This appeal to the book by Isaiah is to prove that he was in line with the threatenings and judgments which preceded his time and that his

prophecies were to be regarded as equal in inspiration and authority with the other scriptures of his day.

Isaiah 35 is a glorious counterpart of the judgment on Edom in chapter 34 and is distinctly messianic. The outline of these contents consists of three items. In verses 1-2 we have the blessings on the land pronounced which reverses the corresponding desolation of Lebanon, Carmel, and Sharon, because of "the glory and excellency of our God." This is a general statement of the reversal of the judgments before predicted. In verses 3-4 is a general announcement of the hope and good cheer on account of the recompense of God. Then in 5-10 the prophet particularizes these blessings which were literally fulfilled in the ministry of Christ. Then the prophet shows us the highway that shall be there, the way of holiness, with no unclean person, no fools and no ravenous beasts walking therein, over which the redeemed shall walk and the ransomed of Jehovah shall return with songs of joy to Zion, where they shall have everlasting joy upon their heads and where sorrow and sighing shall flee away. Thus commencing with the restoration to their land, then passing on to the coming and healing work of the Messiah the prophet closes with the blessing of their conversion. This hope is kept constantly before the holy remnant of Israel by Isaiah, stimulating them in these dark and gloomy hours, just As when the weary traveler gains The height of some o'er-looking hill, The sight his fainting spirit cheers, He eyes his home, though distant still.

This section, Isaiah 36-39, in our outline of Isaiah is called "The Historical Interlude," sometimes called "The Book of Hezekiah." There is a reference to this section in 2 Chronicles 32:32, thus: "Now the rest of the acts of Hezekiah, and his good deeds, behold, they are written in the vision of Isaiah the prophet the son of Amoz, in the book of the kings of Judah and Israel." as a matter of history almost all this section is embodied in 2 Kings 18-20, which should be carefully studied in connection with this passage in Isaiah.

This section may be regarded as the history of how Hezekiah stood the test applied to him. A like test was put to Ahaz (7:3-17), and he, an unbeliever as he was, simply put the offered grace from him, as swine would deal with pearls cast before them. But Hezekiah's test reveals a different character, one vastly more interesting and instructive for God's people in all ages. He proves to be a man of faith in God and, in a large measure, wins out in the conflict, but fails in the matter of the Babylonian messengers and the pride of his heart. Yet again he shows that he was a child of God in that he humbled himself so that the threatened wrath of Jehovah came not upon them in the days of Hezekiah. The case of David and Solomon, in which the consequences of Solomon's sins were deferred till after his death for the sake of David, is similar to this.

This section divides itself into two parts, viz: (1) Sennacherib's invasion (36-37) ; (2) Hezekiah's sickness, and the embassy from Babylon (38-39).

Chapters 36-37 contain a history of an event which had been predicted long before and frequently alluded to afterward (see 8:5-10; 10:12-19, 33, 34; 15:24-25; 30:28-31; 31:8). It was stated definitely that the stream of Assyrian conquest, after it had overflowed Samaria, would "reach even to the neck" of Judah, and then be suddenly turned back. The fact of the prediction is unquestionable. The actual overthrow of the Assyrian power is as certain as any event in the world's annals. These two chapters are thus the historical goal of the book from chapters 7 to 35. So this part of the book is as inseparable from the preceding part of the book as fulfilment is inseparable from prediction itself.

Chapters 38-39 are, on the other hand, the historical starting point for the rest of the book. These two chapters tell of the failure of the man who had checked the stream of national corruption; who suppressed idolatry, restored the Temple worship, and followed the guidance of the prophetic word; who had been rescued, both from a fatal malady and from the assault of the Assyrian king. When such

& one fell away, no higher proof could be given that Judah must be subjected to the severe discipline of the captivity. With this dark foreshadowing there was a necessity for the following chapters of comfort.

The date of Sennacherib's attack on Jerusalem is significant. The record tells us that this event was in the fourteenth year of Hezekiah, king of Judah, which was forty-six years after the vision of chapter 6. This taken in connection with 37:30 indicates that they were on the threshold of the Jubilee Year which, with its blessings, should be the sign unto Hezekiah that God would make the Jubilee laws effective at this time and deliver the land from the hand of Sennacherib.

From 2 Kings 18:13-16 we learn that the immediate cause of Sennacherib's invasion at this time was Hezekiah's refusing to pay tribute. But the record also tells us that Hezekiah righted this wrong to the king of Assyria by sending the tribute and begging his pardon. This did not satisfy Sennacherib because he had a motive beyond that of getting the tribute, for we see him demanding the unconditional surrender of Jerusalem avowedly to be followed by deportation. This was an act of perfidy, as well as of cruelty and arrogance. Undoubtedly Sennacherib's motive was not merely political, but he was bent on proving that Jehovah was on a level with the gods of other nations. Assyria had become a great power and, as she thought, had overcome the gods of all the other nations, including Samaria whose God was Jehovah. Just one more step now was needed to make Assyria the lord of the world, and that was the capture of Jerusalem. This evidently was his ulterior motive in this invasion.

In chapters 36-37 we have the details of this history which is a thrilling account of a conflict between the true and the false religion, similar to that of Moses and Pharaoh, or Elijah and the prophets of Baal. Here it is the Assyrian gods versus Jehovah. The items of this history are as follows: Rabshakeh was sent by Sennacherib from

Lachish against Jerusalem with a great army which stopped at the upper pool near the Joppa gate, where Isaiah met Ahaz some forty years before.

Messengers from Hezekiah at once went out to meet Rabshakeh through whom he sent a message to Hezekiah belittling his confidence in Egypt and in Jehovah, saying that Egypt was a bruised reed and could not be depended upon, and that Jehovah had commissioned him to destroy the land of Judah. Then the messengers asked Rabshakeh to speak in the Assyrian language so the people on the wall could not understand, but he deliberately refused to comply, saying that he was sent to speak to the people on the wall. Then he grew bold and made a strong plea to those who heard him to renounce allegiance to Hezekiah and come over to Sennacherib, but they held their peace as they had been instructed to do. Upon this came the messengers to Hezekiah with their clothes rent and told him the words of Rabshakeh. Hezekiah when he heard it rent his clothes, covered himself with sackcloth and went into the house of Jehovah.

Then he sent messengers to Isaiah to ask him to pray for the remnant. Isaiah returned word that there was no need of fear, for Jehovah would send Sennacherib back to his own land and there he would die. Rabshakeh returned to find his master pushing the conquest on toward Egypt and hearing at the same time that Tirhakah, king of Ethiopia, was coming out to help Hezekiah. This seemed to provoke Sennacherib and he sent a letter to Hezekiah to warn him again putting his trust in Jehovah, reminding him also of the Assyrian victories over the gods of the other nations. Then Hezekiah took the letter and spread it before Jehovah and prayed.

For pointedness, faith, and earnestness, this prayer has few equals on record. Just at this time came another message from the Lord through Isaiah, assuring Hezekiah of the Lord's intervention, as in very many instances before, to deliver his people from this Assyrian, whom he would lead by the nose back to his own land. Then follows

the sign of Jehovah to Hezekiah assuring him that the remnant should prosper under Jehovah's hand, reannouncing also the defeat of the plan of Sennacherib to take Jerusalem. The rest of chapter 37 is an account of the destruction of the Assyrian army by the angel of Jehovah and the death of Sennacherib in his own land.

Chapter 38 opens with the statement, "In those days was Hezekiah sick unto death," which is far from being a precise date, but the promise of fifteen years added to his life and the twenty-nine years of his reign in all, fixes the date in the fourteenth year of his reign, which is the date given in 36:1. In 38:5-6 the two deliverances are coupled together in a way which suggests that they stood in some close relation to each other. Thus we are led to look on these two pairs of chapters, not as successive in point of time, but as contemporaneous.

In the record here Hezekiah's malady is called a boil, but we learn that it was a special disease marked by the signs of leprosy. The same word occurs in Exodus 9:9-11 to describe the Egyptian plague of "boils," in Leviticus 13:18-20 to describe the boil out of which leprosy sprang, in Deuteronomy 28:27, 35 to describe the "boil of Egypt" and the "sore boil that cannot be healed," and in Job 2:7 to describe the "sore boils" with which Job was smitten. So, humanly speaking, his disease was incurable.

When the prophet announced that Hezekiah must die he prayed and wept. The prayer, as recorded here, is very brief but pointed, pleading his own faithfulness to Jehovah, an unusual petition though allowable in Hezekiah's case because it was true and was in line with the promise made to Solomon (1 Kings 9:4).

It was no weak love of life that moved Hezekiah to pray for recovery. It was because that he, who had followed God with all sincerity, appeared to be stricken with the penalty fore-ordained for disobedience. Leprosy means "a stroke," and was believed to be a stroke from God. That was what made the stroke so exceedingly bitter. He was not to witness that great exhibition of God's truth and

mercy toward which the faithful had been looking for almost thirty years. Such was a sore trial to Hezekiah.

Upon the direction of the prophet, a cake of figs was applied. This remedy is said to be employed now in the east for the cure of ordinary boils. But it was quite an insufficient cure for this incurable "boil" from which Hezekiah was suffering. In miraculous cures, both the Old Testament prophets and our Lord himself sometimes employed means, insufficient in itself, but supernaturally rendered sufficient, to effect the intended cure. (See 1 Kings 17:21; 2 Kings 4:34, 41; 5:14; John 9:6; Mark 7:33:8:23, etc.) These are examples of the natural and the supernatural working together for the desired end.

The sign given Hezekiah was the turning back of the shadow on the dial ten degrees. The dial was, perhaps, a large structure consisting of steps upon which the shadow of a great shaft was allowed to fall, which indicated the position of the sun in the heavens. In this case the shadow was made to run back, instantly, ten degrees. How this miracle was performed the record does not say, but it may have been seen by the law of refraction which does not make it any less a miracle. Hezekiah wrote a song of thanksgiving for his recovery, which in the first part looks at the case of his sickness from the standpoint of the despair and gloom of it, while the latter part treats the case from the stand point of the deliverance and wells the note of praise. In the middle of this poem we find his prayer which he prayed in this dark hour.

Hezekiah made a great mistake in the latter part of his life in allowing himself to become exalted in his prosperity and not humbling himself before the Lord as in former years (2 Chronicles 32:24-33). So when God tested him again in the matter of the messengers from Babylon, he failed because he had not the spirit of discernment so as to know their purpose to spy out the land. He showed them everything and thus prepared the way for the capture of Judah by the Chaldeans.

The closing part of this section shows the necessity for the second division of the book. This part closes with the announcement of the captivity and gives us a very dark picture which calls for the opening sentence of comfort in the next division. Hezekiah is reconciled to it as we see from his language, but evidently it is to be understood in this connection that the prophet had already revealed to him that there should be peace and truth in his days. Now, if Hezekiah had his message of comfort and was thereby able to joyfully acquiesce in the future calamity already announced, should we not expect a message of comfort also for Judah? The last twenty-seven chapters furnish just such comfort for Judah, that she too might not despair in view of the approaching captivity.

From the many lessons that might be selected from the life of Hezekiah I take but one. Though he was upright and so highly commended in the Scripture (2 Kings 18:5-7) he had a burden of guilt, from which only God's grace could absolve him. He could not stand as the "Righteous Servant," who should "justify many" by "bearing their iniquities." If good Hezekiah could not, what child of man can? Nay, we have all sinned and come short of the glory of God.

QUESTIONS

1. What the relation of Isaiah 34-35 to the preceding parts, especially the preceding section, of the book?
2. What the relation of these two chapters to each other?
3. How does this section open and what the nature of the prophecy as indicated by it?
4. What the analysis of chapter 34?
5. Why adopt the allegorical view of the use of the word, "Edom," in this chapter?

6. How is the idea further carried out in the next paragraph?
7. What the book referred to in 34:16 and what the import of this appeal to the Word?
8. What the nature of chapter 35 and what the brief outline of its contents?
9. What is the section, Isaiah 36-39, called, where may we find a reference to them and where do we find nearly the whole of them embodied?
10. What, briefly, the theme of this section, what similar test was applied to a king of Israel prior to this and what the difference in the deportment of the two kings under the test of each, respectively?
11. What case in the history of Israel similar to this?
12. How is this section divided and, briefly, what does each part contain?
13. What the date of Sennacherib's attack on Jerusalem and what the significance of the date in the light of 37:30?
14. What the cause of Sennacherib's invasion at this time?
15. What the essential points in the narrative of Sennacherib's attack upon Jerusalem?
16. What the date of Hezekiah's sickness?
17. What was Hezekiah's malady and what its nature?
18. What did Hezekiah do when the prophet announced that Hezekiah must die and what plea did he make?
19. Why did Hezekiah pray to be healed?

20. What remedy did he apply and why?
21. What the sign given Hezekiah?
22. How was this miracle performed?
23. What expression have we of Hezekiah's gratitude for this divine deliverance and what the viewpoints from which it deals with the case?
24. What Hezekiah's great mistake in the latter part of his life?
25. How does the closing part of this section show the necessity for the second division of the book?
26. What great lesson from the life of Hezekiah?

XVIII. THE BOOK OF ISAIAH - PART 10

Isaiah 40-42

This great section (40-66) of Isaiah is called "The Old Testament Book of Comfort." The New Testament correspondence to this book of comfort is John 14-17.

This section is addressed chiefly to the Israelitish exiles in Babylon. The conservative critics regard this as one of the greatest marvels of predictive prophecy. As Isaiah had already announced the Babylonian exile in 39:6-7 he was further commissioned to provide comfort for those who should be tempted to despair by reason of their distress in captivity.

In 2 Chronicles 32:25-33 we have an account of the condition at the close of the first part of the book, which does ample justice to the great and excellent Hezekiah as a ruler and a servant of Jehovah, yet it points out the sin of his heart in not rendering again according to the benefit done unto him. His heart was lifted up, which was no trivial sin, but he repented of this sin and thereby averted the immediate judgment from Judah. All this made Isaiah feel more and more distinctly the meaning of the Remnant, of which he had had much to say. True, Assyria was never to destroy Jerusalem, but Isaiah saw behind Assyria a dark cloud arising which was to cover the whole face of heaven and burst upon the guilty city and people. This Isaiah saw clearly and distinctly. It was this very Babylon who at that time opposed Assyria, so that it was easy for Hezekiah and his people to take them as an ally. In view of this rising cloud Isaiah's responsibility was increased. So now he directs his latest ministry to the future glory of Israel. The ten tribes were already in captivity and Judah was ripe for it. No time now to call to repentance until the Remnant should be purified by the judgment which was already decreed.

These last twenty-seven chapters are divided into three consecutive portions of nine chapters each which are externally marked off by a

sad refrain: "There is no peace, saith Jehovah, to the wicked." In like manner each of these divisions is subdivided into three equal parts of three chapters each. The central verses of the central chapter of the central division of this section contains the very essence of the gospel (see 53:5-8). The progress of revelation is also indicated by the subject, or general theme, of each division of nine chapters. The first is "Theology," or the doctrine of God; the second is "Soteriology," or the doctrine of salvation; the third is "Eschatology," or the doctrine of the last things. Who could imagine that such an arrangement could have come to be by mere chance in the hands of a number of Isaiah's?

In Isaiah 40:1-2 we have an introduction to the rest of the book. This contains (1) the theme of this entire section, (2) the announcement that the warfare of Jerusalem was accomplished, (3) that her iniquity was pardoned, and (4) that she had received of Jehovah's hand double for all her sins.

The theme of this last part of the book, as herein contained, has been fully explained already. But what is the meaning of Jerusalem's "warfare" being accomplished? This means that her service was fulfilled, the long period of hardship and drudgery during which she has borne the brunt of the enemies' attacks; that the time was fulfilled and the kingdom of God was at hand. A new day had dawned for Jerusalem. Her "iniquity pardoned" means God's reconciliation to her and that he would not impute sin to her or punish her any longer for it. "Her receiving double of Jehovah's hand" means, not twice as much as her sins deserved, but that she had received "abundantly" for her iniquity and therefore she might be assured that, having been amply punished, she need not fear further vengeance. All this is spoken from the standpoint of the captivity from which they are to return.

The theme of chapters 40-42 is the conflict with idolatry inside of Israel.

The prophecy of 40:3-5 is a distinct prediction of the work of John the Baptist and is so declared to be in Matthew 3:3: "For this is he that was spoken of through Isaiah the prophet, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make ye ready the way of the Lord, Make his paths straight."

This is confirmed by Mark (1:3), Luke (3:4-6), and John (1: 23). But Luke's quotation of Isaiah 40:3-5 throws more light on the interpretation than that of the other evangelists. He says that all flesh shall see the salvation of God, which indicates that this prophecy reaches over into the gospel dispensation and takes in the Gentiles.

The main work of John the Baptist is here set forth. His work, according to this prophecy, was preparatory and is set forth in figures of speech showing the levelling and adjusting work of repentance. Every valley shall be filled, all the hills shall be leveled and all rough places shall be made plain. The import of all these figures can be expressed in the one word, "grading"; so the work of John the Baptist was compared to the grading of a highway over which Christ was to come to his people. Then the prophet turns from the figure of grading to one of agriculture, expressing thereby the same preparatory nature of John's work. The image employed is that of burning the grass of a field. (Isa. 40:6-8). John's preaching subsequently fulfilled this figure, of withering the grass of the flesh, in a most striking manner, by destroying all hope of fitness for the kingdom of God based on fleshly descent from Abraham. In 40:9-11, the verses following the description of John's preparatory work, we have the thought carried on by a call to the messenger to get up on a high mountain and proclaim to the cities of Judah, with a lifted voice, the coming of their God, who would come as a mighty one to rule and to feed the sheep. This was all fulfilled in the coming of our Lord, who, heralded by John the Baptist, stretched forth his hand with authority, fed the sheep and tenderly cared for the lambs.

The picture of 40:12-17 is that of the incomparably lofty One, the Jehovah of Israel, who is here exalted above all creation, showing

God's eternal wisdom and power versus man's finiteness and insignificance. This passage is quoted by Paul in his great exclamation over the supreme wisdom and knowledge of God (Rom. 11:33-35).

The picture presented in 40:18-24 is a contrast between Jehovah and the senselessness of idolatry, as the preceding passage is a contrast between Jehovah and man. In the light of this truth the prophet shows how monstrous appeared the folly of those who made an image to represent or symbolize Deity. This passage is a complement of verses 12-17 showing that if God be all that is there said of him, how strange that man should produce the poor, mean likeness of God which he has in his folly, set up in various times and places. The prophet here sarcastically contrasts these idols with Deity in their power, again magnifying Jehovah's wisdom and power above every other being in the whole scope of the universe. Doubtless this argument, together with the many others made by Isaiah, against idolatry", helped greatly to bring about the freedom from Polytheism, which has marked the Jewish people ever since the restoration from the Babylonian captivity.

The brief paragraph, 40:27-31, sets forth the comfort to God's people of knowing the foregoing things concerning their God: that their way was open to Jehovah and he had not forgotten the justice due to them; that Jehovah is an everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth and does not grow weary, and that they that wait for the Lord shall renew their strength, shall mount up with wings as eagles, shall run and not be weary, shall walk and not faint. But what does the last verse mean? This passage seems, at first thought, to be an anticlimax, but it is a real climax. The first part of a journey is accomplished under the impulse of ardent feeling, as the eagle mounting upon wings for a long flight. The second stage of the journey is made by robust and energetic effort; as the traveler, not so fresh and buoyant, runs and by such effort presses on the way. The last stage of the journey is made by a steady, but tranquil and almost unconscious, advance, as when almost exhausted the traveler walks

steadily onward. This verse taken in connection with the preceding one means this: Though the journey be such that the strongest, humanly speaking, may be weary and fall, the Lord giveth such power to those that wait upon him, though they be faint and have no might, that, in the first part of the journey, they shall be fresh and buoyant; in the second stage of the journey they shall run, as other men would, but unlike them they shall not be weary; and in the third stage of the journey where there is falling and fainting, with these it shall not be so, but they shall all have strength to complete the journey. How beautifully this applies to Christian service in this life. "They that wait upon Jehovah shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; they shall walk, and not faint."

The special theme of chapter 41 is Jehovah's contest with idols, the outcome of which is that Jehovah proves his Deity in two ways: (1) by stirring up Cyrus as a scourge to the heathen nations, and (2) by predicting the future which the false gods of the heathen could not do.

The prophetic picture in 41:1-7 is a challenge to the isles and nations to match Jehovah's strength with the power of their idols. Jehovah invites them to consider well the evidence. Then he marches out Cyrus at his word. He passes swiftly to chastise the heathen nations who tremble at his approach. They assemble, combine their efforts and encourage one another to make the very best god possible, so as to meet the power of Cyrus.

The thought is carried on in 41:8-16. In the midst of the consternation produced by Cyrus, Israel is encouraged not to fear; that Jacob is the chosen seed and he will be gathered from the ends of the earth; that Jehovah will be his God, singing in his ear, How firm a foundation, ye saints of the Lord, is laid for your faith in His excellent Word; that he would infuse weakness into their enemies and that he would give Israel an aggressive vigor that would enable

them to scatter their foes, which was fulfilled, perhaps, in the Maccabean period.

The crowning promise in 41:17-20 is that of spiritual support and refreshment through the dull and dreary time of the captivity, which would find its full fruitage in the gospel days. The picture here is one that cheers the lonely traveler in a desert land. The anticipation of the blessings of the oasis stimulates and encourages. Here we have a desert converted into a garden, such as the gospel alone could do.

A contest between Jehovah and idols is described in 41:21-29. Here Jehovah challenges them to try their hand on revealing the past, predicting the future, or to demonstrate their claim by performing the supernatural, to which he himself replies that they are nothing and render people who choose them abominable. Then the prophet gives a sample of Jehovah's prediction, which these idols were not able to match, because they were confusion. The prediction here is respecting Cyrus who should come from the north and should make the rulers as potter's clay under his feet.

Who was the "Servant of the Lord," occurring so often in Isaiah? Israel was God's national son and it was the vocation of Israel to be God's servant. So long as they served him loyally, they had true freedom, but when they ceased to do so they were chastised and had to learn the service of other kingdoms (2 Chron. 12:8). Yet their vocation was not annulled. The promise to Abraham's seed stood firm. The "holy seed" was the germ of life which continued intact throughout their history. The title, "Servant of the Lord," is applied to Israel, or Jacob, in chapters 41; 44; 45; 48. In other places where the title occurs, as 42; 43; 44:26; 49; 52; 53, it is evident that a person is addressed who, while he is so closely related to Israel that he can be its representative, has at the same time a transcendent personality which enables him to stand outside of Israel and to act independently of it or in antagonism to it, as in 49:5-6; 53.

It is to be noted in this connection that the title "Servant of the Lord," occurring nineteen times in 41-53 disappears after 53:11. The reason is obvious. His work as a servant is thenceforth finished. The everlasting covenant has been established (55:3). On the other hand after chapter 53 we have "Servants of the Lord," which does not occur at all before chapter 44, but occurs ten times in 44-66. The relation between the two complementary series is fully explained by 53:10: "He shall see his seed," and 53:11: "He shall see of the travail of his soul." Through the obedience of one righteous servant many are made righteous (Rom. 5:12-19).

The special theme of chapter 42 is "The Servant of Jehovah and His Work."

In 42:1-4 we have set forth the character, anointing, gentleness, and work of the Messiah. The New Testament (Matt. 12:18-21) applies this expressly to Christ. In this we see that he was chosen with special delight and anointed in the Holy Spirit for his mission by Jehovah himself. His mission to the Gentiles, his quietness in his work, and his gentleness in dealing with backsliders are all noted with marked distinction. He will establish justice in truth and his administration shall include all the nations. The "bruised reed" refers to a musical instrument in need of repair, and the "smoking flax" refers to the wick of an old-fashioned lamp, nearly gone out. Both of these refer spiritually to the backslider and illustrate the tenderness with which Christ deals with the backslider. He will not break the bruised flute, but will fix it up again. Nor will he snuff the candle, but will trim it so that it will give forth its light. Brother Truett had a great sermon on this text in which he magnified the tenderness of Christ to backsliders.

The thought of verses 1-4 is carried on in verses 5-9. This is a solemn reaffirmation that the mission of the "Servant of Jehovah" was from the Almighty and that the success of it was assured by him. This mission of the "Servant" is here declared to be twofold:

(1) for a light of the Gentiles; (2) to open the eyes of the blind, to liberate the captives from the dungeon and from the prison house.

The "former things" here (v. 9) are the former prophecies concerning Israel's captivity which had been fulfilled, and the "new things" are the predictions respecting the restoration of the captive people to their own land.

The thought expressed in 42:10-17 is a new song to Jehovah for his triumph over idolatry and for the deliverance of his people. The surrounding nations are called upon to join in this song, i.e., the nations about Palestine. This is a song of praise for the gospel and has its fullest realization in the antitype's victory over superstition and idolatry. Verse 16 is a striking statement: "I will bring the blind by a way that they know not; in paths that they know not will I lead them." This is an appeal to trust Jehovah in the darkest hours. The poet has expressed this great need thus: When we in darkness walk, Nor feel the heavenly flame, Then is the time to trust our God, And rest upon His name.

In 42:18-25 Israel is represented as blind and deaf, grinding in prison houses because of disobedience, very much like national Israel in the days of our Lord, who had eyes but saw not and ears but heard not. They are also represented as a plundered people, but this is the judgment of Jehovah upon Jacob, because he was not obedient to his law. Again he is represented as not laying the matter of Jehovah's dealings with him to heart. Is it not true that Jacob is in this condition today? He has never yet laid the folly of his sin of rejecting the Saviour to heart. But he will one day be made to consider his rebellious way of unbelief, the veil will fall from his blind eyes and he will receive our Lord and go with us after a lost world with a zeal that the world has never yet seen.

QUESTIONS

1. What is this section (40-66) of Isaiah called and what the New Testament correspondence to it?

2. To whom is it addressed and how is it regarded by the conservative critics?
3. Give a brief statement of the general condition in the kingdom at the close of the first part of the book (39:8).
4. Restate here the artistic features of this last section of the book.
5. What is contained in. 40:1-2 and what the explanation of each of the items?
6. What the general theme of the subdivision, 40-42?
7. What the prophecy of 40:3-5 and where do we find the distinct fulfilment?
8. How is the main work of John the Baptist here set forth?
9. How is this thought of the preparatory work of John the Baptist for the coming king carried forward?
10. What the picture of 40:12-17?
11. What the picture presented in 40:18-26 and how does it seem to have impressed the Jewish people?
12. What the thought in 40:27-31 and what the interpretation of verse 31?
13. What the special theme of chapter 41 and what the outcome?
14. What the prophetic picture in 41 :1-7?
15. How is the thought carried on in 41:8-16?
16. What the crowning promise here (41:17-20)?
17. Describe the contest between Jehovah and idols in 41:21-29.

18. Who was the "Servant of Jehovah," occurring so often in Isaiah and what of the usage of the term by this prophet?
19. What the special theme of chapter 42?
20. What the contents of verses 1-4?
21. How is the thought of verses 1-4 carried on in verses 5-9?
22. What the "former things" and the "new things" in verse 9?
23. What the thought expressed in 42:10-17?
24. What Israel's condition as described in 42:18-25?

XIX. THE BOOK OF ISAIAH - PART 11

Isaiah 43-45

The theme of these three chapters is the conflict with the forces of idolatry outside of Israel and arrayed against Israel. The special theme of 43:1 to 44:5 is, "The Free Grace of Jehovah Brings Redemption."

Jehovah, speaking to Israel in 43:1, contrasts the curse spoken of in the closing part of the preceding chapter with his free grace of protection. He says, "But now thus saith Jehovah." Then follows a statement of his relation to Jacob. He was Israel's Creator, Former, Redeemer, and Caller. He created Israel, i.e., brought Israel into being, and when Israel was chaotic, he formed it into an organized nation. When Israel was in bondage to Egypt, he redeemed it, and throughout its history he has called it by name and with special favor he has nourished it.

"Waters," "rivers," and "fire" in verse 2 mean troubles of various kinds through which Israel must yet pass. It is a back reference to the Red Sea incident and the crossing of the Jordan, and a prophecy literally fulfilled in the case of the Hebrew children in the furnace of fire. But it has a strong and impressive symbolical meaning. They were yet to pass through the floods and fires of persecutions in their captivity, and dispersion which was to come later on in their history.

Jehovah had saved Israel from Pharaoh, from the Amalekites, from Jabin, from Midian, from the Philistines, from Zerah, and from Sennacherib. The term, "Saviour," is quite a favorite with Isaiah in these last chapters of his book. The prophet had his eyes fixed on the deliverance of Israel from the rouble captivity of sin and of Babylon and thus he saw Jehovah not only as their Saviour in the past but their future Saviour as well. The thought is extended in the expression, "I have given Egypt as thy ransom," which means, "In my counsels I have already assigned to the Persians, as a compensation for letting thee go free, the broad countries of Egypt,

Ethiopia, and Seba." This was fulfilled when Cambyses, the son of Cyrus effected the conquest of Egypt and Ethiopia about 527-6 B.C. This is a marvelous prediction and for its fulfilment, goes far beyond the date of this part of Isaiah assigned by the critics.

In the prophecy of verses 5-6 Isaiah saw a greater dispersion than the one of his day and also a greater gathering than the return from the captivity. Though there was a primary fulfilment in the restoration from Babylon, that does not by any means fulfil the conditions herein set forth. They were to come from the north and the south, the east and the west. But no such gathering of the Jews has yet been witnessed. We look to the future for the glories of this prophecy.

In 43:8-13 we have a challenge to the nations to try their hand on prophecy, either old or new, and to set forth the claims of their gods against Jehovah. He challenges them to produce the evidence in their case or acknowledge the truth as revealed by Jehovah. Israel is Jehovah's witness, and also his chosen Servant. Therefore the conclusion is that they have no god; that Jehovah is the only true God. Not only his predictions prove him superior to the other gods, but his power to bring them to pass is beyond all power to hinder.

Israel was Jehovah's witness (v. 10), thus:

1. Israel was Jehovah's witness to the truth of the proposition that he was the only God as shown in the records of its history. A look at the records proves them to be genuine and in them are found the many predictions and their fulfilments which are unquestioned. These may be mentioned: the overthrow of Jeroboam's altar at Bethel by Josiah, David's descendants on the throne of Judah, the long continuance of the house of Jehu, and many others. These are outstanding witnesses of the power of Jehovah to predict the future, as no other god can do.

2. Israel is yet one of the most powerful witnesses for the truth of revelation. No other nation has been so preserved in its dispersion.

But all this is found in the prophecy concerning Israel. The proposition of the "Jew" is the one unanswerable argument for the inspiration of the Bible with all infidels. On all other questions they can find a fairly satisfactory answer to themselves but they cannot get by the "Jew." He is the one unanswerable argument for the truth of our religion to the skeptic. "That Jew, that Jew; what shall we do with that Jew?"

The "servant" of verse 10 is an added witness and is distinct from Israel though of Israel. This refers to the Messiah, the true servant of chapter 42:1-7 whose work was largely witnessing for the Father. He is called the "Faithful Witness" (Rev. 1:5; 3:14), who "came into the world that he might bear witness of the truth" (John 18:37).

The counterpart to this picture of Israel's redemption as stated in 43:14-21 is the destruction of Babylon, with several correspondences between this deliverance and the deliverance from Egypt.

There are several of these back references here. "The way in the sea," "path in the mighty waters," "the chariot and horse," "the army and the mighty man" are references to the incidents of the Exodus from Egypt and correspond to the power of Babylon and the way in the desert by which God will deliver them from Babylon. The "rivers in the desert" is a reference to the supply of water by Jehovah on the journey from Egypt to the Holy Land. But this deliverance is to be so much greater than the former one they are asked not to mention that one at all: to blot it out of their memory. But did the return from Babylon under Zerubbabel and Joshua fulfil this prophecy? It could not be claimed that this return was sufficient to fill out such an outline. But when we consider the typical aspect of this event as it related both to Israel and Babylon we get the spiritual deliverance of Israel from Babylon. This is impressively pictured in Revelation where the Israel of God is delivered from the mystical Babylon. So in its far-reaching application, the future of Israel so eclipsed the past that they were not to remember the former things.

In 43:22-28 the Lord reproves Jacob for his sin and shows that Israel had never done anything to merit this deliverance but on the other hand, his father, Abraham, and his teachers, the priests and prophets, had all gone out of the way and there was no reason for his deliverance except for Jehovah's own sake, purely an act of grace.

The passage (44:1-5), is set over against the closing verses of chapter 43 to which it really belongs as a conclusion, and in which Jehovah states that he had profaned the princes of the sanctuary, i.e., the priesthood had been deprived of its function, as a part of the punishment of Israel's sin, and that he had made Israel a curse and a reviling. In the opening verses of chapter 44 the prophet again strikes the joyful note of promise: that the thirsty land should be refreshed; that the Spirit would be poured upon the seed of Jacob, and there would come the blessings of a matchless prosperity, at which time the Gentiles would come to take the name of Jacob and Israel.

"Jeshurun" in verse 2 is one of Israel's proper names. It is found in only four places, viz: Deuteronomy 32:15; 33:5, 26, and here in Isaiah 44:2. Of these proper names given to Israel it is well for us to note some of them in this connection. "Hebrew" is derived from Heber, the ancestor of Abraham. "Jacob" marks them as descendants of the patriarch by the same name. "Israel" marks their militant character, as soldiers for God. So when we speak of them from the standpoint of their origin, we say, "Hebrews"; when we take the standpoint of the founder, we say, "Jacob": when we refer to their militant character it is "Israel"; when we think of their standard of moral excellence, it is "Jeshurun, the upright."

The promise here of the outpouring of the Spirit connects back with Joel 2:28; Isaiah 32:15, and is enlarged upon in the promises of John the Baptist and Christ, and has its fulfilment in Acts 2.

The import of verse 5 is that Israel in that day will be so flourishing that the Gentiles will not be ashamed to own her, but rather, they will seek to take the name of Jehovah and his people. One will say,

"I am Jehovah's; another, "I am of Jacob"; and another, "I am of Israel."

The special theme of Isaiah 44:6-23 is the "Contrast Between the Living God and Powerless Idols." The prophet introduces this theme (44:6-8) by exalting Jehovah as king and redeemer of Israel, and the one eternal living God, who founded Israel and revealed himself to him as his impregnable Rock. The prophet then shows the shame of idol makers. The ones who make them are "confusion," or "darkness"; there is no profit to their idols; their own witnesses, the idols, do not know; they expect something from them; the failure affects the whole guild of idol makers; all their efforts working together cannot save them from the fear of Jehovah. Their utter failure is their shame.

The whole process of image-making is here reviewed. First comes the making of the adz, or graving tool. The smith works and hammers, and is hungry, thirsty, and exhausted. Then follows the carpenter, lining off the idol and shaping it with various tools into the form and beauty of man. But these idols must be made of cedars or other trees, which have to be planted, which also have to be watered by the rain from Jehovah, the purpose of which is to be burnt by man. But the idol maker divides the tree, making part into a god, taking part to burn for warming himself, and cooking his food. Then bowing down before his handmade god he worships it, prays unto it and says, "Deliver me; for thou art my god." A strange god is such a contrivance as this!

The reason for all this perversion is summed up in one sentence in verse 20, thus: "A deceived heart hath turned him aside." The paragraph, as a whole, throws much light on their condition. They do not know because God "hath shut their eyes." But they once could see and turned away from the light. Then God turned them over to hardness of heart and reprobacy of mind (see Rom. 1:18-32). This is the judicial blindness that comes to those who have the light and reject it. Such is the condition of the heathen world today,

except where the gospel has been proclaimed. One of the greatest results of gospel light is the destruction of idols. The Jews are also under judicial blindness today because they rejected the Messiah when he came. The lesson for us is a missionary one. There is but one thing that can dispel the ignorance here described, and that is the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. This is in line with Paul's commission, to open the eyes of the Gentiles, that they might turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan unto God, etc." (Acts 26:16-18).

The cheering message to Jacob and Israel in 44:21-23 is the message of forgiveness and redemption, with a call upon all nature to rejoice in the salvation of Jehovah, "for Jehovah hath redeemed Jacob and will glorify himself in Israel."

The special theme of Isaiah 44:24-25 is "The Mission of Cyrus." Jehovah here introduces himself, and the introduction is in this form: "Thus saith Jehovah,"

1. Thy redeemer;
2. That formed thee from the womb;
3. That maketh all things;
4. That stretcheth forth the heavens alone;
- 5, That spreadeth abroad the earth (by myself) ;
6. That frustrateth the signs of the liars, and maketh diviners mad:
7. That turneth wise men backward, and maketh their knowledge foolish;
8. That confirmeth the work of his servant, and performeth the counsel of his messengers;

9. That saith to Jerusalem, She shall be inhabited, and of the cities of Judah, They shall be built, and I will raise up the waste places thereof;

10. That saith to the deep, Be dry, and I will dry up thy rivers;

11. That saith of Cyrus, He is my shepherd and shall perform all my pleasure;

12. Even saying of Jerusalem, She shall be built, and of the Temple) Thy foundation shall be laid.

Some of this language is plain enough but several of these items need special comment. In the sixth item occur the words, "signs of the liars, and maketh diviners mad," which is a reference to the prognostications of the astrologers and soothsayers, that pretended, falsely, to have a knowledge of future events.

In the eighth item occur the words, "servant" and "messengers." "Servant" refers to Isaiah himself and "messengers" to the prophets generally. This means that God attested his prophets in their work just as he did the Lord and his apostles in their work, bringing to pass their predictions.

In the tenth item the words, "Be dry, and I will dry up thy rivers," refers to the action of Cyrus in drawing off the water of the Euphrates when he took Babylon.

In the eleventh item are found the terms, "Cyrus" and "shepherd," a term applied to Cyrus with the statement, "and shall perform all my pleasure." The occurrence of "Cyrus" here is very largely responsible for the theory of two Isaiahs, which is amply discussed in the introduction. Suffice it to say here that the giving of Cyrus' name in this passage is not inconsistent with God's method of revelation. For instances of names given beforehand by inspiration, see introduction. "Shepherd" here applied to Cyrus places him above the ordinary Oriental monarch in his mission. Cyrus was under a

special commission of the Almighty, though he was, in a large measure, unconscious of divine direction. He may have had this prophecy pointed out to him, as Josephus claims and his statements in Ezra 1:24 indicate. In doing the pleasure of Jehovah Cyrus was executing the orders of the unseen hand behind his throne and of the Great Governor of the universe, who exalts kings and deposes them at his own will.

The prediction concerning Jerusalem in the twelfth item is a marvelous prophecy, the fulfilment of which is as certain and definite as history can possibly make it.

The message of Cyrus (45:1-7) was that he was to be especially anointed to subdue the nations before him, as Hazael and Jehu were anointed for their work. He was to take Babylon and liberate Jehovah's people, build their temple and establish them in the land. The purpose herein expressed was threefold: (1) That Cyrus himself might know that it was Jehovah who had called him by name; (2) That Israel should reap the benefit and advantage of his labor; (3) That the whole world might be taught the unity of God.

It seems most probable that there is a reference in 45:7 to the dualism of Zoroastrianism, which advocated two external principles, light and darkness which were perpetually at war with each other. This verse seems to have supplied a corrective to that error, making God the Creator of all things.

The final aim of all God's providential acts (v. 8) was that of the kingdom of heaven and therein righteousness and salvation, should be planted upon earth. The two words for righteousness in this verse are different. The first is rather the norm, or the principle of righteousness; the second, the embodiment of this principle and character and conduct. The living principle descends from heaven and the quickened earth shoots forth "trees of righteousness."

The prophet shows the folly of striving with one's Maker (45:9-13). It would be absurd for the clay in the hands of the potter to say,

"What makest thou?" or the unborn babe to question and find fault with its parents. So in this wonderful thing that Jehovah is about to do, he assured Israel that it is done in righteousness, and his purpose in Cyrus is the rebuilding of Jerusalem and the restoration of the exiles. In verse 13 Jehovah says, "I have raised him up in righteousness, and I will make straight all his ways." This refers to Cyrus as an instrument of God's righteous purposes, but the question arises here with respect to his character and his attitude toward religion. The character of Cyrus has been admitted by both ancient and modern writers to have been singularly noble. There is none like him in the ancient world. The explanation of it all is found in this passage in Isaiah. He was God's "anointed." He had a special vocation from the God of Israel, was raised up by him in righteousness, was loved by him and chosen to perform his will on Babylon. As to his attitude toward the religion of Jehovah, it was friendly, but there is no evidence, positive, that he ever embraced it or even became a monotheist. In Ezra 1:2-4 he talks like a believer, but this may have been due to his acquaintance with this prophecy, rather than any personal acquaintance with Jehovah. In addressing Cyrus (45:4-5) Jehovah says, "I have surnamed thee, though thou hast not known me."

The far-reaching effect of the work of Cyrus (14-17) was to be that - the heathen, put to shame, should confess Jehovah to be the Saviour of Israel. Verse 15 shows the mysterious ways of God's providence, and verse 17 is an expression of the highest faith in Israel's everlasting salvation by Jehovah.

After declaring himself creator and the only God, Jehovah says (v. 19), "I have not spoken in secret, in a place of the land of darkness; I said not unto the seed of Jacob, Seek ye me in vain: I, Jehovah, speak righteousness, I declare things that are right." The exposition of this text presents some exceedingly broad views of the government of God. The prophet viewed the children of Judah here as captives in Babylon, with their city and temple destroyed, and Babylon the world empire and the invincible, as holding them. This

caused many difficulties in the way of this text, which seemed to make vain the commandment to seek his face. First there was the seeming invincible power of the world empire, Babylon. This Jehovah was taking care of through his own unconscious instrument of power, Cyrus, whom he raised up, endowed, and prepared. Secondly, their own degraded condition was a most serious difficulty in the way of building a nation. But Jehovah would put away their sins and restore the nation for his own name's sake. (For a full discussion of this text see the author's sermon, "Encouragement to Prayer," in *Evangelistic Sermons*, p. 183.)

Jehovah here challenges all the nations, that have escaped, to try their hand with their gods and see if they can match this proceeding of Jehovah, and after again asserting that he is the only just God and Saviour, he throws out the broad invitation to all the earth to come and be saved, in view of the decrees which had gone forth by the oath of God, that every knee should bow and every tongue confess. Here, then, back of all human exertion, and back of all kaleidoscopic presentations of seemingly chaotic views of men and purposes, is the great purpose of God, to bring this whole world under the domination of his Son, Jesus Christ (see Phil. 2:5-11).

In a little chapel, a primitive Methodist chapel, an exceedingly ordinary building, there is in one of the pews on the right hand side of the church from the pulpit, a tablet which says that right under that tablet, Aug. 6, 1850, Charles H. Spurgeon heard an ignorant preacher, who seemed to occupy the pulpit that day by accident, read this forty-fifth chapter of Isaiah, and heard the words, "Look unto me, all ye ends of the earth, and be ye saved," and he was saved right then and there. This is an illustration of the power and application of this broad invitation. Surely it is not in vain to seek God.

QUESTIONS

1. What the general theme of these three chapters?

2. What the special theme of 43:1 to 44:5?
3. How does Jehovah here in 43:1 express his relation to Jacob, or Israel?
4. What the meaning of "waters," "rivers," and "fire" in verse 2?
5. When had Jehovah been Israel's Saviour, what the meaning of "I have given Egypt as thy ransom, Ethiopia and Seba in thy stead" and when was this prophecy fulfilled?
6. What the fulfilment of the prophecy of Israel's gathering in verses 5-6?
7. What the challenge by Jehovah in 43: S-13 and what the results as herein forecast?
8. How was Israel Jehovah's witness and who the servant in verse 10?
9. What is the counterpart to this picture of Israel's redemption as stated in 43:14-21?
10. What back references do we find here to the former exodus from Egypt and how is this exodus to compare with that?
11. How is this deliverance of Israel shown to be purely of grace?
12. What new contrast in 44:1-5?
13. Who was Jeshurun and what the significance of the different names of God's people in the Old Testament, when was the promise here of the outpouring of the Spirit fulfilled, and what the import of verse 5?
14. What the special theme of Isaiah 44:6-23?
15. How does the prophet introduce this theme (44:6-8)?

16. How does the prophet then show the shame of idol makers?
17. What the prophet's sarcastic description of the process of idol making (44:12-17) and what the point of ridicule?
18. What the reason for all this perversion as here assigned by the prophet (18-20) and what the lesson?
19. What the cheering message to Jacob and Israel in 44:21-23?
20. What the special theme of Isaiah 44:24 to 45-25?
21. How does Jehovah here introduce himself and what the interpretation of each item of introduction?
22. What the message to Cyrus (45:1-7) and what the purpose expressed?
23. What the interpretation of 45:7?
24. What the final aim of all God's providential acts (v. 8)?
25. How does the prophet show the folly of striving with one's Maker (45:9-13)?
26. What the character of Cyrus and his relation to the religion of Jehovah?
27. What was to be the far-reaching effect of the work of Cyrus (14-17)?
28. What encouragement to prayer in this connection (18-19) and what the difficulties to be overcome?
29. What the outcome and application of all this discussion about Cyrus?

30. What great preacher was converted by accepting this great invitation and what the circumstances of his conversion?

XX. THE BOOK OF ISAIAH - PART 12

Isaiah 46-48

The general theme of these chapters is the victory over idolatry; the fall of Babylon and its idols. The special theme of chapter 46 is "The Overthrow of the Gods of Babylon."

There are two of the Babylonian deities named in 46:1-2, Bel and Nebo. Bel, the local representation of Baal, the Phoenician sun-god, is identified with Merodach and, in the BabyIonian astrology, he is connected with the planet, Jupiter. Bel appears in several names of the Babylonian princes, as in Belshazzar and Belteshazzar. Nebo, the Babylonian god of learning, the son of Merodach, was the messenger of their gods to men. He is thought by some to have been connected with the planet, Mercury. Nebo, appears, also, in the names of their princes, as in Nebopolassar, Nebuchadnezzar, and Nebuzaradan. According to Herodotus there was a golden statue of Bel in the temple of Belus, twelve cubits high, which was carried away by Xerxes.

The picture here in these two verses is that of the conquered gods bowing to their victors. Now instead of being borne lightly along in the procession they are borne away on beasts of burden. These gods and their subjects together go into captivity.

In 46:3-7 we have a contrast with the preceding picture of the captives of Babylon bearing their gods away on beasts of burden. Here Jehovah pictures himself bearing his people. They have been borne by him from their birth, and will be borne by him down to old age and to hoary hairs. This reminds us of the stanza in "How Firm a Foundation," which embodies this truth and the sentiment of which was taken from this passage. Then the prophet follows with another description of the process of making a god. This time it is the process of molding it rather than shaping it out of wood. But the results are the same. They fall down and worship it. They pray unto it but it cannot answer, nor save them out of trouble. So the contrast

between Jehovah and idols is this: Jehovah bears his people, but the idols have to be borne by their people; Jehovah saves his people out of their troubles, but the idols cannot save out of trouble.

The exhortation to the transgressors of Israel found in 46:8-10 is an exhortation to remember. The first thing to remember is "this," which refers to the contrast between Jehovah and idols. Since Jehovah bears Israel, then let Israel show themselves men. The marginal reading here is "stand firm." This reminds us of the conflict on Mount Carmel between Jehovah and Baal. Elijah said, "Why go limping between two opinions? If Jehovah is God serve him; if Baal, then serve him." The people here were weak in their conviction and, doubtless, needed just such an exhortation as this: "Stand firm for Jehovah, for he is the only God." The prophet here also intimates that to waver between Jehovah and idols was transgression.

Remember the First and Second Commandments: "Thou shalt have no other gods before me. Thou shalt not make unto thee a graven image and bow thyself down to it." Remember this is transgression. Then remember "the former things of old": that Jehovah is God, and there is none else: that there is none like him; that he declares the end from the beginning, and from ancient times things that are not yet done. Remember that he is a God who foreknows all things and tells them beforehand, even things that are yet unfulfilled, O ye Radical Critics. Remember your former experiences, O House of Israel. How ye saw that Jehovah was the great and terrible God. It sounds like the war cry, "O ye Mexicans, Remember the Alamo! Remember Goliad!" or Abraham's voice across the impassable gulf, "Remember, son, remember that thou in thy lifetime hadst thy good things, and Lazarus, his evil things." Remember, O remember. If God's people and the world would only remember! "Remember, too, O Israel, that my counsel never fails and that I will do my pleasure; that I have already told you that I will call that ravenous bird, Cyrus, from the East, to do my counsel, and remember that what I have purposed I will do."

The prophet closes this chapter with an exhortation to the stubborn in Israel, who were far from righteousness. Jehovah then announces the speedy approach of his righteous judgments upon the godless and his salvation in Zion for Israel.

The special theme of chapter 47 is "the overthrow of Babylon, the mistress of kingdoms." This chapter is a song of triumph and divides itself into four stanzas, as follows: (1) 1-4; (2) 5-7; (3) 8-11; (4) 12-15 the first two commencing with a double imperative and the last two, with a single imperative.

Jehovah is the speaker all the way through except in verse 4 which is a kind of parenthetical ejaculation by Isaiah and his God-given children, or, maybe a chorus in Israel.

There is here a call by Jehovah to Babylon, who boasted that she had never been captured, to come down from her lofty throne and sit in the dust. Babylon had hitherto been one of the chief seats of Oriental luxury, the glory of kingdoms and the beauty of the Chaldean excellency, the golden city. She was given to revelry and feasting, to mirth and drunkenness, to shameless licensed debauchery. All this must now be changed (v. 1).

She was now to sit at the mill and grind like a slave. She must remove the veil, strip off the train, and uncover the leg to cross the streams, etc. This, of course, is taken from the figure of the female who had been taken captive, and represents the great humiliation that must come to the proud and luxurious Babylon, in which also no man shall be spared.

Verse 4 in this song, which is so different from the rest of it, is thought by some to be a marginal note of a sympathetic scribe, which has made its way by accident into the text. It is admittedly different from the rest of the song and its removal would artistically improve it. But it may be consistently retained as an outburst of the chorus upon recognizing their Redeemer, when they exclaim: "Our Redeemer, Jehovah of hosts, the Holy One of Israel."

The first part of verse 5 is an entreaty to the fallen people to hide their shame in silence and darkness, as disgraced persons do who shrink from being seen by their fellows.

Babylon was not mistress of the kingdoms in Isaiah's time, or at any earlier period, unless at a very remote one. She had been subject to Assyria for centuries when Isaiah wrote, and it was ruled under Sennacherib by viceroys of his own appointment. The explanation then is that inspiration and prophetic foresight enabled Isaiah to see Babylon at the height of her glory, as in the days of Nabopolassar and Nebuchadnezzar, when she had taken to herself the greatness of Assyria and ruled a large part of Western Asia.

The reason assigned for letting Israel go into captivity is that he was wroth with them, and therefore profaned them. They did not receive any mercy at the hand of the Chaldeans but they laid a heavy yoke upon the aged. This God will not tolerate and with man it is a mark of the crudest barbarism. The attitude of Christianity toward the aged is, Be kind to each other The night's coming on, When friend and when brother Perchance will be gone.

An additional cause cited (v. 7) is her pride and boastfulness. Without due consideration she said, "I shall be mistress forever." This is true to the primary instincts of human nature. We confidently expect the sun to rise tomorrow because it has never failed yet to rise on a single day. Peter tells us that in the last days mockers will come, saying, "Where is the promise of his coming? for, from the day that the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation." And so the world goes on. Perhaps Babylon had more excuse for making such a boast than other nations. Her capital was one of the most ancient cities in the world. For two thousands years or more she had maintained a prominent position among the chief peoples of the earth, and had finally risen to a very proud eminence. But she ought to have remembered that all things come to an end, and to have so deported herself as not to have provoked God to anger. If the management and passengers of

the Titanic had remembered this, one of the greatest disasters in the world, perhaps, would have been averted. But the boast of the "unsinkable" and the vainglory of the "world-beater" came to nought. "And thou, Capernaum, shalt thou be exalted unto heaven? thou shalt be brought down to hell."

The characteristics of Babylon are set forth in 47:8-11 as follows:

1. She was given to pleasures. Herodotus says that when Cyrus invested the city the inhabitants made light of his siege and occupied their time in dancing and revelry.
2. She was self-confident. The evidence goes that, when Cyrus captured the city, very slight and insufficient preparations had been made for the defense of the city.
3. She was boastful. "I am, and there is none else besides me; I shall not sit as a widow, neither shall I know the loss of children."
4. She was conceited. "None seeth me."

Jehovah made reply to these characteristics of the boastful city, thus:

1. Jehovah warns her that loss of children and widowhood should come upon her in a moment in one day, notwithstanding her multiplied sorceries and enchantments. This was fulfilled when Cyrus took the city 539 B.C. Then "in a moment" Babylon lost the whole of her prestige, ceased to reign, ceased to be an independent power, became a "widow," had a portion of her population taken away from her, and was brought down in the dust.
2. Jehovah warns her that her wisdom and knowledge had perverted her, and that evil should come upon her unawares; that mischief should fall upon her that she should not be able to put away and that sudden desolation would overtake her unexpectedly.

The import of 47:12-15 is "sorcery cannot remove the impending calamity" and the contest between their sorcery and Jehovah is precipitated by Jehovah's challenge to the soothsayers and enchanters to the conflict pretty much in the same way that Elijah challenged the prophets of Baal on Mount Carmel. There is a touch of irony in verses 12-13, which would paraphrase thus: "If Babylon uses all the resources of her magical art, perhaps she may succeed, who knows? Perhaps she may strike terror into the hearts of her assailants."

The three terms, "astrologers," "star-gazers," and "prognosticators" in verse 13, do not mean three classes of persons, but rather the same class under three designations. "Astrologers" were dividers of the heavens; "star-gazers" were observers of the stars; and "monthly prognosticators" were almanac-makers. The astronomy of the Babylonians consisted (1) of dividing the heavens into constellations for purposes of study and comprehension; (2) of observing the sun, moon, and planets, noting eclipses, occultations, conjunctions, and the like, all of which was legitimate science; (3) of prognostication of events from the changing phenomena of the heavens. Almanacs were prepared and put forth in which these predictions were made and on these much dependence was placed. This phase of their work is called astrology, and is that which the prophet here ridicules.

The result of this contest here as foretold by the prophet is that these men and their means shall be as stubble, i.e., they will offer no more resistance to Jehovah than dry stubble offers to fire. It burns up so clean that there is not left a coal to warm at or sit before. This shall be such a complete desolation that the traders shall flee to their own countries and the commerce of the great and flourishing city shall be destroyed forever. The special theme of chapter 48 is the expostulations with, and exhortations to Israel in view of its stubbornness and impenitence. Its profession is indicated in verses 1-2 by the expressions, "called by the name of Israel," "swear by the name of Jehovah," "make mention of the God of Israel," "call themselves of the holy city," and "stay themselves upon the God of

Israel," all of which indicate their adherence to the names and formalities of their religion. Their professions were loud but they were "not in truth, nor in righteousness."

Jehovah here (48:3-11) reveals Israel's characteristics, as obstinacy, stiff-neckedness, brazen-faced, dull of hearing, treacherous, and transgressing. These characteristics Jehovah endeavored to offset by revelations beforehand, in two cycles of predictions, the earlier and the later being reserved for the emergency of the occasion such as the present crisis in their history.

All these were not sufficient to save Israel, therefore, he, for his name's sake, deferred the just punishment of destruction and put them in the furnace of affliction that he might purify them, at the same time save his own name from profanation and reserve the glory to himself.

The meaning and application of verse II is that God had selected Israel out of all the nations of the earth to be his "peculiar" people, and having declared this he supported them by miracles in their struggles with other nations and peoples. Thus he was committed to protect and defend Israel "for his name's sake," lest his name should be blasphemed among the Gentiles. He had rolled away the reproach of Egypt when he landed them safe in Canaan, so that Egypt could never say that he had failed in his promise to Israel to carry them into their Promised Land. So now he must save his name from profanation by deferring his anger and chastising Israel. A great lesson is this. God's people will not be utterly destroyed nor forsaken, but they cannot escape the Lord's chastisements if they sin. He takes care of his name and his people at the same time. This is far-reaching in its application. All Jehovah's promises to Israel, and the world through Israel) were at stake. Israel occupied an important position with respect to the scheme of salvation in its relation to the whole world, and therefore Jehovah could not let Israel go. He must refrain his anger, and preserve Israel through the furnace of

affliction or the plan of redemption for the world fails and the name of Jehovah is profaned and his glory given over to another.

The appeal to Israel in 48:12-16 is an appeal to profit from the work of Cyrus. Jehovah asserts his eternity of being and his creative work, and then challenges the nations to match it if they can. Then he introduces Cyrus as the instrument of his pleasure on Babylon and invites them to take notice that this is by the authority of Jehovah, who had sent the prophet, and his Spirit.

The possibilities for Israel here (17-19) pointed out are the possibilities of peace, like a river; righteousness, like the waves of the sea; their offspring, like the grains of sand on the shore; and a perpetual name before Jehovah; all this on the one condition that Israel hearken to his commandments. His purpose throughout their existence was to teach them for their profit. Thus he had led them through the many dark valleys of affliction and brought them to their own good land where they had enjoyed his loving favor and protection, with a bright hope for their future. But they sinned and forfeited the divine favor, and now they must hear the sad refrain, "Oh that thou hadst hearkened to my commandments! then had thy peace been as a river, and thy righteousness as the waves of the sea; thy seed also had been as the sand, and the offspring of thy bowels like the grains thereof; his name would not be cut off nor destroyed from before me," which is much like the saying of the poet: Of all sad words of tongue or pen, The saddest are these: "It might have been."

The exhortation of 48:20-22 was to "go forth from Babylon, flee from the Chaldeans." At first thought such an exhortation would seem superfluous. It might be reasonably expected that, when the prison doors should fly open, there would be a mighty rush from Babylon back to their native land, but not so. The history of the return shows how poor was the response to the exhortation. So this exhortation, to "go forth from Babylon, and flee from the Chaldeans," was far from being superfluous.

They were to go in the spirit of joy, singing the song of their redemption, as at the deliverance from the land of Egypt. With a voice of singing they were to recite the history of Jehovah's gracious dealings with them in the wilderness, which were paralleled here in their deliverance from Babylon.

There was a distinct advance here. The subject of the last twenty-seven chapters of Isaiah is not merely the return of Judah from Babylon to Jerusalem. Higher themes engage the prophet's mind, viz: That preparation of the way of Jehovah, and the manifestation of his glory, for all flesh to see it together. All this was in the mind of the prophet, and the deliverance from Babylon was only a prefiguring of the far greater deliverance of the world from the thralldom of sin. As the exodus from Egypt was the high-water mark of God's grace to his people of the Old Testament dispensation, so is this. last mention by Isaiah of the struggle with Babylon. There is joyous victory here like that which it typifies in Revelation where the mystical Babylon falls and God's people shout their everlasting praises to him who rules over the kingdoms of the earth.

There is a connection between verse 22, "There is no peace, saith Jehovah to the wicked," and the fall of Babylon. God's judgments fell heavily on Egypt at the deliverance of Israel at the Red Sea and his judgments are heavier on Babylon at the deliverance of his people from the captivity. But Egypt and Babylon are types of the great spiritual enemies of God's kingdom. So when the Babylon of Revelation falls there is fear and trembling because of the judgments on her from Jehovah. When God stretches forth his hand in judgments, there is no peace to the wicked.

QUESTIONS

1. What the general theme of these three chapters?
2. What the special theme of chapter 46?

3. What the principal gods of Babylon and what the prophetic picture of 46:1-2?
4. What the contrast found in 46:3-7?
5. What the exhortation to the transgressors of Israel found in 46:8-10?
6. How does the prophet close this chapter?
7. What the special theme of chapter 47?
8. What the nature of the composition and what the divisions of it?
9. Who the speaker of this song? 10, What the great change in the position of Babylon to be brought about by its capture?
11. What was to be her new occupation and what the shame of her new condition?
12. How do you account for verse 4 in this song, which is so different from the rest of it?
13. What the import of verse 5 and how is it that Isaiah saw Babylon as the mistress of kingdoms?
14. What is the reason assigned here for Babylon's having Israel in captivity and how are they said to have been treated while in captivity?
15. What the added cause of Babylon's downfall given in verse 1?
16. What the characteristics of Babylon as set forth in 47:8-11?
17. What reply does Jehovah make to these characteristics of the boastful city?
18. What the import of 47:12-15?

19. How is the contest between their sorcery and Jehovah precipitated and what the irony of their passage?
20. What the meaning of "astrologers," "star-gazers," and "prognosticators" in verse 13, and what the value of the work of these men?
21. What the result of this contest here as foretold by the prophet?
22. What the special theme of chapter 48?
23. How is Israel's profession here set forth (48:1-2)?
24. What the characteristics of Israel herein set forth and what Jehovah's efforts to counteract this disposition?
25. What the result of these favors from Jehovah and in view of such result what course did Jehovah take with them?
26. What is the meaning and application of verse 11?
27. What the appeal to Israel in 48:12-16?
28. What the possibilities for Israel here (17-19) pointed out and why had it not realized them?
29. What the exhortation of 48:20-22 and what the special need for such exhortation?
30. In what spirit were they to go from Babylon?
31. How does the exodus here compare with the exodus from Egypt i.e., was there any advance to something greater and higher as one might expect in the work of God?
32. What the connection between verse 22, "There is no peace, saith Jehovah to the wicked," and the fall of Babylon?

XXI. THE BOOK OF ISAIAH - PART 13

Isaiah 49:1 to 52:12

The general theme of Isaiah 49-57, is the servant of Jehovah as an individual and his offices, or salvation through the servant of Jehovah. In this section the collective sense of the Servant of Jehovah falls into the background. It is the individual Servant, the Servant in the highest, or most restricted sense, with whom we have to do in these chapters. His individuality is indicated by his already having been given a name and having been called from birth.

This section divides itself into three parts, as follows: (1) 49:1 to 52:12, his prophetic office; (2) 52:13 to 54:17, his priestly office; (3) 55:1 to 57:21, his kingly office. More fully the theme of 49:1 to 52:12 is the prophetic office of the Servant and his awakening calls. The Servant, as an individual represents what Israel ought to have been collectively in the theocracy, executing the offices of prophet, priest, and king, through the Holy Spirit.

This section opens with a call to the isles and peoples from far, the significance of which is that the mission of the Servant of Jehovah is worldwide in its application.

The Servant tells us here (49:1-4) that he was called and named before he was born; that his mouth was prepared by Jehovah, as a sharp sword; that he was hid in his hand and that he had been made a polished shaft. Nevertheless, the Servant felt depressed. His labor seemed all in vain. Yet his confidence in his God was unshaken and well founded.

The Servant's worldwide mission is again emphasized in verses 5-6. Jehovah here says that raising up and restoring Israel would be too light a thing for his Servant and so removes the depression of his heart by promising that he should be a light to the Gentiles and his salvation unto the ends of the earth.

There are three peculiarities in verse 7 which indicate how deeply the Servant was affected by the difficulties to be met, but Jehovah encourages his Servant in them. These peculiarities are: (1) He would be despised by man; (2) abhorred by the nation; (3) a servant of rulers. These all find fulfilment in Christ. "He was despised and rejected of men"; he was abhorred by the Jewish nation and rejected; he was truly the servant of kings and rulers. "He came not to be ministered unto but to minister." The encouragement here offered in view of these characteristics is that kings and princes shall honor him. This has been fulfilled in many instances and is being fulfilled now. Every king who has been converted since the days of Christ's earthly ministry has done him honor. Many a king has seen and stood up in wonder, just as the prophet here indicates.

Our Lord is here (8-13) presented in special relation to the covenant. But before he could occupy such relation, as the basis of the covenant with Jehovah's people, he had to suffer, which is here intimated in verse 8, which also should be taken in connection with Psalm 22:21, where he is said to cry out for deliverance from the lion's mouth and the answer came. This was fulfilled in the suffering of our Lord on the cross. So through suffering he became the basis of the covenant whose blessings are here enumerated. These blessings are the raising up of the land, the inheritance of the desolate places, the liberation of the captives, a supply of food and drink, protection from the sun, and a highway for their journeys all of which has fulfilment in the supply of spiritual blessings to Jehovah's people through the Lord Jesus Christ. "Whosoever believeth on me shall never hunger; he that believeth on me shall never thirst." The blessings of the everlasting covenant are sufficient for every need of his covenant people. Not only are they described as ample but they are for all people. They shall come from far; from the north, from the west, and from Sinim which is China. The sight of all this causes the prophet to call for the outburst of joy in heaven and on earth which reminds us of our Saviour's parables setting forth the joy of heaven when the sinner returns to God.

Zion here (49:14-23) complained that Jehovah had forsaken her; that he had forgotten her to which Jehovah gives the matchless reply found in that passage which has become a classic: "Can a woman forget her sucking child that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yea, these may forget, yet will I not forget thee. Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands; thy walls are continually before me." Then the prophet goes on to show how Zion shall possess the world, and in complete astonishment at her success and enlargement, she then will reverse her questions and say, "Who hath begotten me all these children?" Jehovah responds again that he is the author of her success and that all who wait for him shall not be put to shame. This is a glorious outlook for Zion and removes all just cause for complaint.

The passage (49:24-26) alludes to a series of mighty transactions, involving vast and eternal interests. It reveals the most astounding tyranny, the most appalling captivity, the most signal deliverance and by the most eventful tragedy known to the universe. The persons of the great drama, their several parts and their destiny, claim our chief attention. But who is the mighty one of this passage and how did he bring these captives into this captivity? In many places in the Scriptures he is declared to be the "prince of this world." He is that one who obtained possession of this world by conquest, guile, and conquest. He obtained possession of it in the garden of Eden, through enticement to sin. He captured the first pair, the man and the woman, from whom all of the people of this world are descended; and by that one man's disobedience, in that first great crisis of this world, there came upon all men death. We died then. All the posterity of Adam and Eve born hitherto or yet to be born died in that great battle by which Satan, the prince of demons conquered this world.

His captives are those beings whose creation was the culmination of the work of God. While incidentally his domain obtained by the Eden-conquest stretches over the material world and the mere animal world, directly and mainly it extends over the intelligent,

moral, accountable agents into whose hands God had given this dominion over the earth. When God made man he gave him dominion over the fowls of the air and the fish of the sea and the animals of the forest and he commanded man to multiply and fill the earth with inhabitants, and to subdue all the forces of nature, making them tributary to him and to the glory of God. This delegation of dominion to man was wrested by guile and violence from his feeble hands, and passed by right of conquest into the hands of Satan; so that the captives, the prey of the terrible one, are the people of this earth, and all of them, without any exception of race, or nation, or family, or individual; without any regard to the artificial distinctions of class and wealth and society; without any reference to the distinctions in intellect and culture. The whole of them, even the millionaire and the pauper whom he grinds, the king and the subject whom he oppresses, the gifted orator, the genius of art, the far-seeing statesman, the beautiful woman, the prattling infant, the vigorous youth, all of them are under the dominion of Satan, and his government extends over them by that original conquest.

They are lawful captives and there is a difficulty suggested by the inquiry, "Shall the lawful captives be delivered?" This difficulty can be apprehended in a moment. If one be held in bondage unlawfully it is easy enough to anticipate that there shall be deliverance from that unjust captivity, provided that the law has power to vindicate itself; but if the captive is lawfully a captive— I mean to say that if it is the law itself that forges his fetters — then indeed does it become an inquiry of moment, "Shall the lawful captive be delivered?" It is true that the sting of death is sin, but it is also true that the strength of sin is the law, and a lawful captive is one whose bonds are just as strong as the sanctions of the law which he is violating. And how strong is that law? We have the testimony of inspiration that not a jot or a tittle of it shall fail, even though the heavens fall. And what is the scope of this law? "Thou shall love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and all thy soul and all thy strength and all thy mind and thy neighbor as thyself."

That law is an expression, a transcript of the divine mind, in its intent when man was made; and by so much as it is strong, and by so much as it is broad, by that much will it hold the transgressor. Satan knew that it was out of his power to go into that garden of delights and seize by violence alone these moral agents into whose hands had been entrusted the dominion of this world. That would have made them unlawful captives. So he addressed himself to stratagem and guile. It became necessary that though he was the tempter they should consent and by their own act of disobedience should array against themselves the awful law of God. And while sin is the sting of death, the law of God should be the strength of sin. But who shall deliver these lawful captives? This passage is messianic and the Jehovah of this passage we find in verse 26 to be the Saviour, Redeemer, and Mighty One of Jacob which could refer only to our Lord Jesus Christ, who is revealed as the destroyer of the works of the devil.

Then how is he to deliver them? The answer to this also is very explicit. The Scriptures show that he is in some way to deliver these lawful captives by his own death. "When thou shalt pour out thy soul unto death I will divide thee a portion of the great." "Thou shalt despoil the strong." And the passage in Hebrews is pertinent: "That forasmuch as the children were partakers of flesh and blood he likewise took part of the same, that through death he might destroy him that has the power of death, even the devil." Through his death he is to bruise the head of Satan. Hence, just before he died he said to his disciples in the language of the Scriptures, "The prince of this world cometh and findeth nothing in me. Now is the crisis of this world, and I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me." Not a man can be saved except this one be lifted up on the cross.

Not a man can be delivered from the bondage of Satan, not one groaning captive who is the prey of the terrible one, shall be plucked out of his hand, except by the death of this substitute. Then he shall see his seed. Then he shall see of the travail of his soul. Then deliverance shall come because that death takes away Satan's armor,

in which he trusted. What armor? That armor of the law. But that death paid the law's penalty. That death extinguished the fire of the law. That death blunted the edge of the sword of justice. That death exhausted the penal claims of God against the man for whom he died. It is by death that he is to deliver us, sacrificial, substitutionary, vicarious death, "He being made sin who knew no sin, that we may be made the righteousness of God in him."

Moreover by that death is secured regeneration, which defeats depravity, and sanctification, which breaks the power of evil habits by perseverance in holiness. And that is why a preacher of this good news declares that he knows nothing but the cross; no philosophy for me; no weapon could have been forged strong enough to smite Satan; no leverage mighty enough to roll off of crushed humanity the ponderous incubus which bondage to Satan had placed upon them. No, I preach Christ and him crucified. "I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me." And hence how infinitesimal does that preacher become, how contemptible in the sight of God and man, who goes out where sin and sorrow and death reigns through the power of the devil, who goes out where men are in bondage, where they are captives, where they are under the power of Satan and in darkness, and would try to charm their captivity by singing his earth songs, by talking of geology and of evolution, or of any fine-spun metaphysical disquisition. Away with it all, and present only the death of Christ; for it is by the death of Christ that this deliverance is to come.

The import of 50:1-3 is that Israel had suffered through her own sin, yet she was to be delivered by almighty grace. It is introduced by a series of questions referring to Israel's relation to Jehovah under the figure of a marriage. Israel was challenged to show a writing of divorcement, but none could be found, or to find one of Jehovah's creditors to whom he had sold her, but no creditor could be found, because Jehovah owed no one anything. Since this was true and Israel could produce no writing of divorcement showing that Jehovah had put her away, therefore she was desolate and separate

because of her own sins, and Jehovah could redeem her by his mighty arm as he delivered Israel from the bondage of Egypt.

In 50:4-9 we find that the Servant was subjected to a painful training for his great work. This consisted in giving him the tongue of a disciple, an ear to hear, his back to the smiters, his cheek to those who pluck off the hair and his face to shame and spitting. All this was for the training of the prophet whose mission it was to speak, to hear, to suffer, and to sympathize. These are all to be found in much evidence in the life of our Lord. But he goes on to speak of his confidence of victory in it all because God would help and justify him, turning the wickedness of his persecutors upon their own heads.

In 50:10-11 we have a twofold application of these principles, an encouragement to the faithful and a warning to the self-sufficient. The former were promised guidance through the darkness if they would trust in Jehovah, while the latter trying to make their own light, were endangering themselves and their neighbors and coming to sorrow in the end.

The passage (51:1 to 52:1) consists of a series of prophetic calls. The prophetic character of the Servant having been made sufficiently prominent in the preceding paragraphs, this section gives a series of prophetic calls introduced by such words as "Hearken," "Awake," "Attend."

The first call is a call to the followers of righteousness and the seekers of Jehovah. They are exhorted to take a backward look at their origin and to God's dealings with them from Abraham to the present. Then he encourages them to look forward to the future when all the waste places and the wilderness shall be like Eden, the garden of Jehovah. This ideal state will not be realized until the millennium.

The second call is a call to the nation to consider the law, the law of the gospel, which was to go forth to bless the nations, the

consummation of which is the winding up of the affairs of the earth and the establishment of everlasting righteousness. The third call is a call to them that know righteousness, the ones who know God's law in their hearts, to fear not the reproaches of men. Many of the very best people do fear the reproaches of men and therefore our Lord gives a like encouragement in the beatitudes to those who are reproached for righteousness' sake. The reason assigned is that they shall die and be eaten by moths and worms yet the righteousness of Jehovah is forever and his salvation unto all generations. Men may come and men may go But the righteousness of Jehovah goes on forever.

The fourth call is a call to Jehovah to put on strength, as in the days of old, and prepare the way for his people to return with everlasting joy upon their heads. The reply comes to upbraid the people for fearing man who is only transient and forgetting Jehovah their maker who had exhibited his power, not only in their past history, but in all times since the creation. From this they might take courage, for he who did all this would liberate the captives and bring salvation to his people. The Saviour of the people is Jehovah, whom the waves of the sea obey. This finds its happiest fulfilment in the person and work of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The fifth call is obviously the counterpart to the call in the preceding paragraph. This was a call to the arm of Jehovah, this is a call to Jerusalem; that, to put on strength, this to awaken from the effects of the drunkenness from the cup of his wrath, in which condition her sons were like an antelope in the net. But Jerusalem is now bidden to look for favors from Jehovah since his wrath has been transferred from her to those who afflicted her.

The sixth call is to Zion to put on her strength, and beautiful garments. She is assured that her captivity was ended. While this is cast in the mold of the Jewish conception, yet the language looks to a fulfilment which is found only in conditions of the new covenant.

The personal knowledge referred to in verse 6 is the experimental knowledge of the new covenant. It was our Lord Jesus Christ who fulfilled the last clause, "It is I," or as the margin has it "Here I am." He said on one occasion, "Before Abraham was, I am," on another, "Be not afraid; it is I," and again, "Lo, I am with you all the way." He alone makes possible the personal, experimental knowledge and abiding presence of Jehovah.

The seventh call, in view of what has gone before, is very significant. There can be no doubt that this applies to the evangelists of the cross. Paul quotes it and so applies it in Romans 10. They are here called watchmen and may refer to the prophets of the Old Testament as well as the preachers and missionaries of the New Testament. But the prophet sees a day far beyond his, when the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of God. The joy of the new day for Zion is pictured in glowing colors. They shall sing; they shall see eye to eye; they shall exalt the holy one of Israel as the God of their salvation.

The exhortation in 52:11-12 is primarily an exhortation to depart from Babylon in which the Jews are now represented as being held in captivity, and the description of their going out without haste, etc., fits minutely the exodus from Babylon, cast in the mold of the deliverance from Egypt. But as remarked before, the deliverance from Babylon and Egypt are typical of a greater deliverance of God's chosen. The deliverance from sin and the Babylon of this world is a far greater deliverance than either of these. This is all in view of the work of the Servant in his prophetic office, which has for the basis of all his success his vicarious suffering, at which this section barely hints.

QUESTIONS

1. What the general theme of Isaiah 49-57?
2. What the threefold division of this section (49-57), and what the special theme of each division?

3. What, more fully, is the theme of 49:1 to 52:12?
4. How does this section open and what its significance?
5. How is this servant of Jehovah equipped for his success and what the state of mind toward the outcome of it all (49:1-4)?
6. How is the Servant's worldwide mission again emphasized (5-6) ?
7. What three peculiarities in verse 7 which indicate how deeply the Servant was affected by the difficulties to be met and how does Jehovah encourage his Servant in them?
8. In what special relation is our Lord here (8-13) presented and what the blessings of that relation as pictured by the prophet?
9. What Zion's complaint and what Jehovah's response to it (49:14-23)?
10. What the importance of the passage, 49:24-26?
11. Who is the mighty one of this passage and how did he bring these captives into this captivity?
12. Who are his captives, i.e., his prey?
13. Why are they lawful captives and what the difficulty suggested by the inquiry, "Shall the lawful captives be delivered?"
14. Who shall deliver these lawful captives?
15. How is he to deliver them?
16. What the import of 50:1-3?
17. What the painful training of the Servant of Jehovah which assured him of success?

18. What the twofold application of these principles?
19. Of what does 51:1 to 52:12 consist and how are the parts introduced?
20. To whom the first call, and what was involved in it?
21. To whom the second call and what the import of it?
22. To whom is the third call and what the import?
23. To whom the fourth call and what the response?
24. To whom the fifth call and what its import?
25. To whom the sixth call and what the import?
26. What the seventh call, who calls and what the import of this call?
27. What the exhortation in 52:11-12?

XXII. THE BOOK OF ISAIAH - PART 14

Isaiah 52:13 to 54:17

The special theme of this section is the priestly office of the Servant and the happy results of his priestly work to Zion. Some have called it the "Great Passional." Polycarp calls this section "the golden passional of the Old Testament Evangelist." Delitzsch says, "It is the center of this wonderful book of consolation (40-66), and is the most central, the deepest, and the loftiest thing that the Old Testament prophecy, outstripping itself, has ever achieved." Another has said, "Here we seem to enter the holy of holies of the Old Testament prophecy, that sacred chamber wherein are pictured and foretold the sufferings of Christ and the glory which should follow." This section contains the very heart of the gospel and the preacher who leaves it out of his preaching is a preacher of "airy nothings." The success or failure of the preacher is determined as he relates his preaching to the truth of this great passage.

There are several different interpretations of Isaiah 52:13 to 53:12:

1. The earliest Jewish authorities, even down to Aben Ezra, A.D.1150, stood for the messianic interpretation of this passage. Their later writers abandoned this explanation on account of its bearing on the Christian controversy. It was assumed as indisputable by the Christian Fathers, and almost all Christian expositors down to the commencement of the nineteenth century took the same view.
2. The later Jews under the pressure of the Christian controversy abandoned the traditional interpretation and applied this prophecy to Jeremiah, Josiah, or to the people of Israel.
3. In the present century a number of Christian commentators have adopted one or the other of the later Jewish theories, either absolutely or with modifications.

The argument for the messianic theory and against the later Jewish theories is as follows:

1. The portraiture of the "Servant of Jehovah" here has so strong an individuality and such marked personal features that it cannot be a mere personified collection, whether Israel, faithful Israel, or ideal Israel, or the collective body of the prophets.
2. That it could not be the nation at large appears from the fact that the calamities which Israel suffered are always spoken of as sent upon them for their own sins.
3. That it could not refer to their prophets or righteous men, who made expiation for the nation's guilt, appears from the following considerations: (1) Such a position is against the whole tenor of Scriptures. (2) Their most righteous in their prayers did not plead their own merit but Jehovah's righteousness and mercy. (3) Many parts of this section are manifestly such as cannot be applied to either the nation or any body of men inside of it.
4. It goes so infinitely beyond anything of which a mere man was ever capable, that it can only refer to the unique man, the God-man, Christ Jesus our Lord.

The proof from the New Testament that this is the true interpretation is abundant. Passages from this section are quoted in Matthew 8:17; Luke 22:37; John 12:37-38; Acts 7:32-33; Romans 10:16 'and 1 Peter 2:24-25, all of which are unmistakably applied to Christ. This ought to settle the question once for all that this passage is distinctly messianic.

This great passage divides itself into five paragraphs of three verses each, as follows: (1) 52:13-15, the introduction, a general view of the whole subject; (2) 53:1-3, the prevailing unbelief and his unpromising appearance; (3) 53:4-6, a substitute for sinners; (4) 53:7-9, his submissiveness and his purity; (5) 53:10-12, the glorious success of his completed propitiation and also his intercession.

We have the general view of the whole subject presented in 52:13-15. This passage is a prelude to chapter 53 and is closely connected with it. In these three verses we have, (1) the Servant's exaltations, (2) his humiliation preceding, (3) the far-reaching blessings which shall result to the whole world. This includes the whole of his redemptive work, stated generally. In Philippians 2:5-11 we have our Lord's humiliation, exaltation, and success, in which there is a graphic picture of his suffering on the cross. The prophet here gets three views of the Servant of Jehovah: First, he sees him exalted, lifted up, very high; secondly, he sits at the foot of the cross and there sees the Lord as he hung upon the accursed tree, after he had been buffeted, crowned with thorns, smitten, scourged, crucified, his face covered with bruises and with blood, and his frame and features distorted with agony, so that "his visage was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men," but the picture changes and, thirdly, the prophet sees this suffering Christ as he startles many nations and receives honor at the hands of kings. This is a brief view of a preview or introduction to the more clearly outlined picture in the next chapter.

The first question in Isaiah 53:1 "Who hath believed our report?" seems to sound a discouraging note from the standpoint of the prophet. The messengers have gone forth to publish peace (52:7), and many nations have received the tidings with reverence (52:15), but Israel in the midst of whom this wondrous work of atonement has been effected, refused to believe the message. While the immediate reference is doubtless to 52:7 this complaint is applicable to the whole revelation of the prophet. He had brought them the good tidings concerning "Immanuel," the "Prince of Peace," the "Rod out of the stem of Jesse," the "Sure Foundation," the "Righteous King," and the "revealed glory of the Lord." He surely felt that he spoke, mainly, to unbelieving ears, and this unbelief was likely to be intensified when so marvelous a prophecy was delivered as that which he was now to put forth. There is, of course, a rhetorical exaggeration in the question, which seems to imply that no one would believe.

The prophet's second question, "To whom hath the arm of Jehovah been revealed" raises the question of the recognition of Jehovah's displays of power in behalf of Israel. He has made bare his holy arm before all the nations and the ends of the earth are made to see the salvation of Jehovah, but where is the spiritual discernment of these things in Israel? Many Jews had failed to recognize Jehovah's marvelous dealings with them and the nations around because of their unbelief. But there is a more far-reaching application of these questions to Israel, as indicated by Paul in Romans 10:16. They did not recognize the "Arm of Jehovah," the Lord Jesus Christ, as their Messiah. His mighty works were not recognized by them as attestations of the One that was to come, but with blinded eyes they rejected him, as the prophet here foresaw.

Here it is said that he grew up as a "tender plant" before Jehovah, i.e., the Messiah was a fresh sprout from the stump of a tree that had been felled, the tree of the Davidic monarchy. Yet he was before Jehovah with his loving favor upon him. He was also as a "root growing up out of dry ground," just like the tall succulent plant in the east, growing from the soil utterly devoid of moisture. The roots of such plants in the desert are full of fluid, though the surrounding air is very dry. The "dry ground" here refers to the corrupt age and nation, and the arid soil of humanity in general.

"He hath no form nor comeliness; and when we see him there is no beauty that we should desire him." He had no regal pomp nor splendor, nothing to attract the multitudes, but his attractive qualities were to the spiritual rather than to the carnal. The spiritual beauties of a holy, sweet expression and a majestic calmness could only have been spiritually discerned. "He was despised"; men had contempt for his teaching and verily they hated him because his teaching and life were BO contrary to them. "He was rejected," by the Jewish nation and was not reckoned with men by them. "A man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief"; his whole ministry illustrates this. His sorrows appear on every page of the Gospels. Men hid their faces from him when they met him, because they saw only the external

expression of sorrow and grief. Thus he is pictured as a "tender plant, a root growing up out of dry ground, without comeliness, no beauty, despised and rejected, a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief," men hiding their faces from him as one despised and not esteemed.

In verses 4-11 we have the very heart of the vicarious work of our Lord, but there are other expressions in the passage that bear on this phase of his work. So we will consider them all together. There are eleven of these unmistakable expressions of our Lord's vicarious sufferings: (1) "He hath borne our griefs"; (2) "he hath carried our sorrows"; (3) "he was wounded for our transgressions"; (4) "he was bruised for our iniquities"; (5) "the chastisement of our peace was upon him"; (6) "with his stripes we are healed"; (7) "Jehovah hath laid on him the iniquity of us all"; (8) "he was cut off out of the land of the living for the transgression of my people"; (9) "when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin"; (10) "he shall bear their iniquities"; (11) "yet he bare the sins of many."

In the ninth item above, the sacrificial nature of these sufferings is directly stated. To a people whose approach to God was limited throughout by the indispensable condition of the expiatory offering, all these sayings were calculated to suggest to them that in such a one they might realize all their hopes of righteousness. The terms, "iniquities," "transgressions" and "sins" which occur here, gather around the work of the high priest on the "day of atonement," and indicate the priestly work of Christ, which is the theme of this section. This doctrine thus taught in the Old Testament is set forth with equal distinctness in the New Testament, and forms the hope, the trust, and the consolation of all Christians.

While thus suffering for a lost world his suffering was regarded by those who witnessed it as a smiting from God for his own sin. Hence they scoffed at him and reviled him in his greatest agonies. To one only, and him not one of God's people, was it given to see the

contrary, who declared aloud, "Certainly this was a righteous man" (Luke 23:47).

The prophet here shows that he was oppressed and afflicted, though he did not open his mouth. Like the Passover lamb led to the slaughter, he was dumb, which has a remarkable fulfilment in the deportment of our Lord under trial.

He was taken away by oppression and judgment, i.e., by a violence which cloaked itself under the formalities of a legal process. The people of his generation considered that this stroke fell upon him, not because of the transgression of God's people, but thought that the stroke came because of his own sins.

His innocence and purity are set forth in verse 9. The prophet shows that the intent of the executioners was to make his grave with the wicked, as was the case of all criminals who were crucified on the "Hill of Skull" and buried in a grave in the midst, but through the providence of Jehovah he had the rich man's tomb because there was no violence done by him nor was any deceit found in his mouth. "Violence" here refers to his overt acts and "deceit" refers to the inward state of the heart. He was free from both the guilt of sin and the bondage of sin. He was pure both in life and in character.

It may be truly said that God bruised Christ and put him to grief, the explanation of which is found in Acts 2:23: "Him, being delivered up by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye by the hand of lawless men did crucify and slay." The crucifixion of Christ was not an after-thought with God. It was divinely decreed, and permissively carried out by the hands of wicked men. He was put to death by the divine stroke, on the charge of sin.

But how shall we sufficiently realize all the significance of earth's greatest tragedy? Even when we beggar language we but bring somewhat nearer the heights and depths of its import. If all the crises in human affairs since Adam first hesitated over the tender of forbidden fruit in the hand of his wife to the present crisis in the

affairs of the Oriental nations could pool their hazards, they would not surpass the momentous issues involved when he said, "Now is the crisis of this world." Indeed there has never been and never will be but this one real crisis for this world. Since that time we use only relative terms when we talk about a crisis.

If all the cups of woe ever pressed to shrinking human lips since the first sad pair were banished from Eden to the wailing over the victims of the Eastland disaster were condensed into one measure of gall and wormwood, they would not exceed the bitterness enforced on our great substitute when he cried out in Gethsemane's bloody sweat: "My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me." If all the floods from Noah's deluge to the last Mississippi overflow could merge their waters into one swollen tide of horror, we might not compare it with his baptism of suffering forecast by the prophets: "All thy billows have rolled over me. Deep calleth unto deep at the voice of thy waterspouts." If all the fires since sulphur and brimstone were rained on Sodom and Gomorrah to the burning of San Francisco were combined into one lurid conflagration "painting hell on the sky," its devouring flame could not be so intense and searing as the fire of which he speaks: "I am come to send fire on the earth; and what will I, if it be already kindled?" If all the wars since Abraham dispersed the foray of Chedorlaorner to the strife by land and sea now raging in the Orient were massed into one universal conflict, the shock of arms would make but an echo of his fight with principalities and powers in the realm of the Spirit and of death from which he emerged "leading captivity captive" and with head-crushed Satan chained to his chariot wheels. If all the darkness since in creation's dawn, "darkness was upon the face of the deep," to the Egyptian darkness which might be felt and thence to the sun's latest eclipse, or Byron's poetic dream, was woven into one funeral pall of gloom, it might not equal that "hour of the power of darkness" which enveloped his cross. If all the loneliness of the exiled since Cain as a fugitive went away from the presence of God to Croly's *Wandering Jew*, or to Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*, were merged into one desert of solitude, it could not be compared to his isolation when

"of the people there were none With him," and when he cried: "My God, why hast thou forsaken me." If all the tragedies since Cain slew his brother Abel, to the last victim of the Inquisition were grouped into one horrible *auto de fe*, this concentrated martyrdom of all time should not measure the vicarious expiation of him who died as a felon at the hand of God. Yes, "His soul, being made an offering for sin," because "He bear the sin of many," was poured out unto death.

And because "the chastisement of our peace was laid on him" it pleased the Father to bruise him and to put him to grief, "for he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him," and because when "found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross, therefore hath God highly exalted him and given him a name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of beings in heaven and beings on earth and beings under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

The outcome of it all (10-12), and its bearing on the evangelization of the world are as follows: (1) "He shall see his seed," i.e., his disciples, who are said in the Scriptures to be the begotten of the teacher, as Paul speaking of Onesimus, "whom I have begotten in my bonds." (2) "He shall prolong his days," i.e., he shall continue to live by the resurrection and thus extend the time of his work in the salvation of men. (3) "The pleasure of Jehovah shall prosper in his hand," i.e., God's ultimate aim and end with respect to the universe shall be accomplished through him as the instrumentality. (4) "He shall see the travail of his soul and be satisfied," i.e., because of the travail of his soul he shall be satisfied. This is exactly parallel to Philippians 2:5-11 which emphasized the thought, "No cross – No crown." (See the author's sermon on this theme, *Evangelistic Sermons*, p. 15.) (5) "Shall justify many," i.e., shall turn many from sin unto righteousness, which corresponds to Paul's great discussion

in Romans 5:18-19. (6) "A portion with the great," i.e., he shall be a great conqueror, shall have a great kingdom and overcome the strong, making the kingdoms of this world his own, or it may refer to his mighty champions of evangelism with whom he will divide the possessions.

These are not contingent promises. All their preceding conditions have been fully met. Hence they are absolute promises made by the Almighty Father to his divine Son. Every attribute of deity is pledged to their literal and complete fulfilment. We might doubt the stability of the material heavens, the indestructibility of matter, and the persistence of the law of gravitation, but these promises lie beyond the realm of question and peradventure.

The imperiousness of the "shall see" is the ground of positiveness in the "shall come," applied to all sinners given to our Lord by the Father. And the "shall be satisfied" guarantees and necessitates the salvation of all the elect. And though a thousand portents forebode a dissolution of the earth before his satisfaction be complete, it cannot be prematurely dissolved, for the messianic days of salvation shall be prolonged until his purposes be fully accomplished. Some Christians, indeed, consulting their own selfish desires to be relieved at once from trouble may cry out: "Come on, Lord Jesus, come quickly – the time of the second advent is at hand – do not tarry – do not be slack concerning thy promise to come quickly."

But the Lord, unwilling that any of his elect should perish and unsatisfied until they shall repent and live) prolongs his days. We may not propound to a weary and cowardly church the question, "Are you satisfied?" The church might consult its selfish greed and fear and stop the good work of salvation too soon. We may not carry the question to death and hell, "Are you satisfied?" But only one may answer that question, our Lord himself. Men must be saved and saved and saved until he is satisfied – men of all grades of personal guilt, men of all nations and tribes and tongues. Poor, outcast, wandering Israel must be saved. We may be assured he will not be

satisfied until the redeemed constitute a host that no man can number, a host whose hallelujah will be louder than mighty thunderings, louder than the voice of many waters. If the "great" and the "strong" of this context refer to Satan, we may be sure Christ will not be content with the present division of these spoils. Though Satan's goods be now at peace the stronger than he will bind him and despoil him. But if "strong" and "great" refer to Christ's mighty champions of evangelism, it is equally sure he will make their portion far greater than their present possession. Thus the context illumines the text and makes it reasonable.

The last clause of verse 12 gives us the intercessory work of Christ as priest. It began when he said on the cross, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." But it has continued ever since and will continue until he leaves the mediatorial throne and returns to this world to wind up the affairs of time and turn over the kingdom to the Father.

The special theme of chapter 54 is the vast growth and blessedness of Zion, as the result of the Servant's work. From Isaiah 54:1-3, at Nottingham, England, May 30, 1792, William Carey sounded forth that bugle note of modern missions, "Expect great things from God; attempt great things for God," which waked a sleeping world and whose echoes yet linger on every shore of time.

The mighty mandates of this passage stagger all reason, all probability, all philosophy, indeed everything but superhuman faith. And even superhuman faith must have some solid foundation on which to rest, otherwise it becomes blind credulity. As the great commission, to disciple all nations and preach the gospel to every creature, rested upon the preceding assurance, "All power in heaven and in earth is given unto me," and the succeeding assurance, "Lo, I am with you all the days even unto the end of the world," so these mighty mandates must have a substantial predicate. That predicate lies in the context.

The verses immediately preceding the text declare: "When thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand. He shall see of the travail of his soul and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities. Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong, because he poured out his soul unto death; and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors." This passage rests on that context.

There is no break in the thread of continuity between Isaiah 53 and 54. Chapter 54 is unthinkable without chapter 53. Yes, let it be affirmed with uplifted hand and eyes and heart: This passage enjoins impossibilities apart from the awful tragedy set forth in the preceding context. But on that predicate of vicarious atonement all it enjoins is both easy and delightful.

There are seven of these mandates, as follows:

1. The barren are commanded to rejoice in heart over unborn children promised of God contrary to nature. In its spiritual application this does not refer to the active, working, fruit-bearing churches. The reason of their joy is evident and every way rational. They have not been barren hitherto. The call is to the barren churches, whose members so far have been as fig trees producing nothing but leaves. It implies a marvelous gift of faith to them, for the heart cannot break forth in praise over a blessing promised, unless it believe the promise. Yea, for such praise the faith must be the very substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. At such a promise the barren Sarai once laughed in derision until through faith she became Sarah and laughed now with joy and even named her child "Laughter."

2. They are commanded not merely to rejoice in heart, but to provide instant, and abundant house room for the coming of these multitudinous children of promise: "Enlarge the place of thy tent,

and let them stretch forth the curtains of thy habitations." This injunction reminds us of the vision of Zechariah: A young man went forth with a measuring line to lay off the site of the messianic Jerusalem. But an angel from God appears with the injunction: "Run, speak to that young man." Tell him, "Jerusalem shall be immeasurable. It shall expand until it takes in all the neighboring towns and villages. Let him roll up his insignificant tape line. That cannot measure this enlarged city of promise. No walls can enclose it. It shall be as big as the country itself."

3. In making provision for this enlargement there must be no regard for the cost. No miserly calculations. No selfish economy shall restrict the outlay: "Spare not; lengthen thy cords and strengthen thy stakes."

4. Enlargement shall be in every direction: "For thou shalt break forth upon thy right hand and thy left." The heresy that giving to one object, or working in one direction precludes other gifts and objects must die out of the heart.

5. This enlargement in all directions must be without foreboding as to the outcome. The heart must not dread the humiliation of possible failure, for says the passage: "Fear not; for thou shalt not be ashamed."

6. There must be no premature dread of the possible character and destiny of the numerous progeny after they have come: "For all thy children shall be taught of the Lord; and great shall be the peace of thy children."

7. This great enlargement must be undertaken in absolute fearlessness of any fighting opposition or talking opposition. For, "No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue that riseth against thee thou shalt condemn."

The imagery here employed is very suggestive and impressive to those of us familiar with tent life. We know that a little squad needs

but a little tent, and it needs only a small place with small curtains, short cords and weak tent pins. But when we lay off a wide space, that means a big tent and broad curtains and long ropes and strong, deeply driven stakes to anchor it securely against storms. Then, with a little tent we need only a short central tent pole, but with a big tent we need a tent pole like the mast of a ship. This pole is the center of unity. When we suddenly and greatly increase our tent our tent pole must either grow to fit the new conditions or we must get out a new one.

We are commanded to sing – not to croak – sing for blessings past, sing more for blessings promised, sing if we suffer, as Paul and Silas at midnight in the jail at Philippi. Rejoice that God has counted us worthy to suffer for his name and cause. Let faith that never staggers at the magnitude of commands and promises fire our heart to expect great things from God and to attempt great things for God. Let us learn to make large prayers, prayers for mighty favors. Let us open our mouths wide and God will fill them. It ministers to the self-respect of a people to cut out a big piece of work for them to do. Let us heed these words adapted from Whittier: What Hell may be, we know not; this we know: We cannot lose the presence of the Lord: One arm, Humility, takes hold upon His dear Humanity; the other, Love, Clasps his Divinity. So where we go He goes; and better fire-walled Hell with Him Than golden-gated Paradise without.

QUESTIONS

1. What the special theme of this section and how does it rank in importance with other scripture?
2. What the different interpretations of Isaiah 52:13 to 53:12?
3. What the argument for the messianic theory and against the later Jewish theories?
4. What the proof from the New Testament that this is the true interpretation?

5. Give an analysis of Isaiah 52:13 to 53:12.
6. What the general view of the whole subject as presented in 52:13-53:12?
7. What the import of the prophet's double question in Isaiah 53:1?
8. Explain his unpromising appearance.
9. What the proof from this passage that Christ was made a substitute for sinners?
10. While thus suffering for a lost world how was this suffering regarded by those who witnessed it?
11. How, according to this prophecy, did he deport himself under such trials?
12. What the meaning of verse 8?
13. How is his innocence and purity set forth in verse 9?
14. How may it be truly said that God bruised Christ and put him to grief, and what the significance of this great tragedy?
15. What the outcome of it all (53:12) and what its bearing on the evangelization of the world?
16. When was the last clause of verse 12, "and made intercession for the transgressors," fulfilled?
17. What the special theme of chapter 54?
18. What great sermon was preached from Isaiah 54:1-3, and what of its lasting effect?
19. What can you say of this passage, and what its relation to the preceding chapter?

20. What are the mandates enjoined in chapter 54 and what their application?
21. What can you say of the imagery here employed?
22. What the chief note of exhortation in this chapter?

XXIII. THE BOOK OF ISAIAH - PART 15

Isaiah 58-57

The special theme of this section is the kingly office of the Servant. This appears expressly in 55:3-5. Though the title "Servant of Jehovah" never occurs in the singular after 53:11 again and again his presence is manifest to the reader, so, throughout these three chapters the glorious king of Israel lives and acts.

The first kingly work of the Servant is providing for the needs of his people (55). The two thoughts of this chapter are the gracious invitation to the royal feast of the Servant (55:1-5) and a call to repentance and remission of sins, and the happy consequences.

The invitation is to "every one that thirsteth." This is very much like our Lord's gracious invitation: "If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink;" "Thirst" is used here and elsewhere in the 'Scriptures to symbolize the longing of the human heart for its counterpart which is God. "Water" symbolizes salvation, the satisfying portion that comes to the thirsty soul when brought to realize its famishing condition. This corresponds to Zechariah's "fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for uncleanness," and to our Lord's "water of life" which he offered to the Samaritan woman at the well of Sychar, and to every thirsty soul, thus: "I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely." Upon this thought are built the many hymns which use this symbolism, such as, "There is a Fountain Filled with Blood" and "The Fountain that Never Runs Dry."

"Wine" here symbolizes spiritual joy, or gladness, while "milk" symbolizes the nourishment of the soul. So the invitation here is to salvation, gladness, and nourishment, or the complete satisfaction of the spiritual needs of man. The terms, or conditions, of this invitation are simple: "Come, buy, eat," but "Without money and without price," i.e., you may call it "buying" if you wish, but it does not cost anything. It is, as the preacher said once, "free gratis, for

nothing." It is an offer of "salvation by grace," purely the gift of God.

But what the import and application of Isaiah's double question, "Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread? and your labor for that which satisfieth not?" These questions contrast the value of spiritual and worldly things. "Not bread" means that which has no real value; that which does not sustain, or that which does no good. "Bread" here includes every necessity of life, as food, clothing, and shelter. But these necessities are only incidental and should be made tributary to the higher things of life, things that contribute to the culture of the mind and heart. The affections of the great mass of Israelites were set on worldly things, on enriching themselves by "adding field to field and house to house" (5:8), and they cared nothing for spiritual blessings, much less to "hunger and thirst" after them.

Then he says that these things do not satisfy. Worldly things cannot satisfy the heart, not even the heart of the worldly. These thoughts are emphasized in the exhortation which follows: "Hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness." The highest aim in life should be soul growth, and the food that makes for "soul fatness" is found with Jehovah, and not in worldly things. Worldly things tend to soul poverty rather than soul prosperity. In this connection John's language to Gaius should be kept in mind: "Beloved, I pray that in all things thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth." So it is that "a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth." But it will be noted that all this is concerning right expenditure and not right acquiring of wealth. There is much discussion about the methods of getting wealth, but little on the right expenditure of wealth. There is some conscience on how to make money, but not very much on how to spend it. Often the distribution of wealth is more hurtful than the accumulation of it. No man has the right to waste his money or to spend it for "that which is not bread," nor has he the right to labor

and spend his life on the pleasures of the world, which do not satisfy.

The "everlasting covenant" here (v. 3) refers to the covenant of grace, as amplified in the New Testament, and the "sure mercies of David" refers to Christ, the surety of that covenant, as Paul shows in Acts 13:34: "And as concerning that he raised him up from the dead, now no more to return to corruption, he hath spoken on this wise, I will give you the holy and sure mercies of David," i.e., the blessings promised to David.

So verse 4, by New Testament interpretation (Acts 13:34), refers to the risen and exalted Christ, who was and is a witness, a leader, and a commander of the peoples. This involves his kingly office.

In verse 5 the Messiah is addressed, and there is a promise made to him similar to the promise in Psalm 2:8: "Ask of me, and I will give thee the nations for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession." Here is it said to him, "Thou shalt call a nation that thou knewest not; and a nation that knew not thee shall run unto thee," the chief attraction being the glory of the risen and exalted Lord. "Nation" here is used distributively and means all the Gentile world, as included in Psalm 2:8.

In verses 6-7 we have a specific direction for seeking salvation. First, it must be sought in the right person – "Jehovah," or Jesus Christ who is Jehovah manifested. Second, it must be sought at the right time – "while he may be found." Third, it must be sought by prayer – "call ye upon him." Fourth, it must be sought when he is near, or at the moment when his Spirit is moving upon the heart. "Today if ye shall hear his voice, harden not your hearts," for that is the day of salvation to that person. Fourth, it must be sought in the right way – by repentance and faith: "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts." Repentance is a change of outward life and inward thought. It means a change of mind toward God with respect to sin, but the inward change of mind works the outward change of life, i.e., the outward change is the

"fruits meet for repentance." "And let him return unto Jehovah, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon." Faith is throwing oneself upon Jehovah (Christ) for his mercy and his pardon. The publican prayed, "God, be propitiated toward me, the sinner," i.e., let thy mercy abound toward me because of the sacrifice of expiation.

In verses 8-9 we have the wisdom of Jehovah magnified in this plan over against what the foolishness of man would have devised. His thoughts and ways are as high as the heavens above man's thoughts and ways.

The instrument used in this great plan of salvation is the word of God (10-11). As the rain from heaven refreshes the earth and makes it produce the seed, so shall the word of God, sent out from Jehovah, accomplish its work in the salvation of the people.

The manifestations of the new life imparted in conversion, or regeneration, are joy and peace, the results of the impartation of new life by the Spirit. All nature reflects the joy also. Many a time has a soul fresh from the hand of God, imagined that the mountains were singing, and that the trees were clapping their hands. What a view of one's environments this new life gives to its recipient! The world about him seems to be clad in the garments of gladness and all nature responds to his song of joy.

The language of verse 13 is highly figurative, picturing the blessed state of the reign of righteousness in the earth. All this chapter has a primary reference to Israel and her deliverance from the captivity through their seeking Jehovah and their repentance, but as the deliverance of Israel from Egypt was a type of the individual deliverance from sin, so is the deliverance from Babylon, a type of individual deliverance from sin, which is the basis of the New Testament evangelism. God no longer delivers nations from sin as a whole but deals directly with the individual. So we go on with the work of evangelization of the individual until the nations, which are composed of individuals are converted and then will we see this

ideal here realized. The "thorn" and the "brier" symbolize the curse of wickedness, and the "fir tree" and the "myrtle tree," the blessings of righteousness. The promise here is that the "thorn" and the "brier" shall give way to the "fir tree" and the "myrtle tree," which cannot be fully realized until that blessed ideal of the millennium shall come in to bless the world.

The second work of the Servant king is fresh legislation, or fulfilling the law and declaring the relations of all the heirs of the kingdom. The new law for the various subjects of the kingdom (56:1-5) is as follows: To keep justice and to do righteousness. This has a fulfilment in Christ's exposition of the law, found in the Sermon on the Mount. The equality in the privileges of the covenant here described finds fulfilment only in the privileges of the new covenant, of which Paul says, "There is neither bond nor free, Jew nor Gentile, male nor female." Then the proselytes and eunuchs need not fear, for they shall have honorable mention in the new covenant.

In this new order of things provision is made for the foreigners. They shall have all the privileges of the sanctuary – the privilege of sacrifice and prayer. They shall be brought to the holy mountain of Jehovah to share the joys of his house. Not only will he gather the outcasts of Israel, but he will gather others besides. Thus said Jesus, "Other sheep I have, which are not of this flock; them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and they shall become one flock, one shepherd." The house of Jehovah was to be "a house of prayer for all peoples." This looks forward to the time when the temple should be emphatically a place of prayer, the legal sacrifices having received their fulfilment and being thenceforth superfluous and out of place. But the Jews did not recognize the fulfilment when it came, and thus they held on to the sacrificial ritual until Jehovah destroyed their "house and city." So the larger fulfilment of this passage is found in the spiritual house, the church, which succeeded the tabernacle and temple. In this house all people have the same privileges. The holy of holies is open to all who come in the name of

him who entered within the veil, there to intercede for those who come to God by faith in him.

The third work of the Servant king is judgment in the interest of righteousness and mercy (56:9-12). This is the picture of the judgment upon the guilty heads of the community. The beasts of the field are summoned to come and devour these ungodly, selfish shepherds, because they are blind, without knowledge, dumb, greedy, without understanding, and drunken. Their philosophy of life was, "Let us eat, drink, and be merry; for to-morrow we die." This picture of the hireling shepherds corresponds exactly with Christ's description of them in John 10. The judgment on them here corresponds to his judgment upon the religious leaders of his time, which found its consummation in the destruction of Jerusalem.

Here we see the Lord's favor to the righteous in view of the judgment upon the evil. He takes them away before the judgment comes. This has always been God's method. When he was about to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah he took Lot and his family out; before the final destruction of Jerusalem they were warned by our Lord to flee, and before his final judgment upon the world he will take all his people out of it. So the prophet explains here that Jehovah took his righteous prematurely because of the coming judgment upon the evil. The removing of some of the faithful in Israel before the judgment came upon them was to them a blessing, since they were in quiet rest and peace. This must have in it the foreshadowing of the final destruction of Jerusalem when the wrath of God fell so heavily upon the Jewish leaders.

The charge against the people in 57:3-10 is the charge of idolatry and its accompanying sins. To itemize them, they were sorcery, adultery, harlotry, mockery, transgression, falsehood, worshiping in the high places, Molech worship, stone worship, enlarging the bed for others, making covenant with them and forgetting Jehovah.

The penalty pronounced upon them in 57:11-13 is that their righteousness and works should not profit them, and their refuge of

lies should be swept away. Most modern interpreters think that the Jews are addressed here and that the time is the latter part of Hezekiah's reign. If this be true, then evidently the prophet comes back in his vision to the time in which he lived. This is not at all impossible, but it is probable, as some of the older commentators think, that, with the condition of Israel in the time of the prophet as a background, this is a forecast of the church with its corrupt priesthood and idolatry in the Dark Ages. The hopeful note in this paragraph is the inner circle of the faithful who take refuge in Jehovah and who shall possess the land and inherit his holy mountain. It is consoling to find that this remnant is never lost but runs all the way from Abel down to the present. It matters not how dark the hour in the history of the world the "salt of the earth" is in evidence.

This section closes (57:14-21) with a promise to the humble and a curse upon the wicked. This is a fine prescription for a revival. There is, first, an order to prepare the way, so that the people can go to the "holy mountain" of Jehovah. Second, there is a magnifying of the eternity and holiness of Jehovah and his transcendence above the universe. Third, there is the condescension of God, who is the source of all true revivals, to dwell in the hearts of men. Fourth, there are the conditions set forth, viz: humility and contrition. Fifth, there is also the purpose of Jehovah's condescension, viz: "to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite." Then the prophet gives Jehovah's promise to heal backsliding Israel and to comfort the mourners, announcing peace to his people, but eternal unrest and sorrow to the wicked.

QUESTIONS

1. What the special theme of this section?
2. What the first kingly work of the Servant?
3. What the two thoughts of this chapter?

4. Who are invited to their feast, what the symbolism here and upon. what terms are they invited?
5. What the import and application of Isaiah's double question, "Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread? and your labor for that which satisfieth not?"
6. What the meaning-of the "everlasting covenant," and the "sure mercies of David" in verse 3?
7. Who is spoken of in verse 4, and what office is there given him?
8. In verse 5 who is addressed and what the meaning of the verse?
9. Expound verses 6-7.
10. By whose wisdom was such a plan of salvation wrought out?
11. What the instrument used in this great plan of salvation?
12. What the manifestations of the new life imparted in conversion, or regeneration?
13. What the interpretation of verse 13, and when will the prophecy here be realized?
14. What the second work of the Servant king?
15. What the new law for the various subjects of the kingdom (56:1-5)?
16. In this new order of things what provision is made for the foreigners?
17. What the third work of the Servant king?
18. What the picture of 56:9-12?

19. What the Lord's favor to the righteous in view of the judgment upon the evil?
20. What the charge against the people in 57:3-10?
21. What the penalty pronounced upon them in 57:11-13?
22. Who are the people here addressed?
23. What hopeful note in this paragraph?
24. How does this section close (57:14-21)?

XXIV. THE BOOK OF ISAIAH - PART 16

Isaiah 58-60

This division (Isa. 58-66) is eschatological and consists of promises and warnings for the future. The special theme of chapters 58-60 is Israel's sin, Jehovah's salvation, and Zion's glory. Israel's sin, as stated in chapter 58, was a heartless ritualism.

The prophet's special commission in 58:1 was to cry aloud, to sound forth like a trumpet against the transgressions and sin of Jacob.

The people complained (vv. 2-7) that Jehovah had not regarded their religious services; that he had not dealt with them in righteous judgments. To this Jehovah replied that their fasting was nothing more than a form; that while they fasted they, at the same time, did their own pleasure and oppressed all their laborers; that while they fasted they also fought and did not fast so as to be heard when they prayed; that fasting was not merely bowing the head like a bulrush and sitting in sackcloth and ashes; that such fasting was not regarded by Jehovah at all, but rather the fasting that put away wickedness, set the captives free, fed the hungry, clothed the naked, and aided their own countrymen generally.

The promises to Jacob in this connection and the conditions upon which they were made are as follows:

1. On the condition that they fast in reality, as Just described, he promised that light should break forth upon them; that they should be healed speedily; that righteousness should be in front of them and the glory of Jehovah should be their reward; and then their cries to Jehovah should be answered by him.
2. On the condition that they take away oppression, scorning, wicked speaking, feed and sympathize with the hungry and afflicted, he promised that their light should become as bright as the noonday;

that Jehovah would guide them; that they should be like a watered garden; and that the land should be restored to its former blessings.

3. On the condition that they keep his holy sabbath, doing the Lord's pleasure therein, he promised that they should have delight in Jehovah and he would exalt them in the high places of the earth and would supply their every need.

This chapter has for its historical background the great atonement day, the only time when Israel was required to fast as herein pictured. The voice of the prophet here corresponds to the trumpet which announced the atonement day. His announcing their transgressions, sins, and iniquities, all of which cluster about this day corresponds to the reminding of their sins on the atonement day, on which also was announced the Jubilee, when there was the breaking of all yokes, and its provisions for those who had come to be broken down and oppressed. But they had only kept the outward form of this ritual and had not observed it in heart. So the prophet issues a call to repentance, very much like that of John the Baptist before he announced the Lamb of God that took away the sin of the world. The great atonement was just ahead and it was necessary that they be afflicted in their souls on account of their sins.

This thought is carried on in the next chapter (vv. 1-8). Here the sins are pointed out more particularly. The prophet begins by announcing that the difficulty is not with Jehovah but with the people. Their sins had separated between them and God. The sins here recited cover the whole catalogue. Their hands, their fingers, their lips, their tongues, their feet, and their minds were all involved. Their state was most despicable and called for the severest Judgments. They were all gone out of the way.

There follows (9-15a) a most wonderful confession of sin. In this confession they state their awful condition and lament their sins and hopelessness. This is very much like the condition of Israel when John the Baptist lifted his voice in the wilderness of Judea at which they repented confessing their sins.

But relief comes in this state of hopelessness and despair. Jehovah intervened in the power of his grace and wrought out their salvation (15-21). When Jehovah looked on he saw that there was no justice; that there was not a righteous man; that there was no one, like Moses or Aaron, to intercede. Just such a condition existed when our Lord came. There was none good, no, not one. So he was moved with compassion and stretched forth his arm and brought deliverance to his people.

When he came to contend like a mighty warrior for his people he put on righteousness as a breastplate, salvation for a helmet upon his head, garments of vengeance for clothing, and zeal as a mantle. Thus panoplied he waged a spiritual conflict with his adversaries and he recompensed to his enemies their dues.

The marginal reading of verse 19 is to be preferred for this verse: "So shall they fear the name of Jehovah from the west, and his glory from the rising of the sun; for when the adversary shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of Jehovah will lift up a standard against him." The first part of this verse teaches us that the true religion will be spread over the whole earth. The latter part seems to have its analogue in the past deliverance of Israel, as in the case with Sennacherib, but it connects directly here with the Messiah who is the standard which Jehovah has set up against the adversary, and for the whole world. He is the ensign for all peoples.

The Redeemer in verses 20-21 is unmistakably the Messiah. This passage is highly messianic and reveals the salvation of Christ. The covenant here is the new covenant, or the covenant of grace, so much amplified in the New Testament. The Spirit here is the Holy Spirit who inspired the prophet and inspired the New Testament writers giving them words that would never depart from the mouths of God's people. This is a promise of inspiration for all the word of God and that there will always be a seed who will contend for that inspiration. As surely as the church of Jesus Christ, which is the habitat of the Spirit, shall be perpetuated, just that surely there will

always be a contention in that church for the word which was inspired by that same Spirit. A good sign of apostasy upon the part of a church is for it to deny the inspiration of the word of God. This is exactly in line with the New Testament teaching on the Holy Spirit. The new covenant herein spoken of involves the giving of God's Holy Spirit to his people (Joel 2:28 and Acts 2), and this Spirit was promised by Christ as the Paraclete of the church forever. He shall not depart from God's people while time endures, and his office work in the hearts of men and women will continue until the Lord, for whom he must bear witness, shall come back to this earth without a sin offering unto salvation.

The theme of chapter 60 is the transcendent glory of Zion and it is in the nature of a song of triumph, a poem which is the counterpart, perhaps, of chapter 47, describing the fall and ruin of Babylon. The theme of this song appears in verse 14: "The city of Jehovah, The Zion of the Holy One of Israel."

The connection between this chapter and the preceding chapter is very close. They are closely bound together, the relation between them being, for the most part, that of contrast. There are five of these points of contrast as follows:

1. In chapter 59 the people were waiting in "dark places for the light"; now the "light" has come.
2. In chapter 59 "righteousness and peace" stood at a distance; now they govern the Holy City.
3. In chapter 59 "salvation" was far off; now the walls of the city are called salvation.
4. In chapter 59 reverence for the "name of Jehovah" and "his glory" was promised; now it is realized.
5. In chapter 59 a "redeemer" was foreseen; now his work is accomplished.

The imagery of this poem seems to be borrowed from the account of the visit of the Queen of Sheba to Solomon, found in 1 Kings 10:1-10. This song consists of five stanzas, of nearly equal length, as follows:

1. 1-4, Zion's light and inhabitants
2. 5-9, Zion's wealth
3. 10-14, Zion's reconstruction
4. 15-18, Zion's prosperity
5. 19-22, Zion's crowning glories

The light of Zion is the reflected light of the glory of Jehovah, just as the light of the disciples of Jesus was his reflected light. He is the "Sun of Righteousness" and "the Light of the World"; primarily, while his disciples are "suns of righteousness" and "the light of the world," secondarily. Here Zion is exhorted to arise and shine, just as Christ said to his disciples, "Ye are the light of the world . . . let your light so shine, etc." The "promise" is that, notwithstanding gross darkness should cover the earth and its peoples, Zion should have the light of Jehovah, and it should be so attractive that the nations of the earth and the kings of the world should come to her brightness.

The inhabitants of Zion shall come from far, i.e., from all parts of the world, as Jesus said, "They shall come from the east, and from the west; from the north, and from the south, and shall sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of God." They shall be Jews and Gentiles, Greek and Roman, Chinese and Japanese, Malayan and Australian, Indian and African, European and American. Yea they shall be Oriental, Occidental, Septentrional, and Austral, but all radiant with one life, one light, and one love.

The very best of everything in the material world is here mentioned as coming to Zion, illustrating both the temporal and spiritual

blessings of Zion, the temporal being used to transport Zion's sons and daughters, i.e., for missionary purposes. This is literally fulfilled in every material thing that is consecrated to the service of the king of this splendid city. The ships, the lower animals) the gold and the silver – the best of it all has been made to serve the purposes of Christianity from the time of Paul to the present day.

The reconstructors of this city are here called foreigners which may refer primarily to Cyrus and Artaxerxes Longimanus but the passage has a meaning far beyond the literal one. "Strangers" of all kinds, Greeks, Romans, Africans, Gauls, Spaniards, and others, are building the walls of Zion today. The promises here remind us of those concerning the New Jerusalem of Revelation. The gates are open continually, and kings and conquerors bring their trophies into it. The nation that will not serve this one shall perish. Many of them have come and gone according to this promise. The final and complete victory of this glorious institution over its enemies is one of the most encouraging promises of this passage.

But what of her prosperity? Whereas Zion has been down and trodden under foot, now she stands erect with an eternal excellency, and becomes the joy of many generations. Her nourishment comes through the means of the Gentiles. Righteousness and peace shall be its rulers, and no more violence shall be heard in the land. The entire cessation of war and violence is one of the most characteristic features of the "last times," when swords shall be beaten into ploughshares, and spears into pruning hooks. The Prince of Peace shall ultimately establish peace. Many men of earnest religious feeling have thought, at various times, that they saw the actual commencement of the reign of peace upon the earth, so distinctly promised, so earnestly longed for, and so necessary for the happiness of mankind. But a calm dispassionate observer of the twentieth century is shaken from every confidence of its approach when he witnesses such disastrous wars as the recent terrific struggles for the championship of the world. Yet just such conflicts as these must precede the coming in of the reign of peace and who

can tell but that these are the last great struggles which shall introduce this blessed reign of the Prince of Peace? (See the author's discussion of this in his *Interpretation of Revelation*, pp. 225-267.)

This description (19-22) of the crowning glories of this city of Jehovah parallels John's description of the New Jerusalem coming down out of heaven as a bride adorned for her husband. Here the redeemed are basking in a light whose radiance eclipses the light of the sun and moon, which streams down upon them from God the Father of lights in whom there is no variableness, neither shadow of turning. This light shall be everlasting and there shall be no mourning. All her people shall be righteous and the saying shall come to pass that "the meek shall inherit the earth." The little flock shall become the strong nation, the multitude that no man can number. All this must come in its own time, the time fixed in God's counsels for the final and glorious triumph of his everlasting kingdom.

QUESTIONS

1. What the theme of Isaiah 58-66?
2. What the special theme of chapters 58-60?
3. What, in general, was Israel's sin, as stated in chapter 58?
4. What the prophet's special commission in 58:1?
5. What complaint do the people of Jacob make against Jehovah and what his reply?
6. What the promises of Jacob in this connection and upon what conditions?
7. What the historical background of this chapter and what time in the history of Israel does it foreshadow?

8. How is this thought carried on in the next chapter?
9. What the effect of this cry of the prophet against their sin?
10. What relief comes in this state of hopelessness and despair?
11. When Jehovah looked on what did he see and how did it affect him?
12. What were his weapons for this mighty conflict?
13. What the meaning of verse 19?
14. Who the Redeemer, what the covenant and what the mission of the Holy Spirit as set forth in verses 20-21?
15. What is the special theme and what the nature of chapter 60?
16. Where in this chapter do we find the subject, or theme, of this address?
17. What the connection between this chapter and the preceding chapter?
18. What the imagery of this poem and where found?
19. Give an analysis of this song, showing its parts and their several
20. What is the light of Zion and what the promise concerning it (1-31)?
21. Who are to be the inhabitants of Zion?
22. What shall be the wealth of this glorious city and what use shall be made of it?
23. Who the reconstructors of this city and what the promises connected with the reconstruction?

24. What of her prosperity? .

25. Describe the crowning glories of this city of Jehovah, the Zion of the Holy One of Israel.

XXV. THE BOOK OF ISAIAH - PART 17

Isaiah 61 :1 to 63:8

The threefold theme of this section (Isa. 61:1 to 63:6) is the mission of the Servant of Jehovah, a new picture of Zion's glory, and the judgments of the Servant upon his enemies. The speaker in 61:1-3 is the Messiah and the positive proof of it is the testimony of our Lord himself:

And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up: and he entered, as his custom was, into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and stood up to read. And there was delivered unto him the book of the prophet Isaiah. And he opened the book, and found the place where it was written.

The spirit of the Lord is upon me, Because he anointed me to preach good tidings to the poor: He hath sent me to proclaim release to the captives, And recovering of sight to the blind, To set at liberty them that are bruised, To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.

And he closed the book, and gave it back to the attendant, and sat down: and the eyes of all in the synagogue were fastened on him. And he began to say unto them, Today hath this scripture been fulfilled in your ears: – LUKE 4:16-21.

This short paragraph sets forth, in general, the preparation of the Messiah for his special mission. There are several items of information in this passage. We are told here that the Messiah had a special anointing for his work. This took place at his baptism when the Holy Spirit came upon him and abode with him ever afterward without measure. There follows in this passage the several offices that the Messiah filled. In the Old Testament we have the special anointing of prophets, priests, and kings for their respective offices. This anointing was performed by the use of the holy anointing oil for which we have the specific recipe in Exodus 30:22-23. All these offices of the Old Testament prophet, priest, and king were

combined in the one person of the Messiah. He was prophet, priest, and king, and in Jesus Christ we have all these functions performed.

In this commission of our Lord here we have these functions distinctly indicated. His prophetic office is signified in the special commission to preach the good tidings unto the meek; his priestly work is indicated in his commission to bind up the brokenhearted; and his kingly office, in his commission to set free the captives. Then he was to proclaim the Jubilee year in which all captives were set free and all oppression of debt was removed, and there was a time of general rejoicing. All this has a distinct fulfilment in the gospel dispensation through Christ and his heralds. The picture here is one of joy and gladness, just such as comes to a people who have been freed from the bonds of slavery, of which the greatest is the slavery of sin. This is the mission of the Messiah and amply fulfilled in our Lord Jesus Christ.

The results of such a ministry are pictured in 61:4-9. In the preceding paragraph the recipients of the blessings of the Messiah are called "trees of righteousness, the planting of Jehovah." In this passage the prophet takes as his starting point the captivity, then pictures in glowing terms their return and rebuilding of the waste places, and then sweeps out into the future where he sees the Jews and the Gentiles in the kingdom together and the Jews holding a prominent place in the great plan of God for the salvation of the world. At that time instead of their shame they shall have double honor and instead of their dishonor they shall have rejoicing. One of the results of his work is the establishing of justice and the meting out of rewards in truth, and he makes an everlasting covenant with them.

Then in verse 9 we have a striking prophecy. Here we are told that the seed of the Jews shall be known among the nations and their offspring among the peoples; that they should be acknowledged by all who see them, as "seed whom Jehovah hath blessed." This marvelous prophecy is being fulfilled in every nation of the world

where the Jew has migrated. No man fails to recognize the shrewd Jew in the affairs of the governments and in the great commercial and financial interests of the marts of the world. He has figured largely at all the great courts of the earth ever since Joseph was prime minister at the court of Pharaoh and Daniel, at the court of Nebuchadnezzar. He is a success everywhere, so much so that the world points the finger at him and says, "There is the one whom Jehovah hath blessed."

The speaker in 61:10-11 is Zion, responding to the gracious promises of the preceding parts of this section. This was a great time for rejoicing. The good tidings, their healing and their liberty brought by the Messiah now finds a hearty response in heartfelt joy and rejoicing.

The things here mentioned for which God's people rejoice and are joyful in him are as follows: The first thing mentioned is the garment of salvation, or the robe of righteousness. This, of course, is the imputed righteousness of Christ, and Dressed in his righteousness alone, Faultless to stand before his throne, God's people may go on rejoicing as a bridegroom or as a bride adorned for the marriage. There is here also the strong assurance of the final triumph of righteousness in all nations. The whole world is to become an Eden, reclaimed forever out of the hand of the unrighteous spoiler. In this year of Jubilee the earth will be restored to its proper heirs, the righteous seed. For all the preceding weary ages of wrong, compensation shall be made. All God's saints, who have long been shame-stricken, shall then become "kings and priests unto God," and thus their joy shall be made full.

Some regard the speaker in chapter 62 as Jehovah; some, the prophet himself or the prophetic order, while others regard him as the Servant of Jehovah. The last supposition is by far the most logical and the best. The close connection with the preceding chapter is evident. In that chapter we have a soliloquy of the Servant

and a response upon the part of Zion. Here the Servant takes up the soliloquy and goes on through this chapter.

The Servant in 62:1-5 declared that he would not hold his peace any longer for the time had come for the publishing of Zion's righteousness and salvation; that this should be evident to the nations; that she should have a new name and should be a crown of beauty and a royal diadem in the hand of God; that her new name should be expressive of her new relation, i.e., "not forsaken," but Hephzibah, "My delight is in her," and Beulah, which means "married"; that thenceforth Zion should be a delight and that God would rejoice over her. All this has its realization in the ministry of Christ and the Holy Spirit.

There has been a great controversy over the name, "Hephzibah." Our Campbellite brethren claim that the new name here given Zion is the name, Christian, which the disciples received at Antioch (Acts 11:26). They insist that the church should have that name and that to wear that name is essential to salvation. Just what that new name is, it is not easy to decide. Two names are given here "Hephzibah" and "Beulah." Why we should select the first rather than the second, is not evident. These names are expressive of a new condition and of a new relation, one meaning, "My delight is in her" and the other, "married." Then, it will be noted here that this new name shall be the "name, which the mouth of Jehovah shall name." But the name "Christian" was given the disciples by the heathen and in derision. Then the name Christian occurs but three times in the New Testament and in each case it is applied to the individual disciple and nowhere is it applied to the church. Another mystery about it all is that if the church of Jesus Christ should be called "The Christian Church," why was it so long receiving this name? Not until 1827 was the name suggested at all, and then several other names were tried before they hit upon this name. According to this passage in Isaiah, if we find this new name in the New Testament, we must expect to find it given by Christ himself or by some one of his

inspired apostles. But we look in vain for such name in their ministry and writings.

It seems better to consider these names in the light of the historical background of Zion at this time and in the light of the specific meaning of the words here used. The two names, "Hephzibah" and "Beulah," have their corresponding application in the history of Israel, expressing a condition and a relation at the time the prophet wrote. "Azubah," forsaken, was the name of Jehoshaphat's mother (2 Chron. 20:31) and Hephzibah, "my delight is in her," was the name of Hezekiah's wife (2 Kings 21:1). So here he says, "Thou shalt no more be termed forsaken [Azubah]; neither shall thy land any more be termed Desolate: but thou shalt be called Hephzibah, and the land Beulah; for Jehovah delighteth in thee, and thy land shall be married." This explains that these names are expressive of Zion's new condition and relation, which she was to maintain in the gospel dispensation under the new covenant. We find some New Testament expressions that correspond to these, indicating the relations under the new covenant, such as "the honorable name," by James and the "new name" of Revelation 2:17; 3:12, which will be given to individual saints in the heavenly kingdom.

Further interest in Zion is expressed by the Servant in 62:69. The interest here is in the setting of the watchmen on the walls of Jerusalem, who are to watch Jerusalem with an everlasting vigilance. Some think that the watchmen here are the prophets and priests; others, that they are angels who keep perpetual watch and ward over Zion. That these watchmen here are angelic beings appears from their personal vigilance and that they are reminders to Jehovah of his oath and covenant to bless Zion. This corresponds to the watchers in Daniel 4:13, 17, 23 which are admitted, generally, to be angels. In the New Testament this idea of angel ministrations is emphatic. Our Lord refers to the angels that have charge of the "little ones" and angels ministered unto him on different occasions. Paul tells us that the angels are present and watching over the assemblies in the churches, and in Hebrews 1:14 he defines their work in

particular, thus: "Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to do service for the sake of them that shall inherit salvation?"

Their special mission has already been intimated in the preceding paragraph. But as this passage here sets forth, they are to be Jehovah's remembrancers, reminding him of his covenant with them and his promises to them. They are not to let Jehovah rest until "He establish and make Jerusalem a praise in the earth." This thought of importunity is also expressed in Luke 11:5-13; 18:1-8. Here is also set forth the oath of Jehovah respecting Zion, that the enemies of Zion shall no more triumph over her but that Zion shall enjoy the full blessing of her fruitage.

The proclamation of 62:10-12 is a proclamation for all to go up to Jerusalem. A highway must be prepared, the stones must be gathered out and an ensign for the peoples be lifted up. The prophet here starts again with the Babylonian captivity, delineates the parts the several peoples perform in the return and restoration of the Holy City and its institutions. Then he announces the proclamation of Jehovah to the end of the earth that the salvation of the daughter of Zion cometh. Then stretching forward in his vision, he sees the Holy City called "Sought out, a city not forsaken." This was not fully realized after the return and so we keep our faces toward the future in anticipation of this glorious day when the Jews everywhere shall receive with joy in their hearts this proclamation to go up to their own land and to the Holy City, never again to be forsaken.

The prophet's vision in Isaiah 63:1-6 is a vision of someone coming from Edom, with crimsoned garments from Bozrah. His apparel is glorious, and his step is characteristic of a conqueror. But who is this conqueror from Edom? He here announces himself to be one speaking in righteousness and mighty to save. This is fulfilled only in our Lord Jesus Christ. We see him here in the capacity of an avenger, coming in judgments.

There is no idea of expiation in this passage whatever. It is the idea of vengeance upon the enemies of Zion that stands out prominent

here. He explains that he had trampled the peoples in his wrath and that alone. There was no one with him and his own arm brought salvation to him.

Edom here, as in other places in Isaiah, refers to the worst enemies of Zion. The day of vengeance is yet future. It is the day when our Lord shall vindicate his people against all their enemies, who shall feel the weight of his mighty hand.

The whole of this prophecy is future and the verbs here are claimed by some to be in the future tense, but the dramatic form of the narrative demands that the verbs be in the past. So often the prophet sees the events, yet future, as already accomplished. This emphasized the certainty of their fulfilment, just as the tense of the verbs in Romans 8:29-30 which present the work of our salvation as if it had already been accomplished.

We find the parallel of this passage in Revelation 19:1-21. There we have the man on the white horse going forth to battle and winning his victor over the nations, stained also with their blood. This great conflict is a precursor of the millennium.

QUESTIONS

1. What the threefold theme of this section (Isa. 61:1 to 63:6)?
2. Who is the speaker in 61:1-3 and what the proof?
3. What the things set forth in 61:1-3 and what their fulfilment?
4. What the results of such a ministry as pictured in 61:4-9?
5. Who is the speaker in 61:10-11?
6. What the things here mentioned for which God's people rejoice and are joyful in him?

7. Who the speaker in chapter 62?
8. What interest expressed for Zion by the Servant in. 62:1-5?
9. What the controversy over the name, "Hephzibah," and what the new name given to Zion?
10. What further interest in Zion is expressed by the Servant in 62:6-9?
11. What are these watchmen set by the Servant and what the corresponding New Testament teaching?
12. What is their special mission and what Jehovah's oath here concerning Zion?
13. What the proclamation of 62:10-12 and what will be its fulfilment?
14. What the prophet's vision in Isaiah 63:1-6?
15. Who is this conqueror from Edom?
16. In what capacity do we here see him?
17. Is there any idea of expiation in this passage, and what his own explanation of his crimsoned garments?
18. What does Edom here represent and when the "day of vengeance" here spoken of?
19. What can you say of the tense of the verbs in 3-6?
20. Where do we find the parallel of this passage in Revelation?

XXVI. THE BOOK OF ISAIAH - PART 18

Isaiah 63:7 to 66:34

The general theme of this last section of the book of Isaiah is the divine principle of discrimination. More particularly, the items of this theme are penitent Israel's prayer, Jehovah's response, and the fixing of final destinies.

This section opens with the prophet's recounting of the mercies of Jehovah. In the distant past the Lord had pity on Israel and bore his people in his arms. The elements of his compassion are here mentioned as loving-kindness, great goodness, mercies, sympathy, love, and pity, the expression of which is realized in his salvation, deliverance, redemption, and support. All these terms are strong and significant of the relation Jehovah sustained to his people in the past. This is a most excellent way to stimulate in a people the spirit of prayer. The people had rebelled at Sinai in the incident of the golden calf, at Taberah they murmured, at Shittim in the case of the daughters of Moab, in the time of the Judges, in Samuel's time, the ten tribes under Jeroboam, and Judah under Manasseh, Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin, and Zedekiah. Thus Jacob was a rebellious people.

The results of this rebellion and the effect on the people were tremendous. This rebellion on the part of God's people (1) grieved his Holy Spirit, (2) caused him to turn to be their enemy, and (3) made him to fight against them. When the Holy Spirit was withdrawn from the people and Jehovah began to fight against them, they were set to questioning thus: Where is the God that brought us up out of Egypt? Where is he that put his Holy Spirit in our midst? and so on (11-14). This reminds us of the dear old hymn that runs thus: Where is the blessedness I knew When first I saw the Lord? Where is the soul-refreshing view Of Jesus and his word? The prophet here is going back to their glorious experience with the Lord and in so doing he is kindling in them the spirit of prayer and supplication which finds expression in the following paragraphs.

The elements of prayer in 63:15-19 are striking. In this excellent and pious prayer in which they entreat God, for his grace and mercy, to behold them with an eye of compassion, they argue both from the goodness of his nature, and from the greatness of the works which he had formerly done for them. God sees everywhere and everything, but he is said to look down from heaven, because there is his throne, whereon he reigns in majesty. This is a plea for Jehovah's condescension, followed by a complaint that God had relaxed in his zeal for them and had restrained his compassion toward them. Then they plead his fatherhood and his redemption from everlasting, following it up with a complaint of his judgment of judicial hardness of heart, and a lamentation for the desolation of their own land and their forsaken condition in a strange land.

This prayer is continued (64:1-7) in an expression of an earnest wish that God would show himself as visibly in favor of his ancient people as he did when he came down upon Mount Sinai, amidst thunder, and lightning, and tempests, which shook heaven and earth, and testified his presence. They plead what God had formerly done, and was always ready to do for his people. Then they confessed themselves to be sinful and utterly unworthy of God's favor, and that they had deserved the judgments under which they were now suffering. Note that there are three emphatic "alls" in his confession – "All unclean," "all our righteousness" and "we all do fade as a leaf." They were all morally unclean; a moral leprosy was upon them. They were like a leprous man who had to rend his clothes and go about crying, "Unclean! unclean!" They were like one under a ceremonial pollution and not admitted to the courts of the tabernacle. All their righteousnesses were as filthy rags, rags which would only defile. This is true when considering the very best works and actions that can be performed by the very best of mankind, for all our works have so great an alloy of imperfection that they cannot justify us before a just and holy God. They were all like a fading and falling leaf, but Leaves have had their time to fall, And flowers to wither at the north wind's breath, And stars to set; but all – Thou hast all seasons for thine own, O death.

The final plea of this prayer (64:8-12) is threefold: (1) They again plead the fatherhood of God who had made them as a potter makes the vessel out of the clay; (2) his holy cities, Zion and Jerusalem, were a wilderness and a desolation; (3) their holy and beautiful house was burned with fire and all their pleasant places were a waste. They urged that these things should move Jehovah in pity and compassion to interfere in their behalf.

The special theme of chapters 65-66 is Jehovah's response to the prayers and confessions of penitent Israel. In the most restricted sense, this is an answer of Jehovah to the preceding confession and prayer. It is the close of the great prophecy of the Servant who is to glorify Jehovah on earth and to finish the work given him to do. It is also a winding up of Isaiah's ministry.

The first response to these prayers is a sharp discrimination between the faithful and unfaithful, a contrast in the hopes of the faithful and the unfaithful, a contrast in the hopes of acceptably approaching Jehovah cherished by the two parties: those who find him had not been called by his name; whereas Israel in the mass are cast off through their own sinfulness (65:1-7).

In verses 1-2 we have the ones who find Jehovah and the ones who fail to find him. Here he is represented as hastening to assist and welcome a people that was not called by his name. This refers to the Gentiles, the proof of which is found in Romans 10:20-21. These words of Isaiah certainly include the Gentiles, as he had included them in 56:7, in which he said, "My house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples." On the other hand he spread out his hands to a rebellious people, which, as Paul construes it, refers to Israel who rejected Christ.

The details of their rebelliousness (3-5) are stated, in general, as provoking Jehovah to his face, and are specified as follows:

1. Sacrificing in gardens, i.e., the groves and gardens of Palestine in which they worshiped Astarte. The profligacy of these rites cannot be described.
2. Burning incense upon bricks, i.e., upon the tiled or bricked roofs of houses, which was directly contrary to the Mosaic Law.
3. Sitting among the graves, i.e., the rock tombs of Palestine, for the purpose of raising the dead, or of obtaining prophecies from them, or of getting prophetic intimations made to them in dreams.
4. Lodging in the secret places, i.e., in the Crypts, for the mysteries celebrated in the natural caves and artificial crypts.
5. Eating swine's flesh, i.e., as a part of the sacrificial meals.
6. Eating broth of abominable things, i.e., from the flesh of unclean or unlawful animals.
7. They said, "Stand by yourself; I am holier than thou." This was self-conceit and hypocrisy.

The votaries of these abominations are described as smoke in the Lord's nose, and a fire that burns continually. They were objects of his wrath and should receive the measure of their work into their own bosom.

The contrast in 65:8-12, or the second item of Jehovah's response, is a contrast in their character and in their notions of God. In Israel there is a precious seed, or kernel, which shall be preserved, whereas the doings of the idolaters shall return upon their own heads.

But what is the meaning of "inheritor of my mountains," (v. 9) ? The whole of Palestine is little more than a cluster of mountains, which may be divided into three groups: (1) the mountains of Galilee, extending from Hermon to Tabor; (2) the mountains of Samaria and Judea, extending from Carmel and Gilboa to the plateau of Mamre

above Hebron, separated from the first group by the plain of Esdraelon; (3) the mountains of the trans-Jordanic region, including those of Bashan, Gilead, Moab, and Edom, separated from the two other groups by the Jordan Valley. The inheritor of this whole region of Palestine was to be the true Israel of God.

Then what the meaning of "Fortune" and "Destiny" in verse 11, and what the application here? These are heathen deities for whom Israel prepared viands and poured out a drink offering, respectively. The prophet here makes a play upon the word, "destiny," saying, "I will destine you to the sword," and then assigns the reason, viz: that he called but they did not answer.

The third item of Jehovah's response (13-16) is a contrast in results. The promised blessings are more than realized to the one, whereas the other has a corresponding disappointment. The first paragraph is introduced by the word "therefore," which connects back with the thought of their 'rejecting the call of Jehovah. The thought, as carried on in this paragraph, is the supply of good things for his servants while those who reject the call shall hunger and thirst. The servants shall rejoice, while they are put to shame. The servants shall sing for joy of heart, while they shall cry for sorrow of heart, and shall wail for vexation of spirit. They shall leave their name for a curse unto God's people. They will be slain by the Lord, while the servants receive a new name. "So that he who blesseth himself in the earth shall bless himself in the God of truth; and he that sweareth in the earth shall swear by the God of truth." All this is now being realized. The prophet starts with the call from the captivity which many of them did not have the heart to hear and suffered many privations among the nations as the consequence, but the deeper meaning is their spiritual privation which the Jews have suffered for these many centuries since they rejected the salvation offered to them. Their name is a curse to every Jew today, as the Jews are hated and persecuted in all lands.

The phrase, "the God of truth," in verse 16 should be translated, "the God of the Amen," which is a unique epithet. The explanation of it is found in the New Testament passages (2 Cor. 1:20; Rev. 3:14). This means the God of the covenant; the God, to whom that quality of covenant keeping truth essentially belongs, is he in whom all shall "bless themselves" or "shall be blessed." The seed of Abraham and the seed of David are to be identified with this God of truth, a mystery completely realized in him who is "the Amen, the faithful, and true witness" of Revelation 3:14. In him "all the promises of God are . . . Amen." In his person God and man were joined in an immutable covenant of peace. To the curse pronounced upon everyone that violates God's law, he said, "Amen," upon the cross. To the blessings guaranteed to all nations by God's promises to Abraham and David, he said, "Amen," when he rose from the dead to "live for evermore" (Rev. 1:18). When the time shall come in which men shall call themselves by the name of the Lord and know only one God as the source of blessing in Christ Jesus, then the former state of human affairs, with all its "troubles" will have passed away, and the new era will be inaugurated, which is abundantly described in the next paragraph.

The prophetic picture in 65:17-25 is an ideal picture of the overflowing blessings in the messianic age extending into the millennium. In some respects this picture corresponds to John's picture of the holy city in Revelation, but they cannot be identical, since death and sin are not banished from Isaiah's new Jerusalem. In this ideal state the heavens and the earth are new; there will be rejoicing, but no weeping and crying. Death shall be there but the longevity of the patriarchal times will be restored. There shall be such prosperity as they never saw in the land of Canaan. Then prayer and its answer are simultaneous, and heaven and earth are closer together than ever before since sin entered the world. The enmity in the animal creation caused by sin will be removed. The wolf and the lamb shall feed as one, and the full curse of sin shall fall upon the serpent whose food shall be dust. Nothing shall hurt nor destroy in the Holy Mountain of the Lord. This picture makes

one think of paradise regained, but it does not reach the complete ideal. John carried much of the symbolism here into his picture of paradise regained, but he saw the Holy City in its state of perfection, with no death, no sin, no tears, no sea, and with the glory of all the nations brought into it.

The fourth item of Jehovah's response to penitent Israel's prayer (66:1-4) is a contrast in the ideas and methods of approach to Jehovah. In the new order of things (vv. 1-2) Jehovah will operate the affairs of his kingdom from his throne in heaven and will not need the old temple for his resting place. But his new temple will be a spiritual house and the man to whom he will look will not be one after the Jewish ritual but the poor and contrite in spirit. This looks very much like the beatitudes of our Lord, which set forth the true characteristics of the citizens of his kingdom.

But what is the import of verses 3-4? This relates to the sacrifices in the new order of things. The man that offers an ox will be in God's sight as if he sacrificed a man, and he that offers a lamb as if he sacrificed a dog. "He that offereth an oblation, as he that offereth swine's blood; he that burneth frankincense, as he that blesseth an idol." Then follows a graphic description of the state of the Jews in their delusion. The Jews are now holding on to the old ritual and the Catholics would put the whole of Christendom back under the types and shadows by their system of ritualism. What the prophet here labors to show, the apostle Paul elaborates in his letters to the Colossians, to the Ephesians, and to the Hebrews. The Jews are under this delusion today and in judicial blindness because they did not heed the call of God through the Messiah.

The fifth response of Jehovah to these prayers (5-6) is a contrast between the love and favor shown by Jehovah to his people, and the hatred toward them, cherished by the ungodly Israelites.

The short passage announces that the true Israel will be hated and persecuted by Israel after the flesh. These Jews in their zeal for Jehovah's cause will persecute the righteous, but they shall be put to

shame, for Jehovah is keeping watch over his own and recompenses their enemies. All this was fulfilled in the early history of Christianity and God's judgment on the Jews.

In verses 7-9 we have distinctly, the conversion of the Jews as a nation which ushers in the millennium. This is the nation born in a day. It is this restoration that Ezekiel speaks of in Ezekiel 37, and Zechariah in Zechariah 14:1-8, and Paul in Romans 11:11-15, and the period here introduced corresponds to the millennium of Revelation 20:1-6.

The sixth response of Jehovah to the penitent prayer of Israel is a command to all who love Jerusalem to rejoice that she is extended and enriched (10-14). There are two tender expressions in this paragraph relative to Jerusalem, viz: (1) "Behold, I will extend peace to her like a river, and the glory of the nations like an overflowing stream." (2) "As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you."

These two blessings here are the thoughts of peace and comfort: peace like a river, and comfort like a mother's love. The added thought of the glory of the nations flowing into it is worthy of note. This is to be the center of all that is beautiful and glorious and John carrying this idea over into his description of the New Jerusalem, says, "And the nations shall walk amidst the light thereof: and the kings of the earth bring their glory into it . . . and they shall bring the glory and the honor of the nations into it."

The seventh item of Jehovah's response to their prayers is the announcement of the final work of Jehovah, universal and everlasting, glorifying his people, and judging his and their enemies.

The judgment of verses 15-17 is the final judgment at his coming after the millennium, in which all the nations are gathered and his fiery judgment is executed upon the abominable of the earth, and the thought is carried on in verses 18-21. There is the happy issue of the judgment on the righteous, as in Matthew 25:31-40.

The final picture of the book (22-24) shows us the final habitat of the righteous, who will occupy the "New Earth" forever, and the eternal destruction of the wicked, whose "worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched; and they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh."

QUESTIONS

1. What the general theme of this last section of the book of Isaiah?
2. What more particularly the items of this theme?
3. How does this section open and what the contents of 63:7-9?
4. What had the people done and when?
5. What the results of this rebellion and what the effect on the people?
6. What the elements of prayer in 63:15-19?
7. How is this prayer continued in 64:1-7?
8. What the final plea of this prayer (64:8-12)?
9. What the special theme of chapters 6&-66?
10. What the first item of this response?
11. Who are the ones who find Jehovah and the ones who fail to find him (1-2)?
12. What the details of their rebelliousness (3-5)?
13. How are these abominations characterized by Jehovah?
14. What the contrast in 65:8-12, or the second item of Jehovah's response?

15. What is the meaning of "inheritor of my mountains" (v. 9)?
16. What the meaning of "fortune" and "destiny" in verse 11, and what the application here?
17. What the third item of Jehovah's response, how does the first paragraph (13-16) carry on this thought and when the prophecies therein fulfilled?
18. What is the meaning and application of "the God of truth" in verse 16?
19. What the prophetic picture in 65:17-25 and what the fulfilment?
20. What the fourth item of this response to penitent Israel's prayer (66:1-4)?
21. What the import of verses 1-2?
22. What the import of verses 3-4?
23. What the fifth response of Jehovah to these prayers (5-5)?
24. What the import of verses 5-6?
25. What the import of verses 7-9?
26. What the sixth response of Jehovah to the penitent prayer of Israel?
27. What two tender expressions in this paragraph relative to Jerusalem?
28. What the seventh item of Jehovah's response to their prayers?
29. What the judgment of verses 15-17?
30. How is the thought carried on in verses 8-21?

31. What the final picture of the book (22-24)?

XXVII. THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST IN ISAIAH

The relation between the New Testament Christ and prophecy is that the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy. To him give all the prophets witness. All the scriptures, the law, the prophets, and the psalms, testify of him. And we are fools, and slow of heart to credit adequate testimony when we distrust any part of the inspired evidence.

Of the ancient prophets Isaiah was perhaps the most notable witness of the coming Messiah. An orderly combination of his many messianic utterances amounts to more than a mere sketch, indeed, rather to a series of almost life-sized portraits. As a striking background for these successive portraits the prophet discloses the world's need of a Saviour, and across this horrible background of gloom the prophet sketches in startling strokes of light the image of a coming Redeemer.

In 2:2-4 we have the first picture of him in Isaiah, that of the effect of his work, rather than of the Messiah himself. This is the establishment of the mountain of the Lord's house on the top of the mountains, the coming of the nations to it and the resultant millennial glory.

In 4:2-6 is another gleam from the messianic age in which the person of the Messiah comes more into view in the figure of a branch of Jehovah, beautiful and glorious. In sketching the effects of his work here the prophet adds a few strokes of millennial glory as a consummation of his ministry.

In 7:14 he delineates him as a little child born of a virgin, whose coming is the light of the world. He is outlined on the canvas in lowest humanity and highest divinity, "God with us." In this incarnation he is the seed of the woman and not of the man.

The prophet sees him as a child upon whom the government shall rest and whose name is "Wonderful, Counsellor, Mighty God,

Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace" (Isa. 9:6). This passage shows the divinity of Christ and the universal peace he is to bring to the world. In these names we have the divine wisdom, the divine power, the divine fatherhood, and the divine peace.

In 11:1-9 the prophet sees the Messiah as a shoot out of the stock of Jesse, i.e., of lowly origin, but possessing the Holy Spirit without measure who equips him for his work, and his administration wrought with skill and justice, the result of which is the introduction of universal and perfect peace. Here the child is presented as a teacher. And such a teacher! On him rests the seven spirits of God. The spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge, and the fear of the Lord. He judges not according to appearances and reproveth not according to rumors. With righteousness he judges the poor and reproveth with equality in behalf of the meek. His words smite a guilty world like thunderbolts and his very breath slays iniquity. Righteousness and faithfulness are his girdle. He uplifts an infallible standard of morals.

In 40:3-8 appears John the Baptist, whom Isaiah saw as a voice crying in the wilderness, preparing the way for the coming King.

In 11:2; 42:1; 61:1-3 the prophet saw the Messiah as a worker in the power of the Spirit, in whom he was anointed at his baptism. This was the beginning of his ministry which was wrought through the power of the Holy Spirit. At no time in his ministry did our Lord claim that he wrought except in the power of the Holy Spirit who was given to him without measure.

In 35:1-10 the Messiah is described as a miracle worker. In his presence the desert blossoms as a rose and springs burst out of dry ground. The banks of the Jordan rejoice. The lame man leaps like a hart, the dumb sing and the blind behold visions. The New Testament abounds in illustrations of fulfillment. These signs Christ presented to John the Baptist as his messianic credentials (Matt. 11:1-4).

The passage (42:1-4) gives us a flashlight on the character of the Messiah. In the New Testament it is expressly applied to Christ whom the prophet sees as the meek and lowly Saviour, dealing gently with the blacksliding child of his grace. In 22:22 we have him presented as bearing the key of the house of David, with full power to open and shut. This refers to his authority over all things in heaven and upon earth. By this authority he gave the keys of the kingdom to Peter – one for the Jews and the other for the Gentiles – who used one on the day of Pentecost and the other at the house of Cornelius, declaring in each case the terms of entrance into the kingdom of God. This authority of the Messiah is referred to again in Revelation:

And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as one dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying. Fear not: I am the first and the last, and the Living one; and I was dead, and behold I am alive for evermore and I have the keys of death and of Hades. – REVELATION 7:17-18

And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write: These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth and none shall shut, and shutteth and none openeth. – REVELATION 3:7

In 32:1-8 we have a great messianic passage portraying the work of Christ as a king ruling in righteousness, in whom men find a hiding place from the wind and the tempest. He is a stream in a dry place and the shadow of a great rock in a weary land.

In Isaiah 28:14-18 the Messiah is presented to us as a foundation stone in a threefold idea:

1. A tried foundation stone. This is the work of the master mason and indicates the preparation of the atone for its particular function.

2. An elect or precious foundation stone. This indicates that the stone was selected and appointed. It was not self-appointed but divinely appointed and is therefore safe.

3. A cornerstone, or sure foundation stone. Here it is a foundation of salvation, as presented in Matthew 16:18. It is Christ the Rock, and not Peter. See Paul's foundation in 1 Corinthians:

According to the grace of God which was given unto me; as a wise masterbuilder I laid a foundation; and another buildeth thereon. But let each man take heed how he buildeth thereon. For other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. – 1 Corinthians 3:10-11.

In Isaiah 49:1-6 he is presented as a polished shaft, kept close in the quiver. The idea is that he is a mighty sword. In Revelation, Christ is presented to John as having a sharp, twoedged sword proceeding out of his mouth.

In Isaiah 50:2; 52:9f.; 59:16-21; 62:11 we have the idea of the salvation of Jehovah. The idea is that salvation originated with God and that man in his impotency could neither devise the plan of salvation nor aid in securing it. These passages are expressions of the pity with which God looks down on a lost world. The redemption, or salvation, here means both temporal and spiritual salvation – salvation from enemies and salvation from sin.

In 9: 1f. we have him presented as a great light to the people of Zebulun and Naphtali. In 49:6 we have him presented as a light to the Gentiles and salvation to the end of the earth: "Yea, he saith, It is too light a thing that thou shouldest be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel: I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth."

In 8:14-15 Isaiah presents him as a stone of stumbling: "And he shall be for a sanctuary; but for a stone of stumbling and for a rock

of offence to both the houses of Israel, for a gin and for a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem. And many shall stumble thereon, and fall, and be broken, and be snared, and be taken."

The prophet's vision of his maltreatment and rejection are found in Isaiah 50:4-9; 52:13 to 53:12. In this we have the vision of him giving his "back to the smiters, and his cheeks to them that plucked off the hair." We see a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. His visage is so marred it startled all nations. He is a vicarious sacrifice. The chastisement of the peace of others is on him. The iniquity of others is put on him. It pleases the Father to bruise him until he has poured out his soul unto death as an offering for sin.

The teaching of Isaiah on the election of the Jews is his teaching concerning the "holy remnant," a favorite expression of the prophet. See 1:9; 10:20-22; 11:11, 16; 37:4, 31-32; 46:3. This coincides with Paul's teaching in Romans 9-11.

In 32:15 we find Isaiah's teaching on the pouring out of the Holy Spirit: "Until the Spirit be poured upon us from on high, and the wilderness become a fruitful field, and the fruitful field be esteemed as a forest," and in 44:3: "For I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and streams upon the dry ground; I will pour my Spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring."

In 11:10 he is said to be the ensign of the nations: "And it shall come to pass in that day, that the root of Jesse, that standeth for an ensign of the peoples unto him shall the nations seek; and his resting place shall be glorious."

Isaiah 19:18-25; 54:1-3; 60:1-22 teach the enlargement of the church. The great invitation and promise are found in chapter 55.

The Messiah in judgments is found in Isaiah 63:1-6. Here we behold an avenger. He comes up out of Edom with dyed garments from Bozra. All his raiment is stained with the blood of his enemies whom he has trampled in his vengeance as grapes are crushed in the

winevat and the restoration of the Jews is set forth in Isaiah 11:11-12; 60:9-15; 66:20. Under the prophet's graphic pencil or glowing brush we behold the establishment and growth of his kingdom unlike all other kingdoms, a kingdom within men, a kingdom whose principles are justice, righteousness, and equity and whose graces are faith, hope, love, and joy, an undying and ever-growing kingdom. Its prevalence is like the rising waters of Noah's flood; "And the waters prevailed and increased mightily upon the earth. And the water prevailed mightily, mightily upon the earth; and all the high mountains, that are under the whole heavens, were covered."

So this kingdom grows under the brush of the prophetic limner until its shores are illimitable. War ceases. Gannenta rolled in the blood of battle become fuel for fire. Conflagration is quenched. Famine outlawed. Pestilence banished. None are left to molest or make afraid. Peace flows like a river. The wolf dwells with the lamb. The leopard lies down with the kid. The calf and the young lion walk forth together and a little child is leading them. The cow and the bear feed in one pasture and their young ones are bedfellows. The sucking child safely plays over the hole of the asp, and weaned children put their hands in the adder's den. In all the holy realms none hurt nor destroy, because the earth is as full of the knowledge of the Lord as the fathomless ocean is full of water. Rapturous vision! Sublime and ineffable consummation! Was it only a dream?

In many passages the prophet turns in the gleams from the millennial age, but one of the clearest and best on the millennium, which is in line with the preceding paragraph, is 11:6-9: "And the wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together: and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the adder's den. They

shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of Jehovah, as the waters cover the sea."

The prophet's vision of the destruction of death is given in 25:8: "He hath swallowed up death for ever; and the Lord Jehovah will wipe away tears from off all faces; and the reproach of his people will he take away from all the earth: for Jehovah hath spoken it," and in 26:19: "Thy dead shall live; my dead bodies shall arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in the dust; for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast forth the dead."

The clearest outlines of the prophet's vision of "Paradise Regained" are to be found in 25:8, and in two passages in chapter 66: Rejoice ye with Jerusalem, and be glad for her, all ye that love her: rejoice for joy with her, all ye that mourn over her; that ye may suck and be satisfied with the breasts of her consolations; that ye may milk out, and be delighted with the abundance of her glory. For thus saith Jehovah, Behold, I will extend peace to her like a river, and the glory of the nations like an overflowing stream: and ye shall suck thereof; ye shall be borne upon the side, and shall be dandled upon the knees. as one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you; and ye shall be comforted in Jerusalem. And ye shall see it, and your heart shall rejoice, and your bones shall flourish like the tender grass: and the hands of Jehovah shall be known toward his servants ; and he will have indignation against his enemies. – ISAIAH 66:10-14

For as the new heavens and the new earth, which I will make shall remain before me, saith Jehovah, so shall your seed and your name remain. And it shall come to pass, that from one new moon to another, shall all flesh come to worship before me, saith Jehovah. – ISAIAH 66:22-23

QUESTIONS

1. What the relation between the New Testament Christ and prophecy?

2. What can you say of Isaiah as a witness of the Messiah?
3. What can you say of Isaiah's pictures of the Messiah and their background?
4. Following in the order of Christ's manifestation, what is the first picture of him in Isaiah?
5. What the second messianic glimpse in Isaiah?
6. What Isaiah's picture of the incarnation?
7. What Isaiah's picture of the divine child?
8. What Isaiah's vision of his descent, his relation to the Holy Spirit, his administration of justice, and the results of his reign?
9. What Isaiah's vision of the Messiah's herald?
10. What the prophet's vision of his anointing?
11. What the prophet's vision of him as a miracle worker?
12. What the prophet's vision of the character of the Messiah?
13. What the prophet's vision of him as the key bearer?
14. What the prophet's vision of him as a king and a hiding place?
15. What the prophet's vision of the Messiah as a foundation stone?
16. What the prophet's vision of him as a polished shaft?
17. In what passages do we find the idea of the salvation of Jehovah, and what the significance of the idea?
18. What Isaiah's vision of the Messiah as a light?

19. Where does Isaiah present him as a stone of stumbling?
20. What the prophet's vision of his maltreatment and rejection?
21. What the teaching of Isaiah on the election of the Jews?
22. Where do we find Isaiah's teaching on the pouring out of the Holy Spirit?
23. Where is he said to be the ensign of the nations?
24. What passages teach the enlargement of the church?
25. Where the great invitation and promise?
26. Where the Messiah in judgment?
27. What passages show the restoration of the Jews?
28. What the prophet's vision of the Messiah's kingdom?
29. What the prophet's vision of the millennium?
30. What the prophet's vision of the destruction of death?
31. What. the prophet's vision of "Paradise Regained?"

XXVIII. THE BOOK OF MICAH - PART I – INTRODUCTION AND EXPOSITION

Micah -1:1 to 2:13

Micah was a contemporary of Hosea of the Northern Kingdom and the great prophet, Isaiah, of the Southern Kingdom. They all prophesied in the reigns of Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, during the last decades of the eighth century B.C. Micah and Isaiah present contrasts in many respects, as well as great similarities in other respects. It has been thought, with a degree of reason, that Isaiah belonged to the royal family, or at least, the princely families of Jerusalem. Micah evidently belonged to the poorer classes living in the country, but preached in the capital and doubtless in the country districts also. While Isaiah belonged to the noblest of families, we have no account whatever of the family of Micah. He does not give us his father's name, which is an unusual thing among the Israelites, as they generally give the name of the father and sometimes the grandfather. Their home life was considerably different, as the life of the city is different from the life of a country village. Thus the sphere of their activity was somewhat different. Isaiah moved among the politicians and statesmen: he was a friend and a counselor of the king. Micah moved among the poorer classes, the yeomen, and was much less interested in the politics of the country than Isaiah was. Isaiah's audiences many times were the royal and the princely families, the grandees of Jerusalem and Judah. Micah's audiences were sometimes the peasantry living in the lowlands, or Shephelah, of Judea.

Micah has been termed "the prophet of the poor," for he was born and reared among the villages, and his message is mainly a message on behalf of the poor.

The date of his preaching was somewhere between 735 B.C. and 700 B.C., probably somewhere about 730 B.C. or 720 B.C. We know that he preached during the reign of Hezekiah for we have a report of that fact in the book of Jeremiah. He says he also preached

in the reign of Jotham and Ahaz. We find by reference to Jeremiah 26:17-19 that Micah had preached in Jerusalem, and had said that Zion should be plowed as a field, and that Jerusalem should become a heap and the mountain of the house as the high places of the forest. We find also in verse 19 of that same chapter that Hezekiah, the king of Judah, and all Judah heard him, but did not seek to put him to death, as Jehoiakim and the nobles were seeking to put Jeremiah to death. But the rulers of Jerusalem seem to imply that Micah's preaching was largely influential in bringing about the reformation under Hezekiah. He says in that nineteenth verse, "Did Hezekiah not fear Jehovah, and entreat the favor of Jehovah, and Jehovah repented him of the evil which he had pronounced against them?" All that seems to imply that the preaching of Micah largely influenced the life of the good king Hezekiah, and helped to bring about the reformation that took place in his reign, and that Micah was a man of great power and influence among the higher classes as well as among the lower.

The range of his prophecy was not as wide as that of Isaiah. The latter was to some extent a prophet of the nations, a statesman; his eye took in all the politics of the world at that time, and he prophesied concerning the policies of kings and counselors, princes, and grandees of Jerusalem. He uttered his stern denunciations and diatribes against the party that would seek for aid from Egypt, and likewise touched on the politics of other nations, especially Judah's and Jerusalem's relation to them. Isaiah dealt in world politics, but Micah did not deal with the political situation; he dealt with the moral, the civil, and the economic conditions of his country.

In many respects they are like each other. In their messages they are fundamentally the same – they cry out against the same evils in Judah and Jerusalem; they denounce them in almost the same terms. Their conception of God is much the same, their conception of sin is almost identical, and their conception of the future of Judah and Jerusalem, and of the restoration, and the blessed messianic age, are almost the same. Thus God uses two men at the same time for the

same end who are of very different mold, very different characteristics, and of very different temperaments.

Micah evidently preached among the people and also in Jerusalem among the leaders. He preached for some years, we do not know how long, and probably retired to his home and put in permanent form the substance of his preaching during these years. It is altogether likely that that is the case. Jeremiah did the same and probably others of the prophets, as many a man does today; after preaching twenty or thirty years, he chooses the best of his sermons and has them published and leaves them in permanent form.

There are three distinct addresses, or discourses, in the book, each commencing, "Hear ye, etc." Following these marks as dividing points we have the following analysis:

Introduction: The author, place, date, and objective of the prophecy (1:1)

I. Threatened judgment and promised restoration (1:2 to 2:13)

1. Jehovah approaching in judgment on Samaria and Jerusalem (1:2-7)

2. The prophet's distress (1:2-7)

3. The nature and punishment of their sin (2:1-11)

4. The return and restoration of Israel (2:12-18)

II. A gross sin, a great salvation (restoration) and a glorious Saviour (3-5)

1. Their gross sin and consequent destruction (3)

2. Their great salvation (restoration) and consequent exaltation (4)

3. Their glorious Saviour and consequent deliverance (5)

III. Jehovah's lawsuit with Israel (6-7)

1. A statement of the case (6:1-8)
2. Jehovah's charges against the city (6:9-16)
3. The prosecution by the prophet (7:1-6)
4. Pleading guilty and hoping for mercy and pardon (7:7-13)
5. The final pleading of the case by the prophet with the hope of glorious triumph (7:14-17)
6. The doxology (7:18-20)

The introduction to the book of Micah says that he prophesied during the reigns of the three kings we have mentioned. This would imply that he preached during a period of probably twenty or thirty years, possibly sixty years. He says also that he prophesied concerning Samaria and Jerusalem. Amos' message was directed mainly to Samaria, so was Hosea's. Isaiah's was mainly to Judah and Jerusalem, and Micah's to Samaria and Jerusalem, but mainly to Jerusalem.

The theme of 1:2-7 is Jehovah's approaching in judgment on Samaria and Jerusalem. Micah begins his prophecy, "Hear ye people, all of you; hearken, O earth, and all that therein is." Isaiah says, "Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth, for Jehovah hath spoken." Micah may have been influenced by Isaiah, and may have used, to some extent, his phraseology. Certainly the introductory words of his prophecy resemble Isaiah's in a striking manner. And he goes on, "Let the Lord Jehovah witness against you, the Lord from his holy temple." The figure is a little different from that of Isaiah's who represents Jehovah sitting upon his throne as Judge, and as accuser of the people. Here, he is a witness against the people because of their sins. The figure is much the same though not exactly.

In the next verse we have a vision of the appearance of God in judgment and this again very strikingly resembles the passage in Isaiah (64:1-2). He says, "Behold, Jehovah cometh forth out of his place, and will come down and tread upon the high places of the earth, and the mountains shall be molten tinder him, and the valleys shall be cleft as wax before the fire, as waters that are poured down a steep place." This of course, is Oriental imagery representing the appearance of God in judgment and the terrible effect of his presence and his power upon nature itself. Isaiah 64:1-2 says, "Oh that thou wouldest rend the heavens, that thou wouldest come down, that the mountains might flow down at thy presence, as when fire kindleth the brushwood and the fire causeth the waters to boil."

Verse 5 tells why Jehovah is thus going to appear: "For the transgressions of Jacob," referring to the entire people of Israel, "and for the sins of the house of Israel," a parallel expression, synonymous with the former. Then he raises the question, "What is the transgression of Jacob? Is it not Samaria?" What does he mean? He means that the transgressions of Northern Israel are all centered in its capital, concentrated there, and all her life – her civil, economic, political, and religious life – is determined by the life of Samaria, the capital. It is concentrated there, in the heart of the nation, and out of that heart issues the sins that are going to be the ruin of the nation. What are the high places of Judah? The high places, of course, refer to the idolatrous seats of worship, the centers of their iniquities, and the cause of their downfall. "Are they not Jerusalem?" Here again he means to imply that the iniquities of Judah are concentrated in Jerusalem and the life of Judah has been molded and shaped and fashioned according to the life of Jerusalem.

In other words, Micah emphasizes the one great thought which is now taking hold upon men, and which is sometimes overemphasized, that is, "as goes the city, so goes the country." Now, that is to a large extent true. But it is not absolutely true. In certain respects it may be, but in a great many moral conflicts in our land we may thank God that it is not, for the country is wiping out

the saloon element and many other evils which the city is unable to do. Yet in some respects the country is shaping the destiny of the nation. In Micah's day it was different. All the power was centered in the city, and as Samaria so was Northern Israel, and as Jerusalem, so was Southern Israel. Micah was right in placing the source and cause of all their evil in their two capitals, Samaria and Jerusalem.

Now verse 6 says, "Therefore I will make Samaria as a heap of the field." Samaria was to be like a heap of stones and rubbish in a great field; as the planting of a vineyard where there was scarcely any vegetation, possibly a little life, possibly a stump or root, dead and dried out, decayed, or possibly a shoot with a little life in it. "I will pour down the stones thereof into the valley, – the walls and the great buildings and the palaces should be leveled to the earth, and he would discover or lay bare the very foundations of that magnificent capital, Samaria, built upon the second strongest fortification in all that part of the world.

And as a result, there was to come disaster upon all their idolatrous worship, their golden calves, their shrines, and their altars: "And all her graven images thereof shall be beaten to pieces, all her hire shall be burned with fire, and all her idols will I lay desolate." Then he gives the reason for the destruction of all the instruments of their idolatrous worship: "For she gathered it of the hire of an harlot, and they shall return to the hire of an harlot." This means that Northern Israel had secured her wealth and luxury by means of idolatrous worship, which is always described as harlotry, or adultery, by the prophets, and because of this adultery and harlotry all their wealth should return to those from whom it came. All this implies that her idolatrous systems should be utterly wiped out, and all the profit gotten thereby should be utterly lost. All this was fulfilled in the capture of Samaria by Shalmaneser.

The special theme of 1:8-16 is the prophet's distress over this destruction. Here Micah gives us a glimpse into his heart, for he loved his people, his nation, and city, and as he sees the destruction

that is to come, he tells us his feelings: "I will go stripped and naked; I will make a wailing like the jackals, and a lamentation like the ostriches. For her wounds are incurable (the wound of Samaria is in his mind) ; for it is come unto Judah." It was incurable because of her sins. "It reacheth even unto the gate of my people," to the very city of Jerusalem itself.

From verse 10 on, Micah is looking out upon his own beloved country, the Shephelah, or the lowlands, from the hills of Judah, and he sees there a great many thriving villages that dot these lowlands from the Philistine plain on the west to the hills of Judah on the east, and in vision he sees the enemy spreading over that fair land and leaving it desolate, over his own beloved village where he was born and brought up, which he loved. Now in these verses there is a great play upon words, and the Hebrew of them must be an interesting study. I will try to give a little idea of how he plays with the meaning of words showing the fate that should overtake those villages. "Tell is not in Gath." But the Septuagint has it, "Tell it not in Gath, weep not in Aceo." Translated literally, it would be, "Tell it not in Tell-town; weep not in Weep-town." "At Bethle-Aphrah have I rolled myself in the dust," or literally, "At the house of dust, I have rolled myself in the dust." "Pass away, O inhabitants of Shaphir," or "Inhabitant of beauty," pass away in anything but beauty – in ugliness, in wretchedness, and shame. "The inhabitant of Zaanah," or the village that means "going further," is literally, "not going further." "The wailing of Bethel," wailing on the house of support, "shall have taken away from her the support thereof." "The inhabitant of Maroth" (bitterness), waiteth anxiously for good, because evil is come down from Jehovah unto the gate of Jerusalem." What does he mean? He is using the names of those various villages to suggest the fate that shall overtake them. One shall not receive the news of the destruction of Jerusalem, another shall receive the news and another shall be left in shame and ugliness and wretchedness, etc.

Then he speaks of another city which was besieged by Sennacherib, near the parting of the caravan ways leading out from Judah down to Egypt. Every embassy passing from Pudah down to Egypt would pass by Lachish, and every conquering host would pass that way. "O inhabitant of Lachish, bind the chariot to the swift steed: she was the beginning of the sin to the daughter of Zion, for the transgressions of Israel were found in thee." This means that, as Lachish was the headquarters for the Egyptian steed and the Egyptian cavalry, which Judah and Jerusalem sent for, to aid them in their struggle against Assyria, the prophet denounces her because of her alliance with the heathen country in an attempt to secure horses and chariots for protection. That was their sin. "Therefore shalt thou give a parting gift to Moresheth-gath; the house of Achzib shall be a deceitful thing unto the king of Israel," or, "The house of the beautiful spring shall be the house of the dried-up, deceitful spring." "I will yet bring unto thee, O inhabitant of Mareshah," or "I will bring unto the possessor, him that will possess thee." "The glory of Israel shall come even unto Adullam," the cave where David remained so long in hiding with his warriors.

Thus Micah saw the army of the Assyrians coming and taking the villages on the borders of the Philistine plain, reaching up to the foot of the great hills that lead up to Jerusalem, all the lowlands of Judah thus being laid waste. Because of this, "Make thee bald, and cut off thy hair for the children of thy delight: enlarge thy baldness as the eagle (baldness was a sign of grief and sorrow) ; for they are gone into captivity."

The special theme of 2:1-11 is the nature of the sin and the punishment. Micah inveighs against the commercial heads, the business magnates, the princes, and the great men of Judah. It is against them that he hurls his prophecies, and he represents them as businessmen pondering and scheming how they may seize upon the lands of the poor. "Woe unto them that devise iniquity, and work evil upon their beds! when the morning is light, they practice it, because it is in the power of their hand." How many commercial

men and land-grabbers, how many great corporation managers lie awake devising some way by which they may get their fellow's land, to satisfy their insatiable greed for more land, or for the possessions of the poor! They did it in Micah's day and they are doing it yet. They covet fields and seize them, foreclose mortgages, sell out the homes of the poor, seize the land and houses whenever they can possibly do so, and take them away, "So they oppress a man and his house, even a man and his heritage."

Micah's sympathy is with the poor in the lowlands of Judah and we cannot be surprised at that, for great commercial iniquity and the economic distress following therefrom nearly always attack the poor first. Many of the great uprisings of history have occurred among the poorer classes. The bloodiest wars among the Romans in ancient days arose because of the agrarian outrages perpetrated in that land. It was in the fourteenth century, that oppression of the yeomanry by the rich nobles and lords of England and France caused the great peasant uprisings. Just after the Reformation when a new spirit had been infused into the people there was a notable uprising in Germany, and among the peasants of France the volcano of the French Revolution broke forth, which made its impression upon all the world and all history. Micah's sympathy goes out to the poor, for they are the backbone of the nation.

In verse 3 he predicts the penalty of this sin that shall come: "therefore thus saith the Lord, Behold, against this family do I devise an evil, from which ye shall not remove your necks, neither shall ye walk haughtily; for it is an evil time." You are going to be brought so low, that in that day one shall take up a parable against you, and lament with a doleful lamentation, and say, "We are utterly ruined: he changeth the portion of my people: how doth he remove it from me I to the rebellious he divideth our fields," showing how that all the land and law system would be completely changed and turned upside down by the terrible revolution that was to take place. The result was that there would be none left to divide the inhabitants and none to measure the fields and allot them to their owners: "Thou

shalt have none that shall cast the line by lot in the congregation of the Lord."

Micah deals again with the leaders of the people, and this is what they say to him, that is, these grandees, these business magnates: "Prophecy ye not . . . reproaches shall never cease." Thus they try to persuade Micah to be quiet. "O thou that art named the house of Jacob, is the Spirit of the Lord straitened?" This is the reply on the part of Micah to those men who told him not to prophesy, and implies by way of answer to them that, if they will do the words of the law and walk uprightly, then the Spirit of Jehovah will not be straitened any more, but they will have the liberty which they claim they have at present. Then he goes on from verse 8 to denounce their rapacity. These men were extremely covetous, extremely ruthless in their treatment of the poor: "Even of late my people is risen up as an enemy: ye pull off the robe with the garment from them that pass by securely, as men averse from war." They so oppress the poor that they have robbed them of their very clothes and take their children from their homes: "The women of my people have ye cast out from their pleasant houses, from their children have ye taken away my glory for ever." They oppress the women, the widows, and when they could seize upon a house or a field or anything belonging to them, they would seize it and drive the women and children from their own houses, the same as the Pharisees in the time of Christ, who "devoured widows' houses and for a pretense made long prayers."

Because of that he again denounces them: "Rise ye, and depart: for this is not your rest: because it is polluted: it shall destroy you, even with a sore destruction." Get away from this, go into exile. That will be the inevitable result. With stinging sarcasm, he refers to the false prophets and tells them they are the kind of preachers they like to listen to: "If a man walking in a spirit of falsehood do lie, saying, I will prophesy unto thee of wine and of strong drink, he shall even be the prophet of this people." That is the kind of a prophet they like, a

man that will preach to them about wine and strong drink, or the man that will preach to them the things they like.

The theme of 2:12-13 is the return and restoration of Israel. This passage has caused a great deal of discussion among commentators. The critics say it is out of place here; that it breaks the connection, and that it was written in exilic times or after, because it prophesies the restoration of the exiles. If it appears to break the logical connection, let it be remembered that Micah had already predicted their captivity and this paragraph simply gives the needed encouragement at this time. Surely Micah, prophesying as he did in the early part of 722 B.C., saw a vision of the restoration. He certainly gives us a picture here of Israel restored, as he says, "I will surely gather the remnant of Israel; I will put them together as the flock in the midst of their fold; they shall make great noise by reason of the multitude of men. The breaker is gone up before them: they have broken forth and have passed on to the gate, and are gone out thereat, and their king is passed on before them, and Jehovah at the head of them." This is sometimes taken as a prophecy of the exile itself, showing how the people are to be gathered together as a flock and led into captivity; that their king would be led before them, and Jehovah would be the real leader and cause of it all. The better interpretation, however, is that it represents Israel as returning from exile and led by their God.

QUESTIONS

1. With whom was Micah contemporary, during whose reigns did they prophesy, and what the contrasts between Micah and Isaiah?
2. What special characterization of Micah and why?
3. What the date of Micah's preaching and what the testimony from Jeremiah?
4. How does the range of Micah's prophecy compare with that of Isaiah?

5. In what respects were they alike?
6. Who is the author of the book of Micah and what the probabilities in the case?
7. Give an analysis of the book.
8. What the contents of the introduction (1:1)?
9. What the theme of 1:2-7, how does Micah begin his prophecy, how does it compare with the opening of Isaiah, and what other parallel with Isaiah?
10. What reason assigned in verse 5 for the appearance of Jehovah, what the meaning and application of this verse?
11. What the results of this coming of Jehovah in judgments (6-7) and when fulfilled?
12. What the special theme of 1:8-16, how does the prophet describe his feelings, and what the case as stated in verse 9?
13. Show Micah's play on words in his vision of the destruction of the cities of the plain (10-16).
14. What the special theme of 2:1-11 and against what class does Micah inveigh in this prophecy?
15. With whom was the sympathy of Micah and what examples in history of land troubles?
16. What the penalty to be meted out for this sin (3-5)?
17. What the response of the leaders to the prophecy of Micah, what Micah's reply, what the character of the leaders as herein revealed, and what kind of preaching suited them?

18. What the theme of 2:12-13, what do the critics say about it, and what the fulfilment of this prophecy?

XXIX. THE BOOK OF MICAH - PART 2

Micah 3-7

The title of this section (Micah 3-5) in the analysis is "A Gross Sin, a Great Salvation (Restoration), and a Glorious Saviour."

The prophet characterizes their sin in 3:1-4. In chapter 2 we have a painful picture of their sins but in this paragraph we have a more detailed account of their sins and the punishment. He again addresses the heads of Jacob and the rulers of the house of Israel, and asks them the question, "Is it not for you to know justice?" You are the men that should do right: you are the men appointed to bring justice to the people, but what are you like? "You hate the good, and love the evil." And then he gives another and more terrible description of their oppression and the way they have treated the poor, "who pluck off their skin from off them and their flesh from off their bones; and flay their skin from off them, and break their bones, and chop them in pieces, as for the pot, and as flesh within the caldron," which of course) is an extremely strong way of putting it. Before the French Revolution it was much the same. A peasant said, "They crop us as a sheep would crop the grass," and another peasant made the remark, "They treat us as if we were but food." This condition existed many times previous to the time of Micah, and many times since. The result will be destruction: "Then shall they cry unto the Lord, but he will not hear them; he will even hide his face from them at that time."

Micah attacks the false prophets in these words: "Thus saith the Lord concerning the prophets that make my people to err; that bite with their teeth." Most people thus bite, but these prophets had a peculiar purpose in biting with their teeth; they did all their prophesying that they might have something to bite. "They bite and cry, Peace; and whoso putteth not into their mouths they even prepare war against him." Just as in Jeremiah's day so they did in Micah's day; both prophets had to contend with the false prophets. "And whoso putteth not into their mouths, they even prepare war

against him," that is, if a person did not feed them or give them something they proclaimed a war against him in the name of God. Because of this, the result would be darkness, mental, moral, and spiritual as well as political: "It shall be night unto you that ye shall have no vision; and it shall be dark unto you, that ye shall not divine; and the sun shall go down upon the prophets, and the day shall be black over them."

The seers, the soothsayers, the diviners, the visionaries, the fortunetellers, and the class that live by preying upon the people, shall be ashamed and confounded; "Yea, they shall all cover their lips; for there is no answer of God."

Now, the contrast between those false prophets and Micah, the true prophet of God, follows: "But as for me, I am full of power by the Spirit of the Lord and of judgment, and of might, to declare unto Jacob his transgression, and to Israel his sin." The difference is an ethical and a spiritual one. One is indwelt and filled with the power of the Spirit, the other is indwelt and filled with the power of his own selfish ambition and desires. The difference is fundamentally one of character. In 9-12 we hear Micah, again addressing the heads of Jacob, accusing them of abhorring justice and perverting equity. He says, "They build up Zion with blood and Jerusalem with iniquity. The heads thereof judge for reward, and the priests thereof teach for hire, and the prophets thereof divine for money: yet they lean upon the Lord, and say, Is not the Lord among us: No evil can come upon us."

They felt this way when Jeremiah prophesied their downfall; they said, "The Temple ! The Temple! The Temple! It is impossible! This city, this temple, this people of Jehovah: God will protect us." And in reply to this plea of false safety Micah says, "Therefore shall Zion for your sake be plowed as a field and Jerusalem shall become heaps, and the mountain of the house as the high places of a forest." This, the princes in Jeremiah's time said, produced in Hezekiah a

deep repentance, and was largely influential in producing the reformation under that excellent king.

Micah's vision of the mountain of the Lord's house is found in 4:1-5. This magnificent passage is to be found almost word for word in Isaiah. Micah says,

In the latter days it shall come to pass, that the mountain of Jehovah's house shall be established on the top of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills; and peoples shall flow unto it. And many nations shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of Jehovah, and to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths. For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of Jehovah from Jerusalem. – MICAH 2:1-4

If we compare that with Isaiah 2:1-4 we see the verbal likeness between the two.

And it shall come to pass in the latter days, that the mountain of Jehovah's house shall be established on the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many peoples shall go and say. Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of Jehovah, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of Jehovah from Jerusalem. – ISAIAH 2:2ff.

As we stated before these two prophets were contemporaries. Now the question arises, Which of these two copied from the other, which borrowed the other's thought and the other's phraseology, or are they both original, or did both Isaiah and Micah borrow from another prophet? It is the idea of a great many of the critics that both borrowed from another prophet, an earlier one, but it is not necessary to infer that Isaiah was the kind of man who needed to borrow from any other prophet. He himself was one of the most sublime poetic geniuses the world had ever seen; he possessed an

imperial imagination, and he never needed to borrow or plagiarize. It seems more probable that Micah borrowed from Isaiah, if any borrowing was done. They lived in the same age, they prophesied at the same time and in the same city, and no doubt were acquainted with each other. They moved in a similar circle of ideas, and it is possible that a similar idea would come to both at the same time; that the Spirit of God would present a vision to each mind very much the same. That is possible, but the most reasonable explanation is that this is Isaiah's vision, his phraseology, his picture. It is Isaiah's imagination and Isaiah's literary genius that is behind this, and Micah being familiar with the thought incorporated it into his prophecy and adds verses 4-5 which we do not find in Isaiah, thus:

But they shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig tree; and none shall make them afraid: for the mouth of the Lord of hosts hath spoken it. For all peoples walk every one in the name of his god; and we will walk in the name of the Lord our God for ever and ever.

For the interpretation and fulfilment of this great prophecy see, Interpretation on Isaiah 2:1-4, pp. 115-117.

The thought is carried forward in verses 6-8. This is the promise of the restoration. Here he takes up the same thought from a little different standpoint. He comes now to the details and peculiarities of the age and deals with the conditions of those people to whom he is speaking, thus: "In that day, saith Jehovah, will I assemble her that halteth, and I will gather her that is driven out, and her that I have afflicted." This refers to the exiles. "And I will make her that halted a remnant, and her that was cast far off, a strong nation; and the Lord shall reign over them in Mount Zion from henceforth, even for ever." This agrees with Isaiah, Amos, Hosea, Ezekiel, and Jeremiah. This is a picture of the restoration, while the other was a picture of the restored kingdom. This picture of the former power and dominion is expressed thus: "Thou, O tower of the flock, the hill of

the daughter of Zion, unto thee shall it come, yea, the former dominion shall come, the kingdom of the daughter of Jerusalem."

A period of anguish must precede this restoration. This is indicated by Micah's questions, thus: "Now why dost thou cry out aloud? Is there no king in thee?" There didn't seem to be when we remember the king was such a weakling. "Is thy counselor perished, that pangs have taken hold of thee as of a woman in travail?" All good counsellors had perished. He goes on: "Be in pain, and labour to bring forth, O daughter of Zion, like a woman in travail; for now shall thou go forth out of the city, and thou shalt dwell in the field, and thou shalt come even to Babylon: there shalt thou be delivered; there the Lord will redeem thee from the hand of thine enemies." This statement, that they should go into Babylon troubles the critical school. They say that Babylon was not in the ascendancy in the time of Micah. Assyria was the nation that loomed upon the horizon as the power that would destroy, therefore they reason that Micah could not have conceived of Babylon being the place of exile because Babylon was not the leading nation. Of course, according to their theory Micah could not see into the future one hundred years.

They also say that this is an interpolation, in fact many of them say that Micah did not prophesy this at all, but it was spoken during the exile or after by some anonymous writer. But in verse II he pictures the attitude of the other nations toward Judah and Jerusalem, thus: "Now also many nations are gathered against thee, that say, Let her be defiled, and let our eye see our desire upon Zion." Isn't that exactly why Ezekiel prophesied against all these nations and buried his threats of denunciation against them? Now Micah gives the reason why they act thus: "They know not the thoughts of Jehovah, neither understand they his counsel; for he hath gathered them as the sheaves into the threshing-floor." Because of his attitude toward Judah they will be gathered as sheaves on the floor to be threshed.

The call of 4:13 to 5:1 is a call to liberty and dominion. The prophet is now speaking of triumphant Israel whose time of deliverance is at

hand, and through whom the nations are to be beaten and threshed in punishment. He says to the people of Israel, "Arise, and thresh, O daughter of Zion; for I will make thy horn iron, and I will make thy hoofs brass; and thou shalt beat in pieces many peoples: and I will consecrate their gain unto Jehovah, and their substance unto the Lord of the whole earth." The figure is that of a great threshing floor upon which the sheaves lay, and the threshing instruments are driven over them, Israel is to be as a threshing instrument of iron which shall be driven over the other nations, and shall break in pieces many people, and their wealth shall be taken by Israel and devoted to the worship of Jehovah. That corresponds with Isaiah 60 one of the finest passages in Isaiah's writings.

It also resembles his prediction of Tyre, which shall be destroyed and her whole wealth devoted to the worship of Jehovah. In chapter 5 he again summons Israel to activity: "Now gather thyself in troops, O daughter of troops: he hath laid siege against us; they shall smite the judge of Israel with a rod upon the cheek." A strange expression, "they shall smite." In spite of the fact that "thou hast been smitten, arise, smite back and conquer; your time has come, your dominion ye shall receive again."

Chapter 5 is devoted to the glorious Saviour and consequent deliverance, or the messianic King and the Blessedness of Israel. This is another view of the same glorious age of the restoration, a different vision, a different point of view, but essentially the same.

The king of this blessed age arises from among the poor (vv. 2-4). We saw in the last chapter that Micah was the prophet of the poor, that his sympathies went out for them in particular and now when he pictures this glorious age, and its king as rising, he represents him as rising from the poor class: "But thou Bethlehem, Ephrathah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall one come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting." Bethlehem, the home of David, the village where the shepherd boy, who afterward became

the shepherd king, lived, the place dear to the heart of every Israelite; this is to be the place whence the king shall come. It is one of the smallest places, the most insignificant and most obscure little villages.

It was no accident that the Saviour of the world rose from among the poor, the working class. Is it not the most fitting thing that could possibly have happened that a king of the world should rise from among the poor? Whether it be wise or not in our estimation it certainly was in God's estimation, and a little thought along that line will convince us that God could not have done a wiser thing than to have Christ rise from among the poor people. "Whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting," that is, there have been prophecies of him that had been looking forward, expecting him, and he had been manifesting himself in various ways from the beginning, and had been set forth in types and shadows as the one who should come and appear in his glory. Then he goes on with his picture: "Therefore will he give them up, until the time that she which travaileth hath brought forth: then the remnant of his brethren shall return unto the children of Israel." And then this king, this shepherd-king, this descendant of David, as it says in verse 4, shall stand and shall feed his flock in the strength of the Lord, in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God. This is the picture of the Shepherd so common in Isaiah, Ezekiel, Jeremiah, Amos, Hosea, and again in that immortal parable of the shepherd as found in John 10. "And they shall abide, for now shall he be great unto the ends of the earth."

Micah's vision of him as a deliverer is found in verses 5-6 He is here presented as the one who shall deliver them from the Assyrian. He uses the Assyrian here because the Assyrian was the great barbaric power that was rising up on the horizon of the world at that time and extending her power over every nation. The very name itself sent terror to the people of that time. "And this man shall be our peace. When the Assyrian shall come into our land, and when he shall tread in our palaces, then shall we raise against him seven shepherds, and

eight principal men." These officials will surround him as his cabinet, to stand by, to support, to give aid, and he will be amply and ably supported on his throne. "And they shall waste the land of Assyria with the sword, and the land of Nimrod in the entrances thereof." On time's horizon the end seems close with Micah. Twenty-six hundred years or more have passed by since, and time's horizon is yet enlarging. The Assyrians have been extinct since a hundred years after Micah's time. So the Assyrian here is used to represent the enemies of the Messiah's kingdom and thus includes all the nations that know not God.

The relation of Israel to her friends and to her foes is stated in verses 7-9. To her friends the remnant of Jacob shall be as dew from Jehovah, as showers upon the grass that tarrieth not for man, nor waiteth for the sons of men." That is true yet regarding the remnant of Israel. But for their enemies, "the remnant of Jacob shall be among all the nations in the midst of many people, as a lion among the beasts of the forests and as a young lion among the flocks of sheep; who, if he go through both treadeth down, and teareth in pieces, and none can deliver." This is not to be taken literally. There is a sense in which God's people go forth like a lion, conquering, but the Messiah's kingdom is spiritual.

Israel's relation to idolatry in this new condition is set forth in verses 10-15. All idolatrous connection shall be rooted out: "I will cut off thy horses out of the midst of thee, and I will destroy thy chariots: and I will cut off the cities of thy land, and throw down all thy strongholds. And I will cut off witchcraft out of thine hand; and thou shalt have no more soothsayers: thy graven images also will I cut off, and thy standing images out of the midst of thee; and thou shalt no more worship the work of thine hands." Israel shall be cleansed of her idolatry.

The title of chapters 6-7 in the analysis is "Jehovah's Controversy with His People." This is a different section of the book of Micah, different problems arise here, different modes of expression. A great

many of the critics maintain that this was written during the reign of Manasseh when idolatry was revived, and heathen sacrifices were carried on. It would fit in with the reign of Ahaz, however, and Micah prophesied during the reign of Ahaz, Jotham, and Hezekiah. The conditions found here existed during that time.

The case of the controversy of Jehovah with his people is stated in 6:1-9. Here Jerusalem is called upon, thus: "Arise, contend thou before the mountains, and let the hills hear thy voice. Hear ye, the Lord's controversy and ye strong foundations of the earth: for the Lord hath a controversy with his people, and he will plead with Israel." All nature is called upon to hear. This is not mere poetry: there is eternal truth underlying it. "The Lord hath a controversy with his people and he will contend with Israel." He goes on to describe the controversy. What is it about? Not about sin. Jeremiah calls the people to a great controversy regarding their sin; Micah does not. It is how they shall serve Jehovah, how they shall worship him.

Jehovah speaks: "O my people, what have I done unto thee? and wherein have I wearied thee? testify against me." A marvelous statement, Jehovah asking his people to testify against him, if they have anything to testify. What condescension! Just like Isaiah I "Come now and let us reason together." Then he goes on, "For I brought thee up out of the land of Egypt, and redeemed thee out of the house of servants; and I sent before thee Moses, Aaron, and Miriam." "Remember what happened between Shittim and Gilgal," that plain bordering on the Jordan in Moab, and Gilgal across the Jordan. What happened between these two places? "Ye know the great miracle I performed, the stopping of the waters, and the multitude crossing over on dry ground; remember that ye may know the righteous acts of Jehovah." Verse 6 gives a little glimpse into the religious condition of the people, "Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before the high God? Shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves of a year old?" They had been doing that in abundance. "Will the Lord be pleased with thousands

of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? and shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?" The numbers used are an exaggeration of course, for purposes of rhetoric and making it effective "with ten thousands of rivers of oil." Oil was a part of the sacrifice and worship. "Shall I give my firstborn for my transgressions, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?" This gives us an idea of what the people were doing, and how they were worshiping. They were sacrificing the first-born, and seemed to seriously believe that Jehovah required them to do so.

Micah 6:8 is one of the greatest passages in the Old Testament. Micah sums up the whole of religion in one little verse; he gives one final answer to all such questions as to how we should serve and worship God, thus: "He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good: and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?" No prophet or writer ever summed up the whole duty of religion better than Micah does here – to do justly, righteously in all conduct, i.e., kings, rulers, business magnates, commercial princes, millionaires, land owners, workmen. That is the first thing. And more than that, "love mercy," go beyond strict justice; go farther than that, delight in tenderness. show mercy. That goes as far as Christianity almost. And then finally, "humble thyself to walk with thy God," or "walk humbly with thy God"; the better translation, perhaps is, "Humble thyself to walk with God." This is the finest expression that has ever been used to describe the service of true religion: "Do justly," there is our relationship in all civil life. "Love mercy," there is, our relationship in all home life, family life, all social life; there is the tender side of human life. "Walk humbly with God"; there is the divine side. There is just one passage that equals this, says Dr. George Adam Smith, and that is where Jesus says, "Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest" (Matt. 11:28-29).

The charges here against the city (6:9-16) are their various sins which are the reasons for Jehovah's visitation. Here we have the city's life pictured in a vivid and lurid way. Verse 9, "The Lord's

voice crieth unto the city, and the man of wisdom shall see thy name: hear ye the rod, and who hath appointed it." Verse 10, "Are there yet the treasures of wickedness in the house of the wicked, and the scant measure that is abominable?" Verse 11, "Shall I count them pure with the wicked balances, and with the bag of deceitful weights? For the rich men thereof are full of violence and the inhabitants thereof have spoken lies, and their tongue is deceitful in their mouth." And because of this he utters his threat of destruction and predicts the utter desolation of the country and the people. In verse 16 he charges them with following the example of Omri: "For the statutes of Omri are kept and all the works of the house of Ahab." Ahab seized Naboth's vineyard and they followed his example, "and ye walk in their counsels: that I may make thee a desolation and the inhabitants thereof an hissing; therefore ye shall bear the reproach of my people."

The prophet's part in the case is found in 7:1-6. He appears as the prosecuting attorney here in this passage and bewails the utter corruption of society: "Woe is me! for I am as when they have gathered the summer fruits as the grape gleanings of the vintage: there is no cluster to eat; my soul desireth the first ripe fig. The good man is perished out of the earth: and there is none upright among men: they all lie in wait for blood; they hunt every man his brother with a net." It does not necessarily mean literal blood, but when one takes away a man's means of support, his wages, his necessities of life, he takes away his life because he will have less of the necessities of life. The oppression of the poor is simply the taking of the blood of the people. "They hunt every man his brother with a net," and how many businessmen there are in this age that do love to get the net around another man! "That they may do evil with both hands earnestly, the prince asketh, and the judge is ready for a reward; and the great man, uttereth his mischievous desire; thus they weave it together." There is a lot of sharp dealing among them, a hard people to deal with; "The best of them is as a brier: the most upright is sharper than a thorn hedge. Trust ye not in a friend, put ye not confidence in a guide: keep the doors of thy mouth from her that

lieth in thy bosom." No one can be trusted. When a man dare not confide in his own wife, it is about as bad as it can be. "For the son dishonoureth the father, the daughter riseth up against her mother, the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law, a man's enemies are the men of his own house." How desperate the entire life of the nation must have been with every form of deceit practiced. Jesus Christ used this very expression to tell how his gospel was going to cause division and enmity.

The righteous remnant takes part in the case (7:7-13). They plead guilty and hope for mercy and pardon. It is the voice of the prophet and in the prophet the voice of the righteous kernel the true Israel that speaks here, not the voice of the people nor the rulers, but the righteous kernel, the true Israel, the mother of sorrow. Notice what she says in resignation: "As for me, I will look unto the Lord, I will wait for the God of my salvation; my God will hear me." That is a fine text, and the next one is even better: "Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy: when I fall, I shall arise; when I sit in darkness, the Lord shall be a light unto me." To translate it literally: "I have fallen, I will arise." Faith seldom, if ever, in dark moments, uttered a more hopeful, a more blessed sentiment than that. In Bunyan's immortal allegory, where he describes Christian in the Valley of Humiliation and fighting with Apollyon, and Apollyon throws him to the ground, Christian thrusts him with his sword, quoting these words, "Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy: when I fall, I shall arise." In verse 9 we have a note of resignation that is beautiful: "I will bear the indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against him, until he plead my cause and execute judgment for me; he will bring me forth to the light, and I shall behold his righteousness." How hopeful and trustful that is!

Now the effect upon his enemies: "Then she that is mine enemy shall see it, and shame shall cover her which said unto me, Where is the Lord thy God? mine eyes shall behold her: now shall she be trodden down as the mire of the streets." He gives another glimpse of the future: "In that day thy walls are to be built, in that day shall

the decree be far removed." That reminds us of Nehemiah and the rebuilding of the walls. Micah says the time will come when the walls will be rebuilt. "The decree"; we do not know just what is meant here, perhaps the marginal reading, "boundary," is correct. Then he goes on to picture in glowing language the return of the people from all nations whither they have been scattered: "They shall come unto thee from Assyria, and from the fortified cities, and from the fortress, even to the River, and from sea to sea, and from mountain to mountain," but that is to be after the desolation takes place, for in verse 13, it says, "Notwithstanding, the land shall be desolate because of them that dwell therein, for the fruit of their doings."

The prophet's final plea for and hope held out to Israel is as follows: "Feed thy people with thy rod, the flock of thine heritage, which dwell solitarily in the wood, in the midst of Carmel: let them feed in Bashan and Gilead, as in the days of old." This seems to imply that Northern Israel had not been depopulated in Micah's time, for just before this Tiglathpileser had deported all Palestine beyond the Jordan; that seems to have taken place and Micah pictures the return here as the people coming to feed in Bashan in the land from which they had been taken.

The hope here is that the nations, when they see this, shall come in dread and dismay, verse 17. "The nations shall see and be ashamed of all their might: they shall lay their hand upon their mouth; their ears shall be deaf. They shall lick the dust like the serpent," referring to the account in Genesis 3 regarding the serpent, saying that dust should be his meat, and that he should move along close to the earth and should lick up the dust. "They shall move out of their holes like worms of the earth: they shall be afraid of the Lord our God, and shall fear because of thee." A picture of the terror of the nations after the Restoration. Ezekiel pictures them as being utterly subdued, so does Jeremiah to some extent, but Micah pictures them as being in abject submission and terror, crawling like servile beasts in fear before the presence of Israel.

Now come the beauties of the doxology: "Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? he retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth in mercy." Isn't that a beautiful picture of God? There are several texts there. "He will turn again, he will have compassion upon us: he will subdue our iniquities: and thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea." How deep is the sea? In some places it is five miles deep. If their sins are cast down to the bottom of the sea they are gone forever. And he closes this beautiful statement thus: "Thou wilt perform the truth to Jacob and the mercy to ABRAHAM, which thou hast sworn unto our fathers from the days of old." He goes back to Abraham, God's promise to him: "All nations shall be blessed in thee," and that promise must be fulfilled.

QUESTIONS

1. What the title of this section (Micah 3-5) in the analysis?
2. How does the prophet characterize their sins in 3:1-4, what instances in. modern history, and-what the result of the sin of Jacob?
3. Describe Micah's attack on the false prophets and his contrast between himself and them.
4. What charge does Micah bring against the heads, the priests & the prophets, respectively, what their reply and what the consequent result?
5. What Micah's vision of the mountain of the Lord's house (4:1-5), how does it compare with Isaiah 2:1-4. Who borrowed in this case?
6. How is the thought carried forward in verses ~8?
7. Describe the period of anguish that must precede this restoration, the radical critics' position on this passage, and the attitude of the other nations toward Judah and Jerusalem.

8. What the call of 4:13 to 5:1?
9. To what is chapter 5 devoted?
10. What Micah's vision of this king as to his origin and place of birth?
11. What Micah's vision of him as a deliverer and why the mention of the Assyrian in this connection (5-6) ?
12. What the relation of Israel to her friends and to her foes (7-9)?
13. What shall be Israel's relation to idolatry in this new condition (10-15)?
14. What the title of chapters 6-7 in the analysis and what can you say in general of this section?
15. State the case of the controversy of Jehovah with his people (6:1-8).
16. What can you say of the beauty and meaning of 6:8 and what the application of its several points?
17. What the charges here against the city (6:9-16)?
18. What the prophet's part in the case (7:1-6)?
19. What part does the righteous remnant take in the case (7:7-13), and what hope do they see?
20. What the prophet's final plea for and hope held out to Israel?
21. What the beauties of the doxology (18:20)?

XXX. THE BOOK OF NAHUM

The title of the book of Nahum is simply this: "The Burden of Nineveh." It is committed largely to the prophecy of the destruction of the capital of the Assyrian Empire. The writer is Nahum. We know nothing about him. He mentions not even his father's name. He simply mentions the fact that he was an Elkoshite. Where Elkosh was is disputed. There is a place in Assyria today called Alkush which the Arabians in the region say contains the tomb of Nahum, but the tradition regarding that only goes back as far as the sixteenth century and it is exceedingly questionable. There is a place mentioned by Jerome in Galilee called Elkesi, and Jerome and a great many other scholars believe that that was the home of Nahum, a little village in Galilee. This is doubted by others, and it has been found that there was a little village down in Judah called Elkesi also and some scholars maintain that Nahum had that as his home and that he lived in Judah. He evidently speaks from the standpoint of a Judean. Other scholars maintain that Nahum was one of the exiles transported from Judah and wrote his prophecy while in exile in Assyria. The reason for that is that Nahum seems to know exactly the fortifications and as we shall see the layout of the city of Nineveh, the siege of which he predicts. This theory is not to be credited at all.

The style of Nahum is the most vivid, perhaps, of all the Old Testament writers. In majesty it almost equals Isaiah. In the rapidity of its motion, its energy, its movement, in the imagination displayed he even surpassed Isaiah. This is one of the finest pieces of literature in all the world.

The date of this prophecy is somewhere between 663B.C. & 607 B.C.; 663 B.C. being the date upon which Ashurbanipal, king of Assyria destroyed Noamon, or Thebes, the great city in Southern Egypt. To the destruction of that city Nahum refers in 3:8; so his prophecy took place after that event, possibly sometime after. It was such an important event as would be remembered for a long time.

The destruction of a great city like Noamon would be impressed upon the world. The prophecy must have been written previous to 607 B.C., for that is the date of the fall of Nineveh, and this year marks one of the most important events in the political history of that age. Probably his prophecy comes somewhere between 630 B.C., and 610 B.C., not far from the destruction of Nineveh.

The occasion for the writing of this prophecy is the downfall of the Assyrian nation, with the sack and destruction of the great city of Nineveh. The history of Assyria and Nineveh is a history of conquests, a history of oppression, a history of remorseless warfare of indescribable cruelties, siege upon siege of every city that came in contact with any of Assyria's possessions. No nation in all the world for two hundred years had rolled its resistless tide of savage warriors across the face of the earth as did Assyria. Not a nation in all the known world but what suffered from her attacks. Eastern Palestine, Northern Israel, and Southern Israel were overrun and deported, and the inhabitants of Damascus and Syria were deported also and scores of other nations and tribes were ruthlessly torn away from home and country and carried into exile. The blood, the agony, the tears, the sufferings, the sorrow which Assyria and Nineveh caused, only God himself could describe.

Not a nation during those two hundred years but that hated, but that dreaded her; not a nation but that cringed and trembled as she approached. And those two hundred years engendered in every nation a hatred that was intense, and almost ceaseless. Israel had felt her terrible hand; so had Babylon and all other Semitic nations. And now at last the Medes north and east of Assyria, gather together their nation, with Cyaxares at their head, and march against her. Nabopolassar, king of Babylon, also comes against her. PharaohNecho in the days of Josiah, king of Judah, marched up to the Euphrates to take Nineveh and secure her boundless treasures. Thus it became a contest, as to whether Cyaxares the king of the Modes; Nabopolassar, king of Babylon; or PharaohNecho, king of Egypt, should conquer this city with its incalculable riches. About

625 B.C. Nineveh withstood a great siege and buried back the Medes. But the country was much depopulated. Her allies were gone; a weak king sat upon the throne. The Medes grew more powerful, and at last about 609 B.C. or 608 B.C. Nabopolassar and Cyaxares came to an agreement. Nabopolassar apparently sent Nebuchadnezzar to meet Pharaoh-Necho and drive him back. He himself held the advances to Nineveh and prevented the allies of Assyria from coming to her relief. The king of the Medes came upon her from the North and the East, and after a siege of two years Nineveh fell, and there was not a nation upon the earth that did not feel a relief and there went up from every people and every heart this one cry, "At last! At last! At last! the old savage lion is dead and we are free." Nahum voices that sentiment. At last the old lion has gone, as all Europe and, perhaps, America, when Napoleon was defeated at Waterloo, said, "At last the scourge of the nation is gone."

The following is an outline of the book:

Title: The theme and author (1:1)

I. A verdict of vengeance (1:2-15)

1. The character, majesty, and method of Jehovah (1:2-8)

2. His verdict concerning Nineveh (1:9-14)

3. His verdict of vengeance on Nineveh, an Evangel to Judah (1:15)

II. A vision of vengeance (2)

1. A description of the attack upon the city (2:1-7)

2. An inside view during and after the attack (2:8-13)

III. A vindication of vengeance (3)

1. The wreck of the city and its causes (3:1-7)

2. An example and its lessons (3:8-19)

Nahum had a strong and deep conviction that Jehovah is the God who will punish iniquity, and therefore he breaks forth (1:2-8) : "Jehovah is a jealous God and avengeth; Jehovah avengeth and is full of wrath; Jehovah taketh vengeance on his adversaries, and he reserveth wrath for his enemies." See the accumulated effect of his repetition here. He goes on: "Jehovah is slow to anger and great in power and will by no means clear the guilty. Jehovah hath his way in the whirlwind and in the storm, and the clouds are the dust of his feet. He rebuketh the sea, and maketh it dry, and drieth up all the rivers; Bashan languisheth, and Carmel; and the flower of Lebanon languisheth." This is the effect of Jehovah coming down: "The mountains quake at him, and the hills melt, and the earth is burned at his presence, yea, the world, and all that dwell therein. Who can stand before his indignation? and who can abide in the fierceness of his anger? his fury is poured out like fire and the rocks are broken asunder by him."

Now in verse 7 he gives another view of Jehovah, and here is a beautiful text: "The Lord is good, a stronghold in the day of trouble; and he knoweth them that trust in him." How different that is from the other, and how different God's attitude toward his enemies, and toward those that trust him! "But with an overflowing flood will he make an utter end of the place thereof, and darkness shall pursue his enemies." As to his character, he is a God of vengeance, and yet the central fact of his nature is that he is slow to anger. Under the figure of a storm the prophet sets forth the overwhelming majesty of Jehovah. The method of God he describes as "good, a stronghold," toward his friends, but toward his foes, "He will make a full end."

Now he speaks against Nineveh (1:9-14) thus: "What do ye imagine against the Lord? He will make an utter end: affliction shall not rise up the second time." Imagine what you like, he will make a complete end. The affliction shall not rise up the second time, and it

didn't. "For though they be tangled in thorns, and while they are drunken as with their drink, they shall be devoured as stubble fully dry." It matters not what your condition, what your defense or how impossible it would seem that you should be destroyed. "There is one gone out of thee, that imagineth evil against the Lord, a wicked counsellor." We don't know who that was. Perhaps it refers to the blasphemous boasts of Sennacherib. "Thus saith Jehovah, though they be quiet, and likewise many, yet thus shall they be cut down, when he shall pass through. Though I have afflicted thee, and will burst thy bonds asunder." Then he describes how he shall destroy the gods of Assyria, the graven images, and molten images shall be utterly broken to pieces and buried.

Here (1:15) he pictures a runner hurrying with news to Judah and Jerusalem: "Behold, upon the mountains the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace!" The cry, "Nineveh is fallen," was the best news that came to the whole world at that time. And Nahum thus voices the feelings and sentiments of all these nations. "O Judah, keep thy solemn feasts, perform thy vows: for the wicked shall no more pass through thee; he is utterly cut off."

The attack of the enemy upon Nineveh is described in 2:1-7. First, he describes the attack upon the fortifications: "He that dasheth in pieces is come up before thy face: keep the fortress, watch the way, make thy loins strong, fortify thy power mightily." Thus he ironically advised the city to defend themselves against the enemy's approach. Verse 3: "The shield of his mighty men is made red, the valiant men are in scarlet, the chariots shall be as flaming torches in the day of his preparation, and the cypress spears shall be brandished. The chariots shall rage in the streets, they shall jostle one against another in the broad ways: their appearance is like torches, they run like the lightnings. He remembereth his worthies: they stumble in their walk; they shall make haste to the wall thereof and the mantelet shall be prepared." We can almost see and hear them; the appearance of their chariots is like torches, they run like lightning, as they approach the walls. The enemy now opens the

sluice gates of the river which flows into the city and floods it. It is a fact found from excavation that Nineveh was partly destroyed from the water being turned in through the watergates. It is interesting to remember that Diodorus Seculus mentions an old prophecy, that the city would never be taken until the river became its enemy. He moreover declared that during an enemy's attack the river burst its banks and washed away the wall for twenty stadia. Continuing, Nahum describes the city under the figure of a woman and her attendants. They flee and the enemy captures the spoil.

The inside view of the city during and after the attack is described in 2:8-13. Here the prophet describes the inhabitants of Nineveh as the besiegers are attacking the walls: "But Nineveh is from of old like a pool of water; yet they shall flee away. Stand, stand, shall they cry, but none shall look back." Thus Nineveh is described as water which has been gathered in a pool but she scattered in every direction. When the cry is made, Stand! Stand! they flee away and look not back. Now the enemy has entered the city and this is the cry: "Take ye the spoil of silver, take ye the spoil of gold, for there is no end of the store and glory of all the pleasant furniture." And they did take all the spoil, after which he thus describes her: "She is empty, and waste, and the heart melteth and the knees smite together, and much pain is in all loins, and the faces of them all are waxed pale." They are about to be sacked.

Then the prophet speaks sarcastically, looking at it from the distance, and seeing the old lion in his den thus besieged: "Where is the den of the lions and the feasting places of the young lions, where the lion and the lioness walked, the lion's whelp and none made them afraid? The lion (that is, old Nineveh), did tread in pieces enough for his whelps and strangled for his lioness and filled his caves with prey, and his dens with ravens." He is representing Nineveh as a lion in his den, and it was all too true, for thousands and tens of thousands of the hapless inhabitants of other nations were literally strangled, and nation upon nation was seized in order that he might fill his den and his coffers with their wealth. Is it any

wonder that the world felt relieved and Jehovah himself gave the prophet a message voicing the sentiment? Then in verse 13 he says, "I am against thee, saith Jehovah, and I will burn her chariots in the smoke, and the sword shall devour thy young lions; and I will cut off thy prey from the earth, and the voice of thy messengers shall no more be heard."

Then the wreck of the city is described in 3:1-7. The fall of the city of Nineveh and the causes thereof, are stated in chapter 3. In the first three verses we have a description of the sack of the city, thus: "Woe to the bloody city! It is all full of lies and rapine; the prey departeth not; the noise of a whip and the noise of the rattling of the wheels, and of the prancing horses, and of the jumping chariots. The horseman mounting and the flashing sword and the glittering spears and there is a multitude of slain, and a great number of carcasses; and there is no end of their corpses; they stumble upon their corpses." The cruelty and savagery of those two hundred years impressed itself upon all those nations, and these soldiers broke into that city, and as Nineveh had never shown any mercy they showed Nineveh no mercy. Now he goes on with the description of her as a harlot: "Because of the multitude of the whoredoms of the well-favored harlot, the mistress of witchcrafts, that selleth nations through her whoredom, and families through her witchcrafts. Behold I am against thee, and I will show the nations thy nakedness, and the kingdoms thy shame." All the nations were interested in her destruction. "And I will cast abominable filth upon thee, and make thee vile, and will set thee as a gazing stock. And it shall come to pass, that all they that look upon thee shall flee from thee, and say, Nineveh is laid waste: who will bemoan her? whence shall I seek comforters for thee?" They bemoaned when Tyre fell, they bemoaned Thebes, they bemoaned Egypt, and John pictures how they bemoaned the downfall of Rome, but they never bemoaned Nineveh.

The prophet cites an example in 3:8-15. He compares the fall of Thebes, or Noamon, with the fall of Assyria, and says, "Art thou

better than Noamon, that was situated among the rivers, that had the waters round about her, whose rampart was the sea?" She had mighty allies, too, Ethiopia and Egypt, and had no end of strength. Now he says, "You are no better than she; she suffered; she was carried away into captivity." Then he gives a further description of how the country is infatuated and all the outlying fortresses were taken: "Thou shalt be drunken, thou shalt be hid; thou also shall seek strength because of the enemy." Then he pictures the inhabitants (v. 13) : "All thy strongholds shall be like fig trees with the first ripe figs; if they be shaken, they shall even fall into the mouth of the eater. Behold, thy people in the midst of thee are women: the gates of thy land shall be set wide open unto thine enemies; the fire shall devour thy bars." Then in sarcastic and grim irony he tells the people of Nineveh to go to work and try to defend themselves: "Draw water for the siege, fortify thy strongholds: go into clay, and tread the mortar, make strong the brick kiln. There shall the fire devour thee; the sword shall cut thee off; it shall eat thee up like the cankerworm ; make thyself many as the locust."

Nineveh was the greatest commercial center of the age (3:16-17). He describes her great commercial prestige thus: "Thou hast multiplied thy merchants above the stars of heaven: the canker-worm spoileth, and fleeth away. Thy crowned are as the locusts, and thy captains as the great grasshoppers, which camp in the hedges in the cold day, but when the sun ariseth, they flee away, and their place is not known where they are." And that is how they all dispersed when the enemy entered the city.

The last two verses close with a grim humor, containing a very significant statement regarding her: "Thy shepherds slumber, O Assyria," are slumbering yet and will continue to slumber. "Thy nobles shall dwell in the dust; thy people are scattered upon the mountains, and no man gathereth them," and they have never been gathered since, and never will be. "There is no assuaging of thy bruise; thy wound is grievous; all that hear the report of thee shall clap their hands over thee." Everybody rejoiced when she went

down. "For upon whom hath not thy wickedness passed continually?"

It must have been sometime before this, perhaps, two hundred years before this, that Jonah was sent to Nineveh to preach her destruction in forty days, and Nineveh repented and was saved, but there was no Jonah to preach to her now. Her time had come, her wickedness was too great, she was past redemption, and in 607 B.C. the city of Nineveh ceased to be forever. Excavators have been digging there, and they have found the remains of this great city, the walls and the whole plan of it.

QUESTIONS

1. What the title of this book, who the author, what of his family, and what the traditions and theories about him and his book?
2. What can you say of the style of Nahum?
3. What the date of this prophecy?
4. What the occasion of this prophecy, and what the relation of Nineveh to other nations?
5. Give an account of the capture and downfall of Nineveh.
6. Give an outline of the book of Nahum.
7. What the character, majesty, and method of Jehovah as revealed in this prophecy (1:2-8)?
8. What his verdict concerning Nineveh (1:9-14)?
9. How is the announcement of Nineveh's fall to Judah described (1:15)?
10. Describe the attack of the enemy upon Nineveh (2:1-7).

11. Describe the inside view of the city during and after the attack (2:8-13).
12. Describe the wreck of the city and cite the cause (3:1-7).
13. What example does the prophet cite and what the lesson (3:8-15)?
14. What says the prophet here of the commerce of Nineveh and her merchants (16-17)?
15. What the permanent condition of this great city as described in the last two verses?