

prophets had to stand in competition with heathen diviners, and they never veiled or compromised their superior position or refused to take righteous advantage of their ascendancy (Dan. ii. 27, 28; Isa. xlv. 24-26).

Look at the contrast. On the one side we find the sooth-sayers, magicians, astrologers, necromancers, and wizards that chirp and mutter (Isa. viii. 19), on the other side, the prophets and servants of Jehovah; on the one side, the dark divination of man's superstition, on the other, the luminous wisdom of the Lord; on the one side, the impotence and stupidity of idol gods manufactured of wood and metal, on the other, the eternal strength and righteousness of Jehovah, His wisdom in covenant pledges and His fidelity in fulfilment (Isa. xli. 21-24, 29; xlv. 9-20; xlvii. 12-15). This opens up one side of the prophet's work, *i.e.*, as it related to the royal court; a work among the king's counsellors.

*Secondly.—There was also the popular side of their work, i.e., their work among their own people*

It was necessary that the Jews themselves should have clear conceptions and strong convictions of Jehovah's supremacy; such conceptions and convictions as would quicken their stunted spiritual life into a strong and luxuriant growth (Isa. xlv. 3, 4).

They needed eyes, ears and hearts aroused from idolatrous and worldly stupor, that they might perceive and feel the cause of their humiliation, viz., sin (Isa. xlii. 18-25; Dan. ix. 5-8).

It was necessary that the people should return to Jehovah before they returned to Jerusalem. A change of heart was more important to them, under Jehovah's covenant, than a change of location. They needed to know the duties, feel the obligations, and appreciate the privileges of the covenant until its monotheistic principles and powers would mould their life anew and start them on a course of fidelity to Jehovah.

Then, for their encouragement, they needed some inspiring view of the future glories of Jehovah's land and people. To this work the prophets of the exile set themselves, and just such encouraging pictures are presented by Ezekiel from the fortieth chapter onward, where we find the glories of the restored wor-