

F B Meyer on 2 Kings

2 Kings DEVOTIONALS Our Daily Homily F B Meyer

Thou man of God!

2 Kings 1:9, 11, 13 1:9

OH that thou and I might so live before God and men, that they should recognise us as men of God, as God's men! See how these ungodly captains at once recognised this, in the case of [Elijah](#). They fretted and chafed against his holiness; but they were forced to admit it. They tried to impose their orders, or those of their king; but they realized that Elijah was the servant of Him whom they set at nought, so far as their own lives were concerned.

If we are really men of God, we shall be the last to assume the title. Notice that Elijah puts an if before the title with which he was saluted: "If I be a man of God." Paul counted himself the least of all saints.

We must be of God. All our goodness must originate in Him. We can no more boast of goodness than a chamber can boast of the light which irradiates each corner of its space. The faith that takes his grace, as well as the grace it takes, is his. We are absolutely his debtors; and happy are they who love to have it so, and lie always at the Beautiful Gate of God's heart, expecting to receive alms at his hand.

We must be for God. This is the only cure for self consciousness, for that perpetual obtrusion of the self life which is our bane and curse. Ask that the Holy Spirit may fill you with so absorbing a passion for the glory of Jesus, that there may be no room to think of your own reputation or emolument.

We must be in God, and God in us. This is possible, when we love perfectly. He that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him. Oh, sea of light, may we lie spread out in thy translucent waves, as the sponges in southern sapphire seas, till every fibre of our being be permeated and infilled!

2 Kings 2:2, 4, 6 2:2

[Elisha](#), tarry here, I pray thee.

Thrice [Elijah](#) spoke thus to his friend and disciple, to test him. Perseverance, tenacity of purpose, a refusal to be content with anything short of the best, are indispensable conditions for the attainment of the highest possibilities of experience and service. And perpetually in our life's discipline these words come back on us, Tarry here! Not that God desires us to tarry, but because He desires each onward step to be the choice and act of our own will.

Tarry here in Consecration.— "You have given so much; is it not time that you refrained from further sacrifices? Ungird your loins, sit down and rest, forbear from this strenuous following after. Spare thyself; this shall not come to thee."

Tarry here in the Life of Prayer.— "It is waste time to spend so much time at the footstool of God. You have done more than most, desist from further intercession and supplication."

Tarry here in the attainment of the likeness of Christ.— "It will cost you so much, if all that is not Christlike is to pass away from your life."

Such voice's are perpetually speaking to us all. And if we heed them, we are at once shut out of that crossing the Jordan, that rapturous intercourse with heaven, that reception of the double portion of the Spirit, which await those who have successfully stood the test. The law of the Christian life is always Advance; always leaving that which is behind; always reckoning that you have not attained; always following on to know the Lord, growing in grace and in the knowledge of the blessed Savior, and saying to the Spirit of God, as [Elisha](#) to Elijah, I will not leave thee.

2 Kings 3:17 3:17

Ye shall not see wind, neither shall ye see rain; yet that valley shall be filled.

This is God's way of fulfilling the desire of them that fear Him. We like to see the clouds blown forward through the sky, and hear the moan of the rising wind; in other words, we like to see God's gifts on their way, or to have the sensible emotion of receiving them. Sometimes we have symptoms and signs that fill us with rapture; at other times, these are lacking; and we surrender ourselves to despair. Yet when we see neither wind nor rain, God may be most mightily at work.

It is so in Church work— How often we make our valleys full of ditches! Our machinery is complicated and perfect; we have spread neither pains nor care. Then we ardently desire the signs of a powerful revival, and break our hearts if they are not apparent; while, all the time, if we only knew it, the Divine blessing is welling up in the ditches, doing more than would be the case if our highest wishes were gratified. Here and there tears are falling silently, hearts are being cleansed, lives are becoming yielded to God.

It is so in Christian experience— We expect to have our [Pentecost](#) as the early Church received hers. We desire to see wind and rain, and to know that God is baptizing us; but this is not granted. There is no footfall of hurrying clouds, no coronet of flame, no gift of tongues. But, deep down, the ditches are being filled up, yearnings are being satisfied, the capacity for God within us is being met, though it grows apace. God be praised that the success of His work is not gauged by outward signs!

A well may be filled as completely by the percolation of water, a drop at a time, as by turning a river into it.

2 Kings 4:6 4:6

And the oil stayed.

What a sorrowful confession! There was no reason why it should stay. There was as much oil as ever, and the power which had made so much could have gone on without limit or exhaustion. The only reason for the ceasing of the oil was in the failure of the vessels. The widow and her sons had secured only a limited number of vessels, and therefore there was only a limited supply of the precious oil.

This is why so many of God's promises are unfilled in your experience— In former days you kept claiming their fulfillment; frequently you brought God's promises to Him and said, "Do as Thou hast said." Vessel after vessel of need was brought empty and taken away full. But of late years you have refrained, you have rested on your oars, you have ceased to bring the vessels of your need. Hence the dwindling supply.

This is why your life is not so productive of blessing as it might be— You do not bring vessels enough. You think that God has wrought as much through you as He can or will. You do not expect Him to fill the latter years of your life as He did the former. You can trust Him for two sermons a week, but not the five or six.

This is why the blessing of a revival stays in its course— As long as the missionary remains with us, we can look for the continuance of blessing. But after awhile we say, Let the services stop; they have run their course, and fulfilled their end. And forthwith the blessing stops in mid-flow. Let us go on pleading with the unsaved, and bringing the empty vessels of our poor effort for God to fill them up to the full measure of their capacity.

2 Kings 5:14 5:14

Like unto the flesh of a little child.

Is there any fabric woven on the loom of time to be compared in perfect beauty to the flesh of a little child, on which, as yet, no scar or blemish can be traced? So sweet, so pure, so clean. It was a wonderful combination, that the strong muscles and make of the mighty man of war should blend with the flesh of a child. But this may be ours also, if we will let the hand of Jesus pass over our leprous-smitten souls. At this moment, if you let Him, He will touch you and say, "Be clean," and immediately the leprosy will depart, and you will return to the days of your youth—not forgiven only, but cleansed—not pardoned only, but clad in the beauty of the Lord your God, which He will put on you.

We do not count a little child to be free from the taint of sin. It is conceived in sin, and inherits the evil tendencies of our fallen race. Its innocence of evil is not holiness. Jesus gives us more than innocence, He makes us pure and holy. But there are other childlike qualities which our Savior gives. The humility of a little child, who is unconscious of itself, and who is not perpetually looking for admiration. The unselfishness of a little child, who seeks its companion to share its luxuries and games. The trust of a little child, which so naturally clings to a strong and loving heart, willing to follow anywhere, to believe in anything. The love of a little child, who responds to every endearment with sunny laughter and soft caresses.

There is a great difference between childish and childlike. The former is put away, as we grow up into Christ: the latter we grow into, as we become more like our Lord. The oldest angels are the youngest: the ripest saints are the most childlike.

2 Kings 6:17 6:17

Behold the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire roundabout [Elisha](#).

So it is with each of God's saints. We cannot see, because of the imperfection of mortal vision, the harnessed squadrons of fire and light; but the Angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear Him, and delivereth them. If our eyes were opened, we should see the angel hosts as an encircling fence of fire; but whether, we see them or not, they are certainly there.

God is between us and temptation.— However strong the foe, God is stronger. However swift the descending blow, God is swifter to catch and ward off. However weak we are, through long habits of yielding, God is greater than our hearts, and can keep in perfect peace. "Trust ye in the Lord forever; for in the Lord **Jehovah** is the Rock of Ages."

God is between us and the hate of man.— Dare to believe that there is an invisible wall of protection between you and all that men devise against you. What though the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing! No weapon that is formed against you shall prosper, and every tongue that shall rise in judgment shall be condemned.

God is between you and the deluge of care.— What thousands are beset with that dark specter! They have no rest or peace either day or night, saying, "Where will the next rent, the next meal, come from?" How different the life of birds, and flowers, of children, of Jesus, and all holy souls. Oh, rest in the Lord, and put Him between you and black care.

God is between you and the pursuit of your past.— He is your reward (cp Ge 15:1); and as He intercepted the pursuit of Pharaoh, so He stands at Calvary between your past and you. The assayer of retribution is arrested by that Divine Victim— what more can we ask!

2 Kings 7:9 7:9

This day is a day of good tidings.

It was indeed. The enemy that had so long hemmed them in had dispersed, leaving a great spoil behind. The famine which had driven the people to awful straits was at an end, and there was now plenty of everything. It was inhuman for these four lepers to be content with eating and drinking, and sharing out the spoil, when hard by a city was in agony. Common humanity bade them give information of what had happened.

Let us take care lest some mischief befall us, if we withhold the blessed Gospel from a dying world. We know that Jesus has died and risen again, and that His unsearchable riches wait for appropriation. We have availed ourselves of the offer; but let us see to it that so far as we can, we are making known that the wine and milk may be obtained without money and without price.

Mischief always overtakes a selfish policy; whereas those who dare to share with others what they have received, not only keep what they have, but find the fragments enough for many days afterward.

Let us tell men that the Savior has overcome our foes, and has opened the kingdom of heaven to all who believe. Let us speak from a full heart of all that He has proved to be. Let us invite men to share with us the grace which hath neither shore nor bound.

One ounce of testimony is worth a ton weight of argument, and overpowers all objection. The Lord, on whom the king leaned, derided the possibility of the prophet's prediction; and no doubt had plenty of adherents. But the leper's report swept all His words to the winds. They had known, tasted, and handled. Let us remember that we are called to be witnesses of what God hath done for us.

2 Kings 8:11 8:11

And the Man of God wept.

[Elisha](#) foresaw all the evil that [Hazael](#) would inflict on Israel, and it moved him to tears. Though he was a strong man, able to move kingdoms by his message and prayer, yet he was of a tender and compassionate disposition. This was he who one moment upbraided the king of Israel for his crimes, and the next called for a minstrel to calm his perturbed spirit with strains of music. The men that can move others are themselves very susceptible and easily moved.

The nearer we live to God, the more we deserve to be known as men and women of God, the more will our tears flow for the slain of the daughters of our people. Consider the ravages that drink, and impurity, and gambling, are making among our people; enumerate the homes that are desolate, the young life that is wrecked as it is leaving the harbor, the awful dishonor done to woman; and surely there must come times when tears well up for very humanity's sake, to say nothing of the pity which they acquire who look at things from God's standpoint.

Jesus beheld the city and wept over it. Give us this day, O Son of Man, Thy compassion, Thy love, Thy tears, that we may speak of Thy grace graciously, of Thy love tenderly, and even of Thy judgments with brimming eyes.

A broken heart, a fount of tears: Ask, and it shall not be denied.

Wouldst thou avert such issues; begin with the cradled babes of your homes. Win them for God; teach them how to curb passion and subdue themselves. Tenderness and wisdom may arrest the making of Ben-hadads.

2 Kings 9:22 9:22

Is it peace, [Jehu](#)? And he answered, What peace?

We all want peace. Of every telegraph messenger, as he puts the buff-colored envelope into our hands, we ask almost instinctively, Is it peace? If there is a rumor of war, a depression in trade, a bad harvest, a sudden calamity in our neighborhood, we instantly consider the effect it may have on the tranquillity and prosperity of our life.

By peace we too often mean the absence of the disagreeable, the unbroken routine of outward prosperity, the serene passage of the years: not always eager for anything deeper. And if other and profounder questions intrude themselves, we instantly stifle or evade them. Like Herod, we shut up the Baptist in the dungeon. Like the Roman general, we make a desert and call it peace. Men will flee from a Gospel ministry which pursues them into close quarters, and arouses unwelcome questions that break the peace.

There cannot be true peace so long as we permit the infidelities and charms of some [Jezebel](#) of the soul-life to attract and affect us. [Jezebel](#) may stand for the painted world, with its wiles and snares, or for the flesh, or for some unholy association of the past life, like that which clung to Augustine. But there must be no quarter given to the unhallowed rival of our Lord. Whatever its charms, it must be flung out of the window before we can be at peace.

“Then, and not till then, we shall see Thee as Thou art; Then, and not till then, in Thy glory bear a part; Then, and not till then, Thou wilt satisfy each heart.”

If you are entirely surrendered to the Lord, “the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall guard your hearts and your thoughts in Christ Jesus.”

2 Kings 10:31 10:31

[Jehu](#) took no heed to walk in the law of the Lord God of Israel.

[Jehu](#) was the Cromwell of his time. He swept away the symbols of idolatry with ruthless destruction. Nothing could withstand his iconoclastic enthusiasm. But he failed to keep his own heart, and therefore his dynasty lasted for but one generation. It is a deep lesson for us all.

We may keep other people's vineyards, and neglect our own. We may give good advice to our friends, but fall into the very faults against which we warn them. We may pose as infallible guides, but fall into the crevasses and precipices from which we had carefully warned our companions. [Jehu](#) avenged the idolatries of [Ahab](#), but he departed not from [Jeroboam](#)'s calves.

Before you rebuke another, be sure that you are free from the faults that you detect in him. When you hear of the failings of some erring brother, ask yourself whether you are perfectly free from them. And never attempt to cast out the mote from your neighbor's eye till you are sure that the beam has been taken from your own.

Take heed to your heart. Its complexion colors all the issues of life. Do not be content to be strong against evil; be eagerly ambitious of good. It is easier to be vehement against the abominations of others than to judge and put away your own secret sins. But while we keep our heart with all diligence, we cannot afford to be independent of the keeping power of God. We must yield ourselves to Him, reserving nothing. The King must have all. The light of His face must fill every nook and corner of the soul. And every power that opposes itself to His dominion, must be dragged beyond the barriers and ruthlessly slain.

2 Kings 11:12 11:12

They made him king, and anointed him.

This dexterous overthrow of [Athaliah](#) by the bringing of the youthful king, who had been hidden in the secret chambers of the Temple, accommodates itself so obviously to a reference to the inner life, that we must be pardoned for making it.

Is not the spiritual condition of too many children of God represented by the condition of the Temple, during the early years of the life of Joash? The king was within its precincts, the rightful heir of the crown and defender of the worship of **Jehovah**: but, as a matter of fact, the crown was on the head of the usurper [Athaliah](#), who was exercising a cruel and sanguinary tyranny. The king was limited to a chamber, and the majority of the priests, with all the people, had not even heard of his existence. So, unless we are reprobates, Jesus is within the spirit, which has been regenerated by the Holy Ghost; but in too many cases He is limited to a very small corner

of our nature, and exercises but a limited power over our life.

There needs to be an anointing, an enthroning, a determination that He shall exercise His power over the entire Temple of our Being; the spirit, which stands for the Holy of Holies; the soul, for the Holy Place; the body, for the outer court.

Holiness or Sanctification is not a quality or attribute which can be attributed to us apart from the indwelling of the Holy One. If we would be holy, we must be indwelt by Him who is holy. If we would have holiness, we must be infilled by the Holy One. But there must be no limiting of His power, no barrier to His control, no veiling or curtaining of His light. The veil, if such there be, must be rent in twain from the top to the bottom.

2 Kings 12:4 12:4

The money that cometh into any man's heart to bring into the house of the Lord.

The margin suggests that the thought of giving for God's house would ascend in a man's heart, till it became the royal and predominant thought, swaying the whole man to obedience. It is a beautiful conception!

For the reconstruction of the Temple there were two classes of revenue: the tribute money which each Israelite was bound to give, and the money which a man might feel prompted to give. Surely the latter was the more precious in the eye of God.

Does it ever come into your heart to bring some money into the house of God? Perhaps the suggestion comes, but you put it away, and refuse to consider it. The thought begins to ascend in your heart, but you thrust it down and back, saying, Why should I part with what has cost me so much to get! Beware of stifling these generous promptings. To yield to them would bring untold blessing into heart and life. Besides, the money is only yours as a stewardship; and the thought to give it to God is only the Master's request for His own.

The great mistake with us all is, that we do not hold all our property at God's disposal, seeking His directions for its administration; and that we forget how freely we have received that we may resemble our Father in heaven, and freely give. Too many, alas! are anxious to hoard up and keep for themselves that which God has given them, instead of counting themselves and all they have as purchased property, and using all things as His representatives and trustees. Let us make a complete surrender to our Lord, and from the heart sing,

Take my silver and my gold, Not a mite would I withhold.

2 Kings 13:18 13:18

He smote thrice and stayed.

A striking spectacle. The dying prophet, with his thin hands on the muscular hands of the young king, as he shoots his arrow through the eastern window; the exhortation to smite the remaining arrows on the ground; the bitter chiding that the king had struck thrice only, instead of five or six times! What lessons are here? The Lord Jesus put His hands upon ours. Here is the reverse to the incident referred to. Ours are weak, His are strong; ours would miss the mark, His will direct the arrows, if only we will allow Him, with unerring precision. We shoot, but the Lord directs the arrow's flight to the heart of His foes.

Our success is commensurate with our faith. If we strike but thrice, we conquer but thrice. If we strike seven times, we attain a perfect victory over the adversary. Is not this the cause of comparative failure in Gospel effort? Souls are not saved because we do not expect them to be saved. A few are saved, because we only believe for a few. It is one of the most radical laws in the universe of God, and one which our Lord repeatedly emphasized, that our faith determines the less or more in our own growth, and in the victories we win for Christ. Do not stay, O soul-winner, but smite again and yet again in the secret of thy chamber, that thou mayest smite Satan, and compel him to acknowledge thy mite.

Let us not stay, though the energy of earlier days may be ebbing fast. The sanctified spirit waxes only stronger and more heroic, as [Elisha's](#) and Paul's did, amid the decay of mortal power., The Lord will say to us, as He did to Paul, "My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness."

2 Kings 14:6 14:6

Every man shall be put to death for his own sin.

So ran the law of Moses. It forbade the imposition of punishment on the relatives of the wrong-doer, but it had no mercy on him. "The soul that sinneth, it shall die," was the succinct and conclusive verdict of the older law, in this reflecting the spirit and letter of one yet older, which ran, "The day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die."

First, we were dead in our sins.— Ephesians 2:5-note puts this beyond all doubt. In the sight of God, all who walk according to the

course of this world, and obey the prince that now worketh in the children of this world, are dead in trespasses and sins. However much they may be alive as to their souls, they are dead as to their spirits, entirely destitute of the life of God.

Second, we have died for our sins.— 2 Corinthians 5:14, 15 (r. v.) establishes this fact, and shows that in Jesus, we who believe in Him, are reckoned to have died in Him when He bore our sins in His own body on the tree. In God's estimate, His death is imputed to us; so that we are reckoned as having satisfied, in Jesus, the demands of a broken law. It has no more to ask.

Third, we must die to our sin.— Romans 6:11-note. Reckon that you have died, and whenever sin arises, to menace or allure you, point back to the grave, and argue that since you died in Christ, you have passed altogether beyond its jurisdiction, for you have yielded your members as weapons of righteousness unto God. And having been crucified with Christ, you now no longer live, but Christ liveth in you. Let it become your daily habit to place the grave of Jesus between yourself and all allurements of the world, the flesh, and the devil.

2 Kings 15:9, 18, 24, 28 15:9

The sins of [Jeroboam](#), the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin.

This chapter anticipates the final overthrow of the kingdom of the tribes. It describes the corruption and disorganization of the people which made them the easy prey of Assyria. One puppet-king after another was set upon the throne to fall after a brief space of rule, and four times over it is said that they followed in the steps of [Jeroboam](#), "who made Israel to sin." The seed sown two hundred years before had at last come to maturity, issuing in the ruin of the nation. What a comment on the inspired words, "Sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death."

Twelve times in the story of the kingdom of Israel, we are told that [Jeroboam](#), the son of Nebat, made Israel to sin. The institution of the calves on his part seemed to be a piece of political wisdom, but it was an infraction of the Divine law; and what is morally wrong can never be politically right. The house cannot stand unless the foundation can bear the test of the Divine plummet. The kingdom of Israel fell, to prove to all after-time that the disregard of God's law is a foundation of sand, which can never resist the test of time.

Why is [Jeroboam](#) so frequently called "the son of Nebat"? Why should the father be forever pilloried with the son, except that he was in some way responsible for, and implicated in, his sins? There was a time when perhaps Nebat might have restrained the growing boy, or led him to the true worship of God; or perhaps his parental influence and example were deadly in their effect. How important that parents should leave no stone unturned to promote the godliness of their children, bringing them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

2 Kings 16:10 16:10

King [Ahaz](#) sent to Urijah the fashion of the altar and the pattern of it.

The fashion of this world passeth away like a fleeting dream; or like the panorama of clouds that constitutes a pavilion of the setting sun, but which, whilst we gaze, tumbles into a mass of red ruin. And yet we are always so prone to imitate King Ahaz, and visit [Damascus](#) with the intention of procuring the latest design, and introducing it, even into the service of the sanctuary.

Man naturally imitates. He must get the pattern of his work from above, or beneath; from God or the devil: hence the repeated injunction to us all, to make all things after the pattern shown on the mount. If we would be rid of the influence of worldly fashion, we must conform ourselves to the heavenly and divine. The pattern of the Body of Christ, of the position of each individual believer among its members, and of the work which each should accomplish, was fixed before the worlds were made. The best cure for worldliness is not unworldliness, but other-worldliness. The best way of resisting the trend of people around us is to cultivate the speech, thought, and behavior of that celestial world to which we are bound by the most sacred ties, and whither we are travelling at every heartthrob.

This introduction of the altar of a heathen shrine into the holy temple of [Jerusalem](#), reminds us of the many rites in modern religious observances which have been borrowed from paganism, and warns us that the Church has no right to go to the world for its methods and principles. Let the world do as it may in its discussions about truth, its efforts to attract attention, and its organizations; our course is clear, not to build altars after its fashion, nor model our life on its maxims.

2 Kings 17:41 17:41

These nations feared the Lord, and served their graven images.

It was a curious mixture. These people had come from [Babylon](#), Hamath, and Sepharvaim, and were settled in the land from which Israel was deported. In their desire to propitiate the God of the country, they added His worship to that of their own gods (2 Kings 17:32), though they did not really fear Him (2 Kings 17:34). There was an outward recognition of the God of Israel, which was worse

than useless. Are you sure this is not a true description of your own position? You pay an outward deference to God by attending His house, and acknowledging His day, whilst you are really prostrating yourself before other shrines. The one originates in a superstitious fear, a desire to stand well with your fellows; but it is in the direction of the other that your heart really goes. You come as His people come, sit as His people sit, kneel as His people kneel; but your heart is far apart, and you only do as you do that you may follow your own evil ways with less fear of discovery.

With all of us there is too much of this double worship; but let it be clearly understood that it is only apparent, not real. No man ever really serves two masters, or worships two gods. Whatever conflicts with God in heart or life is our chosen god. Whatever appears to share our heart with God really holds our heart. God will never be in competition with another. He must either be all or none.

The soul that endeavors to divide its service between **Jehovah** on the first day, and its graven images all the other days of the week, might as well discontinue its religious observances, for they count for nothing: except to blind it to its true condition.

2 Kings 18:20 18:20

Now on whom dost thou trust?

It was no small thing for **Hezekiah** to rebel against the proud King of Assyria. Hamath and Arpad, **Samaria** and Sepharvaim, Hena and Ivah, reduced to heaps of stones, were sufficient proofs of the might of his ruthless soldiers. How could **Jerusalem** hope to withstand? **Rabshakeh** could not comprehend the secret source of **Hezekiah**'s confidence. It was of no use for him to turn to Egypt. Pharaoh was a bruised reed. And as for **Jehovah**! Was there any likelihood that He could do for Israel more than the gods of the other nations had done for them? Not infrequently does the puzzled world ask the Church, "In whom dost thou trust?"

Our life must to a large extent be a mystery, our peace pass understanding, and our motives be hidden. The sources of our supply, the ground of our confidence, the reasons for our actions, must evade the most searching scrutiny of those who stand outside the charmed circle of the face of God; as it is written, "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard . . . what God hath prepared."

We all ought to have the secrets which the world cannot penetrate. Doubt your religion if it all lies on the surface, and if men are able to calculate to a nicety the considerations by which you are actuated. We must be prepared to be misunderstood and criticized, because our behavior is determined by facts which the princes of this world know not. We do not look up to the hills, because we look beyond them to God; we do not trust in silver or gold, or human resource, because God is our confidence. We cannot but seem eccentric to this world, because we have found another center, and are concentric with the Eternal Throne.

2 Kings 19:14 19:14

And **Hezekiah spread it before the Lord.**

Amid the panic that reigned in **Jerusalem**, the king and the prophet alone kept level heads, for they alone had quiet, trustful hearts. We hardly realize the crisis unless we compare it with the march of 200,000 Kurds or Turkish soldiers upon some peaceful Armenian community. Israel had no earthly allies. Her only reinforcements could reach her from heaven, and it was the care of these two saintly men to implicate their cause with that of the living God (2 Kings 19:4). This is the faith that overcomes the world, which realizes that God lives here and now in our home and life and circumstances. His cause is implicated in our deliverance; His name will be disgraced if we are overwhelmed, and honored, if preserved. He is our judge, Lawgiver and King, and is therefore bound by the most solemn obligations to save us, or His name will be tarnished.

When therefore letters come to you, anonymous or otherwise, full of bitter reproach; when unkind and malignant stories are set on foot with respect to you; when all hope from man has perished, then take your complaint—the letter, the article, the speech, the rumor—and lay it before God. Let your requests be made known unto Him. Tell Him how absolutely you trust. Then malice and fear will pass from your heart, whilst peace and love will take their place: and presently there will come a swift message of comfort, like that which Isaiah, the son of Amoz, sent to **Hezekiah**, saying on the behalf of God, "That which thou hast prayed to Me, I have heard."

God knew the contents of the missive before you did; but He likes to read it again in the company of His child!

2 Kings 20:10 20:10

Let the shadow return backward ten degrees.

It is impossible for us to understand how this could be. The shadow of the declining day waxes ever longer, and only a miracle could change its appearance on the dial. It may suggest some significant thoughts about shadows that may still go back.

The shadow of a wasted life.— Of course, there is a sense in which the wasted years will never come again; they have passed beyond recall. But the shadow may go back on the dial of our life when we truly repent, and turn again to God, for He hath promised:

"I will never leave thee, neither forsake thee." And "I will give back the years that the canker worm and caterpillar have eaten."

The shadow of happier days.— These seem to have gone. For long you have noticed the growing twilight, and it has seemed impossible ever again to have the lightness and spring of one or two decades back. But be of good cheer, for when a man comes into that fellowship with God which sorrow and temptation teach, when with growing years he attains added grace, we are told that he shall return to the days of his youth.

The shadow of early affection.— Have you lost loved ones, so that your life is like a house the windows of which, one after another, have become shuttered and dark? But love is not forfeited forever. Those who forsake all for Christ's sake shall get all back again in Him. His love comprehends all human love. The relationships of His kingdom surpass in tenderness and tenacity those of the warmest earthly ties. Thy brother shall rise again, and thou shalt hear him call thy name, and shalt sit with him in the Home of Life.

2 Kings 21:1 21:1

And his mother's name was Hephzi-bah.

Hephzi-bah means, "My delight is in her" (Isaiah 62:4). How strange, supposing that her name was any indication of her character, that such a woman should have borne such a son; for "[Manasseh](#) did wickedly above all the Amorites did which were before him." A godly ancestry, however, does not guarantee a holy seed. [Hezekiah](#)s and Hephzi-bahs may be the parents of [Manassehs](#). That this may not be so:—

Let us guard against the inconsistencies of our private life.— The child of religious parents becomes habituated to their use of expressions in public which betoken the highest degree of holiness, and is therefore quicker to notice any inconsistency in temper or walk. Is there not a subtle temptation also for those who work much for God in public to feel that a certain laxity is permissible in the home? Will not late after-meetings at night compensate for indolence in the morning, and will not protracted services be the equivalent for private prayer? May not irritability to servants or children be accounted for by the overstrain of our great work? Hence, inconsistency and failure to realize our lofty aims, which are quickly noticed, beget distaste for our religion.

Let us guard against absorption in public religious duty to the neglect of the home.— Does it never happen that the children of religious parents are put to bed by nurses who are heedless of their prayers, because their mothers have undertaken a mission? Do not boys sometimes grow up without the correcting influence of the father's character, because he, good man, is so taken up with committees?

Let us guard against an austerity of manner, which prevents us being the companions, play-fellows, and associates of our children.

2 Kings 22:20 22:20

Thou shalt be gathered into thy grave in peace.

As a matter of fact, [Josiah](#)'s death was not a peaceful one. He persisted in going into conflict with Pharaoh-necho, king of Egypt, against the latter's earnest remonstrance (see 2Chronicles 35:20, 21, 22); and, in consequence of his hardihood, met his death. His servants carried him in a chariot dead from Megiddo (2 Kings 23:30). Is there, then, any real contradiction between the prophet's prediction and this sad event?

Certainly not! The one tells us what God was prepared to do for His servant; the other what he brought on himself by his own folly. There are many instances of this change of purpose in the Word of God. One of them is known as "His breach of promise," or "altering of purpose" (Numbers 14:34, marg.). He would have saved His people from the forty years' wandering in the wilderness, but they made Him to serve with their sins and wearied Him with their iniquities. He would have gathered [Jerusalem](#) as a hen gathers her brood, but she would not.

Let us beware lest, a promise being left us, we should seem to come short of it; lest there be in any of us an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God, and frustrating some blessed purpose of His heart. "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him"; but we may limit the Holy One of Israel, and so restrain Him by our unbelief as to stay the mighty works which are in His plan for us. He may desire for us a prosperous life and a peaceful death; but we may close our dying eyes amid disaster and defeat, because we willfully chose our own way.

2 Kings 23:25 23:25

Like unto [Josiah](#) was there no king before him.

This chapter is a marvellous record of cleansing and purging. We are led from one item to another of drastic reform. Nothing was spared that savored of idolatry. Priests and altars, buildings and groves, came under the searching scrutiny of this true-hearted

monarch; and, as the result, it was possible to keep such a Passover as had not been observed during the days of the judges or the kings (2 Kings 23:22).

How much our enjoyment of the solemn feast depends upon our previous efforts to put away from our lives all that is inconsistent with the law of God. We hardly realize how insidiously evils creep in. Before we are aware, we have fallen beneath God's ideal, and adopted the customs of our neighbors, or of those with whom we come into daily contact. All such declension hinders our joy in keeping the Passover. It is needful, therefore, that there should be times when we turn to God with fresh devotion, and in the light of His holy truth pass the various departments of our life under review, testing everything by the Book of the Law. In [Josiah's](#) case, the sacred volume was recovered from long neglect; in our case it needs to be re-read in the light of higher resolves. This would be like a new discovery. Our ultimate rule must always be the will of God, appreciated with growing clearness, and used as a standard by which to judge the habits and tenets of our life. We read the Bible for purposes of a truer knowledge of God and His ways, and for spiritual quickening; but let us also use it more frequently as the bath of the spirit. Let us bathe in it. Let us revel in it as the grimy children of the slums in the laughing wavelets of river and sea.

2 Kings 24:13 24:13

He carried out thence all the treasures of the House of the Lord.

Amongst these departed treasures must have been much of the sacred furniture of the Temple, and the holy vessels; because, in the days of Belshazzar, we find them brought out to grace the royal banquet. Belshazzar drank wine from them with his lords, wives, and concubines, whilst they praised the gods of [Babylon](#), who had given them victory over their foes. Amongst the rest was the golden candlestick, whose flame afterward illuminated the inscription of doom, written by God's hand upon the palace wall. By the command of Cyrus these precious vessels were finally restored (Ezra 5:14), and carried back to [Jerusalem](#), by a faithful band of priests (Ezra 8:33).

The whole story of the captivity is full of solemn lessons.— The Church of God must make her choice between one of two courses: either she must keep from all entangling alliances, and from vying for temporal power; or she must face the liability of being brought under the power with which she would fain assimilate. Israel wanted to be as the other nations around her, imitating their organization, and allying herself now with one, and then with another; in consequence she was swept into captivity to the very nation whose fashions she most affected (Isaiah 38).

Have we never tasted the bitters of captivity?— Borne away from our happy early homes to live among strangers, set to repugnant tasks, removed from all that made life worth living, we have known the exile's lot. Alas! if it be so; yet, even in our captivity, where the Lord's song is silenced, and our harps hang from the willows, if we repent, and put away our sins, and turn again to the Lord, He will not only have mercy, but abundantly pardon, and bring us again that we may be as we were in times past.

2 Kings 25:30 25:30

Every day a portion, all the days of his life. (r. v.)

Is it to be supposed that the king of [Babylon](#) took more care of Jehoiachin than God will take of us! Jehoiachin had resisted his suzerain, and cost him a great expenditure of men and treasure; but nothing which had transpired in the past hindered this provision of a daily supply. Will God do less for you, His child? Would it not come as a relief if you were to be told that, from this moment till you die, you could always have a sufficient provision of all the necessaries of life? But if you are a child of God, that promise has already been made! Do not be anxious, but believe that God's word is at least as sure and as efficient as man's.

The allowance was continual.— It did not begin with plenty, and gradually dwindle to scraps. The supply was maintained year after year. Will God drop off your supplies, think you, because He forgets, or because His power is exhausted? You know that each supposition is alike untenable. What He has done, He will do. The storehouses of nature open to His key. His are the cattle on a thousand hills.

Every day a portion.— Jehoiachin had not the provisions of a year or a month put down at his door; but as each day broke he was sure of the day's portion. It may be that God is dealing thus with you. Only manna for the day: daily strength for daily need.

All the days of His life.— Jesus is with us "all the days"; and He is the bread of God, in whom is every property necessary for life. All the days are included in God's care for us, of birth and death, of sunshine and shadow. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow you all the days of your life, and you shall dwell in the House of the Lord forever.

2 Kings

Choice Notes

by F B Meyer

2 KINGS 1 FIRE FROM HEAVEN

2 Kings 1:2

Ahaziah's sickness was caused by a fall through a defective lattice or fence work, which surrounded the upper stories of his house; either around the flat roof without, or enclosing one of the galleries which looked down on the open court of the palace within. There was a special instruction about this (Deut 22:8). We should be careful of our battlements, to see that they are in good repair, and we should build them in all threatened places. The habit of abstinence from strong drink is one piece of lattice work which in these days we should very carefully maintain. If we do not fall for want of it, others may. All good habits are strong battlements.

2 Kings 1:2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14 His mission to Baal. --

Ahaziah's messengers necessarily passed **Jerusalem** on their way to **Ekron**. It was, therefore, a direct insult to **Jehovah** to ask the help of the heathen oracle. As **Elijah** said, it was as if there were no God in Israel. See how the pride of man rages against the will and way of God! But in vain! The strongest regiments that come up against Him and His servants shall be broken in pieces. Around Elijah there was an invisible cordon of angels, as real as the soldiers of Ahaziah; and so it is with all who live by faith. These are unhurt in lions' dens; unsinged by flames; hidden in the secret of his pavillion; safe folded beneath his feathers. No weapon that is forged against them can prosper; and every tongue that rises in judgment against them they condemn.

These successive fifties perished because they shared in the contemptuous arrogance of their monarch; but as soon as one man spoke in a different tone (2 Kings 1:13), the awful destruction of would-be captors stayed. With the froward He shows Himself froward; with the merciful, merciful (Ps 18:25, 26-note).

But how different the dispensation in which we live! Our Lord distinctly forbade His disciples attempting to imitate this episode; and in referring to it the Saviour said, "Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of; my mission is not to destroy, but to save" (Luke 9:54, 55). We should breathe the spirit of our age -- the age of the Holy Ghost, of revealed love, and of grace abounding over sin. The fire in which we must believe is that of Pentecost, which destroys not souls but sin. Oh, that we had the power of calling it from heaven, to consume sin and transform sinners!

"Thou Spirit of burning, come!"

2 Kings 1:15, 16 Elijah before the king. --

Elijah, who had before dreaded the royal court, and fled from it, seems to have lost all fear, and goes boldly to the bedside of the dying monarch, raised on an alcove in the side of the room; and he returns unscathed, being defended by the gracious care of God (Ps. 27:1-3).

2 KINGS 2 THE FIERY CHARIOT

In this chapter -- one of the greatest of the Old Testament -- we see how a man who one day lay on the desert sands and wished to die was translated that he should not see death. A special vehicle was sent to bring him home to his Father's palace! Oh, you who are sitting in the shadow of death, there are days of rapture and transfiguration in store for you -- only be still and wait patiently. Your God will come! The waters shall part before you, and the fire shall bear you to your home. Be strong; yea, be strong!

2 Kings 2:3 The sons of the Prophets. --

From the days of Samuel there were schools or colleges in which young men were trained for the office of teachers and prophets throughout the land. They were instructed in the law, and the principles of religion, and cultivated the art of sacred psalmody (1 Sam. 10:5, etc.). The greatest prophets were not always selected from their ranks. **Elijah**, notably, was not. But they seem to have given the young men the benefit of their tutelage. These sons of the prophets had been made aware of the approaching rapture of their venerated leader. **Elisha** was also aware of it (2 Kings 2:3-5).

2 Kings 2:6, 7 They two! --

How close their kinship! Each noble, but in a different way; one supplying the other's lack. Who can estimate the blessing of such fellowship, tested and tried by repeated experiences borne in company? The older man by repeated invitations gave the younger the chance of dropping off, if he wished; and [Elisha](#)'s tenacity of purpose showed the quality of his soul. Difficulties in Christian living frequently suggest our turning back. But if we comply, we miss the radiant vision and mighty endowment. Let us dare to persevere, with undeviating, unswerving faith, till we are clothed in living power.

2 Kings 2:8, 9, 10, 11, 12 [Elijah's last journey.](#) --

Rivers part before men who believe in the living God. The Spirit of God can work through a flimsy cloak, as well as by an outstretched rod. The double portion (2 Kings 2:9) is the heritage of the eldest son and heir. Its reception in this case depended on that spiritual affinity which could behold the movements of the spiritual world. To none but the purged eyes of faith would that radiant vision have been evident. To see it was a proof of the spiritual character of [Elisha](#)'s faith; and the parted river (2 Kings 2:14) witnessed the acquisition of his master's power. That same Spirit is for us. This is the meaning of Pentecost (Acts 2:39).

2 Kings 2:13-22 [Elisha's ministry was sweet, beneficent, gentle.](#)

The healing of the waters at Jericho was especially significant. But there was judgment also, as his "strange work" We must not think of these children (2 Kings 2:23) as boys and girls. The same word is used of Joseph at 39, and of Rehoboam at 40. They were probably young men ("young lads" R.V. marg.) connected with the false idolatry, which had its seat in Bethel.

2 KINGS 3 MOAB'S REBELLION

2 Kings 3:1, 2, 3

[Jehoram/Joram](#)'s reign was marked by some measures of reform. He discountenanced the [Baal](#) worship, though he clave to [Jeroboam](#)'s calves.

2 Kings 3:6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 2Ki 3:12 [The alliance.](#) --

How strange it is that, after the terrible lesson received in his alliance with [Ahab](#), Jehoshaphat drifted into an alliance with his son! The lack of water (2 Kings 3:9) threatened to so weaken the armies of the three kings as to make them an easy prey for [Moab](#). It was very absurd on their part to charge the Lord with their disasters (2 Kings 3:10). They should have enquired of the Lord before they started; but like many others since their day, they left that for a stage of the enterprise when disaster was upon them. Experience is not enough to keep us from making fatal mistakes. Nothing but the grace of God and daily watchfulness can avail for that. But even when we have turned aside from Him, God will not desert us, and will answer our appeal for help as He did for these kings and their armies.

To pour water (2 Kings 3:11) on the hands of another is to act as his servant.

2 Kings 3:13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20 [Elisha's message.](#) --

He quotes the very words of [Elijah](#) (2 Kings 3:14, and 1 Kings 17:1). He recognizes the presence of Jehoshaphat as a reason for clemency. The influence of music calms his agitation and predisposes him for the Divine communications. How often we have to make preparations for the advent of Divine blessing, long before we see any signs of the blessing itself! Our expectant faith is the valley full of ditches, and God is able to do exceeding abundantly above all we ask or think; but in all God's gifts there is the need for co-operation. He alone can send the water, but we must trench the ground. We must prepare the receptacles, which He alone can fill. It is for us to erect buildings, to organize the machinery, to gather meetings, to invite men to hear the Word, to prepare and deliver the message, to build up Sunday-schools, and the other associations of mission and church work; but the living water can only come by the way of the throne. Its advent is often unannounced. There is neither wind nor rain. A gracious influence suffuses the congregation. Heads are bowed, tears fall silently, lives are changed: God's heritage is refreshed, and many confess what He has done for their souls. Let us pray for this result; doing our work carefully and abundantly, not limiting time or pains in digging the ditches, assured that God will abundantly answer.

2 Kings 3:21, 22, 23, 24, 2Ki 3:25 [The destruction of Moab.](#) --

The Moabites were deceived by the red tinge of the water caused by the rays of the rising sun; and concluding hastily that the Israelites had mutually destroyed themselves, they moved forward to a terrible defeat. Their cities were beaten down (2 Kings 3:25), their wells stopped, and their land invaded.

2 Kings 3:26, 27 [Mesha, king of Moab.](#) --

This is the king who caused the celebrated "Moabite Stone" to be erected. This interesting monument, discovered in 1868,

corroborates Mesha's tribute to Israel, and his revolt, as recorded in this chapter. The sacrifice of his son (2 Kings 3:27) was the precedent of Moabite victories over Israel and Judah in the territory occupied by them in the land of Moab.

2 KINGS 4 THE SHUNAMMITE'S SON

[Elisha](#)'s ministry was one of redemption. He was ever counter-working on the effects of sin and evil. In this he was a type of Jesus, who is

"the universal Remedy of all evil broken forth in nature and the creature; the Destruction of misery, sin, darkness, death, and hell; the Resurrection and Life of all fallen nature; the unwearied Compassion, the longsuffering Pity, the never-ceasing Mercifulness of God to every want and infirmity of human nature" (W. Law).

2 Kings 4:1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 The widow's oil. --

God cares for the poor. How much they miss who do not go to Him about their temporal wants! "He is the God of the widow" The oil went on pouring so long as there were vessels. If only there had been more expectancy and a larger number of vessels, there would have been a more plentiful supply. Thus does Jesus fill our empty vessels with the Holy Ghost. He puts no limit on their number or size; but always stands ready to fulfil all our need, only lamenting when there is not a vessel more. God's only limitation is that which we impose by our unbelief. His oil will never cease, so long as we have empty vessels to bring.

What blessings often come to us within closed doors! (2 Kings 4:4, and Matt. 6:6).

2 Kings 4:8-37 The [Shunammite](#) son. --

A real man of God needs but little for the supply of his wants (2 Kings 3:10, and Phil. 4:12). How much greater joy than favor with the king was the birth of a son to an Israelite woman! (2 Kings 4:17). Sunstroke was a common cause of death (Ps. 121:6-note). So sure was the mother in the life-giving power of the prophet, that she needed not to tell her husband of the lad's death. Why should she grieve him, when the child would soon be again in health (Heb. 11:35-note)? She felt convinced that God could not mock her; and that, when he gave, it would be a gift worthy of Himself (2 Kings 4:28). How often we put the staff of doctrine and precept on the face of our beloved and unconverted children, without result! In the home and school there must be a definite contact between soul and soul, as between the body of the prophet and that of the child. Walk your house in intercessory prayer, and persevere even until seven times (2 Kings 4:35).

As the prophet in the [Shunammite](#)'s house, so also does Jesus come into our hearts, when we make Him welcome; and coming, He gives life, and life more abundantly -- first the life of birth, and then life through death. The law cannot revive dead souls. It lies impassive on their faces. But He communicates it, as a spark from His own body.

2 Kings 4:38-44 The pottage and the loaves of barley. --

Miracles of benevolence and healing were akin to [Elisha](#)'s gentle spirit. Is not this also the domain of the Gospel, to counterwork the ancient curse of the ground, to meet the hunger of men? The benediction of God will turn an evil into a blessing (Mark 16:18) and will multiply a little to feed many (Ps. 132:15-note). Jesus turns the poison into food, extracting the harm that we had carelessly gathered for ourselves; and multiplies our slender resources, so that they avail for many.

2 KINGS 5 [NAAMAN](#), THE SYRIAN

[Naaman](#) had everything that this world could give, with one sad exception -- health. "But he was a leper!" Though there is more evenness in our earthly lot than any of us realize, there is a "but" in every life, which is meant to bring us to God.

2 Kings 5:2, 3, 4

The little maid sought the peace of the home to which she was carried captive (Jer. 29:7). She was "the interpreter" the one of a thousand, who spoke true and health-giving words. Where she found herself, therein she abode with God (1Cor 7:21, 22, 23). What a blessing a Godly servant, though but a little maid, may be to a home! Let no one forsake their post in a godless household; because there may be some [Naaman](#), whose life will be given back from death as the result of some simple testimony for God.

2 Kings 5:5, 6, 7

The journey to Israel was undertaken under the impression that healing might be obtained by influence and wealth at the word of a king. The lordly soldier had to learn to receive it as a gift in a humble, obedient, and believing spirit. Our physical health and other blessings may depend on the state of our hearts much more largely than we sometimes realize.

2 Kings 5:8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14 [Elisha](#)'s method of cure. --

As a first step, to teach [Naaman](#) humility, [Elisha](#) sends a message detailing the means of recovery. "But [Naaman](#) was wroth" How often do we find that the aristocratic sinner has his own notions of the treatment he merits! It hurts the pride when the officer, the nobleman, or the child of fashion is treated like any ordinary sinner. "Behold I thought" figures very largely with us all. And we must take care not to minister to that kind of pride. [Elisha](#) had a special reason in the course he adopted in dealing with this commanding nature. But where the leprosy of sin is eating out the heart and there is no other hope, humility will succeed to rage. Sorely wounded, the soul will gladly catch at any means of cure, though it be bathing in the despised Jordan.

The sevenfold dipping in the Jordan may fitly symbolize the perfect washing in the cleansing blood of Christ (Zech. 13:1). We may be young again -- the pure flesh of a little child, united with the manly strength of the warrior (2 Kings 5:14). [Naaman](#)'s -bowing in the house of Rimmon may have been condoned under special circumstances which we cannot fully estimate; but it is no precedent for us.

2 Kings 5:20-27 [Gehazi](#). --

What process of decay had been at work in [Gehazi](#)'s mind to allow of this downfall? His sin was greed of riches, as was Achan's (Josh 7:1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26); certainly his privilege as the prophet's servant aggravated his iniquity. What a contrast to the earnestness of the new Gentile convert! (2Kings 5:15, Mt 8:11; Luke 4:27).

2 KINGS 6 ANGELIC ENVIRONMENT

2 Kings 6:1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 2Ki 6:7 The lost axe-head. --

It was remarkable that the college became so strait in days of persecution. Yet this is the general experience of the Church (Ex 1:12). True religion is not above personal exertion, and every man ought to take a beam (Mark 13:34). How often does the Lord step in, by a personal exercise of His power, to regain the losses caused by our blunders! If He can make dead metal float, He can surely make dead hearts live.

2 Kings 6:8, 9, 10, 11, 2Ki 6:12 The all-seeing eye. --

God knows the secret plottings of His foes, and He will either counterwork them, or deliver His own (2Peter 2:9note). The wicked may well be greatly troubled, as they learn that the whispers even of the bedroom are heard in heaven. How foolish to think that the prophet could discover plottings against the king, but not against himself!

2 Kings 6:13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 2Ki 6:18 The surrounding Host. --

Though an host should encamp against us, our hearts need not fear. More are they for us, than those against us. This assurance made the prophet calm in the midst of danger.

Our blessed Lord was always conscious of the enveloping presence of these horses and chariots of fire. He had only to ask the Father, and He would give Him twelve legions of angels. He reminded His judge that he could have had no power at all, unless it had been given Him. And we also are ministered to. And may God give us the open eye, that we may behold the unseen, and walk as those to whom the mysteries of the eternal world are unveiled!

2 Kings 6:19, 20, 21, 22, 2Ki 6:23 The enemy foiled. --

[Elisha](#), strong in the knowledge that God's protecting hand was over him, was able with the greatest composure to lead the army to [Samaria](#), where he introduced them to the man whom they had come to seek, and where he "prepared great provisions for them" (Pr 25:21, 22)

2 Kings 6:24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 2Ki 6:33 The siege of [Samaria](#). --

What a striking fulfilment of Deuteronomy 28:53, 54, 55, 56, 57! But "Dove's dung" may have been a kind of a leguminous plant. The king lamented the calamity, but did not repent of the sin which caused it. The truth which he enunciated was right, that all punishment is of the Lord; but the inference was wrong (2Kings 6:33). We must learn to bow our heads to the Divine dealings, and to accept God's chastisement (Lam. 3:39, 40).

2 KINGS 7 UNEXPECTED DELIVERANCE

2 Kings 7:1, 2 The prophet's assurance. --

These were the prices of peace. The gate was the market-place. Peers are not infallible, and those who are most accustomed to

rely on large material resources are sometimes least able to believe the unseen and eternal. The poor are rich in faith. How unwilling is man to believe that God can or will do as He says! Dare to believe even to the opening of the heavens (Mark 11:23). Unbelief shuts a man out of the enjoyment of the greatest abundance; and makes a famine amid harvest plenty.

2 Kings 7:3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11 A welcome discovery. --

It was the extreme of misery that made these lepers count as a matter of indifference what became of them; but how soon their misery was exchanged for great joy! Such are the experiences of human lives: one day in despair, the next satisfied with all that the heart could wish. And most truly is this so with those who turn to Christ. The leper is cleansed, the hungry fed, and the impoverished soul enriched. God opens windows in heaven to supply our need. Look up beyond the mountains for His help. Nothing is impossible to Him. He turneth the shadow of death into the morning.

Indeed it is not well in a day of good tidings to hold our peace. If we do, punishment will surely overtake us. We do not become poorer when we give; and we have no right to keep to ourselves the Bread of Life, for lack of which men perish. The example of these poor men may well stimulate us, when we have discovered the unsearchable riches of Christ, to tell others the story.

2 Kings 7:12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 2Ki 7:20 [Samaria](#) supplied. --

Though this had been predicted, it was too good to be believed. How little had Israel expected to be supplied thus! God can feed His people with the treasures of the wicked, fleeing though no man pursues. The threatenings of God are as certain as His promises. If the latter are fulfilled (2 Kings 7:18), so shall the former be (2 Kings 7:20). May we never be in this plight of seeing others included at the Divine banquet, and ourselves shut out! (Luke 13:28). Unbelief will shut us out of the enjoyment of the blessings of the Gospel. They may be all around us, so that we can see them with our eyes, and yet not eat thereof. In the clay when, through the opened Heaven, God rained down the abundance of everything, he alone failed to partake who was blinded by unbelief. Beware, O Christian soul, lest thou miss aught in the day of the Lord's deliverances!

2 KINGS 8 "THE MAN OF GOD WEPT"

The [Shunammite](#), to whom [Elisha](#) was so much indebted, appears again in the sacred story (2 Kings 8:1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6). That kindness of hers was remembered long after.

What a blessing it is to have a man of God for a friend! There are symptoms and warnings of coming danger to which holy souls are sensitive; and we are wise to regard them, as did the woman whose son [Elisha](#) had restored to life. Enter into thy chambers, until the storm be overpast. Lives which are thus ordered by the will of God are blessed, not only spiritually, but temporally. They are guided in their going out and coming in, as this woman was, who reached the presence of the king at a moment which was specially auspicious. An hour earlier or later would have missed the mark. Her return was precisely ordered to take place at the moment when [Gehazi](#) was telling her story to the king. Commit thy ways unto the Lord, and thy works shall be established. Let God choose for thee, and life will be full of coincidences in which His handiwork is seen.

2 Kings 8:7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15 [Hazeal](#). --

[Elisha](#) came to [Damascus](#), evidently at the Divine bidding, just when Ben-hadad was sick. The sickness was not in itself mortal, yet he would die from another cause. Not only in the face of [Hazeal](#), the rough soldier, but in the thought of God, the prophet read his destiny, as the ruthless destroyer of the Jewish people.

[Elisha's](#) tears (2 Kings 8:11) resemble those of Christ. In this, as in so many other respects, he anticipated the life of our Redeemer. The unconcerned stare of men of the world; the agony of human suffering caused by sin; the declension of God's own people beneath the perverting influence of idolatry -- these are themes to make our eyes fountains of tears. Oh, for fellowship with the sufferings of Christ! Would that men of God today had more of the gift of weeping over the miseries of men!

How little do we know what we shall be! None of us know the evil of our hearts. In our calmer moments we would count it impossible to do crimes which in the heat of passion we will commit tomorrow (2 Kings 8:15). O my soul, walk closely with God! He only can keep you in that hour when you will be rudely disallusioned of the notions of your own goodness.

2 Kings 8:16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29 [Jehoram/Joram](#) and Ahaziah, kings of Judah. --

[Jehoram/Joram](#) gives a terrible example of how a woman may mar a man's life. He had a good father, but a bad wife. And the latter influenced him more than the former did (2Chr 21:1-20). The lamp was kept burning for David's sake (2 Kings 8:19, and Ps. 132:17-[note](#)). Surely that same grace can keep the fire burning in your heart. Ahaziah, who succeeded him, was no better. Misled by his mother, he followed in the dreary steps of [Ahab](#). The close intimacy between the two houses led to alliance in war, and to a common fate.

2 KINGS 9 [Jehu](#) ANOINTED KING

2 Kings 9:1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 [Jehu](#) anointed king. --

The anointing of [Jehu](#) was a part of God's commission to [Elijah](#) in Horeb (1Kings 19:16); but the ceremony was accomplished by [Elisha](#) as the prophet's successor, most probably in accordance with [Elijah](#)'s expressed desire. The urgency of the nomination caused [Elisha](#) to send one of the young prophets to Ramoth-Gilead, thereby saving himself the toils of the journey. It is the province of youth to work, endure hardships, and make haste.

[Jehu](#) was appointed to the kingship for special reasons, i.e., to cut off the house of [Ahab](#), and avenge the blood of the prophets. It is a great opportunity when God lays His hand on any as chosen vessel (Acts 9:15). But it is a terrible responsibility. May He never be compelled by our sins to lay us down, as those whom He can no longer employ!

2 Kings 9:11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20 [Jehu](#)'s revolt. --

God's servants are often accounted mad (2 Kings 9:11); but the message which they bear is well understood by those who are ready to hear it. The situation was accepted by the soldiers under the command of [Jehu](#); and the placing of their garments "on the bare steps" (R.V., mar.) was their act of homage. The measures to keep the tidings from the king's ears were taken with great precaution; and since Ramoth-Gilead was at some distance from [Samaria](#), and no one was allowed to bear the tidings, the revolt had gained great importance, before the least suspicion reached the metropolis.

2 Kings 9:18 "Is it peace?"

A question which we instinctively ask as we open the telegram, or the letter in the strange handwriting. And they ask it with greatest alarm who know that their life is not rightly ordered. The man who is wrong with his fellowman is always expecting wrong from them. Instead of sending messenger after messenger to scout the country, it would be far better to adjust the wrongs at home. Then God becomes a sure Rock of Defense, and the soul ceases to be afraid of evil tidings, because it trusts Him.

2 Kings 9:21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37 [Jehu](#)'s punishment of [Ahab](#)'s house. -- (Read also 2Chr 22:1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12).

The meeting in "the portion of Naboth the [Jezeel](#)ite" (2 Kings 9:21) doubtless reminded [Jehu](#) of [Elijah](#)'s denunciation of [Ahab](#) upon the same ground; and after the death of [Jehoram/Joram](#) he turned to his captain with the words of the prophet, which had evidently left an ineffaceable impression upon his heart. "In some sense [Ahab](#)'s blood was licked by dogs, as it flowed from the gaping wounds of his son" Long after [Ahab](#) had passed away, the curse of his life blighted other lives (Jer. 32:18). We cast shadows which reach beyond the natural term of our lives. We sow seeds, the harvest of which is reaped by our posterity. There is not one whose life is not a savior of life unto life, or of death unto death. Lamb of God, grant us thy peace, the peace of forgiveness and of a holy life; so that there may be an afterglow to our sunset, lingering with blessing.

[Jezebel](#)'s heart was proud and unbroken. She thought to make the conqueror the slave of her power or charms. But she could not avert her fate. How often does truth ask: "Who is on my side?" Let us heed the summons, and dare to look out in answer (2 Kings 9:32). God's mills are here seen grinding, though slowly, yet to powder.

2 KINGS 10 "THE HOUSE OF [AHAB](#)"

2 Kings 10:1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17 The extermination of [Ahab](#)'s family. --

This was a very terrible act of vengeance. Yet for the well-being of the race, God is sometimes obliged to cut off evil-doers, lest the plague spread with its poison, till there be no health or safety left. The brethren of Ahaziah were slain by Arabians (2Chr 22:1). The word brethren is a wide one, covering many degrees of relationship. The elders of [Jezeel](#) had been [Jezebel](#)'s tools against [Naboth](#); now they are [Jehu](#)'s tools against her own house. [Jehonadab](#) was a man of unusual strength of character (1Chr 2:55; Jer. 35). [Jehu](#) boasted of his zeal; and such boasting generally covers insincerity. The really earnest man has no need to advertise himself. God was no party to the deceit and fraud of his behavior. [Jehu](#) might have achieved the same result by unobjectionable methods. God still cuts off the persons and families of notorious evil doers, though by more unobtrusive processes (Ps. 16:4-[note](#)).

The work of extermination by [Jehu](#) was very thorough: "He smote all that remained of the house of [Ahab](#) in [Jezeel](#)" great men, familiar friends, and priests -- until none remained; and in this he set an example for us to ponder and imitate. There must be no compromise with evil in our hearts or lives. We must not spare one known wrong which rears itself against the obedience of Christ. It may seem important; it may robe itself in the garb of religion: but it must die. Oh, for that ruthless sword! that relentless vengeance.

2 Kings 10:18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32 Jehu's decline. --

Jehu was earnest enough in uprooting all traces of **Baal**-worship, but his zeal against idolatry was not accompanied by personal holiness. He took no heed to walk in the law of the Lord with all his heart (2 Kings 10:31). When the succession to the throne had been secured by the promise of God to his fourth generation, he rapidly deteriorated, permitting the sins of **Jeroboam**. It is comparatively easy to denounce the sins of others, to be orthodox in our creed, and strong in our denunciation of those who are treacherous to Evangelical truth; and yet we may be permitting in our heart grievous wrongs on account of which God will have to cut us short. Judge yourselves, that ye be not judged. Take the beam out of your own eye, that you may see clearly to take it out of another's. Be careful that your own heart-life is free from the sins you are so quick to discern. Remember that conscience often drives us to find relief by venting on others the remonstrances which it denounces against the sin of the heart.

2 Kings 10:32, 33, 34, 35, 36 Israel's decay. --

They were short in their duty to God, therefore God cut them short in their extent, wealth, and power. **Hazeel** was the cause of this, fulfilling **Elisha's** anticipations (2 Kings 8:12). Those tribes suffered first whose choice had been determined by the attractions of the land. Those who choose for this life only are often the first to suffer the loss of all, as Lot did.

2 KINGS 11 **JOASH** MADE KING

2 Kings 11:1, 2, 3 Athaliah well deserves the title given her in 2 Chronicles 24:7. She usurped the throne, and played the part of her mother, **Jezebel**, in Judah. Though Joram had been a wicked man and a bad king, he seems to have been able to recognize the value of piety in others; and so he had secured, as a husband to his daughter, the good priest, **Jehoida/Jehoiada**. The husband influenced the wife; and in the general massacre which **Athaliah** perpetrated, Jehosheba rescued the youngest child of Ahaziah, who was, in fact, her nephew. His nurse and he were hidden in a room where the mattresses were kept, and which was used perhaps for some sudden influx of priests at festal times. Is not this hidden prince a type of the hiding of the true Prince in the recesses of our hearts, while some **Athaliah** occupies too large a share of the government?

2 Kings 11:4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12 The boy king. --

It was a joyful moment, that manifestation of the hidden prince. Many loyal hearts must have renounced all hope of such a thing as seeing again an offspring of David's line. But God kept His word. The Word of God was a befitting gift (2 Kings 11:12, and Deut. 17:18, 19).

There are suggestions in this chapter which may apply to our inner life as believers. There is a strong, wicked **Athaliah** principle in most of us, which strongly opposes all that is of God. It usurps His place, and murders His seed. And the holy but lowly Joash germ of the regenerate life is too often secreted in some remote attic of the nature for long years. Thank God it cannot be discovered or destroyed. It is hidden with Christ in God. But it is exposed to great opposition, and the conflict in the outward life is in the highest degree painful. Then there comes a moment when suddenly it breaks from its hiding-place; and, in some moment of revival or consecration, assumes its rightful position on the throne. What predominates in you -- flesh or spirit, self or Christ, **Athaliah** or Joash?

And is not this also a type of coming events? Surely before long the Lord Jesus, who is now hidden, will be manifested (Col. 3:4), and those that have hated Him will be ashamed.

2 Kings 11:13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21 Reformation. --

The death of **Athaliah** led the way to a thorough change throughout the kingdom. There was a double covenant: the demolition of the **Baal**-house, which had sadly profaned the holy city; and regulations for the proper performance of the worship of God. Then came joy and quiet; as there always must when evil is cast out, and the life adjusted with the holy law of the **Most High**.

2 KINGS 12 THE TEMPLE REPAIRED

2 Kings 12:1, 2, 3 An auspicious beginning. --

So long as the good priest lived, the young king did well. We owe more than we know to the influence of Godly men like **Jehoida/Jehoiada**; and it would be our constant prayer that God would raise up such men in these last days. Nay, let us seek to be such ourselves, acting as an antiseptic against pollution, and salt against corruption. Our speech, our behavior, our daily life, should be so healthful and wholesome as to check the growth of evil. But we should not be content with this. There is much positive good that needs doing.

2 Kings 12:4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16 The renovation of the Temple. --

The sacred structure had suffered terribly under [Athaliah](#) (2 Chron. 24:7). The king might well take an interest in the building where he had spent his earliest years. The first attempt at raising a fund was a failure. It was in the wrong hands; surely the priests were not the proper parties to receive or collect moneys, which were dwindled away in their own maintenance. But when once an opportunity was given to the people to give their freewill offerings, the sum soon grew to a large amount, which enabled the workmen to proceed.

It was not very businesslike, perhaps, to have no contract with the men who did the work in the temple building. But the fact of it not being needed is a beautiful tribute to their faithfulness. We need more men of this stamp. They often set off in dark relief the characters of those who, like these priests, might have been expected to be the foremost in such holy work. God's noblest servants do not so often come from the classes specially trained, as from those of whom nothing was expected.

The house of God is always needing repair. Such are the breaches caused by false friends or open foes in the moral and religious life of the people, that there is ample scope for the most strenuous effort.

2 Kings 12:17, 18, 19, 20, 21

Invasion and assassination followed close on each other. Joash revolted from God, and the hand of the Lord was against him (2 Chr 24:1-27). The reign began in sunshine, but was sadly overcast. How much we need to ask that He who has begun the good work in us may perform it to the end!

2 KINGS 13 DEATH OF ELISHA

2 Kings 13:1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 [Jehoahaz](#) in Israel. --

At first sight there seems a discrepancy between 2 Kings 13:1 and 2 Kings 13:10. We must account for the longer period by supposing that his father admitted [Jehoahaz](#) to some share of power during his lifetime. It is very interesting and pathetic to read of the compassion of [Jehovah](#), notwithstanding the evil done in His holy sight. He heard the prayer of the king, in spite of all the evil he had done, and answered it by sending a saviour. In their distress men cry unto the Lord, and He saves them out of the stormy sea; but how often they forget Him, and repay His kindness by idolatry and neglect! "The Lord gave Israel a saviour; ...nevertheless they departed not from the sins of [Jeroboam](#)" (2 Kings 13:5-6). Oh, that the love of God, so undeserved and yet so free, might lead us to repentance!

2 Kings 13:10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19 [Jehoash](#). --

The grandson of [Jehu](#), he followed in the idolatries which had become indigenious to Israel's soil. The death of [Elisha](#) was a most memorable event. It was now sixty years since he had commenced his public work as Elijah's servant. In strong contrast to the sins around him, [Elisha](#) stood as a witness for God, and much holy light shines around his closing record. The King of Israel seems to have expected to see chariots of horsemen, as in the translation of [Elijah](#). Did [Elisha](#) expect it? This was not to be his end. But the path of his soul from his dying bed was swift and sure. It does not matter how or where we die, in any case Jesus waits to receive us to Himself.

What a model of prevailing faith and prayer [Elisha](#)'s dying converse with the king affords! We do not consume our foes, because we strike only thrice and cease. We should put no limit on God by our restrained prayer and meager faith. Let us go with Him as far as we may, and only stay when He says, Ask Me no more.

2 Kings 13:20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25 Miracle at [Elisha](#)'s grave. --

The dead body was the means of giving life. Surely [Elisha](#) was living still; for God is not God of the dead, but of the living (Mt. 22:32). And is it not a parable of how the grave of Jesus is the means of life? You must die in order to live.

Mark the posthumous influence of a good man! His example, his word, his books, are full of holy power; and many a dead soul touching his remains lives. Oh, that we may live through death; and when dead, may our memory and influence still speak, and energize, and work for God.

2 KINGS 14 AMAZIAH, KING OF JUDAH

2 Kings 14:1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 [Amaziah](#) in Judah. --

There was a gleam of better things in this reign, although not of the best (2 Kings 14:3). Good traits were to be found in [Amaziah](#)'s character, among which was his humanity to the children of his father's murderers; the slaying of whom, although expressly forbidden (Deut. 24:16), was probably dictated as a policy by fear of their rising up to avenge their fathers' death. There was also

his willingness (as recorded in 2 Chr 25) to forego the assistance of the army of Israel, when met by the remonstrances of the man of God. He obtained a great victory over Edom (who were in a state of revolt, see 2 Kings 8:22) because he dared to trust God; but he fell a victim to the idols of Edom. "He brought the gods of the children of Seir, and set them up to be his gods, and bowed himself down before them" (2 Chr 25:14).

2 Kings 14:7 Selah, or Petra, was largely excavated out of rock, hence its name. Oh, to live in the Rock!

2 Kings 14:8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22 His defeat and death. -- After the idolatry which followed the campaign against Edom, it seemed as if God's Spirit left him, and gave him up to his own devices. He gave himself up to arrogance and vainglory; challenged the king of Israel to combat; and exposed himself and his people to disastrous defeat. To what lengths of folly and sin may we not go when once we get away from God!

It is always a foolish thing to run into collision with any who are willing to live peacefully with us. The beginning of strife is like the letting out of water, which may become a flood before which the instigator will be swept away. The parable was rather humbling in its comparisons, but it conveyed beneficial advice. How often are men allured to ruin by their first successes! The great enemy of souls hides the hook by the gaudy fly, the pitfall by the layer of soil. If a man persist in spite of all warnings given by friends or foes, he must bear the consequences of his own folly. We have a glimpse in the parallel record of the pride and arrogance of the king, which culminated in this disastrous challenge and overthrow (2 Chr 25:16).

2 Kings 14:23, 24, 25 26, 27, 28, 29 [Jeroboam II](#) in Israel --

This king was the fourth of [Jehu](#)'s dynasty. How like God, to abundantly fulfil His promise (2 Kings 10:30). This was the longest reign of any of the kings in Israel. The Syrians had in past reigns cut Israel short; at Hamath in the north, and all down the Jordan to the Dead Sea. The victories which marked the reign of this intrepid soldier, and which were the means of the restoration of Israel of the lost territory, were granted by the goodness of God, who was touched by the miseries of His people, and the remembrance of His covenant. The people should have used this season for repentance; but they put this from them. Their iniquities were too deep-seated to warrant that full deliverance which God was prepared to have given them. There was some lessening of the bitter bondage, as though to show what God would have done; but not more, since they would not repent. He is long-suffering indeed, and not willing that any should perish; yet our sins seem often to compel Him to proceed to extremities, that by fire He may deliver us from all evil.

Jonah, Hosea, Joel, and Amos prophesied at this period. They foretold the earthquake which took place in this reign; the invasion of locusts and caterpillars; and the terrible drought.

2 KINGS 15 ISRAEL'S DOWNFALL

2 Kings 15:1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 [Azariah](#) or [Uzziah](#) in Judah. --

[Uzziah](#)'s reign was very splendid; fifty-two years of almost unbroken prosperity; the story of it is told in 2 Chronicles 26:1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23. The inspired historian here only emphasizes that the glory of his days went down in darkness. We learn from the other record, that at the close of his reign, being deprived of the invaluable direction of Zechariah, he sought to combine in himself the offices of priest and king, a prerogative which could only be realized in Christ (Zech. 6:13), and that for this he was branded with the awful curse of leprosy, which compelled his absence from the temple, till the day of his death.

2 Kings 15:8-31 The last kings of Israel. --

For more than thirty years preceding its dissolution, the northern kingdom was terribly distracted. Disintegration and slavery always follow in the wake of idolatry and disobedience. So it befell in Israel. Anarchy, idolatry, high-handed wrong, and immorality, swept like a hurricane over the land. Rent with revolution, destitute of strong wise men fit to hold the helm, unable to withstand the successive invasions of Assyria, it was indeed in a pitiable plight.

2 Kings 15:32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38 [Jotham](#), king of Judah. --

A true conception of the state of the land may be obtained from the earlier chapters of Isaiah. Wantonness, pride, luxury, oppression, rode roughshod over the land. Yet it was at this very crisis that the prophet saw his marvellous vision (2 Kings 6:1). Punishment could not be longer averted. "The Lord began to send" (2 Kings 15:37). These men were unrighteous and unholy; yet they are said to have been God-sent. And so always, while wicked men think only of executing their own malignant designs, they are really subserving the plans of the Most High (Acts 4:27, 28). But the full weight of this blow was averted during the comparatively good reign of Jotham, to fall with double force during that of his wicked son.

We are only safe and happy so long as we do what is right in the sight of God. Rightness is blessedness. If only we will dare to

take God's faith, we shall have God's companionship; not only as light, but as salvation. To do the will of God is the only clue to abiding for ever.

2 KINGS 16 JUDAH INVADED

2 Kings 16:1, 2, 3, 4 [Ahaz](#) in Judah. --

He not only passed his children through lines of fire, but seems to have burnt some of them (2 Chr 28:3). He dared to bring back the abominations of the heathen. His actions would be well-nigh incredible, did we not know something of the fickleness and evil of our own hearts. Bitter indeed was the return made to the great Vinedresser for all the care He had expended on the vine that He had planted in the very fruitful hill. Verily it brought forth wild grapes. All the abominations of Canaan were practiced by the people whom God had taken to Himself as His peculiar possession. Such a descent from the song of redemption at the Red Sea would have appeared impossible. But it came nevertheless. God foresaw it all, yet He did not relinquish His purpose. It is a great comfort to know that our God can never be surprised at any evil thing He sees in us. He loved us, notwithstanding His clear prevision of all we would cost Him. And though such love must chastise, yet it will never leave us, until it has brought us back to itself.

2 Kings 16:5, 6, 7, 8, 9 The confederacy of Israel and Syria. --

Isaiah divulges their object (Isa. 7:6). It is most desirable to read Isaiah 7, 8, 9, in which the prophet calms the fear of the people, under the shadow of this great calamity. If Judah had only relied on these successive promises, and had left God to interpose on their behalf, there would have been certain deliverance and victory. But, instead of this, a bribe was offered to the king of Assyria to do what the Almighty would have done.

How great was the blunder and crime of calling in the help of Assyria to break up the confederacy! it was in the teeth of Isaiah's most eager protestations; and it was the first step towards the invasion of the land by that very nation whose help was like the broken staff, which pierces the hand of him who leans on it.

2 Kings 16:10, 11, 12, 13,14, 15, 16 [Idolatry](#) --

The heavenly-designed altar was replaced by one modelled after that in [Damascus](#), and sacrifices offered to false gods (2 Chr 28:23). Delivered from his foes, Ahaz began to copy their idolatrous practices and to imitate the workmanship of their altars. Apparently he did not reason that the repetition of their sins would reduce him and his country to their fate. We wonder at the exchange, and yet how often do we substitute our own thoughts and plans for God's! Let us see to it that we guard our altar intact (Heb 13:10-note). What a wily and unprincipled priest was here! (2 Ki 16:16).

2 Kings 16:17, 18, 19, 20 The spoiling of the Temple. --

The laver was for the ablutions of the priests. The covert for the larger congregations of the Sabbath. The entry, from the royal palace to the Temple. Evidently Assyrian influence was very much in the ascendant; and everything was done to secure a uniformity between the ritual at [Jerusalem](#) and that of their powerful neighbors. Let us turn from this sad apostasy to the predictions of our Emmanuel (Isa. 8:8).

2 KINGS 17 CAPTIVITY

2 Kings 17:1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 Hoshea in Israel. --

The measure of their iniquities was now full. Israel in vain sought to avert its fate by appealing, not to the Lord, but to the king of Egypt. But Egypt was no match for the powerful kingdom which was arising on the banks of the Euphrates. To lean upon Pharaoh was to trust a broken reed. What agony must have been endured during the three years' siege! Shalmaneser changed the inhabitants (2 Kings 17:6 and 2 Kings 17:24), a policy which was continued by Esarhaddon (Ezra 4:2). The object was to keep the country tilled, and to make rebellion less likely and easy. But, after all, the Assyrian was the rod of the Divine justice (Isa. 10:5).

2 Kings 17:7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23 The Divine indictment against Israel. --

This chapter reads like a page from the records of the great white throne. God humbles Himself to explain the reasons for His treatment of His people. He shows that it was not without cause that He dealt with them as He did. The story of Israel's sins, in spite of His earnest entreaties, the melancholy record of God-rejection and neck-hardening, of divination and enchantment, of faithlessness and disobedience, is set down without omission or compromise; and side by side is the golden tissue of goodness and mercy. It is a strange contrast. And yet if the true story of our inner experience could be written, how much there would be in common between it and this. Let us ponder those deep expressions, "they sold themselves to do evil" (2 Kings 17:17); "[Jeroboam](#) drove Israel from following the Lord" (2 Kings 17:21). Note also the expression in 2 Kings 17:15, that we become like the objects

we follow (Ps. 115:6-note). Israel was never restored; but remained dispersed among the nations, many of them being added to the Church in after days, as addressed in 1 Peter 1:1, 2-note (see R.V.).

2 Kings 17:24-41 The story of the new settlers. --

When Israel was taken from the land it was peopled by mongrel races from [Babylon](#) (which was already under the power of Assyria), and from other places. Every nation served its own gods, and at the same time gave some kind of allegiance to **Jehovah** as the local protecting deity of the land whom it was necessary to propitiate. It is a strange story; and yet there are many among us who, while really following the idols of their own evil hearts, give a nominal reverence to the name of God, partly because they think it polite, and partly because they wish to maintain a fair appearance among their fellows. They go to a place of worship with the intention of appeasing God; while they make for themselves many an idol besides (Matt. 6:24-note; 1John 5:21).

2 KINGS 18 [SENNACHERIB](#)

2 Kings 18:1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12 [Hezekiah](#). --

There was to be some hard fighting, in [Hezekiah](#)'s reign, for existence and liberty. The foes of God and His people would come about them as an angry sea encircling a sand bank. The skies were dark with the gathering storm when [Hezekiah](#) ascended the throne, which his father had blackened with his crimes. It was wonderful that such a father as Ahaz should have had such a son; but he probably had a good mother (2 Chr 29:1, 26:5). He at once commenced a course of reform; and made the best preparation possible for meeting all the contingencies of his time by putting away the evils which had alienated the Divine protection.

In the rooting out of idolatry, and in the destruction of the brazen serpent, which had become a kind of fetish, in the same way as the crucifix has become now, he must have raised an immense amount of opposition; but he did not swerve to the right or left. What a magnificent testimony is in 2 Kings 18:6! There is no such way of meeting temptation and danger as by putting the heart right with God. Cleave to Him; depart not from following Him; keep His commandments: so shall the Lord be with you, and whithersoever you go forth, He will prosper you.

2 Kings 18:13, 14, 15, 16 Sennacherib. --

It must have been a vast disappointment when the Assyrian came to invade Judah. But the invasion would probably give a great assistance to the cause of reform, arresting and warning many who thought the king too particular. It was a great mistake to bribe Sennacherib; and, like so many of our expedients, it did not avail. What a lamentable pity that [Hezekiah](#) did not, from the commencement of his trouble, throw himself on the protecting care of God! If the king had only trusted this time as he did the next, there would have been no need for the bribe. God would have delivered His people.

2 Kings 18:17-37 Rab-shakeh. --

Three years after, the generals of Sennacherib beleaguered the city, in very close quarters. It is thought by some that this bold blasphemer was an apostate Jew, hence the added force of his words. He tried to prove that the Jews had forfeited Divine protection (2 Kings 18:22); that the Assyrians had come at the bidding of **Jehovah** (2 Kings 18:25); and that He would not be able to do more for His people than other gods (2 Kings 18:34).

The Jews met the taunts of Rab-shakeh in silence. It was wise policy. It is infinitely better to hand over our wrongs to God, who will avenge our cause and see that right is done, than to defend ourselves by argument and force. The only exception is when a simple explanation may relieve the cause we love from some evil imputation. Rab-shakeh could not understand the attitude of the king and people. Men of the world cannot read our secrets. God's hidden ones are as great a mystery as Christ was; but one day they will be manifested with Him.

2 KINGS 19 [SENNACHERIB OVERTHROWN](#)

The lesson of this chapter needs but few words. There is no such resort for the troubled soul as God Himself. Twice did [Hezekiah](#) seek the face of the Lord.

2 Kings 19:1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 The royal anguish. -

In the first instance, when [Hezekiah](#) heard the blasphemous words so proudly spoken before the walls of [Jerusalem](#), he went up into the house of the Lord, and entreated Isaiah to join him in supplication. That bowed form of [Hezekiah](#) before the altar of God, while his servants and ministers were with Isaiah, is a beautiful emblem of the true way of meeting trouble. And it is very blessed, when our cause is so identified with God's, that we can appeal for help on that account.

All through this crisis Isaiah acted the part of a patriot and hero. He poured forth words of burning eloquence and fire, denouncing

the Assyrian, predicting his doom, and encouraging the people. The one figure which stands out in bold relief amid the storm is that of the intrepid prophet, who even dares to compose a funeral ode for the burial of the imperious invader. There is hardly anything in all literature so sublime as Isaiah 10:1-34, 11:1, 2, 3, 4, 5,6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 12:1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 13:1-22, 14:1-32.

2 Kings 19:8-34 The blasphemous letter. --

The siege of [Jerusalem](#) was postponed till Sennacherib could undertake it in person, and the hostile forces drew off. But a letter was sent full of insult and blasphemy and proud certainty of ultimate success. For the second time, [Hezekiah](#) sought the face of the Lord, and prayed before Him. This was not the last letter which has been written with the ink of gall and bitterness, and sent to the servants of God. It is always best to lay such before God, and leave Him to answer them (2 Kings 19:14).

There is great beauty and earnestness in the king's prayer (2 Kings 19:15, 16, 17, 18, 19). Supplications for help blend with holy argument and reasonings and allusions to the effect of the issue on the Divine glory.

In each case God sent an answer of peace through Isaiah. The second of them is a magnificent ode, full of heroic and ecstatic faith, and breathing the spirit of undaunted and unwavering trust. That was probably the sabbatic year, for the produce was promised to be sufficient for two years; but in any case, the sabbatic calm had entered the prophet's soul. They that believe enter into rest. And as in the center of the candle flame there is a vacuum of perfect safety, so amid alarm we may find in Christ's care a resting-place so happy and secure that we too may relieve ourselves of our burdens and sing triumphal odes on the very eve of the battle. There is no lack to them that trust in God.

2 Kings 19:35, 36, 37 The enemy's destruction. --

How brief and significant the record! One of the angels was enough; how strong they must be! It is very foolish to wage war with God. Out of this memorable episode sprang Psalm 76.

2 KINGS 20 HEZEKIAH'S PRAYER

2 Kings 20:1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 [Hezekiah's](#) sickness. --

One trouble often follows another. With [Hezekiah](#) the invasion of Assyria was followed by severe sickness. This was apparently in the same year; hence, "I will defend this city" (2 Kings 20:6).

Accumulated troubles present a platform for accumulated deliverance. We may understand from the prophet's announcement that the natural result of the disease would have been death. But an arrest was put on the ordinary course of things by the miraculous interposition of God, in answer to prayer.

Who does not know what it is to turn the face to the wall in unutterable anguish? We must get where God alone can read us. When we cannot be as private as we would wish, let us not discontinue our devotions, but be as private as we can. [Hezekiah](#) may have quoted the promise made to David (1 Kings 8:25), and longed for a respite; partly because life and immortality were not brought to light, and partly because he may have desired to finish his reforms. God always see our tears and hears our prayers, though He does not always answer us promptly and satisfactorily to our poor sense. The figs were, perhaps, rather the means of stimulating faith than the cause of cure.

With all our care we cannot add one cubit to our life; but God can. He assigns the number of years we have to live, and knows exactly when their number will be up. Oh, to spend each hour as being His gift as much as were the fifteen years of [Hezekiah's](#) life. God does not always prolong life in answer to prayer, and we should always leave such matters submissively with Him; because He may see reasons why it would be far better for us to be removed at once from this world of temptation and sorrow.

2 Kings 20:8, 9, 10, 11 The sign. --

The dial was probably a series of steps on which an upright pole cast a shadow, the hours being marked by the concurrence of the shadow with the edge of the steps. It appears that there was a partial eclipse of the sun in [Jerusalem](#) at this time, on January 11, B.C. 680, but it is not likely that this would account for this remarkable phenomenon, which was doubtless due to some Divine power which we cannot understand. But the shadow might be affected, without any necessary interference with the movements of the planetary system.

2 Kings 20:12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21 The penalty of ostentation. --

What a lost opportunity not to show these men that the sun was, after all, but a servant in the hand of Israel's God! If [Hezekiah](#) had been taken away by early death, he would never have incurred the terrible words of 2 Kings 20:17. Let us watch against the sin of show and pomp. At the best we are only caretakers and stewards. We have nothing that we have not received. But if we forget this,

and yield to pride and vainglory, we are liable to forfeit all.

2 KINGS 21 MANASSEH'S WICKEDNESS

2 Kings 21:1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 [Manasseh's sins](#). --

Such sin is revealed in this chapter as recalls the worst abominations of the heathen; and this of the redeemed people of God, incited by the son of the good [Hezekiah](#)! A pious father cursed with a wicked son -- not the last time, alas! And it is the more wonderful, as he was born after the marvellous deliverances in the State, as well as in the royal home. He carried his sacrilege into the precincts of the holy Temple, and introduced the very worst forms of idolatry. How sad the record, that they did even more evil than the nations whom the Lord destroyed before Israel!

2 Kings 21:10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18 [The predicted doom](#). --

There could be only one result to all this: that the Lord's help should be withdrawn, and that they should be left to reap the bitter harvest of their sins. God does not cast us off till we have cast Him off; and even then He punishes us by withdrawing to His place only till we acknowledge our offense and seek His face again. Our only defense and salvation consist in our union with God; His deliverance around us, His grace within. But directly we yield to sin, it is as if some obstruction had come into the channel of communication; and the waterfalls in the fountain, but not because of any failure in the cistern.

The line and plummet (2 Kings 21:13) were used to mark off those, in a long line of captives, who were reserved for life or condemned to death. The wiping of the dish is very expressive. The people endorsed their king in what he did, and they were therefore to share his fate. The blood of innocents (2 Kings 21:16) aggravated their case. The Lord was about to leave His people to suffer the results of their sins, that they might learn by contrast what an awful thing it was to forfeit His protecting care (Hosea 5:14, 15).

In this reign, Hosea, Joel, Nahum, Habakkuk, and Isaiah lived and prophesied. It is recorded by tradition that the last of these was sawn asunder (Heb. 11:37); and perhaps the blood of the other four was included in that which [Manasseh](#) shed. The more sin, the more warning voices; but the greater light, the darker sin.

2 Kings 21:17-18 [Manasseh's death](#). --

We learn from 2 Chronicles 33:1-25 the story of [Manasseh's](#) repentance and acceptance with God. In his affliction he sought the Lord. Such is the gain of pain. But his personal repentance could not obliterate the terrible results of his sins or their effect in incurring the penalty of captivity. We may be pardoned; but there is a harvest which even pardon does not avert.

2 Kings 21:19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 26

Amon's reign was short and inglorious, and was ended by assassination (2 Kings 21:26). He was not stayed by the example of his father's sins or regrets from following the sinful courses to which from childhood he had been inured. "He forsook the Lord, ...and walked not in the way of the Lord" (2 Kings 21:22). As the twig is bent the tree grows. Oh parents, remember that example is more decisive than words. You may adopt for yourselves, in maturer life, a holier and better course; but you can never eradicate the evil influences exerted on your children.

2 KINGS 22 [JOSIAH](#), THE BOY-KING

2 Kings 22:1, 2 [Josiah's good reign](#). --

Aged eight on his accession to the throne, he seems from the first to have chosen the paths of goodness. In the midst of his father's court, that young life grew up as a young palm in the desert waste. Perhaps one of the prophets, or some attendant, had made him the subject of special care and love, teaching him in the ways of the Lord. In his sixteenth year, while he was still young, he began to seek God yet more earnestly; and four years after the religious life within him prompted him to begin a great work of reform (2 Chr 34:2, 3).

2 Kings 22:3, 4, 5, 6, 7 [The repair of the Temple](#). --

Other reforms had been probably effected throughout the land; but it was not till the eighteenth year of his reign that this great work of the cleansing of the Temple, and the restoration of the holy rites, actually began. This is work to which we must all give our heedful care. The temple of the body must be kept pure for the Holy Ghost; and the inner shrine of the spirit should be maintained=in perpetual repair.

The money for the Temple work seems to have been contributed voluntarily, but there was a beautiful piety in the workmen which

made them deal faithfully. There is no doubt that real religion makes better masters and servants; hence so many find it worth their while to feign it.

2 Kings 22:8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14 The discovery of the Book of the Law. --

It is at such times, when rubbish is being cleared, and breaches made good, that the Word of God is found; and it comes home to us with new freshness, and becomes first the critic, and then the joy of our hearts. This was the Temple copy, laid beside the ark in the most holy place (Deut. 31:25, 26). Some say that it had been hidden by some faithful priest during the ungodly reigns of [Manasseh](#) and Amon.

Probably Shaphan would read Dt 28:1-68, 29:1-28, 29, 30:1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6-17, 18, 19, 20; and there was plenty in these chapters to fill the young king with dismay, if, as was not improbable, the whole was totally new to him. Oh, to read the Bible always with a particular reference to oneself! -- and then, like [Josiah](#), to proceed at once to put its injunctions and precepts into practice. There is great encouragement here. One copy of the Scriptures, like a seed long buried, suddenly fructified, and led to a reformation. So was it when Luther began to read that copy of the Vulgate at Erfurt. One copy of the Bible is enough to upheave a nation.

2 Kings 22:14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20 The mission to [Huldah](#). --

Ahikam was a friend of [Jeremiah](#) (Jer. 26:24); Achbor, or Abclon, a leading courtier. Zephaniah may have been too young; [Jeremiah](#) was at [Anathoth](#). So, as the need was urgent, they went at once to [Huldah](#), the wife of Shallum, well known for her prophetic gifts.

There was evidently a Godly remnant in [Jerusalem](#), who had survived the massacre of the former reigns; of these [Huldah](#) was one. Women should always live in the uplands, beholding sights and hearing voices which are hidden from the rest of us. The greatest peculiarity is a thoughtless and irreligious woman.

The college was the name, not for a school, but for a particular quarter of the city. The decree had gone forth as against Sodom; but as in the case of Lot, so here, the people of God are delivered.

2 KINGS 23 RENEWING THE COVENANT

2 Kings 23:1, 2, 3 The Law is read. --

What the king had found good for himself, he gave to his people. It is a good habit to circulate the Scriptures. And how beautiful it was that this covenant should be formed. Let us give ourselves to be only, utterly, and always for God; and then set ourselves to destroy evil, beginning with ourselves.

2 Kings 23:4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20 Idolatry destroyed. --

It is almost incredible to find that the emblems of the most obscene idolatry had been set up in the Temple, and that the holy place had been desecrated by abominable rites. But is there not a solemn warning to us all? [Baal](#)-worship is simply the adoration of human energy, and the Asherah the license of love. May there not be more of these than we know, even in Christian hearts!

The brook Kedron runs along the east and south of the city, dry in summer, but after heavy rains a torrent bed. There the impurities of Temple and city were emptied. The grove of 2 Kings 23:6 was the mystic tree. Some of the levitical priests, who had fallen into the habit of officiating in high places, were degraded from their office, though still maintained from the Temple revenues. [Topheth](#) (2 Kings 23:10) was so called from toph, a drum, which was used to drown the cries of terrified children made to pass through the fire at this place. The filth of the city was collected here and burned; hence the allusion of Mark 9:44.

Not satisfied with removing every vestige of idolatry from his own dominions, [Josiah](#) made a tour of the land once inhabited by the ten tribes; and especially destroyed the ancient altar at Bethel, as had been predicted more than three hundred years before his birth (1 Kings 13:2). From that time the desolation foretold by Hosea and Amos has never been disturbed; and Bethel, the house of God, has literally become Bethaven, the house of nothing.

2 Kings 23:21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28 The Passover observed. --

When the old leaven was cleared away, they could keep the feast. There came to it, not only [Josiah](#)'s own subjects, but many of the remnant people of the ten tribes (2Chr 35:1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19).

When the purgation of evil is complete so far as we know, we may turn to eat the Passover; and we shall be at one with all the scattered people of God in the act of solemn commemoration.

2 Kings 23:29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37 [Josiah](#)'s death, and afterwards. --

These events are more fully related in 2 Chronicles 35:20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27. The end of [Josiah](#) was very tragic; it was the result of his own folly and presumption. A long God-fearing life may end in self-incurred disaster, unless we carefully walk with God to the very end. There is never a moment in the life of the most matured saint when he may lean to his own understanding. The defeat of [Josiah](#) at [Megiddo](#) is confirmed by Herodotus, and by sculptures on Pharaoh's tomb. [Jehoahaz](#) a younger son, was taken prisoner by Pharaoh, and carried to Egypt, where he died (Jer. 22:10, 11-12). [Jehoiakim](#), notwithstanding the pressure which lay on him, did evil, and hastened his ruin.

2 KINGS 24 CARRIED INTO BABYLON

2 Kings 24:1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 [Jehoiakim's](#) reign. --

Mark the emphatic statement of the second verse, "The Lord sent against him" bands of foes. [Nebuchadnezzar](#) now first appears upon the scene. He was then at the beginning of his reign (Jer. 25:1), and little realized that he was only an axe with which God hewed, the rod of His anger, the staff of His indignation. Ungodly men are sometimes permitted to vex God's people for their chastisement; the best way of escaping them is to turn instantly to God in confession and prayer. The Chaldees were evidently the flower of his kingdom (Dan. 2:1ff).

Note the entail of [Manasseh's](#) sin (2 Kings 24:3)! He had lived, been forgiven, and died years before; but Judah was irrevocably doomed for his sin. The poison had eaten so deeply into the heart of the people, that only the severest measures could eradicate its effect. "At the commandment of the Lord came this upon Judah:"

"He slept with his fathers" (2 Kings 24:6) simply means that he died; for this king was not honored with the rites of burial (Jer. 36:30).

The battle of [Carchemish](#), referred to in 2 Kings 24:7, was one of the decisive battles of the world (see Jer. 46:2).

Note that Daniel was among the captives carried away by [Nebuchadnezzar](#) in this reign (Dan. 1:1, 2-note), together with a portion of the sacred vessels of the Temple.

2 Kings 24:8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16 [Jehoiachin](#). --

The three months' reign of this king is not inconsistent with [Jeremiah's](#) prophecy concerning [Jehoiakim](#) (Jer. 36:30). [Nebuchadnezzar](#) in person joined "his servants" in the siege of [Jerusalem](#); and the king, the queen-mother, and the royal family "went out" (2 Kings 24:12), and surrendered to the [Babylonian](#) monarch. They were carried into exile, according to [Jeremiah's](#) prediction (Jer. 22:24, 25), together with "all [Jerusalem](#), and all the princes, the mighty men of valor, and ten thousand captives, and all the craftsmen and smiths" (2 Kings 24:14); leaving behind only the "poorest of the people of the land:"

The sacred vessels of the Temple remaining from the previous seizure were also carried away, and were put to profane uses in the land of exile (Da 5:2, 3-note); they were not returned to [Jerusalem](#) until the days of [Cyrus](#) (Ezra 1:7, 8, 9, 10, 11). The false prophets, who soon after the departure of the sacred vessels predicted an early return, were resisted by [Jeremiah](#) with the Divine approval; Hananiah -- one of the foremost of the misleading voices -- dying "in the same year" (the fourth year of the captivity, Jer. 28:1) according to the message of [Jeremiah](#) (Jer. 28:15,16), who (Jer. 29:10, 11) specified seventy years as the time-limit of the captivity. The prophet Ezekiel was also among the captives at this exodus, and he dates his prophecies from this year (Ezek 1:2; 40:1; 29:17). Kish the Benjamite, the ancestor of Mordecai, was also among the captive-band (Esther 2:6). It is very necessary to study the prophecies of [Jeremiah](#) and Ezekiel as illustrating the history of this period.

2 Kings 24:17, 18, 19, 20 The last of the Kings. --

[Mattaniah](#) was the uncle of the previous king, and his name was changed by [Nebuchadnezzar](#) to Zedekiah (God's Justice). He was young, and his heart was reckless and impenitent. Led on by ambassadors of neighboring states, he was enticed into a league with them against [Babylon](#), in the teeth of [Jeremiah's](#) remonstrances, who wept tears of blood over the infatuation of his fellow-countrymen. Zedekiah, blinded to all warning lights as to truth and honor (Ezek 17:15), effectually brought upon his people a yet more overwhelming destruction. How foolish and hardened is that departure of the heart from the living God which deprives it of rudder and chart, and leaves it to drift before the tide! The fear of God is the beginning of wisdom, and only those have sound understanding that keep His commandments.

2 KINGS 25 DESOLATION

2 Kings 25:1, 2, 3 [Jerusalem](#) again beseiged. --

Angered by this last traitorous revolt, the king of [Babylon](#) resolved to put an end to the separate existence of the kingdom. This

was the third siege of [Jerusalem](#). Owing to the strength of the fortifications, it lasted a year and a half, until the people were reduced to the most fearful deprivations, and perpetrated atrocities which are almost inconceivable (Lam. 2:20, 21, 22; 4:3). [Jeremiah](#) earnestly persuaded the king to surrender (Jer. 38:17); and if only the prophet had been allowed to sway the king's counsels, much of the misery of the siege would have been averted; but it seemed as if a judicial blindness had been allowed to veil his eyes, and to harden his heart to his destruction.

2 Kings 25:4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11,12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21 The final scenes. --

Two prophecies, apparently contradictory, were fulfilled (Jer 32:4; Ezek. 12:13). The former prophecy, where it is said the king's eyes shall behold the eyes of his captor, was true; yet only as far as the time of his surrender. Ezekiel's word that "yet shall he not see the land though he die there" foretold his dire fate in the loss of his eyesight. With [Babylonian](#) savagery [Nebuchadnezzar](#), after slaying the king's sons before his eyes, quenched the light for ever, and the king was "bound with fetters of brass and carried to [Babylon](#)" (2 Kings 25:7).

The retribution was terrible: [Zedekiah](#) blinded and a captive; the Temple, after four hundred and twenty years of varying fortunes, in ashes; the city walls and buildings razed to the ground; the remnant of the precious things carried off; the principal men put to death, while a miserable handful of eight hundred persons were driven into captivity.

2 Kings 25:22, etc. The remnant. --

The poorest only were left, under [Gedaliah](#), [Jeremiah](#)'s friend (Jer 26:24; 40; 41). His murder by Ishmael, who was jealous of him, was the last drop of anguish in the prophet's cup. In spite of his earnest protestations, the people deserted their own land, and settled in Egypt (Jer. 44:1), and the land was left desolate for seventy years to keep her sabbaths. Thus ended the kingdom of Judah; and thereafter the Jews became a scattered people: though destined to pass through two more extreme agonies, one of which befell them under Titus, the last awaits them still.

Such is the vengeance of God. He pleads along with man; but if he will not turn, then He whets His sword, and becomes the terrible avenger of sin. Such a story as this makes it possible to understand the anguish of the Hereafter, where men receive the reward of bad things done in the body. But, amid all, we recall the tears of the Book of Lamentations, like the tears of the Son of God. There is that in God which weeps while He chastises, which cries, "How shall I make thee as Admah and set thee as Zeboim?" Nor are tears all. He is the Redeemer. He gathers again the outcasts of Israel. There will be a return from the captivity, because "He delighteth in mercy"