

United States Senate

MEMORANDUM

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Life and Times of Jechariah
Negro Church Hist. Collection
C. S. Butcher

I have noticed some errors in
this little book but I think it is
a very good attempt.
C. S. B.

**THE LIFE
AND PROPHECIES OF
ZECHARIAH**

By *Henry Hammond*
Rev. H. H. Pinckney, D. D.

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PREFACE.

This little book is written for the specific purpose of setting before busy men, in the simplest and shortest way, the character, works, times and mission of the Minor Prophet whose name it bears. It is not exhaustive nor excursive, but essays to give in outline and essence what has been said in many large volumes. Still, one will be greatly mistaken who takes it for a mere compilation. It is an independent and original presentation of the author's views and reflections based upon standard history as given by the best authorities.

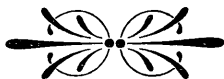
It is written, first of all, for studious men who are denied the advantages of school training and who are unable to purchase the large and expensive books treating upon these subjects. The young minister in a small charge or country circuit, even if his education be limited, can easily read and understand, and feel that he has the essential things often so much more stiltedly and technically set down in volumes of portentous size. He can, because of its convenient size and small weight, carry this book in his pocket to use in filling out a long wait for breakfast, or the time taken on a street car ride; and having read it, he may test his mastery of the contents by quizzing himself from the questions in the back of the book, which have been carefully framed to cover the whole subject.

This volume is one of a series uniform in treatment, and any person who finishes the series (to be issued by installments) will be excellently

equipped in the books of the Minor Prophets. He will no longer regard them as "Minor" in importance, but will understand that this rather unfortunate designation refers entirely to their brevity.

In the hope that it will stimulate interest in one of the most unique characters of Sacred Writ, and that it will lead to powerful sermons from this Prophet's suggestive texts, this little volume is presented to laymen and clergymen alike.

H. T. KEALING.



LIFE AND PROPHECIES OF ZECHARIAH.

By Rev. H. H. Pinckney, D.D.

**The Prophets’
Interesting
Characters.** Are we interested in the Bible? Then we are interested in the characters portrayed in that blessed volume. Apart from the “Son of Man” himself, perhaps no set of men mentioned in the Bible gather around them so much of veneration and kindly interest as do the “prophets of the Lord.”

They commanded the respect of the people because of their holy mission and great power.

This power was heaven’s gift to its chosen servants, and those servants constantly reminded the people of this authority by their oft-repeated “Thus saith the Lord.”

Every prophet of the Lord mentioned in the Bible fills some important place in the history of God’s people and performs some

special work which distinguishes him from the others of his class.

**The Two
Classes of
Prophets.**

The prophets are divided into two general classes called Greater and Lesser, or Major and Minor.

Zechariah is classed among the Minor Prophets.

In the book which bears his name, he is called, "Zechariah, the son of Berechiah, the son of Iddo." In the Book of Ezra he is called "the son of Iddo."

The place of Zechariah's birth is said to have been Babylonia; and the time, during the Captivity.

**Zechariah's
Birth.**

Though born away from the home of his fathers, he early imbibed and cultivated those thoughts of freedom and a return to their beloved Jerusalem, which lessened the burdens of captivity for those who suffered it.

It is not too much to say that he was born with a thirst for freedom. Hearing from earliest infancy, as he must have heard, the plaintive cries and earnest prayers for deliverance; noticing, as he must have noticed,

that Jerusalem was the burden of prayer and song ; and learning, as he doubtless did, that all windows of his people were "opened toward Jerusalem," it is not strange that early in life he should become enthusiastic over the subject of his people returning to Jerusalem. When permission was given by Cyrus to Zerubbabel and others to return and rebuild the walls of Jerusalem, one of the most enthusiastic of that band which set out toward the sacred city was the young and energetic Zechariah.

His Place and Influence. Already were the signs of his prophetic calling manifest. In word, in deed, in bearing, he displayed that acumen, discretion and judgment which made him a superior among his companions and commended him to the confidence of his elders. He was the friend of Zerubbabel and Joshua, the leading spirits in the movement to return and rebuild the Temple ; and, with them, was recognized and acknowledged as a leader among his people. Besides being a full-fledged prophet of the Lord, he filled the high and exalted position of priest.

Knowing, as we do, the deep veneration which the Jews had for their priests, we can

readily see that Zechariah's double position of prophet and priest gave him great influence among them. From the little which we know of his personal history, we are assured that he used this influence for the advancement of God's cause by cheering and helping his people in this critical period in their history. We find him among the first band of exiles on their return to Palestine. No sooner was permission to return given by Cyrus than this young hero bounded to the front and, by his superior knowledge and insight, assisted in giving direction to the expedition.

The Return When that heroic band
Under Cyrus. arrived in Palestine,
Desolation. what a sight met their
 gaze! The country was
 truly desolate. "Strang-

ers" inhabited their cities. The magnificent kingdom which David had handed down to Solomon, and which, with varying fortunes, had been enjoyed by each succeeding administration down to the time of the captivity, had apparently passed out of existence. The land of golden harvests, purple vineyards and fruit-laden trees had disappeared. That God-blessed land which once literally "flowed with milk and honey," and

which had been the envy of many nations in former years, had completely vanished, and in its place these returned exiles found a "waste howling wilderness." Men that "knew not the God of Israel" ruled over the land and a heathen people desecrated the places once made sacred by the presence of David, Hezekiah, and the old prophets of the Lord.

Was it not enough to discourage the stoutest hearts? But this was not all. If the general appearance of the country was disheartening, what must have been their emotions when they came in sight of the Holy City? It was here that their interests centred; it was in behalf of this holy spot that prayers and petitions had ascended to Jehovah for lo! these seventy years or more. It was toward Jerusalem that the intrepid Daniel had opened his window three times

Jerusalem. a day to pray. Not all the threats and abuses; not even the promised favor of the reigning monarch in the land of captivity, nor the actual incarceration in a den of hungry lions, could close that window; for Daniel's heart and the people's mind wert centred upon Jerusalem. It was then that the sweet singer of Israel had for-

mulated those plans which had made Israel a great name among the nations of the earth.

It was there that the great Solomon had startled the world by his great and astounding wisdom. There the good King Hezekiah had done that which was "right in the sight of the Lord," and had "walked in the footsteps of his fathers."

It was true that the great prophet Isaiah had said of this Holy City: "*Woe to Ariel, to Ariel, the city where David dwelt! add ye year to year: let them kill sacrifices. Yet I will distress Ariel, and there shall be heaviness and sorrow; and it shall be unto me as unto Ariel. And I will camp against thee round about, and will lay siege against thee with a mount, and I will raise forts against thee*" (Isaiah xxix:1, 2, 3).

It was true that every word of this dismal prophecy was literally fulfilled; but it was also true that the same prophet had encouraged Israel to look forward to the passing away of these dreadful times in words full of comfort and encouragement: "*Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God. Speak comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned; for she hath received of the Lord's hand double for all her sins*" (Isaiah xl:1, 2).

Both of these prophecies were uttered before the shadow of the great Captivity had fallen upon the people.

The great man who uttered them never lived to see their fulfillment, but subsequent generations did.

It was reserved for another to speak "comfortably to Jerusalem" at a time when words of comfort were sadly needed, indeed.

As before stated, the returned exiles looked upon a country desolate in the extreme. At Jerusalem the sight was truly appalling. The city was in the hands of strangers, and its holy places shamefully desecrated.

The Temple. The Temple was a heap of ruins. This was worse than broken walls, ruined highways, or dismantled homes.

In their captivity, the older men had constantly spoken of that magnificent pile built by the great Solomon.

They never tired of depicting its transcendent beauty as, standing upon the crest of the hill, it gave back in prismatic colors the white saluting rays of the morning sun. They told their children over and over again how "*Solomon overlaid the house within with pure gold; and he made a partition by*

the chains of gold before the oracle; and overlaid it with gold. And the whole house was overlaid with gold, until he had finished the house: also the whole altar that was by the oracle he overlaid with gold" (I Kings vi:21-22).

It was the memory of this magnificent edifice which they had in mind as they gazed sorrowfully upon the ruins which confronted them.

It was at this point that
Zechariah's the work of Zechariah
Work Begun. really began. It was his
to encourage and
strengthen sorrowful and failing hearts.

Ezra gives to him and the prophet Haggai the credit for stirring up, by their prophetic utterances, the patriotic enthusiasm of the Jews to complete the rebuilding of the Temple.

Says Ezra: "*Then the prophets, Haggai, the prophet, and Zechariah, the son of Iddo, prophesied unto the Jews that were in Judah and Jerusalem in the name of the God of Israel, even unto them*" (Ezra v:1).

Was Zechariah Called to The Work? We find an answer in the very beginning of his prophecies. "*In the eighth month, in the second year of Darius, came*

the Lord unto Zechariah, the son of Berechiah, the son of Iddo the prophet." Here, then, is his call. His authority is "the word of the Lord." What higher authority could he have?

It must be borne in mind that this "word of the Lord" came to him in addition to his priestly functions.

Thus, doubly armed, he went among the nearly discouraged people and spoke "comforting words" to them.

His Prophecies. Three Divisions. A careful perusal of his prophecies will disclose that they may be divided into three parts: the

first (chapters i to viii) consists mainly of a series of visions relat-

Chaps. i to viii, First Division. ing to the building of the Temple, the glory of the city, the removal of all

abominations out of the land, etc.; and winds up with a prediction that Jerusalem will become a centre of religious worship to all the world. Here we find those beautiful

visions which did so much to encourage the hearts of the people. God revealed His purposes in His own way, and His servant simply makes known to the people what has been revealed to him.

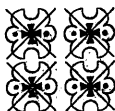
The second division
Chaps ix to xi, (chap. ix to xi) speaks
Second Division. of Damascus and Phoenicia and the cities of the Philistines, threatening them with dire calamities and final destruction. It also makes mention of Javan (Greece), and predicts that Judah shall become greater than that country, renowned for its literature and art.

It hints strongly at the probable reunion of Israel and Judah; but somewhat mars this prediction by showing symbolically the impossibility of such a thing.

In this second division Zechariah makes it plain to Israel that the great empire of Assyria and Egypt would be humbled in the dust and that God's people would again occupy a commanding position among the nations of the earth.

In the third division of
Chaps. xii to xiv, his prophecies we find
Third Division. predictions showing that dark times would come to Judah. It would be a severe ordeal and

crucial test of the loyalty and faithfulness of the people; but, after sore trial, the nation would come forth thoroughly purged from iniquity and the Lord would appear in His glory in Mount Olivet.



CHAPTER II.

First Division of the Prophecies.

The Visions

Considered and
Interpreted.

The Horses.

The visions are most
beautiful to contemplate.

Take for instance the
first of them—the vision
of the horses :

*"I saw by night, and behold a man riding upon a red horse, and he stood among the myrtle trees that were in the bottom; and behind him were there red horses, speckled and white. Then said I, O my Lord, what are these? And the angel that talked with me said unto me, I will shew thee what these be. * * * * Then the angel of the Lord answered and said, O Lord of hosts, how long wilt thou not have mercy on Jerusalem and on the cities of Judah, against which thou hast had indignation these three-score and ten years? * * * * So the angel that communed with me said unto me, Cry thou, saying, Thus saith the Lord of hosts; I am jealous for Jerusalem and for Zion with a great*

*jealousy. * * * * Therefore thus saith the Lord; I am returned to Jerusalem with mercies; my house shall be built in it, saith the Lord of hosts, and a line shall be stretched forth upon Jerusalem” (Zechariah 1:8-9-12-14-16).*

Here was a prediction so plain that no one need err in interpreting it. The indignation of the Lord against Jerusalem—seen in the dire calamities which had fallen upon it—was to be removed: mercy was to be shown the city, and some, if not all, of its former glory would return. The great comforting feature of the vision or prophecy, was the fact that the Lord had “returned to Jerusalem with mercies” and His house would be built in it.

It was just such comforting words as those that the returned exiles needed to encourage them in their great undertaking.

At the close of the same chapter—in the last five verses—we find a similar prediction in just as clear and unmistakable language: *“Then lifted I up mine eyes, and saw, and behold four horns. And I said unto the angel that talked with me, What be these? And he answered me, These are the horns which have scattered*

Judah, Israel and Jerusalem. And the Lord showed me four carpenters. Then said I, What came these to do? And he spake, saying, These are the horns which have scattered Judah, so that no man did lift up his head: but these are come to fray them, to cast out the horns of the Gentiles, which lifted up their horn over the land of Judah to scatter it."

Had not Judah been scattered when the great armies of the Persians marched over its hills and valleys, laying waste its cities and towns?

Had not "horns" pierced the heart of the nation when the rude hands of the Gentile invaders were directed against that one object, dearest to the heart of the Jewish people,—the Temple?

Surely no other people of which history gives any account had been so effectually scattered.

But the same power that permitted the scattering will bring the remnants together again, and make of them one harmonious whole for the glory of His name.

If the people needed encouragement, Zechariah supplied that need.

The Vision of Joshua in Filthy Garments. In the third chapter of this remarkable series of visions, the hopes of the people are raised to the highest point possible. Christ, the Messiah, is promised.

The attention of the people is, for a time taken from the things which concern the people immediately, and is carried forward into the great future. In the vision he sees Joshua, the great High Priest, standing before the angel of the Lord, clothed in filthy garments—a sign of the nation's degradation. Joshua is about to make intercession for the people, and Satan, the arch enemy, is ready to resist him.

Notwithstanding Satan's opposition, Joshua's filthy garments are taken from him and he receives this comforting assurance and promise: "*I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with a change of raiment.*" Thus is shown that the prayers of the afflicted people had been heard and mercy extended toward them.

Certain rules of conduct are laid down for the guidance of the people, and then this magnificent promise is made: "*Hear now, O Joshua the high priest, thou, and thy fellows*

that sit before thee: for they are men wondered at; for, behold, I will bring forth my servant, the Branch”—a distinct and direct reference to the coming of Christ.

If there was one event more than another to which the nation looked forward with joyful anticipations, it was the coming of the “Child, the Wonderful, Counsellor,” He it was who should restore Israel to her pristine glory and give her the proud place she occupied when the first Temple was built. During those seventy years of slavery, when there was literally nothing to cheer and encourage the hearts of the people, the glowing and comforting promises of His coming made by the Isaiahs and Jeremiahs preceding the captivity may have lost some of their hold upon the people. But at the first lifting of the clouds, the promise is renewed with emphasis; and Zechariah is the instrument chosen to bear the glad tidings to the nation. First, the people are assured that God’s house shall be built, notwithstanding seeming difficulties; and secondly, they are cheered by the renewal of the promises of a Saviour. How is the first of these great promises to be redeemed?

So many unexpected difficulties are cropping out that the task seems almost impos-

sible. The opposition of the Gentiles was to be expected, but others besides Gentiles are opposing the rebuilding of God's house.

Just across the line lived
The Samaritans' a people who ought to
Opposition. be friendly to these re-
Zerubbabel turned exiles. They
Encouraged. are connected with them
 by ties of blood; in fact,
 they are first cousins, being the lineal de-
 scendants of Esau, Jacob's own brother.
 But these Samaritans are really the bitterest
 opponents of the work being attempted by
 Zerubbabel and his friends.

This good man's heart might have failed him had not the cheerful Zechariah brought him the message of the Lord: "*This is the word of the Lord unto Zerubbabel, saying, Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord*" (Zechariah iv:6).

From cheering the
The Flying Roll. hearts of the workmen,
 the prophet passes on to
 another phase of the new conditions of the
 practically new kingdom. In the vision of
 the Flying Roll, chapter v, he shows that,
 in time, vice and immorality shall be ban-
 ished from the land and the rule of the
 Lord of hosts shall be absolute. All of this

is intended to arouse the enthusiasm of the people and to strengthen their faith in the cheering promises God is making them through His servant.

Chapters vi, vii and viii close the first division of Zechariah's remarkable visions or prophecies.

In them he shows the great extent of the kingdom of the "Branch" and the final restoration of Jerusalem. With the rebuilding of the Holy City will come the completion of the Temple, and Haggai, his associate, assures the people that "*The glory of this latter house shall be greater than of the former, saith the Lord of hosts; and in this place will I give peace, saith the Lord of hosts*" (Haggai ii:9).

In this first division are some of the most remarkable and far-reaching prophecies to be found in the whole Bible. That they served their purpose and really and actually had a good effect upon the nation, subsequent events fully prove.

III.

Second Division of His Prophecies.

The second division begins with chapter ix and extends to chapter xi.

It opens by assuring the people of God's defence of His church.

It is here that Damascus, Phœnicia and the cities of the Philistines are threatened with destruction and ruin.

Here the predictions are not general, but specific, so that no mistake can be made as to the places or people referred to by the prophet.

Tyrus and Zidon (Tyre and Sidon), two great and flourishing cities of Phœnicia, are mentioned by name as destined to feel the force of God's wrath and suffer for their wickedness and opposition to the people of God.

He speaks of Tyre in very plain language :
"And Tyrus did build herself a stronghold, and heaped up silver as the dust, and fine gold as the mire of the streets. Behold,

the Lord will cast her out, and he will smite her power in the sea; and she shall be devoured with fire" (Chapter ix;3-4).

This prophecy alone is sufficient to establish the accuracy of Zechariah's predictions.

Tyre and Its Rival Sidon.

We all know the history of Tyre, and can appreciate the faithfulness of the prediction.

In Solomon's day, this was one of the great cities of the world. At that time the celebrated King Hiram reigned in that city. An alliance existed between the two kingdoms, and Solomon is said to have married Hiram's daughter. Tyre was then probably at the height of its power.

It had varying fortunes, and in 538 B. C. Cyrus conquered the country.

Before this, the city of Tyre had made itself famous by holding out against Nebuchadnezzar, who conquered Jerusalem in 587 B. C., for thirteen long years.

Its naturally strong defensive position and the acknowledged valor of its fighting men made such a long-drawn-out struggle possible.

Much could be said about this great city and its fortunes in connection with the his-

tory of the time of Zechariah; but it will suffice our purpose to touch but lightly upon the salient points in its history as they have been affected by the prophecies of Zechariah.

It was Zechariah's prediction that "*the Lord will cast her out, and will smite her power in the sea; and she shall be devoured with fire.*"

Has this prophecy been fulfilled? Tyre had an exceptionally fine naval position, and on this account it was the objective point of attack by invaders. Xerxes, in his noted Greek wars, completely destroyed the Phœnician fleet and subjugated Sidon, the rival of Tyre. The inhabitants of Sidon revolted, but were finally crushed, and, exasperated and humiliated by repeated defeats, they

Sidon Burned. fired the city with their own hands—an act which was a partial fulfillment of Zechariah's prophecy.

This again gave Tyre the supremacy, and for a time it flourished.

Tyre's Varying Fortunes and Ultimate Degradation.

In the year 332 B. C., Alexander the Great attacked the city because the inhabitants refused to pay him allegiance; and, after a

seven months' siege, completely subdued it. He scattered the inhabitants and replaced them with colonists, mostly Carians. The place again rose to prominence, and, later, fell into the hands of Cleopatra as a present from Antony, the great Roman general. For a time it was practically independent, but the last trace of its independence was taken from it by the Roman Emperor Augustus.

Under Roman rule, it again flourished. A Christian colony was even founded there, and in the time of St. Jerome it was again the noblest, most beautiful and most prosperous city of Phœnicia.

But its prosperity was of short duration. The Saracens conquered it and then the Crusaders subdued it, and finally, in 1516 A. D., it passed into the hands of Selim I, and its glories ceased. From that time on it gradually lost prestige and power, and to-day the desolation and wretchedness of that once magnificent city are painfully evident.

Only between 3,000 and 4,000 people now dwell amid the ruins of its ancient glory, eking out a scanty living in insignificant exports of cotton, wool and wood.

It is said that such renowned characters as Frederick Barbarossa and Origen are buried within the limits of this doomed city.

Thus is Zechariah's prophecy against the city literally fulfilled. She did "*build herself a stronghold, and heaped up silver as the dust, and fine gold as the mire of the streets,*" but the Lord did "*smite her power in the sea*" and she was actually devoured.

**The Restoration
of Jerusalem
Promised.**

By the destruction of Tyre and its neighboring country the glory and renown of the new Jerusalem would become more pronounced and, as if to further encourage the people, the prophet goes on to tell them that other empires and kingdoms which had in the near past done them harm, would be brought low and humbled. In chapter x, we have an encouraging picture of the gathering of Israel and Judah from among the various nations among which they had been scattered:

*"I will bring them again also out of the land of Egypt, and gather them out of Assyria; and I will bring them into the land of Gilead and Lebanon; and place shall not be found for them. * * * and the pride of Assyria shall be brought down, and the sceptre of Egypt shall depart away. And I will strengthen them in the Lord; and they shall walk up and down in his*

name, saith the Lord'' (Verses 10, 11, 12.).

We see in these words a distinct reference to the restoration of Israel's glory and the destruction of two of the greatest empires the world has ever seen. But by reading the first verses of the chapter, we find that these great blessings are promised conditionally. Israel must

The Conditions seek after God and not
Imposed. after idols. He, in
times past, had visited

punishment upon them because of sin. The great Captivity from which they were returning was one such visitation, and this very return was evidence of the fact that God would save and restore them. But they must seek after Him.

The idolatry of the countries in which they had been living must in no way be introduced into the Holy Land by the returning Jews.

It was a sad truth that many of those who had remained at home during the great scattering had joined with the invaders in many things. Some were mixing with them in the matter of trade and commerce; others had taken unto themselves wives from among the heathen, and still others had boldly forsaken the religion of their fathers

and gone over completely to the idols of their conquerors.

These violations of God's law must be atoned for in some way. If "the glory of the latter house" is to be "greater than of the former," then the Lord, and He alone, is to be the object of their affections.

These things are made plain to the people by this great prophet, and their hopes for the future are wonderfully brightened. The very fact that simple obedience to God will make their country greater than the greatest empires of the world, was of itself sufficient to inspire them.

The Nation's We cannot suppose
Greatness to be that the prophet meant
Largely Spiritual. to convey the idea that
 Israel and Judah, as
 kingdoms, would be
 greater in extent of territory and in actual
 possessions than the great empires named,
 but they would be greater in spiritual blessings; the "Branch"; the Son of God Himself, would be identified with this new kingdom which the returned exiles were building. He would give to this kingdom a distinction and renown never before enjoyed by any previous kingdom or government.

These things would surely happen; and

under the inspiration of the glorious prospects presented, the prophet hints at the probable union of Israel and Judah:

"And I will strengthen the house of Judah, and I will save the house of Joseph, and I will bring them again to place them; for I have mercy upon them: and they shall be as though I had not cast them off; for I am the Lord their God, and will hear them" (Chapter x:6).

It would have been well for God's people if the good prophet could have stopped right here.

Here was a prediction showing great possibilities for the future. The people were to be gathered from the various countries into which they had been dispersed, and so great would they be that in Gilead and Lebanon, in Palestine, their old home, and, in fact, in the whole country itself, "place shall not be found for them." They were again to be independent: all old alliances with sinful nations were to be broken off, and in the reign of "the Branch" the greatest blessings possible would fall upon them as a people.

At this glorious time indicated, they would receive marvelous protection and assistance against those enemies who would oppose their return and settlement, just as

their fathers had been protected when they passed through the Red Sea from their affliction in Egypt, and through the Jordan into the Promised Land.

All the power of their opposers would be destroyed as were Pharaoh and Sennacherib.

Thus being protected and "strengthened by the Lord," they would "walk up and down in his name."

One great and encouraging feature of this remarkable prophecy was, "*the pride of Assyria shall be brought down, and the sceptre of Egypt shall depart away.*"

We have said that it would have been well for these people if the prophet had stopped here.

But there were other
Breakers Ahead. things which he saw,
 and which, as a faithful servant of God, he was compelled to make known to the people. He saw that, notwithstanding the great incentive to righteousness which his prophecies furnished; in spite of the fact that the most glorious era in their history awaited them, viz: the coming of "the Branch"; still these people would "fall from grace." Their treatment of the promised Messiah would

deprive them of the proud distinction they had hitherto enjoyed of being "the people of God."

On account of these things God would once more visit His displeasure upon them.

It is true that the reference to Assyria and Egypt meant not only those countries, but all the enemies of God and His truth, who shall be broken in pieces by the coming kingdom of Christ; but in the general breaking up, Israel and Judah would also suffer, and this fact is clearly shown in the succeeding predictions.



IV.

The Third Division of Prophecies.

The third and last division of Zechariah's prophecies begins with chapter xi of his book.

In the preceding prophecies the people are encouraged by the prospect of a restored and possibly reunited nation. Their country would once more be theirs; their beloved Jerusalem would be rehabilitated, and that grandest of all considerations, the Temple, would be rebuilt. It was true that "*many of the priests and Levites and chief of the fathers, who were ancient men, that had seen the first house, when the foundation of this house was laid before their eyes, wept with a loud voice*" (Ezra iii:12); but "*The glory of this latter house shall be greater than of the former, saith the Lord of hosts; and in this place will I give peace, saith the Lord of hosts*" (Haggai ii:9).

The reason why the glory of this latter house shall be greater than of the former, is found in the fact that Jesus Christ, "the

Branch," would sanctify this latter house by His presence.

It is indeed a sad change which presents itself in the very beginning of chapter xi: *"Open thy doors, O Lebanon, that the fire may devour thy cedars. Howl, fir trees, for the cedar is fallen; because the mighty is spoiled: howl, O ye oaks of Bashan; for the forest of the vintage is come down. There is a voice of the howling of the shepherds; for their glory is spoiled: a voice of the roaring of young lions; for the pride of Jordan is spoiled."*

Josephus Recites A Strange Incident. Josephus, the great Jewish historian, tells, that at a certain time after this prophecy was uttered, and just before the destruction of the Temple by the Romans, the doors of that great building opened of their own accord, and that a certain pious man who witnessed the unusual spectacle, said of the Temple, "I know thy destruction is at hand, according to the prophecy of Zechariah."

This shows to what even the ancient Jews supposed this prophecy referred. "Lebanon may either signify the Temple built of

cedars from that mountain, or the city filled with haughty and prosperous inhabitants, and with stately mansions like the cedars of Lebanon" (Scott).

Certain it is that this doleful prediction points to the destruction of Jerusalem, and that the whole context leads our thoughts to the days of Christ. See Matthew xxiv: 1-2, and Luke xix:41-44.

In the preceding chapters, the future conversion of the Jews was predicted in this, the manner by which they would be brought to this condition is described. Jerusalem and the nation had been planted and tended as a vineyard from which much fruit was expected, but it had become an unfruitful forest and would be burned to the ground.

"A voice of the roaring of young lions; for the pride of Jordan is spoiled," in verse three, has reference to the chagrin, madness and despair of the princes, priests and scribes at seeing all their authority and wealth torn from them by the Roman power.

They would howl like enraged lions driven from their coverts by the inundations of the Jordan, when it overflowed and desolated

the neighboring fields, which were the pride of that river.

This state of affairs was also foretold by Jeremiah xlix:19-20, and also Jesus speaks of it in Matt. xxiii:34-37.

There can be no possible doubt as to the meaning of the prophecy, for subsequent events have long since confirmed what is here indicated.

It is to be noticed that even while uttering these doleful predictions, the prophet points to a bow of hope. The flock is to be slaughtered, but the Lord "will feed the flock of slaughter." The Father appointed Jesus as the "good Shepherd" to feed the flock. "He came to seek and to save the lost," and His personal ministry was among "the lost sheep of the house of Israel."

He did attempt to feed the flock, but they refused the food He offered them, and this refusal was their undoing. It eventually brought about the fulfillment of the prophecy concerning their destruction.

<p>The Two Staves, Beauty and Bands.</p>	<p>The prophet speaks of taking "<i>two staves; the one I called Beauty, and the other I called Bands; and I fed the flock. Three shepherds also I cut off in one month; and my soul loathed them, and</i></p>
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their soul also abhorred me" (Verses 7-8). By the "two staves" is shown the symbolical character of the prediction. The one called Beauty represented the honor and privilege which the Jews possessed in the oracles, instituted worship and Temple of God; and especially by the ministry of Christ, and His apostles, who preached the gospel to them before all others.

"Bands" denoted the connection of the nation under one government and the harmony that had in some measure united them as the flock of God. But as they would not generally profit by the ministry of Christ, he would "cut off three shepherds in one month." This

Three Shepherds probably refers to the
Cut Off in three leading sects
One Month. among the Jews, the Pharisees, Sadducees

and Herodians who pretended to be shepherds and were all degraded and cut off suddenly. "One month" is an expression commonly used at that time to denote a short time. How fully this prediction was verified can be seen in the fact that Christ ignored these sects when He commissioned His apostles to preach His gospel. His righteous soul "loathed" their pride, hypoc-

ris and wickedness, and they, in turn, abhorred His holy character and doctrine.

They were ultimately destroyed by the Romans.

It is only necessary to read carefully to the end of this eleventh chapter to see the fearful destruction which it foretells. We have only to read history to see complete verification.

One writer sums up the whole by saying: "The principal calamities of the race of Jacob began when they divided into two kingdoms: on their return from captivity they all formed one people; but after their rejection of Christ, internal discords, far more fierce and more speedily destructive than the wars between Judah and Israel, hastened the fatal catastrophe of the nation."

The "bands" were broken and Israel was made the victim of rulers, priests and others who oppressed, deceived and devoured them.

A judgment was pronounced against these evil shepherds, but it in no way averted the curse upon the nation. As the prophet said, so it happened.

In chapter xii, the direful character of the prophecies is slightly changed. Jerusalem is still the subject, but her condition is greatly improved. She is now to become "*a cup*

of trembling unto all the people round about when they shall be in siege both against Judah and against Jerusalem." This is a most gracious prediction, if a strictly spiritual interpretation is put upon it. In that sense, it would indicate the wonderful success of the first preachers of the gospel.

We know that in spite of all opposition, the immediate successors of our Lord accomplished a most wonderful work. It was at Jerusalem that they tarried for the coming of the Holy Spirit, and it was in that city that they received the great power which made them invincible in their attacks upon sin and unrighteousness.

Jerusalem should become "*a burdensome stone to all that should burden themselves with it.*"

Perhaps we may gather from this that the grand accomplishment of this prophecy is yet in the future, and that it relates to times when Israel shall be converted and restored to their own land.

In whatever light we may view it, it is pregnant with hope and cheer for that sacred city. We may well believe that "*In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for uncleanness.*" Has not that foundation been opened for lo! these

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many years? It began to flow, when from "his pierced side came forth blood and water" (St. John xix:31-37).

It has been flowing ever since and will continue to flow until the last guilty wretch shall plunge in and wash away his stains.

But before that long-prayed-for time shall arrive, what tremendous changes shall take place at Jerusalem!

In the closing chapter of his prophecies, the prophet declares that "*the city shall be taken, and the houses rifled, and the women ravished; and half of the city shall go forth into captivity, and the residue of the people shall not be cut off from the city.*" Part of this prophecy has already been fulfilled. When the Romans marched their armies against Jerusalem was "the day of the Lord" on which He came to destroy those who would not submit to His rule.

The Mount of Olives is mentioned here, is significant.

Jesus, when upon earth, often stood upon that mountain; it was from there that He ascended to heaven; and in consequence of His ascension and the commission given His disciples, the gospel was sent to the different parts of the earth. The cleaving in two of the mountain was

symbolical of the tearing and rending of the nation by the Roman power when thousands fled from Jerusalem to escape the great disaster. It is to be observed that the Romans, after spoiling Israel, never prospered as they had done before. Evidently the Lord fought against them until their magnificent empire was torn asunder and partitioned off by contending forces.

God made them the medium of His vengeance upon His erring people, but revenged Himself and His people upon them afterward.

Afterward shall come
The Time Neither the day "*that the light*
Clear Nor Dark. *shall not be clear nor*
dark." This evidently

refers to that time in the Christian era when, for a long period, the gospel was greatly obscured by ignorance, heresy, superstition and idolatry. But even in those dark days, there was some holiness left in the Church.

This period could not be called a bright day, neither could it be called a dark day.

It contained a mixture of truth and error, of holiness and sin, of happiness and misery.

History records the fact that at one time a bigoted and worldly Church kept the true light from the people.

With its multiplicity of rites and ceremo-

nies, some of them sinful in the extreme, it fed the nations upon the husks until spirituality had almost entirely died out and the light was neither "clear nor dark"

For that particular period, the light came at "evening time," when a Luther thundered against the evil practices of the Church and shook it to its very foundations.

The "living waters" that went out from Jerusalem bore upon their bosom the first messengers of the gospel, and they and their successors have been carried by those waters into nearly every habitable part of the globe.

The millennium predicted by this prophet has not yet arrived.

The time when "*the Lord shall be King over all the earth; in that day there shall be one Lord, and his name one,*" has not arrived. But who doubts its coming?

Is not the gospel of Christ making advance daily? Was there ever a time in the history of the world when such tremendous strides were made by truth and righteousness as now?

It is true that the "King of kings" does not, as yet, hold such universal sway over the earth that "*upon the bells of the horses,*

Holiness Unto The Lord" is inscribed ; but His followers have every reason for believing that Zechariah's prophecy will come true.

It is promised that this blissful state shall continue to the end of the world.

The contest between truth and error, righteousness and sin, piety and impiety, will be a long and severe one ; but right shall ultimately win.

The followers of the Nazarene will be sorely beset, and their sun will be almost set ; but just as the shades of night are gathering, "it shall be light."

Such is the happy end of the struggle of the church of God as predicted by Zechariah.

In this struggle against sin, and victory over it, Jew and Gentile alike shall participate, but only those of each class who fight under the banner of Calvary's Lamb.

The Authorship of Zechariah Disputed.

There has been quite a diversity of opinion as to the authorship of the Book of Zechariah.

Some very learned Biblical critics have contended that only the first part of the work can be ascribed to Zechariah, and it cannot be denied that the internal evidences favor this supposition. In the

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visionary predictions there is a unity and consistency which unmistakably belong to Zechariah.

The imagery bears very distinctly the impress of those two master-spirits of the exile, Ezekiel and Daniel. We have but to compare the work of these two Greater Prophets with parts of Zechariah to see the similarity of both style and matter.

In some of the latter prophecies, the style is changed and becomes softer, richer and more poetical. From this fact, many argue that the hands of Ezekiel and Daniel did the work attributed to Zechariah. If we are to judge from the style alone, we cannot avoid the conclusion that some other hand than Zechariah's chronicled the events recorded in the latter prophecies of that book. But

A Composite	this is immaterial to
Authorship	the general purpose of
Immaterial.	the prophet's work and
	object. He came upon

	the stage at a time
when God's people needed the services of	
just such a man. In the chaotic condition	
in which they found their old home, and	
against the great oppositions with which	
they were confronted in the rebuilding there-	
of, they needed just such encouragement as	
God, through Zechariah, furnished them.	

There is one note ringing through all the prophecies of this great man which we must ever keep in mind, viz: the final restoration of Jerusalem. As it was the source of "the living waters" which have refreshed the earth, watered the thirsty land and turned the parched desert into a pool, so it shall again become the centre of Christian activity. In the very place where the "Branch" had been maligned, traduced and murdered, His standard shall be lifted high above all others, and upon that banner shall be inscribed "King of Kings and Lord of Lords."

And, if we are to believe prophecy, the descendants of the very people who once despised His name shall join in the general rejoicing attendant upon His ultimate triumph over all his foes.

The Fate of Zechariah.

Out of the little that is known of Zechariah's life, we learn that his prophecies of evil brought down upon him the anger of the Jewish people, and that he was foully murdered by them. Be that as it may, he lives to-day through his wonderful predictions, and everywhere men are acknowledging him as a true servant of God whose words have been fulfilled in part and are still being verified by succeeding ages.

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QUESTIONS FOR SELF-EXAMINATION IN THE BOOK OF ZECHARIAH.

- 1.—Into what two general classes are the Prophets divided?
- 2.—(a) What can you say of Zechariah's birth?
(b) Of his place and influence?
- 3.—(a) What was the condition of Palestine at the time of the Jews' return from captivity in the time of Cyrus? (b) The condition of the temple?
- 4.—State and define the division in Zechariah's prophecies.
- 5.—Relate and interpret the following visions:
(a) the horses; (b) the four horns; (c) the filthy garments; (d) the flying roll.
- 6.—What can you say regarding Tyre and Sidon and the prophecy concerning them?
- 7.—In promising the restoration of Israel's greatness, what conditions were imposed?
- 8.—Was this greatness to be material or spiritual?
- 9.—What was "the Branch?"
- 10.—What is the burden of the third division of Zechariah's prophecy?
- 11.—What strange incident does Josephus narrate?
- 12.—Reconcile the rosy and the gloomy predictions.

- 13.—(a) What is the significance of the two staves, Beauty and Bands? (b) The three shepherds cut off in one month? (c) The cleaving of the Mount of Olives? (d) The time neither clear nor dark?
- 14.—What reasons have we for expecting the promised Millennium?
- 15.—(a) What dispute concerning the authorship of Zechariah has arisen? (b) What is your own view? (c) Why?
- 16.—What is supposed to have been the fate of Zechariah?
- 17.—Write an essay on the Book of Zechariah, or a sermon on some text therefrom.



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