Isaiah - Commentaries by William Kelly

The Known Isaiah, Isaiah 63:7 - 66:24: The Known Isaiah

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Founded on the vision of the judicial vintage, we have next the prophet's intercession on behalf of the Israel of God, the godly remnant as hateful to their godless brethren after the flesh as to the nations, indeed more so. Past mercies are re-called; their relationship to Jehovah pleaded; their sins confessed. Israel had destroyed themselves by their ungrateful, persistent, and shameless iniquity. Who had called them to be His own people? He was unchanged, if Abraham and Israel could not own them. Was not Jehovah better to them, ruined as they justly were, than even all their fathers? And the supplication was deepening and more urgent through ch. 64. which brings together the beginning of their national history on quitting Egypt with still more tremendous and comprehensive judgments that open their final deliverance and blessedness under their Messiah. Faith gives power to repentance; and mercy anticipated makes guilt hateful, as its accomplishment sharpens self-judgment to the uttermost. Hence the confession with which the plea is pressed on Him Who even from of old proclaimed Himself Israel's Redeemer. All goes far beyond any historic dealings, and requires us to look to the end of the age when Jerusalem shall be no more trodden down of the Gentiles, and those with whom the prophet identifies himself abase themselves in the dust before Jehovah. “The set time” will soon come.

Chapters 65. 66. are the answer to the supplication. Far from slight of Israel, Jehovah had meanwhile been inquired of by those that asked not—been found of those that sought Him not. It is the intermediate call of the Gentiles by the gospel. “I said, Behold me, behold me, unto a nation not called by my name. I have spread out my hands all the day long unto a rebellious people that walk in a way not good, after their own thoughts.” The only true sense is that given by the apostle in Rom. 10:20, 21: “Isaiah is very bold and saith. I was found of them that sought me not, I became manifest unto them that asked not of me. But unto Israel he saith, All the day long did I spread out my hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people.” The evasive efforts of the Rabbies, as well as of Grotius, Gesenius, Hahn, Hendewerk, &c., are deplorable. Nor need any believer wonder at Dr. D.'s silence (Lit. O.T. 223); for the inspired interpretation seals the unbelief and folly of rationalism, ever retreating from the light of God into nature's darkness. To those who accept the apostle's comment as the end of controversy, the conclusion only falls in with and confirms what we have learned by many proofs in the prophecy itself; that here we are in presence of the Jews cast off, not for their idolatry only but for their rejection of the Messiah, and of Gentiles meanwhile called by sovereign grace, before mercy intervenes at the end of the age to restore Israel, when the Gentile, not continuing in goodness but high-minded, shall become the object of unsparing judgment. And the moment hastens.

But in that day it will be made apparent even to themselves that not all are Israel which are of Israel. Mere flesh will prove vain. Jewish antipathy to idols (so strong after the Babylonish captivity, stronger still after the Roman conquest, and seemingly stronger of all in presence of Popish corruption and persecution) will yield to the latter-day apostacy, with the yet worse enormity of worshipping Antichrist, as already shown. So we find here, not without Pharisaism. But Jehovah will bring forth a seed to possess His mountains, His elect, His servants, His people that have sought Him. Hence while those that forsake Jehovah shall be numbered to the sword, His servants shall sing aloud and triumph in the exaltation of His name. For all is to be made new, of which Jerusalem's joy is the proof and pledge, and her weeping is no more, death being the exception and then only as a curse. The connection with chaps. 11. 12. 24-27. and 35. is marked; all converge on the day when Jehovah reigns, earth is glad, and glory dwells in Israel's land.

To interpret all this of the return from the captivity is infatuation, which directly tempts such commentators to the sin of imputing exaggeration to the prophet. The root of all is the groundless limiting of prophecy to events close at hand. The truth is that the Holy Spirit, having convicted the favored people both of idolatry and of the rejection of Messiah, looks on to the catastrophe which closes their evil career, and brings out a generation to come, in the solemn end of the age. Then a voice from the city, a voice from the temple, a voice of Jehovah that rendereth recompence to His enemies! There will be no more delay. But the day that sees a land brought forth, and a nation born at once in the godly Jewish remnant, whom their brethren hated and cast out for His name, shall behold Jehovah come with fire and His chariots like a whirlwind to render His anger with fury and His rebukes with flames of fire. For by fire and by His sword will Jehovah enter into judgment with all flesh. It is expressly the day come for the gathering of all nations and tongues, when they shall see His glory. The restoration of His people coalesces in time with His judgment of the nations. And the blessing thenceforth of Israel is to be permanent. “For as the new heavens and the new earth which I will make shall remain before me, saith Jehovah. so shall your seed and your name remain. And it shall come to pass from new moon to new moon, and from sabbath to sabbath, all flesh. shall come to worship before me, saith Jehovah: And they shall go forth and look upon the carcasses of the men that transgressed against me; for their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched; and they shall be an abhorrence unto all flesh” (66.)

What has all this to do with the close of the exile? The prediction of the Messiah is incomparably fuller than of Cyrus, and the setting forth of His unparalleled humiliation and sufferings as a sacrifice for the sins of His people no less plain than of His exaltation over kings and peoples, His judgment not only of the nations but of the wicked in Israel, where Jehovah's hand shall be known toward His servants as surely as His indignation toward His foes. It is merely trifling with a serious reader and with scripture to say “that these chapters [40-66.] form a continuous prophecy, dealing throughout with a common theme, viz. Israel's restoration from exile in Babylon” (Lit. O.T 217).

There are distinct themes, as we have seen, in the three sections of this great prophetic strain. All three look to the triumph of divine grace in Israel on their recognition of overwhelming sin. The first section alone (40.-48.) notices Babylon, Cyrus, and the Return; but even it goes far beyond all that was then realized. The second (49.-57.) charges the people with wickedness worse than idolatry through the game evil heart of unbelief in departing from a living God. The third and last shows the terrible result for the wicked pursued to the end of the age, when Jehovah delivers and blesses the godly with glory in the land, as He punishes signally the apostate transgressors. It will be a day of judgment and of blessing for all flesh; and it is idle to deny that it still awaits fulfillment. Compare vers. 6-9, and 15, 16.

If one believes all this, the grounds for questioning Isaiah's authorship, and imagining another unknown prophet a century after, sink into total insignificance. The mainstay of the argument is disproved and excluded. The prophecy as certainly treats of the Savior's atoning death and exaltation in the second part as of Babylon's fall under Cyrus in the first. And the third part sets forth the judgment on the evil and the restoration of Israel, which are still future. “Where is the disputer?”

“The servant” is the key note to all three parts; and we thus learn why “the king” would not be so appropriate here. For in the first part we have Israel the responsible servant, but altogether failing; the blind people that have eyes, and the deaf that have ears, therefore become a prey and given to the robbers. Then in the second, Messiah is substituted for Israel, formed to be His servant, as indeed already said to be His elect in Whom His soul delighted. And if man despise and the nation abhor Him, and if Israel be not gathered, Jehovah has given Him to be for a light of the nations, His salvation to the end of the earth. The gathering of Israel awaits another day; and this comes out fully in the third part, where they discover their sins, and recognize in the Redeemer Who comes to Zion Jehovah's righteous Servant; and are owned themselves now at length as His servants, His elect, when He will recompense the iniquities of their brethren and of their fathers into their bosom.

It is perfectly certain that the Messiah is the King of Isa. 9:6; 32:1, and the Servant of ch. 49-53; and it is quite true that the figure of the Servant rather than of King is here required, in order to give force to these three parts of this wonderful prophecy. Isa. 11:2 and ch. 61. 1, if compared, show how the two truths meet in the power of the Spirit of Jehovah that rested on Him: a clear evidence of the unity of the entire book. It is in Him the perfection of a Servant was found in the face of contempt and hatred, suffering and death; it is through His grace that the faithless shall yet become faithful servants, in that day afflicted and contrite in spirit, and trembling at His word. They will behold the great High Priest emerging from the sanctuary. Ours is a better portion, for we in spirit follow where He is on high, believing the things which are now reported to us through those that preached the gospel to us by (4) the Holy Spirit sent forth from heaven.

Notes on Isaiah, Isaiah 63:1-6, Notes on

These verses connect themselves with the close of chapter 62, following up the coming of the Messiah as the Deliverer of Zion, no longer forsaken but sought out, and all her dispersed children now gathered in with a most vivid sight, as it were, of His return from executing vengeance on their Gentile foes. The scene of the slaughter is laid in the land of Edom and the city of Bozrah. Horsley I consider quite wrong in denying any mention of these places here, while admitting them in chapter 34. He would translate the proper names as appellatives thus: “Who is this that approacheth all in scarlet, with garments stained from the vintage? This that is glorious,” &c. But this able man had overlooked the chapter just referred to, where the scene demands the proper names. This consideration, in my judgment, gives conclusive support to the ordinary translation.

But commentators in general contradict each other without being able to strike out divine light from the words of the prophet. Thus Origen, Theodoret, Tertullian, and Jerome, may illustrate views which have too long prevailed, so far as to lead the compilers of the English Common Prayer, to read it for the Epistle on the Monday before Easter. They actually regard the scene as prophetic of the Savior suffering for our sins, instead of seeing in it the Avenger of His long-oppressed Israel; as a pledge of mercy, not as a threat of judgment. Hence the good Bishop of Cyprus thinks the prophet here points out the Lord's ascent to heaven, lays stress on Edom as the red land, connects the pierced side and blood and water with the blood-stained garments; and sees the destruction of the devil and all his host in the treading of the winepress. Calvin justly objects to such a perversion of the prophecy; but he is quite as far from the true mark as any when he proceeds to apply it not to Christ, but simply to God Himself as such in His dealings of old with the Edomites, and other enemies of His people, when He broke them by the Assyrians of old. This is to make the word of private, isolated, interpretation, dislocating it from its true aim and scope in the illustration of the glory of the Lord Jesus, not at His first advent, but when He comes again. Luther's notion is strange enough: he regards it as a prediction of the punishment of the Jews or Synagogue, not an infliction on their enemies for their rescue in the latter day. The Jew, as is commonly known, conceives that the divine wrath which impends over Rome as the full meaning of the enemy here named Edom, is the real thought. Bishop Lowth rightly combats Grotius' hypothesis that Judas Maccabaeus and his victories make the subject of it; or the subsequent exploits of John Hyreanus, his brother Simon's son. “It may be asked [he adds], to whom, and to what event does it relate? I can only answer, that I know of no event in history to which, from its importance and circumstances, it can be applied, unless perhaps to the destruction of Jerusalem and the Jewish polity; which in the gospel is called the coming of Christ and the days of vengeance. Matt. 16:28; Luke 21:22.” This suffices to prove the bewilderment of Christian writers down to our times, which is yet more confessed by some, like the last, owning that “there is no necessity of supposing that it has been already accomplished.” Vitringa, as usual, is more sober than the mass; but there seems to be no good reason for treating, as he does, the local references as mystical; for when this great day arrives, the world will behold a wonderful reappearance, not of Israel only, but of their ancient rivals and enemies, which, like the ten tribes, men of the world assume to be forever extinct. It will be the day of reckoning for the nations, and the end will righteously answer to the beginning. At any rate, there is nothing valid enough to set aside the plain mention of these localities, nor the fact of an utter overthrow of the Gentile enemies of Israel there.

But the great truth which is overlooked by almost all is, that it is no question of the heavenly Church, but of the earthly people, Israel. The Church is removed from the scene by grace to meet the Lord, and be with Him in the Father's house, though surely also to appear with Him in glory and to reign with Him over the earth. But not such is the character of the deliverance of Israel; and of this Isaiah treats, like the Old Testament in general. It is by the execution on earth of judgments, which have for their object the salvation of the Jews and the destruction of their enemies. This accordingly accounts for terms, which are hard indeed to be explained where men think of the Church in these verses. Believe that Israel is there, and what more proper than such a description of their Deliverer, as “I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save,” or “The day of vengeance is in my heart?” Is this the way we think of His love to us or His attitude even to the world while we are passing through? How can verses 5, 6 apply to Him as Head of the Church? Bring in the question of Israel delivered for His kingdom here below, and all is consistent and clear.

It is then the Lord, Jehovah-Messiah, who is here seen in the prophetic vision, returning victorious from the spot which more than our prophecy declares to be the theater of the wrath which shall be poured out unsparingly on the foes of His people. “Who is this,” asks the prophet identifying himself with the people, “that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? this that is glorious in his apparel, traveling in the greatness of his strength?” His answer (for it assumes the form of a dialog) is, “I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save.”

“Wherefore,” asks Isaiah again, “art thou red in thine apparel, and thy garments like him that treadeth in the wine-fat?” “I have trodden,” answers He, “the winepress alone: and of the people[s] there was none with me; for I will tread them in mine anger, and trample them in my fury; and their blood shall be sprinkled upon my garments, and I will stain all my raiment. For the day of vengeance is in mine heart, and the year of my redeemed is come. And I looked, and there was none to help; and I wondered that there was none to uphold: therefore mine own arm brought salvation unto me; and my fury, it upheld me. And I will tread down the people in mine anger, and make them drunk in my fury, and I will bring down their strength to the earth.” Manifestly it is no picture of Christ forsaken of God nor even rejected of man, but of His treading down the opposed nations, as grapes in a wine-press. It is not infinite love suffering infinitely that sin might be judged, and God glorified about it, and thence able to justify the believer from all things. It is One trampling down in fury, and the blood of His enemies sprinkling His garments, not His blood washing them in divine grace. It is not the day of grace but of vengeance, though along with it the year of His redeemed is come when the scattered and peeled people shall be brought to Zion with everlasting joy on their heads. Now it is the day of salvation for the Gentiles, who believe, while wrath to the uttermost is come on the Jews who believe not.

Notes on Isaiah, Isaiah 63:7-19 and Isaiah 64, Notes on

The last section brought together at its beginning the Lord's first advent, at its end His second advent, with Jerusalem as the special object here contemplated in His earthly plans. We now enter on the closing part of this great and varied prophecy. There are two divisions in it. The first, that which affords us our present theme (from ver. 7 of chap. 63 to the end of chap. 64), consists of a most urgent intercession by the Spirit in the mouth of the prophet on behalf of Israel with Jehovah. The second is His answer which carries us to the end of the book.

Even the least enlightened of modern commentators admits that we open with what seems designed as a formulary of humiliation for the Israelites in order to their restoration. “I will mention the lovingkindnesses of the Lord, and the praises of the Lord, according to all that the Lord hath bestowed on us, and the great goodness toward the house of Israel, which he hath bestowed on them according to his mercies, and according to the multitude of his lovingkindnesses. For he said, Surely they are my people, children that will not lie: so he was their Savior. In all their affliction he was afflicted, and the angel of his presence saved them: in his love and in his pity he redeemed them; and he bare them, and carried them all the days of old.” (Ver. 7-9.)

Nothing is more suitable than this exordium, whether one thinks of the Lord first or His people next. Mercies acknowledged lead to fresh mercy. He was not changed in His lovingkindness, nor they in their deep need of it, as only He could show it to them. Hitherto His love had received no return, nothing but bitter disappointment.1 Yet what could exceed His tender care? “But they rebelled and vexed his holy Spirit: therefore he was turned to be their enemy, and he fought against them. Then he remembered the days of old, Moses, and his people, saying, Where is he that brought them up out of the sea with the shepherd of his flock? where is he that put his holy Spirit within him? That led them by the hand of Moses with his glorious arm, dividing the water before them, to make himself an everlasting name? That led them through the deep, as an horse in the wilderness, that they should not stumble? As a beast goeth down into the valley, the Spirit of the Lord caused him to rest: so didst thou lead thy people, to make thyself a glorious name.” (Ver. 10-14.)

It is evident then that God will work morally in Israel. No external deliverances for themselves nor execution of vengeance on His and their foes will suffice for His great purposes, any more than for His own glory or their real good. Hence, the Spirit will exercise them in confession and in supplication before Him. As the verses already looked at set out their ingratitude and self-will in presence of His unmerited goodness, so the next takes the form of prayer. “Look down from heaven, and behold from the habitation of thy holiness and of thy glory: where is thy zeal and thy strength, the sounding of thy bowels and of thy mercies toward me? are they restrained? Doubtless thou art our father, though Abraham be ignorant of us, and Israel acknowledge us not: thou, O Lord, art our father, our redeemer; thy name is from everlasting. O Lord, why hast thou made us to err from thy ways, and hardened our heart from thy fear? Return for thy servants' sake, the tribes of thine inheritance. The people of thy holiness have possessed it but a little while: our adversaries have trodden down thy sanctuary. We are thine: thou never barest rule over them; they were not called by thy name.” (Ver. 15-19.)

They are broken in heart and turn in affiance of spirit to the Lord. Had He of old said, Surely they are My people, children that will not lie? Now they say, Surely thou art our Father, though Abraham be ignorant of us, and Israel acknowledge us not. Yet do they own that there had been judicial hardening over them, erst over Pharaoh and his people. How deep and persevering the sins that could turn the Lord against His own people as against their enemies of old! and this too so long! for Israel had enjoyed their inheritance but a little while: long, long had their adversaries trodden down Jehovah's sanctuary, and Israel had been as those on whom His name was not called.

This leads out the heart in still more earnestness.

“Look down from heaven” suffices no more. “Oh that thou wouldest rend the heavens, that thou wouldest come down, that the mountains might flow down at thy presence, as when the melting fire burneth, the fire causeth the waters to boil, to make thy name known to thine adversaries, that the nations may tremble at thy presence! when thou didst terrible things which we looked not for, thou earnest down, the mountains flowed down at thy presence. For since the beginning of the world men have not heard, nor perceived by the ear, neither hath the eye seen, O God, beside thee, what he hath prepared for him that waiteth for him.” (Ver. 1-4.)

It is interesting here to note the great difference for which the accomplishment of redemption gives occasion by the gift of the Holy Ghost. Compare 1 Cor. 2 We see that God now does reveal the things He has prepared for them that love Him. We do not wait for the emergence of the great High Priest to know our blessedness; for while He is still in the holiest, the Holy Spirit, as the apostle teaches, has come out and given us to enter in as anointed of Him and made free to go boldly within the veil. Indeed for us the veil is rent, and all things hidden are revealed. But Israel (and the prophet speaks of Israel) must wait till they see Him whom their fathers so guiltily pierced, though I doubt not their heart will be truly converted to the Lord, born again but not in peace till they actually behold Him.

Hence we have in what follows the language of true repentance. “Thou meetest him that rejoiceth and worketh righteousness, those that remember thee in thy ways: behold, thou art wroth; for we have sinned: in those in continuance, and we shall be saved. But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away. And there is none that calleth upon thy name, that stirreth up himself to take hold of thee: for thou hast hid thy face from us, and hast

consumed us, because of our iniquities. But now, O Lord, thou art our father; we are the clay, and thou our potter; and we all are the work of thy hand. Be not wroth very sore, O Lord, neither remember iniquity forever: behold, see, we beseech thee, we are all thy people. Thy holy cities are a wilderness, Zion is a wilderness, Jerusalem a desolation. Our holy and our beautiful house, where our fathers praised thee, is burned up with fire: and all our pleasant things are laid waste. Wilt thou refrain thyself for these things, O Lord? wilt thou bold thy peace, and afflict us very sore?" (Ver. 5-12.)

The Known Isaiah, Isaiah 58:1 - 63:5: The Known Isaiah

The last section of this great prophetic discourse here opens, running down to the end, but itself consisting of subdivisions winch it is well to heed. There is first a trenchant moral appeal to the house of Jacob in their combining sins and transgressions with punctilious regard to legal ordinances, especially fasting and sabbath keeping, and yet total antagonism to their spirit (ch. 58.) There is at the close of that chapter, with Isaiah's wonted grandeur in recalling to true righteousness and the honor and blessing that would follow, the most forcible setting out of their entire corruption in chap. 59. with all the amplitude of his early style. It was their own evil that separated the Jews and their God, their sins which hid His face from them that He heard not. Thereon ensues confession of their sins, but no power to rise from their wretchedness, till Jehovah intervenes (identifying with Christ, the Redeemer, in Zion) with deliverance for the godly remnant, who according to His covenant receive His Spirit and His words for themselves and their offspring evermore.

Zion accordingly is called to arise and shine, for her light is come and the glory of Jehovah risen upon her; and this the more strikingly that darkness shall cover the earth and gross darkness the peoples (60). So unfounded is the dream of Christendom that Israel's conversion is to be due to Gentile zeal or faith. On the contrary the apostacy shall first come, and the man of sin be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus slays or consumes with the breath of His mouth and brings to naught by the appearing of His advent. Both Old. and N. T. are distinct that His personal judgment of the quick inaugurates the wondrous change for the earth, when not only shall all Israel be saved (after the destruction of the lawless one and his adherents, with other foes) but nations shall come to Zion's light and kings to the brightness of her rising. The picture of the future restoration, righteous and glorious here below, and this manifestly of Jerusalem and His people (though with marked difference from the heavenly city in Rev. 21; 22) is drawn, allowing for the new connection, exactly in Isaiah's manner, serene and sublime, and wholly different from the exilic or the post-exilic prophets. To interpret it of the church is not only unintelligent, but lowers our heavenly glory with Christ; it wrongs Israel and defrauds the Gentiles as a whole, to say nothing of the lower creation which God never forgets if man does.

Chaps. 61.-63. 6 bring in Christ, not in His humiliation and atoning death, but in the incomparable grace of His first advent, and its blessed consequences not yet fulfilled to the Jews as such, and His indisputable power in judgment at the second when the day of vengeance is come. How instructive His own closing of the book in the synagogue of Nazareth, when He read only the first clause of ch. 61:2! When He returns, He begins with the day of vengeance before He gives effect to the year of His redeemed. See ch. 62:4. The Reformers were no more enlightened than the Fathers who confounded ch. 63. with 53. and the blood of the peoples with His blood.

But what we have had in this brief summary is wholly destructive of the unbelieving school. For, as we saw in the first previous or second section the Jew guilty not of idolatry only as in the past but of the rejection of the Messiah, so now the prophet treats of that pretentious but hollow Pharisaism which has ever since characterized them, and of the sure judgment which the rejected Messiah will inflict at His coming in power and glory. Dr. D. does not venture to apply the end of ch. 59. or the beginning of ch. 63. to the first advent. Even if he could with the smallest show of justice, how would this fall in with the assumption of an unknown prophet toward the close of the captivity? He knows quite well that the moral impediments which disqualify Israel for the enjoyment of the promised blessings have never yet been removed. He knows that the unreality of their fasts and other observances continues to this day, and that the true fast, so pleasant to Jehovah, of unselfish goodness and mercy is as far off as ever, when alone He can shower His blessings on His people, and they shall build the old wastes and raise up the foundations from generation to generation, nay, delight in Jehovah Who will cause them to ride on the high places of the earth.

Not only does the apostle Paul cite the close of ch. 59. modified by Psa. 53:6 (7) to prove the future coming of the Lord to save Israel (in Rom. 11), but he quotes also the earlier verses in Rom. 3 to demonstrate their utter moral ruin as a present fact. And this he meets with the grace of God in the gospel now to every believer; as he holds out the coming of the Redeemer by-and-by, when Israel shall be restored and have the kingdom according to prophecy.

Hence these self-styled higher critics betake themselves to "the felicity of the ideal Zion of the future," when, after a judgment to be enacted in the Jews, not in their foes only, the dark cloud of night that shrouds the rest of the world is lifted from the holy city, and light clothes Zion forever. Then they talk, or at least Dr. D. does, of "Jehovah's ideal servant" once more introduced in ch. 61., which is followed as before by the promise of Jerusalem's restoration, of the new and signal marks of Jehovah's favor resting on the restored nation, and of its own appreciation of all. Of course ch. 63:1-6 is similarly treated, as "an ideal humiliation of nations, marshaled upon the territory of Israel's inveterate foe" (Lit. of the O.T. 222).

It would be more candid to let us know whether Dr. D. believes, any more than his German forerunners, in the reality of these predictions. If he does, the critical hypothesis is ipso facto overthrown and abandoned; if he does not, its infidel and anti-Christian character is apparent. In any case, it is absurd to argue that the prophet is merely addressing "the exiles in Babylonia," any more than "the men of Jerusalem, contemporaries of Ahaz and Hezekiah or even of Manasseh" (p. 224). All this reasoning is the pettifoggery of rationalism with not even the semblance of truth. It is impossible for any man to face any one of these sections, still less the second and the third, and to say that the prophet speaks always, in the first instance, to his own contemporaries (though they were responsible to believe as we are). Let him show, if he can, that the prophet never abandons his own historical position but speaks from it, when he predicts the sufferings of the Messiah and the glories that should follow them. If by "ideal" he honestly confesses both, let him now speak, or else hereafter forever hold his peace.

Behold My Servant, Behold My Servant: Part 6

Not less certain is it that the two concluding verses are the answer of Jehovah. Who but He could speak of Messiah as “My righteous Servant?”

“He shall see of the travail of his soul, he shall be satisfied; by his knowledge shall my righteous servant instruct the many in righteousness, and he shall carry their iniquities. Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong ones; because he poured out his soul unto death, and was numbered with the transgressors; and he bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.”

The godly remnant had said in faith, “When Thou shalt make his soul a guilt (or, trespass) offering, he shall see a seed.” Now Jehovah responds emphatically, “He shall see of the travail of His soul.” It was no mere act done as a duty, though in truth out of the depths of His obedience. It was also “of the travail of His soul,” if these words ever applied to any suffering accepted in love, and endured for the glory of God and the salvation of the otherwise lost. What was it for the Holy One of God to be forsaken by His God, when He cried and could not be heard? when forsaken by His disciples? when despised of men, and scorned by His people, from the high priest to the meanest of the Jews? by the very robbers deservedly crucified on either side? Yet at no time was He so efficaciously suffering for God's glory; at no time so infinitely the object of divine delight, though His God who could not regard sin with the least allowance, so far from then delivering, made Him, the sinless One, sin for us.

Here and here only was the travail of His soul without a parallel; and hence the fruit of it no less unparalleled. It was thenceforward to be God's righteousness to justify the lost if they believed on Jesus, the sole way of salvation by grace for any. Others cried to Him who inhabited the praises of Israel. The saints before He came trusted, and Jehovah delivered them. But He went down under the burden of our sins, intolerable to all but Him; yet to Him more intolerable than to any; and He crying “Thou art holy,” yet the abandonment continuing till the atoning work was done, when from the horns of the buffaloes He was heard, and in departing could say, Father, into thy hands I commend my Spirit. And the demonstrative answer came in raising Him from among the dead and seating Him at His own right hand on high. This was God's righteousness to Him (compare John 16:10), who has also given us who believe to become God's righteousness in Him, and declares “He shall be satisfied.” For the Father's glory and God's glory thus He secured at all cost to Himself; and hence God, as God and Father, is concerned in glorifying Him who in love and according to divine purpose shares it with us. If He is head over all, we are His body and shall be associated with Him in His exaltation over all things, the things in the heavens, and the things on the earth. Our text speaks only of the earthly people's part; but Eph. 1:10-14, is no less certain as to the church's union and glory with Him in all things heavenly and earthly.

The rest of verse 11 needs the more care, because it has been forced to speak in concert with traditional views, instead of its real and simple meaning. For the Lord's ministry is first set out, and then His sacrificial death. “Justify many” would be a singular departure from due order, before His bearing our iniquities; which if such a sense were intended would require the preceding place as the necessary ground for justification. But the verb admits where requisite of “instructing in righteousness,” no less than of “justifying,” according to the context, as is plainly demanded in Dan. 12:3. “They that turn to righteousness” goes too far, especially when we take into account that it is “the” many, who have an evil place in the prophet's usage: not “many” but “the mass” of apostate Jews in the last days, who had their prototypes in those who rejected the Messiah when He presented Himself the first time. These He patiently and zealously instructed in righteousness as minister of circumcision; as the wise or teachers will do in the coming days. “The many” in either case might be instructed in righteousness without being turned to it; for they appear to be in contrast with the righteous few and perish in their stubborn unbelief. Here too, as the phrase is “the many,” it would seem that the same objects are in view.

Hence too there is no need for departing from the regular force of the last clause, “and He shall carry their iniquities.” Such was the second part of Messiah's work, His death-work, as instructing in righteousness was His life-work before. “Justifying” is rather attributed to God on the ground of Christ's death. Hence the necessity for another rendering, required for the human instruments in Dan. 12:3, pleads strongly for a cognate force in Isa. 53:11, because it falls in with the order here, which is adverse to “justifying” before propitiation. The change to “for” He shall bear (or, carry) their iniquities was to make the clause square with justifying, which would have been a harder saying with “and,” the true sense.

Jehovah ends the strain (ver. 12) with the proclamation of Messiah's earthly exaltation and all the more because of His humiliation in suffering love. “Therefore will I divide Him a portion with the great, and He shall divide the spoil with the strong ones.” He is the mightiest and most enduring of conquerors; but the spring lay not in strength or wisdom or majesty or glory. It originated in infinite love, it flowed out in divine grace, of which He will be the most suited administrator in the day of glory; because He, to make all effectual both for God's glory and for man's need and blessing, had gone down into suffering unfathomable to all but Himself. So the prophet here expresses it, “Because He poured out His soul unto death, and was numbered with the transgressors; and He bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.” He submitted to the last degree of creature weakness; He bowed to the foulest imputation of indignity; He carried the sinful load of not a few but “many,” and made intercession not for friends but enemies, “the transgressors,” who but for Him had been lost forever. What possibly plainer here than the sinless One suffering at God's hand sin's punishment, turning to God in bearing their evils that those who believe might be forgiven and purged, blessed and triumphant through Him? Christ is the way, the truth, and the life; but here primarily for repentant Israel. Yet as the substitute for guilty objects, He suffered at the righteous Jehovah's hand beyond all that man can conceive.

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“Yet it pleased Jehovah to bruise him; he hath put him to grief. When thou shalt make his soul a trespass-offering, he shall see seed, he shall prolong days, and the pleasure of Jehovah shall prosper in his hand” (ver. 10).

In the preceding section the last clause of ver. 8 is decisive that the speaker can be none other than Jehovah Himself meditating throughout 7-9 on the gracious sufferings of His Messiah. Here in ver. 10 it is no less certain that we hear the remnant's voice about Him in answer to Jehovah, and reckoning on the sure and blessed fruit of Jehovah's part in that momentous trespass-offering. If Jehovah viewed with delight the Holy One of God meekly bowing to all indignity and suffering at the hands of those among whom He deigned to dwell in infinite love, and with

heart set on representing aright the true God who was as little known as He is as among the heathen, the godly tell Jehovah of the wonder, once hidden from them but now their delight, that it seemed good in Jehovah's eyes to bruise Him.

Long had the bruising of Him been revealed. It was disclosed to the guilty pair in paradise forfeited by their transgression (Gen. 3:15), before the responsible man was driven out, and the cherubim were set with the flame of the flashing sword to guard the way to the tree of life. Then the enmity of the serpent was in the foreground; and the word was “He shall crush thy head, and thou shalt crush his heel”; as this was the announcement proper then, and most true in itself. The crushed Savior should crush the Serpent's head, and at last be its utter destruction; for the God of peace shall bruise Satan under our feet shortly, howsoever long He has waited: as He is the last enemy with his power of death to be cast into the lake of fire and brimstone. Nor is it here the deceived and beguiled human adversaries Jew or Gentile who are dwelt on.

Of these the Lord spoke often to His disciples when unbelief became more and more pronounced. “From that time Jesus began to show to His disciples that He must go away [being then near Cæsarea-Philippi] to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief-priests and scribes, to be killed, and the third day be raised” (Matt. 16:21). Then after the transfiguration, while they abode in Galilee, He said to them, “The Son of man is about to be given up into men's hands, and they shall kill Him, and the third day He shall be raised up” (Matt. 18:22, 23). Again, in Matt. 20:17-19, He took the Twelve apart, and said, “Behold, we go up to Jerusalem, and the Son of man will be given up to the chief-priests and scribes, and they will condemn Him to death; and they will give Him up to the Gentiles, to mock and to scourge, and to crucify, and the third day He shall rise again.” Compare Acts 2:22, 23, 36; 3:13-15; 4:10; 5:30, 31.

But here the godly view His sufferings in the light of Jehovah's purpose and peace. Whatever man's wickedness, and it was immense every way, love still more unfathomable was behind to bring about a work of grace beyond human thought to God's glory, beyond all love in man who might die for his friend, as He for His enemies proves it essentially divine. “Yet it pleased Jehovah to bruise him.” What grace could compare with this? What an answer to Satan's base suggestion in paradise, that He begrudged His most favored creature the fruit of the tree in the midst of it! For what gift in heaven or earth could approach that unspeakable free gift? What sufferings too were like His? Truly He was subjected to grief; and by whom? How divine a way to demonstrate the love and holiness and righteousness of Him that sent, and of Him who was thus put to grief?

O sinful man, O doubting believer, accept the witness God has given concerning His Son. Professing Christian, go not below what godly Jews shall yet confess. As Isaiah here predicts to be fulfilled in them for the kingdom on earth; so we ought to do still more fully according to the gospel for heaven. “Herein is love, not that we loved God [as we surely ought], but that He loved us, and sent His Son a propitiation for our sins.” Indeed He loved us beyond parallel, and doubly. We were dead in sins; and God's love was manifested in sending His only-begotten Son, that we might live through Him. We were guilty sinners; and He sent His Son as the only efficacious sacrifice for our sins (1 John 4:9, 10).

The prophet so many centuries before as to this thoroughly agrees with the apostle who looked on the cross, and so many years after lived to give this witness of divine love. “When thou shall make His soul a trespass-offering, He shall see seed, He shall prolong days, and the pleasure of Jehovah shall prosper in His hand.”

There are those bearing the Christian name who venture to question and even deny that God dealt with our Lord Jesus judicially. But here is not a debatable type, if such it be counted; here is no trope which can be deemed Oriental, as so many love to find in scripture. It is the greatest of the O. T. prophets after Moses expressing in the Spirit what the future believing remnant of Jews will respond to Jehovah's intimate communications about Messiah. None can dispute that it is a term taken from the very heart of the offerings for sin in the Jewish ritual, illuminated by the light of Christ to those so long sleeping among things dead, as all must be in unbelief. It is more than an offering for “sin,” and expresses the addition to swerving from right the guilt of offense against relationship with Jehovah, a desecration of His name in respect of Him who deigned to make them His (and we may surely say in every respect); for in what had Israel not failed?

But when Messiah's soul (for it was not His body alone, but Himself in the most intimate and full way) was made a trespass-offering, how efficacious the result! What was blood of bulls and goats, of rams or lambs, in comparison? The worshippers once purged have no more conscience of sins, as the Epistle to the Hebrews so boldly declares. Messiah has already seen a seed purged and blessed thereby; and “He shall see seed” too for His manifested kingdom here below, not of His ancient people only but “all the families of the earth blessed in Him.” “Unto Thee shall the nations come from the ends of the earth, and they shall say, Surely our fathers have inherited falsehood, vanity; and in these things is no profit” (Jer. 16:19). Dead for our sins, He is alive again for evermore, the best prolongation of days; and “the pleasure of Jehovah shall prosper in His hand.” For “the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name is called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Father of the age to come (or, Eternity), Prince of Peace,.. upon the throne of David, and over his kingdom to establish it, and to uphold it with righteousness and with judgment from henceforth even forever.” “Behold, a king shall reign in righteousness, and princes shall rule in judgment; a man shall be as a hiding-place from the wind, and a covert from the storm; as brooks of water in a dry place, as the shadow of a great rock in a thirsty land.”

Behold My Servant, Behold My Servant: Part 4

THIS is the answer of Jehovah to the remnant's confession of their past unbelief and their present faith in Messiah. The last clause of ver. 8 makes it certain that the strain in these verses is His language, beginning in 7 and ending in 9.

“He was oppressed and he humbled himself, and he opened not his mouth; as a lamb he is brought to the slaughter and as a sheep before his shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth. By oppression and judgment was he taken away, and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken. And they made his grave with the wicked but [he was] with the rich in his death; because (or, though) he had done no violence nor [was] deceit in his mouth” (vers. 7-9).

How precious it is to have the true God thus communicating His moral complacency in the rejected Messiah and in His work of sin-bearing to those who once despised Him but now share His delight in that meek endurance of all indignity! What a sight for the heavenly host, who at the marvel of His birth of woman appreciated the sign of a babe wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger, yet praising God and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good-pleasure in men! Now it is Jehovah musing on the deepest proof the

only-begotten Son could give of the Savior's love and His own, not only to display the true nature of God where it was unknown, but to save His people from their sins, whose history had been a succession of divine favors followed by deepening departure and rebellion against Him.

When His law and His institutions were more and more despised, when His priests made His offerings abhorred by their corruption, when the kings became leaders in idolatry and its debasing consecration of vice, He sent prophets not only to reprove but to win Israel back extraordinarily. But they took His servants, beat one, killed another, stoned a third. He sent others more than the first; but they persisted instead of repenting and did even worse. Having yet therefore one beloved Son, He sent also Him to them the last, saying, They will reverence My Son. But they said one to another, This is the Heir. Come, let us kill Him, and the inheritance will be ours. Was there ever a truer sketch that the Son drew for that generation, which they recognized yet fulfilled in His cross?

The Lord of the vineyard did destroy the wicked husbandmen, and gave the vineyard to others; who if they heard the glad-tidings for awhile did not abide in goodness nor stand through faith, but presumed to think that God had cast off Israel to give Christendom an everlasting and indefeasible possession of the earth and of all nations. How utterly heedless of the solemn warning that this present evil age shall end with the apostasy and the man of sin, and that the day of the Lord shall dawn on Israel penitent, believing, and saved, after exterminating judgment of the wicked Jews and Gentiles while the heavenly saints shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father!

Here the prophet was inspired to present the renewal of Jehovah's relations with the godly Jew under the figure of the converse we are considering. And as it began in 52:13-15 with His pointing out the amazing change from One whose visage was marred more than man's, and His form more than the sons of men, to a glory which should astound kings when established before them, and this drew out in 53:1-6 the confession of their past unbelief and their present assurance of His sufferings in atonement for them, so Jehovah takes up the strain of the meek Sufferer doing the divine will whatever it might cost in a world at enmity with God. How suited and impressive the lesson to the remnant about to become a strong nation I Messiah, The Lord of all “was oppressed”; but, far from resenting, “He humbled Himself.” He “openeth not His mouth,” though He knew well the purpose of the religious chiefs to compass His death. “As a lamb is brought to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He openeth not his mouth. He was taken away by oppression and judgment; and who shall declare his generation?” Whatever might be the form of judgment, all was unrighteous, and those who condemned Him condemned themselves unspeakably. For He who was perfect love “was out off out of the land of the living.”

Where was Jehovah then? He was there in a light strange to man: God would Himself provide a lamb for a burnt-offering, yea, a sin-offering too. “For the transgression of my people was he stricken.” It runs through scripture from Genesis to Revelation; but in no scripture is it declared more plainly than here by Isaiah. How then have the Jews failed to hear? Through the same unbelief as blinds the natural man. Sin unjudged makes a Savior hateful. A God of law is reasonable; the God of sovereign grace is intolerable to self-satisfied man, who trusts in himself, distrusts God, and denies the need or the value of the sacrifice of Christ.

Expositors generally assume that the oriental style in the Psalms and the prophets overflows and must be allowed for in the sober facts. Certainly it is not so in Christ and His cross! The truth exceeds in His grace and His endurance; as it does in the N. T. The reality penetrated more deeply and rose far above any anticipation vouchsafed. But there is another side not to be overlooked. The cross of Christ reveals His moral glory as nothing else could. Where was Jewish righteousness and priestly grace, where Roman law, and Greek letters at that solemn hour? Did not all of man and the world with its religion conspire against the only Righteous Servant the Lord of glory, full of grace and truth? And what can be said of the disciples, of His apostles, of Peter? Where can there be an atom for boast save in Him who was made a curse upon the tree, abandoned even of God necessarily that we might never be, yet vindicating Him to the uttermost when realizing it to the uttermost? Truly it was the hour which stands alone through all eternity, and the Lord Jesus could say of it, Now was the Son of man glorified and God was glorified in Him; if God was glorified in Him God shall also glorify Him in Himself, and shall glorify Him immediately, i.e. before the predicted glory of the kingdom be manifested.

Yet whatever He suffered, it is touching to observe how Jehovah cared even for the dead body of His Son as here noticed. “And they made his grave with the wicked,” the natural end of a crucified malefactor, “but [he was] with the rich in his death,” the unlooked for issue under His guidance, “because he had no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth.” The fact too of its being a new tomb where no dead body had ever lain gave occasion to make the truth of His rising the more unambiguous and manifest.

Behold My Servant, Behold My Servant: Part 3

But the latter half of the remnant's reply is a confession, not only of their once unbelief but of their now faith as simple as it is real and deep.

“Surely our sicknesses (or, griefs) he bore and carried our sorrows, and we regarded him stricken, smitten of God and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace [was] upon him, and with his stripes was healing to us. All we like sheep have gone astray, we have turned every one to his own way; and Jehovah hath laid (or, made to light) upon him the iniquity of us all” (vers. 4-6).

It is well that we have the divine application of ver. 4 in the Gospel of Matt. 8:17, where it is cited from the Septuagint as “Himself took our infirmities and bare our diseases.” It is not meant that He suffered under them as a matter of fact; but that He took them on His spirit and was burdened by their weight, whilst He removed them by His gracious intervention. He was perfect in this respect as in all others. What a contrast with Moses in Egypt inflicting scourges on the oppressors of Israel and despisers of the “I am” and with Elijah in the midst of apostate Israel recalling the guilty king and people from Baal to Jehovah! Here we have God in Christ, reconciling the world to Himself, not reckoning to them their offenses, but not yet the sinless One made sin for us that we might become God's righteousness in Him. It was He who, anointed by God with the Holy Spirit and power, went throughout doing good and healing all that were under the devil's power, because God was with Him. And it appears from this remarkable word of the prophet as applied by the apostle that as He healed in divine energy, He took the infirmities and the sicknesses as a load of sorrow on Himself before God.

Do we not see the detail of this peculiar way especially in the Gospel of Mark? Take the leper in chap. 1, the paralytic of chap. 2, the demoniac of chap. 4, the raised daughter of the synagogue ruler in chap. 5, the deaf and dumb in chap. 7, the blind man of Bethsaida in chap. 8, and

the son with a dumb spirit in chap. 9. It was not only power that dispelled the evil, but His deep interest and grace in the way wherein He did it, as the perfect servant of man's need in God's power. Truly “He hath done all things well.” Thus we gain a truth through the prophet by understanding ver. 4 of His wondrous way in healing the afflicted, instead of forcing it to speak of His very distinct work of propitiation for our sins, which required far more and different from the cure of infirmities and diseases appreciated aright before God.

It is in vers. 5 and 6 that the godly remnant express their infinite debt in His suffering for them, instead of being regarded as one stricken, smitten of God and afflicted like Job, or in another way a Gehazi or an Uzziah. “But he was wounded for our transgressions, bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed (or, healing was to us).” The figures are abundant and as strikingly differ: but they all agree in revealing Him as the expiatory sufferer and substitute: the ever present shadows throughout the Jewish ritual of His atoning for the believer's felt need and deepest want before God as a guilty sinner. “For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sin.”

The blood of such creatures did all that was available till the Lamb of God came and suffered for us, not only made sin and become a curse on the tree, but for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savor. For every shadow met and was more than fulfilled on our account in Him who glorified God as God in His death for sin, as He had in His life glorified Him as His Father in an equally perfect obedience. It is unbelieving blindness to see in His cross nothing more than a martyrdom for the truth and an example of holy love. These elements were in it beyond doubt, but incomparably more: the absolute necessity on God's part as well as ours of One as truly God as man, one mediator both of God and men, Christ Jesus man, who gave Himself a ransom for all, who suffered for sins once (and once was ample), Just for unjust, that He might bring us to God, not yet to heaven (however surely this in due time) but (what was of the utmost moment for the soul now and here) “to God.” And what can be plainer than the prophet's figures? He (none other in heaven or on earth could avail), He only, He truly, He effectually “was wounded,” not as reward for any good in us, but “for our transgressions.” When in their darkness they did esteem Him stricken, smitten of God, it was governmental, and significant of God's displeasure. But now they knew by divine teaching and state it as a certain truth that only in sovereign grace to helpless and otherwise ruined sinners, was He therein wounded for our transgressions, bruised for our iniquities. It was God's way to save righteously. If the Jews did not dispute that through one man sin entered into the world, and through sin death; and thus death passed upon all men for that all sinned (adding then their personal sins to Adam's transgression); much rather did the grace of God, and the free gift in the grace of the one man Jesus Christ exceed unto the many. Was it not worthy of God and due to the Savior, that where sin abounded, grace should exceedingly surpass? Compare the unworthy first man's sin with the all-worthy Second's suffering for sins. Who but an unbeliever could fail to see the infinite contrast, that grace should flow abundantly for the salvation of the believer, as judgment must act all the more certainly against those who despise such a God and such a Savior?

Peace with God, for such as we were, needed an immovable foundation. And He is the foundation, righteous and holy even for us through “the blood of His cross.” “The chastisement of our peace was upon Him.” Who else could have borne it? Sinful man must have sunk under what sin deserved irretrievably and forever. But He whom knowing no sin God made sin for us endured to the utmost, and was raised righteously and triumphantly, Jesus Christ the same yesterday and to-day and forever. “And with His stripes we are healed.” Such is the one divine and only panacea for any and every lost one who bows to the Crucified One and to the righteousness of God, abjuring his own righteousness but confessing his guilt and ruin.

This is what takes away not only guilt but guile, and stablishes him that had been dishonest and deceitful in integrity even in God's sight. The mouth is all the freer and fuller to own its wicked folly: “All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned each to his own way.” There was no exception: all astray, yet each in his own evil way. Yet in the face of all wrongs, and in His own spontaneous and all-overcoming goodness Jehovah caused to light upon Him the iniquity of us all.

Did not one of our own poets sing “I lay my sins on Jesus?” Nay, friend, God's truth is far beyond thy hymn. Jehovah who knew all laid the iniquity of all that believe on Him. Is not this far greater, better, and surer? We have all had habits of sin, even those converted young; and a sinful habit genders forgetfulness as well as heedlessness of sins. Which of us could be so confident for eternal salvation as to rely on our own memory in laying our sins on Jesus? How awful to have presumed fatally in such a case! How blessed, even apart from that danger, to have the certainty that God does perfectly for the believer what he himself could only do imperfectly! What grace on His part, and what pitiful consideration of our shortcoming He who could not but feel abhorrent every act of self-will, every uprising of independency and rebellion, caused the vile mass of iniquity to light on His head who is here shown to be its infinitely suffering Sin-bearer, willing because Jehovah willed it in a grace which is His prerogative, to save the lost.

Behold My Servant, Behold My Servant: Part 2

In strong contrast with the kings astounded and abashed at Messiah's glory the godly remnant confess the incredulity even of the chosen people at their report.

“Who hath believed our report? and to whom hath the arm of Jehovah been revealed? For he grew (or, shall grow) up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground. No form had he nor comeliness, and when we see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him. He is despised and shunned by men; a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, and as one from whom men hide their face, he was despised and we esteemed him not.”

Judicial darkness overhung the people. So the prophet long before testified, according to the word of the Lord. They had eyes but they saw not; ears they had but they did not hear, and their unintelligent heart was hardened against Him who would have healed their desperate sickness. Hence there was no reception of what ought to have been the most welcome tidings, though the arm of Jehovah had been revealed unmistakably, but as yet only to a very small remnant.

Messiah's humiliation was an affront to the Jew as poor as he was proud and filled with nothing but earthly power and grandeur in his dreams of the coming king. And the root of it was the insensibility of the natural man to sin, his own sins and utter evil and ruin before God. But whatever the glorious things designed and assured to Israel, it is impossible that He could overlook iniquity. Of old they had been ready and confident to obey His law; and they made it their boast that they alone had it. But how had they kept it or honored Him? Their history, and He

wrote who knew all, was a record of continual sin and rebellion. While Moses was up the mountain to receive the tables of stone on which Jehovah wrote the Ten Words, the people broke into open revolt, and made Aaron the instrument of setting up a golden calf to fall down and worship as the deliverer from Egypt, covering yet aggravating their apostasy under the proclamation of a feast to Jehovah. Wherefore that generation perished in the wilderness.

Were their sons any better under Joshua in the conquest of Canaan? Jehovah failed in nothing, they in everything; and so in Josh. 24:19 he told them, “Ye cannot serve Jehovah for he is a holy God; he is a jealous God; he will not forgive your transgressions nor your sins. If ye forsake Jehovah and serve strange gods, then will he turn and do you evil, and consume you after he hath done you good. And the people said to Joshua, Nay, but we will serve Jehovah.” But the covenant he made in this last interview of his had no more heed than that of Moses. And the book of Judges occupies its first chapter with the failure even of Judah to dispossess the defilers of the land, as the second declares that Israel served the Baalim, forsaking the God of their fathers who brought them out of Egypt. Though He raised up judges to restore them and to save them out of the hand of their enemies, they ungratefully on the death of each turned back, and behaved more corruptly than their fathers; so that His anger was kindled against (not the Amorite or the Canaanite but) Israel, and refused to drive out their enemies, left to prove His people.

But they rebelled against the best of judges, even Samuel the prophet, and would have a king like the nations, though this meant rejecting Jehovah. They soon proved that the king of their choice brought them into dismal subjection to the Philistine. And God chose David, type of the true Beloved; and things looked bright comparatively, but not without dark blots, notwithstanding the outward show of Solomon's reign, another type of the same Messiah in a different aspect. But the ruin that impended became manifest in his son Rehoboam when ten tribes revolted out of the twelve, never to know reunion till Messiah's day of power and glory.

Meanwhile the people, the priests and the kings increased their transgressions (2 Chron. 36:14), though Jehovah sent to them by His messengers; but they mocked at them till His fury rose against His people. “There was no remedy”; and they were carried to Babylon. Was the remnant any better on their return? Let the Cross of Christ, and the destruction under the Romans answer.

Yet the dry bones must live, and stand up an exceeding great army, before the union of Judah and his companions with Ephraim and his, to be one in Jehovah's hand (Ezek. 37). The chapter before lets us know the primary work on their souls when He sprinkles clean water upon them, gives them also a new heart, and replaces their stony heart with a heart of flesh; so that they repent and loathe themselves in their own sight for their iniquities and their abominations.

On what ground will this “regeneration” stand? On that very humiliation and the propitiation for sins which till now the blinded nation refused in Jesus with scorn. This is what the godly remnant take up and in the deepest contrition acknowledge to Jehovah on His call to behold His Servant before whose exaltation the kings are struck dumb.

Not so the converted remnant. They open their lips to tell out to Jehovah, not only the unbelief of others notwithstanding the fullest proof on Jehovah's part, but their own. They acknowledge their past folly and the people's in misinterpreting His matchless grace in stooping so low to vindicate God's nature and word, and to be their substitute and Savior. “O foolish and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets spoke!” Why fix on Isa. 63 and ignore Isa. 53? Why rejoice in Messiah's treading down their foes, and forget their own sins, and their need of Him to be trodden down under divine judgment for them to be saved and brought to feel their otherwise inexpiable guilt? “Ought not the Christ to suffer these things and to enter into His glory?” as He Himself told the mourning pair on the resurrection day.

The Lord therefore took His place in the ruin of the people and of its royal house. How unlike Adam who fell in the midst of pristine excellence, beauty, and sinless enjoyment! He accepted the lowliest position at Nazareth and under the dominion of the last heathen empire, because of the sins of the people. And thence He emerged, without a single advantage of birth, power, wealth, or human learning, to glorify His Father in His living ways, to glorify God as to sin in His death (rejected by all), yet dying for the lost as indeed for everything. For His is a twofold reconciliation, not only for all believers but for all the universe of heaven and earth, that all, save the wicked and the unbelieving, may be blessed forever by His redemption. If man despised, how did not God joy in Him that was His fellow humbling Himself for His Father's glory from first to last here below, as He expressed it from heaven repeatedly! In Him was His own best pleasure. How immeasurably above coming in power and pomp! “For He grew up before Him as a tender plant and as a root out of a dry ground. No form had He nor comeliness; and when (not Gentiles, but) we see Him, there is no beauty that we should desire Him.” Yet had they not this very word and many more to win and warn them? “He is despised and shunned (or, rejected) by men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief (yes, He alike Messiah and Jehovah), and as one from whom men hide their face, He was despised, and we esteemed Him not.”

The Known Isaiah, Isaiah 52:13 - 57:21: The Known Isaiah

Here the antagonism of the modern critics to the truth becomes as evident as it is without excuse. Their theory totally breaks down. What historical circumstances furnished a ground for such a prediction? The critics fall back on one or other of the rival evasions of Jewish unbelief, in order to escape the varied and overwhelming proofs that the Holy Spirit sets forth the Lord Jesus in the expiatory sufferings and future earthly glory of the Messiah. Impossible to ask an accomplishment of the verses that close 52. and fill 53. more detailed or more comprehensive, more reflecting divine glory, more providing for the guilt and ruin, yet deliverance, of God's people through One Righteous Man a sacrifice for many. Every resource of hostile ingenuity in the east and in the west, of ancient times and of modern, has beaten upon this house; but it has not fallen, for it is founded on an impregnable rock, around which are strewn the dishonored remains of God's enemies.

The sole objection which has any appearance of truth is the difficulty to ignorant minds that all its scope is not yet fulfilled. But this could not be consistently with God's ways and counsels, and is the less reasonable, because of the prevalent trait of prophecy which regards the end of the age, when human departure from God meets its judgment, and righteousness shall reign universally to His glory. No display of grace can match the Savior sacrificially dying for our sins on the cross; and what display of glory to compare with Him coming forth from heaven to put down every foe and establish a kingdom which will embrace not only all the earth but all things in heaven also? Now the prophet in presenting His humiliation and especially His death as an offering for sin does not fail to speak of His exaltation and height of glory when He is no longer hid in God but manifested to the nations, to the abasement of kings, and triumphant over the great and the strong. Christ at His First advent

made clear what His then work was, and what remains to be made good at His Second. So He said, “First must He suffer many things and be rejected of this generation” (Luke 17), and “Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into His glory” (Luke 24)? God's ways are not as man's, who, if he aspire however high, lies down in sorrow, and closes in death; but Christ went down the willing Victim into death and judgment, in order to bear away sins righteously and lay a basis for holy blessing even of the most guilty, never to be sullied by evil, and never to pass away; and this to the glory of God the Father.

These are Dr. D's words (p. 221): “52, 13-53, 12 deals again with the figure of Jehovah's ideal Servant, and develops under a new aspect his character and work. It represents, namely, his great and surprising exaltation, after an antecedent period of humiliation, suffering, and death, in which, it is repeatedly stated, he suffered, not (as those who saw him mistakenly imagined) for his own sins, but for the sins of others.” Is it not distressing that a man should see and acknowledge so much which applies clearly, unmistakably, and exclusively to the Lord, and yet withhold the confession of His name? Who but Christ ever suffered from God for the sins of others? The italics even are his own. Yet not a word honestly lets out the truth of the One efficacious substitute for sinners, though “it is repeatedly stated” as he does not deny but confess throughout the passage. Hence the effort to apply it to Jeremiah, or to Josiah, is as vain as to conceive the Jews to be here so personified. They suffered for their own sins, as all scripture shows, and most justly. Nor has any nation been less patient even under God's chastenings, instead of suffering as a lamb without one spot or blemish or complaint. Even the more ancient Jewish interpretation points to the Messiah; and the evasions alluded to are modern comparatively (on the part of Rashi, D. Kimchi, Aben Ezra, as well as Saadiah Gaon and Abarbanel) through the strain of controversy with Christians. Their very Prayer-book testifies to this truth against them repeatedly.

And why is it that those baptized unto Christ and His death swerve from the evident aim of the prophecy with the more incredulous and antichristian Jews? Alas! it is the same spirit of error, the same antagonism to the truth so humbling to man, so glorifying to God and His Son. Possibly Dr. D. allows that the prophecy, though not all accomplished yet, really refers to our Lord, as the N. T. everywhere attests. But if so, where is the vaunted necessity for showing a specially suitable occasion in Isaiah's age? Where the distinct bearing on contemporary interests? Is the situation presupposed that of any O.T. prophet's age any more than Isaiah's? Is not the predicted glory based upon a condition of things existent only in Christ's life, death, and resurrection? And is not this, the necessary conclusion, destructive of the neocritical hypothesis in every form? The authoritative comment, the best interpretation, is the N. T., especially when we admit the light of the Lord's return from heaven to bless Israel and all the nations, times of restoring all things of which God spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets since the world began.

Hence even Dr. D. cannot get rid of the impression. There is no frank confession of faith, no gratitude for mercy so rich as the prophecy expresses toward Israel, and the New Testament applies in the largest and surest way to all who now believe the gospel. Still it needs no argument to demonstrate that the atoning death of the Lord Jesus perfectly meets what was here predicted many centuries beforehand; and no Christian ought to question that the anticipated glory and blessing for the earth as its result will assuredly follow in due time, which the hulk of prophecy also awaits.

Chap. 54. looks on to that day. It was in no way applicable to the returned remnant from Babylon. The principle does apply and is applied to the grace of God bringing in so many unexpected children of Abraham as the gospel does by faith of Christ (Gal. 4). But the direct and complete fulfillment can only be as a whole, when Israel's sorrows are ended, and they are gathered and established in righteousness, as far from oppression as fear, and the Holy One of Israel shall be called indisputably the God of the whole earth. No one of intelligence will say that their bright expectation is realized; every believer may well rejoice that God will be thus gracious to Israel in a day that hastens. It cannot be till Christ comes again.

Chap. 55. opens the door of mercy to others beyond God's ancient people. “Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.” When Jehovah intervenes to save Israel according to the prophet, it will be on principles of grace which will bless the Gentiles who feel their need and hearken to His word to the ends of the earth. It does and can not fully express the gospel now; because, for those who have been baptized and put on Christ now, there is neither Jew nor Greek, all being one in Christ; whereas in the new age Zion shall be no longer plowed nor Jerusalem become heaps, but the mountain of Jehovah's house shall be established in the top of the mountains and exalted above the hills, and peoples shall flow unto it as the religious center of the whole earth. Then the first dominion, the kingdom, shall come to the daughter of Jerusalem, as indeed Jehovah shall reign in mount Zion henceforth: a state of things incompatible with the gospel.

Chaps. 56. 57. consist of moral warnings, all the more impressed because of the grace which goes out so deeply yet so far and wide. For to grace evil is more offensive than to law which is its open condemnation. God carefully guards His grace from the imputations which fallen nature would cast on it. Hence saith Jehovah, Keep ye judgment and do justice; for any salvation is near to come and my righteousness to be revealed. Jehovah's salvation and righteousness prove to be the opposite of a license to sin, as flesh might wish and think. The sabbath was, and will be, so much the truer a test, because it flows from divine authority simply, not from the action of conscience which of itself condemns corruption or violence apart from God's commandment. Nor need any despair, however naturally powerless or distant. But grace is large, as well as holy and searching; and His house is to be open for the prayers of all who know and rejoice in Him whom once they slighted in their ignorance.

Chap. 57. pursues the same consequences as to the Jew. In that day it will be plain beyond mistake that Israel have no impunity, as indeed they never had, however they may have nursed the fond delusion. Idolatry, strange to say, will reappear among the Jews during the end of the age, as the prophet here intimates, in a way contrasted. with the eve of the return from Babylon or since; so too the Lord warns in Matt. 12:43-45. The captivity led to the going out of the unclean spirit. from his house, and the empty, swept, and garnished state which characterized “that generation” ever since. But the rejection of the true Christ will have as its issue in the latter days the reception of the Antichrist (see also John 5:43), when the unclean spirit returns with seven other spirits more wicked than himself; and they enter in and dwell there; and the last state of that man is worse than the first. Our Lord's application of the parable is indisputable: “Even so shall it be also unto this wicked generation.” Never the unclean spirit of idolatry returned to the Jew, still less with the full power of Satan in Antichrist. But as surely as the Lord spoke, it will be at the close of the age, when this prophecy also is to be accomplished. For “the king” (ver. 9) is none other than that ominous personage who is then to be adored by the apostate people, as “idols” will also be (ver. 5). Compare Dan. 11:36-39: a prediction in the third year of Cyrus, never yet fulfilled, and expressly said to be “at the time of the end,” just before the final deliverance, blessing, and glory of Israel here below “in the glorious land.” What force does not all this give to the concluding words! “No peace, saith my God, to the wicked.” When it was idolatry only with its moral effects, it was “Jehovah” as in chap. 48:22; here, where is this darker sin of

Messiah's rejection with its issues, it is “my God.”

Notes on Isaiah, Isaiah 52:13-15 and Isaiah 53, Notes on

This section is complete in itself, though it assumes the truth already before us in chapter 1., pursues it farther and more profoundly, and thus completes the foundation of all that follows.

The elder Jewish interpreters did not contest the application to the Messiah. Thus Jonathan Ben Uzziel expressly speaks to this effect in the Chaldee paraphrase (given in the Antwerp, Paris, and London Polyglotts). So the Talmud Babyl. (in Tr. Sanhedrin, cap. helek, fol. 98) applies to the Messiah 53: 4. Again, the book of Zohar confirms this in the comment on Exodus (fol. 95, col. 3), and the Mechilta (according to the Jalkut Shimoni, part ii. fol. 90, col. 1) is no less distinct, as even Aben Ezra, Abarbanel, and other distinguished men among their later authors confess. I am indebted to another who has supplied some of these references for the striking fact that even now, in the prayers of the synagogue used universally, there is the clearest witness to the same truth. For instance, at the Passover they pray in these terms: “Hasten and cause the shadows to flee away. Let him be exalted and extolled and be high, who is now despised. Let him deal prudently and reprove and sprinkle many nations.” Again, in the prayers for the day of Atonement, there is as plain an allusion to the righteous Anointed bearing the yoke of iniquities and transgression, wounded because of it, and men (or Israel at least) healed by his wound. The translator (D. Levi) tries to turn part of the prayer aside to Josiah, as do some of the Rabbis; but the prayer. expressly alludes to the Messiah in one of these references to Isa. 53 just cited even according to the same person.

The more modern writers, who dread the ancient application of their fathers, have invented a double means of escape, either by some distinguished man like Josiah or Jeremiah, or by the Jewish people elsewhere styled “my servant” in the prophecy. But in vain. This section is so punctually and exclusively applicable to our Lord that these efforts only prove the will of unbelief and its failure. We have seen already in the beginning of chapter 49 Christ, the servant, substituted for Israel who had been altogether wanting.

We have seen in chapter 1 That the godly Jews are exhorted to obey the voice of this servant of Jehovah, humbled though He has been among men, but vindicated of God.

“Behold” (says God now through His prophet), “my servant shall deal prudently, he shall be exalted and extolled and be very high. As many were astonished at thee: his visage was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men: so shall he sprinkle1 many nations; the kings shall shut their mouths at him: for that which had not been told them shall they see; and that which they had not heard shall they consider.” (Ver. 13-15.) What can be less congruous than the facts of Josiah, Jeremiah, or the Jewish people? Neither the king nor the prophet had any such destiny as could be fairly brought into this remarkable contrast of, first, deep shame, then wide and lofty glory before subject nations and kings. And though it is true, as we have often noticed, that “my servant” sometimes applies to Israel in this prophet, there are always definite contextual marks which render the decision by no means difficult or doubtful. This is made evident and certain from chapter 53, where there is the most obvious distinction between the individual in question and the people who esteemed Him not, though He bore their griefs and carried their sorrows, yea, was wounded for their transgressions, and brought healing to them by His stripes when bruised for their iniquities. To identify this suffering One with the people from whom and for whom He thus suffered, and to whom He afterward brings such signal blessing, is the grossest confusion on the face of the matter.

But let us turn to the wondrous words of our God from these strange vagaries of men. Chapter 53 opens with the confession and implied complaint of the unbelief of men, yea, of their own unbelief; for Israel, now broken down in sense of sin, acknowledge that it was not merely those without who heeded little the report of the Messiah, but that they too themselves had been hard and rebellious against Him. “Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed? For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him. He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised and we esteemed him not. Surely he hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.” (Ver. 1-6.)

The close of the last chapter (ver. 13-15) gave us Jehovah's contemplation of His Anointed, once put to shame and now on the summit of glory before every eye. Then His people trace, in view of Him, their past and most guilty blindness, as they think of His wondrous humiliation, their misjudgment of His life and death, and their present perception of its cause in their sin and misery from which He had come to save them. When they had of old beheld His path of shame and sufferings from first to last, they understood neither the grace which brought Him down so low nor the glories that should follow. They had regarded Him, on the contrary, as an object of God's displeasure and justly cast out and trampled on. But now they are taught of God and avow before Him and men that, underneath all that humiliation and, as they wrongly thought, personal obnoxiousness to His judgment, a deeper work was being done, even atonement. (Ver. 5.) This opens the mouth in lowly confession of sin; as the heart can then feel its past evil way, and each judges himself before God.

In verses 7-9 Jehovah expresses His delight in the moral beauty which shone in the suffering One, affirms on His part the explanation of the enigma of the cross, though up to His death and burial man was allowed his way in disposing of Jesus. “He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: be is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth. He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken. And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth.” (Ver. 7-9.) The plague-stroke was upon him for the transgression of the people of Jehovah. It was not the outward fact simply of a rejected Messiah to which He was pleased to submit, the awful proof of man's and Israel's moral state; but there is this divine key, and the far more wondrous meeting of a more hidden and a deeper need, even expiation.

Israel then reiterate the blessed truth with their Amen, pursuing the glorious consequences as far as it is theirs to see them. “Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin he shall see his seed, be shall prolong his

days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand." (Ver. 10.) Here it is the atoning work, and the suffering of the Lord is dwelt on, and its aspect as the all-efficacious offering for sin. It is blessedly true that the death and blood-shedding of the Savior must be for propitiation; but it is as false a thought as the enemy of souls ever insinuated that this propitiation or atonement is or could be according to God and His word without His sufferings specifically, yea that suffering which was the deepest expression of God's judgment of our iniquities when He who knew no sin was made sin for us and forsaken of God. His blood and death when viewed as expiatory and not as the evidence simply of man's wickedness, are the blood and death of Him who really bore our sins in His own body on the tree, and endured the to us unfathomable judgment of God, when not the Jews only but God hid His face from Him. Can a Christian slight this divine abandonment of Him who suffered the just for the unjust to bring us to God? He may, but only as he may be guilty of grievous, not to say fatal error.2

But that wherein lay the strength and main stress of His sufferings was this invisible weight that none could see that gazed on Him; but He felt more than all the rest. In this are three things.

1. The weight of sin. 2. The transferring of it upon Christ. 3. His bearing of it.

"1. He bare sin as a heavy burden: so the word of bearing in general, , and those two words particularly used by the prophet to which these allude, are the bearing of some great mass or load, and that sin is. For it hath the wrath of an offended God hanging on it, indissolubly tied to it; of which who can bear the least? Yea, to consider in the present subject where we may best read what it is, it was a heavy load to Christ, where the psalmist, speaking in the person of Christ, complains heavily, 'Innumerable evils have compassed me about. Mine iniquities' (not His, as done by Him, but yet His by His undertaking to pay for them) they 'have taken hold of me, so that I am not able to look up; they are more than the hairs of my head: therefore my heart faileth me.' And sure that which pressed Him so sore, who upholds heaven and earth, no other in heaven or earth could have sustained or surmounted, but would have sunk or perished under it. Was it, think you, the pain of that common outside of His death, though very painful, that drew such a word from Him, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? Or was it the fear of it beforehand, that pressed a sweat of blood from Him? No, it was this burden of sin, the first of which was committed in the garden of Eden, that then began to be laid upon Him, and fastened upon His shoulders in the garden of Gethsemane, ten thousand times heavier than the cross which He was caused to bear: that might be for a while turned over to another, but this could not. This was the cup He trembled more at, than that gall and vinegar after to be offered Him by His crucifiers, or any other part of His external sufferings. It was the bitter cup of wrath due to sin that His Father put into His hand and caused Him to drink, the very same thing that is here called the bearing our sins in his body.'... Jesus Christ is both the great high priest and the great sacrifice in one. And this seems to be here implied in these words, Himself bare our sins in his own body;' which the legal priest did not: so He made his soul an offering for sin.' He offered up Himself. His whole self. In the history of the gospel, it is said, His soul was heavy and chiefly suffered; but the bearing in His body and offering it, that is offenest mentioned as the visible part of the sacrifice, and in His way of offering it, not excluding the other. Thus we are exhorted to give our bodies in opposition to the bodies of beasts, and they are therefore called a living sacrifice, which they are not without the soul. Thus His bearing in His body imports the bearing in His soul too." —The Works of R. Leighton, Jerment's edition, 1805. Vol. 1, pp. 370-376.

I may add that this was a point of objection by Cardinal Bellarmine to Calvin, who maintained the same doctrine as is carped at now-a-days, and not merely by rationalist speculators, such as Mr. Maurice and his friends. It seems to me a peculiar mind which could cite 1 Peter 3:18 in a paragraph designed to prove that reconciliation or atonement is never in connection with Christ's sufferings specifically. It is false that the statement they oppose separates His sufferings from His blood and death: on the contrary, while distinguishing for other points, the object was to insist on the inseparableness of His sufferings with His blood and death for atonement. The admission that they are not separated in the Spirit's mind for atonement is my thesis, which he yields; but he is wrong in saying, "the two are never separated." It is merely inattention to Scripture and unworthy of an answer.) The chapter closes with Jehovah's confirmation, repeating the glorious results of both grace and government, and in each case connecting them with the work of salvation. "He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities. Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors." (Ver. 11, 12.)

The Known Isaiah, The Known Isaiah: Isaiah 49:1 - 52:12

Here the ground taken by neo-criticism is untenable self-evidently save to unbelievers. For the section of the prophecy which chap. 49 opens is beyond just question occupied with Messiah's rejection and its results. This is the second and still graver indictment alleged against the Jews; fruit of the same unbelief, though under deeper mercy despised, which had left Jehovah for idols, the charge against them in the previous section. Hence Babylon and Cyrus disappear now, as Assyria has no place in either. Nor can any statement be less accurate than Dr. Driver's (Lit. O.T 217) that "these chapters [40.-66] form a continuous prophecy, dealing throughout with a common theme, viz., Israel's restoration from exile in Babylon." In a measure it may be accepted as applicable to the first of the three parts, though even here it falls lamentably short of its full scope. For in the very preface (chap. 40.), we have, if we accept the interpretation of the N. T. as authoritative, John Baptist's ministry, and the coming of Jehovah in the person of the Messiah, His appearing in glory and in triumph over idols, as tender and faithful as He is matchless in power and wisdom. We have also a result in sovereign grace far beyond anything realized by the returned remnant. If these men dare to say that the prophecy is false and is never to be fulfilled let them stand out as open infidels. They may not all be so; yet they are all doing the enemy's work.

The truth is that "the servant" is the key-note of the continuous prophecy. It runs through all the three divisions, each of which has its special aim and proper character. Hence in 41:8 we have "Israel my servant," responsible to bear witness of the one Living God against idolatry, but utterly failing and therefore captives in Babylon (the ancient champion of image worship), till Jehovah raise up a deliverer from the north-east, named expressly before the section closes, His shepherd to perform all His pleasure as to Jerusalem and the temple, as well as to execute judgment on Babylon and its dark superstition. Even here, however, and in an early part (chap. 42:1-4), care was taken to point out an incomparably greater "Servant" than Israel, Cyrus, or any other, Who should come in meekness, but not fail nor be discouraged till He have set judgment in the earth, and the isles shall wait for His law. How different from His blind "servant" in the same chapter, abandoned to heathen spoliation for their more guilty heathenism, whatever over-abounding mercy may do another day not yet arrived!

With chap. 49 the heavier and more heinous charge is pressed. The prophet sets before us throughout the section the aggravated guilt of the returned remnant in rejecting their own, the true, Messiah. It is a striking instance of a principle common to the N. T. as well as the O., the replacement of the faithless “servant” by the faithful One, of Israel the empty vine by Messiah the True Vine, the fleshly son of God called out of Egypt by His Only-begotten in due time. Indeed it is the question for faith and unbelief between the first man and the Second, which underlies all revelation, and determines the lot of every soul before whom it comes, for not time only but eternity. Messiah takes up Israel's place, as Jehovah's servant in whom He will be glorified, but in view of His rejection says (ver. 4) “I have labored in vain, I have spent my strength for naught and vanity: yet surely my judgment is with Jehovah, and my work [or wages] with my God.” The next verse is the answer and demonstrates the substitution of Messiah for Israel, not distinct only but for the present opposed to Him. “And now saith Jehovah that formed me from the womb to be his servant, to bring Jacob again to him, that Israel may be gathered to him (yet shall I be glorious in the eyes of Jehovah, and my God shall be my strength); and he said, It is a small thing that thou shouldest be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob and to restore the preserved of Israel: I will even give thee for light to Gentiles, to be my salvation unto the end of the earth” (vers. 5, 6). The text is here rendered in a form substantially as learned Jews prefer. What can be plainer, even if we had not the apostle's application in Acts 13, than that here we have the blessed result of the gospel for Gentiles, on the refusal of the Messiah by His own people? No doubt despising man joined the nation in its apostate abhorrence, and the cross followed; which infinite grace made the ground of salvation indiscriminate to Jew or Gentile that believed: a state of things wholly distinct from what was before the first advent and what will follow the second, when Jehovah will prove that He never forgot Zion, but at length will contend with her enemies, and save her children then repentant and looking to Him Whom they pierced. Thus verses 7, 8, quite confirm the grace now going out far and wide (cf. 2 Cor. 6:2), while the ch. passes on to the millennial rescue and exaltation of Israel on earth. All is due to the Servant, and is God's gracious use of His rejection. Meanwhile the Jew has lost Him as King in Zion; and the believer (whosoever he may be) has Him as Savior, Lord, Priest, and Head in heavenly glory.

How does the self-styled higher criticism fare before this divine light? It is really, what the cross of Christ outwardly seemed, emptiness and vanity: an unspeakably sad sight, a mob of Jewish foes inciting Gentiles against Christ and God's inspired scripture, with traitor disciples playing into their hands! May they tremble at Jehovah's word, lest that come upon them that is spoken of in the prophets, lest they perish as despisers in their inexcusable unbelief. For no canon more pervades the school than the denial of true prophecy independent of local and actual indications, and especially of any unveiling of the distant future. Hence the foregone conclusion of incredulity. The question is begged. They neither prove nor disprove. They assume as their primary principle that “to base a promise upon a condition of things not yet existent, and without any point of contact with the circumstances of situation of those to whom it is addressed, is alien to the genius of prophecy” (Lit. O.T 201). From the first prediction in the Bible to the last the very reverse is nearer the truth, allowing for the subordinate cases to which it may apply. From the great body of scriptural prophecy on the contrary is excluded private i.e. isolated solution; because it converges as the rule on the yet future kingdom when the earth shall be full of the knowledge of Jehovah and His glory as the waters cover the sea. How transparently weak to deny the prophecies of Babylon or any other to Isaiah, because of a century or more, when their Great Unknown (itself the utmost folly for a prophet and opposed to all inspired facts) beyond controversy predicts the postponement of Israel's hope through the rejection of Messiah many centuries after, the consequent grace to Gentiles, and the yet unaccomplished Zion in the latter day when kings shall be nursing fathers and queens nursing mothers! This rationalism is the more irrational, because, in what they acknowledge as incontestable, the leap into that future vision of glory on earth and for Israel especially, is even more detailed in chaps. 2., 4., 9., 11., 12.; so that the argument, if it is to be so called, is as illogical and capricious, as it is unbelieving.

But turning to chap. 50., we have the new controversy of God carried on still more fully and profoundly. The Messiah is set forth evidently: the hidden glory of Jehovah on one side, and on the other the humiliation in grace of the dependent and obedient Servant, so competent and ready in love to others yet rejected and abased to the uttermost, and after all the shame and suffering helped of God and justified: a justification, which the apostle in Rom: 8. was inspired to claim for the Christian in virtue of His sacrificial death. And this wondrous but true portrait, not of some ideal personage, but of our Lord Jesus Christ, so amply and closely verified in the N. T., is presumed to be drawn by the unknown prophet of the rationalists “towards the close of the Babylonian captivity”! Not one solid reason has ever been given for the hypothesis; but if we conceive it for the moment as certified fact, what would there be but the equally sure refutation of rationalism? What bearing on contemporary interests was there just before the return, more than in Hezekiah's days when the captivity in Babylon had been announced? How these skeptics labor for the fire and weary themselves in vain, when they strive to rob Isaiah, not only here, but of such chaps. as 24.-27., and 34., 35. Assign them to whom they please, the mouth of Jehovah has uttered them, and there shall be a fulfillment in the due time: blessed they that believe, wretched beyond utterance those that render null as to themselves the counsel of God. What point of contact with the circumstances of those addressed can be adduced at one time rather than the other for such predictions? To suppose an unknown prophet of the highest rank equal to Isaiah, or superior, is itself a very unreasonable and uncalled for fancy; especially when incorporated with his writings, the greatest known. Even the shortest strain is carefully attributed to each writer; and on a human point of view, no one less needs, less admits of, a supplement than the stately son of Amoz; on divine ground, the effort savors of impiety, wholly subjective as it is. That the latter seven and twenty chapters are on the whole the grandest and most important of the book is beyond dispute. Nothing but the malignant revolutionary violence of modern infidelity accounts for the scheme; which after all leaves God's book in possession of true prediction of Christ many centuries before He came to fulfill the most momentous part, as He will surely come again to fulfill all that remains.

Chaps. 51.-52:12 apply the truth to the people of God or at least to the godly remnant of the future, regarded in their strict prophetic bearing. There is first a triple call: “Hearken to me, ye that follow righteousness” (vers. 1-3), “Listen (or attend) to me, my people” (vers. 4-6), and “Hearken to me, ye that know righteousness” (vers. 7-8); which indicate progress spiritually. Then follow three calls: first, “Awake, awake, put on strength, O arm of Jehovah” (vers. 9-16), a call for divine intervention; next, “Rouse thyself, rouse thyself standing, O Jerusalem” (vers. 17-23), an address to the city of God's choice; then a final “Awake, awake; put on thy strength, O Zion” (52:1).

Then comes the joyful message, which certainly has not the smallest relation to the plain of Shinar, but to the high lands of Palestine, as the tidings coalesce not only with chap. 40., but with 24.-27. 32.,33.,35., indeed with 11., 12., and chapters earlier still. It would appear that at this epoch of the future, Jews will be once more captives among the Gentiles, who then go out, priests and people, far more gloriously than the trembling remnant who left Babylon of old by the decree of Cyrus, or even the nation of old leaving Egypt in haste. We know from Zech. 14:2 That, just before their divine deliverance, half of Jerusalem shall go forth into captivity. But Jehovah too shall go forth and fight against those nations as when He fought in the day of battle. Alas! one cannot expect faith as to the future from those who disbelieve His word about the past. This one scripture it seemed well to cite as decisive proof of Jewish captives, just before the close of man's and the beginning of

Jehovah's day.

The Known Isaiah, Isaiah 44:6 - 48:22: The Known Isaiah

We have seen the glory of Jehovah set forth in creation and providence, but not more than in His gracious condescension and unfailing care of the people whom He chose and separated to Himself as His servant, witness of the one true and living God against all false gods and especially idols, the snare of no nation more than of Israel. This was especially seasonable, when the prophet had solemnly set before Hezekiah the ruin even of the residue who clung to David's house, when that royal stem, on which their standing and hopes depended, should be carried with all their treasures to Babylon. For on earth was no mother, no patroness, of idolatry, more ancient, powerful, or renowned than Babylon, “the glory of kingdoms.” What then seemed so much to compromise His name as that Babylon should sweep His people off the land He gave them into captivity? On the contrary it was because of apostacy from Jehovah for Gentile idols, and this at length and persistently in David's house, that Jehovah gave them up to a land of graven images where men were mad upon idols. Judah's sin became their punishment, that they might learn, both from Jerusalem and in Babylon, the brutish delusion and destructive shame of trust in gods that man made.

Hence long before the tune the prophet told them of the judgment Jehovah would visit on Babylon, by raising up one from the east and the north an avenger in righteousness. This was of so much the deeper interest to the chosen people, because its capture would open the door for their return. Yet who can overlook that the terms of the prediction, while definitely applying to both events, go on without doubt to Christ? Nor is it merely Christ in the past but in the future also, times for restoring all things, which the apostle Peter preached (Acts 3), as God spoke of them by His holy prophets since time began. It is a marked and integral part of the testimony that God herein challenges the devotees of idolatry to declare what shall happen, and things, in not the near future but “the latter end of them.”

The assumption therefore that this must have been a wise anticipation, when Cyrus was in his mid career of conquest, and a very few years before the fall of Babylon, is not alone absolutely without proof, but morally irreconcilable with the language and argument of the prophet. To suppose the union of the Medes with the Persians as an actual fact, and Cyrus already triumphant in N. W. and Central Asia, is to make the prediction a vain mendacious boast, instead of a communication divine beyond question. If it be Isaiah's, as its place professes it to be, following his humbling words to Hezekiah, what can be more forcible in establishing the claims of the one true God, raising up the avenger and unveiling the future, itself but the pledge of one still more glorious, to the Jew when the crisis so loudly called for it? Yet in doing so He laid their iniquity bare with an unsparing hand, even while He calls them to sing a new song to Himself in view of a deliverance, not yet fulfilled but sure, when the day of sovereign grace dawns on repentant Israel, renouncing their own righteousness and looking to Him Whom they pierced. Nature began with all things good from God, which man, listening to the enemy and sinning, reduced to ruin; grace begins with the ruin, gives the Second man and last Adam to bear the judgment of the sins, bring in divine righteousness, and establishes at last a new heaven and a new earth. Israel's was a similar story over again; and so is Christendom's. In all God is faithful, above all in Christ by virtue of His person and work, Who vindicated God as to the past, present, and future; as He must reign till He has put all the enemies under His feet. When all things have been subjected to Him, then shall the Son also be subjected to Him that subjected all things to Him, that God [Father, Son, and Holy Spirit] may be all in all, instead of all things being under the glorified Man in the previous kingdom.

After this richest encouragement to His undeserving people (44:1-5), He again raises His controversy with idols, and sets out the folly as well as wickedness of man's making his object of worship (6-20), with a most touching appeal to Israel, formed to be His servant; as in view of sovereign grace He will dispel their transgressions as a mist and their sins as a cloud (21-23). He asserts His frustration of lying signs and senseless diviners, while He confirms His declared counsel, saying of Jerusalem, Thou shalt be inhabited, and of the cities of Judah, Ye shall be built, as of the deep, Be thou dry, and of Cyrus (for now he is named), He is my shepherd and shall accomplish all my pleasure, who will say of Jerusalem, She shall be built, and to the temple, Thy foundation shall be laid (24-28).

So notoriously and punctually it came to pass: none need travel beyond the written word of God to learn it. Jehovah, with power supreme, has not only the knowledge of the end from the beginning, but imparts conspicuously of that knowledge for the sustenance of faith, at the very time when His people, because of faithlessness, were reduced to be no longer a vessel of His power. It was Jehovah that held Cyrus' right hand to subdue nations before him, to break in pieces the doors of brass, and to cut asunder the bars of iron. For Israel's sake He named Cyrus, though he knew not Jehovah, that men might know from east and from west that there is none beside Him. It was He that raised up Cyrus in righteousness, to build His city, and let go His captives, not for price nor reward, saith Jehovah of hosts. Yet this unparalleled return of the Jew from Babylon is as evidently but the shadow of an everlasting salvation, not yet Israel's, when idols and their worshippers shall be in the dust, and in Jehovah all Israel shall be justified and shall glory; yea, and every knee shall bow to Him and every tongue shall swear (45).

In chap. 46 follows the utter humiliation of Bel and Nebo, chief idols of Babylon, more manifestly impotent than the beasts that bore them, unable to save, and themselves gone into captivity. Again is Jehovah contrasted in His loving patience toward Israel with the image that could neither move nor speak nor save; whereas He was giving proof, in their deep depression for their sins and especially their idolatries, that Jehovah is God, and none else, and none like Him, declaring the end from the beginning and from ancient times the. things that are not yet done, to be shown ere long, in calling a bird of prey from the east, the man of His counsel from a far country, though Zion has still to await salvation, and Israel Jehovah's glory, which faith would never count far off.

But ere that great day the virgin daughter of Babylon must sit in the dust (ch. xlvii). Warned solemnly as no Gentile monarch had ever been, a warning recalled and interpreted by a Jewish prophet of the captivity, “the head of gold” did not take these things to heart nor remember the end thereof. Hence he that long beforehand predicted the captivity, now followed it up with Babylon's desolation to come suddenly, not knowing nor suspecting nor able to ward it off, spite of enchantments and sorceries, spite of astrologers, stargazers, and moon-prognosticators: there is none to save Babylon.

The controversy closes in chap. 48., wherein Jehovah appeals to Jacob's house, called by the name of Israel, and come forth out of Judah's waters: a remarkable description which clothes the Jews with the honored name of him, who, wrestling with God and with men, prevailed. Here again Jehovah reminds them of His declaring, the former things long ago, lest with their neck of iron sinew and their brow of brass, they should impute to their idol what the Eternal had long predicted and at last accomplished. Now He caused them to hear new things, that they might be kept, if it could be, from their perverse rebelliousness, and not be cut off but be refined in the furnace of affliction. He the First and

He the Last again challenged, Which among them had declared these things? It was their Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel, Who, alike by this very prophecy as by others, bore divine witness to His witnesses; and by the Gentile chief He raised up against Babylon, He would wean them from futile images to the assurance of His own sovereign goodness and unmerited fidelity. For “there is no peace, saith Jehovah, unto the wicked.” And what wickedness grosser or more ungrateful in Israel than idolatry?

Yes, there is a deeper depth to devour the guilty people; and this the prophet opens as the still more awful indictment laid to their charge in the next section.

The Nature of Prophecy, Some Old Testament Prophecies Referred to in the New Testament

In Matt. 1:23 we have Isaiah 7:14 cited, and applied to the birth of the Messiah. The facts stated prove its literal fulfillment. Now there are symbols and figures, as well as simple language, in Isaiah 7-9:7; but this does not hinder the Holy Spirit stamping the prophecy of the Incarnation, not as an “idea” or general principle, but as an objective fact. There were other children for signs and for wonders in Israel—Shear-jashub already horn, and Maher-shalalhash-baz about to be, sons of the prophet; but they are as distinct from the Virgin's Son Immanuel as Hezekiah, already a dozen years old at least, and born before Ahaz came to the throne. Neither he, nor Isaiah's children, were born of the Virgin; nor could even Hezekiah, still less a future unknown son of Ahaz, call it his land, as Immanuel can, whose name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace, the Destroyer of the last Assyrian, and the Deliverer and King on David's throne forever. Alas! there is the secret root of unbelief. He is the Great Unknown, not the writer of chaps. 40-66, though Isaiah's was indeed the pen that indited them, but Isaiah's theme, the Virgin's Son, in the striking parenthesis of his introductory chapters. Had men but seen as God reveals Him at the beginning, they had not doubted the voice of God through Isaiah at the end.

Even the chief priests and scribes (Matt. 2:4-6) could answer unhesitatingly as to the place where Messiah should be born. It was none other than Bethlehem of Judea according to Micah 5:2. The Holy Spirit in no way discountenances, but accepts the light they saw from the lamp of prophecy. Luke 2 adds the providential ordering by which Joseph went from the north of the land to this particular spot in the south. God was taking care, we may boldly say, that the word should be fulfilled to the letter. And the true-hearted believer may see how full of instruction is the context; for the words immediately preceding declare that the Judge of Israel should be smitten upon the cheek. Then comes in the parenthetical verse 2, which reveals not only His birth as David's Son, but an everlasting kinship (for indeed He is Immanuel, God with us). And because of the Jews thus contemning their Ruler in Israel, they are themselves given up (says verse 3) till she which travaileth hath brought forth-till the birth of the divine purpose for the restitution of all things. “Then the remnant of his brethren shall return unto the children of Israel,” or, in the figure of the apostle, the natural branches be grafted into their own olive tree. Then will the glorious hopes that follow be punctually fulfilled. Neither Satan nor the Lord will have any difficulty in finding the Assyrian who, in that day, is to perish in the land. There the Assyrian stands on the page of prophecy, as he will on the stage of the future, to perish forever. So false is it that neither the restoration itself of Israel, nor the events growing out of it can be understood according to the letter. So true is it that those who reason thus maintain that, in this sense, considerable portions of the prophetic scriptures can have no proper fulfillment. “And why, then,” they boldly ask, “should any be supposed to have?” It is systematic dishonor of God's mind through ignorance of the scriptures and of His power.

The next quotation (from Hosea 11:1) is full of interest. The prophet was inspired to blend, as it were, Israel of old and Christ called out of Egypt. He, before God, was the true Israel, and their history recommenced in that blessed Person for Whose sake God had led out the ancient people at their beginning. Theirs is a sad tale of self-will, rebellion, idolatry, yet to be repented and forgiven, when the generation to come shall say, Blessed be He that cometh in the name of Jehovah. The observant reader may see a similar transfer and identification in Isaiah 49. This is not merely literal, but spiritual in the true sense, not the vague spiritualizing which fritters all away, forgets the glory and relationship of Christ, blots out Israel as such from God's mercy in the future, and lowers the church from heaven to earth.

Matthew 2:17 exhibits a difference in the form of citing: “Then was fulfilled” Jeremiah 31:15. What can more strikingly testify how Christ is ever before the Holy Spirit, than the application here by our inspired Evangelist? A heathen, or certainly a Jew, might admire the beauty, and boldness, and elevation of the impersonation; who but God would have thought now of the mourning prophet's words, which brought His Son before Him in the Edomite's slaughter of the babes of Bethlehem? Matthew does not say that it was the object of the prophecy, as in other cases. If the evil one prompted the savage jealousy of Herod, God felt for Rachel's children afresh when shielding the Messiah, who will yet reward her work, give hope for her latter end, and bring the children again to their own border.

The last verse of chap. 2 gives another variety that differs not only in the form, but in the general reference: so that (, not) it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets. It was their scope. He was to be despised of men. So His residence accorded. “Can any good come out of Nazareth” There Joseph took Mary and the Heir of all the promises of God. Such was the scope of the prophets.

“Isaiah the prophet” is said, in Matthew 3, to have predicted John as “the voice of one crying in the wilderness” (Isaiah 40:3). This would be decisive if higher criticism consisted with the fear of God—if it trembled at His word. How came men to set themselves above apostolic authority? Because they must otherwise, accepting prophecy, give up their skepticism and bow to God's revelation. If Isaiah wrote this wondrous moral pleading to the end, he clearly predicts Cyrus by name and character, by mission and work, and graphically foretells Babylon's fall, and the return to Jerusalem; nor this only, but the rejection of the Messiah and His atoning death, by the faith of whom the people, no longer impenitent, become God's servants through Jehovah's Righteous Servant, who appears at length for their final deliverance and everlasting joy, and the destruction of enemies within and without. As to the bearing of the words quoted by the Baptist, they must be childish indeed who fail to see that they describe the service of John as Messiah's herald, a moral work set out in material figures, as is common in the New Testament. Never have I heard a whisper of future “engineering” intended, save by believers in human progress, and in a millennium brought about by man's instrumentality rather than by Christ's advent. But there may be souls no less simple and rash on the other side.

“Isaiah the prophet” is cited again (9:1,2) in Matt. 4:14-16, and with marked propriety. Just so much of the prophecy is used as bears on the first advent of Christ, the great light that shone on her that was distressed, “the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles,” etc. The figurative language of the former quotation in no way forbade its literal accomplishment in John the Baptist, without a vague series of heralds to bring in the Lord. So equally bold figures here only render vivid testimony to that True Light which Christ was, not to His forerunner

who bore Him witness. They are both definite and accomplished prophecies. Only the very next words of Isaiah 9 open the unfulfilled coming glory of Messiah here below. “Thou hast multiplied the nation, thou hast increased their joy. They joy before thee according to the joy in harvest, as men rejoice when they divide the spoil": words alien from gospel blessing and from heavenly glory, but perfectly expressive of the world-kingdom of our Lord at the end of the age. Hence the flash which shines next, lighting up the judgment which brings it in. “For the yoke of his burden, and the staff of his shoulder, the rod of his oppressor, thou hast broken, as in the day of Midian. For all the armor of the armed man in the tumult, and the garments rolled in blood shall even be for burning, for fuel of fire. For unto us a child is born,” etc. (R.V.). This ought surely to be unmistakable. It is the Second Advent, not the first. In the perspective of the prophet the one is followed by the other. Christ's death separated them; the New Testament, and its special work and heavenly relationships with the exalted Head of the body, come between. But the one is as literal and distinct as the other, though figures cluster round both to enlighten faith, not to wrap in mist and cloud as men wish.

The next quotation of prophecy is from “Isaiah the prophet” (53:4): “Himself took our infirmities and bare our diseases” (Matthew 8:17). The Evangelist applies it to Messiah's removal of disease. Atoning work is distinguished, and even contrasted, with the latter half of verse 4, in verses 5, 6, 8 (last clause), 10, 11, 12, though there is more than atonement. And so the New Testament cites these, not verse 4, for atonement. Thus all is precise and definite in the prophecy, as well as in apostolic citation. It is scientific theology which produces darkness, of which it is equally unconscious and vain, with which it would, if it could, envelop the divine word. It really deceives itself. The prophecy is luminous throughout, opening and closing with Messiah's exaltation in His kingdom to come; but almost all between is the inimitable portrait of His humiliation and death in man's rejection and God's atonement. It is not surprising that those who love to regard the prophets as dwelling in their own fog are shy of a chapter which is not more sharply defined than it is momentous and humbling. Nor is it that figures are lacking, but that simple language pervades it from first to last. Symbol is wholly absent, and all excuse for allegorizing; and the rather, as there is most needed yet spiritual food already prepared of God for the spiritual.

The Lord in Matthew 11:10, warrants our personal application of Malachi 3:1 to the Baptist, stopping short of the verses that follow, which await His coming again. And though Luke 1 clearly refers to Malachi 4:5, 6, it is even there only applied morally, or to faith, not historically; as our Lord Himself puts the case in Matthew 11:14, and Mark 9:13 “And if ye are willing to receive it, this is Elijah which is to come.” Nothing is farther from His mind than to set aside a future action of Elijah (compare Mark 9:12, John 1:21) before the great and terrible day of Jehovah come, a description in no way suiting His first advent in grace, even though moral judgment accompany that grace.

The only other quotation that need be noticed here is in Matthew 12:17-21, from Isaiah 42:1-4. The folly of a great unknown prophet is cut off here also by anticipation. “Isaiah the prophet” spoke it: a distinct prediction applicable at that time to the Messiah's presence in lowly meekness, and with tender care for the crushed or the dim waiting for ultimate triumph. Never can it apply again as then, though it looks to the end from that beginning. The poor of the flock would, and did, appreciate His unpretending grace, whatever the disappointment of His brethren after the flesh, and however the wise and prudent find excuse for unbelief and a plea for stumbling. But divine wisdom is justified by all her children.

Notes on Isaiah, Isaiah 14:28-32, and Isaiah 15-16, Notes on

THE division of chapters is singularly unhappy here; for the last five verses of chapter 14. form a section to themselves, and the two following chapters are but one subject. What adds to the confusion is the insertion of the sign of the new paragraph at verse 29 of chapter 14.; whereas verse 28 really pertains to the new burden—not to Babylon or the Assyrian, but to God's judgment on the Philistines.

“In the year that king Ahaz died was this burden. Rejoice not thou, whole Palestine, because the rod of him that smote thee is broken: for out of the serpent's root shall come forth a cockatrice, and his fruit shall be a fiery flying serpent.”

The death of Ahaz might naturally excite the hopes of his neighbors, the Philistines, who had been put down by the strong hand of his grandfather Uzziah. Of him it is written in 2 Chron. 26:4, that “he did that which was right in the sight of the Lord, according to all that his father Amaziah did. And he sought God in the days of Zechariah, who had understanding in the visions of God: and as long as he sought the Lord, God made him to prosper. And he went forth and warred against the Philistines, and brake down the wall of Gath, and the wall of Jabneb, and the wall of Ashdod, and built cities about Ashdod, and among the Philistines. And God helped him against the Philistines, and against the Arabians that dwelt in Gur-baal, and the Mehunims. And the Ammonites gave gifts to Uzziah; and his name spread abroad even to the entering in of Egypt; for he strengthened himself exceedingly.”

And now, not only Uzziah, but Ahaz, were gone; “the rod of him that smote” the land of the Philistines was “broken.” The enemy had learned to despise Judah in the days of faithless Ahaz. “For the Lord brought Judah low because of Ahaz king of Israel: for he made Judah naked and transgressed sore against the Lord.” Who was his son that they should fear him? Let them not rejoice, however; “for out of the serpent's root shall come forth a cockatrice, and his fruit shall be a fiery flying serpent.” The primary accomplishment of this was in the reign of Hezekiah of whom it is recorded (2 Kings 18:8,) that “he smote the Philistines, even unto Gaza, and the borders thereof, from the tower of the watchmen to the fenced city.”

But I see no reason whatever to suppose that this burden is an exception to the rest; especially as the strength of the language points to a mightier destruction than that inflicted by that pious king of Judah. Its proper fulfillment, therefore, awaits the latter day. And then to the full will be seen the two-fold application of divine power, when, on the one hand, the first-born of the poor shall feed and the needy shall lie down in safety; and on the other, Jehovah will not merely break the rod but kill the root of Philistia with famine and slay its remnant. In the next verse (31) the prophet bursts forth with the utmost animation, calling on the gate to howl, and the city to cry out. “Thou, whole Palestina, art dissolved: for there shall come from the north a smoke, and none shall be alone in his appointed times (or hosts).” Thus, an overwhelming and vigorously sustained force is threatened, which will sweep all before itself as far as the Philistines are concerned. Here, too, the end is deliverance for the godly Jews. “What shall one then answer the messengers of the nation? That the Lord hath founded Zion, and the poor of his people shall trust or find refuge in it.”

In chapters 15-16, we have the burden of Moab. What a picture of desolation and woe, and so much the more felt because so unexpected and sudden! The Philistines were not more offensive to God because of the pleasure they took in the calamities of Israel, than the Moabites in their excessive self-security and pride. “Because in the night Ar of Moab is laid waste, be [Moab] is undone; because in the night Kir of Moab is laid waste, he is undone.” (Chap. 15:1.) Such seems to me the force a little more exactly. Broken thus in their strongholds, one after another surprised to their dismay, the people are supposed to go to their places to weep, with deep and universal signs of mourning in public and in private; and this to the extremities of their land, the very soldiers crying out like the weaker sex. (Ver. 2-4.) The prophet or whosoever is personated by him, cannot but feel for the disasters of Moab; and the graphic sketch of desolation and want and carnage is continued to the end of the chapter.

Chapter 16. opens with a call to Moab to send the lamb to the ruler of the land from Sela in the wilderness, unto the mount of the daughter of Zion. This appears to be a reference to their ancient tribute. They were subdued by David of old, and sent him gifts. “And he smote Moab and measured them with a line, casting them down to the ground; even with two lines measured he to put to death, and with one full line to keep alive; and so the Moabites became David's servants, and brought gifts.” (2 Sam. 8:12.) Later on in the history, we find that the king of Moab was a sheep-master, and used to render to the king of Israel the tribute of 100,000 lambs, and as many rams with the wool. The prophet seems here to remind Moab of its obligation: otherwise their daughters must prepare for still greater calamities. (Ver. 1, 2.) “Take counsel, execute judgment; make thy shadow as the night in the midst of the noonday; hide the outcasts; bewray not him that wandereth. Let mine outcasts dwell with thee, Moab: be thou a covert to them from the face of the spoiler: for the extortioner is at an end, the spoiler ceaseth, the oppressors are consumed out of the land. And in mercy shall the throne be established; and he shall sit upon it in truth in the tabernacle of David, judging and seeking judgment, and basting righteousness.” (Ver. 3-5.) The prophet, in his second counsel, touches on the dire offense, in the Lord's eyes, of Moab. Had he sheltered the outcasts of Israel? or had he taken advantage of their distressful flight to smite and betray them? The prophetic Spirit looks through Hezekiah to the true Son of David, who shall reign in righteousness when the last oppressive spoiler has come to his end.

The verses that follow (6-12) detail once more the pride of Moab and his most humiliating downfall, when, spite of his arrogance, “Moab shall howl for Moab; every one shall howl,” and the country shall vie with the towns in extent of devastation; and the prophet weeps afresh at the sight of the wretchedness of the once lofty foe, who prays in his sanctuary; “but he shall not prevail.”

The last verse shows that, whatever may be the full bearing of this burden on Moab, “within three years, as the years of an hireling, [i.e., I suppose, exactly measured out, as would be the fact in such a case,] and the glory of Moab shall be contemned, with all that great multitude; and the remnant shall be very small and feeble.” That this was accomplished to the letter, there can be no doubt to the believing mind, though we know not the instrumentality, whether the king of Judah or the Assyrian.

But as little need one question that the fulfillment of all the terms of the prophecy will be in the grand future crisis; for it is certain that the final king of the north will fail to reach Moab, and that the children of Israel under the Messiah are to lay their hands upon him. Compare Isa. 11:14 with Dan. 11:41. Nothing more clearly proves that, if unknown or little known now, there will remain representatives of that nation in the end of the age to take their part in that catastrophe, humiliating to man but to the glory of God, when the chosen people, in their totality, shall be saved and restored by divine mercy to the land of their inheritance and their promised supremacy.

Notes on Isaiah, Isaiah 9:8-21 and Isaiah 10, Notes on

The prophet now resumes the dirge of judgment on the nation in general, begun in chapter 5, and interrupted by the two-fold episode of chapter 6 and of chapters 7, 8, 9:1-7. This last gave us the special development of Jehovah's ways with His people; the revelation of His glory in Christ, with its effects in judgment and mercy; the Incarnation, or Immanuel, the Virgin's Son, the stay of David's house and hope of Israel, spite of the land desolated by the Assyrian; then the re-appearance of the Assyrian, now that it is Immanuel's land, and the overthrow of all the Gentiles associated with him, whatever his temporary but great successes even in the pleasant land; next, an inner moral view of the people when (strange to say) Jehovah should be for a stone of stumbling to both the houses of Israel but a sure sanctuary for a godly remnant, “My disciples,” who would be for signs and wonders in Israel at the very time Jehovah hides His face, as He is clearly doing now, from the house of Jacob: all closing in darkness and trouble such as never was for the mass, and yet with light for the despised Galileans, as at the Lord's first advent, so just before the nation is multiplied, the oppression is broken, the victory won not by human sword, but by burning and fuel of fire; and He who is not more surely the virgin's Son, the woman's Seed, than the mighty God, the Prince of Peace, establishes His blessed kingdom from henceforth, even forever.

Chapter 9:8 takes up again (comp. chap. 5: 25) the general train, but with allusion to some of the instruction, as for instance to Rezin and the Assyrian, in the parenthetical part. Verses 8-12 Contain the renewed announcement of divine displeasure. “The Lord sent a word into Jacob, and it hath lighted upon Israel. And all the people shall know, even Ephraim and the inhabitant of Samaria, that say in the pride and stoutness of heart, The bricks are fallen down, but we will build with hewn stones: the sycamores are cut down, but we will change them into cedars. Therefore the Lord shall set up the adversaries of Resin against him, and join his enemies together; the Syrians before and the Philistines behind; and they shall devour Israel with open mouth.” It is clear that as yet the ten rebellious tribes are the object of judgment, and emphatically their pride of heart in despising the Lord's rebuke and confiding in their own powers. For this is their fond hope and vain-glorious arrogance, turning their breach into an occasion of greater strength and display than ever. “The bricks are fallen down, but we will build with hewn stones; the sycamores are cut down, but we will change them into cedars.” But here came the retributive dealing of God. Had Syria's king, Rezin, joined them in unholy league against Judah? “Therefore the Lord shall set up the adversaries of Rezin against him and join his enemies together, the Syrians before and the Philistines behind; and they shall devour Israel with open mouth.” So it ever is. The unfaithful people seek the world's alliance against those with whom God's testimony is, but prove ere long that the friendship of the world is not only enmity against God, but destruction to themselves. “For all this his anger is not turned away, but his hand is stretched out still.”

The next view of their judgment (ver. 13-17) is not so much judicial retribution from without, but because His chastening was slighted, the Lord's giving up Israel to utter internal demoralization. “For the people turneth not unto him that smiteth them, neither do they seek the Lord of hosts. Therefore the Lord will cut from Israel head and tail, branch and rush, in one day. The ancient and honorable, he is the head; and the

prophet that teacheth lies, he is the tail. For the leaders of this people cause them to err; and they that are led of them are destroyed." Universal ruin in one day on all classes, from the highest to the lowest of Israel, "branch and rush;" all plunged into common destruction, leaders and led. What a picture! and how much more dismal and hopeless, when the righteous Lord, indignant at the abounding falsehood and wrong under the highest pretensions to sanctity, "shall have no joy in their young men, neither shall have mercy on the fatherless and widows." Neither youth and vigor are pleasant to Him, nor can orphanage or widowhood touch His heart longer in a people so depraved: "For every one is an hypocrite and an evildoer, and every mouth speaketh folly. For all this his anger is not turned away, but his hand is stretched out still."

Then follows a most vivid picture (ver. 18, 19) of wickedness, burning like fire; of Jehovah's wrath darkening the land; and reckless, unsparing violence of brother against brother. "And he shall snatch on the right hand, and be hungry; and be shall eat on the left hand, and they shall not be satisfied: they shall eat every man the flesh of his own arm: Manasseh, Ephraim: and Ephraim, Manasseh: and they together shall be against Judah. For all this his anger is not turned away, but his hand is stretched out still." The nearest of the ten should devour each other, and both Judah.

The last of these disciplinary inflictions is given in chapter 10:1-4. Here it is the unrighteousness of the judges, who stood in the place of God Himself and were called Elohim, gods, (Psa. 82,) but most grievously misrepresented His character and wronged His people, specially the defenseless. "Woe unto them that decree unrighteous decrees, and that write grievousness which they have prescribed; to turn aside the needy from judgment, and to take away the right from the poor of my people, that widows may be their prey, and that they may rob the fatherless! And what will ye do in the day of visitation, and in the desolation which shall come from far? to whom will ye flee for help? and where will ye leave your glory?" And this is His sentence on them: "Without me they shall bow down under the prisoners, and they shall fall under the slain." The most exalted shall be most abased; and those shall fare worst whom it least became to turn their high estate and large power to God-dishonoring greed and oppression. "For all this his anger is not turned away, but his hand is stretched out still."

But now, in verse 9, we enter on a most weighty change. The Assyrian desolator comes up once more. It is his final working which is chiefly in the mind of the Holy Ghost; as indeed this is the grand catastrophe and last trouble of Jacob, and in contrast with the previous solemn formula of still continuing, unexhausted wrath. Now, on the contrary, we have in this proud enemy of Israel the rod of Jehovah's anger. "The day of visitation" is there, the "desolation from far" is come. The indignation ceases, and Jehovah's anger in their destruction. His anger now is turned away and His arm stretched out no more.

Again, it is of great moment to apprehend clearly that the Antichrist, or man of sin, is a totally distinct personage. The commentators, from Eusebius to Horsley, who confound the two, are inexcusably careless of the Scripture; for it is very clear that there will be a willful king in the city and land who will set himself up as Messiah and Jehovah in His temple, received as such by the apostate Jews; and that, altogether opposed to the Antichrist in Jerusalem who is in league with the western power, there is another chief, an external antagonist of the Jews, who is the Assyrian, or king of the north, so often occurring in the prophecies. Of him Sennacherib was a type.

The Assyrian, then, was first used as a rod to chastise Israel. "I will send him against an hypocritical nation, and against the people of my wrath will I give him a charge, to take the spoil, and to take the prey, and to tread them down like the mire of the streets. Howbeit he meaneth not so, neither doth his heart think so; but it is in his heart to destroy and cut off nations not a few." But he owned not God, saying, "Are not my princes altogether kings? Is not Calmo as Carchemish? is not Hamath as Arpad? is not Samaria as Damascus? As my hand hath found the kingdoms of the idols, and whose graven images did excel them of Jerusalem and of Samaria; shall I not, as I have done unto Samaria and her idols, so do to Jerusalem and her idols?" His own doom is therefore sealed. "Wherefore it shall come to pass that when the Lord hath performed his whole work upon mount Zion and on Jerusalem, I will punish the fruit of the stout heart of the king of Assyria, and the glory of his high looks. For he saith, By the strength of my hand I have done it, and by my wisdom; for I am prudent; and I have removed the bounds of the people, and have robbed their treasures, and I have put down their inhabitants like a valiant man: and my hand hath found as a nest the riches of the people: and as one gathereth eggs that are left, have I gathered all the earth; and there was none that moved the wing, or opened the mouth, or peeped. Shall the ax boast itself against him that heweth therewith? or shall the saw magnify itself? as if the rod should shake itself against them that lift it up, or as if the staff should lift up itself, as if it were no wood. Therefore shall the Lord, the Lord of hosts, send among his fat ones leanness; and under his glory he shall kindle a burning like the burning of a fire. And the light of Israel shall be for a fire, and his holy one for a flame: and it shall burn and devour his thorns and his briers in one day; and shall consume the glory of his forest, and of his fruitful field, both soul and body: and they shall be as when a standard-bearer fainteth. And the rest of the trees of his forest shall be few, that a child may write them." It is the closing scene. The Lord has not even yet performed His whole work on mount Zion and on Jerusalem. Nay, He will not have done as long as the Antichrist will be there. Having disposed of Him by His epiphany from heaven, the Assyrian still remains to be punished. "And it shall come to pass in that day, that the remnant of Israel, and such as are escaped of the house of Jacob, shall no more again stay upon him that smote them; but shall stay upon the Lord, the Holy One of Israel, in truth. The remnant shall return, even the remnant of Jacob, unto the mighty God. For though thy people Israel be as the sand of the sea, yet a remnant of them shall return: the consumption decreed shall overflow with righteousness. For the Lord God of hosts shall make a consumption even determined, in the midst of all the land." Then indeed Israel's unbelief shall forever pass away: Israel shall truss no more in an arm of flesh, be it Egyptian, Assyrian, or what not. The slaughter of Midian and the manner of Egypt give the characteristic patterns of the future deliverance. (Ver. 26.)

The chapter closes with a most animated description of the Assyrian's march down from the north into the utmost nearness to Jerusalem. "He is come to Aiath, he is passed to Migron; at Michmash he hath laid up his carriages: they are gone over the passage: they have taken up their lodging at Geba; Ramah is afraid; Gibeah of Saul is fled. Lift up thy voice, O daughter of Galliun: cause it to be heard unto Laish, O poor Anathoth. Madmenah is removed; the inhabitants of Gebim gather themselves to flee. As yet shall he remain at Nob that day: he shall shake his hand against the mount of the daughter of Zion, the hill of Jerusalem." In vain, however: he shall come to his end, and none shall help him. "Behold the Lord, the LORD of hosts, shall lop the bough with terror; and the high ones of stature shall be hewn down, and the haughty shall be humbled. And he shall cut down the thickets of the forest with iron, and Lebanon shall fall by a mighty one."