

The King's Highway

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"COMFORT YE, COMFORT YE MY PEOPLE"

— Isaiah 40:1 —

By Seth C. Rees

There is nothing small in this Book. But if comparisons were allowable, this chapter in the book of Isaiah would rank very high. Its sublimity of thought, its riches of imagination, and its beautiful diction are all marvelous. This chapter has exerted a mighty and lasting influence on the world leaders, for long generations. Martin Luther stretched himself upon it at the fortress of Salzburg, John Brown read it in the prison at Harper's Ferry. Oliver Cromwell leaned on it for strength in his stormy days. Daniel Webster read it over and over when he was crushed in spirit. Wordsworth praised its influence, and even Tennyson said that it was one of the five great classics of the Old Testament. I have read that an English magazine wrote to many of the most eminent scholars in the Empire and asked them what lines in prose or poetry seemed to them the most immortal. Many and varied were the answers that came back. William E. Gladstone perhaps the greatest statesman that England has ever produced, said, "Give me the 40th chapter of Isaiah."

Isaiah was a statesman of rare foresight; a man of sterling patriotism. "If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning." To a Jew there was no city in the world but Jerusalem. Fidelity was a fire in his bosom. More than Florence to Savonarola, was Jerusalem to Isaiah. Isaiah was an orator, one of the great kings of speech. He was loaded with magnificent gifts, every one of which was consecrated to God. Isaiah was both poet and prophet. Notice at least three things that he makes prominent.

THE GREATNESS OF GOD

He bathed in the atmosphere of the infinite and carried the odor of God in his garments. Great fish never swim in a millpond. Isaiah could never worship a small God. As a whale calls for a deep sea, Isaiah was always talking about a great God. "The everlasting God . . . the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary." He is so great that nations are nothing before him. He sitteth on the circle of the earth, he weigheth the mountains, and holdeth the oceans in his hand. The nations are a mere drop in the bucket. He metes out heaven with a span. So very great is our God. Do you have needs too great for him? Are your sins scarlet? Here is cleansing. Are you weak? Here is strength. What difference does it make to the ocean whether you launch a row boat on it, or a battle ship—a dreadnaught. At most, you are only a chip on the waves. Our God engineers millions of shining worlds from year to year without a vibration and every one of them comes in on the tick of his great clock. A gardener was watering flowers, when an astronomer asked him to look at an eclipse through the telescope. After looking for a time, he said, "Professor that is the slickest job I ever saw." There is an old world traveling twenty million miles a day, sometimes slower

and sometimes faster but always on schedule time. We are traveling fifty thousand miles an hour, without a jar or a vibration, never a baby awakened, never a dew drop shaken.

Stradivarius tried to make a dozen violins varying in tone, but failed. Frederick the Great tried to make a few clocks swing their pendulums together, but gave it up. God has pendulums of different lengths swinging every way. Not one ever misses its function.

When we stood on the brink of the Grand Canyon and looked into the canyon a mile deep, and then looked across to that eternal wall of rock thirteen miles across that yawning gulch, we did not want to say a word, we did not care to hear a word from others. We were awe struck. We were dumb. I read of two men who visited the canyon. One said: "Pretty big hole, Tom."

"Oh," said Tom, "Let's go. I wouldn't give a paper of pins for it." That dreadful indescribable void was nothing to him. What was to me that most startling wonder that my eyes ever fell upon was nothing to him. When I visit the "Garden of the Gods," as I have done so many times, and stand near that natural stone spire towering one hundred and fifty feet into the air and remember that it is twenty feet in diameter at the top and about six feet in diameter at the bottom, and then remember that it has stood there in all the Rocky Mountain storms since the flood recorded in Genesis, I am filled with wonder.

When I travel through the Canadian Rockies, and stand by the glaciers of eternal ice, piled a mile high like Mt. Lowe or Mt. Wilson, and behold the ice of six thousand winters which never diminishes, I am not only chilled but thrilled and filled with wonder. Oh the mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Eternal Rock of Ages, towering so high as to make Paine and Voltaire and Bolingbroke and Ingersol look like atoms. Oh the shadow of a great Rock in a weary land!

THE GLORY OF GOD

What do I mean by the glory of God? What do I mean by the glory of any thing. I mean that the quality of the thing or person merits universal praise. The glory of God is his infinite excellence, his praise-worthiness. "Holy, holy, holy, Lord of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory." His glory is revealed in several ways.

His Holiness. It is never safe to give power to the throne until we know the character of the throne, and how the power will be used. It is not enough that we know that God is great and mighty, but we want to know the quality of his character. When I hear the chorus of heaven chanting praises to his Divine presence I ask, Why? and the answer is, "Holy, holy, holy, Lord of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory." He is the High and Holy One.

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