

sings this song sings it with his back to the dark; his eyes are full of the light of a day that can never end. When the missionaries first came to England it was this very thing that won their way for them. The shadow of death rested on the land. Men said they were like birds that flew into the hall out of the night, spent a few moments in the dim firelight, and then passed again into the dark. But "the morning light" came with the name of Jesus; the darkness disappeared, and they found themselves men "with all the day before them".

So it is also *the song of Zion's war*. We are not going to lose that word "war" out of the world's vocabulary. We will keep the word, but we will change its meaning. Instead of seeking the death of men, we will seek their life. There will be unceasing conflict against all things that wound men and slay them. We will fight drink, lust, ignorance, cruelty, greed, and all the evils that shame our King. The orb *must* come under the cross!

Therefore it is also *the song of salvation's river*. Some of the best songs in the world have been sung about rivers. "Sweet Afton", for instance. But when all other rivers run dry this will still flow on. "There is a river", sang the old singer, "the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God." A strange, mystic stream whose murmur can be heard all the world over. Once tasted, its waters quench every thirst, and renew the heart in lasting peace and power. Shiloh's waters run softly, but they are waters out of the rock nevertheless. "And that Rock is Christ."

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### Pen Pictures of Great Prophets

By Rev. J. M. Duncan, D.D.

#### IV. EZEKIEL

"God Is Strong" or "God Strengthens", the name Ezekiel means; and in the life story of the prophet we see the wonderful might of Jehovah moving irresistibly on his heart and filling him with the spirit of dauntless courage in speaking the divine message to his people.

Ezekiel was an exile. He belonged to the company who were carried away from Judah to Babylon in B.C. 597,—the elite of the

nation. There these expatriated Jews dwelt in a colony by themselves, in fairly easy circumstances and enjoying a measure of liberty and self-government, forming a little world of their own, yet looking back to their native land with passionate longing and keeping up active intercourse with Jerusalem.

But before going, with so many of his countrymen, to Babylon, Ezekiel had lived through stirring incidents in his own land. He could recall the battle of Megiddo in B.C. 608, where the good king Josiah was slain, and Necho, king of Egypt, became the overlord of Judah. As a priest in Jerusalem, he had seen Jehoahaz placed on the throne by the choice of the people, only to be dethroned and imprisoned after three months by Necho, who replaced him by Jehoiakim, who became king as a vassal of Egypt. Then came the defeat of Egypt by Nebuchadnezzar in B.C. 604, when Jehoiakim became subject to Babylon; his rebellion three years later; Nebuchadnezzar's siege of Jerusalem during which Jehoiakim died, to be succeeded by his son Jehoiachin. The siege ended in the surrender of the city and the captivity of B.C. 597.

Ezekiel had come under the influence of Jeremiah. Like that great prophet, he was convinced that, for the sins of the people, Jerusalem would be destroyed and the temple laid waste.

The fall of Jerusalem in B.C. 586, under Zedekiah, cuts the ministry of Ezekiel in twain. Before that event, his prophecies deal largely with the coming and certain destruction of the city and temple. After it he encourages his people with the hope of their return to their own country and the restoration of their capital.

Ezekiel is the prophet of visions. His book opens with a wonderful picture of the glory of the Lord which he was permitted to behold. Later on an angel showed to him the temple as it should be restored, and he gives a minute description of it in chs. 40-48.

There is a gospel in Ezekiel. It is the glad message that God will give a new and clean heart to each one coming to Him in penitence and faith. And along with the gospel there is the warning, that each one who obstinately sins against God must bear the consequences of his rebellion.