



Smithsonian Institution

National Museum of African American History and Culture

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soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine: the soul that sinneth, it shall die. One man was as much regarded by him as that of another; He had the life or souls of the father as absolutely at His disposal, as that of the son; and He could have no motive for letting one escape with impurity in order to punish the other in his stead. the soul that sinneth shall die. We must remember that all souls are mine, says God. Equally so I am the Father. Behold, all souls are mine; as the soul of the father so also the soul of the son is mine; the soul that sinneth it shall die. The sinning soul shall die. The words imply not only ownership, absolute authority on the part of God, but, fatherly affection towards the whole human race which he created and formed.

II. The Oppressed Rescued. (VV. 11-16) (11) For thus saith the Lord God; Behold, I, even I, will both search my sheep, and seek them out. Jehovah is the Shepherd of his sheep, not any one human individual. For the prophet the words pointed to that vision of a restored Israel, which was the expectation of the ancient prophets and floated before the minds of the apostles, and to which St. Paul looked forward as the solution of the great problems of the world's history.

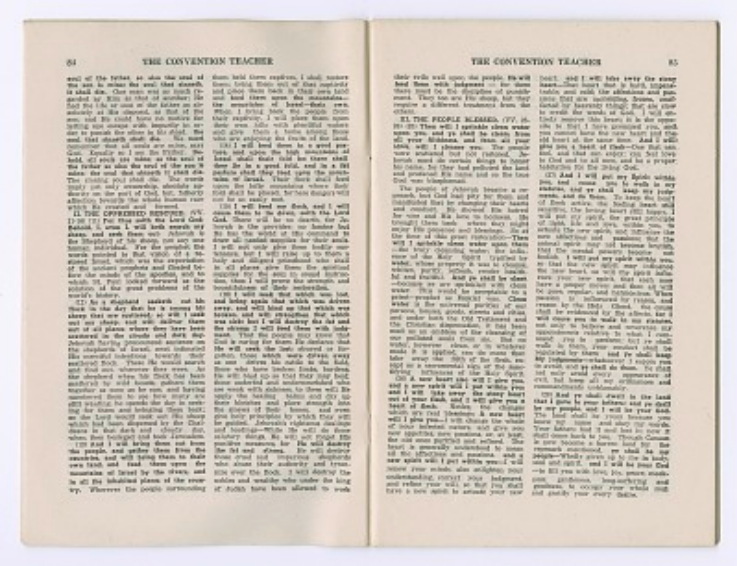
(12) As a shepherd seeketh out his flock in the day that he is among his sheep that are scattered; so will I seek out my sheep, and will deliver them out of all places where they have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day. Jehovah having pronounced sentence on the shepherds of Israel, next intimated His merciful intentions towards their scattered flock. These He would search and find out, wherever they were. As the shepherd when his flock has been scattered by wild beasts, gathers them together as soon as he can; and having numbered them to see how many are still wanting, he spends the day in seeking for them and bringing them back; so the Lord would seek out His sheep which had been dispersed by the Chaldeans in that dark and cloudy day, when they besieged and took Jerusalem.

(13) And I will bring them out from the people, and gather them from the countries, and will bring them to their own land, and feed them upon the mountains of Israel by the rivers, and in all the inhabited places of the country. Wherever the people surrounding

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them held them captives, I shall restore them; bring them out of that captivity and place them back in their own land and feed them upon the mountains - the mountains of Israel - their own. When I bring back the people from their captivity, I will place them upon their own hills with plentiful waters and give them a home among those who are enjoying the fruits of the land.

(14) I will feed them in a good pasture, and upon the high mountains of Israel shall their fold be: there shall they lie in a good fold, and in a fat pasture shall they feed upon the mountains of Israel. Their flock shall feed upon the lofty mountains where their fold shall be placed, for here dangers will not be so easily met.



(15) I will feed my flock, and I will cause them to lie down, saith the Lord God. There will be no dearth, for Jehovah is the provider; no famine but He has the world at His command to draw all needed supplies for their soul. I will not only give them bodily sustenance, but I will raise up to them a holy and diligent priesthood who shall in all places give them the spiritual supplies for the soul in sound instruction, thus I will prove the strength and bountifulness of their restoration.

(16) I will seek that which was lost, and bring again that which was driven away, and will bind up that which was broken, and will strengthen that which was sick: but I will destroy the fat and the strong: I will feed them with judgment. That the people may know that God is caring for them He declares that He will seek the lost; strayed or forgotten, those which were driven away as one drives his cattle to the field, those who have broken limbs, burdens, He will bind up so that they may heal; those underfed and undernourished who are weak with sickness, to them will He apply the healing balms and dry up their blotches and place strength into the sinews of their bones, and even give holy principles by which they will be guided. Jehovah's righteous dealings and leadings - While He will do those salutary things, He will not forget His punitive measures, for He will destroy the fat and strong. He will destroy those cruel and imperious shepherds who abuse their authority and tyrannize over the flock. I will destroy the nobles and wealthy who under the king of Judah have been allowed to work
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THE CONVENTION TEACHER 85

their evils well upon the people. He will feed them with judgment - for them there must be the discipline of punishment. They too are His sheep, but they require a different treatment from the others.

III. THE PEOPLE BLESSED. (VV. 25-28) (25) Then I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean; from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, I will cleanse you. The people were scattered but not restored. Jehovah must do certain things to honor his name, for they had polluted the land and profaned his name and so the true god was blasphemed.

The people of Jehovah became a reproach, but God had pity for them and manifested that by changing their hearts and conduct. He showed his hatred for vice and his love to holiness. He brought them back where they might enjoy his presence and blessings. So at the time of this great restoration -- Then will I sprinkle clean water upon them -- the truly cleansing water; the influence of the holy spirit typified by water, whose property it was to cleanse, whiten, purify, refresh, render healthful and fruitful. And ye shall be clean -- because ye are sprinkled with clean water. This would be acceptable to a priest--prophet as Ezekiel was. Clean water is the universal purifier of our persons, houses, goods, streets and cities, and under both the old testament and christian dispensation, it has been used as an emblem of the cleansing of our polluted souls from sin. But no water, however clean, or in whatever mode it is applied, can do more than take away the filth of the flesh, except as a sacramental sign of the sanctifying influences of the holy spirit.

(26) A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh. Notice, the changes which are real blessings; A new heart will I give you --I will change the whole of your infected nature, and give you new appetites, new passions, or, at least, the old ones purified and refined. The heart is generally understood to mean all the affections and passions. and a new spirit will I put within you --I will renew your minds, also enlighten your understanding, correct your judgment, and refine your will, so that you shall have a new spirit to actuate your new

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heart. and I will take away the stony heart -- That heart that is hard, impenetrable, and cold; the affections and passions that are unyielding, frozen, unaffected by heavenly things; that are slow to credit the words of god. I will entirely remove this heart; it is the opposite to that I have promised you, and you cannot have the new heart and the old heart at the same time. **And I will give you a heart of flesh -- One that can feel and that can enjoy; can feel love to God and to all men, and be a proper habitation for the living god.**

(27) And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them. To keep the heart of flesh active, the feeling heart still sensitive, the loving heart still happy, I will put my spirit, the great principle of light, life and love, within you, to actuate the new spirit, and influence the new affections and passions; that the animal spirit may not become brutish, that the mental powers become not foolish. I will put my spirit within you, so that the new spirit may influence the new heart, so will my spirit influence your new spirit, that each may have a proper mover and then all will be pure, regular, and harmonious. When passion is influenced by reason, and reason by the holy ghost, the cause shall be evidenced by the affects, for I will cause you to walk in my statutes, not only to believe and reverence my appointments relative to what I command you to perform; but ye shall walk in them, your conduct shall be regulated by them and Ye shall keep my judgments -- whatsoever I enjoin you to avoid, and **ye shall do them.** Ye shall not only avoid every appearance of evil, but keep all my ordinances and commandments unblamably.

(28) And ye shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; and ye shall be my people, and I will be your god. The land shall be yours because you know my name and obey my words. Your fathers had it and lost it; now it shall come back to you. Though Canaan is now become a barren land for the reproach mentioned. ye shall be my people -- Wholly given up to me in body, soul and spirit. and I will be your god --to fill you with love, joy, peace, meekness, gentleness, long-suffering and goodness, to occupy your whole soul and gratify your every desire.

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