

book (Rev. Ver.) ; part of the report to the king. *Read therein before the king* (Rev. Ver.). 2 Kgs. 22 : 8, 10 says "read it", that is, the whole book, implying that it must have been comparatively short. *He rent his clothes* ; overwhelmed with terror, for the wrath of Jehovah was likely to be poured out on him and his people. There were many curses written in the book (v. 24) against those who forsook Jehovah and made sacrifice to other gods. When we read such a passage as the 28th chapter of Deuteronomy, we understand why Josiah rent his clothes.

Vs. 20, 21. *The king commanded.* He sent a deputation to *enquire of the Lord*, by going to some prophet who could speak in God's name. *For me.* This was a personal matter with the king. He would know his own sin and his own duty. *For them, left in Israel* ; those in the Northern kingdom who had not been carried away by the Assyrians. *Judah.* 2 Kgs. 22 : 13 says "all Judah", the Southern kingdom. Josiah was concerned for all his people. *Great is the wrath of the Lord* ; against His people's sin. *Not kept the word of the Lord.* The king saw the root cause of his nation's troubles in their disobedience to God.

The king's messengers went to one Huldah, called "the prophetess". Huldah's message was that the king had heard indeed the Word of God ; wrath and destruction were coming, but Josiah himself would be spared. He would be gathered to his fathers in peace

before the dread catastrophe befell his people. Vs. 22-28.

III. The Scriptures Obeyed, 29-33.

Vs. 29, 30. *Gathered...all the elders* ; the heads of clans and families, to consult with them and secure their cooperation. *Went up into the house of the Lord.* There confession was made for the nation, with deep humiliation and earnest intercession. But there was more : the king turned with his people to God "with full purpose of, and endeavor after, new obedience". *All the men of Judah*, etc. It was a popular assembly, including all classes. *Read in their ears* ; as a fitting preparation for the step they were to take. *The book of the covenant* ; the book containing the terms of the covenant : God would be their God if they, by obedience, approved themselves His people.

Vs. 31-33. *The king stood in his place.* 2 Kgs. 23 : 3 says, "stood by a pillar" ; probably by the door of the temple where he was wont to stand in religious assemblies. *Made a covenant before the Lord* ; solemnly calling upon God and pledging himself and his people to love and serve Him. The terms of the covenant are taken from Deuteronomy (see Deut. 6 : 17 ; 10 : 12, 13 ; 13 : 4 ; 26 : 16). *He caused all...to stand to it* ; formally to take on themselves the obligation of the covenant. *Took away...abominations* ; destroyed idol worship. *They departed not* ; but continued steadfast in their obedience to Jehovah.

APPLICATION

Hilkiah found a book of the law, v. 14. The finding of God's Word has ever brought joy and blessing to those making the discovery. It meant much to

A Blessed
"Find"

Martin Luther, when, in the convent at Erfurt, his eyes rested on the pages of the Book divine which had hitherto been hidden from him. One tells of the gladness and hope kindled in the heart of a little German girl, who, by seeming chance, picked up from the floor of her father's printing office a torn bit of paper. It read, "God so loved the world, that He gave",—the rest of the sentence was missing. She could not then find out what it was that God gave, but she was at once attracted to a God

who loved and gave something. If the spelling out of one broken sentence from the Bible could waken such delight and holy wonderment, what springs of comfort and inspiration should we find in the scriptures of the Old and New Testament !

Shaphan carried the book to the king, v. 16. While the Bible is for private meditation, it is also the most public of all books. It was

fitting that it should be put into the hand of the head of the nation, and that through him it should be made known to the whole people. Its message is for all. It is the handbook of king and common man alike. In it and through it we may hear the voice of the King

For King
and Commoner