

hill-top, and every feature of the landscape as far as the eye can see, consist of stones—stones everywhere—in many places many feet in depth. "The land is one of waste and desolate and ruined cities," nearly as much so now as in the day of the prophet Ezekiel.

35. Like the garden of Eden. Eden was the ideal of natural luxuriance and beauty. The whole passage states a promise that the captives in Chaldea could hardly have been expected to believe, so utterly contrary did it run to the course of facts. But it was literally fulfilled, for in the days of our Saviour there was not a more fertile land in all the world than Judea, Samaria, Perea, and Galilee, and we have no reason to doubt that God's providence is quite equal to turning Palestine once more into a marvel of fertility.

37. I will yet for this be inquired of.

This passage of Holy Scripture is as deficient in material for critical notes as it is full and rich in lessons of an expository and practical character. And this fact is characteristic of the word of God. Those portions which are best adapted for religious edification and comfort stand in little need of critical discussions, and are so plain that a child can understand them. They constitute, moreover, by far the larger part of the Bible.

Verse 25. Sprinkle. This word (in the Hebrew) is used in Ezek. 10. 2, for the scattering of coals; in 2 Chron. 34. 4, and Job 2. 12, for scattering dust; in Isa. 28. 25, for scattering seeds; and in Hos. 7. 9, for sprinkling gray hairs upon the head. But generally the reference is to the sprinkling of blood (as in Exod. 29. 20; Lev. 1. 5; Num. 18. 17; and Ezek. 43. 18), and in connection with the mention of **clean water**, as here, it becomes a metaphor of purification, spiritual cleansing.

26. Stony heart . . . flesh. Here again material images are used to denote a purely spiritual religious conception.

29. Call for the corn. As if the corn were a thing of life, God will issue his call to it to spring up and grow and produce abundant fruit.

33. Cause you to dwell in the city. Rather, "cause the cities to be inhabited;" that is, to be again filled with people.

35. Eden. The word suggests that the land of Israel will be like a paradise regained. Comp. the "new earth" of Isa. 65. 17; 66. 22; and Rev. 21. 1.

37. Inquired of. Or, "I will let myself be inquired of." Comp. the emphatic use of this word in chap. 14. 3. **With men like a flock.** Hebrew, "like a flock of men;" or, if we follow the Masoretic pointing, which puts the article before flock, "like the flock—men." It seems best to discard the article supplied by the Masorites, and

God wants prayer. If there were no other reason for prayer, the very act puts the human soul into a position where it can more readily receive divine blessings; and the thought in the prophet's mind may have been something like that which was afterward expressed in the New Testament, "Ye have not, because ye ask not; ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss."

38. The holy flock. Immense droves of sheep and lambs were annually taken to Jerusalem for sacrifice and feasting. In our Lord's day perhaps two millions of people came up to Jerusalem at the passover, and for their consumption in food and in sacrifice enormous numbers of animals were required. So large, says the prophet, shall be the increase of the population of the land which, when he spoke, was almost utterly deserted.

CRITICAL NOTES.

construe the word as in the next two clauses, which should all be read together, without any break between verses 37 and 38, as follows: "Like a flock of men, like a flock of holy ones, like a flock of Jerusalem." The allusion in the last clause is to the immense flocks of sheep and other cattle brought to Jerusalem at the great feasts. Comp. 2 Chron. 35. 7.

The Lesson Council.

Question 2. In what sense is the word "heart" used in the Scripture?

As (1) the thinking, reasoning part of man; (2) the inner thought, or purpose; (3) the conscience, as when on the day of Pentecost men were "pricked in the heart;" (4) the understanding, as in 1 Cor. 2. 9, but chiefly as (5) the emotional part of our nature; (6) the fountain and seat of the moral life, the springs of desire, will, purpose, and affection; (7) the central soul itself, that which constitutes the moral nature. This is its commonest meaning, and is that of Ezekiel in his frequent usages; and hence it is a prophecy not only that the hard, immoral nature of Jews which lusted after idols should be transformed, but also of that central fact of gospel salvation, Regeneration, a moral nature transformed by the Holy Spirit.—*Rev. A. Inwood.*

The term "heart" occupies an important place in Scripture. Its psychological position is more fundamental than "soul." It is the place where desires originate and where self-consciousness is developed. The "soul," as the "ego," comes to a knowledge of itself in the "heart." The biblical view of the "heart" may be summarized as follows: 1. It is the home and source of moral activity. 2. Hence it is the seat of the conscience. 3. It is the fountain-head of the affections. 4. It is