

preserved the men's characters far more accurately than any description could have done. So the Hebrews used a name to indicate the man's character, his personality, himself. When at her marriage the wife's personality was legally merged in that of her husband, she was called by his name, and this custom continues. Whenever the Hebrew

wished to express forcibly the nature or office of a person, he said his name should be so and so. As the name was an expression of the personality, the use of it beforehand was a prediction of the fortunes of the person so named. The Child mentioned in the Lesson shall actually be all that is implied in these names.

## APPLICATION

*There shall be no gloom to her that was in anguish* (Rev. Ver.), v. 1. Sometimes the sorrows and trials of life come upon us thick and fast, like the drops of a pelting rain storm from which there is no shelter. But we know how the sun shines upon the rain drops and forms the beautiful many-colored bow that spans the heavens. In watching the exquisite rainbow, we forget the discomfort of the storm. And so in the brightness of God's presence, with His love shining full upon us, all the darkness flees away from our souls, and they are illuminated with a sweet and heavenly radiance.

*In the former time . . . contempt . . . in the latter time . . . glorious* (Rev. Ver.), v. 1. In these words may be written the history of Christ's kingdom. Pilate despised it,

**A Story in a Sentence** and thought he had stamped it out when he sent its Founder to the Cross. The proud Romans looked with infinite scorn upon the few poor fishermen who went out to bring the world under the sway of the gospel. In the eyes of Festus, Paul seemed to be a madman when he spoke of the power of the risen and living Christ. But every Christian century has seen that kingdom grow in extent and influence over men. It never was so glorious as to-day, and its glory and greatness will increase until the whole world is brought under the rule of its mighty King.

*Walked in darkness*, v. 2. Travelers tell of the strange conduct of Arab guides in Eastern tombs and temples. When, by some mischance, their lights go out, they begin to clap their hands and make all sorts of strange noises. They are afraid in the dark, believing the air around them to be full of demons, whom they thus try to scare away.

Deeper and more dreadful is the darkness of those who are away from Christ. Their pathway is full of fears. They are afraid of life's perils and trials, for they have not His strength in which to meet them; of death, for they are not united with Him who vanquished the grave; of judgment, for they have not made Him who sits on the throne their friend; of the future, for it promises them nothing but woe. How foolish to walk amid these terrors, when in a moment they may be scattered through simple trust in the Saviour!

*Upon them hath the light shined*, v. 2. Upon whom? Upon those who were in the shadow, and looked toward the light. Those outside the cathedral cannot see the richness of the colors or the beauty of the figures in the pictured window; neither can those within who will not look. But he who in the gloom of the great building looks toward the painted glass, will see nothing else worth gazing at. So with us. Only when we stand in the shadow of our sins do we fully realize the beauty and radiance of the Saviour, who died for our sins and became thereby the Light of the world.

*Joy in harvest*, v. 3. Ninety million bushels of wheat and more of golden grain were garnered in last autumn from the fertile prairies of the West. Plenty and prosperity are the pleasant results, bring gladness of heart to the people of the land. There is another harvest. It belongs to God. It is made up of precious human souls. We may have a share in the blessed work of gathering it in. And no joy of earthly reaping time can compare with theirs who, at the last, shall have sheaves to bear into the presence of the Lord of the harvest.