

involved. Certainly the valley referred to in Psalm 23 is to be thought of as a dark and gloomy place where death lurks in the shadow.

LETTER 44
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JESUS IN ISAIAH 7:14

The passage to which you refer is one which can easily prove difficult to a person who is just beginning a careful study of the prophetic books. In studying these books it is necessary to learn to understand the simpler passages first, for from them one can learn the principles with which to approach the more difficult problems.

The 14th verse of Isaiah 7 is a word of rebuke addressed to King Ahaz. In verse 13, Isaiah has strongly rebuked Ahaz for his lack of trust in God and for his determination to carry through his own selfish plan of seeking an Assyrian alliance instead of looking to God for help. In rebuking Ahaz, Isaiah informs him of God's plan to provide another head of the house of David who will be worthy of the position which Ahaz now holds. This will be God's own son, Immanuel. Verse 14 refers to Christ and to Christ alone. There is no other person to whom it can be any possible reference.

Since it does not say when Christ is going to be born, the next two verses go on to speak of the length of his life as a measuring stick. Suppose that it were to begin right away: in such a case, the prophet says, by the time that the Child would know how to make simple choices, the two kings that Ahaz fears so greatly would have disappeared from the scene of history. In the latter part of verse 15, the phrase, "that he may know to refuse the evil, and