

Continued from the February Issue

Isaiah Forty-nine, continued

We have noticed that the first part of Isaiah forty-nine contains a wonderful declaration by "the Servant of the Lord" of the work to which God has called Him. He recounts the promise that the Lord will sustain Him in the performance of this work and will cause its results to extend to the very ends of the world. It is no wonder that in verse thirteen the prophet utters an exclamation of great joy over God's mercy.

In marked contrast to this we now find in verse fourteen that Zion ^{makes} ~~utters~~ a despairing complaint. She finds it impossible to recognize the wonders of the promises which have been given. She says, "The Lord hath forsaken me, and my Lord hath forgotten me."

The predictions given in our present section of Isaiah are so astounding and overwhelming that ~~they have to be explained~~ ^{the prophet needs to explain them} little by little. Only gradually can it dawn on the hearer exactly what is the full import of these wonderful promises ~~that the Lord has given~~. The revelations given to Isaiah contain a depth of meaning far beyond what can be immediately grasped. Much in them which becomes crystal clear in the light of the actual fulfillment in the New Testament must have been extremely difficult for the people who originally heard it to grasp.

In view of this it is no wonder that Zion should recur to her old complaint of incredulity and despair. She fears that everything is at an end for her. She is in bondage, in suffering, in exile far from home.

In Isaiah 49:15-53 ^{50:3} God answers the complaint of Zion. Before we examine His answer it is necessary that we note exactly who it is that has made the complaint. Literally, Zion indicates the southeastern hill of Jerusalem, on which David's palace was built. The term is often extended to stand for the entire city of Jerusalem. In the passage before us, however, it is easy to see that the complaint does not represent the despair of a bit of ground, or of the earth and rock which formed the hill on which David's palace stood. The complainant is not a city, but a people described