

Christ in Isaiah - Part 2

by H.J. Vine

Christ is God's Servant, who is God's wisdom, power, and salvation, and who will restore Israel and save the world through His atoning work accomplished on the cross.

Scripture: Isaiah 49:1, Isaiah 52:13, Isaiah 53:5, Isaiah 54:11-12, Isaiah 55:1-3, Isaiah 59:19, Matthew 2:14-15, John 15:1, Romans 9:4, 1 Corinthians 1:24

Topics: "Wisdom Of God", "Christ as the Servant"

Description

H.J. Vine emphasizes the profound wisdom of God as revealed through Christ in Isaiah, illustrating how the Servant of the Lord embodies divine wisdom and purpose. He contrasts the expectations of the mere religionist and the rationalist, showing that true wisdom is found in Christ, who suffered and was exalted for our salvation. The sermon highlights the significance of Christ as the true Israel and the faithful Servant, who restores and brings light to all nations. Vine also reflects on the prophetic nature of Isaiah, affirming that Christ's atoning work fulfills God's promises and secures salvation for both Israel and the Gentiles.

Transcript

The Wisdom of God

The mere religionist looks for a sign, whilst the desire of the rationalist is for wisdom. The Sign which God gives is also His Wisdom. The Sign of Isaiah (I) is the Servant of Isaiah (II), and He is the wise Servant, "Behold, My Servant shall deal prudently" (Isa. 52:13). Christ is God's wisdom (1 Cor. 1:24) and to us also, who are in Christ Jesus, He "has been made wisdom from God." He is that hidden wisdom which God had predetermined for our glory; but the princes of this age crucified the Lord of glory; for they did not know Him; and they showed their own folly by killing Him. The secret depths which eye had not seen, connected with God's wisdom, are now revealed to us by His Spirit (Isa. 64:4, and 1 Cor. 2:10). "The Jews [religionists] require a sign, and the Greeks [rationalists] seek after wisdom . . . But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God" (1 Cor. 1:22, 24).

The suffering Servant in Isaiah 53, bearing sin and its punishment from the hand of God, subjects Himself in Isaiah 50 (before the seven trumpet-calls in the intervening verses) to shame and spitting from man; and there we learn that He who stooped so low to allow Himself to be thus treated was none less than the Creator, God Himself, in the presence of His own creatures. What a sight! What a sign!

In section (I), Christ is the personal Servant: Israel the national servant. In section (II) Christ is the Servant: instructed individuals become "servants." In section (III) the "servants" only are mentioned as such.

In section (I) Christ is seen as the faithful Servant; trustworthy and successful. In section (II) He is the righteous Servant; suffering and satisfied. In section (III) the anointed One; Preacher and Avenger.

The Prince: the true Vine; God's Son

The Isles are first called upon to listen to the voice of God's Servant (Isa. 49:1). The peoples from afar are also told to hearken. These "peoples" are doubtless outside the ordered nations. But who are the "isles?" Surely not simply those confined in the Mediterranean Sea. Whoever they are, God favours them, and distinguishes them in a remarkable way. "Keep silence before Me, O islands; and let the peoples renew their strength; let them come near," He says to them in Isaiah 41:1. Again, "The isles shall wait for His law" (Isa. 42:4). And again, "Sing unto the Lord a new song, and His praise from the end of the earth, ye that go down to the sea, and all that is therein: the isles and the inhabitants thereof" (Isa. 52:10). "Let them give glory unto the Lord, and declare His praise in the islands" (v. 12). When His greatness is described in such marvellous majesty in Isaiah 40, it is said, "Behold He takes up the isles as an atom" (v. 15). But, as elsewhere, failure and sin against God invade their coasts, and we finally read, "To the islands He will repay recompense, and they shall fear the name of Jehovah from the west, and His glory from the rising of the sun" (Isa. 59:18-19). Here in our Isaiah (Isa. 49:1), the Servant of God, the true Israel--"Prince of God"--says to them; "Listen, O isles, unto Me!"

It is to Him, to this same Servant, God says in verse 3, "Thou art My Servant, Israel, in whom I will glorify Myself." This is the only place in our section where God's Servant is called "Israel." The name, as we know, means "Prince of God." To the believing heart Christ is easily seen in this verse; but the rationalistic critics would shut Him out (notwithstanding the verses before and after); they would make the Servant the nation of Israel here; and all through. If this be true, then it is the nation in verse 5 that restores Jacob, and in Isaiah 53 makes atonement. Such absurdities as these, destructive criticism perpetrates in the name of scholarship!

Israel, as we know, was brought up out of Egypt by the Lord, and planted as a Vine to bear fruit in service, for His glory. They failed in this respect as in others; but must God's purpose fail because of this? That could not be. The Son of God has come into Israel's place before God, and He said, "I AM THE TRUE VINE" (John 15:1). God's purpose, therefore, is maintained and made effectual in the personal Israel, the personal Vine; and when the repentant remnant are brought to Him, they will become the fruitful nation in Him, for God's glory; even as He said to His disciples before Pentecost, "As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in Me" (John 15:4). He is the True Vine.

Another scripture confirms this way of explaining verse 3. In Hosea 11:1 speaking of "Israel," He says, "loved Him, and called My Son out of Egypt." Again we are reminded that though national sonship is theirs--to them "pertains the adoption [sonship]" (Rom. 9:4), according to God's purpose; yet, in responsibility, they failed utterly; and have become degraded instead of maintaining the dignity of God's national Son. Once more we ask: Must then God's purpose fail? Impossible! God's beloved Son steps into Israel's place! And of him we read, "He took the young Child and His mother . . . into Egypt . . . that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying: Out of Egypt have I called MY SON" (Matt. 2:14-15).

Israel is the national vine and the national son, according to God's purpose; but only in Christ of the seed of Abraham, of the seed of David, raised from among the dead is this secured to them. HE IS THE TRUE VINE; HE IS GOD'S SON. It is the same with Israel as the national servant; in Christ alone is God's purpose in this regard sure for them also. HE IS THE PERSONAL ISRAEL, THE PRINCE OF GOD.

Jacob wrestled with the unnamed One, till daybreak in "Peniel" (before "the face of God"), and there secured this name "Israel" (a "Prince of God"), there in his wrestling. Weakened, yet he prevailed; and "the sun rose upon him, a prince of God." In Jacob's night of wrestling there was prefigured the nation's history. Sometimes Isaiah calls them Jacob; sometimes Israel. Like Jacob, they will come out of their long night of wrestling, and the sun will rise upon them. Their Messiah, Christ, will give them light. He will arise as the Sun of Righteousness, gladdening them with His healing and health-giving beams. It will be the dawning of the morning of world-wide blessing; but Israel (Jacob) will catch the shining rays from Him first, and reflect them over the earth; which shall then be filled with the knowledge and glory of God, as the waters cover the sea. Already the true believer is taken out of darkness and called into His marvellous light; and before the time of Jacob's trouble he will be caught up to meet the Lord; for he is not of the night, so he sings--

"The Sun which smiling lights us,

Is Jesus Christ alone:

And what to song incites us,

Is heaven on earth begun."

Having been caught up when Christ comes to the air for him, the believer will afterwards come with Him. Israel will then own Him. The One to whom they gave the cross of shame, they will, when repentant, welcome as their Messiah--the True Prince of God; the True Vine; the well-beloved Son of God.

Israel's Restorer

Notwithstanding God's salutation given to our Lord Jesus Christ in verse 3 of Isaiah 49, His outward ministry among the Jews appeared to so completely fail, that He replies, "I have laboured in vain, I have spent my strength for nought, and in vain" (v. 4). So it looked! But how sweetly the verse closes, "Nevertheless My judgment is with the Lord, and My work with My God." Blessed confidence! blessed dependence! He knew that He had been formed from the womb to be Jehovah's servant. God was His strength for His service. And even if Israel was not gathered, yet He Himself should be glorious in the eyes of Jehovah (v. 5).

Again, God addresses Him, "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 have given Thee for a Light of the nations, that Thou mayest be My Salvation unto the end of the earth (v. 6). What an answer to the apparent failure of His work! The Apostle Paul, speaking of the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus our Lord, who is exalted to the right hand of God, said He counted all things to be loss and dross on account of it. As we are enabled by the Holy Spirit to gain some of this excellent knowledge concerning Himself, it will be the same in measure with ourselves.

He is here proclaimed by God to be Israel's Restorer; but important as that is, God says it is a small thing comparatively; for not only this one nation shall come immediately under Him; all the nations shall have

Him as their Light; so that, right away to the ends of the earth, our Lord Jesus Christ shall be God's Salvation. What excellent and exceeding distinctions are here attributed to Christ!

It was in the spirit of these scriptures that at Pentecost the Apostles preached and prayed in the name of the holy Child ["Servant"] Jesus. They said, "Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved"; and emphatically announced, "Neither is there salvation in any other, for there is none other name given under heaven among men whereby we must be saved." They meant, of course, especially, none other for Israel. He alone was to be their Saviour, their Restorer. As He had restored the lame man so that he leaped and rejoiced and praised God, so He alone could restore Israel. There is no other name. He is the Restorer of Israel.

But though three thousand Jews from all parts were then brought to the Lord; we also find from our chapter (Isa. 49), the Jews will come to Him from all parts in the coming day; yet He is given to be a Light for all, the Salvation of God for the whole world; and, indeed, He will save the world in the day that is coming; but even now, in Him there is salvation for all. Would that more knew "the Salvation which is in Christ Jesus," the One who is JEHOVAH'S SERVANT: ISRAEL'S RESTORER: GOD'S SALVATION FOR ALL.

The Salvation of the Lord

What a surprise awaits men! The One whom man despises and "the nation abhors"; who was not only the Lord's Servant, but became "the Servant of rulers" (v. 7); this One they shall see exalted above all, righteously restoring Israel, and saving the world through His atoning work accomplished on the cross. He will then be supreme in royal grace and glory, and kings shall see and arise, and they shall "worship because of the Lord who is faithful, the Holy One of Israel, who has chosen Thee" (v. 7). All this is in connection with salvation. The terrible judgment that swiftly, and surely, and suddenly descends upon a wicked world is not treated here; that comes in in the next and last section. These scriptures deal with "salvation,"--it is "an acceptable time," "a day of salvation." This is the character of the present period. It is known to faith now. It will obtain publicly soon. Prisons, and darkness, and hunger, and thirst, will yield up their captives and their victims at the gracious command of our Lord Jesus Christ; to enjoy liberty, and light, and plenty. He will Himself guide them (vv. 9-10). They shall come from afar! "Behold these from the north and from the west; and these from the land of China" (v. 12).

No wonder the heavens are called upon to shout, and the mountains to sing for the comfort that has come to God's people, through Israel's Restorer. Zion thought she was forsaken altogether. A woman may, unnaturally, forget the child of her womb; but Jehovah does not forget His own people. He comforts Zion; He consoles her, and rapidly increases her children, saying to her, "Lift up thine eyes round about, and behold, all these gather themselves together, they come to thee" (v. 18). The nations, and the people too, "bring thy sons in their arms, and thy daughters shall be carried upon their shoulders" (v. 22); "And thou shalt know that I am Jehovah" (v. 23).

It will all be done in righteousness, as well as in grace;--"the prey is taken from the mighty, and the lawful captive delivered" (v. 24). His salvation is then publicly seen. "And all flesh shall know that I the Lord am thy Saviour and thy Redeemer, the Mighty One of Jacob" (v. 26).

The Controller of Creation Subjected to Shame

The fiftieth chapter of our prophecy shows the suffering of the Lord at the hands of men, and in this way is very different from Isaiah 53, which speaks of His atoning sufferings from the hand of God. In this chapter we see Him as the One who in marvellous love "came" and "called" to His unfaithful people, but there was no response to His call. He was the Controller of all creation, yet they scorned Him and put Him to shame, as our chapter declares. His own words declare His greatness:

"Wherefore, when I came, was there no man? when I called, was there none to answer? Is my hand shortened at all, that it cannot redeem? or have I no power to deliver? behold, at my rebuke I dry up the sea, I make the rivers a wilderness: their fish stinks, because there is no water, and dies for thirst. I clothe the heavens with blackness, and I make sackcloth their covering."

How persistent and unwavering and unwearying was His love for sinful Israel! See where it carried Him! "He became a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises of the fathers." It was for their sakes the Controller of creation was found as a Man serving amongst them; and He said (v. 4), "The Lord God has given Me the tongue of the learned, that I should know how to succour by a word him that is weary." What inexpressible grace! The Commander of the universal forces came down to speak words of cheer to weary creatures! There were individuals, when the Lord came, just and pious, who deeply felt Israel's position and condition before God; they waited for the One of whom Isaiah spake. Such an one was Simeon. When Christ came He saw in him the salvation of God and the consolation of Israel.

Nathaniel, that guileless Israelite, too, feeling keenly the fallen condition of Israel, was consoled and cheered by the discovery that "the Son of God, the King of Israel" was in the midst of His people, and that those who mourned the condition of the nation of Israel did not escape His eye.

So real was the dependence of the Lord in His humility upon earth that He said, "He wakens morning by morning, He wakens Mine ear to hear as the learned (or as the disciple)." He whose commands all creation heard and obeyed became a Man, and as a disciple had His ear made attentive by His Instructor. Readily that ear was wakened to be instructed, that He might speak the succouring word that the Father gave Him day by day to communicate to those who were weary of the hollow shams of men and the world, and He could say, "The words which Thou hast given Me I have given them."

It was thus that He trod the path of obedience. Creation's Controller became the obedient Servant! But unflinching obedience in the midst of disobedience necessitated suffering. God gave Him instruction for the path. He had "uncovered His ear" (v. 5). Unlike the "rebellious son," He obeyed, and "turned not away back" to escape the sorrows and the shame involved, He took the path appointed. He trod every step to the glory of God. Not one word of His had to be withdrawn; not one step that He took had to be retraced. Men heaped indignity upon indignity upon Him, their determination to degrade Him gained in force as the days went by, but still He pressed forward to do God's will. He had to say, "I gave My back to the smiters, and My cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: I hid not My face from shame and spitting" (v. 6).

In this connection Israel cannot say as they will yet say in the words of chapter 53, "He was wounded for our transgressions," for in this chapter it is they who wounded Him, not Jehovah. They were moved by hatred to smite Him, in Isaiah 50: He was moved by love to suffer Himself to be "smitten of God" for them, in Isaiah 53. In these days of carelessness and callousness as to the sufferings of our Lord Jesus Christ, we do well to ponder prayerfully the differences in those sufferings.

The Justified Servant

Such lowliness, such long-suffering, such love, such obedience, however scorned by men, must receive justification from God, and justification of such sort that all who would condemn must be silenced for ever.

It was in the full consciousness of this that our blessed Saviour says, "Therefore have I set my face like a flint, and I know I shall not be ashamed. He is near that justifies Me" (vv. 7-8). He was in the place of man: but He fully relied upon divine help (vv. 7 and 9). Nevertheless, the path involved not only the shame, and the smiting, and the spitting of which we have spoken; but also death itself. With His heart full of love and His face firm like a flint He pressed forward with holy resoluteness, and He was slain.

But God has taken Him out of death, He has raised Him from among the dead! What a victory! What a vindication of the perfect life of Jesus! What a justification! "Blessed Saviour," our hearts say, "Thou art worthy!" He was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father; the Father was the first visitor to His tomb, before the disciples, or Mary, or even the angels. His satisfaction was so complete in Him!

Where now are those who would contend? Where now those who would condemn Him? He was seen of the apostles in resurrection; yea, by five hundred brethren at one time. A sure witness this! Yet some there be who still deny His actual, His physical resurrection. But "if Christ be not raised your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins" (1 Cor. 15:17); so the Holy Spirit teaches us in the great chapter on the resurrection of the body. Thank God He is raised; and believers are not in their sins they are in Christ; they also are justified in Him.

God has shown how entirely He is for Christ; and He is also for those who believe on Him. He is against those who are against Him. There were those that hearkened "to the voice of His Servant" (v. 10), but when He was slain all seemed to sink into darkness they were nevertheless to stay upon God, who would raise Christ from the dead. Then what fullness of light would shine! God was for Him! God was also for them! So true is this that Romans 8:33-34 uses these very words of them, used here of Christ personally. Who then shall condemn Him? Who condemn them? It is God that justifies!

One word more before we leave this wonderful chapter. Look at the last verse. There are men who make sparks. They love the product of their own intellects. Let them "walk in the light" of such; but what shall the end be? They "shall lie down in pain." Solemn warning to ritualists and rationalists alike; to all who walk not "in the light as God is in the light" (1 John 1:7) the revealed normal position of true believers. One professing Christian wrote "Lead, kindly light, amidst encircling gloom;" another wrote, "Light divine surrounds thy going, God Himself shall mark the way." Which of these expressed the truth?

The Trumpet's Awakening Calls

In the preceding chapter the resurrection of the Lord is foretold, and, following upon this, seven awakening calls ring out from the silver trumpet of redemption. If Christ is risen, redemption is secured and the joyful results are told to the remnant who shall in a future day seek righteousness; who shall hearken to the voice of God's Servant (Isa. 50:10); and shall trust in Him; they are to move confidently forward to full blessing; they are to gain the glory; God is with them. Had we space and time, it would be interesting to consider the splendid music which sounds forth for the remnant of Israel, and for us also, in these seven glorious calls from Isaiah 51:1 to 52:12. We may briefly note them.

1. "HEARKEN UNTO ME!" Small in numbers though you be, a remnant seeking righteousness, be encouraged; remember Abraham was but one individual when I called him alone; I blessed him and increased him; so will I bless you; "joy and gladness, thanksgiving and the voice of song" shall be yours

(Isa. 51:1-3).

2. "HEARKEN UNTO ME!" You are My people, My nation; Light also shall be established for the peoples; others too shall trust on Mine arm; My righteousness and My salvation shall be abiding; because of Christ, "My salvation shall be for ever, and My righteousness shall not be abolished" (vv. 4-6).

3. "HEARKEN UNTO ME!" Ye know righteousness now; My law is in your hearts; fear neither the reproach nor the revilings of men; once again be divinely assured, "My righteousness shall be for ever, and My salvation from generation to generation" (vv. 7-8).

4. "AWAKE, AWAKE!" The remnant now cry to the arm of the Lord; put on strength and make a way for us as of old, "I, even I, am He that comforts you," Jehovah replies; I will plant the very heavens, as well as "lay the foundations of the earth"; that is why I have preserved you with and in Christ; "thou art My people" (vv. 9-16).

5. "AWAKE, AWAKE!" The call now reaches their true metropolis--Jerusalem; she had drunken deeply of the cup of bewilderment; desolation and destruction, destitution and dire distress had been hers; consolation and comfort shall now cheer her heart; the goblet of bewilderment is now taken out of her hand, and with fury added, given to her enemies (vv. 17-23).

6. "AWAKE, AWAKE!" Put on thy strength, O Zion; adorn thyself with beauty, O Jerusalem, the holy city; see the beautiful feet upon the mountains; hear the tidings of good, "Thy God reigns!" break forth into joy; sing aloud together; "all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God," through Christ Jesus (Isa. 52:1-10).

7. "DEPART, DEPART!" This is the final call. Holy separation is to mark those who are called to such distinguished eminence; separation not only from what is "unclean," but separation to the Lord Himself. He will go before you; and God shall be your reward (vv. 11-12).

The silvery notes cease. The joyful sound has been heard. The ringing music, however, has scarcely died away, before the Holy Spirit of God, with immediate directness, proceeds to point us to the One to whom all the blessing spoken of is due; and we shall see that the remnant learn and respond in Isaiah 53. They then understand that all the rejoicing, the redemption, the righteousness, the salvation, and the glory of God seen by all is the outcome of the atoning sufferings of Jesus.

The Prudent Servant

Verse 13 really begins the subject of Isaiah 53, "Behold, My Servant shall deal prudently, He shall be exalted and extolled, and be very high." The wisdom and prudence of Jehovah's Servant, treading His way to glory through scenes of suffering service, so as to bring blessing for others, is before the mind of the Spirit. We see the "sufferings of Christ and the glory to follow."

And such were His sufferings--so real, so intense--that His whole form, as well as His visage, was visibly marred. It is well known that even the representations of Him showed this before Constantine's time, but not afterwards. However prudent Jehovah's Servant was, however wisely He acted, yet deep and distressful sorrows were His, shame and stripes and afflictions untold came upon Him before His exaltation. But if "many were astonished" (v. 14) at His humiliated appearance, likewise "shall He astonish [not sprinkle] many nations" and kings (v. 15) by His exalted majesty. He is truly the Sign in the depth of humiliation and in the height of glory. Powerful potentates princes, rulers, shall stand and see with

amazement. Kings shall shut their mouths before His royal majesty. "What they had not heard shall they consider" (v. 15), when He, who was once treated so shamefully, is shown to be Israel's king and the Prince of the kings of the earth.

But who are those that have believed this report? And to whom is the Arm of the Lord revealed? Few they were, indeed, amongst Israel. Are there many who truly believe and receive this revelation now? Thank God, beloved reader, if through grace divine you are one. Great indeed is the favour bestowed upon you; esteem it highly; praise God for it.

Many who profess to believe seek to make the nation the prudent servant here, so as to shut out our Lord Jesus Christ. Was it a nation or an individual who had "His grave" appointed with the wicked? Were even the godly of a nation ever "numbered with the transgressors?" Could it be said of the nation suffering for its own sins, "for the transgression of My people was He stricken?" No; none but our blessed Saviour ever answered, or could answer, to this prophecy, spoken over seven centuries before He came. But all was foreknown of God, and we praise Him for the grace which has given us to believe the report, and to see in CHRIST "THE ARM OF THE LORD REVEALED." He and none other is the prudent servant to "BE EXALTED AND EXTOLLED AND BE VERY HIGH."

Isaiah 53

This chapter of chapters is divided into five parts:

1st Isaiah speaks to and of the nation with regard to Christ in verses 1 to 3.

2nd The remnant responds, owning that His sufferings were for them, verses 4-6.

3rd Jehovah replies pointing out his perfections, verses 7 to 9.

4th The remnant respond again as to His sufferings and His glory, verse 10.

5th Jehovah replies once more as to the satisfaction, success, and service of His righteous Servant, verses 11 and 12.

A Tender Plant

1. "As a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground" (v. 2), He was to grow up before God. Isaiah speaks in a similar way in Isaiah 11. The royal tree of David had been brought low. All hope seemed to be gone, but "a tender plant," a small shoot, shows itself. It is destined to bear all the royal glory. It grows up before God. He watches over it; protecting and caring for it. Before Him "it grows"; a prophecy fulfilled in Luke 2, where we read "And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit . . . and the grace of God was upon Him . . . and Jesus increased in wisdom and stature."

Not only had the royal family been brought low; but the nation was in a degraded condition; it had become like the "dry ground" spoken of when, to, "a root," or rather a sprout--a root-sprout--appears in the midst of it. What a garden of glory the nation is consequently destined to become through our Lord Jesus Christ. The "dry ground" will become fruitful; it will blossom as the rose, for Israel will be the national head of all the nations of the earth, and no longer "the tail" as at present.

When they saw Him, however, He bore no royal appearance in their eyes there was "no beauty that we should desire Him"; there was "no form nor lordliness." Had one come with the towering height of Saul, or

the attractiveness of Absalom, Israel would have followed Him; so utterly unable is fallen man to learn. Physical and outward show he esteems: moral and inward perfection he despises.

Shining with every moral perfection, yea, Himself the effulgence of God's glory, the very expression of all that God is, the Son of God thus stood before them. How was He received? "Despised and rejected of men!" What an exposure of the debased condition of man.

A Man of Sorrows

Feeling as He did the degraded state of man, it could not be otherwise than that He should be "A Man of Sorrows"; yea, the "Grief-Acquainted One." The very perfection and holiness of His own being would make Him feel the terribleness of sin as no fallen man could feel it. But to the nation He was One to be shunned; "like one from whom men hide their faces" (v. 3). They despised Him; they esteemed Him not.

The Smitten of God

2. A believing remnant, however, respond in a most beautiful manner in the next three verses (4-6). They stand with afflicted souls before God, in the truth of the day of atonement; and by faith they understand the atoning sufferings of Christ; He suffered for them. Although they have a deep sense of their sinfulness--"We have gone astray" they cry;--yet, they look away in faith to Him who bore their sins. It is a wonderful time when a sin-sick soul comes to this; and it is the only way into peace with God. The believing remnant of Israel will learn this.

Not only did He bear "our griefs" and carry "our sorrows" in His precious sympathy, when the nation considered, contrariwise, that the weight which lay upon Him was because He was "stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted"--because God was against Him; but faith now sees "He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities." In sympathy He bore our griefs: in atonement He bore the punishment due to our sins. Blessed Saviour! "the chastisement of our peace was upon Him." There was no other way; but thanks be to God, we can now say, "by His stripes we are healed." The stripes were His: the healing is ours.

It is thus that the remnant of Israel will enter in to the meaning of the cross. They confess, "All we like sheep have gone astray": but they appropriate in faith His work for them, and continue, "The Lord hath laid upon Him the iniquity of us all." They consequently stand before God clear of every charge Christ having borne all for them. It is the same with those who believe now.

The Perfect One

3. To this, Jehovah replies in the next three verses (7-9); not by speaking of them, but by still pointing to His blessed Son; pointing to His perfectness in the midst of His deep, deep distress, when oppressed and afflicted He opened not His mouth; when brought to be slaughtered, and shorn of His rights; as Messiah to be cut off; as a sheep He was silent; He murmured not. Yea, continues Jehovah, "He was taken from oppression and judgment: and who shall declare His generation?" Had that been declared, all present would have had to own that the true Messiah stood before them--the Son of David, the King of Israel. A converted publican, Levi by name, however, was used of the Holy Spirit to declare it afterwards, in Matthew 1. God will have it owned, and owned publicly soon. Meanwhile He is still rejected, "He was cut off out of the land of the living"; but He was not stricken for any wrong of His own; Jehovah says, "for the transgression of My people was He stricken."

"Men appointed [not, He made] His grave with the wicked"; but God saw to it that this Perfect One "was with the rich in His death"; because He was sinless. "Violence" and "deceit," the two things that characterize sin, were both entirely absent from Him. Violence characterizes those that are strong, and deceit those that are weak; but He did "no violence, neither was any deceit in His mouth." Jehovah points to Him--the Perfect One. He seems to say to the believing remnant: It is true He suffered for you, but go on to know Him in His own perfectness amidst those sufferings.

The Prosperous One

4. Again a response is heard from the remnant (v. 10). Perfect though He was, "yet it pleased the Lord to bruise Him: He has subjected Him to suffering." They still dwell upon what He went through, though not so much for them; they rise rather to see the prosperous results in glory for Himself and for Jehovah. Truly His soul was made "an offering for sin," to settle for God's glory that great question; but rich results in resurrection shall follow, "He shall see a seed, He shall prolong His days." The Corn of Wheat fell into the ground and died, but much fruit in resurrection follows; His days are prolonged there, "even length of days for ever and ever." Prosperity now marks Him! What tongue or pen can express that which is involved in these words, "The pleasure of the Lord"? But this we know: it shall be prosperously carried into its gloriously complete result by the Perfect One who suffered. "THE PLEASURE OF THE LORD SHALL PROSPER IN HIS HAND" (v. 10). In a fuller sense than the remnant thought of, the assembly can now sing:

"His counsels all fulfilled in Thee

His work of love complete

And heavenly hosts shall rest to see

Earth blest beneath Thy feet."

God's Righteous Servant

5. And now Jehovah replies finally, with a divine pronouncement as to the satisfaction and successful service of His "Righteous Servant." If the three final verses of Isaiah 52 had been put into Isaiah 53, as they should have been, the number of our divisions would have been exactly seven; for 52:13 is Jehovah's utterance, as we have seen; and verses 14 and 15 give Isaiah's response to it.

This is the last time Christ is called the "Servant" (Isa. 53:11) in Isaiah: afterwards we read of "servants." It is because His atoning work is looked upon as complete; others therefore are justified. Verse 11 tells us of these two things; He justifies or instructs others in righteousness: He bore their iniquities. No one could be righteous before God, apart from atonement; so we read, "by His knowledge shall My righteous Servant instruct many in righteousness, and [not 'for'] He shall bear their iniquities." The next mention of "servants" is in Isaiah 54:17, where we read, "This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord; and their righteousness is of Me"; not of the law, nor of their own works, but of God.

The blessed Saviour will have no regrets for all His toil and His suffering; deep and eternal satisfaction shall be His, "He shall see of the travail of His soul and SHALL BE SATISFIED." Success has attended His service, though it once looked otherwise. "A portion with the great" is assigned to Him. Spoil of untold wealth shall come into His well-filled treasuries. Heaps upon heaps, glory upon glory, riches and honour and blessing shall be seen to belong to Him; but, Jehovah reminds the heart of the remnant in His final

word, that it was "because He has poured out

His soul unto death: and was reckoned with the transgressors; and He bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors."

"Jesus is worthy to receive

Honour and power divine;

And blessings more than we can give,

Be, Lord, for ever Thine."

"And the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands; saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing" (Rev. 5:11-12).

"THE FATHER LOVES THE SON, AND HAS GIVEN ALL THINGS INTO HIS HAND" (John 3:35).

The Metropolis and Her Children

"Break forth into singing!" is the call of God to those who had known sorrow and woe. The desolation and widowhood of Jerusalem, the metropolis, are here viewed. Consequent upon the truth of Isaiah 53, she is now to be the joyful mother of children, and God her Maker, her Redeemer, her Lord, is called "the God of the whole earth." What a day of liberty, enlargement, gladness, and glory that will be!

This will be true of Jerusalem on earth in the day of her restoration; but let us notice how beautifully the Holy Spirit applies all this to believers now in Galatians 4, that they may intelligently enjoy "the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free"; and that they "be not entangled again with a yoke of bondage." The Galatians had heard and received the glad tidings, and for a while had run well; but legal teaching and principles had ensnared them; the metropolis-- Jerusalem and her legal teachings--that then was "in bondage" herself "with her children," had drawn them into her entanglements; they had lost the true joy and liberty of redemption, though, thank God, not the redemption itself. How sadly true this is of numbers today: saved but not satisfied, redeemed but not rejoicing, saints but not singing. The Spirit's way of recovery is by the ministry of the positive truth. "Ye are sons," since redemption's work is complete (Gal. 4:1-7), no longer bondmen, but sons, and heirs also! How inconsistent with its glorious dignity is bondage! Freedom marks our metropolis, "Jerusalem above is free, which is our mother" (v. 26). Let those who have been "bewitched" by legality awake to this! Let them awake to the truth of God. They are "children of the promise," children of "the free" woman, after the pattern of Isaac. It is theirs to walk in the dignity and liberty of the sons and heirs of God; for "ye have been called to liberty, brethren: only do not turn liberty into an opportunity to the flesh, but by love serve one another."

Peace, too, as well as freedom marks the metropolis of God and her children. To her He says, "The mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but My kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of My peace be removed, says the Lord that has mercy on thee . . . great shall be the peace of thy children." How inconsistent therefore the Galatian strife; "If ye bite and devour one another, see that ye are not consumed one of another." Let our hearts be encouraged as the free woman's children. "O thou afflicted, tossed with tempest, and not comforted, behold, I will lay thy stones with fair colours, and lay thy foundations with sapphires. And I will make thy battlements of rubies, and thy gates carbuncles, and all thy

borders of pleasant stones" (Isa. 54:11-12). This is the beauty and perfection of Christ which is put upon us.

Taught of God

Nor need we be anxious about our spiritual growth and prosperity as we abide in Christ, for it is said, "All thy children shall be taught of the Lord; and great shall be the peace of thy children. In righteousness shalt thou be established . . . thou shalt not fear" (Isa. 13:11). We see again, in the New Testament, how the Holy Spirit takes these truths which belong to Jerusalem and her children primarily, in the coming day, and applies them to us now. In 1 Thessalonians 4:9, we read, "Ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another"; and again in John 6:45 it is written, "And they shall be all taught of God. Everyone that has heard from the Father Himself, and has learned of Him, comes to Me." In the latter case the teaching of God turns the soul to our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God; in the former it instructs those who have come to Him to love one another. "And this is His commandment, that we believe on the name of His Son Jesus Christ, and that we love one another." All the children of the free city, in a true, spiritual sense, are taught of God; and it is said to them, "Whosoever shall gather together against thee shall fall for thy sake" (v. 15).

All this when received in faith into the heart produces quiet confidence in God. We have little apprehension of the evil forces there are at work against those who belong to our Lord Jesus Christ; nor need we seek a greater apprehension of them; for we are to be simple as to evil, and wise concerning what is good. God is nearer to us than every foe, more close, and greater and wiser than all; and He blessedly assures our hearts that "no weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper" (v. 17). Christ is made unto us righteousness as well as redemption from God, so that we can now boast in the Lord (1 Cor. 1:30). Who can condemn Him? Who can condemn those whose righteousness He is? "Every tongue that shall rise against thee, in judgment thou shalt condemn. THIS IS THE HERITAGE OF THE SERVANTS OF THE LORD, AND THEIR RIGHTEOUSNESS IS OF ME, SAITH THE LORD" (v. 17). Happy children of the free city! Happy servants of the Lord! Happy remnant! once seeking in vain for righteousness, now brought to know it, through redemption; and to boast in Christ who is our righteousness. Ours now, and theirs then, when they shall turn to the Lord Jesus Christ. When the remnant, called here for the first time "the servants" of the Lord, shall take up the national standing:

"Israel's race shall then behold Him,

Full of grace and majesty;

Though they set at nought and sold Him,

Pierced and nailed Him to the tree;

Now in glory

Shall their great Messiah see."

The Sure Mercies of David

The gracious call sounds out now to others, far beyond the bounds of Israel, to come and drink of the refreshing streams of blessing: the waters, the wine, the milk, the fatness, the fullness; "even the sure mercies of David"; secured through Jesus Christ, the seed of David, raised from among the dead. All may be had now "without money and without price" (Isa. 55:1-3). The call is, "Ho, everyone that thirsts, come

ye!" (Isa. 55:1).

The risen Son of David has secured "the sure mercies of David"; and God says, "Behold, I have given Him for a Witness to the peoples, a Prince and Commander to the peoples" (v. 4). All, therefore, is stable, sure and safe in the hand of Him who died and rose again. "The pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in His hand." He is the great Shepherd of the sheep, brought again from among the dead, "in the power of the blood of the everlasting covenant." All this is unmovable and eternal because of Him and His work. The covenant is "an everlasting covenant"; and He is "WITNESS," "PRINCE," and "COMMANDER," so that nothing can fail. The sure mercies were promised, now they are procured, and in Christ to be possessed, by those who turn to Him. Joy and singing, peace and prosperity is therefore to mark such. "Ye shall go forth with joy, and be led forth with peace: the mountains and the hills shall break forth before you into singing, and all the trees of the fields shall clap their hands. Instead of the thorn shall come up the cypress, and instead of the nettle shall come up the myrtle: and it shall be to the Lord for a name, for AN EVERLASTING SIGN THAT SHALL NOT BE CUT OFF" (v. 13). The divine stamp of fixity, stability, and eternity, seal the sure mercies of David, secure in Christ. It is an everlasting sign; an everlasting covenant; sure mercies speaking of abundant pardon and full blessing.

The Covenant of the Lord

In Isaiah 54 it is the covenant of His peace; in Isaiah 55, an everlasting covenant; in Isaiah 56 it is Jehovah's covenant; but in solemn contrast, in Isaiah 57:8-9, the last chapter of our section, we read of some who make a hopeless and wicked covenant, with the followers of Antichrist.

It is very blessed, however, to see in this fifty-sixth chapter that even the son of the alien and the despised are encouraged to lay hold of the covenant of the Lord. Moral qualifications are looked for in those who are to share the glory to come. To them it is said, "Keep ye judgment, and do righteousness: for My salvation is near to come, and My righteousness to be revealed." So important is this, that even those whom Israel would consider outsiders, if they are marked by these things, and "take hold" of the covenant and "join themselves to the Lord," shall have an everlasting name and be made joyful in His house of prayer; for, let it never be forgotten by those who form His house now, "Mine house shall be called an house of prayer for all the peoples" (v. 7). They will all be welcomed there, such is the grace of our God.

But meanwhile the responsible watchmen were blind and dumb, sleeping and lying down like selfish, greedy dogs loving to slumber, and too lazy even to bark. Such have neither the faith, nor the moral qualities of those who "take hold" of the covenant, and as the next chapter shows, notwithstanding their official position, they have no part or lot in the blessings of the covenant of the Lord.

Before full blessing is manifested many of the merciful men and the righteous will be taken away from the evil just at hand. Others will give themselves up to abominable idolatry, for Antichrist will then be in power at Jerusalem. They will make a covenant (or "an agreement") (v. 8). "To the king (Antichrist), with ointment" and perfumes they draw nigh; and debase themselves "unto hell" (v. 9). But the stormy wind when it rages "shall carry them all away! A breath shall take them" (v. 13).

A Revival

On the other hand, those who refuse Antichrist and "TRUST IN ME," says the Lord, "shall possess the land, and shall inherit My holy mountain" (v. 13), when glory fills the earth. Therefore let all stumbling-blocks be now removed! "Thus says THE HIGH AND LOFTY ONE THAT INHABITETH

ETERNITY, and whose name is Holy: I dwell in the high and lofty place, and with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones" (v. 15). The high, the holy, the eternal God who dwells in the height, now condescends to dwell also down here in the depth, with the humble and contrite to give them a revival. God becomes all to them. In a true and experimental and lasting way they can now say, "IMMANUEL"; and they can say it in "THY LAND, O IMMANUEL."

This revival of the spirit and heart of the believing remnant will be permanent. It will not be the outcome of a visit simply, but of the dwelling of God with them. What a wonderful day of rich blessing that will be, of peace and joy and righteousness in the abiding consciousness of God's presence. Before that day, however, while the Holy Spirit is here, forming believers into the one body of which our Lord Jesus Christ is the living Head, giving them access to the Father; "in the Lord" they are "built together for a habitation of God in the Spirit" (Eph. 2:22). What true revival blessedness accompanies the recognition of this fact. This is indeed far more wonderful, and connected with far higher privileges, than Israel can know in the day to come. The assembly's blessing is corporate and heavenly, and the relationship is with the Father, as the sons and heirs of God: Israel's is national and earthly, and the relationship is with God as Jehovah. All alike, however, is based upon the redemption work of our Lord Jesus Christ. Peace could alone be procured by the blood of His cross. His is "the blood of the new covenant." He Himself is the Surety and Mediator of it. Peace, therefore, is not only procured, but it is also preached to all.

"Peace, Peace!"

In this connection it is striking that verse 19 is used in Ephesians 2, from which we have already quoted. This news will be proclaimed when the remnant of Israel is revived; "Peace, peace to him that is far off, and to him that is nigh" (v. 19). They will sound out the good news to the Gentile "afar off," as well as to the Jew that is "nigh"; but even now "He has preached the glad tidings of peace to you (Gentiles) who were afar off, and to those (Jews) who were nigh" (Eph. 2:17). It is striking that in both scriptures the Gentile is put first. This is unusual, and looks as if the present period of the assembly was specially in the mind of the Spirit.

The result of all this is, before the national blessing of Israel, both the believers from amongst the Gentiles, and those from amongst the Jews are brought into one body--the assembly; for Christ died "that He might reconcile both in one body to God," that "He might form the two in Himself into one new man"; therefore before Israel is restored to Jehovah, "through Him we have both access by one Spirit to the Father" (Eph. 2:18). Then, as now, it will be the outcome of the peace which was procured by Christ, and preached to those "afar off" and to those privileged to be "nigh"; the peace which is possessed through faith in Him; for all the efficacy of His work is because of who and what He Himself is; so that in the truest sense, whether for the Jew or the Gentile who believes, Christ becomes our peace.

Thanks be to God we can truly say already now in Christ Jesus we who "once were far off, are become nigh by the blood of Christ, For HE IS OUR PEACE, who has made both one." Upon the cross He took our place and bore all that was due to us. We were unsparingly judged there in the Person of our Substitute; but now, in Him who has gone to the Father, we are taken into everlasting favour. His place is ours. All distance and disturbance has been removed by Himself, and He is now before the Father's face. What nearness is His! What nearness is ours!

"Peace, yes, peace, for Christ in heaven

Object is of faith to me:

Peace, yes, peace, for Christ is risen

Righteousness now counts me free;

And free access to the Father,

Through the Christ of God we have;

By the Spirit here abiding,

Promise of the Father's love."

"No Peace"

Like the last, this section closes with a divine declaration as to the lawless among the people of God; "there is no peace" for them. Lawlessness in way and in word; lawlessness in doing and in thinking; lawlessness in working and in writing; i.e. the fulfilling of "the desires of the flesh and the thoughts," and brings down the wrath of God. It is in complete contrast to abiding in His love and keeping His commandments. Sin is lawlessness; it is marked by restlessness and vileness; it leaves out God. The lawless know Him not. They are "like the troubled sea, which cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt" (v. 20). They will follow Antichrist when He comes. Already their restless activity is of the same spirit. The last verse of our section is similar to that of the previous section, "There is no peace, says my God, to the wicked" [or lawless].

It is interesting and instructive, however, to notice the small but significant change. It is "Jehovah" (the Lord) in Isaiah 48:22 who speaks: it is "Elohim" (God) here in Isaiah 57:21. Let us notice the consistent care of the Holy Spirit in His inspiration, using Isaiah to write the appropriate name of God in its particular connection; and let those who follow the follies of the Jehovistic and Elohistic theories be ashamed. The first section begins by addressing Jerusalem; Israel in the land of Jehovah is in view; the second begins by addressing the isles and peoples afar off; the Gentiles as well as Israel are to be blessed of Elohim. Similarly the first two prophets who prophesied in the land, have Jehovah weaved into their own names: ISAIAH and JEREMIAH; whereas the next two who were among the Gentiles have El in theirs, EZEKIEL and DANIEL. This is not by mere chance; but by divine wisdom. Like Himself, God's Word is perfect, though our apprehension of it is very imperfect. May we be led by the Holy Spirit, who inspired its writing, to understand it better, seeing Christ Himself in all the scriptures of truth; for it is in Him our God and Father is seen and known, and in His knowledge we are to grow.

"Thy word, Thyself reflecting,

Doth sanctify by truth,

Still leading on Thy children

With gentle heavenly growth."

Section 2. Chapters 58 to 66

This short section with which the book of Isaiah concludes, comprehends within its small space truths of immense and immediate importance, and of present application as well as of future fulfilment.

In the New Testament the Holy Spirit takes largely from the precious store of this section. In Luke, in John, in Romans, and in Ephesians there are some significant applications from it given by the Spirit. The connections, the comparisons, and the contrasts all combine strikingly to show us the differing distinctions and dignities of our Lord Jesus Christ. He is the real Subject of Isaiah, as indeed He is of all the Scriptures; and He is also the Object brought before the believer, satisfying his deepest desires and filling his heart with thanksgivings, praises, and worship.

The Subject of the Scriptures: the Object of believers

Shining above the brightness of the sun, we see Him in this section as the "everlasting Light," proclaiming with gracious words good tidings to the poor; we see Him as the anointed Preacher; travelling in the greatness of His strength to execute vengeance, we see Him as the "mighty to save"; bringing deliverance and blessing and glory, we also see Him as the Deliverer, the Banner of God, His glorious Arm, the Man-Child; and finally as the Sign of God. It should be noticed that He is not called the Servant in this section: the servants who partake of His Spirit and character being prominent.

Striking and stirring scenes are here shown to us, with Christ as their centre; suddenly and swiftly they pass before our eyes, hastening to their appointed end. These things, however, can only be rightly understood as Christ's connection with them is grasped, for it must be remembered that the great Subject of scripture is Himself.

It has often been pointed out that like a certain government rope which can be recognized all over the world because of a red cord which passes through its centre, so the inspired Scriptures can be known, because, from beginning to end, that which speaks of the atoning blood of Christ is there; from Genesis to Revelation the red line is seen uniting the whole Book. There is, however, the water-line as well as the blood-line shown by the Spirit throughout the sacred Scriptures, all pointing to the blessed Son of God who came by water and blood; not by water only, but "by water and blood"; and the Spirit, the water, and the blood are the threefold "witness which God has witnessed concerning His Son. And this is the witness that God has given to us, eternal life; and this life is in His Son." The believer, therefore, in having the Son, has life in Him whom the Holy Spirit glorifies; for the water and the blood have met his fallen state and guilt; and now, having the Spirit, he can rejoice in the One who is the Subject of all the Scriptures, and the Object of his own heart and mind.

The events, and other things in the Bible also, can be now rightly understood; for instead of studying them apart and forming separate systems, or schools of opinion about them, they are seen in their relation to the Son of God, our Lord Jesus Christ. He is the divine Subject, showing the interwoven unity of all the Scriptures. The Spirit who inspired their writing is come to us who believe to glorify Christ.

Two detectives once called upon me, hoping that I might be able to assist them in tracing a criminal, by discovering the suppliers of a sheet of notepaper upon which he had written a letter.

The most I could do, however, was to tell them who were the makers of the paper which I learnt from the design of the makers' watermark in the centre of the sheet, and which was plainly visible when held up to the light. In like manner the true believer, who is in the light, is capable of discovering in the woven unity of the sacred Scriptures the divine design which is "CHRIST." Those who are in darkness cannot see this,

whether they be boastful scholars or illiterate and ignorant men.

To know Him

It is true that men who are still in darkness often claim Him as their Leader or Example, and yet do not accept Him as He is made known in the Scriptures. The socialist claims Him as a good man, but refuses to receive Him as "the true God and eternal life." Many social, political, and religious leaders, kings and rulers readily acknowledge Him as "a" Light amidst the darkness of the world, without receiving Him exclusively as "the" Light of the world.

Those who receive Him as the Scriptures reveal Him in faith become the sons of light. The repentant sinner feeling the burden of his sins, accepts Him as his personal Saviour, and there is joy in heaven over such. Wherever two or three are gathered to His name alone, He is in their midst; and they may know Him there as their Centre and their all. The individual believer who loves Him and keeps His Word, may know His abiding presence. What a great honour to be granted to us in a world like this, an honour only to be surpassed by our being taken out of the world by the Son of God, and received into the Father's house. To know Him is the greatest wealth and wisdom we can possess. "Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches: but let him that glories glory in this, that he understands and knows Me, says the Lord."

Darkness and Death: Light and Liberty

To the slothful believer who had fallen asleep at Ephesus it is said, "Wake up, thou that sleepest, and arise up from among the dead, and the Christ shall shine upon thee." It is from these first three chapters (Isa. 58, 59 and 60) of our section, the Holy Spirit takes this thought and applies it now. Its importance is very great, for it explains who the Light of Isaiah 60:1-3 is.

The professing people of God--the Jews--were asleep, "in darkness", and "as dead men"; as to them it is said to the prophet, "Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet" (Isa. 58:1). This urgent call is to a suitable moral and practical condition. "Then," we read, "shall thy light break forth as the morning," then shall "thy light rise in obscurity, and thy darkness be as the noonday" (Isa. 58:8-10); but, like the rest of men, they had all sinned; and away from God, "their feet ran to evil" (Isa. 59:7), and the way of peace they knew not. But they are brought to realize their state and to confess, "we wait for light, but behold obscurity; for brightness, but we walk in darkness. We are in desolate places as dead men" (Isa. 59:9-10). They were at their wits' end.

It is just here the Lord brings light and liberty and salvation. "He saw that there was no man, and wondered that there was no intercessor: therefore His arm brought salvation unto Him; and His righteousness, it sustained Him" (Isa. 59:16). It is always the way--"man's extremity is God's opportunity." Let us, however, remind ourselves that the fulfilment of this verse is seen in the salvation of Israel. It cannot now be said, "there is no man;" for there is a Man at the right hand of God, who is the Head of the assembly; and He maintains the interests of God; therefore no power can prevail against the assembly. It cannot now be said, "there is no intercessor," Christ who died for us, has been raised up again; and is "also at the right hand of God, who intercedes for us" (Rom. 8:34). Unlike the leaders in Israel who failed and changed because of weakness and death, the One great Leader of believers today never fails, and continues forever. He is able to save His own completely; and He is "always living to intercede for them" (Heb. 7:25). He is the prevailing Intercessor today; and, like Himself, His intercession is perfect.

In the day, however, when He brings light and liberty to Israel, He will come in power and majesty. The armour of light shall clothe Him, and His own inherent righteousness shall sustain Him; He shall "put on righteousness as a breastplate" also; "and an helmet of salvation upon His head"; garments of vengeance, and zeal shall be His clothing. But though this brings blessing to Israel, it will mean "fury to His adversaries, recompense to His enemies" (Isa. 59:17-18). This will liberate Israel from oppression, and cause the fame of the Lord to spread abroad.

The Deliverer

The true Israel will have the Spirit of Christ; they are the true seed, the remnant, the servants of this section of the book. "This is My covenant with them, says the Lord; My Spirit that is upon thee, and My words which I have put in thy mouth shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, says the Lord, from henceforth and for ever" (Isa. 59:21). This connection with Isaiah 11 is a very beautiful instance of the unity of both parts; it is the connection of the true Israel with the Nazarene.

At the time of the end they will keenly feel the oppression of Antichrist and others; but Christ will come as their Deliverer. He will come to Zion. "When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him." Thus the Deliverer of Israel's fame shall be sounded throughout the world. So shall they "fear the name of the Lord from the west, and His glory from the rising of the sun" (v. 19). This will help us to understand the next verse, and the golden setting given to the precious truth it contains in Romans 11. It will explain many similar instances of the Holy Spirit's use in the New Testament of truth from the Old.

Isaiah 59:20. "And the Redeemer shall come to Zion, and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob, says the Lord." Romans 11:26. "And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Zion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness: from Jacob."

This is certainly not a literal quotation, it is nevertheless the exact truth which God has placed in Isaiah 59 and 60; and this is most important, giving us the mind of God in the context, and the present application of its principles in Romans 11. The Holy Spirit shows us that Israel will be brought into blessing again, and others be blessed through them when apostate Christendom is cut off. This is involved in Isaiah 59 and 60; Christ comes "to Zion," we read there; and "out of Zion" deliverance and salvation shall spread. Thus in the Psalms, "Oh that the salvation of Israel were come out of Zion"; and again in Isaiah 2:3, "Out of Zion shall go forth the law."

In reading Scripture, though we know the very words are inspired of the Holy Spirit, yet we only gather true profit as we grasp the truth, the divine verity itself, which the words are given of God to convey. The consideration of the quotations, the citations, and of the reasoned conclusions in the New Testament, drawn from the Old, would instruct us greatly in the way the Holy Spirit takes to bring spiritual substance to our understandings.

The Everlasting Light

And now Isaiah 60 opens with the daybreak of brightnes

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