

THE PROPHECIES OF CHRIST IN ISAIAH

By Albert G. Stoner, Jr.

First Revision

I dedicate this writing to my wife, Sara, a true co-laborer in the gospel, for whose encouragement and support I am greatly indebted. I also want to express my indebtedness to the brothers and sisters at *The Banner of Truth Fellowship* of Northwest Indiana for their encouragement and feedback with regard to the contents of this writing.

“The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy” (Rev. 19:10).

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—From Boyce Mouton—

REFLECTIONS ON "THE PROPHECIES OF CHRIST IN ISAIAH"

By Al Stoner

"There is within the heart of all men a hunger for the supernatural. It is God Himself Who put it there. Solomon said it like this: 'He has also set eternity in the hearts of men' (Eccl. 3:11). Paul pointed out that God has determined when and where each of us would be born. He did this so that men would seek Him, and perhaps reach out for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us (Acts 17:26-27).

"The 'wicked one', however, knows this and uses this innate desire to deceive us. That's why Satan, the 'father of lies' has disguised himself as an 'angel of light' (II Cor. 11:14). In every generation he has perverted our God-given desire to seduce us. Jesus said that men loved darkness more than light because their deeds were evil (Jn. 3:19). Sinful men have consistently forsaken the Fountain of Living Water and hewn out for themselves broken cisterns that hold no water (Jer. 2:13). Jesus Himself lamented that He came in the name of the Father and was rejected, while someone else would come in his own name, and foolish and deceived men would accept him (Jn. 5:43).

"This brings us to the book of Isaiah. Isaiah faced the same problem that has confronted every generation before and after. The masses consistently rejected the truth Isaiah preached and clamored for satanic mediums. These false prophets would whisper and mutter their incantations (Isa. 8:19). As Jeremiah said: 'The prophets prophesy lies, the priests rule by their own authority, and my people love it this way' (Jer. 5:31). Stephen lamented: 'Was there ever a prophet your fathers did not persecute?' (Acts 7:52). Sadly, history tells us that Isaiah died as a martyr by being sawn in two (Heb. 11:37). The broad way that leads to destruction is filled with false prophets, astrologers and star gazers (Isa. 47:13). The narrow way that leads to life involves a lonely journey.

"Brother Al Stoner has provided a great service to the people of God by focusing our attention on the true prophecies of Isaiah. When the people of God ask: 'How can we know when a message has not been spoken by the Lord?' The answer is simple. 'If what a prophet proclaims in the name of the Lord does not take place or come true, that is a message the Lord has not spoken. That prophet has spoken presumptuously. Do not be afraid of him' (Deut. 18:21-22).

"Fortunately, what Isaiah predicted about Jesus has come true. The Gospel, as you know, involves the fact that Jesus lived, died, and rose again 'according to the Scriptures' (I Cor. 15:1-4). Every major event in the life of Christ was predicted by the prophets centuries before it came to pass. Many of the predictions were made by Isaiah. The men closest to Christ, as you know, died as 'martyrs' or 'witnesses'. They knew that the predictions of the prophets were fulfilled in Christ. They knew that Jesus lived, died, and rose again 'according to the Scriptures'. 'The long ministry of Isaiah took place during the reigns of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah, kings of Judah (Isa. 1:1). So much of his writing involved the coming Messiah that he has been called 'The Gospel Prophet'. Brother Stoner correctly points out, that not only is Isaiah cited as an integral witness to fulfilled prophecy in the Four Gospels, but also throughout the epistles as well. Isaiah's inspired predictions are an integral part of the entire fabric of New Testament teaching.

“The inspired words of Isaiah are timeless. They were relevant in his own generation as he gave guidance and instruction to his contemporaries like King Hezekiah (Isa. 39). His inspired words were also relevant 700 years later when they were quoted by Jesus (Mt. 13:14). His inspired words are also relevant today, for as Isaiah said: ‘Unless the Lord Almighty had left us descendants, we would have become like Sodom, we would have been like Gomorrah’ (Rom. 9:29).

“Brother Stoner’s book will be a valuable addition to your library. His exhaustive study will not only give you insights and understandings into the words of Isaiah, but also the whole narrative of Biblical teaching. Many today are like the Ethiopian Eunuch. They read the prophetic words of Isaiah but do not understand them. Much like Philip the Evangelist, God has given Brother Stoner the challenge to give us guidance and make the message of the Gospel clear.

“Since the Word of God is alive and active, it is appropriate that we all join with Paul and say: ‘Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have free course, and be glorified, even as it is with you’ (II Th. 3:1).” —*Boyce Mouton, of Missouri*

—From Patrick B. Woods—

“Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool” (Isa. 1:18).

It is imperative that the child of God reason upon the writings of Isaiah in view of the “spirit of prophecy”, that is, “the testimony of Jesus” (Rev. 19:10). Not every single word of God is a direct reference to Jesus Himself, as brother Albert Stoner has pointed out, but it is a context through which the Lord is able to speak to us of His Son.

While Isaiah served his generation faithfully according to the will of God, we can see that he was not entirely ministering to them “but to us” who understand them in the light of the gospel of Christ (I Pet. 1:12). With great precision and careful articulation, brother Al sheds the light of the gospel on these precious prophecies recorded by Isaiah the Prophet.

As I perceive it, brother Al has been gifted in making connections between the Apostles’ doctrine and the fulfillment of those things “which were written in the law of Moses, and in the Prophets, and in the Psalms” concerning Jesus (Lk. 24:44). He is a masterful writer who will continually call you up higher to think on things from a heavenly perspective. And let the reader be sure that brother Al’s doctrine is adorned by his manner of life.

The Prophecies of Christ in Isaiah will bless all those who have been given ears to hear the gospel. In this document, as in the book of Isaiah, you will find words of hope, a message of peace, admonitions to flee ungodliness, and exhortations to cling to Christ with purpose of heart. We commend this book and this brother to the church of God and we wait in anticipation for additional writings concerning the prophecies of Christ. —*Pat Woods, Minister, Milton, DE*

—From Barbara Hutchcraft—

“My family had been considering the Person of Christ in our studies together, so when we received the compilation of “The Prophecies of Christ in Isaiah”, I thought it was a wonderful extension for our consideration. I have enjoyed reading through Isaiah with a mind to find the prophecies of our Savior, Christ the Lord. Jesus said, “Search the scriptures . . . they are they which testify of me” (John 5:39). —*Barbara Hutchcraft, of Missouri*

—From Barri Cae Seif—

“I was raised in a Jewish home where the practice of Judaism was tradition and ritual, not matters of the heart. I came to believe in Jesus in 1980 through one Bible verse, Isaiah 53:6.

“All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all.”

“This one Bible verse changed my life. Even though family members and even my own father hated my decision, one thing remains to this day—the beauty of this verse.

“I became familiar with Albert Stoner’s writings in *The Banner of Truth* publication. I realized early on that God had given him a gift, especially that in communicating Biblical truth from the Old Testament, synthesized with New Testament inspiration.

“As I read Al’s writings, I cannot help but enter into worship. He brings truth to light, and within his teachings, worship and reverence for God come forth.

“Dear Reader, may you enjoy the sense of God’s presence as you read this book. You will not be disappointed with the journey as Al takes you through the book of Isaiah. Buckle your pew belt!”

—*Barri Cae Seif, Ph.D. Ovilla, TX*

—From Carmen H. Allen—

“For many years I have enjoyed the publication, *The Banner of Truth*. It has been a source of encouragement and enlightenment to me in my walk in Christ. A few days ago I received a book, *The Prophecies of Christ in Isaiah*, written by you. It is such a thrill to read this work. May our God continue to bless you and your family in this way. I’d like to order five copies of this . . . Sincerely, your sister in Christ, Carmen H. Allen” (Editor’s note: We were happy to send the requested copies to Sister Allen as well as a second shipment a few weeks later.) —*Carmen Allen, Fort Oglethorpe, GA*

—From Rob Laptad—

“Brother Al, Thanks so very much for *The Prophecies of Christ in Isaiah* that sister Barb presented during the recent Table in The Wilderness weekend. A first use proved the references were exhaustive. It is a beautifully designed and high quality crafted work. I hope to use it in the measure it was intended. God is good”. —*Rob Laptad, of Missouri*

—From Mark Dellinger—

“Dear Al, Thank you for giving me a copy of your book. I remember that you encouraged me on this very subject five decades ago in Parson’s Hall. I sure got some warm fuzzies from being personally remembered after fifty years. I purpose to read all seventy-two segments. Your friend, Mark D. Dellinger, and my wife, Cherry”. —*Mark Dellinger, of Fort Wayne, IN*

—From William Parsons—

“The Lord has given you the gift of knowledge and wisdom to write articles and books, to glorify God the Father and His son Jesus Christ, for edifying and comforting the saints, which is very needful in these last days.” —*Merrillville, Indiana*

—From Beverly Brunner—

“Thank you for sending me a copy of *The Prophecies of Christ in Isaiah*. I greatly appreciate your doing that. It is a wonderful, wonderful work.” —*Beverly Brunner, Mt. Zion, IL*

About the Contents of this Writing and Reprint Permission

This writing consists largely of a compilation of Bible lessons, converted to article format, which were given by me at *The Banner of Truth Fellowship of Northwest Indiana* over the past few years. Except for the Scripture references, the poetic expressions, and hymns which are included herein, the material has been written by me. Regarding the hymns and poetic expressions, I have sought to select those which are in the public domain, and have included the author's name for each one selected. Until such a time as a copyright would be applied for, reprint permission is given by me, so long as the material is not misrepresented, or used for purposes other than for the building up of the body of Christ. If the material is used, a credit line would be appreciated, but it is not required. "Freely ye have received, freely give." —*Albert G. Stoner, Jr., First Printing, March 2016*

In the First Revision of *The Prophecies of Christ in Isaiah* I have added articles that did not appear in the First Printing, and have revised and supplemented some of the original articles. I have also created and included some charts to go with some of the articles to assist the reader in a mnemonic capacity. —*Albert G. Stoner, Jr., First Revision, September 2016*

The Kings of Judah Reigning in the Time of Isaiah's Prophecy

King of Judah	Recorded in the Kings	Recorded in the Chronicles	Reigned	Time of Reign
Uzziah (Azariah)	II Kings 15:1-7	II Chron. 26	52 Years**	786-758 B.C.
Jotham	II Kings 15:7-38	II Chron. 27	16 Years	758-742 B.C.
Ahaz	II Kings 15:38-16:20	II Chron. 28	16 Years	742-726 B.C.
Hezekiah	II Kings 16:20-20:21	II Chron. 29-32	29 Years	726-697 B.C.

(Chart, Kings of Judah reigning in the time of Isaiah's prophecy)

“The vision of Isaiah the son of Amoz, which he saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah” (Isa. 1:1).

**During the first 24 years of Uzziah's reign he was co-regent with his father, Amaziah, up until the time of the latter's death. The dates that are listed in the table above represent the twenty-eight years when Uzziah ruled by himself after his father's death. We include these dates to establish the fact that Isaiah received these exceeding precious and unmistakably remarkable revelations some seven hundred years before the Savior came into the world.

In chapter six of his prophecy, Isaiah recounts, it was “in the year that king Uzziah died”, that he received his memorable commission from the LORD to “Go, and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not. Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert, and be healed” (Isa. 6:9-10). Despite the brazen rejection and unreceptivity on the part of many of those of Isaiah's generation, and in generations that were to follow, God is saying here that the message must nevertheless be declared; it must be shouted from the housetops. “Though” the vision “tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry” (Hab. 2:3).

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THE PROPHECIES OF CHRIST IN ISALAH

By Albert G. Stoner, Jr.

THE COMPLETE PURGING AWAY OF SINS BY CHRIST

“Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: THOUGH YOUR SINS BE AS SCARLET, THEY SHALL BE AS WHITE AS SNOW; THOUGH THEY BE RED LIKE CRIMSON, THEY SHALL BE AS WOOL” (Isa. 1:18).

Isaiah is speaking here in the opening pages of his prophecy, in somewhat veiled language to be sure, of the comprehensiveness of the sufferings of Christ to remedy the sin issue. And though the Lord Jesus Christ is not specifically mentioned in this prophecy, He is nevertheless unmistakably identified by the language of God effectually putting away sins. Taking the whole of Scripture into consideration, Christ is “the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world” (Rev. 13:8). And from this higher perspective, the message of Holy Scripture in its entirety is all about the Person and redemptive work of Jesus Christ; it is about His putting away of sin by the sacrifice of Himself, and about His readying of a people to dwell forever with the Lord in the ages to come. But in order for this divine purpose to be brought to completion, men had to be washed from the glaringly crimson redness of sin by the incomprehensibly great sufferings of Messiah, God’s Anointed One.

Here in the opening verses of Isaiah’s prophecy, the God of Heaven reasons, not only with His covenanted people Israel, but now in these last days He makes a gracious appeal to all men everywhere, to repent, and turn from their wicked ways, that they may receive the salvation that He is graciously providing in His beloved Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. “All manner of sin and blasphemy” have been more than adequately suffered for by Christ, taken away by Him, purged by Him, atoned for by Him, washed away by Him, blotted out of God’s remembrance by Him, and cast by Him into the sea of divine forgetfulness. To all who will hear, God declares through Isaiah: *Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow! Though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool!*

Taking into view the entire scope of God’s redemptive work in the Lord Jesus Christ, the salvational and moral change being effected from glaring redness to pure and spotless whiteness, as here depicted by the Prophet Isaiah, would involve the unfathomable suffering of Messiah, God’s anointed Servant. It would entail God’s foreknowing, predestinating, calling, justifying, and glorifying the recipients of His great salvation in Christ (see Rom. 8:28-30). And this would all be “according to the eternal purpose which He purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Eph. 3:11).

From another perspective, the knowledge of this salvation would be experientially worked in the recipients by the divinely ordained means of tribulation working patience, patience working experience, experience working hope, hope making men to be not ashamed before the living God, and the love of God being shed abroad in men’s hearts by the Holy Spirit (see Rom. 5:3-5). In Christ all have been washed, sanctified, and justified in the Name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of God (see I Cor. 6:11). They “are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all” (Heb. 10:10).

The completeness of God’s redemptive work in the Lord Jesus Christ is declared throughout the Scriptures, but particularly in the Apostolic writings is it proclaimed with abundant clarity. The following are some representative expressions of this completeness:

Paul makes this glorious summary declaration in the synagogue at Antioch in Pisidia. “And by Him (Jesus Christ) ALL THAT BELIEVE ARE JUSTIFIED FROM ALL THINGS, from which” they

“could not be justified by the law of Moses” (Acts 13:39; see also vs.14-41). The promise is to ALL that believe, with no exceptions. It is to all that BELIEVE, for there is no other way for men to lay hold on God’s salvation in Christ Jesus. Such believing ones are declared to be JUSTIFIED BEFORE THE LIVING GOD FROM ALL THINGS, concerning which the Law was able only to convince of sin, and to condemn. “For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit” (Rom. 8:3-4).

All Have Sinned, and Come Short of the Glory of God, Being Justified Freely. The same Apostle again takes up a similar refrain in his epistle to the Romans: “For ALL HAVE SINNED, AND COME SHORT OF THE GLORY OF GOD; BEING JUSTIFIED FREELY BY HIS GRACE THROUGH THE REDEMPTION THAT IS IN CHRIST JESUS: whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His (Christ’s) blood, to declare His (God’s) righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God” (Rom. 3:23-25). *Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow!*

In his first letter to the Corinthians Paul declares the comprehensiveness of God’s working in salvation from yet another perspective. “But of Him (God, the Father) are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: that, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord” (I Cor. 1:30-31). WISDOM—RIGHTEOUSNESS—SANCTIFICATION—REDEMPTION is to be regarded as a complete and total working of God through His beloved Son, with nothing left for men to do, except to obey the gospel, believing on the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. *Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow! Though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool!*

All Things Are of God, Who Hath Reconciled Us. “And ALL THINGS ARE OF GOD, WHO HATH RECONCILED US TO HIMSELF BY JESUS CHRIST, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; to wit (that is to say), that GOD WAS IN CHRIST, RECONCILING THE WORLD UNTO HIMSELF, NOT IMPUTING THEIR TRESPASSES UNTO THEM; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ’s stead, be ye reconciled to God. FOR HE (GOD, THE FATHER) HATH MADE HIM (JESUS CHRIST) TO BE SIN FOR US, (EVEN HIM) WHO KNEW NO SIN; THAT WE MIGHT BE MADE THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD IN HIM (CHRIST)” (II Cor. 5:18-21).

“*God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them*” (II Cor. 5:19). In these marvelous words is the message of the gospel expressed in concentrated form. At the cross God was reconciling the world unto Himself by the sufferings of Christ. He was not imputing our trespasses unto us, because He had imputed them unto Christ, when He bore our sins in His own body on the tree. And now, for God to impute our trespasses unto us, particularly to us who have obeyed the gospel, and are continuing steadfastly in the faith of Christ, would entail what is commonly called “double jeopardy”. All iniquity, and transgression, and sin [including ours] have already been abundantly paid for *once* by the Lord Jesus Christ, and for God to require an additional payment for sins from us, who are in Christ, would be antithetical to all that is revealed about His Person and government. The one all important stipulation is that this provision of complete amnesty for men is unto those who are “in Christ”, even unto those who have availed themselves of this blessed provision. “Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ’s stead, be ye reconciled to God” (II Cor. 5:20).

“Ye hypocrites, well did Esaias prophesy of you, saying, This people draweth nigh unto Me with their mouth, and honoureth Me with their lips; but their heart is far from Me” (Mt. 15:7-8).

Christ is
a Branch
which has come
forth out of
Jesse's Roots
Isa. 11:1

THE ALL PERVASIVE EFFECTS OF THE REDEMPTION IN CHRIST FORETOLD

“And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the LORD’S house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; and He will teach us of His ways, and we will walk in His paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. And He shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more. O house of Jacob, come ye, and let us walk in the light of the LORD” (Isa. 2:2-5).

The redemption that is in Christ is declared to be abundantly sufficient to recover both Jew and Gentile from their state of lostness because of sin, and to effectually draw them forever into the Presence of God. It remains for men only to repent, and be baptized for the remission of their sins, that they may receive the gift of the Holy Spirit (see Acts 2:38-39). Men are now justified before God by their faith in Christ, and by their continuance in that faith. “And by Him all that believe are justified from all things, from which” they “could not be justified by the law of Moses” (Acts 13:39).

The scope of God’s redemptive work in Messiah is “all nations”. The evidence of the divine working in salvation can be seen in the fact that the nations mentioned here are not being cajoled or coerced into coming, but rather they are depicted here as *flowing* unto the mountain of the LORD’s house. The upward flow spoken of here testifies of the divine working in men’s hearts. The Father declared to the Son in Psalm 110: “Thy people shall be willing in the day of Thy power.” “Iniquity and transgression and sin” (Exod. 34:7) have now been put away from the face of God by the Lord Jesus Christ, so there is nothing that could possibly hinder men from coming unto Him, except for their unbelief and rejection of Him.

In this prophecy it can be seen that the purpose of God in salvation encompasses “all nations”, with the house of Jacob being summoned to lead the way in walking in “the light of the LORD.” God’s salvation is “to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile” (Rom. 2:10). The inclusion of “all nations” was, however, purposed by Him from the very beginning. In the Garden of Eden the promise of the bruising of the serpent’s head was made, in actuality, to “all nations”, as God addressed the first man, Adam, and his wife, from whom the “all nations” would come forth.

In the Last Days. The expression “in the last days” seems to point to a time near the end of the world when the nation of Israel shall “turn to the Lord” (II Cor. 3:16; see vs. 13-15) in exceeding large numbers. As Paul declared in his letter to the Romans, “And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: for this is My covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins” (Rom. 11:26-27).

We have not been told all the intricate details with regard to God’s working in the end times, neither the precise order of events before “the Son of man shall come in His glory” (Mt. 25:31). However, we do know of specific things that are on the divine calendar that shall precede Christ’s blessed appearing. We also know that God is able to bring about a turn in world events very swiftly, as He, the “Lord of heaven and earth” (Lk. 10:21), is presently engaged in “working salvation in the midst of the earth” (Ps. 74:12). And it is very possible that, when Israel shall “turn to the Lord”, their very turning shall provoke a world-wide revival. But we are content to watch and wait expectantly for Christ’s appearing, leaving the specific events that will precede His coming in God’s hands.

To Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob God promised: “And thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth, and thou shalt spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south: and in thee and in thy Seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed” (Gen. 28:14; see also Gen. 12:1-3; 26:4-5; Gal. 3:16).

In Galatians Paul further makes a direct connection between “the blessing of Abraham” and the reception of the promised Holy Spirit by faith, which reception involves the substantive impartation of the great salvation wrought by Christ to men [both Jew and Gentile]. That substantive impartation includes such things as the knowledge of sins forgiven, new creatureship in Christ, the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, and the writing of the Law of God upon the heart. “Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree: that THE BLESSING OF ABRAHAM might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive THE PROMISE OF THE SPIRIT through faith” (Gal. 3:13-14).

A Divinely Ordered Sequence of Events. Paul stresses the direct bearing of God’s salvation in Christ upon both Jew and Gentile, by drawing attention to a divinely ordered sequence of events in the book of Genesis. The promise, given by God to Abram (Genesis 12 and 15), predates the giving of “the covenant of circumcision” (Genesis 17; see Acts 7:8), by which covenant the distinction was first made between Jew and Gentile. In other words, God made the promise of all nations being blessed in his (Abraham’s) seed prior to the time of His making a distinction between Jew and Gentile. And, of course, Paul clarifies in his epistle to the Galatians that Christ Himself is that Seed that was promised (see Gal. 3:16).

The Significance of When Faith Was Reckoned to Abraham for Righteousness. Hear Paul reason upon this matter. “Cometh this blessedness [described in Psalm 32:1-2; see Rom. 4:6-8] then upon the circumcision [the Jews] only, or upon the uncircumcision [the Gentiles] also? for we say that faith was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness. How was it then reckoned? when he was in circumcision, or in uncircumcision? Not in circumcision, but in uncircumcision. And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised: that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised; that righteousness might be imputed unto them also: and the father of circumcision to them who are not of the circumcision only, but who also walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham, which he had being yet uncircumcised” (Rom. 4:9-12)

The Identification of Abraham’s Seed. “Now to Abraham and his Seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of One, and to thy Seed, which is Christ” (Gal. 3:16). “And if ye be Christ’s, then are ye Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise” (Gal. 3:29). As Paul reasons by the Spirit in Galatians, Abraham’s seed has primary reference to Jesus Christ, and secondarily, to those who belong to Christ. All the promises of God were made to Abraham, but ultimately to his Seed, Christ, and to all who are in Christ, including all of God’s redeemed sons and daughters which have lived since the beginning of the world. “For all the promises of God in Him [Christ] are yea, and in Him Amen, unto the glory of God by us” (II Cor. 1:20).

All the promises of God are secured for, and made sure to, believing men and women *in Christ*. To those who “have the mind of Christ” (I Cor. 2:16), and who have given considerable thought to these matters, the knowledge that all the promises of God are in Christ has become a wellspring of comfort and hope. It makes for great confidence in the living God, and enables men to assure their hearts before Him. Such considerations make for a more fruitful understanding of God’s ways, and of the purpose of God in salvation. In all of these things it is the Lord Jesus Christ, and not us, who has the preeminence: the preeminence that rightly belongs to Him alone.

But let us also be emphatically clear that *none* of the promises of God are unto those who have neglected so great salvation, or to those who have rejected Christ, and who are outside of Christ. For such ones to think that God will somehow be favorable to them in the last day is sheer folly, and evidence of a delusion of greatest proportion. For God to receive such ones unto Himself despite their rejection of His Son, would put Him in the position of being a respecter of persons, which He is not. It would mean that God would have to deny Himself, which He categorically has said that He cannot do. But, perhaps, the most tender of all considerations is that God would have to apologize to Christ for the great agonies that He endured in the behalf of those who have believed upon His name. AND THAT, HE MOST ASSUREDLY WILL NOT DO!

Christ is
a Covenant of the
People

Isa. 42:6; 49:8

THE LORD ALONE SHALL BE EXALTED IN THAT DAY

“The lofty looks of man shall be humbled, and the haughtiness of men shall be bowed down, and the LORD alone shall be exalted in that day. For the day of the LORD of hosts shall be upon every one that is proud and lofty, and upon every one that is lifted up; and he shall be brought low: And upon all the cedars of Lebanon, that are high and lifted up, . . . And the loftiness of man shall be bowed down, and the haughtiness of men shall be made low: and the LORD alone shall be exalted in that day. And the idols he shall utterly abolish. And they shall go into the holes of the rocks, and into the caves of the earth, for fear of the LORD, and for the glory of his majesty, when he ariseth to shake terribly the earth. In that day a man shall cast his idols of silver, and his idols of gold, which they made each one for himself to worship, to the moles and to the bats; To go into the clefts of the rocks, and into the tops of the ragged rocks, for fear of the LORD, and for the glory of his majesty, when he ariseth to shake terribly the earth. Cease ye from man, whose breath is in his nostrils: for wherein is he to be accounted of?” (Isa. 2:11-22).

The LORD alone shall be exalted in that day. He shall be exalted in “the day of Christ” (Phil. 1:10; 2:16; II Thess. 2:2), in the “day, in the which He will judge the world in righteousness by that Man whom He hath ordained; whereof He hath given assurance unto all men, in that He hath raised Him from the dead” (Acts 17:31). On the divine calendar is a day in which the great and exalted Jehovah shall “arise to shake terribly the earth” (Isa. 2:21-22). In that day every man and woman shall be summoned to give a strict account to Him, either for their acceptance or their rejection of His great salvation in Christ Jesus. For those who have believed on the Name of the Son of God, this shall be the day that they have waited for with great longing and fervent desire. But for wicked men and women it shall suddenly dawn upon them that Doomsday has indeed come, when the provided time and opportunity for change shall suddenly have vanished away.

Incidentally, Doomsday, while it is not a Bible word, is nevertheless a Bible thought (see Mt. 24:29-31; Rev. 1:7; 6:12-17; Ps. 110:5-6; Isa. 2:10, 19), pointing to the dreadful time when “the day of salvation”, also called “the accepted time” (II Cor. 6:2), shall finally have come to a close, and all hope that men might be saved shall be forever taken away. We are not speaking here of a time when nations shall purpose to destroy one another with their paltry military might, (as men are heard to foolishly speak today). Rather, it speaks of a time when the heavens and the earth shall have fled away, and when every man and woman shall be summoned to “the Judgment of the great day” (Jude 6) to give an account to God for the deeds done in the lifetime that was allotted to them. They shall give account to Him who is ready to judge the living and the dead (I Pet. 4:5).

For those who have, by their obedience to the gospel, taken shelter in the great salvation, provided by God for men in the Lord Jesus Christ, this day shall be a day of wonder and joy unspeakable. But for those who have rejected God’s Christ, this day shall be for them a day of inexpressible calamity and sorrow. There they shall learn of their everlasting portion. “Shame, and everlasting contempt” (Dan. 12:2), “everlasting punishment” (Mt. 25:46), “outer darkness” (Mt. 8:12; 22:13; 25:39), “wailing and gnashing of teeth” (Mt. 13:42, 50), and “the resurrection of damnation” (Jn. 5:29) are but some of the graphic descriptors of that awful state. Of the perverters of God’s salvation in Christ it is written, that their “judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not” (II Pet. 2:3). And the rejecters of His salvation shall in that day exclaim with horror: “the great day of God’s wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?” (Rev. 6:17).

As in the Days of Noah and the Days of Lot. “And as it was in the days of Noe, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man. They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and the flood came, and destroyed them all. Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded; But

the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all. Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed” (Lk. 17:26-30).

Everyday life shall in that day suddenly grind to a halt, and men, in a moment of time, shall be summoned to the Day of Judgment to give an account “give account to Him that is ready to judge the living and the dead” (I Pet. 4:5, ASV). In that day redeemed personalities shall shout for joy, “Lo, this is our God; we have waited for Him, and He will save us: this is the LORD; we have waited for Him, we will be glad and rejoice in His salvation” (Isa. 25:9). And ungodly men shall cry out to rocks and mountains to fall on them, and hide them “from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb” (Rev. 6:16; see also Hos. 10:8; Lk. 23:30). A “Doomsday clock” is indeed ticking away for unbelieving and ungodly men, but it is the one that has been divinely set by Him, in whose hands and power alone are “the times and the seasons” (see Acts 1:7).

“From all the dark places of earth’s heathen races,
O see how the thick shadows fly!
The voice of salvation awakes every nation,
Come over and help us, they cry.

“The kingdom is coming, O tell ye the story,
God’s banner exalted shall be!
The earth shall be full of His knowledge and glory,
As waters that cover the sea.

“The sunlight is glancing o’er armies advancing
To conquer the kingdoms of sin;
Our Lord shall possess them,
His presence shall bless them,
His beauty shall enter them in.

“With shouting and singing, and jubilant ringing,
Their arms of rebellion cast down;
At last every nation the Lord of salvation
Their king and Redeemer shall crown!”

—Mary B. Slade

“Then the Pharisees went out, and held a council against Him, how they might destroy Him. But when Jesus knew it, He withdrew Himself from thence: and great multitudes followed Him, and He healed them all; and charged them that they should not make Him known: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, Behold My Servant, whom I have chosen; My Beloved, in whom My soul is well pleased: I will put My Spirit upon Him, and He shall show judgment to the Gentiles. He shall not strive, nor cry; neither shall any man hear His voice in the streets. A bruised reed shall He not break, and smoking flax shall He not quench, till He send forth judgment unto victory. And in His name shall the Gentiles trust” (Mt. 12:14-21).

A PROPHETIC DESCRIPTION OF THE PERSON AND WORK OF MESSIAH

“In that day shall the branch of the LORD be beautiful and glorious, and the fruit of the earth shall be excellent and comely for them that are escaped of Israel. And it shall come to pass, that he that is left in Zion, and he that remaineth in Jerusalem, shall be called holy, even every one that is written among the living in Jerusalem: When the Lord shall have washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion, and shall have purged the blood of Jerusalem from the midst thereof by the spirit of judgment, and by the spirit of burning. And the LORD will create upon every dwelling place of mount Zion, and upon her assemblies, a cloud and smoke by day, and the shining of a flaming fire by night: for upon all the glory shall be a defence. And there shall be a tabernacle for a shadow in the daytime from the heat, and for a place of refuge, and for a covert from storm and from rain” (Isa. 4:2-6).

Christ, the Branch of the LORD. “In that day shall the branch of the LORD be beautiful and glorious” (see also Isa. 11:1; 53:2; Jer. 23:5; 33:15; Zech. 3:8; 6:12). Here we are given the divine perspective of this “Branch of the LORD” (NASB). Christ is beautiful and glorious, particularly with regard to His own blessed Person and His indispensable role in the implementation of God’s purpose in salvation. “Yea, He is altogether lovely” (Song 5:16). This is the way that those who are in Christ perceive Him to be. They were once knowingly in a woefully perilous state because of their sin and transgression, but then they happened upon “a treasure hid in a field” (Mt. 13:44), discovering with serendipitous wonder that God already has graciously provided an abundant remedy for the undoing of that awful condition by the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that has followed. For a time the future was ominously bleak with threatening forebodings looming over them, but then “the kindness and love of God toward man appeared” (Tit. 3:4), being made manifest by the preaching of the gospel of Christ. Both to God and to believing men this Branch of the LORD has become “a precious Cornerstone” (Isa. 28:16), upon which the salvation of God is built. And as Peter declared, “Unto you therefore which believe He is precious . . .” (I Pet. 2:7). Everything about the Lord Jesus Christ is “beautiful and glorious” both to God and to those who have believed upon Christ’s name.

In that day shall the Branch of the LORD be beautiful and glorious. *In that day.* This day is elsewhere identified in Scripture as the “day of salvation” (Isa. 49:8; II Cor. 6:2), a day when the preeminent working of God with men would be “to take out of them a people for His name” (Acts 15:14). Accordingly, the Psalmist Asaph made this confident declaration and boast of the Most High: “For God my King of old, working salvation in the midst of the earth” (Ps. 74:12). This salvation is that which God has “prepared before the face of all people” (Lk. 2:31). And in His working of this salvation, Christ Himself is both “a light to lighten the Gentiles” “and the glory of” God’s “people Israel” (Lk. 2:32).

Other References to Christ, the Branch of the LORD. “AND there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, AND A BRANCH SHALL GROW OUT OF HIS ROOTS” (Isa. 11:1). “Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I WILL RAISE UNTO DAVID A RIGHTEOUS BRANCH, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth” (Jer. 23:5). “In those days, AND AT THAT TIME, WILL I CAUSE THE BRANCH OF RIGHTEOUSNESS TO GROW UP UNTO DAVID; and He shall execute judgment and righteousness in the land” (Jer. 33:15). “Hear now, O Joshua the high priest, thou, and thy fellows that sit before thee: for they are men wondered at: for, behold, I WILL BRING FORTH MY SERVANT THE BRANCH” (Zech. 3:8). “And speak unto him, saying, Thus speaketh the LORD of hosts, saying, BEHOLD THE MAN WHOSE NAME IS THE BRANCH; and He shall grow up out of his place, and He shall build the temple of the LORD” (Zech. 6:12). “For HE (CHRIST) SHALL GROW UP BEFORE HIM (THE FATHER) 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” (Isa. 53:2).

The Significance of Christ, the Branch of the LORD. When “the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us” (Jn. 1:14), He did not suddenly appear among men in a state of advanced adulthood. He entered the world as a Babe: born of the virgin Mary, and conceived by the Holy Spirit. He tasted first handedly of the full gamut of human experience, ranging all the way from infancy to adulthood, and even unto death. HE GREW UP BEFORE GOD as a tender plant among those of the race that He came to save. “And JESUS INCREASED IN WISDOM AND STATURE, AND IN FAVOUR WITH GOD AND MAN” (Lk. 2:52). “Though He were a Son, yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered; and being made perfect, He became the Author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey Him; called of God an high priest after the order of Melchisedec” (Heb. 5:8-10).

“In the days of His flesh” (Heb. 5:7) the Lord Jesus Christ GREW UP AS A TENDER PLANT before the God who sent Him into the world. The Lord God did not shield Him from, nor grant Him special immunity to, the temptations, adversities, and woes that are “common to man” (I Cor. 10:13). Christ “was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin” (Heb. 4:15). It was essential that Christ be a partaker of flesh and blood even as we are (see Heb. 2:14), “that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people” (Heb. 2:17). He who now ever lives to make intercession for us at God’s right hand Himself once walked in the land of the shadow of death where we presently are sojourning while yet en route to “the world to come” (Mk. 10:30; Lk. 18:30; Heb. 2:5; 6:5) and to “the promised eternal inheritance” (Heb. 9:15, RSV).

During “the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us” (Acts 1:21) the God of Heaven was causing the Branch to grow out of Jesse’s roots (Isa. 11:1). He was raising up unto ¹David a righteous Branch, even a King who “shall execute judgment and justice in the earth” (Jer. 23:5). “The Man whose name is The BRANCH”, was then being nurtured up of God to “build the ²temple of the LORD”, and to “be a Priest upon His throne” (Zech. 6:12-13; see also Ps. 110:1-4). Thus, we see in these prophetic expressions, THE BRANCH, A RIGHTEOUS BRANCH, THE BRANCH OF RIGHTEOUSNESS, AND A TENDER PLANT, the expediting of the purpose of God in raising up unto men an everlasting King and Priest. This King and Priest is supremely unique, in that His “goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting” (Mic. 5:2), and He also is thoroughly and firsthandedly familiar with the entire spectrum of human experience. He knows each of us far better than we know ourselves. Even more profound than possessing familiarity with each of our personal circumstances, the Lord Jesus Christ has a thoroughgoing acquaintance with our precarious plight introduced by the entrance of sin into the world, and with the griefs and sorrows that are common to us all. He, praise God, is “mighty to save” (Isa. 63:1), and He is “able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him” (Heb. 7:25).

Christ is beautiful and glorious in His divinely given capacities to recover men from their woefully sinful state and to save them completely and forever. He is “the Redeemer” who has come, and who, at a time appointed of the Father, shall yet “come to Zion, and unto them that turn from transgression in

¹ Even after David, the son of Jesse “fell on sleep, and was laid unto his fathers” (Acts 13:36), God, through His Prophets, continued to speak about His Servant David (Ps. 89:3, 20, 35, 49; Jer. 30:9; Ezek. 34:23-24; 37:24-25; Hos. 3:5; Amos 9:11; etc.). In these prophetically posthumous references to David, Christ, the Son of David (Mt. 1:1; 15:22; 20:30-31; 21:9, 15; Lk. 18:38-39, etc.) is the intended Object of consideration.

² This is not speaking of another temple to be built in Jerusalem, but rather an eternal dwelling place where redeemed personalities shall dwell with the Most High throughout the ages to come. This includes those who have lived prior to the Cross, as well as those who have lived “in these last days” (Heb. 1:1-2). In the Revelation we are given to see that the language of the temple of God is an accommodation to the limitations of our understanding in the present time. With regard to that city of redeemed personalities, John declared: “And I saw no temple therein: for THE LORD GOD ALMIGHTY AND THE LAMB ARE THE TEMPLE OF IT” (Rev. 21:22). The very concept of a temple implies that there are sinful defilements from which men are to be kept. But there in that world everyone and everything that defiles and offends shall have been cast into the lake of fire (see Rev. 21:8; 19:20; 20:10, 14-15).

Jacob” (Isa. 59:20; see also Rom. 11:26-27). The exalted Christ is to believing men, both Jew and Gentile, “a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance” “and forgiveness of sins” (Acts 5:31). Such comprehensive declarations seem also to be an allusion to Christ’s High Priestly ministry at the right hand of God, as the garments that were given to Aaron, the high priest, were “for beauty and for glory” (Exod. 28:2; see also Exod. 28:40). As our great High Priest Christ is presently saving men, being now at the right hand of God exalted. “Wherefore He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them” (Heb. 7:25).

Though Messiah is not specifically identified by name in this prophecy, nevertheless He is unmistakably distinguished here by the glorious effects of His reign and dominion at the right hand of God. Such inimitable workings could only proceed from His Person. The Lord Jesus Christ, as well as the Father and the Holy Spirit, are the supremely unique Personalities of the universe. Only the three Persons of the Godhead can be positively identified by Their unique character and ways, for there are none else like Them. Christ is unique in that He alone reveals unto believing men the Father (Mt. 11:27). And both He and the Father come to believing men by the Holy Spirit (see Jn. 14-16).

Jesus Christ is able to be uniquely and unmistakably identified by His indispensable ministry to men, as He is here in this passage of Isaiah’s prophecy. Only Christ is capable of washing away “the filth of the daughters of Zion,” by virtue of His atoning death in our behalf. Only the Man Christ Jesus possesses both the greatness and the worthiness to be for believing men this “tabernacle for a shadow in the daytime from the heat, and for a place of refuge, and for a covert from storm and from rain.” O how precious it is to consider Him in all of His saving capacities and ministries! And here in this prophecy we are given to see the One who has been sent by the Father to effectually deal with the sin issue, so that the children of God, by their faith in Christ, may prepare themselves for the world to come.

Those receiving the benefits of Christ’s dominion are men and women who, having obeyed the gospel (Rom. 10:16), have recovered themselves from the snare of the Devil (II Tim. 2:26). They are drawing near to God by their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and they are presently waiting for God’s Son from heaven (I Thess. 1:10). They have been made willing in the day of Christ’s power, and are walking daily in full accord with the purpose of God in salvation. To all such returning ones, Christ is to them as a blessed shelter from the wrath to come, and a place of refuge from the storms and adversities associated with “this present evil world” (Gal. 1:4).

To all such believing ones, the Lord Jesus Christ, in His very Person, is this tabernacle and place of refuge. He alone is this covert from the storms of sinful allurements that are met with in this present world. And Christ alone is the divinely provided source of refreshment and nourishment from the heat of trial and temptation. To those who have believed upon His name Christ is as “the shadow of a great rock in a weary land” (Isa. 32:2) Truly God has made a wondrously blessed provision in Christ for those who are presently sojourning through this world to the world to come! There is glory all the way!

“Wherefore also it is contained in the Scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on Him shall not be confounded. Unto you therefore which believe He is precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner, And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, even to them which stumble at the Word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed” (I Pet. 2:6-8; see Isa. 28:16).

Christ is
a Covert from the
Tempest
Isa. 32:2

THE WHOLE EARTH IS FULL OF GOD'S GLORY

"In the year that king Uzziah died I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple. Above it stood the seraphims: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly. And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory. And the posts of the door moved at the voice of him that cried, and the house was filled with smoke. Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts. Then flew one of the seraphims unto me, having a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar: And he laid it upon my mouth, and said, Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged. Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I; send me. And he said, Go, and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not. Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert, and be healed" (Isa. 6:1-10).

The Whole Earth is Full of God's Glory. God is working salvation in the midst of the earth, as the Psalmist declared, and consequently the whole earth is teeming with divine activity related to the accomplishment of that salvation. What is actually transpiring in the earth is primarily not about politics, or the environment, or wars, or famines, or a host of other tangential things that are capturing men's attention. The entire Godhead is presently at work behind the scenes in every quarter, calling men "out of darkness into" God's "marvellous light" (I Pet. 2:9), readying a people prepared for the Lord (Lk. 1:17), schooling them to take possession of a reign and dominion in the world to come (see Heb. 2:5; 12:28; Dan. 7:13-14, 21-27; Rev. 22:4-5).

With regard to this glory, by design there are degrees of its perception by men and angels. The four living creatures, being "full of eyes" (Ezek. 1:18; Rev. 4:6, 8), followed by the holy angels, are the most perceptive and discerning of God's working in salvation. The holy angels are all ministering spirits, "sent forth to minister to them who shall be the heirs of salvation" (Heb. 1:13). In Daniel's prophecy we are given a glimpse of the heavenly throne, with the innumerable company of angels ministering unto God.

The Vision of the Angels Ministering to the Ancient of days. "I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of His head like the pure wool: His throne was like the fiery flame, and His wheels as burning fire. A fiery stream issued and came forth from before Him: thousand thousands ministered unto Him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before Him: the judgment was set, and the books were opened" (Dan. 7:9-10). The holy angels are now continually being sent forth to minister to the heirs of God's salvation in Christ.

With regard to the perception of God's working, redeemed men and women are made aware by their faith that God is presently engaged in the work of salvation. They are "labourers together with God" (I Cor. 3:9). They are "ambassadors for Christ," and as Paul said, it is "as though God" did beseech men "by us: we pray" them "in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God" (II Cor. 5:20).

Unbelieving men are the least perceptive of God's working in salvation, if there is any awareness at all. Thus, in wisdom did the Lord speak to men in parables, in order to hide the truth from the insincere, and make it perceptible to honest and good hearts. As Jesus said in Matthew's gospel:

The Purpose of Christ's Parables to both Hide and Make Manifest the Divine Working. "Therefore speak I to them in parables: because they seeing see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand. And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive: For this people's heart is waxed

gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them” (Mt. 13:13-15).

“Therefore they could not believe, because that Esaias said again, He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart; that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal them. These things said Esaias, when he saw His glory, and spake of Him” (Jn. 12:39-41).

“And when they agreed not among themselves, they departed, after that Paul had spoken one word, Well spake the Holy Ghost by Esaias the prophet unto our fathers, Saying, Go unto this people, and say, Hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and not perceive: For the heart of this people is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they closed; lest they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them. Be it known therefore unto you, that the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles, and that they will hear it” (Acts 28:25-28).

As can be seen in the Scriptures above, God has purposed to hide the truth from the insincere, as well as reveal it to those who are pure in heart. By the use of parables the Lord hides the truth from the disinterested, and yet, at the same time, He holds men accountable to further inquire into the discernibly momentous significance contained in them. As our great Exemplar, God does not cast His pearls before swine, neither does He give that which is holy to the dogs. He shows the precious things of His great salvation in Christ to contrite and humble spirits (see. Isa. 57:15; 61:1-3; 66:1-2; Ps. 34:18; 147:3; Mt. 5:4; Lk. 4:18; Lk. 15:1-32, etc.). God’s salvation in the Lord Jesus Christ, and the knowledge of it, came at an unfathomable cost to the Godhead (even the offering up of His only begotten Son for us all). If men do not earnestly desire it for themselves, God will hide it from them. The world to come (Heb. 2:5) will be populated with redeemed personalities who in this life desired more than anything else to be partakers of “the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory” (II Tim. 2:10). Let us therefore seek grace from the Lord to ever give ourselves to nurturing and nourishing that desire to the glory of God!

No disinterested or halfhearted persons shall be there. With one voice, all who are accounted worthy to enter therein shall have expressed the sentiment recorded by the Psalmist: “One thing have I desired of the LORD, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the LORD, and to enquire in His temple” (Ps. 27:4). And with Paul they shall each be able to confess in their measure: “Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ” (Phil. 3:8).

“I dreamed that the great judgment morning
Had dawned, and the trumpet had blown;
I dreamed that the nations had gathered
To judgment before the white throne;
From the throne came a bright, shining angel,
And he stood on the land and the sea,
And he swore with his hand raised to Heaven,
That time was no longer to be.

“And, oh, what a weeping and wailing,
As the lost were told of their fate;
They cried for the rocks and the mountains,
They prayed, but their prayer was too late.”

—*Bertram H. Shadduck*

EMMANUEL, GOD WITH US

“Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; BEHOLD, A VIRGIN SHALL CONCEIVE, AND BEAR A SON, AND SHALL CALL HIS NAME IMMANUEL” (Isa. 7:14).

“Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call His name EMMANUEL, WHICH BEING INTERPRETED IS, GOD WITH US” (Mt. 1:23). For those who are partakers of “the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory” (II Tim. 2:10), God is now dwelling with them and in them in an abiding sense. Jesus said, “If a man love Me, he will keep My words: and My Father will love him, and We will come unto him, and make Our abode with him” (Jn. 14:23). For those in Christ Jesus, God is for us, He is on our side, but He is also dwelling in us.

God with us. The following Scriptures make declarations of the purpose of God to dwell both in and with His people. “And I will dwell among the children of Israel, and will be their God” (Exod. 29:45). “And I will set My tabernacle among you: and My soul shall not abhor you. And I will walk among you, and will be your God, and ye shall be My people” (Lev. 26:11-12). “LORD, Thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations” (Ps. 90:1). “Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion: for, lo, I come, and I will dwell in the midst of thee, saith the LORD. And many nations shall be joined to the LORD in that day, and shall be My people: and I will dwell in the midst of thee, and thou shalt know that the LORD of hosts hath sent me unto thee” (Zech. 2:10-11).

“Whoso eateth My flesh, and drinketh My blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day. For My flesh is meat indeed, and My blood is drink indeed. He that eateth My flesh, and drinketh My blood, dwelleth in Me, and I in him” (Jn. 6:54-56). “. . . ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people” (II Cor. 6:16). “Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God. And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him” (I Jn 4:15-16). “And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God” (Rev. 21:3).

I will dwell in them, and walk in them. One of the objectives of God in His salvation in Christ is that His redeemed sons and daughters shall be incorporated into the Godhead. As the Saviour prayed to His Father on the night that He was betrayed: “I in them, and Thou in Me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent Me, and hast loved them, as Thou hast loved Me” (Jn. 17:23). “And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: GOD WAS MANIFEST IN THE FLESH, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory” (I Tim. 3:16).

In the original prophecy in Isaiah chapter 7 the significance of the name Immanuel seems to be “God with us” in the sense that He is on our side to defend and protect. But when Matthew quotes this same verse in connection with Christ being born of the virgin Mary, the signification of the name Emmanuel has clearly been expanded exceeding greatly. The import of the word “Emmanuel” is that God is now with us in an abiding sense. In Christ, God is both with us and in us, both now and forever. For those who are in Christ, God is indwelling them, and they are dwelling in Him.

Early on in the sacred record God, the Holy One, began to make known His purpose to dwell with His people, even with them, who had sinned, and come short of the glory of God. The last several chapters of Ezekiel’s prophecy provide meticulous detail regarding the rebuilding of the temple, even after God had sent His people into captivity for their sinful and idolatrous ways. As has been well remarked, It seems that in all these precise layout and measurement details, God was saying that He was once again going to dwell with His people.

In Emmanuel (God with us) we see the blessed provision that God has made for the putting away of sins, once and for all. In the Person of Emmanuel the way into the holiest of all has now been made accessible to all who have obeyed the gospel, and are continuing in the faith, grounded and settled, and are not moved away from the hope of the gospel. *The Man Christ Jesus* is now seated at the right hand of God. In the Lord Jesus Christ, our Emmanuel, we have been made accepted in Him. We, by His grace, now reckon ourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Jesus said, "He that hath My commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me: and he that loveth Me shall be loved of My Father, and I will love him, and will manifest Myself to him" (Jn. 14:21). He prayed to the Father in accordance with that which God had purposed in His Son: "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on Me through their word; that they all may be one; as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in Us: that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me. And the glory which Thou gavest Me I have given them; that they may be one, even as We are one" (Jn. 17:20-22). In his first epistle John declared: "Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God. And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him" (I Jn. 4:15-16). This oneness with both the Father and the Son through the Spirit is but foretaste of the everlasting joy that is laid up for redeemed personalities in the ages to come.

*O Thou, my feeble voice and heart inspire,
Who touched Isaiah's hallowed lips with fire!
Let burning coals from off Thy altar fall,
While I extol Thee, Jesus, Lord of all.*

*The waiting world shall hear the prophet's voice;
Let angels, men and earth and Heav'n rejoice!
O House of David, hear! for in thy Son
Shall come a king to reign on David's throne.*

*His name Immanuel! God with us shall be,
And all who walk in darkness light shall see;
The shades of death and hell shall flee away,
And earth shall own the great Redeemer's sway.*

*The government upon His shoulders stand;
Justice shall be established by His hand;
In love and power His kingdom shall increase;
He shall be King of kings and Prince of Peace.*

*Our happy ears now hear the joyful word
The prophets waited for, but never heard;
Our blessed eyes now see the heavenly light,
That kings desired, but died without the sight.*

*The day the prophets waited for is gone,
Jesus is on the mediatorial throne,
To plead for us, until He comes again,
The earth restored, on David's throne to reign.*

—Mary P. Beegle, 1876

HE (CHRIST) SHALL BE FOR A SANCTUARY TO SOME, AND FOR A SNARE TO OTHERS

“Sanctify the LORD of hosts Himself; and let Him be your fear, and let Him be your dread. And He shall be for a sanctuary; but for a stone of stumbling and for a rock of offence to both the houses of Israel, for a gin and for a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem” (Isa. 8:13-14).

Wherever men are believing on the Son of God, He has become to them a blessed Sanctuary, a place of divine protection, a place of shelter where they are made to know that the thrice holy God accepts them on the basis of their faith in Christ and by their being in Christ, the provided Sanctuary. But wherever men are found resisting Him, to all such ones Christ will prove to be a snare, and a stone of stumbling. There is no morally neutral state or condition with regard to this matter. In this present time men are either taking hold of the Lord Jesus Christ by their earnest embracement of the gospel message, and by their faith in Him, or they are resisting Him by their unbelief, which ultimately shall result in their rejection of Him.

The LORD is with You while You be with Him. An inexorable and unavoidable principle was set forth in the words of Azariah the son of Oded spoken to King Asa, the reformer: “The LORD is with you, while you be with Him; and if you seek Him, He will be found of you; but if you forsake Him, He will forsake you” (II Chron. 15:1-2). This is a faithful saying, and one which holds true in every aspect of life’s experience. God “cannot deny Himself” (II Tim. 2:13), neither will He compromise His Godhood to accommodate unbelief and unfaithfulness in men. He has made abundant provision in the redemption in Christ for men to recover themselves from sin and condemnation, but they must avail themselves of this provision which has been made by Him in Christ, and made known in “the word of the truth of the gospel” (Col. 1:5).

The Testimony of the Second Psalm. In view of this perilous situation that men find themselves in, David, by the Spirit, declared in the second Psalm: “Serve the LORD with fear, and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son, lest He be angry, and ye perish from the way, when His wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in Him (Ps. 2:11-12). One of the things that we learn from this Psalm is that men must at all cost avoid having the Son of God to be angry with them, lest they “perish from the way”. For men to ignore and reject the salvation that the Lord Jesus Christ has accomplished in their behalf makes them to be the objects of Christ’s anger.

The Sweet Savour of Christ. The matter of Christ being a sanctuary to some, and a snare to others is expressed elsewhere in the Scripture. For example, Paul declared: “Now thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savour of His knowledge by us in every place. For we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish: TO THE ONE WE ARE THE SAVOUR OF DEATH UNTO DEATH; AND TO THE OTHER THE SAVOUR OF LIFE UNTO LIFE. AND WHO IS SUFFICIENT FOR THESE THINGS?” (II Cor. 2:14-16).

For those, to whom the knowledge of God is welcomed, being to them a savour of life unto life, Christ is a blessed sanctuary. But for those, to whom this same knowledge is offensive and distasteful, being to them a savour of death unto death, Christ has become to them a snare and a trap. All men are in one of these two categories; they are either being drawn to Christ by the preaching of the gospel, or they are offended in Him. The sweet savour of Christ, as it emanates from the words and deeds of those who have been made alive unto God through their faith in the gospel, continues to have the effect of summoning receptive hearts closer to Jesus, as well as driving those who are offended in Him farther away. There is no neutral ground here. Men are either tenderly and lovingly being drawn to Jesus, or they are opposing Him, and are repulsed by Him.

TWO DISTINCTLY DIFFERENT DESTINIES FOR MEN: THAT OF BEING BROKEN, OR BEING GROUND TO POWDER

There are TWO DISTINCTLY DIFFERENT DESTINIES THAT PERTAIN UNTO MEN. The one pertains to those who fall upon Christ, the divinely appointed foundation stone, and who are consequently “broken” so far as their affection for, and inordinate attachment to, this present world are concerned. Blessed are all they who have, in this sense, fallen upon this Stone! The “broken” ones are presently being prepared of God for entrance into joys that are everlasting (see Ps. 16:11; 31:19; Isa. 64:4, etc.), and for a dominion and reign with Christ in the world to come.

Ruination, not Annihilation. The other prepared destiny shall be THE PORTION OF THOSE UPON WHOM THE STONE SHALL FALL, directly owing to their forthright rejection of, and hatred for, the LORD and His Christ. The evocatively descriptive language of being ground to powder does *not* speak of the total ¹annihilation of the persons of such ones upon whom this stone falls, as that would be completely inconsistent with every other scriptural representation of the final state of those who reject God’s salvation in Christ. Being ground to powder speaks of ruination (not annihilation), and of personally bearing the full brunt of the “shame and everlasting contempt” (Dan. 12:2), that is reserved for the wicked and unrighteous.

“Jesus saith unto them, Did ye never read in the scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord’s doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes? Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof. AND WHOSOEVER SHALL FALL ON THIS STONE SHALL BE BROKEN: BUT ON WHOMSOEVER IT SHALL FALL, IT WILL GRIND HIM TO POWDER” (Mt. 21:42-44; see also Lk. 20:17-18).

Being Broken versus Being Ground to Powder. We are well aware that many writers have alleged that those who fall upon the stone of reference and those upon whom the stone falls are both describing the plight of wicked men who have rejected the Son of God. But in our judgment this view is not tenable. The implication associated with this view is that whether a person falls upon the stone, or whether the stone falls upon the person, the final consequence is the same: namely, the rejection by God and condemnation.

The very language does not allow this conclusion. If the Lord had said, “AND”, instead of “BUT”, perhaps that would have opened the door somewhat to the consideration of this view that some have taken: AND ON WHOMSOEVER IT SHALL FALL instead of BUT ON WHOMSOEVER IT SHALL FALL. The use of the word BUT introduces a clear and decisive contrast, indicating that the consequences of falling

¹ Annihilationism, or the annihilation of the wicked, is a fallacious teaching embraced in many circles of Christendom which states that God will destroy or annihilate the persons of the wicked after the Day of Judgment, instead of causing them to endure eternal torments for their rejection of Him. The proponents of this humanistic doctrine attempt to justify their position by alleging that it would be out of character for a loving God to cause those who reject His salvation in Christ to suffer for eternity. Such ones, however, gloss the issue of God also being a God of wrath and vengeance and of the unfathomable cost of our redemption in Christ. Jesus said, “He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and HE THAT BELIEVETH NOT THE SON SHALL NOT SEE LIFE; BUT THE WRATH OF GOD ABIDETH ON HIM” (Jn. 3:36).

This annihilationist view is espoused and being propagated by many professing faith in Christ, in spite of the repeated and solemnly graphic warnings in Scripture of a divinely prepared place of eternal torment. For example: “Then shall He (the King) say also unto them on the left hand, DEPART FROM ME, YE CURSED, INTO EVERLASTING FIRE, prepared for the Devil and his angels” (Mt. 25:41). “And THESE SHALL GO AWAY INTO EVERLASTING PUNISHMENT: but the righteous into life eternal” (Mt. 25:46). “But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in THE LAKE WHICH BURNETH WITH FIRE AND BRIMSTONE: WHICH IS THE SECOND DEATH” (Rev. 21:8).

upon the stone and that of the stone falling upon the person are quite different from each other in every way, and are speaking of two entirely different destinies appointed unto men: the one of salvation, the other of condemnation.

The Lord Jesus Christ is not a Double Jeopardy to Men. To say that falling upon the stone or the stone falling on them, as many commentators imply, would ultimately have the same end result — would seem to introduce a situation of double jeopardy for men. The Lord Jesus Christ is NOT ONLY A STONE OF STUMBLING, over which men stumble and fall. HE ALSO IS ALSO THE BLESSED FOUNDATION STONE, laid in Zion by God Himself. HE IS A FOUNDATION STONE FOR MEN TO BELIEVE UPON.

The Carefulness with which Christ Spoke of His Own Ministry. Throughout Christ's earthly ministry He was always careful to not obscure the reason for which He was sent into the world. "But He turned, and rebuked them (James and John), and said, Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of. For the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them. And they went to another village" (Lk. 9:55-56). "For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved" (Jn. 3:17). "And if any man hear my words, and believe not, I judge him not: for I came not to judge the world, but to save the world" (Jn. 12:47).

This was the case even when speaking with those who opposed Him. "Then was brought unto Him one possessed with a devil, blind, and dumb: and He healed him, insomuch that the blind and dumb both spake and saw. And all the people were amazed, and said, Is not this the son of David? But when the Pharisees heard it, they said, This fellow doth not cast out devils, but by Beelzebub the prince of the devils. And Jesus knew their thoughts, and said unto them, Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand: and if Satan cast out Satan, he is divided against himself; how shall then his kingdom stand? And if I by Beelzebub cast out devils, by whom do your children cast them out? therefore they shall be your judges. But if I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God is come unto you. Or else how can one enter into a strong man's house, and spoil his goods, except he first bind the strong man? and then he will spoil his house. He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad. WHEREFORE I SAY UNTO YOU, ALL MANNER OF SIN AND BLASPHEMY SHALL BE FORGIVEN UNTO MEN: but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men. AND WHOSOEVER SPEAKETH A WORD AGAINST THE SON OF MAN, IT SHALL BE FORGIVEN HIM: but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come" (Mt. 12:22-32).

The Significance of Falling upon the Stone. He does not say, "Whosoever shall stumble and fall", but rather "Whosoever shall fall", that is, with the purpose and intent of falling.

Any encounter by men with the glorified Christ will cause a significant disruption in earthly life, either for weal or for woe. This seems to be something that is glossed over by religious men today who speak of the new birth as relatively inconsequential occurrence.

Those who are begotten by the incorruptible seed of the Word of God have been CONSTITUTED PILGRIMS AND STRANGERS IN THIS PRESENT WORLD. They were once living according to the course of this world, but NOW THEY HAVE BEEN DELIVERED FROM THE POWER OF DARKNESS, AND TRANSLATED INTO THE KINGDOM OF GOD'S DEAR SON. THEY HAVE BEEN SUMMONED INTO THE WARFARE OF FAITH, and to denying themselves and taking up their cross to follow Jesus. THESE ARE THEY THAT "OVERCAME HIM (THE DEVIL) BY THE BLOOD OF THE LAMB, AND BY THE WORD OF THEIR TESTIMONY; AND THEY LOVED NOT THEIR LIVES UNTO THE DEATH" (Rev. 12:11).

Christ, the Foundation Stone is also a Stone of Stumbling. "Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation: he that

believeth shall not make haste (shall not flee in haste, shall not anxiously flee)” (Isa. 28:16). “The stone which the builders refused is become the head stone of the corner. This is the LORD’s doing; it is marvellous in our eyes” (Ps. 118:22-23). “And He shall be for a sanctuary; but for a stone of stumbling and for a rock of offence to both the houses of Israel, for a gin and for a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem. And many among them shall stumble, and fall, and be broken, and be snared, and be taken” (Isa. 8:14-15).

Behold, I Lay in Sion a Stumblingstone. It seems that here at the end of Romans 9 that Paul bringing the thoughts contained in Psalms 118 text and the Isaiah 8 and 28 texts together.

“What shall we say then? That the Gentiles, which followed not after righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith. But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness. Wherefore? Because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumblingstone; As it is written, BEHOLD, I LAY IN SION A STUMBLINGSTONE AND ROCK OF OFFENCE: AND WHOSOEVER BELIEVETH ON HIM SHALL NOT BE ASHAMED” (Rom. 9:30-33).

Being Broken is Sometimes Associated with Good Things in Scripture

Brokenness, especially when it is joined together with contriteness, is always spoken of as something that is precious in the sight of God. To the broken ones the understanding of this blessed aspect of God’s character and working is a wellspring of hope. They are wondrously assured by the revelation of God’s own nature and Person that a desired restoration and reestablishment in God’s ways are soon to follow.

“THE LORD IS NIGH UNTO THEM THAT ARE OF A BROKEN HEART; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit” (Ps. 34:18). In spite of an overwhelming sense of unworthiness experienced by these broken and contrite ones, the Scripture declares that God is nigh unto such ones in a very tender way. He is near to help, to heal, to strengthen, and to restore to a state of usefulness and productiveness in His sight.

“Make me to hear joy and gladness; THAT ²THE BONES WHICH THOU HAST BROKEN MAY REJOICE” (Ps. 51:8). If David, after he had sinned with Bathsheba and subsequently orchestrated the murder of Uriah the Hittite, could in his state of brokenness have prospect of rejoicing in the Lord once again, how much more can those who have believed upon the name of the only begotten Son of God live in the same hope? This is not to presumptuously state that no matter what you do, God will forgive you, as some are carelessly heard to speak. And it is not to minimize in the least the exceedingly grievous nature of ³David’s sin and transgression, but instead it is to draw attention to the great blessedness of what God is doing in salvation and justification by Christ. “Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound” (Rom. 5:20). [If men are not sorely affected as David was, by the acute realization of the grievous nature of their sin and their coming woefully short of the glory of God, then it is open to question whether such unaffected ones have any part or lot in God’s salvation.]

“THE SACRIFICES OF GOD ARE A BROKEN SPIRIT: A BROKEN AND A CONTRITE, O God, Thou wilt not despise” (Ps. 51:17). When men are broken by the chastening hand of God, that is a time when such ones wrestle with a sharp sense of unworthiness and unprofitability Godward. What could such ones possibly offer unto God that would be acceptable to Him?, it is often reasoned. But what saith the answer of God to those laboring under this kind of burden? “The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise.” Such ones must offer up their broken and contrite

² *The bones which Thou hast broken.* The allusion here is to a practice of shepherds dealing with straying sheep. They would sometimes break the bones [probably leg bones] of a sheep to prevent it from habitually wandering away from the fold.

³ David’s sin and transgression. David, the man after God’s own heart (I Sam. 13:14), was severely chastened of the LORD during his remaining days in the flesh for the notable sins committed by him. As it is written, “But the thing that David had done displeased the LORD” (II Sam. 11:27). In the diction of Paul David was chastened of the Lord that he should not be condemned with the world (see I Cor. 11:32).

hearts to God as an acceptable sacrifice to Him.

“HE HEALETH THE BROKEN IN HEART, AND BINDETH UP THEIR WOUNDS” (Ps. 147:3). In these very gracious words uttered by the Psalmist, we see that God does not leave men in their state of brokenness, but rather in His own time He has purposed to marvelously heal and restore.

“THE Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon Me; because THE LORD HATH ANOINTED ME TO PREACH GOOD TIDINGS UNTO THE MEEK; HE HATH SENT ME TO BIND UP THE BROKEN-HEARTED, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound” (Isa. 61:1; comp. Lk. 4:18). One of the objectives of the Father sending His beloved Son into the world was to this end, that Christ might be an effectual Healer of broken and contrite hearts, setting them free from their enslavement to sin and to the Devil, and graciously restoring them, as sons and daughters of the Most High, to acceptable and fruitful service to God. The unspeakably great worth and everlasting benefit of the sufferings of Christ and of the glory which has followed must be declared unto men through preaching. The Lord Jesus Christ Himself is the preeminent Declarer of this worth and benefit, as Isaiah announces in chapter 61.

Brokenness in order to Healing. The brokenness of which the Psalmists testified (Ps. 51, 147), and which the Lord Jesus Christ was sent by the Father to heal (Isa. 61:1), is not of a permanent or continuing nature (as is taught in some circles today), but rather it is one that leads to healing, restoration, and establishment in one's walk with the Savior. Christ was sent to heal the broken-hearted, and the healing that He brings is effectual. The brokenness is real, but also the consequent healing and establishment is real. “He restoreth my soul” (Ps. 23:3). “I was brought low, and He helped me” (Ps. 116:6). Brokenness speaks of where the gracious God of heaven finds men, but not of where He leaves them. “He healeth the broken in heart.”

Let it Rather be Healed. “A broken and a contrite heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise.” It is essential for the people of God, that when they are chastened of the Lord, that they lift up the hands that hang down and strengthen the feeble knees. There is no virtue in remaining in such a state of brokenness. To remain in such a condition will prove to bring reproach upon the Lord's name, as His end objective for His redeemed sons and daughters is not brokenness, but rather establishment in the faith. If the Lord did in fact despise this kind of brokenness, then there would be no hope for recovery and healing. But His tender regard for such broken ones is such that makes for healing and restoration as they continue to draw near unto Him.

In Conclusion. Infidels may scoff at the thought of Christ being a snare and a trap for them. “What have I to do with Him?”, they foolishly reason in their hearts. But such unbelieving ones must consider that Christ is “the image of the invisible God, the Firstborn of every creature:” and that “by Him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by Him, and for Him: and He is before all things, and by Him all things consist (hold together)” (Col. 1:15-17). Christ is the One to whom all men owe their very existence. ALL THINGS WERE MADE BY CHRIST, AND FOR CHRIST.

The Lord Jesus Christ is the One to whom all men and all things owe both their being and their present well being. God “created all things by Jesus Christ” (Eph. 3:9). Christ upholds “all things by the word of His power” (Heb. 1:3). Christ is “the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world” (1 Jn. 2:2). Therefore, if men think that they have the option of living in ignorance of Jesus Christ, even of Him who has created and sustained them, and has made abundant provision for their eternal well being, they have deceived themselves. Let those who stumble at Christ's words beware! If such ones do not repent, and obey the gospel, Christ shall assuredly become to them a snare and a trap. They shall find that, alas, He has become their enemy!

Christ is
a King
Reigning in
Righteousness

Isa. 32:1

BEHOLD I AND THE CHILDREN WHICH GOD HATH GIVEN ME

“Behold, I and the children whom the LORD hath given me are for signs and for wonders in Israel from the LORD of hosts, which dwelleth in mount Zion” (Isa. 8:18).

“For it became Him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings. For both He that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause He is not ashamed to call them brethren, Saying, I will declare Thy name unto My brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto Thee. And again, I will put My trust in Him. And again, BEHOLD I AND THE CHILDREN WHICH GOD HATH GIVEN ME” (Heb. 2:10-13).

“Behold, I and the children which God hath given Me.” These are children of which Christ is both the Begetter and the Firstborn. With such words as these shall the Son make a joyful confession to the Father when all the children of God have been brought safely home to glory. By this confession shall all, who are “accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead” (Lk. 20:35), be acknowledged as being a “purchased possession” (Eph. 1:14), and they shall live and walk in that blessed awareness throughout the ages to come. The redeemed sons and daughters of God shall be comprised of personalities who in this world were Jews and Gentiles, being representatives of every kindred, tongue, tribe, and nation. It shall be a number which no man can number.

An Innumerable Company. The Scripture gives repeated testimony to this innumerable company of redeemed personalities. To Abraham God said: “Look now toward heaven, and tell (count) the stars, if thou be able to number them: and He said unto him, So shall thy seed be” (Gen. 15:5). Again, to Abraham He declared: “That in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore” (Gen. 22:17). The writer of Hebrews also testifies of this multitudinous company in connection with Sara, Abraham’s wife: “Through faith also Sara herself received strength to conceive seed, and was delivered of a child when she was past age, because she judged Him faithful who had promised. Therefore sprang there even of one, and him (Abraham) as good as dead, so many as the stars of the sky in multitude, and as the sand which is by the sea shore innumerable” (Heb. 11:11-12).

The Free Gift Has Abounded unto Many. In his epistle to the Romans Paul writes: “But not as the offence, so also is the free gift. For if through the offence of one (Adam) many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one Man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many” (Rom. 5:15; see also verses 16-21). In the last day, when the final tally has been made, it will be evident to all that the grace of God shall have reaped an exceedingly abundant harvest, far surpassing the devastating effects of Adam’s transgression. “Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound!” (Rom. 5:20).

In the language of the Parable of the Sower, it shall be demonstrated in that day that the seed that was “received” “into the good ground” (Mt. 13:23) greatly outnumbered and triumphed over all the other seeds. And from the perspective of the Parable of the Tares of the Field it will become evident to all that the world is, in fact, a place where wheat is the primary crop that had been growing there, despite all appearances to the contrary. With such an enormous investment being made by the Godhead in this salvation, we could and should expect nothing less than this! If, in the reckoning of God, it was “too light a thing” (Isa. 49:6, ASV) for this salvation to include only “the tribes of Jacob” and “the preserved in Israel”, and not to include “the ends of the earth”, how much more shall it be counted by Him to be “too light a thing” for just a comparatively few to be saved? In matters such as these men must “judge not according to the appearance” (Jn. 7:24)!

A Great Multitude. In the Revelation, John testified: “After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the

throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands; and cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb” (Rev. 7:9-10). In fulfillment of the promise that God made to Abraham, this is a number that is “so many as the stars of the sky in multitude, and as the sand which is by the sea shore innumerable” (Heb. 11:12). Affirming the vastness of this number of redeemed personalities spoken of here, John was given to behold “**THAT GREAT CITY, THE HOLY JERUSALEM, DESCENDING OUT OF HEAVEN FROM GOD, HAVING THE GLORY OF GOD:** and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal” (Rev. 21:10-11). **AS INDIVIDUALS** the personalities who are part of this great city each reflect facets of the glory of God, but **TOGETHER** they reflect a completeness of that glory.

“Behold, I and the Children.” Here the Son is making confession of those who were not ashamed of Him, and of His words in this sinful and adulterous generation. He is confessing His identify with them, and their identity with Him before the Father and before the angels of God in Heaven. Of those who came out of great tribulation, and who have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb, the Lord Jesus Christ will freely declare to an assembled universe: “Behold, I and the children.” Of those who continued in the faith, grounded and settled, and were not moved away from the hope of the gospel, the Savior will confess: “Behold, I and the children whom God hath given Me.”

“Behold, I and the Children whom God hath given Me.” Though the Savior died having no earthly offspring (which thing was a matter of reproach in Israel), He nevertheless gave birth to a vast multitude of seed, “Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God” (Jn. 1:13). As Isaiah declared, Christ “shall see His seed” (Isa. 53:10), yea, and He does even now behold them.

The Children whom God hath given Me. Jesus said, “No man can come to Me, except the Father which hath sent Me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day. It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto Me” (Jn. 6:44-45; see Isa. 54:13). Again, He declared, “All that the Father giveth Me shall come to Me; and him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out” (Jn. 6:37). If men find within themselves a desire to come to the Jesus that is revealed in the Scripture, this is evidence that God has been working in their hearts, teaching them to value His beloved Son in the same way that He does. Let all such ones follow through and come to Jesus without delay!

In the opening words of his gospel, John writes: “He [the Lord Jesus Christ] came unto His own [the Jews], and His own received Him not. **BUT AS MANY AS RECEIVED HIM, TO THEM GAVE HE POWER TO BECOME THE SONS OF GOD, EVEN TO THEM THAT BELIEVE ON HIS NAME:** which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God” (Jn. 1:11-13). “. . . as many as received Him . . .” No more, no less. We therefore call upon you, our reader, to receive Him today!

Christ Addresses His Father in Psalm 22 in behalf of His Brethren

“I will declare Thy name unto My brethren: in the midst of the congregation will I praise Thee. Ye that fear the LORD, praise Him; all ye the seed of Jacob, glorify Him; and fear Him, all ye the seed of Israel. For He hath not despised nor abhorred the affliction of the Afflicted; neither hath He hid His face from Him; but when He cried unto Him, He heard. My praise shall be of Thee in the great congregation: I will pay My vows before them that fear Him. The meek shall eat and be satisfied: they shall praise the LORD that seek Him: your heart shall live for ever. All the ends of the world shall remember and turn unto the LORD: and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before Thee. For the kingdom is the LORD’s: and He is the Governor among the nations” (Ps. 22:22-28; comp. Isa. 8:18; Heb. 2:12-13).

TO THEM WHICH SAT IN THE REGION AND SHADOW OF DEATH LIGHT IS SPRUNG UP

“The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined” (Isa. 9:2).

“And leaving Nazareth, He came and dwelt in Capernaum, which is upon the sea coast, in the borders of Zabulon and Nephthalim: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, The land of Zabulon, and the land of Nephthalim, by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles; the people which sat in darkness saw great light; and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death light is sprung up” (Mt. 4:13-16).

The world is a morally dark place, where Satan, “the prince of the power of the air” holds captive “the children of disobedience” (Eph. 2:2). “The children of disobedience” are men who are “alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is within them, because of the blindness of their heart” (Eph. 4:18). Apart from divine intervention, they are hopelessly shut up to disobedience because of that alienation and the associated blindness of heart. All men, regardless of the extent of their involvement in sin’s overt expression, have had their beginnings in this morally dark region called “the land of the shadow of death”, where the light of God’s salvation in Christ has shined. But, bless God!, not all men have remained there.

Some men have come to the light, and have believed in the light. Some who had once walked in darkness, by the grace of God, have in truth become “children of light” (Jn. 12:36; Eph. 5:8; I Thess. 5:5). They have not hated the light, as do the wicked, but they have come to the light, “that their deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God” (Jn. 3:20-21). Jesus said, “I am the light of the world: he that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life” (Jn. 8:12). The light of life, of which the Savior spoke, is light that begets good hope and everlasting consolation, as it illumines eternal life, immortality, and the complete justification and restoration to God of men who were once hopelessly corrupted and defiled by their involvement with sin. Again, Jesus said, “I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on Me should not abide in darkness” (Jn. 12:46).

In generations such as the one in which we live, the children of light appear to be greatly outnumbered by the children of disobedience. The final tally, however, has not yet been made. In the end it shall become evident to all, that this world is in fact a wheat field, and not a tare field (see Mt. 13:24-30; 36-43). We would not expect anything less than this where the grace of God is reigning through righteousness, as Paul declared in the latter part of Romans 5. And it is God who has been “working salvation in the midst of the earth” (Ps. 74:12). Salvation has been uniquely God’s enterprise from start to finish. He will be glorified by both the quality and the quantity of those who have been made partakers of the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory. The final day will declare it. It shall be a number which no man can number from all kindreds of the earth.

Light is Sprung Up in the Region and Shadow of Death. This light is speaking of Christ Himself, and of His entrance into the world, when the fulness of the time had come. The Scripture declares: “There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light (the Lord Jesus Christ), that all men through Him might believe. He (John the Baptist) was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light. That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world” (Jn. 1:6-9). This light has now entered into believing men and women, and neither the darkness nor the prince of darkness is able to overpower it. Wherever the light of the gospel is shining, it exposes the darkness and its perpetrators for what and who they really are. And wherever men are found believing in the Light, they themselves have become “children of light, and the children of the

day” (I Th. 5:5). Jesus said that such believing ones are indeed “the light of the world” (Mt. 5:14).

The Light Shining Makes for Increased Accountability to God. “Then began He to upbraid the cities wherein most of His mighty works were done, because they repented not: Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works, which were done in you, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. But I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the day of judgment, than for you. And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be brought down to hell: for if the mighty works, which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. But I say unto you, That it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment, than for thee” (Mt. 11:20-24).

Matthew 4:13 tells us that Jesus left Nazareth, and “came and dwelt in Capernaum, which is upon the sea coast, in the borders of Zabulon and Nephthalim.” His extended time of dwelling and preaching in Capernaum and in the regions round about made for an increased accountability to God among the inhabitants living there with the expectancy that they would receive God’s Son, and believe on Him unto life everlasting.

Oh, that we had power to persuade men of the woeful and ill-boding consequences of living in ignorance of the Lord Jesus Christ! To reject Him is *not* to reject a way of life in this present world, but rather it is to reject “the Way, the Truth, and the Life” (Jn. 14:6). To reject the Son of God is to exclude oneself from the glorious destiny that has been prepared for redeemed personalities in “the world to come” (Heb. 2:5), and “in the ages to come” (Eph. 2:7).

Wherever gospel light has been shining it has served as a witness to men of God’s gracious intent to recover them from the snare of the Devil, regardless of whether the message is heartily received, or whether it is forthrightly rejected. “And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come” (Mt. 24:14). The preaching of the gospel is always accompanied by the divine expectation that men will repent, obey the gospel, and give themselves to a life of acceptable service to God and preparation for the world to come through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ.

An Apostolic Summary. “And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to Himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; to wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ’s stead, be ye reconciled to God” (II Cor. 5:18-20). “The light of the glorious gospel of Christ” (II Cor. 4:4) shall continue to shine in the darkness until the time when the door of salvation shall be forever closed! Will you now come to the light that your deeds may be made manifest that they are wrought in God? Or will you be among those who hate the light, and refuse to come to the light? (see Jn. 3:19-21). In this matter there can be no neutrality!

“He answered and said unto them, Well hath Esaiás prophesied of you hypocrites, as it is written, This people honoureth Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me. Howbeit in vain do they worship Me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men” (Mk. 7:6-7).

UNTO US A CHILD IS BORN

“For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The Mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this” (Isa. 9:6-7).

God’s Holy Child. “The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord, and against his Christ. For of a truth against Thy holy Child Jesus, whom Thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together, For to do whatsoever Thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done. And now, Lord, behold their threatenings: and grant unto Thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak Thy Word, By stretching forth Thine hand to heal; and that signs and wonders may be done by the name of Thy holy Child Jesus” (Acts 4:26-30). Let us give heed that we may be found among those who have honored God’s holy Child, Jesus, and NOT among the number that has gathered themselves against Him.

“And the angel (Gabriel) answered and said unto her (Mary), the Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God” (Lk. 1:35). In this utterance by the angel Gabriel we see divinely and succinctly expressed the joining together of God and man. This was no ordinary conception, as the Child was conceived in Mary by the Holy Spirit. And this was no ordinary child, although He was a child. This supernatural conception was expressed in John’s Gospel with the following words: “And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth” (Jn. 1:14).

That Holy Thing. Jesus is called by the angel “that holy thing”, and later called by the Apostle God’s “holy Child.” In this connection let us consider that the Lord Jesus Christ did not identify with our involvement with sin, but, nevertheless He did assuredly identify with our manhood sufficiently to lay down His life for us, to make atonement for sins, and in His resurrection to become our great High Priest, and the Beginning of a new creation, a new race of redeemed sons and daughters, that shall dwell for ever in the world to come. Those partaking of this new creation have been delivered by God from the power of darkness, and translated into the kingdom of His dear Son.

His Blessed Name. “His Name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace.” Each one of these names are faithful representations of who God’s Son is. None of His names are exaggerative. Each of His names are as a precious and marvelous vista, upon which believing men and women may gaze, and be transformed into His image and likeness. Each of Christ’s names are declaring to men who He is in truth. **Christ is Wonderful**, and He is to believing men much more than heart can wish. He satisfies the longing soul. He fills the hungry soul with good things. **Christ is the Counsellor.** He has been made unto us Wisdom. **“Christ, the Wisdom of God”** (I Cor. 1:24). **Christ is the Mighty God**, by whom all things were created (Col. 1:16), and in whom all things consist, or hold together (Col. 1:17). **Christ is the Everlasting Father.** He is present begetting sons and daughters who shall live and reign in the ages to come. **Christ is the Prince of Peace.** One of the fundamental effects of His dominion is peace, even the peace of God: peace that shall completely subdue, and make a full end of, the maliciousness and animosity that has been caused by the entrance of sin into the world. From Jesus proceeds peace that renders swords and spears entirely obsolete, speaking in a figure used by the Prophets. The nature of His peace makes for divine productivity, in which redeemed men and women are, and shall be engaged, both now and in the world to come.

His Government and Peace. The divine government has been entrusted into the hands of God's beloved Son, even His "holy Child Jesus" (Acts 4:27, 30). The objective of this government is to bring God's redeemed sons and daughters safely to the world to come in the face of the fiercest of enemies and grievously troublesome oppositions. For those who submit to Christ's government, their portion shall be peace, even "the peace of God, which passes all understanding." "Of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this" (Isa. 9:7).

But, alas, for those who refuse to obey the Son, the Scripture promises nothing to such ones other than unending sorrow and woe. "Tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile" (Rom. 2:9).

The Significance of the Birth of Christ for Men. When considered in the context of the Scripture, the birth of the Savior is regarded as an exceedingly joyous event because of its marvelous implications for all, and bearing upon, men. "And the angel said unto them, FEAR NOT: FOR, BEHOLD, I BRING YOU GOOD TIDINGS OF GREAT JOY, WHICH SHALL BE TO ALL PEOPLE. FOR UNTO YOU IS BORN THIS DAY IN THE CITY OF DAVID A SAVIOUR, WHICH IS CHRIST THE LORD" (Lk. 2:10-11). The great joy of which the angel spoke is a substantive wellspring of hope when properly considered by men as it is directly associated with their entrance into life eternal and with their participation in a dominion and reign in the ages to come. The eternal life is in Christ, and the dominion is with Christ.

From Bethlehem Ephratah came forth a Savior, the Man Christ Jesus, "whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting" (Mic. 5:2). He was chosen of God to effect a complete reversal of the Edenic curse by His incomprehensibly great suffering for sin, and consequent resurrection from the dead. "Life and immortality" have now become exceedingly precious household words among believing men and women, as they have been "brought to light through" the proclamation of "the gospel" (II Tim. 1:10). That which appeared to be hopelessly broken off in Eden's garden has now, by God's grace, been more than fully restored in "the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory" (II Tim. 2:10).

"Unto us a Child is born,
Christians, hear the story;
In this world our flesh is worn,
By Christ, the Lord of glory.

"Jesu, born of virgin maid,
In Thy visitation
Show Thy mercy, Lord, on us,
And grant us Thy salvation.

"In a manger He is laid,
Where the kine are sleeping;
Angels recognize their Lord,
And o'er Him watch are keeping.

"Alpha and Omega, Thine
Be this day our chorus;
King of kings, and Lord of lords,
Now let Thy grace be o'er us."

—Author Unknown

"Haughty Herod trembles now,
Great his fear and sorrow;
Bethl'em's infants he will slay
Before the dawn tomorrow.

"In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judæa, And saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. For this is he that was spoken of by the prophet Esaias, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make His paths straight" (Mt. 3:1-3).

Christ is
a Leader and
Commander to the
People
Isa. 55:4

A REMNANT SHALL RETURN

“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” (Isa. 10:20-21).

“Esaiaas also crieth concerning Israel, Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, a remnant shall be saved: For he will finish the work, and cut it short in righteousness: because a short work will the Lord make upon the earth. And as Esaiaas said before, Except the Lord of Sabaoth had left us a seed, we had been as Sodoma, and been made like unto Gomorrha” (Rom. 9:27-29).

“And the remnant that is escaped of the house of Judah shall again take root downward, and bear fruit upward: for out of Jerusalem shall go forth a remnant, and they that escape out of mount Zion: the zeal of the LORD of hosts shall do this” (Isa. 37:31-32). “The LORD said, Verily it shall be well with thy remnant; verily I will cause the enemy to entreat thee well in the time of evil and in the time of affliction” (Jer. 15:11). “For thus saith the LORD; Sing with gladness for Jacob, and shout among the chief of the nations: publish ye, praise ye, and say, O LORD, save thy people, the remnant of Israel” (Jer. 31:7). “Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace” (Rom. 11:5). “. . . for in mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance, as the LORD hath said, and in the remnant whom the LORD shall call” (Joel 2:32). “I will surely assemble, O Jacob, all of thee; I will surely gather the remnant of Israel” (Mic. 2:12).

As can be seen in these and in other Scriptures, God is frequently represented as favorably working with a remnant of His people. “The remnant that is escaped . . .” “The remnant shall return . . .” “A remnant shall be saved,” etc. Among other things it seems that men should learn from this to prove their own selves by the Word of God, and to examine themselves to see whether they be in the faith, as the Apostle Paul has exhorted us to do (see II Cor. 13:5). Those who have passed victoriously through the waters of trial and adversity and are yet continuing steadfastly in the faith of Christ may assure their hearts before Him that they are indeed included in this remnant.

A Remnant among both Jew and Gentile. “In that day will I raise up the tabernacle of David that is fallen, and close up the breaches thereof; and I will raise up his ruins, and I will build it as in the days of old: THAT THEY MAY POSSESS THE REMNANT OF EDOM, AND OF ALL THE HEATHEN, WHICH ARE CALLED BY MY NAME, saith the LORD that doeth this” (Amos 9:11-12). This word of the Prophet Amos was one of the many decisive arguments that were brought forth by the Apostles at the Jerusalem conference, recorded in Acts chapter 15. At that gathering it became clear to all that were in attendance that God had opened the door of faith to the Gentiles. In the prophecy recorded in Amos 9 the Holy Spirit is drawing attention to the remnant, not only of the Jews, but also “of all the heathen (Gentiles)”.

Our Inclusion in this Remnant. Our divine election is presently in the process of demonstration before men and angels, and it is clarified to us by our personal identification with the Lord Jesus Christ, even by our faith in Him, and by our obedience to the gospel. The remnant consists of all those who have believed on the Name of God’s Son, Jesus Christ, and who are continuing steadfastly in the faith. The remnant includes all those with whom God is presently working salvationally (see Ps. 74:12), and to whom faith is indeed “the substance of things hoped for”, and “the evidence of things not seen” (Heb. 11:1).

The Remnant in Christ’s Parables. From another perspective, the remnant speaks of the seed that fell on the good ground in the parable of the sower (Mt. 13:3-9; 18-23). It speaks of the “good seed” in the parable of the tares of the field (Mt. 13:24-30; 13:36-43). The remnant is comprised of all “the good fish” in the parable of the net that was cast into the sea (Mt. 13:47-50). And it is represented by the five

wise virgins in the parable of the ten virgins (Mt. 25:1-13). On an individual basis the remnant describes a man who found treasure hid in a field, and sold all that he had to buy the field where the treasure was (Mt. 13:44).

Fleeing to Jesus for Refuge. In coming to Jesus to receive the salvation that God is providing in Him, men must come as though it depends entirely up to them to get to Him and to get into Him. Men must flee to Jesus as though they are the manslayer fleeing unto the provided city of refuge (see Num. 35; Josh. 20; Heb. 6:18-20). This is no time for men to carelessly think that God is somehow going to bring them to Jesus in His own time. The preaching of the gospel apprises men of the exceedingly grim prospect that lies before them apart from Christ, and also of the blessed place of refuge that God has graciously provided in the Lord Jesus Christ, who is our City of Refuge.

Let us therefore work out our own salvation with fear and trembling, “for it is God which worketh in” us “both to will and to do of His good pleasure” (Phil. 2:12-13). The knowledge and assurance of God’s salvation in Christ [and of being elected of God, thus being included in this remnant] are imparted to men as they give themselves to believing the record which God has given of His Son. “The full assurance of faith” (Heb. 10:22), “the full assurance of hope” (Heb. 6:11), and “the full assurance of understanding” (Col. 2:2) are for those who have given “all diligence to make” their “calling and election sure” (see II Pet. 1:10).

“Awake, O Zion’s daughter,
Awake from sorrow’s night;
Come forth in all thy beauty,
Arrayed in garments bright;
Why should thy vales be silent?
Why should thy harps be still,
When He, the Lord, is coming,
Thy soul with joy to fill?

“His arm thy foes shall conquer,
His power their strength shall bind,
And they shall fly in terror,
Like chaff before the wind,
While thou thyself triumphant,
Upon the earth shall stand,
The light of every nation,
The pride of every land.”

“Thou hast not been forsaken,
Tho’ long by foes oppressed;
Thy tears were not unheeded,
By Him who loves thee best;
Oh, look above the shadows
For Him who yet shall reign;
Look up with eyes expectant,
Thy trust is not in vain.

“Awake, awake, O Zion’s daughter,
Awake from sorrow’s night;
Come forth in all thy beauty,
Arrayed in garments bright.
—Fannie Crosby

“And He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up: and, as His custom was, He went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and stood up for to read. And there was delivered unto Him the book of the prophet Esaias. And when He had opened the book, He found the place where it was written, The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He hath anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor; He hath sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord” (Lk. 4:16-19).

Christ is
a Light of the
Gentiles
Isa. 42:6; 49:6

CHRIST, A BRANCH GROWING OUT OF THE ROOT OF JESSE

“AND there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots: And the spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD; And shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the LORD: and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears: But with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth: and He shall smite the earth with the rod of His mouth, and with the breath of His lips shall he slay the wicked. And righteousness shall be the girdle of His loins, and faithfulness the girdle of His reins. . . . They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea. And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek: and His rest shall be glorious. And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall set his hand again the second time to recover the remnant of his people, which shall be left, from Assyria, and from Egypt, and from Pathros, and from Cush, and from Elam, and from Shinar, and from Hamath, and from the islands of the sea. And He shall set up an Ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth” (Isa. 11:1-12).

The Spirit of the LORD Shall Rest upon Him. As in several other places in Isaiah’s prophecy, Messiah is positively identified by a description of His Person. “The Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon Him.” “The Spirit of” wisdom, understanding, counsel, might, knowledge and fear of the LORD shall clearly distinguish Him from all other of the sons of men. “Righteousness shall be the girdle of His loins, and faithfulness the girdle of His reins.” Oh, what a blessed Saviour that God has given us! He is precisely such an One as we desperately need. He is “glorious in His apparel, traveling in the greatness of His strength”. He is “mighty to save” (Isa. 63:1). “He is altogether lovely” (Song 5:16). And most importantly, God is well pleased with Him (Mt. 3:17; 12:18; 17:5; II Pet. 1:17).

Godly men and women possess some of these character traits enumerated here in measure, to be sure, but with the Lord Jesus Christ, all of His excellencies are “as the sun shineth in its strength” (Rev. 1:16). In the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ are seen, without measure, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, and the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD.

Unto the Son God said, “Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, even Thy God, hath anointed Thee with the oil of gladness above Thy fellows” (Heb. 1:9; cf. Ps. 45:7). In Jesus there is no inconsistency, diminishment, or disappointment in His blessed Person. In every matter Christ is precisely what the Holy Scripture represents Him to be, with “no variableness, neither shadow of turning” (Jas. 1:17). “None of them that trust in Him shall be desolate” (Ps. 34:22). They shall instead, in the words of the Psalmist, be “fat and flourishing” (Ps. 92:14).

In Him Shall the Gentiles Trust. “And again, Esaias saith, There shall be a root of Jesse, and He that shall rise to reign over the Gentiles; in Him shall the Gentiles trust” (Rom. 15:12). Gentile believers in Christ must not take for granted their inclusion in the purpose of God in salvation. They must rather rejoice in the knowledge of their inclusion, as a pearl of great price that they have been given of God to find. In the early part of the book of Acts the disciples were “preaching the Word to none but the Jews only” (Acts 11:19). Even for the Apostles the matter of God’s acceptance of the Gentiles was something that was hidden from them at the first. Peter had to be persuaded of God by a vision of unclean beasts and creeping things that the door of salvation had indeed been opened to the Gentiles, which vision led to Peter going to Joppa, to the household of Cornelius, a Gentile, to preach the glad tidings of the gospel (Acts 10). It was not until the Jerusalem conference, recorded in Acts 15, that there was complete consensus among the Apostles with regard to the acceptance of the Gentiles by God.

Men must come to rightly consider that these epochal events recorded in Acts, and the unfolding of them, had decisive relevance to their inclusion in, or exclusion from, the purpose of God in salvation. Let both Jew and Gentile revisit the household of Cornelius (Acts 10) and the Jerusalem conference (Acts 15), retracing in their own minds and hearts the events that occurred both there, and in the intervening chapters. And then let them gaze with wonder upon the marvelous works of God in His dealings with both Jew and Gentile, as Paul did in his consideration of the branches of the olive tree in Romans 11. “For God hath concluded them all [both Jew and Gentile] in unbelief, that He might have mercy upon all. O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out!” (Rom. 11:32-33).

Peter’s Epochal Declaration. “Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that GOD IS NO RESPECTER OF PERSONS: BUT IN EVERY NATION HE THAT FEARETH HIM, AND WORKETH RIGHTEOUSNESS [REGARDLESS OF BEING JEW OR GENTILE], IS ACCEPTED WITH HIM” (Acts 10:34-35). The inclusion of the Gentiles in the purpose of God in salvation is something that was promised from the very beginning, but remained hidden until the time appointed by God, Father. To Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, God declared that a “Seed” would come from their loins, in which all the families of the earth would be blessed (see Gen. 12:3; 18:18; 22:18; 26:4; 28:14; Ps. 72:17; Acts 3:25-26; Rom. 4:11; Gal. 3:8, 16, 28; Col. 3:11; Rev. 7:9). “Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. HE SAITH NOT, AND TO SEEDS, AS OF MANY; BUT AS OF ONE, AND TO THY SEED, WHICH IS CHRIST” (Gal. 3:16).

The Stem and the Root of Jesse. In this prophecy Messiah (Christ) is declared to be a Rod that comes forth from the stem of Jesse (David’s father) as well as Himself being the Root of Jesse. What is being said here is similar to the expression which appears in the Revelation, where the Saviour declares: “I am the Root and the Offspring of David” (Rev. 22:16). Christ being the Word, by whom all things were created, both Jesse and David proceeded forth and came from Him. But as the Son of man, Christ was a Rod which came forth from the stem of Jesse, and He was also the Offspring of David. Thus, as the Son of God, they came from Him, and as the Son of man, He came forth from them. Truly, “great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory” (I Tim. 3:16).

*“Veil’d in flesh the Godhead see;
Hail th’ incarnate Deity
Pleased, as man, with men to dwell,
Jesus, our Emmanuel!”*

—Charles Wesley

“Now I say that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers: And that the Gentiles might glorify God for His mercy; as it is written, For this cause I will confess to thee among the Gentiles, and sing unto Thy name. And again he saith, Rejoice, ye Gentiles, with His people. And again, Praise the Lord, all ye Gentiles; and laud Him, all ye people. And again, Esaias saith, There shall be a root of Jesse, and He that shall rise to reign over the Gentiles; in Him shall the Gentiles trust”

(Rom. 15:8-12).

BEHOLD, GOD IS MY SALVATION

“And in that day thou shalt say, O LORD, I will praise Thee: though Thou wast angry with me, Thine anger is turned away, and Thou comfortedst me. Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust, and not be afraid: for the LORD JEHOVAH is my strength and my song; He also is become my salvation. Therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation. And in that day shall ye say, Praise the LORD, call upon His name, declare His doings among the people, make mention that His name is exalted. Sing unto the LORD; for He hath done excellent things: this is known in all the earth. Cry out and shout, thou inhabitant of Zion: for great is the Holy One of Israel in the midst of thee” (Isa. 12:1-6).

Behold, God is My Salvation. This expression of joyful praise to the Lord Jehovah is owing entirely to the fact that sins have been taken away by the Lord Jesus Christ. This is the same God who cast our first parents out of the Garden of Eden, who sent the flood waters upon the world of ungodly sinners, and who destroyed the cities of the plain, including Sodom and Gomorrah, by fire. Indeed, God is a God of judgment and He is uncompromising in His hatred of sin and rebellion. He cannot deny Himself. But for those who have availed themselves of His great salvation in the Lord Jesus Christ, His anger is marvelously turned away from them. Those who have been baptized into Christ, believing upon His Name, and who are abiding in Him, are able to confess in truth with confidence: “Behold, God is my salvation!” Those who shall be “accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection of the dead” (Lk. 20:35) shall all confess with one accord: “Behold, God is my salvation!”

Our salvation has its origin in God Himself, and was purposed and determined by Him on the trestle board of eternity. God purposed salvation, even before there was a need for it, in order to bring to light aspects of His glorious and holy character that had theretofore been unperceived by “the principalities and powers in heavenly places” (Eph. 3:10-11). Such things as His manifold wisdom, His grace, His mercy, and His long-suffering are now being put on full display in “the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory” (II Tim. 2:10). “For God is my King of old, working salvation in the midst of the earth” (Ps. 74:12).

Jesus Christ is God’s Salvation. God’s salvation is embodied in a Person, namely, the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ. As God Himself declared to the Son through Isaiah, “I will also give Thee for a light to the Gentiles, THAT THOU MAYEST BE MY SALVATION UNTO THE END OF THE EARTH” (Isa. 49:6). God needed Jesus in order to “save His people from their sins” (Mt. 1:21), to deliver them “from the wrath to come” (I Th. 1:10), and to bring “many sons unto glory” (Heb. 2:10). GOD NEEDED ONLY JESUS to implement this salvational work. “God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them” (II Cor. 5:19). “The Father sent the Son [and none other] to be the Saviour of the world” (I Jn. 4:14). God “sent His Son to be the propitiation [covering] for our sins” (I Jn. 4:10).

God is My Salvation. Every man and woman that is in Christ, having obeyed the gospel, and believed upon the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, is personally and intimately related to the living God. This is at least a significant part of what is involved in God’s declaration in the New Covenant: “THEY SHALL ALL KNOW ME, FROM THE LEAST TO THE GREATEST” (Jer. 31:31-34). Jesus said, “He that hath My commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me: and he that loveth Me shall be loved of My Father, and I will love him, and will manifest Myself to him” (Jn. 14:21). Again He said, “If a man love Me, he will keep My words: and My Father will love him, and We will come unto him, and make Our abode with him” (v. 23). “For the Father himself loveth you, because ye have loved Me, and have believed that I came out from God” (Jn. 16:27). We are speaking here of a substantive relation, that is had by faith in Christ, not one that is merely professed. Let all examine themselves with regard to this matter, to prove whether this indeed be the case with them! And then let them confess with great gratitude and humbleness of heart: Behold, God is my salvation!

God is Become My Salvation. “The LORD is my strength and song, and is become my salvation” (Ps. 118:14). “I will praise Thee: for Thou hast heard me, and art become my salvation” (Ps. 118:21). “Behold,

God is my salvation; I will trust, and not be afraid: for the LORD JEHOVAH is my strength and my song; He also is become my salvation” (Isa. 12:2). At our initial entrance into Christ, let us freely confess, that God is become my salvation! In those times when He has restored our souls, and we have been “confirmed” (I Cor. 1:8) once again while being yet in our pilgrim journey, let us shout for joy, Behold, God is become my salvation! And when we are given to perceive anew, in the words of the hymn writer, that “His smile is upon me, the valley is past,” let us leap for joy, and rejoice with great gladness of heart, and exclaim, Behold, God is my salvation!

“1 Awake, and sing the song
Of Moses and the Lamb;
Wake every heart and every tongue,
To praise the Savior's name.

“2 Sing of his dying love,
Sing of his rising power,
Sing how he intercedes above,
For those whose sins he bore.

“3 Sing till we feel our hearts
Ascending with our tongues,
Sing till the love of sin departs,
And grace inspires our songs.

“4 Sing on your Heavenly way,
Ye ransomed sinners, sing;
Sing on, rejoicing every day
In Christ the eternal King.

“5 Sing till you hear Christ say,
Your sins are all forgiven;
Sing on rejoicing every day,
Till we all meet in Heaven.

“6 Soon shall ye hear Christ say,
"Ye blessed children, come:"
Soon will he call you hence away,
And take his wanderers home.”

—William Hammond, 1745

“Then He said unto them, O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken: Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into His glory? And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, He expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning Himself” (Lk. 24:25-27).

Christ is
a Precious
Corner Stone
Isa. 28:16

ELIAKIM THE SON OF HILKIAH, A TYPE OF CHRIST

“And it shall come to pass in that day, that I will call my servant Eliakim the son of Hilkiyah: And I will clothe him with thy robe, and strengthen him with thy girdle, and I will commit thy government into his hand: and he shall be a father to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and to the house of Judah. And the key of the house of David will I lay upon his shoulder; so he shall open, and none shall shut; and he shall shut, and none shall open. And I will fasten him as a nail in a sure place; and he shall be for a glorious throne to his father’s house. And they shall hang upon him all the glory of his father’s house, the offspring and the issue, all vessels of small quantity, from the vessels of cups, even to all the vessels of flagons. In that day, saith the LORD of hosts, shall the nail that is fastened in the sure place be removed, and be cut down, and fall; and the burden that was upon it shall be cut off: for the LORD hath spoken it” (Isa. 22:20-25).

We have been provoked by the bold prophetic statements regarding Eliakim to look into the significance of his person in light of what is said of him here. We ask our readers to judge and prove this matter for themselves. Similar to Melchizedek (see Gen. 14:18-20; Ps. 110:4; Heb. 5:6, 10; 6:20; 7:1-28), very little is known of the person of Eliakim the son of Hilkiyah, except that he evidently is a foreshadowing of the Lord Jesus Christ. As the Holy Spirit wrote him up by the pen of the Prophet Isaiah, Eliakim was called of God (Isa. 22:20; comp. Heb. 5:10). In accordance with the Spirit’s editing, no sin was recorded against him (Isa. 22:20-25; comp. II Cor. 5:21; I Pet. 2:22). He was God’s servant (Isa. 22:20; comp. Isa. 42:1). He was clothed and strengthened of God (Isa. 22:21; comp. Isa. 59:17). The government over God’s people was committed into his hand (Isa. 22:21; comp. Isa. 9:6-7). He was made to be father to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and of the house of Judah (Isa. 22:23; comp. Isa. 9:6). He was fastened as a nail in a sure place (Isa. 22:23; comp. Col. 3:3). He was to be a glorious throne to His father’s house (Isa. 22:23; comp. Ps. 89:27-29; 110:1-3). He was given to open, so that no man can shut, and shut, so that no man can open (Isa. 22:22; comp. Rev. 3:7).

All the offspring, issue, and vessels were made to hang upon him. Everything about God’s eternal purpose in Christ is centered in Christ, and is dependent upon Christ for its implementation. But the time would come when he would be cut down, and fall, and the burden that was hanging upon him would be cut off (Isa. 22:25). In the case of the Lord Jesus Christ, He was “cut off out of the land of the living” (Isa. 53:8). Daniel also prophesied, centuries before the crucifixion of Christ, that “Messiah shall be cut off, but not for Himself” (Dan. 9:26). He was cut off from the living God in our stead, and we were cut off in Him from our former conversation lived in this present evil world. Christ was raised from the dead, never to die again, and we, who have obeyed the gospel, have risen from the dead as new creatures in Christ.

The Identification of the Vessels. All the offspring, issue, and vessels, and the burden that were hanging upon him would be cut off. In Hebrews we are apprised of the need, not only for the people to be cleansed, but also for the tabernacle, and the vessels of the ministry, which were “patterns of things in the heavens” (Heb. 9:23). “Moreover he (Moses) sprinkled with blood both the tabernacle, and all the vessels of the ministry. And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission. IT WAS THEREFORE NECESSARY THAT THE PATTERNS OF THINGS IN THE HEAVENS SHOULD BE PURIFIED WITH THESE; BUT THE HEAVENLY THINGS THEMSELVES WITH BETTER SACRIFICES THAN THESE. For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us” (Heb. 9:21-24).

The Identification of this Burden. Included in this burden, to be sure, were the sins of the world and the sins of His people. To the God of heaven, these sins were as a heavy burden that needed to be borne forever away from His presence by One that was able. They had to be borne by One who would

take the responsibility for them. The Lord Jesus Christ, by “His own Self” bore “our sins in His own body on the tree, that we being dead to sins, might live unto righteousness, by whose stripes” we “were healed” (I Pet. 2:24). The Prophet Isaiah, speaking metonymically, declares of Him: “Surely He (Christ) hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows” (Isa. 53:4). [Our sins and iniquities were indeed the source and cause of all of our griefs and sorrows.]. And John the Baptist, in order that Christ might be made manifest to Israel (Jn. 1:31), proclaimed: “Behold, the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world” (Jn. 1:29).

While the vessels, cups, and flagons seem to prefigure, in part at least, the means (as represented in the tabernacle service) that God would use in bringing men back to Himself, the offspring and the issue appear to foreshadow the nature of men who were defiled by sin, even the part of man from which the sin proceeds. As God reckons things, the Lord Jesus Christ put away that part of us as well in His death, burial, and resurrection. Our sins were not only taken away by Christ, but we, who have believed on Him, also were made “dead to sins, that we should live unto righteousness”, as Peter declares in his first epistle. From God’s perspective our sins have been blotted out as a thick cloud by the sufferings of Christ. They have been cast into the sea of God’s forgetfulness. From faith’s perspective, the sinful nature has been rendered ineffectual by the death of Christ, in order that men may live unto righteousness, even now in the remainder of their time in the flesh. (We encourage our readers to earnestly consider this matter, and search it out for themselves.)

Christ Bore Our Sins, and He Bore them Away. It was necessary that Christ take the responsibility for our sins, bearing them in His own body, and also that He bear them away from the presence of the Lord forever. We see this graphically illustrated in the two goats that were offered for an atonement in Leviticus chapter 16. The one goat was “for the LORD”, and the other was “the scapegoat” (Lev. 16:8), each of which were chosen by the casting of lots. The goat that was “for the LORD” [i.e., “the goat of the sin offering” “for the people”] was killed, and its blood was brought within the vail, and sprinkled upon the mercy seat, and before the mercy seat seven times. But of the scapegoat it is written: “And Aaron shall lay both his hands upon the head of the live goat, and confess over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins, putting them upon the head of the goat, and shall send him away by the hand of a fit man into the wilderness: and the goat shall bear upon him all their iniquities unto a land not inhabited: and he shall let go the goat in the wilderness” (Lev. 16:21-22). Both of the goats together were foreshadowing somewhat of the enormity of what was accomplished in the sufferings of Christ.

The Circumcision Made Without Hands. A remarkable parallel consideration to these matters is found in Paul’s epistle to the Colossians. There the Apostle declares, with greater clarity and precision, the same blessed reality with regard to Christ’s effectual dealing with sin. “For in Him (Jesus Christ) dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. And you are complete in Him, which is the Head of all principality and power: IN WHOM ALSO YOU ARE CIRCUMCISED WITH THE CIRCUMCISION MADE WITHOUT HANDS, IN PUTTING OFF THE BODY OF THE SINS OF THE FLESH BY THE CIRCUMCISION OF CHRIST [“by stripping off the corrupt nature by the circumcision performed by the Messiah”, ISV]: buried with Him in baptism, wherein also you are risen with Him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised Him from the dead. And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath He (God, the Father) quickened together with Him (Christ), having forgiven you all trespasses; blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to His cross; and having spoiled principalities and powers, He made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it” (Col. 2:9-15).

In addition, let us consider that Paul joins together the truth of the circumcision of Christ with our baptism (immersion) into Christ. A person participates in this circumcision when he or she is baptized

into Christ. As God views the matter, both sin and the sinful nature have been removed by the sufferings of Christ and by His resurrection from the dead. The believer in Christ is called upon to reckon by faith upon this blessed reality for the remainder of his or her time in the flesh. “Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God. For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace” (Rom. 6:11-14).

Some Comparisons between Eliakim and Christ

<i>Compare</i>	Eliakim	Christ
Called of God	Isa. 22:20	Heb. 5:5-6, 10
God’s Servant	Isa. 22:20	Isa. 42:1; 49:3-6; 52:13
Clothed and Strengthened of God	Isa. 22:21	Isa. 11:5; 59:17
The Divine Government Committed to Both	Isa. 22:21	Isa. 9:6-7; Psalms 2, 89, 110
Made to be a Father	Isa. 22:23	Isa. 8:18; 9:6
Fastened in a Sure Place	Isa. 22:23	Col. 3:3; Acts 3:20-21
A Glorious Throne	Isa. 22:23	Ps. 89:27-29; 110:1-3
Given Power to Open and Shut	Isa. 22:22	Rev. 1:18; 3:7; I Cor. 16:9
Sinless, by Non-imputation, or in Actuality	Isa. 22:20-25	II Cor. 5:21; I Pet. 2:22

(Chart, Eliakim and Christ Compared)

“And when they had appointed him a day, there came many to him into his lodging; to whom he expounded and testified the kingdom of God, persuading them concerning Jesus, both out of the law of Moses, and out of the prophets, from morning till evening. And some believed the things which were spoken, and some believed not. And when they agreed not among themselves, they departed, after that Paul had spoken one word, Well spake the Holy Ghost by Esaias the prophet unto our fathers, Saying, Go unto this people, and say, Hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and not perceive: For the heart of this people is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they closed; lest they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them. Be it known therefore unto you, that the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles, and that they will hear it” (Acts 28:23-28).

Christ is
a King Ruling with
Princes

Isa. 32:1

THE GOSPEL FEAST PREPARED BEFORE THE FACE OF ALL PEOPLE

“And in this mountain shall the LORD of hosts make unto all people a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined. And he will destroy in this mountain the face of the covering cast over all people, and the vail that is spread over all nations. He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from off all faces; and the rebuke of his people shall he take away from off all the earth: for the LORD hath spoken it. And it shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us: this is the LORD; we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation” (Isa. 25:6-9).

A Feast of Fat Things and Wines on the Lees. Such prophetically sublime expressions as “a feast of fat things”, “a feast of wines on the lees, well refined”, “He will swallow up death with victory”, etc., are summoning our minds and hearts upwards to comprehend some of the blessed effects of God’s salvation in Christ Jesus. Everything pertaining to this great salvation is conducive to rejoicing with “joy unspeakable, and full of glory” (I Pet. 1:8). In God’s Presence there is fullness of joy, and at His right hand there are pleasures for evermore (see Ps. 16:11). These are joys and pleasures that God has purposed to impart to redeemed personalities in the ages to come. We, who are in Christ Jesus, now have a foretaste of this festal joy!

In this present world feasts and wines serve the purpose of assisting men in forgetting, for the moment, the miseries and toil associated with this present world. By way of contrast, the feast of fat things and the wines on the lees, well refined, prophesied here by Isaiah, shall marvelously displace all the cares and woes associated with this present life in the flesh. Those who are in Christ Jesus have a blessed foretaste of this now in the present time, as they walk in the Spirit, and let the Word of Christ dwell in them richly in all wisdom. The partakers of the salvation that is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory shall in like manner be made to forget all of their sorrow, grief, and vexations, forever.

The ones for whom this feast has been prepared are the same ones who had once dwelt in the land of the shadow of death, even those who had “sinned, and come short of the glory of God” (Rom. 3:23). But, praise be to God, they have now been “delivered” “from the power of darkness, and “translated” “into the kingdom of” God’s “dear Son” (Col. 1:13). They have been “predestinated” by God the Father “unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself” (Eph. 1:5). They now rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory, though betimes they are in heaviness through manifold temptations.

This is Our God; We Have Waited for Him! The Prophet Isaiah is anticipating here the blissfully gratifying response of redeemed personalities to the consummation of their salvation at the appearing of the Lord Jesus Christ “in His glory” (Mt. 25:31). Ecstatically they shall exclaim to all that are within the sound of their voice: “This is our God; we have waited for Him. And He will save us! This is the LORD; we have waited for Him, we will be glad and rejoice in His salvation!” Let us both live and wait in joyful anticipation of the Saviour’s appearing. “We know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is” (I Jn. 3:2).

He will Swallow up Death in Victory. Now in the present time the Lord Jesus Christ has indeed “abolished death,” and has “brought life and immortality to light through the gospel” (II Tim. 1:10). Prior to the Word being made flesh, and dwelling among us (Jn. 1:14), eternal life and immortality were not “household words” among the sons of men, as they are now “in these last days” (Heb. 1:1-2). Such words were not part of men’s articulable vocabulary. But now that the Saviour has come, we, who are in Christ, are able to speak of eternal life and eternal things as matters that we sense and

know, by God's grace, that we are knowledgeable of, and as things that are very near and dear to us. By faith in God through the Lord Jesus Christ we have been "enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good Word of God, and the powers of the world to come" (Heb. 6:4-5). Those who believe in God's only begotten Son shall not perish, but have everlasting life. God has given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has this eternal life, and he who does not have the Son does not have life, but is abiding in death (see Jn. 3:14-17; I Jn. 5:11-12).

Some Concluding Remarks. In some concluding remarks we would be careful to say that the gospel of Christ is a proclamation of both "mercy AND truth", and of "righteousness AND peace" (see Ps. 85:10; 89:14). In the Scripture, both "mercy AND judgment" unmistakably characterize the God who is the Author of salvation (see Ps. 101:1; Isa. 30:18; Hos. 12:6; Mt. 23:23; Jas. 2:13, etc.). These divine characteristics are in perfect harmony with one another, and even rejoice together, except when it comes to the matter of sinful men being received again into the Presence of the God, "whose name is Holy" (Isa. 57:15).

It is only in the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ that believing men and women can without question be received back again into God's Presence and fellowship. It was Christ who was made to be sin for us, even Him who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him (II Cor. 5:21). It is Christ who "is the Propitiation for our sins" (I Jn. 2:2). It is Christ Himself who bore "our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, might live unto righteousness" (I Pet. 2:24). It is Christ who, now being seated at the right hand of God, has been made a High Priest after the order of Melchizedek. And it is Christ who shall appear the second (the final) time without sin unto salvation for those who are looking for Him (see Heb. 9:28).

While this "feast of fat things" was indeed made by "the Lord God" "unto all peoples," as Isaiah declared here, yet, unlike feasts that are given by men in this world, the invitation to this feast cannot be rejected by men with impunity. The rejection of the invitation to this feast is not innocent in the least, as its reception and earnest partakement, [in its highly figurative representation of God's merciful kindness towards men who had been banished from His Presence because of sin], is God's gracious provision for the undoing of all that was done by our first parents in Eden's garden. It speaks of the reversal of the Edenic curse, and the blessed provision of complete justification in Christ. The One who is making this invitation is also the One to whom all men owe both their being, and their well being. Coming to this feast has to do with everything that life in this world is all about. In the Lord's parable of "the great supper" (Lk. 14:17-24), those who did not heartily accept the invitation given to them provoked the Lord to anger, as it is unreasonable for men to reject this invitation. "For I say unto you [was Jesus' comment], That none of those men which were bidden shall taste of my supper" (Lk. 14:24).

"Come, sinners, to the Gospel feast;
Let every soul be Jesus' guest.
Ye need not one be left behind,
For God hath bid all humankind.

"Sent by my Lord, on you I call;
The invitation is to all.
Come, all the world! Come, sinner, thou!
All things in Christ are ready now.

“Come, all ye souls by sin oppressed,
Ye restless wanderers after rest;
Ye poor, and maimed, and sick, and blind,
In Christ a hearty welcome find.

“Come, and partake the Gospel feast;
Be saved from sin; in Jesus rest;
O taste the goodness of your God,
And eat His flesh, and drink His blood!

“You vagrant souls, on you I call;
(O that my voice could reach you all!)
You all may now be justified,
You all may live, for Christ hath died.

“My message as from God receive;
Ye all may come to Christ and live.
O let His love your hearts constrain,
Nor permit Him to die in vain.

“His love is mighty to compel;
His conquering love consent to feel,
Yield to His love’s resistless power,
And fight against your God no more.

“See Him set forth before your eyes,
That precious, bleeding Sacrifice!
His offered benefits embrace,
And freely now be saved by grace.

“This is the time, no more delay!
This is the Lord’s accepted day.
Come thou, this moment, at His call,
And live for Him Who died for all.”

—Charles Wesley, 1747

“But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report? So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” (Rom. 10:16-17).

Christ is a Sanctuary

Isa. 8:14

SALVATION WILL GOD APPOINT FOR WALLS AND BULWARKS

“In that day shall this song be sung in the land of Judah; We have a strong city; salvation will God appoint for walls and bulwarks. Open ye the gates, that the righteous nation which keepeth the truth may enter in. Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee. Trust ye in the LORD for ever: for in the LORD JEHOVAH is everlasting strength” (Isa. 26:1-5).

A Commentary on the Greatness of the Person of Jesus Christ. Such bold prophetic language as this is a commentary on the greatness of the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ. God’s salvation is embodied in Christ’s Person. The Father declared to the Son through the Prophet Isaiah: “It is a light thing that Thou shouldest be My Servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel: I will also give Thee for a light to the Gentiles, THAT THOU MAYEST BE MY SALVATION UNTO THE END OF THE EARTH” (Isa. 49:6). As an accommodation to our finite understanding, the Holy Spirit uses words such as “strong city”, “walls”, and “bulwarks” to describe somewhat of the greatness of the salvation that Christ is bringing to men in His own glorious Person. The salvation is great because of the greatness of the Saviour that God has provided us in His only begotten Son. This salvation is an expression of the righteousness of God in dealing with both sin and the sinner. God’s salvation in Christ is impregnable from the attacks of enemies, both seen and unseen. It is unthwartable by the cunning assaults of that old serpent, the Devil. And it is “an everlasting salvation” (Isa. 45:17).

We Have a Strong City. These citizens have been made partakers of the great salvation in Christ, being “strengthened with might by God’s Spirit in the inner man” (Eph. 3:16). Out of weakness they have been made strong (see Heb. 11:34). They have been “strengthened with all might, according to His (God’s) glorious power, unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness” (Col. 1:11). They have strength by virtue of being a city, that is, a society of redeemed personalities. Even now in their gatherings, they strengthen one another’s hands in God, as they speak to one another of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God. This is “a city which hath foundations, whose Builder and Maker is God” (Heb. 11:10). It is a strong city!

Walls and Bulwarks. “Salvation will God appoint for walls and bulwarks.” Walls are enclosures made, in this case, primarily for protection against contrary forces. In Christ the walls of protection serve to keep peace within, and the enemy without. Bulwarks are additional fortifications and ramparts that give to those enclosed within a decisive advantage over the enemy. The Lord Jesus Christ is Himself this enclosure and fortification to all who have obeyed the gospel, and who, by their faith, are abiding in Him.

The Proper Perspective of Divine Protection. We must not, however, adopt an over-simplistic view of the divine protection, of which we speak. The truth of the matter is that no one can harm any of God’s saints, unless evil workers are given leave from the throne to inflict such harm. Jesus forewarned His disciples, “I say unto you my friends, BE NOT AFRAID OF THEM THAT KILL THE BODY, AND AFTER THAT HAVE NO MORE THAT THEY CAN DO” (Lk. 12:4). The sacred record is replete with the testimony of those who “had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented” (Heb. 11:36-37).

John Foxe’s classic work, *Book of Martyrs*, meticulously catalogues atrocities that have been endured by Christ’s brethren down through the centuries at the hands of both governmental AND religious opponents. Evil men, employing their wicked imaginations, have contrived some of the most ghastly means of torture to inflict upon men and women, simply because of their faith in the Christ that is revealed in the Scripture. The inflicted ones were able to endure these things, because they have a living Saviour. In the words of Isaiah, they have a “strong city”, and salvation was, and is, to them as “walls and bulwarks”.

The reason for all of the wicked abuse and bloodletting of these ones [beginning with the blood of righteous Abel (Mt. 23:35; Gen. 4:8)] is directly related to unwavering faith in Him who would come, and has now come, bringing salvation, setting them free from the powers of darkness, the bondage of sin and death, and translating them into the kingdom of God. We're speaking here of the Lord Jesus Christ, and of the faith that has been authored by Him. To all such possessors of this faith, salvation is to them as "walls and bulwarks".

From the perspective of faith, the walls and bulwarks spoken of here afford unfailing protection to the inward man (the new creature), namely to the part of man that has been eternalized by faith in Jesus Christ. We, that are in Christ, "have eternal life" (I Jn. 5:13). We have "tasted of the powers of the world to come" (Heb. 6:4-5). We have begun, by God's grace, to establish a heavenly beachhead, as it were, on the shores of eternity, with our affection set on things that are above (Col. 3:2), and our faith being, in truth, "the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen" (Heb. 11:1). Neither the Devil nor evil men can touch this unseen attachment to the world to come that we possess by our faith. [Let us see that this attachment is continually nourished and increased by our feeding upon the Word of God.]. For those who are in Christ, their FAITH IS SUBSTANTIVE to them by its very nature, AND IT IS EVIDENTIAL. Tried faith has "put on the whole armour of God" (Eph. 6:11; see vv. 10-18). Tried faith knows, and is persuaded, that it has "in heaven a better and an enduring substance" (Heb. 10:34). Tried faith walks confidently about Zion, marking well its bulwarks, and counting the towers thereof (see Ps. 48:12-13).

In closing, let us consider the following declarations from the Psalms, from the lips of the Saviour, and from the Apostle Paul. Let us consider them from this eternal perspective, and of having "a strong city" with its very prominent "walls and bulwarks".

Psalms 121. "Behold, He that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep. The LORD is thy Keeper: the LORD is thy shade upon thy right hand. The sun shall not smite thee by day, nor the moon by night. The LORD shall preserve thee from all evil: He shall preserve thy soul. The LORD shall preserve thy going out and thy coming in from this time forth, and even for evermore" (Ps. 121:4-8).

My Sheep Hear My Voice. "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me: And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand. My Father, which gave them Me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of My Father's hand. I and My Father are one" (Jn. 10:27-30).

In All These Things We are More than Conquerors. "What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things? Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom. 8:31-39).

"Ye are the children of the Prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, And in thy Seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed." (Acts 3:25).

Christ is
a Stone of
Stumbling and a
Rock of
Offense
Isa. 8:14

CHRIST, THE PRECIOUS FOUNDATION STONE LAID IN ZION

“Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste” (Isa. 28:16).

“Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on Him shall not be confounded. Unto you therefore which believe He is precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner, And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed” (I Pet. 2:6-8). “As it is written, Behold, I lay in Sion a stumblingstone and rock of offence: and whosoever believeth on Him shall not be ashamed” (Rom. 9:33).

Christ is the foundation Stone that God Himself has laid in Zion. He is the true foundation for men being accepted with the Father, to be accepted just as surely as Christ is accepted, for they are accepted *in Christ*. He is the foundation Stone for justification by faith, and for sanctification through the Spirit. He alone is the foundation Stone for a right understanding of the God of Heaven, and for fellowship with the Father. He is the foundation Stone for men to be pleasing both to Himself, and to His Father, who is “the only true God” (Jn. 17:3).

In the words of the Lord Jesus Christ, to build upon this foundation is to be “founded upon a rock” (see Mt. 7:24-27). This rock foundation enables men to weather all the howling storms and blistering assaults that are encountered while in this present evil world. But to neglect building upon this foundation is likened by the Savior to building “upon the sand”. To not give earnest heed to all that Christ has said and to all that the Scripture says about Him, is to invite eternal disaster.

If men are going to build for eternity, and not suffer unspeakable and endless calamity and woe, they must build upon this foundation Stone, even upon the Man Christ Jesus. If men would increase in the knowledge of God, and grow up into Christ in all things, they dare not neglect this foundation Stone. If men would partake of joys that are everlasting, they must build upon this foundation Stone. “But of Him [God] are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord” (I Cor. 1:30-31).

Christ, the Chief Builder. Christ Himself is building the temple of the Lord, as the Prophet Zechariah declared. “Thus speaketh the LORD of hosts, saying, Behold the Man whose name is The BRANCH; and He shall grow up out of His place, and He shall build the temple of the LORD: even He shall build the temple of the LORD; and He shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon His throne; and He shall be a priest upon His throne: and the counsel of peace shall be between Them both (between the LORD of Hosts and this Man, Christ Jesus)” (Zech. 6:12-13).

This temple is comprised of the Members of the Godhead [the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit] and redeemed personalities. There is nothing about this temple, or its service, that is in the least monotonous, and that is not directly related to the joyful service of the living God. There are no rooms, chambers, or objects that are separate from the abiding awareness of their blessed Persons. In the world to come there shall be no service rendered to God that is perfunctory, and not delightfully engaging. [It doth not yet appear what we shall be, as John declared. “But we know, that when He shall appear, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is” (I Jn. 3:2)].

With regard to the temple and to the city, John wrote: “And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it. And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof” (Rev. 21:22-23). It seems that the language of “the temple”, and of “the city”, as a shadow of heavenly things, is readying men unto the full realization of such expressions, as “Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men,” and “I will dwell in them, and walk in them” (see Exod. 29:45; I Kgs. 6:13; Ezek. 43:7; Zech. 2:10-11; II Cor. 6:16;

Christ is a Life-Giving Foundation Stone Who Imparts Life to the Stones who are Joined to Him.

“To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious, Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on Him shall not be confounded. Unto you therefore which believe He is precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner, And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed” (I Pet. 2:4-8).

Disallowed Indeed of Men, but Chosen of God, and Precious. Until men learn, and become reconciled to, the stark reality that Christ is disallowed of men, but chosen of God, they will stumble at Christ, and will be offended at Him. The camp of unredeemed humanity disallows the Christ that is revealed in the Scripture, and wants nothing to do with Him. Satan, who is “the god of this world”, has “blinded the minds” of those who do not believe, “lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the Image of God, should shine unto them” (II Cor. 4:4). Jesus said, “And blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in Me” (Lk. 7:23). All such blessed individuals are living demonstrations that God has been at work in their hearts, teaching them to value His only begotten Son.

Jesus Christ is a Tried Stone, a Precious Corner Stone. As trial and testing are the portion of all men, so the Man Christ Jesus has been the most sorely tried. “But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that He by the grace of God should taste death for every man. For it became Him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings” (Heb. 2:9-10). The Lord Jesus Christ suffered the most, so that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, who can have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way. He is able to come to the aide of those who are tempted to sin, for He Himself was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.

As Esaiás Said Before

“And it shall come to pass, that in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not my people; there shall they be called the children of the living God. Esaiás also crieth concerning Israel, Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, a remnant shall be saved: For he will finish the work, and cut it short in righteousness: because a short work will the Lord make upon the earth. And as Esaiás said before, Except the Lord of Sabaoth had left us a seed, we had been as Sodoma, and been made like unto Gomorrha. What shall we say then? That the Gentiles, which followed not after righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith. But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness. Wherefore? Because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumblingstone; As it is written, Behold, I lay in Sion a stumblingstone and rock of offence: and whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed” (Rom. 9:26-33).

THE FEAR OF GOD BEING TAUGHT BY THE PRECEPT OF MEN: A JEOPARDY

“Wherefore the Lord said, Forasmuch as this people draw near Me with their mouth, and with their lips do honour Me, but have removed their heart far from Me, and their fear toward Me is taught by the precept of men” (Isa. 29:13).

“Ye hypocrites, well did Esaias prophesy of you, saying, This people draweth nigh unto Me with their mouth, and honoureth Me with their lips; but their heart is far from Me. But in vain they do worship Me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men” (Mt. 15:7-9). “He answered and said unto them, Well hath Esaias prophesied of you hypocrites, as it is written, This people honoureth Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me” (Mk. 7:6).

Bible things, particularly the knowledge of God, must be communicated to other men with Bible words, words which the Holy Spirit teaches (I Cor. 2:13). They must be communicated by those who are “living epistles”, having been begotten again unto a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. [How shall they hear without a preacher?]. The Holy Scripture is a precious compendium of spiritual vocabulary: spiritual words that are especially suited to acquaint men and women with God’s thoughts and ways. Scriptural words are the divinely ordained containers for imparting to men the knowledge of God. They alone are able to make men “wise unto salvation” (II Tim. 3:16). It has “pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe” (I Cor. 1:21).

Whenever men seek to communicate the knowledge of God with the wisdom of men’s words, they cause their hearers to stumble and to err. The knowledge of God must be communicated by the means which God has both provided and ordained. When this divinely appointed means is ignored, the tragic result is that of the fear of God being taught by the precept of men. The hearers who subject themselves to the wisdom of men’s words may become “religious”, but they are woefully ignorant of the God revealed in the Scripture, whom to know is life eternal (see Jn. 17:3).

Language Describing this Phenomenon. “That this is a rebellious people, lying children, children that will not hear the law of the LORD : Which say to the seers, See not; and to the prophets, Prophecy not unto us right things, speak unto us smooth things, prophesy deceits: Get you out of the way, turn aside out of the path, cause the Holy One of Israel to cease from before us” (Isa. 30:9-11).

“HEAR ye this, O house of Jacob, which are called by the name of Israel, and are come forth out of the waters of Judah, which swear by the name of the LORD , and make mention of the God of Israel, but not in truth, nor in righteousness. For they call themselves of the holy city, and stay themselves upon the God of Israel; The LORD of hosts is His name” (Isa. 48:1-2).

“CRY aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and show My people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins. Yet they seek Me daily, and delight to know My ways, as a nation that did righteousness, and forsook not the ordinance of their God: they ask of Me the ordinances of justice; they take delight in approaching to God” (Isa. 58:1-2).

The Lord Jesus Christ, addressing such corrupters of the Word of God, declared: “Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves” (Mt. 23:15). These proselytes were being taught by the religious elite of that day, and yet the result of that instruction set the hearers on a course that ultimately leads to damnation, rather than them being set on “the way of holiness”, even the way that leads unto life eternal.

In our day religious instruction of one sort or another abounds on every hand, even in the name of

Christ. Every sect impliedly poses as an official representative of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and yet each religious faction is saying and emphasizing completely different things from the others. To say this another way, virtually every church steeple that one beholds is representative of a dissimilar view of, and approach to, the God revealed in the Scripture. In the words of Jeremiah the Prophet, “An appalling and horrible thing is come to pass in the land” (Jer. 5:30, JPS).

“The faith which was once delivered unto the saints” (Jude 3), namely, the one revealed in the Scripture, makes for a fundamental unity that is rooted in the Godhead; it does not at all promote division (see Eph. 4:1-7, 11-16; Jn. 17:20-23). In those who possess the genuine article, it produces a delightfully discernable oneness among fellow believers that is glorifying to God. Consequently, for men to misrepresent the Members of the Godhead by their fundamentally diverse teachings and religious expressions is a sin of incalculable magnitude. It is to bear false witness against the God of our salvation.

There are multitudes of approaches for finding God, an abundance of agendas for serving and pleasing God, yet in the vast majority of these sects, the fear of God is taught by the precept of men, as Jesus said. As striking evidence of this, for the most part the people of which we are here speaking are strangers to Bible things, and strangely unfamiliar with the God who sent His Son into the world that we might live through Him. This is the tragically fatal result of the fear of God being taught by the precept of men.

Philip and the Ethiopian Eunuch

“And the angel of the Lord spake unto Philip, saying, Arise, and go toward the south unto the way that goeth down from Jerusalem unto Gaza, which is desert. And he arose and went: and, behold, a man of Ethiopia, an eunuch of great authority under Candace queen of the Ethiopians, who had the charge of all her treasure, and had come to Jerusalem for to worship, Was returning, and sitting in his chariot read Esaias the prophet. Then the Spirit said unto Philip, Go near, and join thyself to this chariot. And Philip ran thither to him, and heard him read the prophet Esaias, and said, Understandest thou what thou readest? And he said, How can I, except some man should guide me? And he desired Philip that he would come up and sit with him. The place of the scripture which he read was this, He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; and like a lamb dumb before His shearer, so opened He not His mouth: In His humiliation His judgment was taken away: and who shall declare His generation? for His life is taken from the earth. And the eunuch answered Philip, and said, I pray thee, of whom speaketh the prophet this? of himself, or of some other man? Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus. And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him. And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more: and he went on his way rejoicing” (Acts 8:26-39).

Christ is
a Sure
Foundation
Isa. 28:16

CHRIST, THE MAN WHO IS A HIDING PLACE FOR MEN

“Behold, a king shall reign in righteousness, and princes shall rule in judgment. And a man shall be as an hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest; as rivers of water in a dry place, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land. And the eyes of them that see shall not be dim, and the ears of them that hear shall hearken. The heart also of the rash shall understand knowledge, and the tongue of the stammerers shall be ready to speak plainly” (Isa. 32:1-4).

Is it possible for men to hide in another man? In earth this would be an utter impossibility. But God has made an abundant provision for men to hide themselves in the Man Christ Jesus, and in the great and copious salvation that He has provided for believing men in His beloved Son. Men are hiding in Christ from the wrath to come, and from the righteous judgment of God against sin and sinful men. They are finding abundant shelter in Christ from the onslaughts of that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan. They have proven Christ to be the provided exclusive Covert from the tempest and their Source of nourishment and replenishment in times of weariness and trial. The Lord Jesus Christ alone is their Shield from a dark past that sometimes comes back to haunt them. Those who have taken shelter in this Man, who is a hiding place from the wind, have found in Him a bright and blessed prospect for the ages to come.

“Thou art my hiding place; Thou shalt preserve me from trouble; Thou shalt compass me about with songs of deliverance. Selah” (Ps. 32:7). “Thou art my hiding place and my shield: I hope in Thy Word” (Ps. 119:114). “For in the time of trouble He shall hide me in His pavilion: in the secret of His tabernacle shall He hide me; He shall set me up upon a rock” (Ps. 27:5).

This Man is the Lord Jesus Christ. He is a King who is reigning in righteousness. Those who have believed upon His Name have been made princes who rule with Him in judgment even in the present time. (Christ has made them to be kings and priests unto God and His Father by Him.) Jesus is a King to whom has been given all power in Heaven and in earth. The Man Christ Jesus is also an appointed Hiding Place for men.

While on their pilgrim journey the saints frequently find themselves in perplexities and adversities, from which they must take shelter for their preservation. This Man, of whom Isaiah has written, is Himself that Hiding Place. In the same way God appointed Christ to be High Priest (Heb. 3:1-2), He also appointed Christ to be this Hiding Place. In eternity past God foresaw the absolute need for this Hiding Place in the Person of His Son, if men, who were being delivered from their transgressions and from this present evil world, were to arrive safely in glory. And so He appointed Christ to be that One.

When we speak of a man being such things as an impenetrable hiding place from the wind and covert from the tempest, it is immediately evident that we’re not speaking of an ordinary man, but rather of the Man Christ Jesus. The references to weather and climate phenomena are also clearly figurative in their descriptiveness of various trials and distresses through which the believing soul is made to feel and pass. To the believer in Christ, the most vexing adversities and disturbances are not in the realm of nature, but rather those through which his or her faith is called upon to traverse. To those who are living by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, such language as this recorded here by Isaiah is something to which the believer is able to readily relate. Faith makes these connections.

The words of instruction that Moses gave to the children of Israel regarding God’s purpose for them wandering in the wilderness are largely applicable to the church. Now is the time for humbling, proving, and testing, and for learning absolute dependence upon the living God for the necessary sustenance to endure hard trials, and for the readying of them to arrive safely in the world to come. “And thou shalt remember all the way which the LORD thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble

thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldest keep His commandments, or no. And He humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna, which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know; that He might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the LORD doth man live” (Deut. 8:2-3).

As the God who created the natural order is the same One who created both the seen and the unseen part of man, it should not surprise us that there be parallel phenomena occurring in both nature and within the scope of man's experience. There are tempests in nature, and there are tempests in the soul. There are periods of dryness in nature, and likewise also in the soul. There are seasons of watering, and even of floods, in nature, and also within the experience of those who are walking by faith. For those who are living by faith in the Son of God, their souls are comforted and refreshed by Him at His discretion, and to the praise of God's glory. They are confirmed and sustained by the glorified Christ all through the pilgrim journey to Heaven.

There is no other person, other than Jesus Christ, who in His own Person could possibly be all of these protective benefits promised to those who are living by faith in Him. Christ is our Shield with regard to all of our liabilities pertaining to the sin issue. He is the Propitiation for our sins. He is our Passover, sacrificed for us. He is our great High Priest now seated at the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens. He is the One Mediator between God and man. The Man Christ Jesus is all of these things, and more, to those who have obeyed the gospel and who are believing upon His name.

*“O safe to the Rock that is higher than I,
My soul in its conflicts and sorrows would fly;
So sinful, so weary, Thine, Thine, would I be;
Thou blest “Rock of Ages,” I’m hiding in Thee.*

*“Hiding in Thee, hiding in Thee,
Thou blest “Rock of Ages,”
I’m hiding in Thee.*

*“In the calm of the noontide, in sorrow’s lone hour,
In times when temptation casts o’er me its power;
In the tempests of life, on its wide, heaving sea,
Thou blest “Rock of Ages,” I’m hiding in Thee.*

*“How oft in the conflict, when pressed by the foe,
I have fled to my refuge and breathed out my woe;
How often, when trials like sea billows roll,
Have I hidden in Thee, O Thou Rock of my soul.”
—William O. Cushing*

*“When the even was come, they brought unto Him many that were possessed with devils: and He cast out the spirits with His word, and healed all that were sick: THAT IT MIGHT BE FULFILLED WHICH WAS SPOKEN BY ESAIAS THE PROPHET, saying, Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses”
(Mt. 8:16-17).*

THE WORK AND THE EFFECT OF GOD'S SALVATION IN CHRIST

“And the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever” (Isa. 32:17).

All of God's works are done in righteousness, and each, without fail, produces the substantive, righteous effect that He purposes. This, of course, includes His works pertaining to His salvation in Christ. Everything that God does is absolutely righteous, not because He decrees it to be righteous, as some might infer, but rather because His works are an expression of His own righteous Person. “The LORD is righteous in all His ways, and holy in all His works”(Ps. 145:17). This is especially relevant with respect to the matter of His delivering men [who had sinned, and come short of the glory of God] from the power of darkness, and translating them into the kingdom of God's dear Son.

It is the work of God in salvation that brings His righteousness squarely into the forefront of consideration. His creation of the heavens and the earth did not present a challenge to His righteous character. Neither did His creation of man in His own image and likeness call into question the righteousness of His crowning work. But when it came to the Holy One saving men from their sins, and receiving them back to Himself, that was quite another matter.

How could the holy and righteous God possibly receive men, who had transgressed against Him, back unto Himself? Would He be compromising His Godhood by so doing? Why would He not forthrightly cast them away from His Presence without remedy, as He did with the angels that sinned? The holy angels were sufficiently acquainted with the Most High to know that “there is no unrighteousness in Him” (Ps. 92:15). These, no doubt, were among “the things” which “the angels desire to look into” (I Pet. 1:12), but lovingly and reverently so. The bringing to light of perplexing considerations such as these was purposefully left somewhat in a shroud of obscurity until the fulness of the time had come, when God “sent”, and “set forth”, His Son to be the propitiation for our sins (see I Jn. 4:10; Rom. 3:21-26). In this setting forth of Christ as the propitiation for sins, God was declared to be “both just, and the Justifier of him that believeth in Jesus”.

The work of righteousness and its blessed effect are both directly connected to the impeccably just removal of iniquity, transgression, and sin by the Lord Jesus Christ. Salvation is built upon the solid foundation of God's own righteousness. As has been said, but bears repeating, the holy and righteous Jehovah is both just and the Justifier of him who believes in Jesus (Rom. 3:26). “Christ hath once suffered for sins, the Just for the unjust” (I Pet. 3:18). The Holy Spirit convinces men of sin, righteousness, and judgment (see Jn. 16:7-11). Everything about the work of salvation, as well as the effect of that work, is founded upon the righteous integrity of God's own Person. In the Day of Judgment there will none who will rise up to challenge, or take issue with, the work of God in salvation, for it will be evident to all that it has been “done in truth and uprightness” (Ps. 111:8).

When men become conscious of this and submit to Him by their obedience to the gospel (by their faith in Christ, and by their being baptized into Him), the effect that this has upon their believing hearts is that of peace, quietness, and assurance which shall endure into the ages to come. Both the work and its effect attest to the greatness of Him, even Christ, who accomplished the work.

Wherever God is working salvationally there is also a consistent characteristically blessed effect in the hearts of believing men accompanying that work. Both the work and the effect of the work are firmly rooted in God's righteousness. To believing hearts the knowledge of this becomes a source of

great confidence and strength.

The effect of this righteousness in the hearts of believing men and women attests to the substantive nature of the righteous work wrought by the Lord Jesus Christ in His suffering for sins, and bringing men back to God, as Peter declared (I Pet. 3:18). The “purification for sins” (Heb. 1:3, ASV) accomplished by Christ in His death and resurrection has resulted in those believing upon His Name having a purged conscience. They now have access to God (see Rom. 5:1-2), as the way into the holiest of all has now been made manifest (see Heb. 9:7-8). Such believing ones have peace with God through the Lord Jesus Christ, as well as confidence in God. They “worship God in the Spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh” (Phil. 3:3). These are but some of the manifestations of the work and effect of righteousness, of which Isaiah prophesied.

“Branch of Jesse’s stem, arise,
And in our nature grow;
Turn our earth to paradise,
By flourishing below:
Bless us with the spirit of grace
Immeasurably shed on Thee;
Pour on all the faithful race
The streaming Deity!

“Let the Spirit of our Head
On all the members rest;
From Thyself to us proceed,
And dwell in every breast;
Teach to judge and act aright,
Inspire with wisdom from above,
Holy faith and heavenly might,
And reverential love.

“Lord, of Thee we fain would learn
Thy heavenly Father’s will;
Give us quickness to discern,
And boldness to fulfill:
All His mind to us explain,
And His name on us impress,
Then our souls thro’ Thee attain
The spotless righteousness.”

—Charles Wesley

“But I say, Did not Israel know? First Moses saith, I will provoke you to jealousy by them that are no people, and by a foolish nation I will anger you. But Esaiás is very bold, and saith, I was found of them that sought Me not; I was made manifest unto them that asked not after Me. But to Israel He saith, All day long I have stretched forth My hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people” (Rom. 10:19-21).

THE RETURN TO ZION ON THE HIGHWAY OF HOLINESS

“Strengthen ye the weak hands, and confirm the feeble knees. Say to them that are of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not: behold, your God will come with vengeance, even God with a recompence; he will come and save you. Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing: for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert. And the parched ground shall become a pool, and the thirsty land springs of water: in the habitation of dragons, where each lay, shall be grass with reeds and rushes. And an highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called The way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it; but it shall be for those: the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein. No lion shall be there, nor any ravenous beast shall go up thereon, it shall not be found there; but the redeemed shall walk there: And the ransomed of the LORD shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away” (Isa. 35:3-10).

The highway, spoken of by Isaiah, also called “the way of holiness”, is the way that has been opened up by Jesus Christ for those who were once sinners to return to the living God and find complete and blessed acceptance with Him. The Lord Jesus Christ Himself is this Way (see Jn. 14:6). Those who have believed upon His name have been *made accepted* (Eph. 1:6) in Christ, God’s beloved Son. They have been “delivered” “from the power of darkness”, and “translated” “into the kingdom of” God’s “dear Son” (Col. 1:13). In the way of holiness they have found their place of safety. They have obtained joy and gladness in the knowledge of so great a salvation accomplished in their behalf. Sorrow and sighing, even now, have begun to flee away. Those who are now walking in the way of holiness are made to possess the firstfruits of the joy and gladness that shall be their everlasting portion in the ages to come.

Those who are walking on this highway are in a returning posture. All are returning unto the God that made them from the land of sin and alienation from Him. Some are returning unto Him from a wicked and sordid past. Some are returning from Babylon, from a religious captivity that had long shackled them and enslaved them, so that they were unable to serve the Lord their God acceptably, freely, and according to truth, in the way that even their conscience told them that He must be served.

In Returning and Rest. For thus saith the Lord GOD, the Holy One of Israel; In returning and rest shall ye be saved; in quietness and in confidence shall be your strength . . .” (Isa. 30:15). The returning of which we speak here is directly associated with rest, and with quietness and confidence before the living God. In this returning some have painfully had to sever family ties, some have had to bid farewell to former religious ties. But this they gladly did in order that they might obtain the better thing that has been prepared for them of God in the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.

All of the returning ones are returning to Zion, the city of their spiritual nativity. All of the children of God have this one thing in common: they were born in Zion, and they are presently en route to Zion, the city of the living God. Consider the following two Psalms in this connection:

The Eighty-Seventh Psalm. “A Psalm or Song for the sons of Korah. His foundation is in the holy mountains. The LORD loveth the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of Jacob. GLORIOUS THINGS ARE SPOKEN OF THEE, O CITY OF GOD. SELAH. I will make mention of Rahab and Babylon to them that know me: behold Philistia, and Tyre, with Ethiopia; THIS MAN WAS BORN THERE. AND OF ZION IT SHALL BE SAID, THIS AND THAT MAN WAS BORN IN HER: and the highest himself shall establish her. THE LORD SHALL COUNT, WHEN HE WRITETH UP THE PEOPLE, THAT THIS MAN WAS BORN THERE. Selah” (Ps. 87:1-6).

The Eighty-Fourth Psalm. “Blessed are they that dwell in Thy house: they will be still praising Thee. Selah. Blessed is the man whose strength is in Thee; in whose heart are the ways of them (“the highways to Zion”, ASV). Who passing through the valley of Baca make it a well; the rain also filleth the pools. They go from strength to strength, every one of them in Zion appeareth before God. O LORD God of

hosts, hear my prayer: give ear, O God of Jacob. Selah. Behold, O God our shield, and look upon the face of Thine anointed. For a day in Thy courts is better than a thousand. I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness. For the LORD God is a sun and shield: the LORD will give grace and glory: no good thing will He withhold from them that walk uprightly. O LORD of hosts, blessed is the man that trusteth in Thee” (Ps. 84:4-12).

This Highway is a Way for Wayfaring Men to Walk upon. The wayfaring men identified here are sojourners determined to arrive at a set destination. They are en route “to Zion, with their faces set thitherward” (Jer. 50:5). Zion, the city of the living God, is the place of their nativity (see Ps. 87), it is their “homeland” (Heb. 11:14, RSV), and the “long home” (Eccl. 12:5) to which they are presently sojourning. They are pilgrims, not drifters. They are strangers, but not vagabonds. They are journeying, but they are not sightseers. Like Abraham, they are looking “for a city which hath foundations, whose Builder and Maker is God” (Heb. 11:10).

The Way of Holiness, a Place of Safety in the Midst of Great Peril. Though there are menacing dangers and pitfalls that are encountered along this way, to be sure, nevertheless there is an inherent safety that is afforded to all who continue walking in this way. We’re speaking here of safety from the eternal perspective. “The martyrs of Jesus” (Rev. 17:6) have all walked on the way of holiness. All who have suffered shame for Christ’s Name have walked on this highway. All “who will live godly in Christ Jesus” (II Tim. 3:12) are found circumspectly walking in this way with great earnestness and sobriety. But all who walk in this way shall be “accounted worthy” of obtaining “that world, and the resurrection from the dead” (Lk. 20:35).

For those who are continuing in the faith, grounded and settled, and are not moved away from the hope of the gospel, “neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate” them “from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Rom. 8:38-39). “For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?” (I Jn. 5:4-5). “And who is he that will harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good?” (I Pet. 3:13). How could anything or anyone ultimately harm those who, by their patient continuance in the faith of Christ, are abiding at the very center of what God is doing in salvation?

Some Jeopardies Associated with Walking on this Highway. There are many presently living in this present evil world who express, in no uncertain terms, that they want nothing to do with those who are living by faith. Isaiah describes some of the haters of God’s people along with their expressions of loathing and contempt in the following words¹: “Now go, write it before them in a table, and note it in a book, that it may be for the time to come for ever and ever: that THIS IS A REBELLIOUS PEOPLE, LYING CHILDREN, CHILDREN THAT WILL NOT HEAR THE LAW OF THE LORD: which say to the seers, See not; and to the prophets, PROPHECY NOT UNTO US RIGHT THINGS, SPEAK UNTO US SMOOTH THINGS, PROPHECY DECEITS: GET YOU OUT OF THE WAY, TURN ASIDE OUT OF THE PATH, CAUSE THE HOLY ONE OF ISRAEL TO CEASE FROM BEFORE US” (Isa. 30:8-11). But those who have “the faith of God’s elect” (Tit. 1:1) have by their faith been

¹ The conflict described by Isaiah and experienced by those in his day is precisely the same conflict as that which engages those who are living by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ in the present time. The conflict is the same because Isaiah was testifying of the Christ who, in his day, was yet to come, and we are believing in the same Christ, who has indeed come to “put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself” (Heb. 9:26).

² “The faith of God’s elect” (Tit. 1:1) – This is an expression denoting faith that is the genuine article, namely, the faith that is possessed in the present time by those who “shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead” (Lk. 20:35). It has the same import as “unfeigned faith” (I Tim. 1:5; II Tim. 1:5), “the common faith” (Tit. 1:4), and “like precious faith” (II Pet. 1:1).

given to see things as they really are, namely, from the divine perspective. They can do nothing other than faithfully declare what they have been given to see and know and understand.

Other jeopardies include those of being in heaviness through manifold temptations (I Pet. 1:6), enduring trials of cruel mockings, scourgings, bonds and imprisonments (Heb. 11:36), being hated and reproached, and having one's name cast out as evil for the Son of man's sake (Lk. 6:22). Let all those who are called upon to endure afflictions and oppositions for Jesus' sake "rejoice, and be exceeding glad, for great is" their "reward in Heaven" (Mt. 5:12).

The Ransomed of the Lord, and None Others, are Walking on this Highway. The way of holiness is too narrow for any but the ransomed to walk on. There are some who began to walk in this way, but were not able to continue, because they were "offended" (Mk. 4:17) and "the desire for other things" (Mk. 4:19, BBE) became more important to them, and caused them to depart out of this way. A word that is especially pertinent to those who would enter in at the strait gate, and walk in the narrow way was spoken by the Savior when He said: "No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon³" (Mt. 6:24).

This way is the one identified by the Lord Jesus Christ in His Sermon on the Mount. There He admonished His disciples: "Enter ye in at the strait (rigorous, narrow, constricted, tight, difficult⁴) gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it" (Mt. 7:13-14).

Strait gate, narrow way. These words proceeding from the lips of the Savior are hard on the flesh, but nevertheless are exceeding precious to those who are walking in this way. They are words to which faith is readily able to relate, and by which faith is nourished. For those who have denied themselves, and taken up their cross to follow the exalted Savior, they are words that are sweet to one's taste (cf. Ps. 119:103). In the diction of Peter such ones have given "all diligence to make" their "calling and election sure" (II Pet. 1:10).

The irreconcilable moral incongruities between the broad road and the narrow way often make for conflict, vexation, and grief, the brunt of which is borne especially by those who are walking in the narrow way that leads unto life. Those who enter in through the strait gate and are walking in this narrow way are often looked upon scornfully by those who are walking according to this present world and who are on the broad road that leads to destruction. Those who are living by faith in the Son of God frequently find themselves being rejected, scoffed at, and persecuted by those who are animated by the prince of this world. In this world godly men and women are often regarded as "the offscouring of all things" (I Cor. 4:13; see Lam. 3:45). But soon, praise God, they shall be the head, and no longer the tail!

The Lord Jesus Christ, in His own Person, is this Way. Jesus said to Thomas, and to us: "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by Me" (Jn. 14:6). Men walk in this way by partaking of Christ, who is "the living Bread, which came down from Heaven" (Jn. 6:51). Highlighting the utter gravity of this matter, Jesus said: "This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die" (Jn. 6:50). Again He said, ". . . if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever" (Jn. 6:51). Let each person examine him- or herself, to see whether they be in the faith, and so are eating of Christ, the living Bread.

"Therefore the redeemed of the LORD shall return, and come with singing unto Zion; and everlasting joy shall be upon their head: they shall obtain gladness and joy; and sorrow and mourning shall flee away" (Isa. 51:11).

³ "mammon (deceitful riches, money, possessions, or whatever is trusted in)" (Amplified Bible)

⁴ Synonyms taken from the 2016 Merriam-Webster Dictionary

Christ is
a Tried Stone
Isa. 28:16

AND THE GLORY OF THE LORD SHALL BE REVEALED, AND ALL FLESH SHALL SEE IT TOGETHER

“Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God. Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned: for she hath received of the LORD'S hand double for all her sins. The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low: and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain: And the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it. The voice said, Cry. And he said, What shall I cry? All flesh is grass, and all the goodliness thereof is as the flower of the field: The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: because the spirit of the LORD bloweth upon it: surely the people is grass. The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand for ever. O Zion, that bringest good tidings, get thee up into the high mountain; O Jerusalem, that bringest good tidings, lift up thy voice with strength; lift it up, be not afraid; say unto the cities of Judah, Behold your God!” (Isa. 40:1-9).

Comfort Ye, Comfort Ye My People. None of the gods of the heathen comforts the people who have been enslaved by them. These captivated ones are held in shackles of darkness by Satan, the prince of darkness, “lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them” (II Cor. 4:4). None of the pagan gods has “glad tidings” to declare to their followers. If there be any, let them come forth and show themselves! Heathen deities all hold their followers in check by ignorance, and by a subtle threat of the consequences that will follow for not submitting to them.

None of the gods of the heathen is noted for taking delight in righteousness, truth, wisdom, judgment, mercy, grace, and lovingkindness, to name a few outstanding character traits of the God revealed in the Holy Scriptures (see Jer. 9:24; Ps. 11:7; Isa. 61:8; 65:19; Mic. 7:18). Not one of the gods of the heathen is eternal, omniscient, omnipresent, omnipotent, and abundant in goodness and truth, as is the Holy One of Israel.

None, but the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, is actively doing His people good, “working salvation in the midst of the earth” (Ps. 74:12). Who is a God like unto our God? “O taste and see that the LORD is good: blessed is the man that trusteth in Him” (Ps. 34:8).

The Ministry of John the Baptist. A Ministry of Preparing and Restoring. *Preparing the way of the Lord. Accomplishing a restorative work in the hearts of men.* From the perspective of the Lord entering into the world, the ministry was one of preparation for Him. But from the perspective of men's hearts being readied to receive Him, the ministry of John was restorative in nature. These two ministries are complimentary to one another, and yet also distinct from one another.

“As it is written in the book of the words of Esaias the prophet, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make His paths straight” (Lk. 3:4). John was this voice, crying in the wilderness. Of this he was certain, and he was faithful unto the fulfillment of what he knew for sure about his calling and ministry. He apparently was unaware, however, of his partial role, at least, in the fulfillment of Malachi's prophecy regarding Elias (Elijah).

Zacharias' Prophecy concerning John. John came “in the spirit and power of Elias.” “And he (John) shall go before Him (Christ) in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord” (Lk. 1:17; cf. Mal. 4:5). This prophecy regarding the purpose of John's ministry came from the lips of John's father, and yet John seemed to be unaware of this aspect of his ministry when questioned by the priests and Levites that came from Jerusalem.

Jesus' Word concerning John's Role in the Fulfillment of Malachi's Prophecy. “And his disciples

asked Him, saying, Why then say the scribes that Elias must first come? And Jesus answered and said unto them, Elias truly shall first come, and restore all things. But I say unto you, That Elias is come already, and they knew him not, but have done unto him whatsoever they listed. Likewise shall also the Son of man suffer of them. Then the disciples understood that He spake unto them of John the Baptist” (Mt. 17:10-13).

“And this is the record of John [the Baptist], when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, Who art thou? And he confessed, and denied not; but confessed, I am not the Christ. And they asked him, What then? Art thou Elias? And he saith, I am not. Art thou that prophet? And he answered, No. Then said they unto him, Who art thou? that we may give an answer to them that sent us. What sayest thou of thyself? He said, I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord, as said the prophet Esaias. And they which were sent were of the Pharisees. And they asked him, and said unto him, Why baptizest thou then, if thou be not that Christ, nor Elias, neither that prophet? John answered them, saying, I baptize with water: but there standeth one among you, whom ye know not; He it is, who coming after me is preferred before me, whose shoe's latchet I am not worthy to unloose” (Jn. 1:19-27).

And the Glory of the LORD shall be Revealed

The glory of the LORD was revealed, in fulfillment of this prophecy in Isaiah, in the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ. Any previous manifestations of glory, such as in the creation and at the giving of the Law at Mt. Sinai, were eclipsed and greatly superseded by the sufferings of Christ and the glory which has followed. The glory that is associated with the Lord Jesus Christ and His redemptive work is a glory that is abiding, not one that is fading, as was the case at the giving of the Law.

The Glory of the New Covenant, the Ministration of Righteousness. In the following verses Paul reasons with the Corinthians in regard to the superiority of the New Covenant [which is embodied in the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ] over the covenant that was given by God at Mt. Sinai. Everything associated with Christ's Person [including the New Covenant] is glorious, and is far superior to all that came before, and that was known and experienced before by men.

“For if the ministration of condemnation [the Law] be glory, much more doth the ministration of righteousness [the New Covenant] exceed in glory. For even that which was made glorious had no glory in this respect, by reason of the glory that excelleth. For if that which is done away [the Law] was glorious, much more that which remaineth [the New Covenant] is glorious” (II Cor. 3:9-11).

The New Covenant, because the Lord Jesus Christ Himself is that covenant (see Isa. 42:6; 49:8), is called “the ministration of righteousness”. The New Covenant does not merely present to men the possibility of becoming righteous, much more than this, it imparts to men righteousness and makes them righteous, wherever the gospel of Christ is believed and obeyed. In the New Covenant God remembers no more the sins of those who have entered into the covenant through faith in Christ, being baptized into Him (Jer. 31:33-34; Gal. 3:26-27). In this ministration of righteousness God both imputes and imparts to men His own righteousness, as they have no righteousness of their own.

The Apostolic Perspective of the Days of Christ's Flesh. Those who were near to the Savior in the days of His flesh, particularly the Apostles, beheld and testified of the glory that radiated from Christ's Person. The glory was veiled in flesh, but nevertheless it was perceptible to those who near to Him. By Christ's enfleshment, His glory was hidden from disinterested and unbelieving persons, and at the same time revealed to others who had believed on His name. Christ's body, prepared for Him by the Father (Heb. 10:5), was much like the tabernacle in the wilderness in the way that it concealed the Shekinah glory (Exod. 40:34-38) from all but the high priest, who entered into the most holy place once a year.

In John's summary testimonies of the time when the Savior was yet with them bodily (in the opening words of his gospel and also His first epistle), he witnesses to the glory that he beheld as though this were the best way to give expression to what he, and the other Apostles, saw. No doubt that these sanctified recollec-

tions were comforting for the Apostles to call to remembrance again and again, even for those who were living by faith in and unto the glorified Christ.

The Glory Seen in the Opening Words of John's Gospel. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not.(Joh 1:1-5)" "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and WE BEHELD HIS GLORY, THE GLORY AS OF THE ONLY BEGOTTEN OF THE FATHER,) full of grace and truth" (Jn. 1:14). "And of His fulness have all we received, and grace for grace. For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him" (Jn. 1:16-18).

In the Opening Words of First John. "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of THE WORD OF LIFE; (For THE LIFE WAS MANIFESTED, AND WE HAVE SEEN IT, AND BEAR WITNESS, AND SHEW UNTO YOU THAT ETERNAL LIFE, WHICH WAS WITH THE FATHER, AND WAS MANIFESTED UNTO US;) That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ" (I Jn. 1:1-3).

In the prologues to both John's gospel and his first epistle are found words that are mind- and heart-arresting. Though the Lord Jesus Christ, in the days of His flesh, looked like one of us by all natural appearances, nevertheless those who were closest to Him all testified of a glory that was radiating from His Person: a glory that was revelatory of the God who sent Him into the world. and also that set Him apart from all other men. The words of those whom the Holy Spirit moved to write the Scriptures were faithful representations of what they saw and heard.

The Testimony of Peter. We were Eyewitnesses of His Majesty. "For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when WE made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but WERE EYEWITNESSES OF HIS MAJESTY. For He received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to Him from the excellent glory, This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with Him in the holy mount. We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts: Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost" (II Pet. 1:16-21).

In the above words Peter recounts his recollection of the revelation of Christ's glory at the Mount of Transfiguration. But lest we should become obsessed with an inordinate desire for beholding similar manifestations of Christ's glory as were beheld by the Apostles, Peter gives this very needful word of instruction: "We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts" (II Pet. 1:19). In drawing near to God there is no substitute for getting the Word of God inside of one's heart, nurturing it with all diligence, and letting it "dwell" there "richly in all wisdom" (Col. 3:16).

A Promised Manifestation. God has magnified His Word above all of His name (see Ps. 138:2). The Lord Jesus Christ, who Himself is "the Word" "made flesh" (Jn. 1:1, 14), continually drew attention to the Scriptures, and to His word. Jesus said, "At that day ye shall know that I am in My Father, and ye in Me, and I in you. He that hath My commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me: and he that loveth Me shall be loved of My Father, and I will love him, and will manifest Myself to him" (Jn. 14:20-21). Again He said, "If a man love Me, he will keep My words: and My Father will love him, and We will come unto him, and make Our abode with him" (Jn. 14:23).

THE FORERUNNER OF CHRIST FORETOLD

“The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low: and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain: And the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it” (Isa. 40:3-5).

John the Baptist, a Voice Crying in the Wilderness. “For this is he that was spoken of by the prophet Esaias, saying, The voice¹ of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make His paths straight” (Mt. 3:3). Matthew is here citing Isaiah chapter 40 with reference to John the Baptist (the forerunner of Christ). God did not send His Son into the world without first preparing the way for Him. The work of preparing the way of the Lord would involve soberly apprising men of His pending appearing and earnestly readying them to acceptably receive Him.

Necessary Heart Preparations. Prior to the Savior’s entrance into the world the hearts of men were like uneven mountains and valleys that needed to be leveled and cleared to prepare the way for His imminent appearing. “The loftiness of man” must “be bowed down, and the haughtiness of men” must “be made low” (Isa. 2:17). “Those that be low” must be “set up on high” and those “which mourn” must be “exalted to safety” (Job 5:11). The crooked things must be made straight, and the rough places must be made smooth in preparation for the Lord’s coming, which was nigh at hand.

Luke’s Summary of John’s Ministry. In the third chapter of Luke’s gospel he gives a detailed summary of the ministry of John the Baptist.

A Clash Between the Perspectives of Heaven and Earth. “Now in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judaea, and Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, and his brother Philip tetrarch of Ituraea and of the region of Trachonitis, and Lysanias the tetrarch of Abilene, Annas and Caiaphas being the high priests, THE WORD OF GOD CAME UNTO JOHN THE SON OF ZACHARIAS IN THE WILDERNESS.” Here we see a clash between the earth’s perspective and that of heaven. After naming the current Roman emperor, the governor, three different tetrarchs, and two high priests, the Holy Spirit then draws our attention to that which was most significant: The Word of God came unto John in the wilderness.

The Baptism of Repentance for the Remission of Sins. “And HE (JOHN) CAME into all the country about Jordan, PREACHING THE BAPTISM OF REPENTANCE FOR THE REMISSION OF SINS; as it is written in the book of the words of Esaias the Prophet, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make His paths straight. Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be brought low; and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways shall be made smooth; and all flesh shall see the salvation of God.” John’s baptism was not for the purpose of imparting and receiving the remission of sins, but rather for readying men to receive it. The Amplified Bible renders this expression: “a baptism of repentance (of hearty amending of their ways, with abhorrence of past wrongdoing) unto the forgiveness of sin”. Similarly, the ASV renders it: “the baptism of repentance unto the remission of sins”.

The Axe is Laid unto the Root of the Trees. “Then said he to the multitude that came forth to be baptized of him, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? BRING FORTH THEREFORE FRUITS WORTHY OF REPENTANCE, and begin not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, That God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham. And now also THE AXE IS LAID UNTO THE ROOT OF THE TREES: EVERY TREE THEREFORE WHICH BRINGETH NOT FORTH GOOD FRUIT IS HEWN

¹ John the Baptist is here identified as “the voice of one crying in the wilderness”

DOWN, AND CAST INTO THE FIRE. The consideration of the consequences of either receiving or rejecting the salvation is sobering indeed. Those who reject God's salvation in Christ are likened unto trees that are ready to be cut down. THE AXE IS LAID UNTO THE ROOT!

Fleeing from the Wrath to Come. Those who are coming unto Jesus to receive the promised amnesty from the wrath to come must flee unto Him as though it were entirely up to them to get to Him, and to get into Him by the means which God has graciously provided. They must flee as though they were one of the manslayers fleeing unto the provided city of refuge (see Num. 35). "Wherein God, willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath: That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, WE MIGHT HAVE A STRONG CONSOLATION, WHO HAVE FLED FOR REFUGE TO LAY HOLD UPON THE HOPE SET BEFORE US: WHICH HOPE WE HAVE AS AN ANCHOR OF THE SOUL, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the veil; Whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an high priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec" (Heb. 6:17-20).

Some Examples of John's Instruction to those Coming to his Baptism. "And the people asked him, saying, What shall we do then? He answereth and saith unto them, HE THAT HATH TWO COATS, LET HIM IMPART TO HIM THAT HATH NONE; AND HE THAT HATH MEAT, LET HIM DO LIKEWISE. Then came also publicans to be baptized, and said unto him, Master, what shall we do? And he said unto them, EXACT NO MORE THAN THAT WHICH IS APPOINTED YOU. And the soldiers likewise demanded of him, saying, And what shall we do? And he said unto them, DO VIOLENCE TO NO MAN, NEITHER ACCUSE ANY FALSELY; AND BE CONTENT WITH YOUR WAGES." We learn an important lesson from these words of instruction given by John the Baptist. When coming to Jesus men must put an end to any overt sinning that they are engaged in. Whatever is in their power to do, they must do it. Whatever is not in their power to do, Christ will do it! He will take the desire to sin away. He will sanctify and purify believing men so that sin becomes distasteful to them, and the desire for righteousness and true holiness has in such believing ones marvelously replaced the desire for involvement in sinning.

John's Clarification of the Intent of his Baptism. "And as the people were in expectation, and all men mused in their hearts of John, whether he were the Christ, or not; John answered, saying unto them all, I indeed baptize you with water; but one mightier than I cometh, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire: Whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and will gather the wheat into his garner; but the chaff he will burn with fire unquenchable. And many other things in his exhortation preached he unto the people. But Herod the tetrarch, being reprov'd by him for Herodias his brother Philip's wife, and for all the evils which Herod had done, Added yet this above all, that he shut up John in prison.

John Baptizes Jesus. "Now when all the people were baptized, it came to pass, that Jesus also being baptized, and praying, the heaven was opened, And the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon Him, and a voice came from heaven, which said, Thou art My beloved Son; in Thee I am well pleased" (Lk. 3:1-22). One of the primary purposes for John's baptism was that of baptizing the Lord Jesus Christ, at which occasion Christ was made "manifest to Israel" (see Jn. 1:31).

Malachi's Prophecy of John the Baptist. "Behold, I will send My messenger², and he shall prepare the way before Me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to His temple, even the Messenger³ of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, He shall come, saith the LORD of hosts" (Mal. 3:1). Christ, "the Messenger of the covenant", was Himself introduced unto Israel by a divinely appointed messenger, John the Baptist." The expression "Messenger of the covenant" seems to imply that the New Covenant is not merely a divine arrangement, but it is also a communication to men of the divine purpose and intent

² My messenger - John the Baptist

³ the Messenger of the covenant - the Lord Jesus Christ

in salvation. The Lord Jesus Christ Himself, as the Messenger of the covenant, is the embodiment of that communication.

Malachi Foretells of the Sending of Elijah, the Prophet. These are the closing words of Moses and the Prophets [commonly known as the Old Testament]. “Behold, I will send you Elijah the Prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD: and he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse” (Mal. 4:5-6). In Malachi’s prophecy the reference is clearly being made to Elijah the Tishbite (I Kgs. 17-21; II Kgs. 1-2), called in the New Covenant scriptures Elias. This is the Elijah that dwelt with the widow of Zarephath and her son in a time of famine, and they were sustained by a barrel of meal that wasted not, and a cruse of oil that failed not. This was the widow whose son Elijah restored to life again. He it is who called down fire from Heaven and consumed two companies of soldiers sent by Ahaziah king of Samaria, after he (Ahaziah) first sent them to “go to enquire of Baal-zebub the god of Ekron”.

The Great and Dreadful Day of the LORD. In Malachi chapter 3 the sending of the messenger (John the Baptist) immediately prior to the appearing of Christ, the Messenger of the covenant, clearly has reference to Christ’s first appearing. “The Messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in.” “He is like a refiner’s fire, and like fullers’ soap,” “He shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver.” “He shall purify the sons of Levi, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness” (see I Pet. 2:5-9).

The language, THE GREAT AND DREADFUL DAY OF THE LORD, seems to have a clear reference to Christ’s second and final appearing. The sending forth of Elijah the Prophet here is here connected with finality and imminent judgment. Turning the hearts of the fathers (Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob) to the children (their offspring in the flesh) was to the end that God would not come and smite the earth with a curse. It seems that this prophecy in Malachi 4 is pointing to the time of the very end, to the conversion of Israel, and to the Lord Jesus Christ coming the second (the final) time (Heb. 9:28). But nevertheless, the Lord Jesus Christ left the door open for the inclusion of John the Baptist’s ministry as a fulfillment of this prophecy.

He Spake unto them of John the Baptist. “And His disciples asked him, saying, Why then say the scribes that Elias must first come? And Jesus answered and said unto them, Elias truly shall first come, and restore all things. But I say unto you, That Elias is come already, and they knew him not, but have done unto him whatsoever they listed. Likewise shall also the Son of man suffer of them. Then the disciples understood that he spake unto them of John the Baptist” (Mt. 17:10-13).

Jesus Speaks of John the Baptist. “And as they departed, Jesus began to say unto the multitudes concerning John, What went ye out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken with the wind? But what went ye out for to see? A man clothed in soft raiment? behold, they that wear soft clothing are in kings’ houses. But what went ye out for to see? A prophet? yea, I say unto you, and more than a prophet. For this is he, of whom it is written, Behold, I send My messenger before Thy face, which shall prepare Thy way before Thee.”

“Verily I say unto you, Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist: notwithstanding he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he. And FROM THE DAYS OF JOHN THE BAPTIST UNTIL NOW THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN SUFFERETH VIOLENCE, AND THE VIOLENT TAKE IT BY FORCE. For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John. And if ye will receive it, this is Elias, which was for to come. He that hath ears to hear, let him hear” (Mt. 11:7-15).

He that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than John the Baptist, Jesus said. Those who are born from above are not greater than John in godly character and zeal, at least not inherently so. Of John, the Scripture says: “For he shall be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink; and he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother’s womb” (Lk. 1:15). The superiority of those in the kingdom of heaven over John, rather, is directly related to new creatureship in

Christ, and their union with Christ by their obedience to the gospel, and their continued faith in the living and glorified Savior.

Christ Entered the Sheepfold by the Door of Fulfilled Prophecy. “Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber. But He that entereth in by the door is the Shepherd of the sheep. To Him the porter openeth; and the sheep hear His voice: and He calleth His own sheep by name, and leadeth them out. And when He putteth forth His own sheep, He goeth before them, and the sheep follow Him: for they know His voice. And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers” (Jn. 10:1-5).

THE DOOR THROUGH WHICH THE SAVIOR ENTERED INTO THE SHEEPFOLD WAS THE DOOR OF FULFILLED PROPHECY. “TO HIM (CHRIST) GIVE ALL THE PROPHETS WITNESS, that through His name whosoever believeth in Him shall receive remission of sins” (Acts 10:43). “Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into His glory? AND BEGINNING AT MOSES AND ALL THE PROPHETS, He expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning Himself” (Lk. 24:26-27). “And He said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that ALL THINGS MUST BE FULFILLED, WHICH WERE WRITTEN IN THE LAW OF MOSES, AND IN THE PROPHETS, AND IN THE PSALMS, CONCERNING ME” (Lk. 24:44).

John’s Testimony regarding his own Ministry. “And this is the record of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, Who art thou? And he confessed, and denied not; but confessed, I am not the Christ. And they asked him, What then? Art thou Elias? And he saith, I am not. Art thou that prophet? And he answered, No. Then said they unto him, Who art thou? that we may give an answer to them that sent us. What sayest thou of thyself? He said, I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord, as said the prophet Esaias. And they which were sent were of the Pharisees. And they asked him, and said unto him, Why baptizest thou then, if thou be not that Christ, nor Elias, neither that prophet? John answered them, saying, I baptize with water: but there standeth one among you, whom ye know not; He it is, who coming after me is preferred before me, whose shoe’s latchet I am not worthy to unloose. These things were done in Bethabara beyond Jordan, where John was baptizing” (Jn. 1:19-28).

John, the Porter. The porter (Jn. 10:3) of which Jesus spoke was John the Baptist. “The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world. This is he of whom I said, After me cometh a man which is preferred before me: for he was before me. And I knew him not: but that he should be made manifest to Israel, therefore am I come baptizing with water. And John bare record, saying, I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon him. And I knew him not: but he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost. And I saw, and bare record that this is the Son of God” (Jn. 1:29-34).

John, the Friend of the Bridegroom. “And John also was baptizing in Ænon near to Salim, because there was much water there: and they came, and were baptized. For John was not yet cast into prison. Then there arose a question between some of John’s disciples and the Jews about purifying. And they came unto John, and said unto him, Rabbi, He that was with thee beyond Jordan, to whom thou barest witness, behold, the same baptizeth, and all men come to Him. John answered and said, A man can receive nothing, except it be given him from heaven. Ye yourselves bear me witness, that I said, I am not the Christ, but that I am sent before Him. He that hath the bride is the bridegroom: but the friend of the bridegroom, which standeth and heareth Him, rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom’s voice: this my joy therefore is fulfilled. He must increase, but I must decrease. He that cometh from above is above all: he that is of the earth is earthly, and speaketh of the earth: He that cometh from heaven is above all” (Jn. 3:23-31).

Christ is
a Witness to the
People
Isa. 55:4

CHRIST, GOD'S ELECT SERVANT

“Behold My Servant, whom I uphold; Mine Elect, in whom My soul delighteth; I have put My Spirit upon Him: He shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles. He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause His voice to be heard in the street. A bruised reed shall He not break, and the smoking flax shall He not quench: He shall bring forth judgment unto truth. He shall not fail nor be discouraged, till He have set judgment in the earth: and the isles shall wait for His law. Thus saith God the LORD, He that created the heavens, and stretched them out; He that spread forth the earth, and that which cometh out of it; He that giveth breath unto the people upon it, and spirit to them that walk therein: I the LORD have called Thee in righteousness, and will hold Thine hand, and will keep Thee, and give Thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles; to open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison house” (Isa. 42:1-7).

Behold My Servant. In this prophecy God calls upon men to behold His Servant, His Elect. God’s eternal purpose, in its entirety, is centered in Jesus Christ, whom He calls here, “My Servant.” With regard to the servanthood of Christ, spoken of several times in Isaiah¹, the Lord Jesus Christ is the sole Implementer of God’s eternal purpose. Jesus came, not to do His own will, but the will of the Father that sent Him.

God’s Elect. The Lord Jesus Christ is God’s elect Servant. In Psalm 89:3 the Father speaks of Christ as “My Chosen.” “I have made a covenant with My Chosen, I have sworn unto David My Servant, Thy seed will I establish for ever, and build up Thy throne to all generations. Selah” (Ps. 89:3-4). David, the son of Jesse, is but a foreshadowing of the David that is spoken of here. The Psalmist here is speaking of Messiah, “the son of David” (Mt. 1:1; 9:27; 12:23; 22:42; Mk. 12:35-37).

Mine Elect. Christ is the Chosen of God. He was not chosen from a gallery of other possible candidates. When it came to the matter of implementing the eternal purpose, conceived by God the Father in eternity past, there was only One who was, and is, great enough to be the Implementer of that purpose. And that One is the Lord Jesus Christ, who was, and is, also known as the Word (Jn. 1:1-3), “whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting” (Mic. 5:2).

Christ, the Chosen of God, the Implementer of God’s Eternal Purpose

The Father Making Affirmation regarding Christ, His elect Servant, in Psalm 89. “Then Thou spakest in vision to Thy holy One, and saidst, I HAVE LAID HELP UPON ONE THAT IS MIGHTY; I HAVE EXALTED ONE CHOSEN OUT OF THE PEOPLE. I have found David² My Servant; with My holy oil have I anointed Him: With whom My hand shall be established: Mine arm also shall strengthen Him. The enemy shall not exact upon Him; nor the son of wickedness afflict Him. And I will beat down His foes before His face, and plague them that hate Him. But My faithfulness and My mercy shall be with Him: and in My name shall His horn be exalted. I will set His hand also in the sea, and His right hand in the rivers. He shall cry unto Me, Thou art My Father, My God, and the Rock of my salvation. Also I will make Him My Firstborn, higher than the kings of the earth. My mercy will I keep for Him for evermore, and My covenant shall stand fast with Him” (Ps. 89:19-28).

The Son Addressing the Father regarding His Mission. Christ was chosen of God to lay down His life a ransom for many. By the grace of God Christ tasted death for every man. “Wherefore when He (Christ) cometh into the world, He saith, Sacrifice and offering Thou (the Father) wouldest not, but a body hast Thou prepared Me: In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin Thou hast had no pleasure. Then

¹ See, for example, Isaiah 42:1-7; 49:1-7; 50:4-9; 52:13-53:12

² After the death of David, the son of Jesse, the Holy Spirit continued to speak of another David (see Isa. 55:3-5; Jer. 30:9; Ezek. 34:23; 37:23-25; Hos. 3:5; Lk. 1:69; Acts 2:30-31; 13:34), who would reign over the house of Jacob forever. The Spirit was speaking of the Lord Jesus Christ, “which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh; and declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead” (Rom. 1:3-4). In Acts 2:30-33 we see that the right hand of God and the throne of David are one and the same locality. God raised up Christ to sit on David’s throne (in the heavens).

said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of Me,) to do Thy will, O God. Above when He said, Sacrifice and offering and burnt offerings and offering for sin Thou wouldest not, neither hadst pleasure therein; which are offered by the law; Then said He, Lo, I come to do Thy will, O God. He taketh away the first (covenant), that He may establish the second” (Heb. 10:5-9; see Ps. 40:6-8).

So effectual was the redemptive work of the Lord Jesus Christ when He came to do the will of the Father, that His very doing of the Father’s will has taken away the first covenant (the Law), and it has established the second (the new covenant). That is to say, Christ has taken away the approach to God where men are attempting to serve God in their own strength, and He has brought in everlasting righteousness, and a new and a living way. He has brought men into a domain where the greatest awareness is of what God has done in salvation, and where men are called upon to live by faith in God’s working.

The Fulfillment in Matthew’s Gospel. “Then the Pharisees went out, and held a council against Him, how they might destroy Him. But when Jesus knew it, He withdrew himself from thence: and great multitudes followed Him, and He healed them all; and charged them that they should not make Him known: THAT IT MIGHT BE FULFILLED WHICH WAS SPOKEN BY ESAIAS THE PROPHET, SAYING, BEHOLD MY SERVANT, WHOM I HAVE CHOSEN; MY BELOVED, IN WHOM MY SOUL IS WELL PLEASED: I will put My Spirit upon Him, and He shall show judgment to the Gentiles. He shall not strive, nor cry; neither shall any man hear His voice in the streets. A bruised reed shall He not break, and smoking flax shall He not quench, till He send forth judgment unto victory. And in His name shall the Gentiles trust” (Mt. 12:14-21).

Christ, the Elect, Precious Corner Stone. “To whom coming, as unto A LIVING STONE, DISALLOWED INDEED OF MEN, BUT CHOSEN OF GOD, AND PRECIOUS, Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, BEHOLD, I LAY IN SION A CHIEF CORNER STONE, ELECT, PRECIOUS: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded” (I Pet. 2:4-6).

Bruised reeds and smoking flaxes. *A bruised reed shall He not break, and the smoking flax shall He not quench.* Sensitive souls will recognize immediately that this language is describing, not vegetative phenomena, but rather souls that have been sorely wounded by sin and transgression. Such ones as these are the ones whom Jesus came to seek and to save. Oh, the blessedness of the Savior who has such a compassionate regard for such ones as these! This tender regard He indeed has, not merely for the sake of feeling sorry for such ones, but with the intent of restoring them to wholeness, and to a condition where, by their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, they are well pleasing in the sight of God.

Consider the judgment that He is bringing to the Gentiles, bringing them into God’s favor on a grand and glorious scale. The Gentiles are no longer regarded as strangers or foreigners in the household of God, but rather they are now “fellow citizens with the saints” (Eph. 2:19), as Paul declared. Consider the tenderness with which He ministers to bruised reeds and smoking flaxes. (These were seemingly hopeless cases that Jesus restored and revived, establishing their goings on the highway of holiness.) Behold the divine determination and consequent certainty of His bringing the work of God to fruition and final consummation, even in the face of oppositions and discouragements of every sort.

“Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God; And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; in whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: in whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit” (Eph. 2:19-22; Isa. 28:16).

Christ is
an Ensign for the
Nations

Isa. 11:12

THE BLOTTING OUT OF TRANSGRESSIONS

“I, even I, am He that blotteth out thy transgressions for Mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins” (Isa. 43:25). “I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and, as a cloud, thy sins: return unto Me; for I have redeemed thee” (Isa. 44:22).

Isaiah speaks here in prospect of the coming Redeemer, God was blotting out, and has now blotted out our iniquities and transgressions by the offering up of the Lord Jesus Christ for us all. In the scriptural record wherever sins are not blotted out, the names of the persons associated with the sins are blotted out, meaning that God remembers such ones favorably no more. Consider the following verses to see the unchanging mind of God with regard to this matter. (Exod. 32:32-33; Deut. 9:14; 25:19; 29:20; Neh. 4:5; Ps. 51:1, 9; 69:28; 109:13-14; Isa. 43:25; 44:22; Acts 3:19; Rev. 3:5).

With regard to men who “have sinned, and come short of the glory of God” (Rom. 3:23), either men’s sins must be blotted entirely out of God’s remembrance by the means which He has provided, or their names will be blotted out of the book of life. And this circumstance makes the Lord Jesus Christ to be absolutely indispensable to both God and men: that is, if men are to be justly and favorably received into God’s Presence forever.

David’s Penitential Psalm. David had knowledge of this aspect of God’s Person that He is known for blotting out transgressions. Thus, after he had sinned with Bathsheba, and after he had commanded that Bathsheba’s husband Uriah the Hittite be set “in the forefront of the hottest battle” (II Sam. 11:15), and then be abandoned, instead of hiding from the Lord, David made this petition unto God. “HAVE mercy upon me, O God, according to Thy lovingkindness: according unto the multitude of Thy tender mercies BLOT OUT MY TRANSGRESSIONS. Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and CLEANSE ME FROM MY SIN” (Ps. 51:1-2). “Hide Thy face from my sins, and BLOT OUT ALL MINE INIQUITIES” (Ps. 51:9). And God graciously heard David’s petition in the prospect of the sufferings of Christ, and the glory which has followed.

Imprecatory Psalms. An imprecation is a pronouncement of a curse, not out of personal vindictiveness, but rather that which is an expression of the mind of the Lord. Occasionally, the Psalmists especially are directed to utter words of this sort. In the following imprecations pronounced by the Psalmist, the language of blotting out occurs with regard to the names of God’s enemies. From this perspective God’s enemies are not the Jebusites, the Amalekites, or the Hivites, but rather those who “take counsel together, against the LORD, and against His Anointed” (His Christ) (Ps. 2:2). They reject, and oppose, God’s purpose in salvation.

With Regard to Judas Iscariot. “Let his days be few; and let another take his office. Let his children be fatherless, and his wife a widow. Let his children be continually vagabonds, and beg: let them seek their bread also out of their desolate places. Let the extortioner catch all that he hath; and let the strangers spoil his labour. Let there be none to extend mercy unto him: neither let there be any to favour his fatherless children. Let his posterity be cut off; and in the generation following LET THEIR NAME BE BLOTTED OUT. Let the iniquity of his fathers be remembered with the LORD; and LET NOT THE SIN OF HIS MOTHER BE BLOTTED OUT. Let them be before the LORD continually, THAT HE MAY CUT OFF THE MEMORY OF THEM FROM THE EARTH. Because that he remembered not to shew mercy, but persecuted the poor and needy man, that he might even slay the broken in heart” (Ps. 109:8-16).

“They gave me also gall for my meat; and in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink. Let their table become a snare before them: and that which should have been for their welfare, let it become a trap. Let their eyes be darkened, that they see not; and make their loins continually to shake. Pour out Thine indignation upon them, and let Thy wrathful anger take hold of them. Let their habitation be desolate; and let none dwell in their tents. For they persecute him whom Thou hast smitten; and they talk to the grief of those whom Thou hast wounded. Add iniquity unto their iniquity: and LET THEM NOT COME INTO

THY RIGHTEOUSNESS. LET THEM BE BLOTTED OUT OF THE BOOK OF THE LIVING, AND NOT BE WRITTEN WITH THE RIGHTEOUS. But I am poor and sorrowful: let Thy salvation, O God, set me up on high” (Ps. 69:21-29).

The Book of Life. Incidentally, the book of life, as it is represented in Scripture, is a register of persons whose sins have been remitted, and who consequently are alive unto God, having been accounted to be worthy of, and prepared for, the eternal life in the ages to come by the sufferings of Christ, and the glory which has followed. The expression “book of life” is an accommodation to our finite understanding, assisting us in comprehending to some degree the Mind of Him who is omniscient. “There is no searching of His understanding.” “The very hairs of your head are all numbered.” “All things are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do.”

The Great Magnitude of Christ’s Sufferings. So great were the sufferings of Christ for sins, that they have made God forget the offenses of those who are in Christ, and who are abiding in Him. Thus, wherever sins are indeed blotted out, God is able to look upon such believing ones as though they had never sinned! Hear, believe, and rejoice in, the exceeding gladsome proclamation: “. . . by Him (Christ) all that believe are justified from all things, from which” they “could not be justified by the law of Moses” (Acts 13:39). “For by one offering He (Jesus Christ) hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified” (Heb. 10:14). Those who, through their continued faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and obedience to the gospel, are partaking of the benefits of the New Covenant “are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all” (Heb. 10:10).

“Repent ye therefore, and be converted, THAT YOUR SINS MAY BE BLOTTED OUT, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord; and He shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you: Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution [“restoration,” ASV] of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began” (Acts 3:19-21).

“He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; AND I WILL NOT BLOT OUT HIS NAME OUT OF THE BOOK OF LIFE, but I will confess his name before My Father, and before His angels” (Rev. 3:5). So long as men are yet in the body, there remains the jeopardy of names being blotted out of the book of life. The overcomers spoken of here are those who are overcoming by their faith in the Son of God. “For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?” (I Jn. 5:4-5).

The Harmony of the Two Books. “And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell [Hades, the abode of the dead] delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. AND WHOSOEVER WAS NOT FOUND WRITTEN IN THE BOOK OF LIFE WAS CAST INTO THE LAKE OF FIRE” (Rev. 20:12-15).

In the Day of Judgment there will be perfect harmony between the two books identified here. The book containing the record of a lifetime of works for every single man and woman, boy and girl, will perfectly accord with one’s inclusion in, or exclusion from, the book of life. The very works of those who were not written “with the righteous” (Ps. 69:28), or of those whose names were blotted out of the book of life (Rev. 3:4), will give ample evidence of their exclusion from the heavenly register. The same is also true of those whose “names are written in heaven” (Lk. 10:20). Their works will be a demonstration of why their names are written there.

They that Have Done Good, and They that Have Done Evil. Jesus said, “Marvel not at this: for the

hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear His (Christ's) voice, and shall come forth; THEY THAT HAVE DONE GOOD, UNTO THE RESURRECTION OF LIFE; AND THEY THAT HAVE DONE EVIL, UNTO THE RESURRECTION OF DAMNATION" (Jn. 5:28-29).

Paul declared in his epistle to the Romans, God "WILL RENDER TO EVERY MAN ACCORDING TO HIS DEEDS: to them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life: but unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, TRIBULATION AND ANGUISH, UPON EVERY SOUL OF MAN THAT DOETH EVIL, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile; but GLORY, HONOUR, AND PEACE, TO EVERY MAN THAT WORKETH GOOD, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile: for there is no respect of persons with God" (Rom. 2:6-11). The names of those who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory, honor, and immortality, are names which shall be found in the book of life.

And John similarly declared: "And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but HE THAT DOETH THE WILL OF GOD ABIDETH FOR EVER" (I Jn. 2:17). Doing the will of God has to do with the earnest reception of God's salvation in Christ, and by faith, living and walking in accordance with, and not contrary to, God's eternal purpose in Christ.

Considerations such as these are devastating to many of the fatal errors of current overly simplistic theologies, such as the "once saved, always saved," "eternal security" doctrines, which assume, in one way or another that God will accept men as they are in the flesh. [By these subtle wrestings of the truth myriads who make a profession of faith in Christ are living in ignorance of what God is actually doing in salvation. Instead of engaging in the warfare of faith, the doctrine that they have embraced permits them to disengage from the battle, and to settle down in this present world.]

Christ is PURIFYING "UNTO HIMSELF A PECULIAR PEOPLE, ZEALOUS OF GOOD WORKS" (Tit. 2:14). Those who are in Christ are "God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto GOOD WORKS, WHICH GOD HATH BEFORE ORDAINED THAT WE SHOULD WALK IN THEM" (Eph. 2:10). "For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: THAT THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF THE LAW MIGHT BE FULFILLED IN US, WHO WALK NOT AFTER THE FLESH, BUT AFTER THE SPIRIT" (Rom. 8:3-4). The names of such ones as are described here shall indeed be found written in the book of life.

Any teaching, or emphasis, that renders unimportant the direction and perfection unto which God is bringing men in salvation is not of God, and is to be forthrightly abandoned by men. It is essential that men know the truth (Jn. 8:32), believe the truth (I Th. 2:13), and receive a love of the truth (II Th. 2:10), if they are to be saved. Those who despise the truth, or have no desire for the truth, have no part nor lot in the salvation which is in Christ Jesus.

"He (John the Baptist) said, I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord, as said the prophet Esaias" (Jn. 1:23).

Christ is
God's Salvation
unto the End of
the Earth
Isa. 49:6

THE LORD JESUS CHRIST GIVEN AS A COVENANT OF THE PEOPLE

“LISTEN, O isles, unto Me; and hearken, ye people, from far; The LORD hath called Me from the womb; from the bowels of My mother hath He made mention of My name. And He hath made My mouth like a sharp sword; in the shadow of His hand hath He hid Me, and made Me a polished shaft; in His quiver hath He hid Me; and said unto Me, Thou art My Servant, O Israel, in whom I will be glorified. Then I said, I have laboured in vain, I have spent My strength for nought, and in vain: yet surely My judgment is with the LORD, and My work with My God. And now, saith the LORD that formed Me from the womb to be His Servant, to bring Jacob again to Him, Though Israel be not gathered, yet shall I be glorious in the eyes of the LORD, and My God shall be My strength. And He said, It is a light thing that Thou shouldest be My Servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel: I will also give Thee for a light to the Gentiles, that Thou mayest be My salvation unto the end of the earth. Thus saith the LORD, the Redeemer of Israel, and His Holy One, to Him whom man despiseth, to Him whom the nation abhorreth, to a servant of rulers, Kings shall see and arise, princes also shall worship, because of the LORD that is faithful, and the Holy One of Israel, and He shall choose Thee. Thus saith the LORD, In an acceptable time have I heard Thee, and in a day of salvation have I helped Thee: and I will preserve Thee, and give Thee for a covenant of the people, to establish the earth, to cause to inherit the desolate heritages” (Isa 49:1-8).

In Isaiah 42:6 and 49:8 the Father declares to the Son: I will give Thee for a covenant of the people. The New Covenant, prophesied by Jeremiah (31:31-34), is embodied in, and is not separate from, the very Person of the Lord Jesus Christ. Christ is “the Messenger of the covenant” (Mal. 3:1), “a Surety (Guarantee) of a better covenant” (Heb. 7:22), “the Mediator of the New Covenant” (Heb. 12:24), and His blood is “the blood of the everlasting covenant” (Heb. 13:20). But Christ Himself also is the covenant, and apart from His blessed Person and redemptive work there is, and can be, no new covenant.

This is one of many examples of the divine resourcefulness, in that He purposed that the new covenant should be embodied in the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ. Christ is both the Son of God, and the Son of man. He is fully God and fully Man. He is wholly conversant with the God of heaven, and wholly conversant with those He came to save. Jesus Christ is the new covenant incarnate. All the benefits of the new covenant are accessed by faith, and derived from His blessed Person.

A Divine Dialog. *Listen, O Isles.* God’s Servant (His Son) begins this dialog with a summons to the Gentiles. He then declares how that the Father had prepared Him unto this mission. “And He hath made My mouth like a sharp sword; in the shadow of His hand hath He hid Me, and made Me a polished shaft; in His quiver hath He hid Me.” From this perspective the Lord Jesus Christ was as a polished shaft (a divinely fashioned arrow) hidden in the quiver of God’s eternal purpose until the fulness of the time had come. Christ was sent forth into the world armed with words which were the expression of the very heart of God. The heavenly Messenger is also He who has “given Himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour” (Eph. 5:2).

The Son rehearses what the Father declared unto Him. “Thou art My Servant, O Israel, in whom I will be glorified.” The name “Israel”, meaning “he who strives with (brings strong arguments before) God”, first belonged to Jacob, and then to the nation that came out of his (Jacob’s) loins. But here Jehovah addresses His Servant, Christ, as Israel, meaning “Him who strives with God (with strong crying and tears)” as our Great High Priest and Intercessor and with regard to the carrying forward of God’s eternal purpose in Christ. Of this God will be inquired of by the Son (see Ezek. 36:37). “Ask of Me, and I shall give Thee the heathen for Thine inheritance.” Christ also maketh intercession for us.

The Son then utters a complaint of discouragement, expressing His perceived fear that His mission, unto which the Father had sent Him, had been for nought. “Then I said, I have laboured in vain, I have spent My strength for nought, and in vain.” Christ came a light into the world, “and the darkness com-

prehended it not” (Jn. 1:5). “He was in the world, and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not. He came unto His own, and His own received Him not” (Jn. 1:10-11). These are words that give us a unique perspective of the humanity of Christ, and of Christ’s identification with us, in order “that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God” (Heb. 2:17).

The Son encourages Himself before God in the midst of His great discouragement. “. . . yet surely My judgment is with the LORD, and My work with My God.” In this He is also an example to His brethren in their times of suffering affliction.

The Son recounts and rehearses what the Father declared to Him regarding the certainty of the success of His mission. “And He (the Father) said (to the Son), It is a light thing that Thou shouldest be My Servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel: I will also give Thee for a light to the Gentiles, that Thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth.”

In this divine dialog we are given to see the Father’s pledge and promise to the Son regarding the success of His work as it pertained to Israel, and also to the bringing in of the Gentiles. He said in Psalm 2, “Ask of Me, and I shall give Thee the heathen for Thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for Thy possession.”

We also see graphically expressed here how that the Lord Jesus Christ encountered very real discouragement, perhaps more than we are able to comprehend in the present time, and He also received very real comfort and encouragement from the Father to support Him unto the completion of His mission. Let us praise our heavenly Father for sending His Son to be the Savior of the world, and the lay down His life a ransom for many.

Let Zion’s watchmen all awake
And take the alarm they give;
Now let them from the mouth of God
Their awful charge receive.

’Tis not a cause of small import
The pastor’s care demands;
But what might fill an angel’s heart
And filled a Savior’s hands.

They watch for souls, for which the Lord
Did heav’nly bliss forego;
For souls, which must for ever live,
In raptures, or in woe.

All to the great tribunal haste
The account to render there;
And should’st Thou strictly mark our faults
Lord, where should we appear?

May they that Jesus, whom they preach,
Their own Redeemer see;
And watch Thou daily o’er their souls,
That they may watch for Thee.

—Isaac Watts

“As it is written in the book of the words of Esaias the prophet, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make His paths straight” (Lk. 3:4).

(To the Insincere and Unbelieving)

Christ is
a Gin and a Snare

Isa. 8:14

THE FATHER'S MINISTRATION TO HIS SON IN THE DAYS OF HIS FLESH

“The Lord GOD hath given me (Jesus Christ) the tongue of the learned, that I should know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary: he wakeneth morning by morning, he wakeneth mine ear to hear as the learned. The Lord GOD hath opened mine ear, and I was not rebellious, neither turned away back. 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. For the Lord GOD will help me; therefore shall I not be confounded: therefore have I set my face like a flint, and I know that I shall not be ashamed” (Isa. 50:4-7).

“In the days of His flesh” (Heb. 4:15) words such as these had to have been an especial source of consolation and sustainment to the Son of God. The words were testifying of Him, and of the purpose for which He came into the world.

That I should Know How to Speak a Word in Season to him that is Weary. When the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, for our sakes He was made to experience the full gamut of the consequences and liabilities caused by the entrance of sin into the world. Almost immediately after Adam had sinned the Lord God said to him, “In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread” (Gen. 3:19). The curse that was pronounced in the Edenic garden meant that labor, for both the man and the woman, would thenceforth be associated with adversity, toil, affliction, and travail.

The Lord Jesus Christ tasted firsthand of the bitterness of these things. He was made subject to the weariness that is associated with life in this present evil world. He frequently labored to the point of exhaustion as He went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the Devil. In Mark’s gospel we are given a snapshot of “one of the days of the Son of man” (Lk. 17:22) as He diligently labored with His disciples. Mark’s passing comment was that “they (the Lord and His disciples) had no leisure so much as to eat” (Mk. 6:31). On another occasion John gives us a glimpse of the Savior’s being made subject to weariness in toil: “Now Jacob’s well was there. Jesus therefore, being wearied with His journey, sat thus on the well: and it was about the sixth hour” (Jn. 4:6; see also Mk. 4:38). And it was also in this domain of the curse that the Savior sweat “great drops of blood” (Lk. 22:44) as He earnestly gave Himself to the monumental task of laying down His life a ransom for many.

In all of these things Christ was being prepared of God to know how to speak a word in season to them that are weary. The Lord Jesus Christ speaks with firsthand knowledge of our seemingly hopeless condition here in this present world, as He graciously declares: “Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For My yoke is easy, and My burden is light” (Mt. 11:28-30).

He Wakeneth Morning by Morning. In the mornings the Father would wake up the Son in order to resume fellowship with Him, and begin with Him a new day of labor. Jesus said, “Verily, verily, I say unto you, The Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He seeth the Father do: for what things soever He doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise” (Jn. 5:19).

The Lord Jesus Christ was especially prepared by the Most High to redeem and to reclaim lost humanity back unto Himself. His body was prepared of God to be an acceptable offering and sacrifice for sins. And by His humiliation and sufferings He was being fashioned of God to be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God. Not even a sympathetic divine omniscience could take the place of the ability to be touched with the feeling of one’s infirmity, in the way that Christ was enabled of God in the behalf of those whom He came to save. Isaiah spoke of the tenderness of the LORD God towards Israel when he wrote: “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” (Isa. 63:9). While this may have been adequate in effecting temporal deliverances for God’s chosen people in the time of Moses and the Prophets, it is nevertheless entirely inadequate in enabling those who are being delivered from their sins to efficaciously come to grips with the sin issue as it pertains to themselves, and to the conscience. “How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?” (Heb. 9:14).

It was absolutely necessary that Christ become a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God. In this capacity He is able to be touched with the feeling of our infirmity (Heb. 4:15), as He was “in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.” He is able to “have compassion on the ignorant, and upon them that are out of the way, seeing that He also” was “compassed with infirmity” (Heb. 5:2). He is able to save them “to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them” (Heb. 7:25). He comes to the aide of those who are engaged in the warfare of faith, and enables them to overcome temptation, to resist the Devil, and to impart to believing men the purposeful determination to say no to sin. But if any man sin, He, Jesus Christ the Righteous, is our Advocate with the Father. As our great High Priest Christ is able to restore believing men unto fellowship with the Father when they sin, and renew them in the good fight of faith.

The Lord Jesus Christ was prepared of God to steadfastly endure the humiliations and oppositions such as are recorded here, received at the hands of wicked men. “Then did they spit in His face, and buffeted Him; and others smote Him with the palms of their hands” (Mt. 26:67). “And they spit upon Him, and took the reed, and smote Him on the head” (Mt. 27:30). “And some began to spit on Him, and to cover His face, and to buffet Him, and to say unto Him, Prophesy: and the servants did strike Him with the palms of their hands” (Mk. 14:65). “And they smote Him on the head with a reed, and did spit upon Him, and bowing their knees worshipped Him” (Mk. 15:19). Those who are living by faith in the Son of God are similarly prepared of God to bear up under such humiliations and afflictions which they are called upon to endure.

The Savior was given grace to set His face like a flint in order that He might finish the work that God the Father gave Him to do as He gave His life a ransom for many. He likewise enables those who have believed upon His Name to set their faces steadfastly to the end of their sojourn here in this world, in order that they may finish their course with joy. We who have believed on the Lord Jesus Christ are following in His steps, and in the trail that He has blazed for us from this world to the one that is to come.

“But though He had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on Him: that the saying of Esaias the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spake, Lord, who hath believed our report? and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed? Therefore they could not believe, because that Esaias said again, He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart; that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal them. These things said Esaias, when he saw His glory, and spake of Him” (Jn. 12:37-41).

Christ is
a Shepherd who
Feeds His Flock

Isa. 40:11

ISAIAH CHAPTER 53

“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. He was oppressed, and He was afflicted, yet He opened not His mouth: He 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. 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, He shall prolong His days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in His hand. 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” (Isa. 53:1-12).

As one reads Isaiah’s stirring account here in chapter 53, it seems to the reader that the Prophet writes almost as if he were an eyewitness of the sufferings of Messiah, even though he prophesied some 700 years prior to Christ’s coming into the world. The four gospel writers each recounted the specific details of Christ’s crucifixion, but in noticeable contrast Isaiah gives a sacred commentary of what was actually transpiring in His crucifixion. Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John all testified of things that could be seen with the eye, but Isaiah bore witness with great specificity to the momentous significance of what was actually transpiring there on Golgotha. The gospel writers all testified of observable happenings and happenstances that pertained to the crucifixion of Christ, but Isaiah testified of divine transactions taking place in association with His crucifixion.

Prior to Christ’s resurrection and ascension to the right hand of God the significance of His sufferings was not perceived, not even by those who were the closest to Him in the days of His flesh. It was only after the weighty significance began to be opened up unto men through preaching by the Apostles and disciples that men began to comprehend what had actually transpired at the Cross. Those who were near to the Savior, having walked with Him and being present at His crucifixion, were not able to make sense of the climactic events that were unfolding there before their very eyes until “the ¹Day of Pentecost was

¹ The Day of Pentecost, recorded in Acts chapter 2, was the proclamation of the inauguration and coronation of the glorified Christ as the promised, rightful, and destined Occupant of David’s throne. David’s throne, as it is there announced in Acts 2, is set for the implementation of God’s purpose in salvation in the Lord Jesus Christ. It is a throne from which the favor of God is bestowed upon believing men, and from which judgments are meted out to rebellious and unbelieving men. “Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by Him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know: Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain: Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that He should be holden of it. For David speaketh concerning Him, I foresaw the Lord always before My face, for He is on My right hand, that I should not be moved: Therefore did My heart rejoice, and My tongue was glad; moreover also My flesh shall rest in hope: because Thou wilt not leave My soul in hell (Hades), neither wilt Thou suffer Thine Holy One to see corruption. Thou hast made known to Me the ways of life; Thou

fully come” (Acts 2:1).

The Testimony of the Women. *And their words seemed to them as idle tales.* “NOW upon the first day of the week, very early in the morning, they came unto the sepulchre, bringing the spices which they had prepared, and certain others with them. And they found the stone rolled away from the sepulchre. And they entered in, and found not the body of the Lord Jesus. And it came to pass, as THEY WERE MUCH PERPLEXED thereabout, behold, two men stood by them in shining garments: and as THEY WERE AFRAID, and bowed down their faces to the earth, they said unto them, Why seek ye the living among the dead? He is not here, but is risen: remember how He spake unto you when He was yet in Galilee, saying, The Son of man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again. And they remembered His words, and returned from the sepulchre, and told all these things unto the Eleven, and to all the rest. It was Mary Magdalene, and Joanna, and Mary the mother of James, and other women that were with them, which told these things unto the Apostles. AND THEIR WORDS SEEMED TO THEM AS IDLE TALES, AND THEY BELIEVED THEM NOT. Then arose Peter, and ran unto the sepulchre; and stooping down, he beheld the linen clothes laid by themselves, and departed, wondering in himself at that which was come to pass” (Lk. 24:1-12).

“Much perplexed”, “afraid”, “words seemed as idle tales”, “wondering in himself”. These were some of the first responses of the disciples and Apostles when they were confronted with the reality of Christ’s resurrection. They had forgotten what Jesus had said to them many times prior to His crucifixion, as the angel declared unto them: “Remember how He spake unto you when He was yet in Galilee, saying, The Son of man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again.” Let us learn from these things the grievous nature of unbelief, and ever seek grace from the Lord to “be not faithless, but believing” (Jn. 20:27).

The Two on the Road to Emmaus. “And, behold, two of them went that same day to a village called Emmaus, which was from Jerusalem about threescore furlongs. And they talked together of all these things which had happened. AND IT CAME TO PASS, THAT, WHILE THEY COMMUNED TOGETHER AND REASONED, JESUS HIMSELF DREW NEAR, AND WENT WITH THEM. But their eyes were holden that they should not know Him. And He said unto them, What manner of communications are these that ye have one to another, as ye walk, and are sad? And the one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answering said unto Him, Art thou only a stranger in Jerusalem, and hast not known the things which are come to pass there in these days? And He said unto them, What things? And they said unto Him, Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, which was a Prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people: And how the chief priests and our rulers delivered Him to be condemned to death, and have crucified Him. But we trusted that it had been He which should have redeemed Israel: and beside all this, to day is the third day since these things were done. Yea, and certain women also of our company made us astonished, which were early at the sepulchre; And when they found not His body,

shalt make Me full of joy with Thy countenance. MEN AND BRETHREN, LET ME FREELY SPEAK UNTO YOU OF THE PATRIARCH DAVID, THAT HE IS BOTH DEAD AND BURIED, AND HIS SEPULCHRE IS WITH US UNTO THIS DAY. THEREFORE BEING A PROPHET, AND KNOWING THAT GOD HAD SWORN WITH AN OATH TO HIM, THAT OF THE FRUIT OF HIS LOINS, ACCORDING TO THE FLESH, HE WOULD RAISE UP CHRIST TO SIT ON HIS THRONE; HE (DAVID) SEEING THIS BEFORE SPAKE OF THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST, THAT HIS SOUL WAS NOT LEFT IN HELL (HADES), NEITHER HIS FLESH DID SEE CORRUPTION. This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. THEREFORE BEING BY THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD EXALTED, AND HAVING RECEIVED OF THE FATHER THE PROMISE OF THE HOLY GHOST, HE HATH SHED FORTH THIS, WHICH YE NOW SEE AND HEAR. For David is not ascended into the heavens: but he saith himself, The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit Thou on My right hand, Until I make Thy foes Thy footstool. THEREFORE LET ALL THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL KNOW ASSUREDLY, THAT GOD HATH MADE THAT SAME JESUS, WHOM YE HAVE CRUCIFIED, BOTH LORD AND CHRIST” (Acts 2:22-36; see also Psalms 16, 110).

they came, saying, that they had also seen a vision of angels, which said that He was alive. And certain of them which were with us went to the sepulchre, and found it even so as the women had said: but Him they saw not. Then He said unto them, O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken: OUGHT NOT CHRIST TO HAVE SUFFERED THESE THINGS, AND TO ENTER INTO HIS GLORY? AND BEGINNING AT MOSES AND ALL THE PROPHETS, HE EXPOUNDED UNTO THEM IN ALL THE SCRIPTURES THE THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF” (Lk. 24:13-27).

It should be noted that, though Cleopas and his partner (possibly his wife) were tenderly affected by the things which had been transpiring in Jerusalem over the previous several days, the Lord Jesus Christ nevertheless gently upbraided them for their unbelief. We must learn from this account the Lord’s expectation for faith to be found in us, even in times when our faith is being tried.

Isaiah’s Sacred Commentary. At the Savior’s crucifixion there were things that were evident, but there were also things that were not apparent. There were things that could be seen with the eye of flesh, but there were also very real things that were yet hidden from men’s eyes.

It was evident to all that Christ was wounded. But Isaiah declares that “HE WAS WOUNDED FOR OUR TRANSGRESSIONS.” And it was clear to all that Christ was bruised. But the Prophet affirms that “HE WAS BRUISED FOR OUR INIQUITIES.” Other interpretive declarations recorded in Isaiah’s prophecy are as follows: “THE LORD HATH LAID ON HIM (CHRIST) THE INIQUITY OF US ALL.” “FOR THE TRANSGRESSION OF MY PEOPLE WAS HE STRICKEN.” “HE BARE THE SIN OF MANY, AND MADE INTERCESSION FOR THE TRANSGRESSORS.” “YET IT PLEASED THE LORD TO BRUISE HIM (CHRIST).” “HE (GOD, THE FATHER) HATH PUT HIM (CHRIST) TO GRIEF.” The crystal clarity with which Isaiah spoke regarding the significance of Christ’s crucifixion is mind-arresting to reflect upon. They are words that are worthy of frequent and earnest deliberation.

It should become very evident that those, whose understanding of the sufferings of Christ is limited to the record of the four gospel writers, are greatly restricted, and are shut up to a profession of faith that is devoid of divine power. “The power of God unto salvation” (Rom. 1:16) proceeds from the consideration of the implications of what actually was transpiring at the cross of Christ. The implications of which we speak are opened up unto men through the preaching of the cross. These implications are connections that are made by the Apostles and Prophets between the record of events associated with the crucifixion of Jesus Christ and that which has been accomplished salvationally by the sufferings of Christ. “For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God” (I Cor. 1:18). Thus, by the preaching of the cross, what is not apparent [the Father bruising Christ, the LORD laying the iniquity of us all upon Christ, Christ being wounded for our transgressions and being bruised for our iniquities, etc.] is powerfully joined together with that which is more apparent [the events associated with Christ’s crucifixion in the four gospel accounts]. And they are now joined together in the minds and hearts of believing men and women.

Philip and the Ethiopian Eunuch. The Ethiopian eunuch, as he rode back to his homeland from Jerusalem, was reading what we call Isaiah chapter 53. As he read the Scripture his mind and heart were drawn to the One identified there, even to Him who was led as sheep to the slaughter. And then God sent Philip to preach to him as recorded here in Acts chapter 8.

“And the angel of the Lord spake unto Philip, saying, Arise, and go toward the south unto the way that goeth down from Jerusalem unto Gaza, which is desert. And he arose and went: and, behold, a man of Ethiopia, an eunuch of great authority under Candace queen of the Ethiopians, who had the charge of all her treasure, and had come to Jerusalem for to worship, was returning, and sitting in his chariot read Esaias the Prophet.

“Then the Spirit said unto Philip, Go near, and join thyself to this chariot. And Philip ran thither to him, and heard him read the Prophet Esaias, and said, Understandest thou what thou readest? And he said, How can I, except some man should guide me? And he desired Philip that he would come up and sit with him. THE PLACE OF THE SCRIPTURE WHICH HE READ WAS THIS, HE WAS LED AS A SHEEP TO THE SLAUGHTER; AND LIKE A LAMB DUMB BEFORE HIS SHEARER, SO OPENED HE NOT HIS MOUTH: IN HIS HUMILIATION HIS JUDGMENT WAS TAKEN AWAY: AND WHO SHALL DECLARE HIS GENERATION? FOR HIS LIFE IS TAKEN FROM THE EARTH.

“And the eunuch answered Philip, and said, I pray thee, of whom speaketh the Prophet this? of himself, or of some other man? THEN PHILIP OPENED HIS MOUTH, AND BEGAN AT THE SAME SCRIPTURE, AND PREACHED UNTO HIM JESUS.

“And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, SEE, ²HERE IS WATER; WHAT DOTH HINDER ME TO BE BAPTIZED? AND PHILIP SAID, IF THOU BELIEVEST WITH ALL THINE HEART, THOU MAYEST. AND HE ANSWERED AND SAID, I BELIEVE THAT JESUS CHRIST IS THE SON OF GOD. AND HE COMMANDED THE CHARIOT TO STAND STILL: AND THEY WENT DOWN BOTH INTO THE WATER, BOTH PHILIP AND THE EUNUCH; AND HE BAPTIZED HIM.

“And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more: and he went on his way rejoicing” (Acts 8:26-39).

A Concluding Thought. In every generation, wherever honest and good hearts are earnestly pondering the sufferings of Christ as the Ethiopian eunuch was doing, God will send preachers to such ones to open up the Word of God to them. Salvation is God’s enterprise. “Salvation is of the LORD” (Jon. 2:9). God is “working salvation in the midst of the earth” (Ps. 74:10). “The eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show Himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward Him” (II Chron. 16:9). He prepares hearts for the reception of His Word, and then He sends the preachers to minister to them, as He did in the case of the Eunuch. May we be counted worthy to be used of Him in His vineyard to the praise of His glory. May we be alert to recognize hearts that are tender to God’s Word, and then may we have grace to faithfully and rightly divide His Word unto such hearts as “oracles of God”, “that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever, Amen” (I Pet. 4:11).

² “Here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?” It is evident from these words spoken by the eunuch that Philip instructed him regarding the necessity of baptism (immersion), as “he preached unto him Jesus”. “They came unto a certain water” . . . “they went down both into the water” . . . “when they were come up out of the water.” If any today are yet uncertain over whether God, in the New Covenant, has made baptism (immersion) into Christ an essential part of the obtainment of salvation, let them consider the Ethiopian eunuch, and the urgency that he expressed regarding the matter. We make these observations here because this lively discourse between Philip and the Eunuch was the result of the consideration of Isaiah’s prophecy.

WHO HATH BELIEVED OUR REPORT?

“Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the LORD revealed?” (Isa. 53:1).

The Gospel, a Blessed Report. The gospel is the blessed report to men of a Savior who was put to death in the flesh so that He might forever put sin away from the face of God. Sin, the great alienator of men from God, has been, once and for all, put away by the sufferings of Christ, and the glory which has followed!

That which presently goes under the heading of preaching the gospel, however, includes a host of tangential subjects, which are, for the most part, completely foreign to the subject matter labored by the Apostles. From improving marriage and family relationships, to attempting to decipher the will of the Lord for men through earthbound reasoning, to the espousal of humanitarian causes; these are a representation of the typical offerings which today are pawned off upon men under the guise of preaching the gospel.

The Parameters of the Gospel. Let us permit the Apostle Paul to set for us the parameters of the subject matter contained in the gospel. He states as follows: “Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; And that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures” (I Cor. 15:1-3).

Again in another place he said, “the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God” (I Cor. 1:18). “For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe” (1:21).

But where is the preaching of the cross in our day? And where are the glad proclaimers of “Jesus and the resurrection” (Acts 17:18)? Most of what is “preached” today would not save anybody, because the preachments do not contain the savor of the “blessed” or happy God (I Tim. 1:11) or of sins forgiven (cf. I Jn. 2:12). The things which are preached are often as salt which has lost its savor. Most of what is preached today is not capable of convicting the sinner nor of comforting the righteous.

Religious movements which, centuries ago, were once noted for preaching “the glad tidings of the kingdom of God” (Lk. 8:1) have compromised their message and, for the most part, have made friends with the world (cf. Jas. 4:4). The glory associated with many of their noble beginnings has of a long time departed! (cf. I Sam. 4:21). That which professes to be the church has surrendered its divinely given stewardship of being “the pillar and the ground of the truth.” It has buried the talent of truth in the earth, and therefore, has become unprofitable and unsavory to both God and men. What is being declared from most pulpits would not be regarded as good news by a world that is dead in its sins and lost to God, nor by men and women who are seeking to recover themselves from the snare of the Devil. What professes to be the church is characterized by a cowardly lukewarmness, for hidebound legalism, and even for their abandonment, for all practical purposes, of the faith once delivered. There are exceptions here and there, of course, to these generalizations, for which we give thanks.

Characteristic of this degeneration is a very subtle acquired at-homeness in this present evil world on the part of those who have made a profession of faith in Christ, even by those who were once noted for their zeal and fervency for the things of God. People take for granted that they are accepted with God, but are not giving all diligence to make their calling and election sure, as the Apostle exhorted. The “once-saved-always-saved” doctrine, which typically has been associated with certain “fundamental” groups, is actually the doctrine of religious flesh. Every religious group has their own version of this damnable doctrine, whether it is expressed in writing or not. Wherever men and women are assuming that they are accepted of God, and are not giving diligence to the matter of proving their own selves (see

II Cor. 13:5), there the doctrine of which we speak has been embraced.

The Directive Given to Israel while in Captivity. “Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, unto all that are carried away captives, whom I have caused to be carried away from Jerusalem unto Babylon; Build ye houses, and dwell in them; and plant gardens, and eat the fruit of them; Take ye wives, and beget sons and daughters; and take wives for your sons, and give your daughters to husbands, that they may bear sons and daughters; that ye may be increased there, and not diminished. And seek the peace of the city whither I have caused you to be carried away captives, and pray unto the LORD for it: for in the peace thereof shall ye have peace” (Jer. 29:4-7).

For those who have been made to “sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus” (Eph. 2:6), the divine directive to them is *not* as the one that was given by Jeremiah to those who had been carried away captive to Babylon. Those who are in Christ Jesus are not to live as though they are planning to stay here for a long time, for “the time is” not long, but “short” (I Cor. 7:29). They are to “live peaceably with all men” (Rom. 12:18), as much as in them lies, but not to compromisingly seek the peace of the land in which they now are sojourning by faith, for they have been constituted “strangers and pilgrims on the earth” (Heb. 11:13) by virtue of their new creatureship in Christ (II Cor. 5:17).

The Instruction Given by Paul to the Church. “But this I say, brethren, the time is short: it remaineth, that both they that have wives be as though they had none; and they that weep, as though they wept not; and they that rejoice, as though they rejoiced not; and they that buy, as though they possessed not; and they that use this world, as not abusing it: for the fashion of this world passeth away” (I Cor. 7:29-31). These words are not a summons to irresponsible living, but rather to the avoidance of any inordinate attachments to “this present evil world” (Gal. 1:4) and its temporal allurements.

In Christ we have not been carried away into captivity, but rather have been delivered from the power of darkness, and have been translated into the kingdom of God’s dear Son (see Col. 1:13), even while yet living in this present world. We are “no more strangers and foreigners” to “the household of God” (see Eph. 2:19), but we are yet strangers and pilgrims in this present world. We are now in the waiting stance; waiting for God’s Son from Heaven (see I Th. 1:10). This is not only the doctrine of those who are living by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, but it has become to them a substantive reality.

The Tendency to Inordinately Trust in Religious Things. There is a subtle tendency for men to trust in the religious things that they have done, even in things that the Savior has ordained that men should do, rather than trusting in the living and glorified Christ alone. For example, an inordinate trust in one’s baptism into Christ, and the perfunctory observance of the Lord’s Supper can in no wise take the place of a vibrant devotion to the risen and glorified Christ. Yet many religious devotees today evidence by their speech and conduct that they have a subtly misplaced confidence in religious things, activities, and experiences rather than in the Christ who is revealed in the Scripture.

Hear the admonition of Paul in this connection. “MOREOVER, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and ALL PASSED THROUGH THE SEA; and WERE ALL BAPTIZED UNTO MOSES in the cloud and in the sea; And DID ALL EAT THE SAME SPIRITUAL MEAT; and DID ALL DRINK THE SAME SPIRITUAL DRINK: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ. BUT WITH MANY OF THEM GOD WAS NOT WELL PLEASED: for they were overthrown in the wilderness” (I Cor. 10:1-5). If having a phenomenal religious experience and the mere observance of dutiful religious forms were the means of being well pleasing to God, then Israel would certainly be the example to follow. But the Scripture says that “with many of them God was not well pleased: for they were overthrown in the wilderness.”

The Tendency to Law Preaching. Many today feel it incumbent upon them (in their preaching) to re-define sin through various hermeneutic and syllogistic formulas, as though the law given at Mt. Sinai

had utterly failed in its demonstration of the exceeding sinfulness of sin (cf. Rom. 7:13). But the law of God has already abundantly and clearly defined sin.

“Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God” (Rom. 3:19). “Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin” (3:20).

Incidentally, the law of God was not merely a set of commandments, that being the end of the matter. It *was* also the appointed way of approach to God and a valid means of obtaining life before God. “Ye shall therefore keep My statutes, and My judgments: which if a man do, he shall live in them: I am the LORD” (Lev. 18:5). And when Christ died for our sins, He did not merely take one set of commandments “out of the way” (Col. 2:14) to replace them with another set of new covenant commandments (as is commonly taught today). Rather, He took the entire law approach out of the way as the means of coming to God. “Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth” (Rom. 10:4).

The Nature of the Report that is to be Believed. In glorious contrast with this, the gospel is an announcement and proclamation of what God, through Christ, has already done with men’s sins. It is truly “good news” and “glad tidings” to those who have served their tenure under the schoolmaster of law (cf. Gal. 3:24-25). “As cold waters to a thirsty soul, so is good news from a far country” (Prov. 25:25). Such is the impact of the gospel message upon the hearts of those who are hungering and thirsting after righteousness!

The gospel is such good news that, when properly received and considered, men are often tempted to think that it is too good to be true. Justification “from all things, from which” we “could not be justified by the law of Moses” (Acts 13:39); forgiveness of “all trespasses” (Col. 2:13); the promised “crown of life” (Jas. 1:12); “the promise of life which is in Christ Jesus” (II Tim. 1:1); these are but some of the marvelous benefits that are graciously held out to men who obey the gospel.

Christ Jesus has made “an end of sins” (Dan. 9:24) at the cross! He has purged our sins (Heb. 1:3)! He has forever put them away (9:26)! He has once suffered for sins, the Just for the unjust (I Pet. 3:18)! and God has condemned sin in the flesh (Rom. 8:3)! And as Paul summarized the gospel elsewhere, “God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation” (II Cor. 5:19).

Now the preaching of the gospel is the declaration of these blessed realities by men to other men. “It (the gospel) is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth” (Rom. 1:16). And it is in the earnest hearing and receiving of these marvelous realities that men are enabled to recover themselves from the snare of the devil and thus live before God. Let us then make much of this word of reconciliation and insist that it be preached with no substitutes.

*“For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ”
(I Cor. 3:11: see Isa. 28:16).*

TO WHOM HATH THE ARM OF THE LORD BEEN REVEALED?

“Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the LORD revealed?” (Isa. 53:1).

Other Translations. “And to whom has the arm of the Lord been disclosed? [John 12:38-41; Rom. 10:16.]” (AMP); “. . . and to whom hath the arm of Jehovah been revealed?” (ASV); “and to whom had the arm of the Lord been unveiled?” (BBE); “Has anyone . . . seen the mighty power of the LORD in action?” (CEV); “and upon whom shall the arm of the LORD be manifested?” (JUB); “To whom has the LORD revealed his powerful arm?” (NLT).

The Arm of the LORD. The “arm of the LORD” (see also Isa. 51:9; Jn. 12:38) speaks of God’s working arm, particularly where it is evident that He has been working salvationally. It is similar to the expression “the power of God” (Rom. 1:16; I Cor. 1:18, 24; 2:5, etc.) in the Apostles’ writings. The arm of the LORD speaks of a demonstration of the power of God that is operative in the hearts of believing men and women. Wherever people are found believing the gospel “report” or message, there God has been *evidently* at work in the hearts of the believing ones. He works in them by writing His law upon their hearts and in their inward parts (see Jer. 31:33-34). He effects in them a fundamental change, translating them from the realm of darkness to the domain of light (see Acts 28:16; Col. 1:13; Eph. 5:8; I Pet. 2:9). He makes them to be new creatures in Christ (II Cor. 5:17; Gal. 6:15; Eph. 2:10). The Lord makes them to be His sons and daughters because they have obeyed the gospel (Rom. 10:16; see also Rom. 1:5; 6:17; 16:26; II Cor. 6:17-18; Gal. 4:4-6), being baptized into His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. He instructs them about the preciousness of His beloved Son, precious both to God, and to the ones being taught of God (I Pet. 2:4-7; see also I Pet. 1:19). He nurtures and feeds them with His Word. Wherever men indeed are believing in Christ, the Son of God, there “the arm of the LORD” is clearly being revealed, both in them and to them.

A Hebraism, or Parallelism. “Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the LORD revealed?” A Hebraism is a word construction that is peculiar to the Hebrew language. While there are numerous types of these expressions, the kind we are focusing on here consists of two parallel sentences (statements or questions) that are expressing the same thought, only from contrasting perspectives. In this case here we have two questions side by side in verse 1 of chapter 53. Who hath believed . . . to whom is the arm of the LORD revealed? Both sentences considered together are expressing a complete and, at the same time, complimentary thought. We might say: “Who hath believed our report?”, or to express it another way, “To whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?” In this instance, “To whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?” serves to clarify the full import of the question “Who hath believed our report?”

The Scripture clearly places great stress on faith and believing as the appointed work of God for men (Jn. 6:29), as the reason for men’s justification before God (Hab. 2:4; Rom. 1:16-17; Gal. 3:11; Heb. 10:38), as the exclusive means of pleasing God (Heb. 11:6), as being “the substance of things hoped for” (Heb. 11:1), and as the means of victory in overcoming the world (I Jn. 5:4). Paul also speaks of “the exceeding greatness of His power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of His mighty power” (Eph. 1:19). Paul remembers Timothy for his “unfeigned faith” (II Tim. 1:5), and Peter writes to those who have “obtained like precious faith” “through the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ” (II Pet. 1:1). Again Paul writing to Titus speaks of “the faith of God’s elect” (Tit. 1:1), or faith that is the genuine article, namely, the kind of faith that will bring its possessors all the way to glory. And such faith is witnessed wherever “the arm of the LORD is revealed”.

From these as well as many other similar declarations of Scripture it is evident that God has not left the matter of the nature of faith, including the manner of the consistent divine responsiveness thereunto, to be subject to private interpretation. The genuine article is clearly and repeatedly identified and exemplified throughout the Scripture. While there certainly are numerous corruptions of the faith extant in the world, having been fabricated by that old serpent the Devil, the lives of the possessors of “faith unfeigned”

(I Tim. 1:5; II Tim. 1:5) and “the substance of things hoped for” (Heb. 11:1) are ever witnessing decidedly and convincingly against them. “Like precious faith” (II Pet. 1:1), wherever it is possessed by men, exposes and makes manifest that which is not genuine, and that which is not according to truth. “The faith of God’s elect” (Tit. 1:1), wherever it is possessed by men, is consistently and noticeably accompanied by a resolute walk in the Spirit (Gal. 5:16), a supremely fervent love and devotion for the Lord Jesus Christ, an unmistakeable preference for Christ’s brethren, and a following after peace “and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord” (Heb. 12:14). The faith of God’s elect, being that which is lived and walked in by men while yet sojourning in this present world, is the kind of faith that will bring those who possess it all the way to the world to come.

Obedying the Gospel and Believing the Report. “But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report? So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” (Rom. 10:16-17). Paul here cites the question “who hath believed our report?” as evidence that Israel had not all obeyed the gospel. Thus, we are also justified in looking for faith’s bona fide evidences wherever there is a claim of believing the report.

“But though He had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on Him: that the saying of Esaias the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spake, Lord, who hath believed our report? and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed? Therefore they could not believe, because that Esaias said again, He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart; that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal them. These things said Esaias, when he saw His glory, and spake of Him” (Jn. 12:37-41). Wherever men are not in earnest with regard to believing this gospel report, they stand in jeopardy of having their eyes blinded, and their hearts hardened so that they cannot believe. God is extremely sensitive with respect to men’s response to this report!

Arm of the Lord, awake, awake!
Put on Thy strength, the nations shake,
And let the world, adoring, see
Triumphs of mercy wrought by Thee.

Say to the heathen from Thy throne,
I am Jehovah, God alone;
Thy voice their idols shall confound,
And cast their altars to the ground.

No more let creature blood be spilt,
Vain sacrifice for human guilt!
But to each conscience be applied
The blood that flowed from Jesus’ side.

Let Zion’s time of favor come;
O bring the tribes of Israel home;
And let our wondering eyes behold
Gentiles and Jews in Jesus’ fold.

Almighty God, Thy grace proclaim
In every clime of every name;
Let adverse powers before Thee fall,
And crown the Savior Lord of all.

—William Shrubsole, 1796

Christ is
a Hiding Place
from the Wind

Isa. 32:2

HE HATH NO FORM NOR COMELINESS

“He hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see Him, there is no beauty that we should desire Him” (Isa. 53:2). Comeliness, here, is natural attractiveness, beauty or allurement [in a wholesome sense].

Other Translations. “He has no form or comeliness [royal, kingly pomp]”(AMP); “He had no grace of form, to give us pleasure” (BBE); “Nothing about the way he looked made him attractive to us” (CEV); “He had neither beauty nor majesty” (EB); “There was nothing special or impressive about the way he looked, nothing we could see that would cause us to like him” (ERV); “There was nothing attractive about him, nothing that would draw us to him” (GNB); “He had no form or majesty that would make us look at him. He had nothing in his appearance that would make us desire him” (GW); “He has no stately form or majesty that we should look upon Him” (NASB); “He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to him, nothing in his appearance that we should desire him”(NIB).

*“The best of men that e’er wore earth about him was a sufferer,
A soft, meek, patient, humble, tranquil spirit,
The first true gentleman that ever breathed.” –Dekker, an early English poet*

Christ’s Outward Appearance in the Days of His Flesh

In these specific words of the Prophet, he is speaking of an appearance that is perceived by, as well as attractive to, “the carnal mind” (Rom. 8:7), or “the mind of the flesh” (ASV). By saying that the Lord Jesus Christ had no form certainly is not to say that He was deformed, obnoxious, or even unlike other men in His appearance. He “made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men” (Phil. 2:7).

He had no form that we should desire Him. There was nothing about His external appearance that would commend Him to men as their Savior, Redeemer, King, and Judge. His outward appearance did not make Him stand out as the evident fulfillment of all that the holy Prophets had prophesied. But what He said and did would leave men without excuse for not coming to Him and believing on Him (cf. Jn. 6:35).

The Savior, as Viewed by the Mind of the Flesh. “Is not this the carpenter’s son? is not his mother called Mary? and his brethren, James, and Joses, and Simon, and Judas?” (Mt. 13:55). “Is not this the carpenter?” (Mk. 6:3). “Then came the officers to the chief priests and Pharisees; and they said unto them, Why have ye not brought him? The officers answered, Never man spake like this man. Then answered them the Pharisees, Are ye also deceived? Have any of the rulers or of the Pharisees believed on him? But this people who knoweth not the law are cursed. Nicodemus saith unto them, (he that came to Jesus by night, being one of them,) Doth our law judge any man, before it hear him, and know what he doeth? They answered and said unto him, Art thou also of Galilee? Search, and look: for out of Galilee ariseth no prophet. And every man went unto his own house” (Jn. 7:45-52). “When Jesus therefore perceived that they would come and take him by force, to make him a king, he departed again into a mountain himself alone” (Jn. 16:15). “And as soon as it was day, the elders of the people and the chief priests and the scribes came together, and led him into their council, saying, Art thou the Christ? tell us. And he said unto them, If I tell you, ye will not believe” (Lk. 22:66-67).

But neither were His appearance and form a contradiction to, nor a distraction from, who He actually was. His body was uniquely prepared for Him by God (Heb. 10:5) in order that He might be the perfect Sinbearer.

Speaking as a man, it was absolutely critical that God beheld in this Man every other man that had lived, or shall have lived, when He laid the sins of the world upon Him. And to carry this even a step

further, it was also critical that we ourselves be persuaded that this is precisely what He saw, when the chastisement of our peace was upon Him. [the Word was made flesh, the Son of man, the Last Adam, etc.]

Like the Tabernacle in the Wilderness. There were, however, definite marvelously blessed things to be beheld in the Savior “in the days of His flesh” (Heb. 4:15), but one had to look beyond the externals. He was much like the tabernacle in the wilderness which had “a covering” “of rams’ skins dyed red, and a covering of badgers’ skins above that” (Exod. 36:19), and where “the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle” (Exod. 40:34). The deeper one was given to look into His Person and Character, the more the glory and beauty became apparent.

What was beheld in Him before the Day of Pentecost. “This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth His glory; and His disciples believed on Him” (Jn. 2:11). “Master, carest Thou not that we perish?” (Mk. 4:38). “And Peter answered Him and said, Lord, if it be Thou, bid me come unto Thee on the water” (Mt. 14:28). “Then Simon Peter answered Him, Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe and are sure that Thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God” (Jn. 6:68-69). “Then said Martha unto Jesus, Lord, if Thou hadst been here, my brother had not died” (Jn. 11:21).

What was beheld in Him after Pentecost. “THAT which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life; (For the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and show unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us)” (I Jn. 1:1-2).

“Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus” (Phil. 3:13-14).

“Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord, According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue” (II Pet. 1:2-3).

That which was Foreshadowed in the Law. Consider these representations of Him as both High Priest and Sacrifice as foreshadowed in the Law. The Priest offering the sacrifice unto the Lord could not have a blemish, deformity, or defect of any sort, external or internal.

The High Priest. “For whatsoever man he be that hath a blemish, he shall not approach: a blind man, or a lame, or he that hath a flat nose, or any thing superfluous, Or a man that is brokenfooted, or brokenhanded, Or crookbackt, or a dwarf, or that hath a blemish in his eye, or be scurvy, or scabbed, or hath his stones broken; No man that hath a blemish of the seed of Aaron the priest shall come nigh to offer the offerings of the LORD made by fire: he hath a blemish; he shall not come nigh to offer the bread of his God” (Lev. 21:18-21).

The Sacrifice. Neither could that which was offered have any blemishes or defects. It is inconceivable that God’s Lamb, offered up for the sins of the world, would have any defects at all in His Person, Character, or body. In the case of the sacrifices offered under the Law, which were a shadow of heavenly things, there could not be any defects that were evident, or apparent, or known to men. But with regards to God’s Lamb there could not be any faults or defects at all. There could be none that the intense scrutiny of the God, who is thrice holy, could behold. None whatsoever!

In Leviticus. “And whosoever offereth a sacrifice of peace offerings unto the LORD to accomplish his vow, or a freewill offering in beeves [beef] or sheep, it shall be perfect to be accepted; there shall be no blemish therein. Blind, or broken, or maimed [mutilated, crippled, injured, disabled, impaired], or having a wen [a tumor or cyst], or scurvy [covered with scales, or scurf], or scabbed, ye shall not offer

these unto the LORD, nor make an offering by fire of them upon the altar unto the LORD” (Lev. 22:21-22). Again in Deuteronomy, “And if there be any blemish therein, as if it be lame, or blind, or have any ill blemish, thou shalt not sacrifice it unto the LORD thy God” (Deut. 15:21).

Malachi’s Indictment in this Connection. “And if ye offer the blind for sacrifice, is it not evil? and if ye offer the lame and sick, is it not evil? offer it now unto thy governor; will he be pleased with thee, or accept thy person? saith the LORD of hosts” (Mal. 1:8). “But ye have profaned it, in that ye say, The table of the LORD is polluted; and the fruit thereof, even his meat, is contemptible. Ye said also, Behold, what a weariness is it! and ye have snuffed at it, saith the LORD of hosts; and ye brought that which was torn, and the lame, and the sick; thus ye brought an offering: should I accept this of your hand? saith the LORD. But cursed be the deceiver, which hath in his flock a male, and voweth, and sacrificeth unto the Lord a corrupt thing: for I am a great King, saith the LORD of hosts, and my name is dreadful among the heathen” (Mal 1:12-14).

The Lamb of God. The Lamb of God [our Sacrifice and the Propitiation for our sins], and our great High Priest, was, and is, the flawless Substance of all that foreshadowed Him in Moses and the Prophets. There was no shadow that wanted her mate (cf. Isa. 34:16). The types and shadows pertaining to God’s Lamb and our great High Priest in Moses and the Prophets were looking ahead to realities that penetrated much farther than the mere outward appearance, but were not contradictory to the outward appearance. God’s Lamb and our High Priest could not be blemished, blind, or lame, or torn, or maimed, in any sense of the word.

The Marring of Christ’s Visage

This marring is not what is being referred to in Isaiah 53:2 [no beauty that we should desire Him], but we mention this here by way of contrast. “His visage was so marred more than any man, and His form more than the sons of men” (Isa. 52:14).

“His face and His whole appearance were marred more than any man’s, and His form beyond that of the sons of men” (Amp. V.). His visage was marred, but that was the consequence of the events leading up to His crucifixion, the crucifixion itself, and of our sins being laid upon Him. The Lord Jesus Christ was a perfect sinless Sacrifice in every respect, without flaw, without blemish, holy, harmless, and undefiled. The Servant of the Lord [as is He called in Isaiah’s prophecy] was the precious and perfect Lamb of God, and that which Jehovah Himself provided to take away our sins.

The marring of His visage was due to the works of evil men and “the power of darkness” (Lk. 22:53), but also it was “by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God”, and ultimately it was due to our sins being laid upon Him. The Lamb of God was spotless and unblemished when He offered Himself up for us all, but His visage was marred “beyond human semblance” (Isa. 52:14, ESV) as a consequence of that offering and the sufferings associated therewith.

Throughout all eternity the Lamb of God, even God’s perfect Lamb, will bear the marks that have been inflicted upon Him because of our sins. As eternity rolls its ceaseless cycles on there will never be a point or occasion where the sufferings of Christ will not be of utmost relevance to all who are present there. “And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth” (Rev. 5:6)

*“And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus”
(II Tim. 3:15).*

Christ is
Wonderful
Isa. 9:6

HE IS DESPISED AND REJECTED OF MEN

“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.” (Isa. 53:3).

Other Translations. “He was despised and rejected and forsaken by men”(AMP), “He was hated and rejected” (CEV), “Despised is He, and shunned by men” (CLV), “Despised was he, and forsaken of men” (EB), “We despised him and rejected him” (GNB), “He was despised and cast out of men's company” (MSTC), “He was spurned and avoided by men” (NAB), “He was despised and forsaken of men” (NASB), “He was despised and rejected by men” (RSV).

Some Involvements of Being Despised and Rejected

To be despised: to be abhorred, to be shunned, to be loathed, to be looked down upon, to be looked upon with contempt, to be scorned, to be disdained, to be the object of a low regard, to be regarded as offscouring, to be hated, and with regard to the Savior, it was, and is, “without cause”.

To be rejected: to not be welcomed into another's company, to not be received, to be disallowed, to not be recognized for who one really is, to be cast away, to be excluded from men's company, unreasonably and without cause. There are sufferings and hurt that are associated with this rejection, but in the case of the Lord Jesus Christ it was suffering that was clearly undeserved, for He had no sin, and He did no sin. He came into the world “to give His life a ransom for many” (Mt. 20:28; Mk. 10:45), to taste death for every man (see Heb. 2:8-9), and to “ransom” men “from the power of the grave” (Hos. 13:14), and yet He was despised and rejected of men.

The Effects of this Despising upon the Son of God. All of the despising and rejection, every part of it, had the effect of adding more to the acute inward suffering which the Man Christ Jesus had already been called upon to endure. He was a “Man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief.”

As preparatory for being made a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, it was necessary that the Lord Jesus Christ be so constituted as Emmanuel, the Son of God and the Son of Man. It was essential for Him to uniquely and tenderly experience and be touched by sorrow, grief, and pain. It was imperative that “His soul” (Isa. 53:10-11) not be shielded from the multifaceted miseries that would be brought upon Him “in the days of His flesh” (Heb. 4:15), including the despising and rejection of men.

The Constitution of Man Created in the Image of God

Men were not originally constituted of God for familiarity with suffering and pain, although they, in the wisdom of God, certainly have the capacity for that experience. Men were made to continuously have the Lord God's approval (cf. Gen. 1:31), to dwell forever in the Presence of the Holy One (cf. Gen. 3:22-24), and to have dominion over the works of God's hands (Gen. 1:26; Ps. 8:6). Men were not created to be the objects of despising and rejection. This was not the purpose for which men were created.

Men were made to dwell in an environment of unfeigned love and complete acceptance with regards to both God and men, not one of despising and rejection. This consideration is underwritten by the great commandment in the law. “Master, which is the great commandment in the law? Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets” (Mt. 22:36-40). The commandments of God give expression to the mind of God, and to the will and purpose of God.

These commandments are not only setting forth the Divine expectation for men, but also are witnessing to the way things shall be in truth, when once all the vestiges of the curse are removed at Christ's appearing. When He shall have changed “our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body”

(Phil. 3:21), redeemed men and women shall think, reason, judge, and act like the Lord Jesus Christ without the opposing law of sin in their members to contend with. The unchecked tendency of the natural man to this abysmal despising and rejection shall then at last take its place among the former things, which shall no longer be remembered, neither shall they come into mind. But let it ever be remembered that in the days of His flesh the Lord Jesus Christ was for our sakes despised and rejected of men.

Now in Christ Jesus we have been created with a capacity and desire for “joy and gladness” (Isa. 51:3) and for “the way of peace” (Lk. 1:79). We have been created to have undistracted attentiveness, love, and devotion to the Lord God and to His Christ. We, who are in Christ, are being conformed to the image of God’s Son (Rom. 8:29), and thus have a fundamental desire for being pleasing unto God. We were made to be free from bondage of every sort. We were made to be free to serve the living God. “The Spirit which dwelleth in us lusteth to envy” (Jas. 4:5), crying, as it were, “Let My people go that they may serve Me.” Now in Christ Jesus, these benefits have become substantive in nature, and things which the new man continually gravitates towards; yea, they are things which are blessedly and lastingly sustainable through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. The new man was not made for despising and rejection, although often in the present time it is called upon to endure these baser things.

The entrance of sin into the world did complicate matters, speaking as a man. There is within men a dreadful tendency to greatly underestimate how far we fell in Adam and also to de-emphasize and even ignore the lingering effects of the old man that are yet with us, which must be continually crucified. “And they that are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts” (Gal. 5:24). But we, who now “have the firstfruits of the Spirit” (Rom. 8:23), shall bid a final farewell to these oftentimes grievous hindrances in the morning of the resurrection.

Sin has now been completely put away by the Savior, and all the evil effects that were wrought by sin have been wonderfully set at naught and reversed through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ. [So long as we remain in the body, those who are in Christ are called upon to reckon this absolutely to be the case. We are to reckon ourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through the Lord Jesus Christ.] He who tasted death for every man (Heb. 2:8-9), and who was also made to be sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him (II Cor. 5:20-21), was first despised and rejected of men. Life and immortality have now been brought to light through the preaching of the gospel. But the foundational work was first wrought by Him who was first despised and rejected of men.

“All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works” (II Tím. 3:16-17).

Christ is
as Streams in the
Desert

Isa. 32:2

A MAN OF SORROWS, AND ACQUAINTED WITH GRIEF

“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.” (Isa. 53:3).

The Lord Jesus Christ was notably, in the days of His flesh, “a Man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief.” The sorrows and grief that He was bearing all the way to the cross are particularly significant to us because we were the cause of them, and it was because of us that this was declared of Him. The Ethiopian eunuch, poring earnestly over this portion of the Scripture when Phillip met him, asked of Phillip this question: “I pray thee, of whom speaketh the prophet this? of himself, or of some other man?” (Acts 8:34). To whom did these sorrows and griefs pertain, and what was the occasion for them? Honest and good hearts cannot rest until there is abundant clarification with regard to these matters, and “the gospel of Christ”, which is “the power of God unto salvation” (Rom. 1:16), has been given by God to men to graciously provide that clarification and assurance.

Other Translations. “a Man of sorrows and pains, and acquainted with grief and sickness;” (AMP), “he was a man in suffering, and acquainted with the bearing of sickness” (Brenton), “his life was filled with sorrow and terrible suffering” (CEV), “a man of pains, well acquainted with illness” (CJB), “a man of sorrows, and acquainted with infirmity:” (DRB), “a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief knowing sickness:” (ERRB), “a man of suffering, accustomed to infirmity” (NAB), “a man of sorrows, and familiar with suffering” (NIB), “a man of sorrows, acquainted with bitterest grief” (NLT).

Sorrow and Grief Considered

Sorrow is the direct consequence of sin. Before the entrance of sin into the world sorrow was unknown. “Unto the woman He said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee. And unto Adam He said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life;” (Gen. 3:16-17).

Because of the blighting of our race by sin, all men have their due portion of sorrow even in this world. “Man is born unto trouble as the sparks fly upward” (Job 5:7). “Man that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of trouble” (Job 14:1). “Thou hast set our iniquities before Thee, our secret sins in the light of Thy countenance. For all our days are passed away in Thy wrath: we spend our years as a tale that is told” (Ps. 90:8-9). This was the domain, into which the Lord Jesus Christ entered when “the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us” (Jn. 1:14). And this is the domain in which His glory was beheld.

Men of Sorrows. Almost all the notable men of Scriptural record were “men of sorrows.” Think of Jacob, whose gray hairs were, more than once, nearly brought down with sorrow to the grave (Gen. 42:38; 44:29, 31). It is said of Joseph, after he was sold by his brethren to the Ishmeelites for twenty pieces of silver, and after he was wrongly cast into prison in Egypt, that his “feet they hurt with fetters: he was laid in iron” (Ps. 105:18). Samuel sorrowed over Eli’s sons, over Saul, over his own sons, and over Israel for desiring a king like other nations. We could also speak of David, of Isaiah, of Jeremiah, of Hosea, and all the Prophets and Apostles. In each case our recollection of them does not have to search very far to find sorrows that they had and endured. For those living in hope of the promised Redeemer, their sorrows were sanctified, and were working for them a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.

In each of these instances mentioned above the sorrows were caused by personal involvement with sin (as David), or by association with, or by confrontation with, sinners. The curse pronounced by God as a result of the sin of our first parents has had its due consequences upon every man, woman, and child born into the world since the beginning of time.

Every man that has lived in this world has tasted their due portion of sorrow, but it was sorrow mingled together with expressions of “the goodness of God”, which endures continually (Ps. 52:1), and which leads unto repentance (Rom. 2:4). But only Jesus can rightly be called “the Man of sorrows”. His identification with sorrow infinitely has exceeded that of all other men, both in measure, in scope, and in duration.

There was only one occasion in the gospel accounts, where it is said of Him that He rejoiced in spirit. “In that hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit, and said, I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes: even so, Father; for so it seemed good in Thy sight” (Lk. 10:21). And that which occasioned this rejoicing was not something that the majority of men would be able to rejoice in. Most men, even the best of men, are able to rejoice in that which affects their own circumstance, and in that which affords them relief from their sorrow. Comparatively few men are able to rejoice as the Man of sorrows rejoiced, namely in the bringing to mind of the triumphs of God’s eternal purpose even here in this world, whether they affect one’s personal circumstance or not.

The Man of Sorrows. Regarding the Lord Jesus Christ, the Man of sorrows, the sorrows that He tasted of were unique. The sorrows of godly men such as Jacob, Samuel, David, and all the Prophets, were ultimately caused by the entrance of sin into the world, but they were also directly connected with the times and places they lived in, their specific circumstances, and their particular encounters with other men.

In the case of the Lord Jesus Christ His sorrows were infinitely greater in magnitude and scope. His sorrows were related to all time, not only to the time He was yet here with us (Lk. 24:44) “in the days of His flesh” (Heb. 4:15). His sorrows were connected to infinitely greater circumstances: namely, of the sin of the world being laid upon Him and the consequent forsaking of Him by His Father, and Himself being made to be sin for us, even Him who knew no sin. It seems that His partakement of “the oil of gladness above His fellows” (Ps. 45:7; Heb. 1:9) was voluntarily laid aside by Him in the days of His flesh.

His sorrows were different than ours inasmuch as He personally did not share at all in the cause of them. He had no guilt. He did no sin. He shared no responsibility for the curse, (although He, as our Surety, bore the full brunt of it). He magnified the law and made it honorable (cf. Isa. 42:21). He always did the things that pleased His Father (cf. Jn. 8:29). He ever “loved righteousness and hated iniquity” (Heb. 1:9). He was “a Lamb without blemish and without spot” (I Pet. 1:19).

But His sorrows were the same as ours in that He took our sins, and the all guilt associated with them, upon Himself. By so doing, He would be able to be “touched with the feeling of our infirmities”, being “in all points tempted, like as we are, yet without sin” (Heb. 4:15). And also by so doing He would learn obedience by the things which He suffered (cf. Heb. 5:8). In this way He was being prepared of God to be unto us “a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God” (Heb. 2:17; 5:1).

In this divine transaction, God’s righteousness was imputed to believing men and women, and our sins and iniquities were imputed to Jesus. The Lord God did lay upon Him (Christ) the iniquity of us all. He, who knew no sin, was made to be sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him (Christ) (cf. II Cor. 5:21).

Acquainted with Grief. *Acquaintance with grief. Acquaintance with the consequences and effects of sin.* These are words that at first consideration appear to be somewhat insignificant, and yet they are most significant, both to God and to us. Of Israel it was declared, “In all their afflictions He was afflicted” (Isa. 63:9), but it is not clear that Israel was effectually persuaded of this tenderness on the part of God. Consider Israel’s response to this exhortation. “Sing, O heavens; and be joyful, O earth; and break forth into singing, O mountains: for the LORD hath comforted his people, and will have mercy upon his afflicted. But Zion said, The LORD hath forsaken me, and my Lord hath forgotten me” (Isa 49:13-14).

Before the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, the Godhead was unable to sympathize with

sorrows and griefs related to the consequences of sin, particularly in the sense that men who are living by faith are now able to be persuaded and confident of the sympathy. This is sympathy that works effectually in the heart to restore the soul and cleanse the conscience. Men who are tempted to sin, and also who are being recovered from sins, are now able to be effectually comforted by Him who, from the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens, is able to save them to the uttermost (cf. Heb. 7:25). The Savior's acquaintance with grief in the days of His flesh has enabled Him to be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God. Job, when he was tried, wished for a "daysman" (Job 9:33), that would be able to lay his hand upon God and man and bring them together. In the Lord Jesus Christ, our great High Priest, God has abundantly granted to us much more than Job could have ever wished or hoped for.

Acquaintance with Infirmary and Illness. "When the even was come, they brought unto him many that were possessed with devils: and he cast out the spirits with his word, and healed all that were sick: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses" (Mt. 8:16-17). This is a bringing to bear of the Isaiah 53 text by Matthew upon the healing wrought by the Lord Jesus Christ in the days of His flesh. Infirmary and disease are, indeed, a consequence of sin and transgression, but this does not justify the erroneous teaching which says there is healing in the atonement. The Lord Jesus Christ did not come into the world to put away sickness and disease, but rather to forever put away sins by the sacrifice of Himself. The Savior has forever finished the transgression, and made an end of sins, and made reconciliation for iniquity, and brought in everlasting righteousness, to the praise of the glory of His grace.

"Man of Sorrows! what a name
For the Son of God, who came
Ruined sinners to reclaim.
Hallelujah! What a Savior!

"Bearing shame and scoffing rude,
In my place condemned He stood;
Sealed my pardon with His blood.
Hallelujah! What a Savior!

"Guilty, vile, and helpless we;
Spotless Lamb of God was He;
"Full atonement!" can it be?
Hallelujah! What a Savior!

"Lifted up was He to die;
'It is finished!' was His cry;
Now in Heav'n exalted high.
Hallelujah! What a Savior!

"When He comes, our glorious King,
All His ransomed home to bring,
Then anew His song we'll sing:
Hallelujah! What a Savior!"

—*Philip P. Bliss*

Christ is
the Branch of the
LORD

Isa. 4:2

HE WAS DESPISED, AND WE ESTEEMED HIM NOT

“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” (Isa. 53:3).

Other Renderings of This Text. “He was despised, and we did not appreciate His worth or have any esteem for Him” (AMP); “he was looked down on, and we put no value on him” (BBE); “he was dishonoured, and not esteemed” (Brenton); “We despised him and said, ‘He is a nobody!’” (CEV); “he was despised; we did not value him” (CJB); “despised is He, and we judge Him of no account” (CLV); “like someone people will not even look at but turn away from in disgust” (ERV); “we ignored him as if he were nothing” (GNB), “and we didn’t consider him to be worth anything”(GW).

Sins of Commission and Omission. Men, being created in the image and likeness of God, have, by virtue of their being created by Him, unique expectations that have been placed upon them by the Most High. They were made unto the satisfaction and good pleasure of both the Father and the Son. For men to come short of that good pleasure, and willingly so, and yet continue to live in God’s world is a most remarkable thing. Yea, it is a most horrible and astonishing thing (cf. Jer. 2:12), in the language of Jeremiah the Prophet.

The despising of the Lord Jesus Christ was, and is, a sin of commission, which is of greatest magnitude. It amounts to a blatant rejection of the gracious remedy for sin, transgression, and iniquity which God has provided in His only begotten Son. And, likewise, not properly esteeming Him is also an omission of the worst sort. From one perspective, despising and not esteeming go hand in hand together, and are very similar in their involvements. But from another perspective, they are distinctly separate offenses, as they are enumerated here in the Isaiah 53 text.

Not properly esteeming the Lord Jesus Christ is the sin that leads to despising Him. Not properly esteeming Him involves a grievous failure to perceive, or deliberate refusal to consider, who He is in His essential Person, and the purpose for which He came into the world. The failure to perceive and to properly esteem Him is not innocent, and one for which men shall be charged, if they do not recover themselves from the snare of the Devil. How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation? God will have no choice but to cast such ones away forever.

He was Despised, and He is Despised. He was despised in the days of His flesh, He was despised in the time of the Holy Prophets (as it was the Spirit of Christ that was in them as they spoke), and He continues to be despised today by unbelieving men, and by a recreant church. But wherever the Savior is received, and “believed on in the world”, yea, wherever men and women have fallen upon the Stone, and have been broken (cf. Mt. 21:44; Lk. 20:18), the eyes of the Lord are indeed over such ones, and His ears are open unto their prayers. And when the heavens and the earth have passed away with a great noise, and the elements shall have melted with fervent heat, in the words of Peter, the time of this despising shall forever have come to an end. The fire and the heat shall remove everything that offends.

The Effectual Ministry of Light and Saviour. “And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved. But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God” (Jn. 3:19-21).

“For we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish: To the one we are the savour of death unto death; and to the other the savour of life unto life. And who is sufficient for these things? (II Cor. 2:15-16). The light and the savour mentioned in these words of the Savior and of Paul are effectually pervasive in reaching into men’s hearts. In both instances there can be no

neutral response to them (to the light or to the savour). Men are either repelled by them (the light and the savour) or they are drawn to them, as is the case with honest and good hearts.

Both the light and the savour make demands upon men's hearts to deny oneself, and to take up one's cross, and follow after the Lord Jesus Christ. It is a demand that is abundantly compensated with eternal life and glory in the ages to come. But for many, this is a demand that is too great for them to pay, and so they choose to hate the light, in the words of Jesus, and they are repelled by the savour, as it is to them a savour of death unto death.

The Blessed Regard for the Exalted Christ. At the right hand of God the exalted Christ is not, in the least, despised, and He is joyfully and unreservedly esteemed to be most precious. He is loved, adored, and worshipped by all personalities there because of who He is. Consider the following words:

“And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth. And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the beasts and the elders: 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. And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever. And the four beasts said, Amen. And the four and twenty elders fell down and worshipped Him that liveth for ever and ever” (Rev. 5:9-14).

For men to despise, and to not properly esteem the Savior for who He is, can, in view of these things, be seen to be a sin of extremely grievous import.

Wherever Christ is seen and received for who He is, whether in Heaven or on earth, He is worshipped and loved. And thus the task given to us, as we minister to one another and to our fellow men using the words of the Apostle, is “to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ” (Eph. 3:9). “The god of this world has blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the Image of God, should shine unto them” (II Cor. 4:4).

The Proper Response the Lord and to His Christ. “Then one of them, which was a lawyer, asked Him a question, tempting Him, and saying, Master, which is the great commandment in the law? Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment” (Mt. 22:35-38). This commandment is not only “great”, but it is “first and great”.

Examples of Esteem that is Good. “Neither have I gone back from the commandment of his lips; I have esteemed the words of his mouth more than my necessary food” (Job. 23:12). “Therefore I esteem all Thy precepts concerning all things to be right; and I hate every false way” (Ps. 119:128). “By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward” (Heb. 11:24-26).

Examples of Esteem that is Evil. “And He said unto them, Ye are they which justify yourselves before men; but God knoweth your hearts: for that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God” (Lk. 16:15). “But Jeshurun waxed fat, and kicked: thou art waxen fat, thou art grown thick, thou art covered with fatness; then he forsook God which made him, and lightly esteemed the Rock of his salvation” (Deut. 32:15).

Esteem that is of Lesser Consequence. “One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day alike. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind” (Rom. 14:5). “I know, and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus, that there is nothing unclean of itself: but to him that esteemeth any thing to be unclean, to him it is unclean” (Rom. 14:14).

The despising and neglect of esteem of the Lord Jesus Christ was not something that He could become accustomed to. It was a source of great wounding to Him, and justly so. When we were at one time “darkness”, prior to our believing on the Name of God’s Son, we, too, were guilty of the despising and neglect of the Savior of which we here speak. Let us seek grace from the Lord that we may no longer be reckoned among the despisers.

1 REJECTED and despised of men,
Behold a man of woe!
And grief His close companion still
Through all His life below!

2 Yet all the griefs He felt were ours,
Ours were the woes He bore;
Pangs not His own, His spotless soul
With bitter anguish tore.

3 We held Him as condemn'd of heaven,
An outcast from His God;
While for our sins He groan'd, He bled,
Beneath His Father's rod.

4 His sacred blood hath wash'd our souls
From sin's polluting stain;
His stripes have heal'd us, and His death
Reviv'd our souls again.

—William Robertson, 1751.

“And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory. (I Tim. 3:16).

Christ is
the Counselor
Isa. 9:6

SURELY HE HATH BORNE OUR GRIEFS, AND CARRIED OUR SORROWS

“Surely He hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem Him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.” (Isa. 53:4).

Other Translations. “Surely He has borne our griefs (sicknesses, weaknesses, and distresses) and carried our sorrows and pains [of punishment]” (AMP), “But it was our pain he took, and our diseases were put on him” (BBE), “He suffered and endured great pain for us” (CEV), “In fact, it was our diseases he bore, our pains from which he suffered;” (CJB), “But he endured the suffering that should have been ours, the pain that we should have borne” (GNB), “He certainly has taken upon himself our suffering and carried our sorrows” (GW).

Surely. (ACV, AKJV, AMP, ASV, CLV, Darby, IAV, JPS, KJV, LITV, MKJV, NASB, RSV, RV, YLT) “Surely”, (CJB) “In fact”, (ERV) “The fact is”, (GW) “certainly”, (MSTC) “so despicable . . . truly”, (RSV). Almost all of the translations begin with this affirmation of assuredness. Though Isaiah prophesied some 700 years before the sufferings of Christ, yet he spoke as an eyewitness with understanding of the grievous events that were transpiring. In the times of the kings and holy Prophets, those who prophesied were called “seers” (II Kgs. 17:13; II Chr. 33:18-19; Isa. 30:10). They spoke that which God had given them to see, and oftentimes it is evident that they were greatly affected by what they saw.

Such is the case with Isaiah in the passage before us. Isaiah was not merely conveying information, nor merely recording facts. His was certainly a faithful representation of the sufferings of the Lord Jesus Christ, but it was much more than this. His words reflect a solemn awareness of what was transpiring when the Savior laid down His life a ransom for many. Even more specifically, what he was given to see imparted to him an overwhelming persuasion that SURELY THIS MAN WAS BEARING OUR GRIEFS AND CARRYING OUR SORROWS. The Prophet was given to see God’s holy and righteous Servant, the Lord Jesus Christ, who was made to bear sufferings that were incomprehensible. He also beheld the sinners and transgressors that were all about Him, and they were not suffering. And as Isaiah considered these things, he was brought to the breathtaking conclusion that surely this holy and righteous One was bearing our griefs and carrying our sorrows. Most assuredly this was the case for it is evident that Christ had none of His own to bear. And because of the righteousness and greatness of this Man, He was prepared of God to be the “Fit Man” (Lev. 16:21) to take away the sin of the world.

The Crucifixion Scene as Recorded in Mark’s Gospel. We include here a portion of Mark’s gospel that contains the record of the crucifixion of the Lord Jesus. Our purpose here is to show that, though the gospel writers were given to see and record much of the specific details of the crucifixion, yet Isaiah was given to see the implications of those sufferings: what the sufferings were accomplishing, and how God regarded them.

Unlike the Prophet Isaiah, the people who were present at the crucifixion of Christ did not comprehend the involvements of Christ’s sufferings. “And Pilate answered and said again unto them, What will ye then that I shall do unto him whom ye call the King of the Jews? And they cried out again, Crucify Him. Then Pilate said unto them, Why, what evil hath he done? And they cried out the more exceedingly, Crucify him.”

“And they bring him unto the place Golgotha, which is, being interpreted, The place of a skull. And they gave Him to drink wine mingled with myrrh: but He received it not. And when they had crucified Him, they parted his garments, casting lots upon them, what every man should take. And it was the third hour, and they crucified Him. And the superscription of His accusation was written over, THE KING OF THE JEWS. And with Him they crucify two thieves; the one on His right hand, and the other on His left.

And the scripture was fulfilled, which saith, And He was numbered with the transgressors. And they that passed by railed on Him, wagging their heads, and saying, Ah, Thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days, Save Thyself, and come down from the cross. Likewise also the chief priests mocking said among themselves with the scribes, He saved others; Himself He cannot save. Let Christ the King of Israel descend now from the cross, that we may see and believe. And they that were crucified with Him reviled Him. And when the sixth hour was come, there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour. And at the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani? which is, being interpreted, My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me? And some of them that stood by, when they heard it, said, Behold, He calleth Elias. And one ran and filled a sponge full of vinegar, and put it on a reed, and gave Him to drink, saying, Let alone; let us see whether Elias will come to take Him down. And Jesus cried with a loud voice, and gave up the ghost. And the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom. And when the centurion, which stood over against Him, saw that He so cried out, and gave up the ghost, he said, Truly this Man was the Son of God. There were also women looking on afar off: among whom was Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James the less and of Joses, and Salome; (Who also, when He was in Galilee, followed Him, and ministered unto Him;) and many other women which came up with Him unto Jerusalem” (Mk. 15:12-41).

The Message of the Gospel. The proclamation of the gospel involves effectually bringing before the minds and hearts of men THE SUFFERINGS OF THE CHRIST, AND THE GLORY which has followed; the announcement and significance of both the sufferings and the Sufferer, and of the glory that has followed. It is a declaration of Christ, the Righteous One, suffering in the behalf of the ones who were guilty and themselves worthy of suffering. Whenever the gospel is preached believing men and women are effectually brought to consider anew these solemn realities, which have become unto the believing ones “the power of God unto salvation” (Rom. 1:16). With the Ethiopian eunuch they are again brought face to face with the earnest consideration “of whom speaketh the Prophet this? of himself, or of some other man?” (Acts 8:34). Faith concludes once again that it was “the other Man”, even “the Man Christ Jesus” (I Tim. 2:5), who suffered, yea, who suffered in our stead.

Grief. Let us consider here the word grief as it is used in Scripture with the intent of clarifying to our hearts the grief that the Savior bore in our behalf. The two Hittite wives that Esau took were “A GRIEF OF MIND to Isaac and Rebekah” (Gen. 26:35). The things which cause grief to men are oftentimes an index to their character and person. They often point to a purpose and cause which, for the time at least, has been lost or aborted. Such was the case with Isaac and Rebekah. Esau taking wives from the Hittite nation, and later from the Hivites (Gen. 36:2), became a grievous wound in the hearts of Isaac and Rebekah, because these were nations that would be dispossessed according to the promise spoken by God to Abraham (Gen. 15:18-21). Only eternity would be able to deliver from this grief.

Job lamented to his three comforters, “Oh that my grief were THOROUGHLY WEIGHED” (Job 6:2). From the perspective of eternity Job’s afflictions were “light afflictions”, as expressed by Paul, and amounted to “heaviness through manifold temptations” in the diction of Peter. The weighing of Job’s grief has been a comfort and consolation to many in this present world. But THE WEIGHING OF JESUS’ GRIEFS that He bore is the wellspring of justification and acceptance before the Holy One, and shall be a source of comfort and consolation to redeemed personalities throughout the ages to come. Who can thoroughly weigh the griefs that He bore in our behalf?

“Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.” (Isa. 53:4).

Out of his own anguish of heart Job declared to his three friends, “I would strengthen you with my mouth, and THE MOVING OF MY LIPS SHOULD ASSUAGE YOUR GRIEF” (Job 16:5). Both grief and griefs involve the understanding being obscured, and particularly from the perspective of eternity. Grief takes place in the mind and in the heart of men. For the godly grief can be nurtured and assuaged by a proper understanding of God and His purpose in Christ Jesus.

GRIEF CAN BE ASSUAGED (made more bearable) by the moving of lips that possess knowledge and understanding of God's ways and purpose in Christ. Think of the Savior Himself, how that the moving of His lips has been as been the source of everlasting consolation and good hope through grace. When the Lord Jesus Christ was praying in the garden of Gethsemane, an angelic messenger appeared "strengthening Him" (Lk. 22:43), and the moving of his lips assuaged the grief of the Savior, no doubt, bringing to His mind and heart anew the blessed prospect of "the joy that was set before Him" (Heb. 12:2).

David cried, "Mine eye is consumed because of grief" (Ps. 6:5; 31:9). Grief often produces tears and affects spiritual vision. The example of Jacob's grief. "... Joseph is not, and Simeon is not, and ye will take Benjamin away: ALL THESE THINGS ARE AGAINST ME" (Gen. 42:36).

An Example of Christ's Grief Being Assuaged. "And (He) said unto Me, Thou art My servant, O Israel, in whom I will be glorified. Then I said, I HAVE LABOURED IN VAIN, I HAVE SPENT MY STRENGTH FOR NOUGHT, AND IN VAIN: yet surely My judgment is with the LORD, and My work with my God" (Isa. 49:3-4). In the days of His flesh the Savior's grief was assuaged as He reasoned with His Father about the success of the mission for which God sent Him into the world. Let us learn from the example set forth here by the Lord Jesus Christ in dealing with griefs that come upon us. Let us be careful for nothing, but, in everything by prayer and supplication, may we in like manner let our requests be made known unto God.

Griefs (plural). "Griefs" is not frequently used as a plural word. Normally, grief is something that is endured by men one at a time, or possibly two at a time. But manifold and diverse were the sufferings of the Lord Jesus Christ when He bore our sins in His own body on the tree. GRIEFS would be the best word to describe the pain and anguish that our sins inflicted upon Him. He was oppressed and afflicted (Isa. 53:7), He was being watched [as it were for entertainment] (Mt. 27:36), He was despised and rejected of men (Isa. 53:3), He was forsaken of His God (Ps. 22:1), He was forsaken by His disciples (Mt. 26:56), He was mocked (Lk. 22:63), He was spitted upon (Lk. 18:32), He was scourged by Pilate (Mt. 27:26; Mk. 15:15; Jn. 19:1), He was betrayed by Judas (Mt. 10:4), He was crucified (Mt. 27:38), He was chastised by His Father for our sakes (Isa. 53:5), He was smitten of God (Isa. 53:4). All of these things had the effect of causing innumerable griefs to the Holy Son of God (Lk. 1:35).

God Causing Grief in Chastening. "For the Lord will not cast off for ever: but THOUGH HE CAUSE GRIEF, yet will he have compassion according to the multitude of his mercies" (Lam. 3:31-32).

The Prophet Jeremiah here is speaking of grief that is for the purpose of correction and healing. It is grief that proceeds from the wellspring of God's compassion and mercy. It is grief imparted out of necessity. "... He hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence" (Eph. 1:8). The vestiges of rebellion yet remaining in our old man from the entrance of sin into the world oftentimes make it necessary for God's dealings to be severe. Sin, iniquity, and transgression are of such a grievous nature to the God, who so loved the world, that He is left with no other recourse oftentimes but to deal with severity. But for those who are in Christ, His severity causes grief that is unto correction and perfection.

When the Lord God laid upon Jesus the iniquity of us all, this was a causing of grief like none other. This was grief that only Christ, as "our Passover" (I Cor. 5:7) and "our Lord" (Heb. 7:14), was able to bear and recover from to the glory (Phil. 2:11) and satisfaction (Isa. 53:11) of God the Father. We're speaking here of griefs that only a Member of the Godhead could bear. And these were sorrows that only God, in the Person of His Son, could carry away. "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them" (II Cor. 5:19).

With the Lord Jesus Christ there was no need for correction. With Him there was need for perfecting, but it was perfecting, not in His essential Person and Character, but rather perfecting unto His ability and capacity to be a "merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God" (Heb. 2:17).

Bearing and Carrying. Both were unto the satisfaction of the Divine righteousness and justice. It

was essential not only that the sins, iniquities, griefs and sorrows be borne, but that they also be carried away forever from God's Presence. This could either be accomplished by laying the sins upon the sinners, and casting them away from His Presence forever, or by God devising means (II Sam. 14:14) that His Banished (Christ, and all who are in Him, Christ, and all who have believed on Him) be not expelled from Him.

Griefs and Sorrows are the Result of Sin. Bearing griefs speaks of the enduring of them in our stead, and carrying sorrows speaks of removing them from us. That which sin most certainly causes, namely griefs and sorrows, is here, in a figure, substituted for the sin itself (the effect for the cause). Iniquity, trespasses, offenses, transgressions, and sin are all words that speak of violations of, and contrariness to, the good and perfect will of God. They are things which grieve "Him at His heart" (Gen. 6:6), and ultimately they stir Him up to jealousy and wrath. He is "of purer eyes than to behold" such things, things which He cannot look upon (Hab. 1:13).

From this perspective sin, iniquity, and transgression, as well as griefs and sorrows, are in some respects very similar. Christ bore our griefs, and carried our sorrows (Isa. 53:4), when He "His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree" (I Pet. 2:24). Sins and iniquities are things that are readily apparent to God [they grievously affect Him, they anger Him], whereas griefs and sorrows are things that are more readily apparent to men. Men, in their fallen condition, must be instructed about the grievous nature of sin and transgression, because of its effect upon the One who made them.

Some Pertinent Questions

1. Is it possible that countries that were once prided by many as being "Christian nations" could become openly hostile towards those who are professing faith in the Lord Jesus Christ? For those who have eyes to see what has been unfolding all about them in recent years and decades, to ask this question is to answer it in the affirmative. But, regardless of whether there is open hostility or not, the gate will nonetheless be strait, and the way narrow, that leads unto life eternal. The straitness of the gate and the narrowness of the way have to do with conflicts, oppositions, and temptations that are encountered simply by virtue of presently possessing a heavenly treasure in an earthen vessel (see II Cor. 4:7-11) while yet living in "this present evil world" (Gal. 1:4) where Satan is prince. For the children of God living in this present world, there has been, and always will be opposition to their faith. Sometimes that which opposes is upfront and even brutal, and sometimes the opposition is more behind-the-scenes and subtle (see Isa. 30:8-11).
2. What are some of the jeopardies of living in a society where "the God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob" (Acts 3:13) is, for the most part, not regarded as "the living and true God" (I Th. 1:9), or, if there is some recognition of Him, He is largely regarded as an interference in men's lives, rather than being the source of great and unspeakable blessing that He truly is?

"We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts: knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost" (II Pet. 1:19-21).

BUT HE WAS WOUNDED FOR OUR TRANSGRESSIONS

“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” (Isa. 53:5).

Other Translations. “But it was for our sins he was wounded, and for our evil doings he was crushed:” (BBE), “But he was wounded on account of our sins, and was bruised because of our iniquities:” (Brenton), “But he was wounded because of our crimes, crushed because of our sins;” (CJB), “He was wounded for our rebellious acts. He was crushed for our sins” (GW), “But He was pierced through for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities;” (NASB), “He was wounded because of our rebellious deeds, crushed because of our sins;” (NETfree Bible), “Yet, he, was pierced for transgressions that were ours, was crushed for iniquities that were ours” (Rotherham), “Yet He was wounded because of our transgressions, and crushed because of our depravities” (CLV).

The Language of Substitution. In Scripture we are early on taught about the matter of substitution. The “coats of skins”, which the LORD God made for Adam and his wife after they had sinned (Gen. 3:21), was the first example. Sacrifices, which clearly imply some understanding of the matter of substitution, were offered unto God in the time of Noah (Gen. 8:20) and the Patriarchs (Gen. 22:1-13; 31:54; 46:1). And then, under the Law, the explicit details and complexities of substitutionary sacrifices began to be enumerated in Leviticus chapters 1 through 9 especially, but not exclusively there.

In all of these above instances a sacrificed covenant victim was being offered in the stead of the people who had sinned. The clear implication is that: 1) the slain victim was necessary to be offered, 2) that it was acceptable and well-pleasing to God, 3) and that in some sense at least, the offering was serving the purpose for which it was being sacrificed.

Another clear implication is that wherever there is sin, either the death of the sinner, or a substitutionary death, is an inescapable consequence in order to satisfy the Divine righteousness. It is possible for men to erringly reason that chastening that is endured is somehow able to satisfy the Divine justice, but this is simply not the case. “. . . when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world” (I Cor. 11:32). Chastening is not only for the purpose of correction, but it is also to the end that God will be vindicated in His dealings with His own covenanted people for whom Christ has died. There shall be no railing tongues in the Day of Judgment.

In that day, when the Lord Jesus Christ is executing judgment upon men with the authority invested in Him by the Father (Jn. 5:27; Acts 17:30-31), God will be justified in all of His sayings, and shall overcome when He is judged (Rom. 3:4). “For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God? And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?” (I Pet. 4:17-18).

Yet another instructive implication being ingrained in the minds and hearts of men is that a substitutionary offering is a veritable possibility for men, and ultimately pointing to a blessed prospect for those for whom the sacrifice was being offered. And finally, all the bloody sacrifices offered before and during the time of the Law, were foreshadowing the one great Sacrifice, that of the Lord Jesus Christ, who would not only atone for sin, but He would “put away sin” (Heb. 9:26), “once for all” (Heb. 10:10). His awful sufferings and sacrificial death would “finish the transgression,” “make an end of sins,” “make reconciliation for iniquity,” and “bring in everlasting righteousness” (Dan. 9:24). His sufferings and death, His resurrection and ascension, His intercession for those who come unto Him (Heb. 7:25) at the right hand of God, His ruling and reigning until His enemies be made His footstool, and His coming again in glory, are all pointing to the blessed time, when not only time shall be no more (cf. Rev. 10:6), but also sin shall have been forever put away (cf. Jer. 50:20).

Another Perspective of Substitution. It seems that in words such as those following that God was not only giving a commandment to men, but He was also summoning men to reason with Him about the matter of substitution, and how it inflexibly works, and must work, in the Divine government and dominion. “If men strive, and hurt a woman with child, so that her fruit depart from her, and yet no mischief follow: he shall be surely punished, according as the woman's husband will lay upon him; and he shall pay as the judges determine. And if any mischief follow, then thou shalt give life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burning for burning, wound for wound, stripe for stripe” (Deut. 21:22-25).

Here in the law provision was made for the just satisfaction of men who had been wronged or harmed by fellow men. In this case a sin was committed against another man (cf. Mt. 18:21). It can be seen here that there was a demand for a precise retribution and repayment for the offenses that were committed, even on the “man to man” basis. These “man to man” offenses, along with the just retribution of them, are greatly overshadowed by the offenses committed against God Himself. When men sin, God is grieved at His heart (Gen. 6:6), He hides His face (Deut. 31:17-18), He is angered (Ps. 106:32), He forbears and suffers long (Rom. 2:4), His jealous nature is brought to the forefront (Exod. 34:14), and His repentings are sometimes kindled together (Hos. 11:8), to name a few things. Sin, when persisted in, will at some point provoke God to give men up. Men have the ability to become calloused and insensitive regarding sin and also to foolishly judge that God is capable of that same kind of insensitivity.

Incidentally, when we speak of God being satisfied by the travail of Christ's soul, we are speaking of the satisfaction of God's essential Person, not merely of a standard set by Him for Him to be satisfied. Only Jesus fully knows the Father (Mt. 11:27), and only Jesus knew the particulars and the extent of what would be required to satisfy Him [to bring satisfaction to His essential Person in the putting away of sin forever].

Limited understanding of the sufferings of Christ will inevitably lead to lack of understanding of God, and even ignorance of God altogether. There is a real sense that God can only be known and understood to the degree that the grievous nature of the afflictions of Christ are comprehended by faith. Where the sufferings of Christ [and the Christ who suffered] are glossed over [little regarded, disregarded, regarded without tender and loving affectation] in men's hearts and minds, there the God of Scripture is also disregarded. Sin, the great alienator of men from God, was made an end of at the Cross of Christ, but at unfathomable cost to the Son of God, the Lord Jesus Christ. It was a cost paid for with love (Rev. 1:5), and consequently it must be regarded with love and devotion by those who make a profession of faith in Christ, if it is to be at all understood.

Life for Life, Wound for Wound, Stripe for Stripe. When we consider the Deuteronomy text merely on the level of equity of man with fellow men, we are made to think of justice being served. But oftentimes it was not justice that was restorative; it was justice that left the party that was harmed with their injuries and impairment. The only satisfaction that came of this was that the one who did the wrong received precisely the same injury and harm that he or she caused or inflicted.

In the sufferings of Christ, the Lord Jesus Christ was receiving precisely what our iniquity, and transgression, and sin deserved: life for life (His life for our life), wound for wound, and stripe for stripe. His sufferings and death were abundantly restorative and would bring everlasting satisfaction to the demands of God's holy and righteous Character. God saw of the travail of Christ's soul, as He suffered in our behalf, and He was satisfied. He was satisfied that means had at last been devised that His banished sons and daughters be not expelled from Him (see II Sam. 14:14), so that believing men could now ascend into the hill of the Lord, even into God's holy place. Many sons could now be brought to glory. Life and immortality would now and forever be made accessible to believing men and women through the gospel. Mercy and truth had finally found a permanent and lasting meeting place, where righteousness and peace could now and forever affectionately embrace one another. In all of these things, both the Father and the

Son would be glorified, world without end.

The Wounding and Bruising of Jesus. These were wounds and bruises that were suffered in the behalf of others. There was absolutely no just cause that Christ should suffer them for His own sake.

Wounds are injuries that pierce into the very person from without. Bruises are injuries, inflicted from without, and which swelter primarily on the outside, but also cause distress within. Christ was severely wounded and bruised in our behalf, but in accordance with the Scripture (Ps. 34:20; Jn. 19:36), a bone of Him was not broken. In some way known unto God it was necessary that the Lord Jesus Christ be both wounded and bruised.

The greater part of these injuries was inflicted by God the Father, the lesser part was inflicted by men. Salvation is of the Lord; fundamentally it was and remains a Divine work and triumph, and it has been accomplished by that which God has done (cf. Isa. 53:6, 10), not by what men had done.

The Language of Substitution in the Apostles' Writings. The New Covenant Scriptures are replete with the language of substitution. "Christ died *for* us" (Rom. 5:8). "Christ died *for* the ungodly" (Rom. 5:6). "Christ died *for* our sins" (I Cor. 15:3). Christ "laid down His life *for* us" (I Jn. 3:16). Christ tasted death *for* every man (see Heb. 2:9). Christ "is the propitiation *for* our sins" (I Jn. 2:2). "Christ also hath once suffered *for* sins" (I Pet. 3:18). Christ gave "His life a ransom *for* many" (Mk. 10:45). Christ "was made to be sin *for* us" (II Cor. 5:21).

Here are a few other examples of this in the Apostles' writings. "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life *for* his friends" (Jn. 15:13). "Christ hath suffered *for* us in the flesh" (I Pet. 4:1). "For even Christ our Passover is sacrificed *for* us" (I Cor. 5:7). Christ was "made a curse *for* us" (Gal. 3:13). Christ "hath given Himself *for* us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour" (Eph. 5:2). Christ "died *for* us, that . . . we should live together with Him" (I Th. 5:10). "The Son of God" "loved me, and gave Himself *for* me" (Gal. 2:20). "Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom *for* many" (Mt. 20:28). Christ "gave Himself *for* us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works" (Tit. 2:14). Christ has "obtained eternal redemption *for* us" (Heb. 9:12). Christ "offered one sacrifice *for* sins for ever" (Heb. 10:12).

Time would fail us to include all the references to Jesus' substitutionary death and sufferings in our behalf, but it is certain that we could easily establish that, apart from this blessed reality, there would be no good news to preach to our fellow men.

"And they said one to another, Did not our heart burn within us, while He talked with us by the way, and while He opened to us the Scriptures? (Lk. 24:32).

Christ is
the Elect of God
Isa. 42:1

“HE WAS BRUISED FOR OUR INIQUITIES”

“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” (Isa. 53:5).

Other Translations. “He was bruised for our iniquities” (KJV, AKJV, ASV, Darby, LITV, MKJV, RV, Webster); “He is . . . bruised for our iniquities” (YLT); “He was bruised for our guilt and iniquities” (AMP); “for our evil doings he was crushed” (BBE); “He . . . was bruised because of our iniquities” (Brenton); “He was . . . crushed because of our sins” (CEV, CJB); “Yet He was . . . crushed because of our depravities” (CLV); “He was bruised for our sins” (DRB); “he . . . was crushed for iniquities that were ours” (EB); “He was crushed because of our guilt.” (ERV); “he was crushed for our iniquities” (ESV); “he was bruised crushed for our iniquities perversities:” (ERRB); “He was . . . beaten because of the evil we did.” (GNB); “He was crushed for our sins” (GW).

Some Introductory Considerations. The sufferings of the Lord Jesus Christ were manifold in their nature and scope. He was oppressed, He was afflicted, He was wounded, and He was bruised. With regard to the bruising, Christ was bruised by Satan. It was declared by the Lord God to Satan in Eden’s garden, “Thou shalt bruise His heel” (Gen. 3:15). It was the heel of Christ’s humanity that Satan had access to. (We ask our readers to consider this matter, and judge for themselves.) But Christ was also bruised of His Father. As it is written, “It pleased the LORD to bruise Him (Christ)”, and to “put Him to grief” (Isa. 53:10). These bruising, both outward and inward, are beyond our ability to comprehend in the present time. This was God’s suffering Servant who was bearing the full brunt of these agonies and pains.

It ought to be evident, however, that we were not redeemed by the bruising that was inflicted upon Christ by that old serpent, the Devil. We are not indebted to Satan for the putting away of our sins. It was rather by the bruising inflicted upon His Son by God the Father that we, by grace, have attained to the gift of righteousness. God saw the travail of His Son’s soul as He hung there on the Cross, and He was satisfied that sufficient payment had been made. It is as if the Father exclaimed, at the point and degree of His satisfaction, “*It is enough!*” And while both bruising were the cause of griefs that are unimaginable to us in the present time, it was the prospect of being rejected and bruised by His Father from which He recoiled in anguish in the Garden of Gethsemane (see Mt. 26:36-42). “O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt”, He cried out “in an agony” (Lk. 22:44). The Lord Jesus Christ was fully reconciled to receiving the bruise to be inflicted by the Devil, by which He would also bruise the serpent’s head. “For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many” (Mk. 10:45).

Some Uses and Involvements of the Word Bruise in Scripture

The First Mentioning of the Word. “And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel” (Gen. 3:15).

1. This would be a just and righteous exchange, precisely ordered by the Most High. An incurable bruise would be exchanged for a bruise from which there would be recovery. Every time that Genesis 3:15 is read or spoken about, it is a remembrancer both to Satan and to us that his bruise is mortal, and that the Lord Jesus Christ has not only plundered him, but also has blessedly recovered from His bruising, in that God raised Him from the dead.

2. Satan would receive a bruise that would forever spoil him in his ability to tempt, seduce, and make war with men. The promised Seed of the woman, the Lord Jesus Christ, would receive a bruise that would be unspeakably grievous to be born (even as His sufferings are a main focal point of all of Scripture), but from which He would recover, by the grace of God.

3. Satan bruised Jesus’ heel, that is to say, he was given of God to deliver a bruise to Christ’s humanity.

He was limited in his access to Jesus, even in his access to Jesus' humanity. The Lord God declared that He would receive the bruise in His heel, and no higher, and no further. Satan did not have access to Christ's divinity. But, nevertheless, the access he was afforded to the Savior would involve unimaginably great suffering and anguish for the Lord Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God. The bruise delivered by the Devil did in no wise prove to be a hindrance to the working of God in salvation, but rather it in the end served as a memorial to the great suffering that Christ endured in our behalf. In the Revelation, John testified: "And I saw in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures, and in the midst of the elders, a Lamb standing, as though it had been slain, having seven horns, and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God, sent forth into all the earth" (Rev. 5:6, ASV).

4. Jesus bruised Satan's head. He destroyed (spoiled, plundered, rendered impotent) him that had the power of death, that is the Devil. He spoiled principalities and powers, making a show of them openly, triumphing over them in the Cross. He would triumph over them by the very instrument that appeared to spell defeat for Him.

5. Prior to Jesus' bruising, the people of God were in an extremely precarious situation with regard to that old serpent the Devil. A striking example of this can be seen in Zechariah's prophecy. "AND he shewed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the LORD, and Satan standing at his right hand to resist him" (Zech. 3:1).

6. After Jesus' bruising, such things are written of them as, "Resist the Devil, and he will flee from you" (Jas. 4:7). And again, "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the Devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: whom resist stedfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world" (I Pet. 5:8-9). And again, "And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore days" (Rev. 12:6). And also, "And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent" (Rev. 12:14).

7. It is true that while we are yet in the body we are not entirely out of the gunshot of the Devil. "Wherefore we would have come unto you, even I Paul, once and again; but Satan hindered us" (I Th. 2:18). And, "To whom ye forgive any thing, I forgive also: for if I forgave any thing, to whom I forgave it, for your sakes forgave I it in the person of Christ; Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices" (II Cor. 2:10-11).

8. But Christ's brethren now have a provided "way of escape" (I Cor. 10:13) that they may be able to bear, and be delivered from, the many onslaughts, devices, and fiery darts of the old serpent that are directed against them.

9. The bruise to Jesus' heel will remain with Him through all eternity as an effectual remembrance of His devotion to the Father, and of His love for us.

The God of Peace. "And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ [be] with you. Amen" (Rom. 16:20).

1. It is good for us to consider that it is the God of peace who shall bruise Satan under our feet shortly.

2. As we're being sifted and are passing through tribulation, we are actually wrestling against principalities and powers, and spiritual wickedness in high places. But it is the God of peace who shall bruise Satan under our feet shortly.

3. In all of our afflictions which we endure, let us call to remembrance that the God of peace shall bruise Satan under our feet shortly.

4. In the hour of sore temptation, let us comfort our hearts with the blessed assurance that the God of

peace shall bruise Satan under our feet shortly.

5. It is noteworthy that the Apostle expressed this word of consolation and assurance in this manner. In this case, it is the God of peace (the God who is the Author of peace) who shall bruise Satan under our feet shortly.

6. God is now known to be the God of peace, wherever the gospel is believed and obeyed, because the Lord Jesus Christ made peace by the blood of His Cross, He came and preached peace to those that were nigh, and to us who were afar off, and He Himself also is our peace, having broken down the middle wall of partition between Jew and Gentile.

7. It reminds us of the word in the Revelation, where it says, “And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire: and them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God” (Rev 15:2).

Other Incurable Bruises. “For thus saith the LORD, Thy bruise [is] incurable, [and] thy wound [is] grievous” (Jer. 30:12). “[There is] no healing of thy bruise; thy wound is grievous” (Nah. 3:19).

1. We have this very instructive language regarding God’s dealing with recalcitrant Israel. Through the Prophet Isaiah He declared, “Why should ye be stricken any more? ye will revolt more and more: the whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint. From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it; but wounds, and bruises, and putrefying sores: they have not been closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with ointment” (Isa. 1:5-6).

2. Particularly now in the gospel, there is a new incentive for men not to fall into this woeful condition. We now have a Savior who is living, and was dead, and behold, He is alive forever more. We have a new covenant, and a new creature. We have a new and a living way which He has consecrated for us through the veil, that is to say, His flesh.

The Setting at Liberty of the Bruised. “The Spirit of the Lord [is] upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised” (Lk. 4:18).

1. The Lord Jesus Christ was bruised for our iniquities, in order that He might set at liberty them that are bruised because of their involvements with sin and transgression.

2. In the overall view, Satan received a bruise from which he cannot recover. But the Lord Jesus Christ has received a bruise from which He has recovered, by the which He is setting at liberty bruised personalities who are coming to Him for salvation.

3. Their very bruising demonstrates their tenderness in heart, their pureness of heart, and that they are earnestly seeking the “one thing that is needful”. Their very bruising demonstrates that their hearts are right and in accord with the God who is working salvation in the midst of the earth.

Bruised Reeds. “A bruised reed shall He not break, and smoking flax shall He not quench, till He send forth judgment unto victory” (Mt. 12:20).

1. Because Jesus was bruised for our iniquities, He has now been enabled of God to deal tenderly with bruised reeds and smoking flaxes in such a manner that judgment may be brought to victory.

2. The intuitive nature of the new creature in Christ can be seen in the fact that there is not a need for an explanation of what the bruised reeds and smoking flaxes are. The new creature can readily relate to expressions such as these, and identify with them.

3. The new creature is able to readily discern that the Scripture is here not talking about vegetation, but rather about men and women who are taking hold of God’s salvation in Christ.

4. The bruising was received by multiplied failures and shortcomings during the tenure served under the law. The law is an effectual schoolmaster to bring men unto Christ, that they might be justified by faith.

Bread Corn is Bruised. “Give ye ear, and hear my voice; hearken, and hear my speech. Doth the plowman plow all day to sow? doth he open and break the clods of his ground? When he hath made plain the face thereof, doth he not cast abroad the fitches, and scatter the cummin, and cast in the principal wheat and the appointed barley and the rie in their place? For his God doth instruct him to discretion, and doth teach him. For the fitches are not threshed with a threshing instrument, neither is a cart wheel turned about upon the cummin; but the fitches are beaten out with a staff, and the cummin with a rod. Bread corn is bruised; because he will not ever be threshing it, nor break it with the wheel of his cart, nor bruise it with his horsemen. This also cometh forth from the LORD of hosts, which is wonderful in counsel, and excellent in working” (Isa. 28:23-29).

1. The thought being expressed here is that in agriculture not all grains are threshed in the same manner. Doth God take care for fitches and cummin? Or saith He even this for our sakes? For our sakes, no doubt.

2. Some have to be threshed with great tenderness so as not to destroy their fruits.

3. Others have to be threshed with greater severity because of the coarseness of the plant and its fruit.

4. Different instruments are used in the threshing process for threshing various types of grain.

5. Some grains such as bread corn have to be bruised, in order to remove the part that is profitable from that which is not.

6. In chastening, God does not chasten all of His children in the same manner. Some of them are more tender, and are chastened accordingly. Others, for one reason or another known unto God, are chastened with greater severity.

7. With regard to the bruising of the Lord Jesus Christ, the chastisement of our peace was upon Him. He was chastised with a chastisement, the severity of which only He could bear, and recover from. It was the chastisement that was rightly ours, for He deserved none. He received the greatest bruising of all, in order that there would come forth unto Him a full and plentiful harvest in the world to come.

“And He said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the Prophets, and in the Psalms, concerning Me. Then opened He their understanding, that they might understand the Scriptures, and said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And ye are witnesses of these things” (Lk. 24:44-48).

“THE CHASTISEMENT OF OUR PEACE WAS UPON HIM”

“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” (Isa. 53:5).

Other Translations. “The chastisement of our peace was upon him” (KJV, ASV, Brenton, Darby, DRB, LITV, RV, Webster); “the chastisement [needful to obtain] peace and well-being for us was upon Him” (AMP); “the chastisement for our well-being, was upon him” (EB); “He took the punishment we deserved” (ERV); “upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace” (ESV); “He was punished so that we could have peace” (GW); “the punishment reconciling us fell on him” (NJB); “the punishment that brought us peace was upon him” (NIV); “the chastisement of our welfare was upon him” (JPS); “upon him was the chastisement that made us whole” (RSV).

The Manifold Perspectives of the Sufferings of Christ. There are many ways that the sufferings of the Lord Jesus Christ may be considered, and each with profit. There is the primary view, which is God’s perspective of those sufferings, and there is a secondary view, pertaining to how men perceive His sufferings. There is the perspective of Moses and the Prophets, as they lived in anticipation of the coming Sufferer. Then there is the view of the Lord Jesus Christ, in the days of His flesh, as He Himself repeatedly spoke forthrightly of His Cross, where He would “give His life a ransom for many” (Mt. 20:28; Mk. 10:45).

We find a unique perspective of those sufferings in the book of Acts where the glorified Christ was directing His newly established church from the right hand of God, and where “repentance and remission of sins” (Lk. 24:47; Acts 2:38; 10:43) first began to be preached in Jesus’ Name. Here Apostles, prophets, and brethren were forging ahead in newly charted waters, “preaching Jesus, and the resurrection” (Acts 17:18), reasoning with ungodly men of “righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come” (Acts 24:25), and “witnessing both to small and great, saying none other things than those which the Prophets and Moses did say should come” (Acts 26:22).

The epistles afford another necessary perspective of the sufferings of Christ, interpreting, unfolding, and announcing what actually had transpired at the “place, which is called Calvary” (Lk. 23:33), during the final and consummatory Passover, where Christ our Passover, was sacrificed for us. In the epistles there is found an elaborate unfolding of the greatness of the Person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ, of the New Covenant, of justification by faith in Christ, of salvation by faith through grace, of the High Priesthood of Christ, of life and immortality, of the world to come, of an eternal inheritance that is undefiled, just to name a few things.

There is the view given by the Revelation where consolation and judgment are met together in the further outworking of the purpose of God in Christ Jesus. “Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood . . .” “Behold, He cometh with clouds, and every eye shall see Him, and they also which pierced Him . . .”

There is the high and exalted view of the Lord Jehovah, “working salvation in the midst of the earth” (Ps. 74:12). “Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain: Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it” (Acts 2:23-24).”

But from one valid perspective it was not merely peace, but rather “*our* peace” [peace that pertained to us, peace that once was rightly “ours”], that was at stake in the sufferings of Christ. It was “*our* offences” and “*our* justification” (Rom. 4:25) that were squarely on the line. It was “*our* griefs” that were being “borne”, and “*our* sorrows” that were being “carried” (Isa. 53:4). It was we who were “as an unclean thing”, and it was “*our* righteousnesses” that were “as filthy rags” (Isa. 64:6). “The motions of

sins” were working “in *our* members” (Rom. 7:5), accentuating the gravity of the situation as it pertained to us in our standing before the holy and righteous God. “Christ died for *our* sins according to the Scriptures” (I Cor. 15:3). He “His own Self bare *our* sins in His own body on the tree” (I Pet. 2:24).

Chastisement, not Chastening. The word *chastening* in Scripture is closely associated with *correction* with the prospect and hope of perfecting moral character. “My son, despise not the chastening of the LORD ; neither be weary of His correction: for whom the LORD loveth He correcteth; even as a father the son in whom he delighteth” (Prov. 3:11-12). “For whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth” (Heb. 12:6). When a person is chastened of the Lord he or she may properly reason that He is working with such ones to perfect holiness in them. The one who is chastened may rightly infer that God loves him, or her. “*Whom the Lord loveth!*”

But in the case of *chastisement*, especially the way in which the word is used in Isaiah 53, there is no perceived love on the part of the One being chastised. There is instead an acute sense of the One doing the chastising angrily distancing Himself from, and even forsaking, the One being chastised. With regard to sin, and its effect upon God, and upon His moral government, divine correction is *not* an option for remedying the offense. “The soul that sinneth, it shall die” (Ezek. 18:4, 20). Sin is of such grievous nature that it demands that there be death to the sinner together with complete exclusion from the presence of the Holy One, with no apparent alternative in sight. *But, praise God, there was indeed an alternative that was found! The chastisement of our peace was upon Christ, and not upon us!*

In the Lord Jesus Christ the God of heaven has devised “means that His banished” sons and daughters “be not expelled from Him” (see II Sam. 14:14). And that means was by the sufferings of Christ, and the glory which has followed. Consider how great this Man is! Jesus Christ, the Son of God and the Son of man, is the only One who was able to bear the consequences of our sin and transgression, and to recover therefrom. For “God raised Him from the dead” (Acts 13:30)!

The Chastisement of Our Peace. The Lord Jesus Christ laid down His life in obedience to the Father’s commandment, knowing very well that it was the chastisement of *our* peace that was upon Him, *not of His*. For He Himself “did no sin” (I Pet. 2:22), and He “knew no sin” (II Cor. 5:21), as the Scripture plainly declares. At Golgotha, the place of a skull, it was the chastisement of our offenses against the Most High in their entirety that was upon the Savior. And from the perspective of Isaiah 53 it was the chastisement of our peace, or well being before God, that was upon Him. It was the chastisement of our well being before the living God that was upon the Savior, as He “once suffered for sins, the Just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit” (I Pet. 3:18).

The Chastisement of our Peace Was Upon Christ. Let every man think soberly when considering the matter of our sins and transgressions being laid upon Christ, for we were the ones that, by our sinning, did eat “the sour grapes”, but it was the Savior’s “teeth” that were “set on edge” (see Ezek. 18:2-4)! We were the ones that had grievously sinned, yet it was Christ that suffered in our stead for them. We were the guilty ones, and Christ was the innocent Victim.

Shall we then grumble against the God of our salvation, in much the same way that Israel did, and say to Him that this was unfair, yea that it was not right, for Christ to suffer for sins in our behalf? Was it unfair that the Most High has devised means that His banished be not expelled from Him? (cf. II Sam. 14:14). Was it unfair that the chastisement of our peace was on the Lord Jesus Christ when He bore our sins in His own body on the tree? (It can be seen that with men, the circumference of perceived fairness and equity generally does not extend beyond the borders of what directly affects them.) *The chastisement of our peace was upon Him.*

“AND WITH HIS STRIPES WE ARE HEALED”

“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” (Isa. 53:5).

Other Translations. “. . . and with the stripes [that wounded] Him we are healed and made whole” (AMP); “. . . and by his bruises we were healed” (Brenton); “. . . and by His welts there is healing for us” (CLV); “we are . . . made whole by the blows he received” (GNB); “and we received healing from his wounds” (GW); “because of his wounds we have been healed” (NETfree Bible).

It ought to be evident that the healing spoken of here is one that will endure into the endless ages to come as it came at such enormous cost to the Lord Jesus Christ, bearing our sins in His own body on the tree. For men to suppose that the griefs and sorrows borne by Jesus were to the end that men could be healed of sicknesses in this present world is entirely unreasonable. Christ, by His sufferings, death, resurrection, and ascension to the right hand of God, is now readying redeemed men and women to dwell with the Most High in “the world to come” (Heb. 2:5). The one thing that stood in the way of them dwelling there was sin, which has now been put away by the sufferings of Christ.

The entire passage here in Isaiah 53 is a blessed declaration of the abundant provision made by the Lord God for the putting away of sin, reconciling men back to Himself through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus. In the language of Daniel the Prophet, God was finishing “the transgression”, making “an end of sins”, making “reconciliation for iniquity”, and bringing “in everlasting righteousness” (Dan. 9:24). All this, and more, God was accomplishing in the sufferings of Christ and the glory which has followed, with the Lord Jesus Christ being now seated at the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens.

Having said these things let us take a closer look at some references to stripes in Moses and the Prophets in order to consider the parallels between the stripes that are mentioned there and the stripes that were inflicted upon Christ by His Father for our sakes. He was indeed “stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted” (Isa. 53:4).

The Law of Like for Like. “If men strive, and hurt a woman with child, so that her fruit depart from her, and yet no mischief follow: he shall be surely punished, according as the woman’s husband will lay upon him; and he shall pay as the judges determine. And if any mischief follow, then thou shalt give life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burning for burning, wound for wound, stripe for stripe” (Exod. 21:22-25).

Here is a similar word recorded in Leviticus. “And he that killeth a beast shall make it good; beast for beast. And if a man cause a blemish in his neighbour; as he hath done, so shall it be done to him; breach for breach, eye for eye, tooth for tooth: as he hath caused a blemish in a man, so shall it be done to him again” (Lev. 24:18-20).

And again in Deuteronomy: “If a false witness rise up against any man to testify against him that which is wrong; Then both the men, between whom the controversy is, shall stand before the LORD, before the priests and the judges, which shall be in those days; And the judges shall make diligent inquisition: and, behold, if the witness be a false witness, and hath testified falsely against his brother; Then shall ye do unto him, as he had thought to have done unto his brother: so shalt thou put the evil away from among you. And those which remain shall hear, and fear, and shall henceforth commit no more any such evil among you. And thine eye shall not pity; but life shall go for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot” (Deut. 19:16-21).

The Language of a Just and Equal Requiring. The Holy Spirit is, in the preceding verses, establishing a vocabulary for comprehending some of the precise involvements of the sufferings of Christ. [The Law of God is, primarily, a revelation of the Mind of God, and herein lies the Law’s power to enforce, to re-

strain, but even greater, its power to stop mouths, to convict of sin, and to conclude under sin.]

Here we find the language of a just requitement with impartial judgment for wrongs that have been done, and of the execution of that which is “holy, and just, and good” (Rom. 7:12) unto the satisfaction of both God [from a larger and higher perspective] and men [in the immediate context of the Law]. In the immediate context focus is placed more on the just dealings of men towards their fellow men. But this principle of satisfaction and just requitement is also at the very heart of the atonement made by Christ. “Christ was once offered for sins, the Just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God” (I Pet. 3:18). “For the transgression of My people, to whom the stroke was due” (Isa. 53:8, NASB). “When we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly” (Rom. 5:9).

Under the Law repayment was being made by the unjust for “the just”, or rather for the one that had been wronged. But in the gospel the repayment for sin has been made by “the Just for the unjust”, by the Lord Jesus Christ “for sinners”, “for the ungodly”, and “for sins”.

Regarding Worthiness to be Beaten. “And it shall be, if the wicked man be worthy to be beaten, that the judge shall cause him to lie down, and to be beaten before his face, according to his fault, by a certain number. Forty stripes he may give him, and not exceed: lest, if he should exceed, and beat him above these with many stripes, then thy brother should seem vile unto thee” (Deut. 25:2-3). “The judge shall cause him to lie down, and to be beaten before his face.” It seems that this very graphic language has a far greater significance than that of a required procedure being imposed on the children of Israel. On the Cross the Lord Jesus Christ was made to be this “wicked man” instead of us. [“Him (Christ) who knew no sin He (God, the Father) made to be sin on our behalf; that we might become the righteousness of God in Him” (II Cor. 5:21, ASV)].

Worthy to be beaten. In the sufferings of Christ He that is worthy to receive all honor and praise and glory, even Jesus, laid down His life for those who were “worthy to be beaten” by the Judge. This consideration should forever put to silence erroneous thoughts and feelings regarding unworthiness on the part of those who are fighting the good fight of faith. If we’re going to stoop to the level of reasoning about what we are worthy of or not worthy of, we were, in fact, the ones who were worthy to be beaten. But He who alone is worthy, did, in a manner of speaking, lay Himself down before the Judge of all the earth, and was beaten before His face in our behalf.

The Cup which the Father Gave Jesus to Drink. Theologians have written about what they call “the mystery of the atonement”, meaning that, though the atonement indeed envelops many wonderful and blessed realities which may be more readily comprehended by believing men, there are also certain involvements, aspects, and depths with regard to Christ’s sufferings that are unfathomable to men, even believing men. The unfathomableness of which we speak is related to the exceeding sinfulness of sin (cf. Rom. 7:13) and God’s uncompromising hatred for sin (cf. Hab. 1:13; Job 15:15; Ps. 5:4; 11:4-7; 34:15-16; I Pet. 1:15-16).

When the Savior was being arrested in the garden, He told Peter [who was seeking to defend Jesus], “Put up thy sword into the sheath: the cup which My Father hath given Me, shall I not drink it?” (Jn. 18:11). The precise extent and entailments of this cup of sufferings are known only by Jesus and the Father. But there are times when, in preaching of the gospel, we are given to further touch the hem of the garment with regard to the unutterable dreadfulness of what Jesus suffered in our behalf, “the Just for the unjust” (I Pet. 3:18).

We are given to drink in measure. “But Jesus answered and said, Ye know not what ye ask. Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with? They say unto him, We are able. And he saith unto them, Ye shall drink indeed of my cup, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with: but to sit on my right hand, and on my left, is not mine to give, but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared of my Father” (Mt. 20:22-23). The portion of this cup that we are given to drink has had all the deadly dregs removed from it.

Christ is
the
Everlasting
Father
Isa. 9:6

“ALL WE LIKE SHEEP HAVE GONE ASTRAY; WE HAVE TURNED EVERY ONE TO HIS OWN WAY”

“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” (Isa. 53:6).

Other Translations. “We all went wandering like sheep; going every one of us after his desire” (BBE); “All of us were like sheep that had wandered off. We had each gone our own way” (CEV); “We have all strayed like sheep. Each one of us has turned to go his own way” (GW); “All we like sheep have become lost; we have turned each one to his own way” (Jubilee); “We all have wandered away like sheep; each of us has gone his own way” (NCV); “We had all gone astray like sheep, each following his own way” (NAB); “All of us had wandered off like sheep; each of us had strayed off on his own path” (NETBible); “All of us are like sheep. We have wandered away from God. All of us have turned to our own way” (NIRV); “All of us have strayed away like sheep. We have left God's paths to follow our own” (NLT); “We're all like sheep who've wandered off and gotten lost. We've all done our own thing, gone our own way” (The Message); “All we erred as sheep, each man bowed into his own way” (Wycliffe).

Mercy and Truth. Both mercy and truth are foundational matters with regard to the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory. In these two expressions (in the first part of verse 6) mercy and truth are meeting together.

Going Astray. The first expression [*all we like sheep have gone astray*] is a charitable view on the part of God of the second expression [*we have turned every one to his own way*]. The first expression proceeds from “the goodness of God”, the second from His holy and righteous Character, and from God’s desire for [and insistence upon] truth in the inward parts (Ps. 51:6). In the first we see the goodness and lovingkindness of the Lord. God’s righteousness, truth, faithfulness, and lovingkindness are matters that cannot be concealed (Ps. 49:10). They must be declared and made known. His very Nature and Character demands that it be so.

“Going astray” is a very gracious perspective, on the part of God our heavenly Father, of our grievous departure from Him in our involvement with sin. We actually did turn every one to his own way, following our own desires, which were contrary to His.

“Going astray like sheep” sheds light upon a fundamental aspect of God’s eternal purpose in Christ: namely that of His having a people for His own possession, a people that are His own. Here they are called “sheep”. Not like “the beasts that perish” (Ps. 49:12), but like sheep. Not like “the chaff” (Ps. 1:4), but like sheep. Not like “them that go down into the pit” (Ps. 28:1), but like sheep. Not like “a drunken man” (Ps. 107:27), but like sheep.

“All we like sheep have gone astray” makes it clear that there were no exceptions with regard to this indictment. Even those of scriptural record, like Joseph, Daniel, and a very few others, against whom nothing is recorded in Scripture, fall under this indictment as well. From the perspective of God’s eternal purpose in Christ, we all went astray. After Adam and his wife sinned, and were driven out of the Garden (Gen. 3:24), both they and all their posterity became lost with regard to the purpose of God and fellowship with Him.

The State of Lostness. Incidentally, the word “lost”, as it is used with regard to the redemption in Christ, has direct relation to the purpose of God in Christ. To be lost is to be lost with regard to God’s

purpose in salvation. It is to be lost from fellowship and union with Him, a lostness which cannot be remedied through man's devising and wisdom. "Except the Lord of Sabaoth had" "devised means whereby His banished be not expelled from Him" (Rom. 9:29; II Sam. 14:14), we should have been hopelessly cast away from His Presence forever.

The lost sheep of the house of Israel. "But he answered and said, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Mt. 15:24; also 10:6). Marvelous it is indeed that the Savior came looking for such ones. But this was in order that "that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of Him that calleth" (Rom. 9:11).

A fundamental part of the Savior's mission. "For the Son of man is come to save that which was lost" (Mt. 18:11). Through all eternity, these formerly lost individuals will joyously confess that they have been found by the Lord Jesus Christ, to the praise of God's glory.

The Three Parables in Luke 15. "And when he cometh home, he calleth together his friends and neighbours, saying unto them, Rejoice with me; for I have found my sheep which was lost" (Lk. 15:6). "Rejoice with me; for I have found the piece which I had lost" (Lk. 15:9). "For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found. And they began to be merry" (Lk. 15:24).

Lostness without Hope of Recovery like Judas Iscariot. Until Jesus comes again, the memory of Judas Iscariot shall continue to arrest men's attention and serve as a sober warning with regard to half-hearted and casual discipleship of the Lord Jesus Christ. "Those that Thou gavest Me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition; that the scripture might be fulfilled" (Jn. 17:12). "... it had been good for that man if he had not been born" (Mt. 26:24).

Lostness, with respect to the gospel of Christ. "But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost" (II Cor. 4:3). This is a glorious gospel with rays of joyous hope and blessedness for men ever beaming forth from it. If men are unable to behold this glory, it is because they have not believed, and as a consequence, the god of this world has blinded them. From this perspective the lost are those "in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them" (II Cor. 4:4).

The judicial nature of the matter. "... lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them". The nature of this glorious gospel is such that if men can but see it, they will take possession of it for themselves. They will sell all that they have, and buy the field, that they may gain access to where the treasure presently lies buried.

The judicial nature involved here is that, this gospel is so precious in its very nature and essence, God hides it from unbelieving men. "For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them" (Mt. 13:15). God does not cast His pearls before swine, nor does He give that which is holy to dogs, just as the Lord Jesus instructed us not to do.

"We have turned every one to his own way". The gospel of Christ is, to be sure, an announcement of great blessedness, but it is also one that squarely comes to grips with the issues that are at hand, as God sees them. From one perspective, we did go astray like sheep. But from another very real perspective, each of us turned to our own way, thus morally complicating the matter. Now the wisdom of God will be brought to the forefront of consideration with regard to how this matter must be remedied. While the gospel is characterized by *simplicity* (II Cor. 11:3), it is certainly not at all *simplistic* in its involvements and outworkings.

[If we going astray like sheep provided the complete picture of our condition in Adam, then reme-

dying this would only require God leading men back into His fold. If such were the case, then there would be no need for repentance. If such were the case, there would be no need for the Savior.]

But we have indeed turned every one to His own way. This introduces the moral necessity for a Savior, such as God has provided, to bring us back, to provide the basis for pardon, to restore to fellowship, to purify and cleanse from all iniquity and transgression and sin, and to Himself be our Surety, to provide an enduring basis and foundation for reconciliation to, and fellowship with, God, the Most High and the Holy One. All this glorious provision is found in the Man Christ Jesus.

In repentance and confession of sin, men are acknowledging before God [and to His glory] that they themselves turned to their own way.

The grievousness of our turning to our own way is stressed over again by the summons to repent. John the Baptist exhorted: “Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand” (Mt. 3:2). “Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance” (Mt. 3:8). The Lord Jesus also commanded: “Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand” (Mt. 4:17). “I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance” (Mt. 9:17). “Then began he to upbraid the cities wherein most of his mighty works were done, because they repented not” (Mt. 11:20). “Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works, which were done in you, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes” (Mt. 11:21). “The men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: because they repented at the preaching of Jonas; and, behold, a greater than Jonas is here” (Mt. 11:41).

After the day of Pentecost the Apostles took up the refrain: “Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost” (Acts 2:38). “Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord” (Acts 3:19). “When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life” (Acts 11:18). “And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent” (Acts 17:30).

The Application Made By Peter. Using the language of Isaiah 53:6 Peter gives us the post-Pentecostal perspective of the sufferings of Christ, highlighting the unspeakably gracious and effectual designs of God the Father in His beloved Son. “Who His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed. For ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls” (I Pet. 2:24-25). Instead of the grievous lament “we had gone astray” expressed by the Prophet, there is now a blessedly new perspective of the once hopelessly bleak situation. “Ye were as sheep going astray.” Those in Christ Jesus speak of this as a past tense condition that has now been wondrously remedied by the Lamb of God. And instead of the indictment that we had turned every man to his own way, we, by the grace of God, have now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of our souls, who provides to the returning ones the necessary oversight and nurture for a safe and blessed arrival in the world to come.

“For this is he that was spoken of by the prophet Esaias, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight” (Mt. 3:3).

“THE LORD HATH LAID UPON HIM THE INIQUITY OF US ALL”

“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” (Isa. 53:6).

Other Translations. “But the LORD has caused the iniquity of us all to fall on Him” (NAS), “And Jehovah hath caused to meet on him, the punishment of us all” (YLT), “. . . and Yahweh brought the acts of rebellion of all of us to bear on him” (NJB), “Yet the LORD laid on him the guilt and sins of us all” (NLT), “. . . and the Lord has made to light upon Him the guilt and iniquity of us all” (AMP), “. . . but the LORD gave him the punishment we deserved” (CEV), “. . . yet Adonai laid on him the guilt of all of us” (CJB), “But the LORD made the punishment fall on him, the punishment all of us deserved” (GNB), “. . . and Jehovah made meet in Him the iniquity of all of us” (LITV), “. . . but the Lord hath thrown upon Him all our sins” (Bishops’ Bible).

Other Similar Expressions in Scripture

In Moses and the Prophets Isaiah 53:6 tells us with some of the greatest clarity and precision what God did with “the iniquity of us all”. He laid them on His suffering Servant, even His beloved Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. He made them to meet upon Jesus, to light upon Him, to fall on Him. There are also other similar very graphic representations in Scripture detailing the purpose of God in dealing with sin. We would like to draw your attention to some of them here.

Sins Cast Behind God’s Back. “. . . for Thou hast cast all my sins behind Thy back” (Isa. 38:17). There was a real sense that when “the iniquity of us all” was laid upon Jesus, that He Himself was behind God’s back, an experience more incomprehensibly painful than men will ever be able to fathom. These are exceedingly deep waters, waters that any man would drown in, any man other than the Man Christ Jesus. “Then I was by him, as one brought up with him: and I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him” (Prov. 8:30).

Passing By Transgression and Not Retaining Anger. “Who is a God like unto Thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of His heritage? He retaineth not His anger for ever, because He delighteth in mercy” (Mic. 7:18).

Passing by the Transgression of His People. There was a sense in which God passed by His only begotten Son in order that He would not pass us by. “He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things”. This very graphic language was breathed by the Holy Spirit, and is not to be taken as a mere figure of speech. God spoke of passing by the transgressions because He had purposed to pass them by, but in so doing would also necessitate passing by His beloved Son as He bore our sins in His own body on the tree.

He Retaineth Not His Anger For Ever. The Lord Jesus Christ did willingly “tread the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God” (Rev. 19:15). And it seems that “the iniquity of us all” was retained by God the Father until, speaking as a man, that day when His only begotten Son was made to hang upon a tree outside of Jerusalem, the city of God. And there all the righteous anger, mercifully retained by Him and reserved until that appointed time, was poured out upon the Lord Jesus Christ, even upon Him, who is God’s Lamb, Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood (cf. Rev. 1:5).

He Will Subdue Our Iniquities. “He will turn again, He will have compassion upon us; He will subdue our iniquities; and Thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea” (Mic. 7:19). Now in Christ Jesus, it can be said that He has turned again and had compassion upon us. And to a very large extent, by virtue of new creatureship in Christ and having the law of God written upon our hearts, He has subdued our iniquities. And yet because of having this treasure in an earthen vessel, He yet continues to subdue our iniquities as we abide in Him and continue steadfastly in the faith. But when death is finally swallowed

up in victory, He will have finally and completely subdued our iniquities, “according to the working whereby He is able to subdue all things unto Himself” (Phil. 3:21).

Sins Cast into the Depths of the Sea. Again, we would have our readers to consider and judge this matter for themselves. It ought to be evident that God was not casting our sins into one of the world’s oceans or seas. Rather in some way, the Lord Jesus Christ was made to traverse through unutterably great depths of misery and suffering as He bore our sins away from the face of the Most Holy One. And perhaps in the grievously stern warning given by the Savior to any and all who would “offend one of these little ones that believe on” Him (Mt 18:6), namely that it would be better for them that a millstone be hanged around their necks, and themselves be cast into the depths of the sea, He was also giving believing hearts a glimpse into the enormity of the sufferings which He bore in our behalf. It was indeed He “who was *delivered for our offences*, and was raised again for our justification” (Rom. 4:25).

As Far as the East is from the West. “As far as the east is from the west, so far hath He removed our transgressions from us” (Ps. 103:12). He removed them from us when the Lamb of God took them away and carried them to “land of forgetfulness” (Ps. 88:12). In order for our transgressions to be removed from us, it was necessary that the Lord Jesus Christ be removed from the Presence of God when He bore the sins away. May God give us tender hearts to consider these things aright.

I will not remember thy sins. There was a sense, it appears, that when Christ was made to be sin for us (II Cor. 5:21), that God did not, and could not remember Him. This entailed incomprehensible suffering for both the Son, and for the Father.

Visiting Iniquity. “*Visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children*” (Exod. 34:7). At the Cross, the iniquity of us all was visited upon the Lord Jesus Christ in the fullest measure, an incomprehensible measure far greater than was ever visited in the sense spoken of in Exodus 34. The visitation spoken of in Exodus 34 was but a shadow of the visitation that occurred at the Cross. The visitation in Exodus 34 illustrated the exceedingly grievous nature of sin and iniquity and transgression, in that it came back to haunt, as it were, succeeding generations. In the case of David, for example, his sin with Bathsheba continued to dog him and came back to haunt him the rest of his time in the flesh. But in the case of the Lord Jesus Christ, when the sin of the world was visited upon Him, He, being mighty to save, made a full end of them, so that the sins may never come back to haunt or dog those who are in Him, and who abide in Him, continuing in the faith, and not being moved away from the hope of the gospel (cf. Col. 1:23).

Teeth Being Set on Edge. “What mean ye, that ye use this proverb concerning the land of Israel, saying, The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children’s teeth are set on edge?” (Ezek. 18:2). “In those days they shall say no more, The fathers have eaten a sour grape, and the children’s teeth are set on edge. But every one shall die for his own iniquity: every man that eateth the sour grape, his teeth shall be set on edge” (Jer. 31:29-30). In the redemption which is in Christ Jesus, we were the ones who ate the sour grapes, by our involvement with sin, but His teeth were the ones that were set on edge, a condition from which He recovered, but He continues to bear the marks of the grievous sufferings borne by Him in His glorified body.

Ears Made to Tingle. “Therefore thus saith the LORD God of Israel, Behold, I am bringing such evil upon Jerusalem and Judah, that whosoever heareth of it, both his ears shall tingle” (II Kgs. 21:12). “. . . both his ears shall be burning” (ASV). These words were descriptive of the severe judgments that God was bringing upon Israel because of their sin and transgression. But now in the gospel, occasionally believing men and women are given to see glimmers of the awfulness of the sufferings of the Lord Jesus Christ, endured in our behalf, and their ears are, in a manner of speaking, made to tingle.

A Lamb “slain from the foundation of the world” (Rev. 13:8). Christ, our Surety. From one perspective, from the time of the entrance of sin into the world the liability for the iniquity of us all was incurred and, in a manner of speaking, felt by the Word, who in the fullness of time, would be made flesh and dwell

among us, in order that He might give His life a ransom for many.

There was a sense in which the Father absolutely had to be near to Jesus when He bare our sins in His own body on the tree. He made promise to the Son through the Prophet Isaiah with regard to Christ's tenure here in the days of His flesh, "I the LORD thy God will hold Thy right hand, saying unto Thee, Fear not; I will help Thee" (Isa. 41:13). Again, we have this word of the Apostle, God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them.

And yet, from another perspective, it was "by Himself" that the Lord Jesus purged our sins, made purification for sins. And from this perspective, it was by Himself, that Jesus took them away, because God is "of purer eyes than to behold evil, and" can "not look on iniquity" (Hab. 1:13). Great is the mystery of godliness!

O Christ, what burdens bowed Thy head!
Our load was laid on Thee;
Thou stoodest in the sinner's stead,
Didst bear all ill for me.
A Victim led, Thy blood was shed;
Now there's no load for me.

Death and the curse were in our cup:
O Christ, 'twas full for Thee;
But Thou hast drained the last dark drop,
'Tis empty now for me.
That bitter cup, love drank it up;
Now blessing's draught for me.

Jehovah lifted up His rod;
O Christ, it fell on Thee!
Thou wast sore stricken of Thy God;
There's not one stroke for me.
Thy tears, Thy blood, beneath it flowed;
Thy bruising healeth me.

The tempest's awful voice was heard,
O Christ, it broke on Thee!
Thy open bosom was my ward,
It braved the storm for me.
Thy form was scarred, Thy visage marred;
Now cloudless peace for me.

Jehovah bade His sword awake;
O Christ, it woke 'gainst Thee!
Thy blood the flaming blade must slake;
Thine heart its sheath must be;
All for my sake, my peace to make;
Now sleeps that sword for me.

For me, Lord Jesus, Thou hast died,
And I have died in Thee!
Thou'rt ris'n—my hands are all untied,
And now Thou liv'st in me.
When purified, made white and tried,
Thy glory then for me!

—Anne R. Cousin (1824-1906)

"Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles. For so hath the Lord commanded us, saying, I have set Thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that Thou shouldest be for salvation unto the ends of the earth"
(Acts 13:46-47; Isa. 42:6).

Christ is
Immanuel
Isa. 7:14

“HE WAS OPPRESSED, AND HE WAS AFFLICTED”

“He was oppressed, and He was afflicted, yet He opened not His mouth: He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He openeth not His mouth.” (Isa. 53:7).

Other Translations. “Hard pressed is He and being humbled” (CLV); “He was oppressed, and he was afflicted (abased)”;

“He was abused and punished” (GW); “Men were cruel to Him” (BBE); “He was painfully abused” (CEV); “He was treated harshly” (GNB); “He was oppressed, that was already afflicted” (Noyes); “He suffered violence, and was evil intreated” (Bishops’ Bible); “He was oppressed, [yet when] He was afflicted, He was submissive and opened not His mouth” (AMP).

He was oppressed. To oppress: “To impose excessive burdens upon; to overload; hence, to treat with unjust rigor or with cruelty.” “To injure, crush by hardship, subdue.” “To load or burden with unreasonable impositions; to treat with unjust severity, rigor or hardship.” For the godly oppression is more keenly felt when it seems that God is not as near as He was at other times. This was especially the case with the Lord Jesus Christ when He was “delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God” to be “crucified and slain” “by wicked hands” (Acts 2:23). “I will say unto God my rock, Why hast Thou forgotten me? why go I mourning because of the oppression of the enemy?” (Ps. 42:9).

He was afflicted. To afflict: “To give to the body or mind pain which is continued or of some permanence; to grieve, or distress; as, one is afflicted with the gout, or with melancholy, or with losses and misfortunes”. “To trouble; to harass; to distress.” “To give pain, trouble, vex, affect”. “To flagellate, to whip” but here with an added inward significance, a flagellation, not only of the body, but also of the mind and heart. “To inflict some great injury or hurt upon, causing continued pain or mental distress; to trouble grievously; to torment”. Some synonyms are: “To trouble; grieve; pain; distress; harass; torment; wound; hurt.” “Wherefore hidest Thou Thy face, and forgettest our affliction and our oppression?” (Ps. 44:24; cf. Ps. 22:1-24). The first part of Psalm 22 is one of many places in Scripture that give a very graphic portrayal of the inward sufferings of Christ, both of the oppression and the affliction endured by Him.

Oppression and Affliction. Oppression and affliction are only possible because of the frailty of the earthen vessel in which men are presently housed, including the Man Christ Jesus, “in the days of His flesh” (Heb. 4:15). Our earthen vessel is elsewhere called “the body of our humiliation” (Phil. 3:21, AMP), and “the earthly house of our tabernacle” (II Cor. 5:1), which shall be “dissolved” at our death.

The fact the Lord Jesus Christ was oppressed and afflicted in the days of His flesh speaks volumes about the nature and extent to which He humbled Himself (cf. Phil. 2:5-8). He was being oppressed and afflicted by creatures that He Himself created! Great, indeed, is the mystery of godliness! The words “He was oppressed, and He was afflicted”, recorded by the Prophet Isaiah, are one of many Divine commentaries on the extent and degree to which the Lord Jesus humbled Himself.

The oppression and affliction that Jesus tasted was far greater than that of any of the sons of men, far greater than that of those who are presently being readied for eternal glory. Those who have believed on the Son of God are given to partake of many of the same kinds of sufferings that He did, but not to any degree approaching the incomprehensible intensity or severity endured by the Savior.

We know from the Scripture that God does nothing without cause (Ezek. 14:23; Rom. 1:26; I Cor. 11:30; II Th. 2:11; I Tim. 1:16; Heb. 9:15, etc.). We must conclude that Christ being oppressed and afflicted, and especially to the degree that He was, was absolutely necessary for the putting away of sin and for the satisfaction of God the Father. Sin had to be adequately punished in His beloved Son. We must also see in this grievous nature of sin and the price of putting it away forever.

His willingness to submit to being oppressed and afflicted in this manner speaks volumes about His love and devotion to His Father, and of His love for us. Yea, it is a Divine commentary of Christ’s love.

The Eternal Significance. Oppression and affliction only have eternal significance because of the heavenly treasure that is presently housed in the earthen vessel (cf. II Cor. 4:6-11). The earthen vessel derives the heavenly significance that it has from the fact that it is presently housing the heavenly treasure. The reason for housing the heavenly treasure in earthen vessels in the present time, as Paul declares, is “that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us” (II Cor. 4:7).

The purpose of God in salvation is being worked out in those who are engaged in the warfare of faith. Consequently, God is receiving all of the glory and praise, because He, in His great wisdom, has chosen to place the heavenly treasure [“the light of the knowledge of God in the face of Jesus Christ” (II Cor. 4:6)] in earthen vessels. These are vessels that, by design, can neither perfectly contain nor retain the heavenly treasure, and thus need to be regularly replenished, because the treasure is vastly superior to the earthen vessels.

Oppression and affliction, for those who are living by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, are now made to be a source of meaningful purpose, yea of eternal purpose, from the fact that the Savior once was tabernacled in a body like ours, but now He is glorified and exalted at the right hand of God, as our Forerunner (Heb. 6:20), our great High Priest (Heb. 8:1), and the Captain of our salvation (Heb. 2:10). He has triumphantly run this race before us, He is presently interceding for us from the right hand of God, and from there He is leading in the conflict of the ages, as believing men and women are now fighting the good fight of faith, and laying hold on eternal life (see I Tim. 6:12).

The Nature of this Treasure. This treasure is, in essence, “the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ” (II Cor. 4:6), the knowledge of God in relation to salvation from sin, from the curse, from the wrath to come, and unto eternal glory. It is the knowledge of a satisfied God, of sins forgiven, and of acceptance with God through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Believing men and women have been made to be accepted in Christ, the Beloved One (see Eph. 1:6).

The knowledge is substantive in nature, and not merely factual. It includes tasting that the Lord is gracious (I Pet. 2:3; Ps. 145:8), tasting of the good Word of God, tasting of the heavenly gift, and tasting of the powers of the world to come (cf. Heb. 6:4-5). It is a source of bona fide evidence of being “taught of God” (Jn. 6:45; I Th. 4:9), of loving God and being known of Him (I Cor. 8:3). All these are perceptible phenomena known only by those who are living and walking by faith in the Son of God.

Incidentally, the resurrected and glorified body will be impervious to oppression and affliction, even our bodies that are presently housing the heavenly treasure. Oppression and affliction shall, in the resurrection, be exchanged for a righteous dominion, and for joys that are everlasting. Jesus said: “To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with Me in My throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with My Father in His throne” (Rev. 3:21). “To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God” (Rev. 2:7).

But for the ungodly it will not be so. Their resurrected and glorified bodies will be to them an everlasting source of affliction, oppression, and torment. It will be the one in which they taste of “outer darkness”. This will be the body that is cast into “the lake of fire”. Their rejection of the knowledge of God through the Lord Jesus Christ will prove to be to them the source of everlasting grief and torment.

Our Vile Body vs. the Body of our Humiliation (Phil. 3:21). “The body of our humble state” (NASB). The translators provide us two different, yet very valid, perspectives. The body is “vile” (KJV) [that is, it is base, contemptible, and offensive] from the perspective of the opposition that it presents to those who are now living by faith in God through the Lord Jesus Christ. From this perspective it is the source of opposition to the knowledge of God. It often proves itself to be an insidious enemy. The carnal mind (the mind of the flesh, the vile body) is enmity with God. It is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. If one follows after the inclinations of this “vile body” it will ultimately lead to death and everlasting destruction from the Presence of the Lord. The vile body is the source of one’s connection to

the corruption that is in the world through lust, as Peter expressed it.

The Body of our Humiliation. From this perspective the present time is an appointed and necessary extended time of humbling for the people of God in the same way that it was for the Lord Jesus Christ in the days of His flesh. It is necessary for learning the Divine manner and ways in the present time and for readying men for glory in the world to come. It is needful for the demonstration of God's manifold wisdom in dealing with His saints. The "vile body" (Phil. 3:21, KJV) is "the body of our humiliation" (AMP, RV, YLT, see NASB) from the perspective of the purpose of God in Christ Jesus, namely the perspective of the end to which God is working in salvation.

The Body of our Humiliation, a Scaffolding. All over the world, here and there, there are rulers and princes and judges walking all about incognito. The scaffolding of God's workmanship is still firmly in place until the time appointed of God, and known only to God (cf. Mk. 13:32; Acts 1:7). But the appointed time will come! When the scaffold is finally dismantled and discarded at Christ's appearing, then all they who have suffered with Jesus shall eternally reign with Him. The extended duration of unrecognizability due to their lowly, unassuming state and condition will be forever past. Presently "the world knoweth us not, because it knew Him not" (I Jn. 3:1). "But we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is" (v. 2). "And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey Him" (the Lord Jesus Christ) (Dan. 7:27; cf. Dan. 7:13-27).

"Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the Presence of the Lord; and He shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you: Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy Prophets since the world began. For Moses truly said unto the fathers, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; Him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever He shall say unto you. And it shall come to pass, that every soul, which will not hear that Prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people. Yea, and all the Prophets from Samuel and those that follow after, as many as have spoken, have likewise foretold of these days. Ye are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, And in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed. Unto you first God, having raised up His Son Jesus, sent Him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities" (Acts 3:19-26).

Christ is
He in Whom God's
Soul
Delights
Isa. 42:1

“HE WAS TAKEN FROM PRISON AND FROM JUDGMENT”

“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” (Isa. 53:8). “In His humiliation His judgment was taken away: and who shall declare His generation? for His life is taken from the earth” (Act 8:33).

Other Translations. “In his humiliation his justice was taken away” (ACV), “By oppression and judgment He was taken away” (AMP), “After forcible arrest and sentencing, he was taken away” (CJB), “From restraint and from judgment is He taken” (CLV), “He was taken away from distress, and from judgment” (DRB), “By restraint and by judgment he hath been taken” (YLT), “From detention and judgment he was taken away” (ISV).

The “Prison” Mentioned in Isaiah 53:8. The Lord Jesus Christ was not locked up in a “prison” like Joseph, Peter, Paul, and Silas, etc. “Prison” can also be defined describing its most essential elements. “In a general sense,” it is “any place of confinement or involuntary restraint.” In this case the places of restraint and confinement were the judgment halls of the chief priests and rulers (Mt. 26:57-68), of Herod (Lk. 23:7), and of Pilate (Mt. 27:2-65). The Savior, in His humiliation, voluntarily submitted Himself to involuntary confinement and restraint. When the soldiers came to take Him, asking for Jesus of Nazareth, He simply said, “I am He”, and they all went backward and fell to the ground.

The Parallel Text in Acts 8:32-33. It was this particular portion of the Scripture that the Ethiopian eunuch was reading when Philip met him. “Now the passage of scripture that he was reading aloud was this: ‘He was led like a sheep to the slaughter, and like a lamb before its shearer is silent, so He did not open His mouth. In His humiliation justice was taken from Him’” (Acts 8:32-33, Lexham). This particular translation reads that the Eunuch was reading the text aloud, which the word “read” can sometimes be taken to mean. For example, “Give attendance to reading” (I Tim. 4:13), that is, reading in the place of public assembly.

There is something about the involvements of Christ’s suffering that is marvelously attractive to faith. If this, what the Eunuch was reading, was referring to any man other than Christ, the consideration of these details would not only be disinteresting, but also obnoxious and horrifying. But in the case of the Savior, the specific details of His suffering, when properly viewed [by faith] are gloriously transforming. They are a proclamation of liberty to the captives. In His sufferings we are given to blessedly behold the undoing of all that we have done in Adam, and of all the vestiges and propensities left in us from Adam’s transgression.

In His Humiliation. When the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, He voluntarily embarked upon a career of humiliation and extreme self-deprivation, the involvements and depths of which are known only to Members of the Godhead. The King of kings, and the Lord of angels humbled Himself, and took upon Himself the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men. It was in His humiliation that He became our near Kinsman. It was in His humiliation that He was made in the likeness of men. It was in His humiliation that He was made to be sin for us, even He who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him. It was by His humiliation that life and immortality were brought to light through the gospel. It was in His humiliation that the love which God has to us became known and consequently believed. It is in His humiliation that the treasures of Divine wisdom and knowledge have been opened up unto men.

The Justice and Judgment that was taken away with regard to the Lord Jesus. Solomon declared, “A just weight and balance are the LORD’s: all the weights of the bag are His work” (Prov. 16:11). But all the weights of this bag were rejected and discarded by those who were gathered together against the Lord and against His Christ. Again he said, “It is not good to accept the person of the wicked [in this case Barabbas], to overthrow the righteous [the Lord Jesus Christ] in judgment” (Prov. 18:5).

David echoes a similar thought when he writes: “I have done judgment and justice: leave me not to mine oppressors” (Ps. 119:121). The Lord Jesus Christ not only did judgment and justice, but, even more than this, He did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth; He magnified the Law and made it honourable, and yet He was oppressed and afflicted by sinful men. He was left to His oppressors for a season, for this was their hour and the power of darkness.

“The LORD is known by the judgment which He executeth” (Ps. 9:16). “Justice and judgment are the habitation of Thy throne” (Ps. 89:14). However, when Christ was bearing our iniquities, He was experientially far removed from the blessedness and delight expressed by, and associated with, such declarations as these. And yet, by that removal, He was accomplishing the good pleasure of the LORD Jehovah in our behalf.

“The LORD executeth righteousness and judgment for all that are oppressed” (Ps. 103:6). This word of the Psalmist has, it would appear, an expanded significance with regard to the Lord Jesus Christ in the days of His flesh. On the one hand, it seems that, for the Son, God’s suffering Servant, the execution of the righteousness and judgment in His own behalf was sensibly delayed, as He was bearing the iniquity of others. This was delay that only Christ and the Father knew about. It was delay infinitely greater than that experienced by other men who are being tried. It was delay that was Divinely felt. He cried, “My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me? Why art thou so far from helping Me, and from the words of My roaring?” (Ps. 22:1). Only Jesus can take complete ownership of these words.

But from a much nobler and more lofty perspective the LORD was executing righteousness and judgment for all that are oppressed when He laid upon His beloved Son the iniquity of us all. It was not righteousness and judgment for the purpose of rectifying injustices that are suffered by men while living in this present evil world, rather we are speaking here of the bringing in of everlasting righteousness, as declared by Daniel the Prophet. The Lord Jesus Christ, by Divine determination, has indeed finished the transgression, made an end of sins, made reconciliation for iniquity, and brought in everlasting righteousness for the holy people (the church), and for the holy city (new Jerusalem) (cf. Dan. 9:24). By His sufferings, His death, His resurrection, and His ascension to the right hand of God, He has brought life and immortality to light [into plain view] for men, who for millennia of time, had been banished from the tree of life because of their offences against the Most High.

By Oppression, Restraint, and Judgment. It was by oppression, restraint, and men’s judgment that He was taken away. He was taken by “wicked hands” and “crucified, and slain”, as Peter declared on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:23). It was by means of these things that the Lord Jesus Christ was offered as the spotless Lamb upon which the sins of the world were laid. It was also by the means of His sufferings and death, that He was eventually removed from the restraint and judgment of men. Immediately prior to His death He said, “Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit” (Lk. 23:46).

The Lord, His Apostles, and the Word of God. We see in the Lord Jesus Christ and His Apostles a blessed example of utmost reverence for the Word of God. “He was taken from prison and from judgment” (Isa. 53:8). “In His humiliation His judgment was taken away” (Acts 8:33). Though the texts in Isaiah and Acts read somewhat differently [the one being from the Hebrew and the other from the Septuagint translation] they are conveying the same blessed reality regarding the sufferings of Christ and the glorious effect of those sufferings.

Words that Minister to Faith. Such words are those which enable men to take hold of the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen. They are words which the Holy Spirit teaches. They are good words, sound words, substantive words, wholesome words. They are nourishing words, words that are profitable unto the edification of the hearers. They are words which constrain unto godliness. They are words which are able to properly contain the realities which are expressed in the Scriptures. They are not malicious words, nor swelling words. They are not flattering, vain, nor enticing words.

“Adam’s transgression” (Rom. 5:14) and the consequent entrance of sin into the world (v. 12) have in-

troduced bondage and enslavements of every sort. The scope of this enslavement can only begin to be comprehended when the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the Image of God, shines into the heart. Not until men hear, believe, and know the truth are they made free from servitude and enslavement to sin and to the prince of this world. Practically speaking, they are presently made free from the religious and moral error which has enslaved them. [They didn't think right; they had wrong thoughts of the God that made them, and consequently, they didn't live right.]

This bondage is at first so far-reaching and unapparent that men who are in bondage generally are not aware that they are in such a state. An example illustrating this point is found in the gospel of John. "Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on Him, If ye continue in My word, then are ye My disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free. They answered Him, we be Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man: how sayest thou, Ye shall be made free? Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin. And the servant abideth not in the house for ever: but the Son abideth ever. If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed" (Jn. 8:31-36). Men must be apprised of their servitude to sin through the preaching of the gospel. It is only in the light of the glorious gospel of Christ that this servitude can be perceived, and owned, and remedied.

Men Preferring Darkness over Light. Here is yet another graphic portrayal of the moral enslavement and bondage that has infected all of Adam's offspring. "And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved. But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God" (Jn. 3:19-21). Preferring the darkness over the light is not innocent. A continued preference of darkness over light, on the part of men, will be repaid with eternal damnation. The Lord Jesus Christ is the Light of the world (Jn. 8:12), and the gospel of Christ is a light that shines into men's hearts (II Cor. 4:4-5). Unlike the commandment, which was a lamp, the gospel of Christ is a light that not only illuminates men's enslavement in sins, but it also comes with a glorious remedy for complete and total deliverance from sin. But Christ and the gospel also make inflexible demands upon men's lives. "Whosoever will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me" (Mk. 8:34).

In Christ men and women are summoned to "stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ has made them free" (Gal. 5:1). This can only be appreciated against the backdrop of the enslavement and bondage from which they were delivered. In Christ men and women have become an eternity-bound people, and are now espoused to God's eternal purpose in His beloved Son (cf. Eph. 3:10-11). But prior to being in Christ, even the best of men had hope "in this life only" (I Cor. 15:19). "This present evil world" (Gal. 1:4) was theirs, and our, only reference point. Theirs and our thoughts, desires, and ambitions rose no higher than the boundaries of the dominion of Satan, "the prince of the power of the air" (Eph. 2:2). They, and we, were animated by "the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life" (I Jn. 2:16).

But presently the people of God have only a blessed foretaste of the liberty that awaits them up ahead. The liberty that they now have is "in part". [The Romans 7 conflict ought to be a sufficient demonstration of this.] They are now "waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of" their "bodies" (Rom. 8:23; Eph. 1:5). [We presently have the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father (Rom. 8:15)]. Those who are now living by faith in the Son of God are awaiting their deliverance into "the glorious liberty of the children of God" (Rom. 8:21). At that time they, and "the whole creation" (Rom. 8:22) with them, shall be delivered from "the bondage of corruption". From this point on, liberty shall no longer be partial, but rather complete. From this point on, the only servitude will be service to the Father and to His Son. "His servants shall serve Him" (Rev. 22:3), for "there shall be no more curse". In the present time there are, however, yet vestiges of the curse remaining within us and all about us.

But the liberty that the people of God now enjoy in part, and the fullness of the liberty that shall be

brought to them in the resurrection has come at the price of one Man being in prison and in judgment, from which He was, at the set time, taken. The Lord Jesus Christ was greatly “straitened” (Lk. 12:50) while He tenured here “in the days of His flesh” (Heb. 4:15). In His humiliation He submitted Himself to the limitations of time and space, and to all the weaknesses and frailties associated with this earthly tabernacle. He, by whom God “made the worlds” (Heb. 1:2), became “wearied with His journey” (Jn. 4:6; Mt. 8:24; Mk. 4:38) “in the days of His flesh.” He, by whom God “created all things” (Eph. 3:9; Col. 1:16), including food and drink, “hungered” after fasting in the temptation in the wilderness (Lk. 4:2; see also Mt. 21:17-18). He was “crucified through weakness” (II Cor. 13:4), and yet He lives by the power of God.

“The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us” (Jn. 1:14). He was “God” “manifest in the flesh” (I Tim. 3:16). These are wonderfully blessed declarations for us to consider and believe, “for our sakes”, but from the perspective of the Word, this involved a great price to be paid by Himself. It entailed a great humbling of Himself, making Himself of no reputation, taking upon Him the form of a Servant, and being made in the likeness of men. He even further humbled Himself when He “became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross” (Phil. 2:7-8). The Savior was crucified at His weakest point, in order that He might be enabled of God to reach out to, and take hold of, us who were “without strength” (Rom. 5:6). “For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly”.

Some Pertinent Questions

1. What is your estimation of the Christ who is revealed in the words of Isaiah’s prophecy? Have you believed on Him? Have you obeyed His gospel? Do you know Him? Do you love Him?
2. When you think of Isaiah’s prophecy, what are some of the names of Christ that come to your mind and heart?
3. What is the relatedness of the sufferings of Christ to all the other representations of Christ in Isaiah’s prophecy?
4. Name some words or expressions in Isaiah that are identifying Christ’s Person.
5. Name some expressions that depict Christ’s teaching ministry to sinful men.
6. Think of some specific words or expressions used by Isaiah that graphically depict Christ’s sufferings in your behalf.
7. As a Gentile believer in Christ, give some strong reasonings to justify your inclusion in the benefits of Christ’s sufferings. Think of things that Isaiah declares with regard to both Jew and Gentile.
8. Think of words used by the Prophet Isaiah to give expression to the efficacious nature of Christ’s sufferings including the glory which has followed.

“For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. For the Scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on Him shall not be ashamed” (Rom. 10:10-11; see Isa. 28:16).

Christ is
the Mighty God
Isa. 9:6

“WHO SHALL DECLARE HIS GENERATION?”

“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” (Isa. 53:8). “In His humiliation His judgment was taken away: and who shall declare His generation? for His life is taken from the earth” (Act 8:33). “A seed shall serve Him; it shall be accounted to the Lord for a generation” (Ps. 22:30)

Who Shall Declare His Generation? *Who shall declare Christ’s generation?* The sense of the word “generation” in Isaiah 53 is not that of “the average length of time between the birth of parents and the birth of their children” (*Merriam Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary*, Tenth Edition), as commonly thought of. Here the word “generation” speaks of a bringing forth of offspring, and also of the offspring that are brought forth. The offspring bear a close resemblance to their progenitors in their essential makeup and expression. But Christ had no offspring in the days of His flesh. He was “cut off out of the land of the living”, having no fleshly seed to bear His name after Him. In Israel it was considered a matter of reproach not to have offspring (cf. Gen. 30:23; Lk. 1:25). So the Prophet asks this thought-provoking question: *Who shall declare His generation? Where are the children that shall come forth from His loins?*

In the following paragraphs we would draw attention to the fact that, in Israel especially, great emphasis was placed upon tracking the names of children and of children’s children from Adam unto Christ. Beginning with Eve godly women lived in hope that they might be the one who would be counted worthy to bring forth the promised Seed of the woman that would finally bruise the serpent’s head (see Gen. 3:15; 4:1).

The Generations of Adam. “This is the book of the generations of Adam. In the day that God created man, in the likeness of God made He him; Male and female created he them; and blessed them, and called their name Adam, in the day when they were created.

And Adam lived an hundred and thirty years, and begat a son in his own likeness, after his image; and called his name Seth: And the days of Adam after he had begotten Seth were eight hundred years: and he begat sons and daughters: And all the days that Adam lived were nine hundred and thirty years: and he died. And Seth lived an hundred and five years, and begat Enos: And Seth lived after he begat Enos eight hundred and seven years, and begat sons and daughters: And all the days of Seth were nine hundred and twelve years: and he died.

And Enos lived ninety years, and begat Cainan: And Enos lived after he begat Cainan eight hundred and fifteen years, and begat sons and daughters: And all the days of Enos were nine hundred and five years: and he died.

And Cainan lived seventy years, and begat Mahalaleel: And Cainan lived after he begat Mahalaleel eight hundred and forty years, and begat sons and daughters: And all the days of Cainan were nine hundred and ten years: and he died.

And Mahalaleel lived sixty and five years, and begat Jared: And Mahalaleel lived after he begat Jared eight hundred and thirty years, and begat sons and daughters: And all the days of Mahalaleel were eight hundred ninety and five years: and he died.

And Jared lived an hundred sixty and two years, and he begat Enoch: And Jared lived after he begat Enoch eight hundred years, and begat sons and daughters: And all the days of Jared were nine hundred sixty and two years: and he died.

And Enoch lived sixty and five years, and begat Methuselah: And Enoch walked with God after he begat Methuselah three hundred years, and begat sons and daughters: And all the days of Enoch were three hundred sixty and five years: And Enoch walked with God: and he was not; for God took him. And

Methuselah lived an hundred eighty and seven years, and begat Lamech: And Methuselah lived after he begat Lamech seven hundred eighty and two years, and begat sons and daughters: And all the days of Methuselah were nine hundred sixty and nine years: and he died.

And Lamech lived an hundred eighty and two years, and begat a son: And he called his name Noah, saying, This same shall comfort us concerning our work and toil of our hands, because of the ground which the LORD hath cursed. And Lamech lived after he begat Noah five hundred ninety and five years, and begat sons and daughters: And all the days of Lamech were seven hundred seventy and seven years: and he died. And Noah was five hundred years old: and Noah begat Shem, Ham, and Japheth” (Gen. 5:1-32).

Other Generations. Similarly are also recorded “the generations of Noah” (Gen. 6:9), “the generations of the sons of Noah” (Gen. 10:1), “the generations of Shem” (Gen. 11:10), and “the generations of Terah” (Gen. 11:27), who brought forth Abram. Also are recorded “the generations of Ishmael” (Gen. 25:12), “the generations of Isaac” (Gen. 25:19), “the generations of Esau” (Gen. 36:1, 9), and “the generations of Jacob” (Gen. 37:2). Some of these generations became custodians of the promises, and some did not. Some of the generations became the objects of God’s love, and others, the objects of His hatred (Mal. 1:2-3; Rom. 9:13).

The Generation of Jesus Christ. There was a generation that brought forth the Savior. who was “made of the seed of David according to the flesh; and declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead” (Rom. 1:3-4). “And (Joseph) knew her not till she had brought forth her firstborn son: and he called His name JESUS” (Mt. 1:25). It was this particular “bringing forth” that brought an end to a long and wearisome time of labor and travail in the working out of God’s eternal purpose. The woman, by the grace of God, had finally brought forth the long awaited Man child that would bruise the serpent’s head. “And she brought forth a man child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron: and her child was caught up unto God, and to his throne” (Rev. 12:5).

The Two Genealogies of Christ

It ought to be clear since there are two genealogies of Christ recorded in the Apostles’ writings (one in Matthew chapter 1, the other in Luke chapter 3), that one is Joseph’s genealogy, and the other belongs to Mary, the mother of our Lord. While at first consideration it might appear that both genealogies belong to Joseph, a more careful consideration will clarify that Matthew has given us Joseph’s genealogy, and Luke has recorded Mary’s lineage. Joseph was the son of Jacob, the son of Matthan, the son of Eleazar. Mary was the daughter of Heli, the son of Matthat, the son of Levi.

With regard to Joseph, Luke records of the Lord Jesus, “being (as was supposed) the son of Joseph”, but not in actuality. In both genealogies Joseph was considered to be Jesus’ legal father. Mary was Jesus actual mother.

In the gospel accounts there are two separate lineages traced from David to Christ. Matthew, without question, traces Christ’s lineage from Solomon, the son of David, to Joseph. But Luke records Christ’s bloodline from Mary to Nathan, the son of David. It ought to be clear that one of the genealogies has to belong to Mary, else there is no substantive connection between David and Christ. Therefore we are left to conclude that Luke has recorded Mary’s genealogy, though she is not specifically mentioned there by name.

Joseph fulfilled an extremely critical and unselfish purpose, assuming the role of Jesus’ real father by all appearances [though he was in fact His stepfather], while the Savior was growing up and coming to manhood. This was to ensure that no shame and reproach be brought upon Mary, Christ, and the purpose of God in salvation.

Matthew’s Genealogy. From beginning to end God was working very closely with this generation [sometimes more evidently than others] as it was the one that would bring forth the Savior, upon whom

His eternal purposed rested and was established. It becomes evident from the natural tendencies in men to sin and iniquity, when left to themselves, that “except the Lord of Sabaoth had left us a seed, we had been as Sodoma, and been made like unto Gomorrha” (Rom. 9:29; cf. Isa. 1:9).

“The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham. Abraham begat Isaac; and Isaac begat Jacob; and Jacob begat Judas and his brethren; And Judas begat Phares and Zara of Thamar; and Phares begat Esrom; and Esrom begat Aram; And Aram begat Aminadab; and Aminadab begat Naasson; and Naasson begat Salmon; And Salmon begat Booz of Rachab; and Booz begat Obed of Ruth; and Obed begat Jesse; And Jesse begat David the king; and David the king begat Solomon of her that had been the wife of Urias; And Solomon begat Roboam; and Roboam begat Abia; and Abia begat Asa; And Asa begat Josaphat; and Josaphat begat Joram; and Joram begat Ozias; And Ozias begat Joatham; and Joatham begat Achaz; and Achaz begat Ezekias; And Ezekias begat Manasses; and Manasses begat Amon; and Amon begat Josias; And Josias begat Jechonias and his brethren, about the time they were carried away to Babylon: And after they were brought to Babylon, Jechonias begat Salathiel; and Salathiel begat Zorobabel; And Zorobabel begat Abiud; and Abiud begat Eliakim; and Eliakim begat Azor; And Azor begat Sadoc; and Sadoc begat Achim; and Achim begat Eliud; And Eliud begat Eleazar; and Eleazar begat Matthan; and Matthan begat Jacob; And Jacob begat Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ.

So all the generations from Abraham to David are fourteen generations; and from David until the carrying away into Babylon are fourteen generations; and from the carrying away into Babylon unto Christ are fourteen generations” (Mt. 1:1-17).

Luke’s Genealogy of Christ. “And Jesus himself began to be about thirty years of age, being (as was supposed) the son of Joseph, which was the son of Heli, Which was the son of Matthat, which was the son of Levi, which was the son of Melchi, which was the son of Janna, which was the son of Joseph, Which was the son of Mattathias, which was the son of Amos, which was the son of Naum, which was the son of Esli, which was the son of Nagge, Which was the son of Maath, which was the son of Mattathias, which was the son of Semei, which was the son of Joseph, which was the son of Juda, Which was the son of Joanna, which was the son of Rhesa, which was the son of Zorobabel, which was the son of Salathiel, which was the son of Neri, Which was the son of Melchi, which was the son of Addi, which was the son of Cosam, which was the son of Elmodam, which was the son of Er, Which was the son of Jose, which was the son of Eliezer, which was the son of Jorim, which was the son of Matthat, which was the son of Levi, Which was the son of Simeon, which was the son of Juda, which was the son of Joseph, which was the son of Jonan, which was the son of Eliakim, Which was the son of Melea, which was the son of Menan, which was the son of Mattatha, which was the son of Nathan, which was the son of David, Which was the son of Jesse, which was the son of Obed, which was the son of Booz, which was the son of Salmon, which was the son of Naasson, Which was the son of Aminadab, which was the son of Aram, which was the son of Esrom, which was the son of Phares, which was the son of Juda, Which was the son of Jacob, which was the son of Isaac, which was the son of Abraham, which was the son of Thara, which was the son of Nachor, Which was the son of Saruch, which was the son of Ragau, which was the son of Phalec, which was the son of Heber, which was the son of Sala, Which was the son of Cainan, which was the son of Arphaxad, which was the son of Sem, which was the son of Noe, which was the son of Lamech, Which was the son of Mathusala, which was the son of Enoch, which was the son of Jared, which was the son of Maleleel, which was the son of Cainan, Which was the son of Enos, which was the son of Seth, which was the son of Adam, which was the son of God” (Lk. 3:23-38).

Who Shall Declare Christ’s Generation? The recorded genealogies in Scripture trace the Savior’s bloodline from Abraham through Solomon to Christ and from Adam through Nathan to Christ, and stop there. So then, who shall declare the generation that shall come forth from Him? Are there any books that are large enough and worthy enough to contain all of the names of these persons? “And of Zion it shall be said, This and that man was born in her: and the highest himself shall establish her. The LORD

shall count, when He writeth up the people, that this man was born there. Selah” (Ps. 87:5-6). “After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands” (Rev. 7:9). “And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth” (Rev. 19:6).

Those Whose Names are Written in the Book of Life. “And I intreat thee also, true yokefellow, help those women which laboured with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and with other my fellowlabourers, whose names are in the book of life” (Phil. 4:3). These persons, by their evident association with the book of life in the estimation of the Apostle Paul, were, and are, declaring the living Savior's generation. May we have grace that our manner of living here in this world may ever bear witness to our association with the book of life.

These Shall Declare His Generation. “He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before My Father, and before His angels” (Rev. 3:5). “Therefore the redeemed of the LORD shall return, and come with singing unto Zion; and everlasting joy shall be upon their head: they shall obtain gladness and joy; and sorrow and mourning shall flee away” (Isa. 51:11). Such overcomers and redeemed personalities are “. . . they which are written in the Lamb's book of life” (Rev. 21:27). May we, by God's grace, be counted worthy to be found in that heavenly register!

The Father solemnly affirmed to the Son through the Prophets before He suffered, “Thy people also shall be all righteous: they shall inherit the land for ever, the branch of My planting, the work of My hands, that I may be glorified” (Isa. 60:21). And the Son resolutely replied to the Father, “And again, I will put My trust in Him. And again, Behold I and the children which God hath given Me” (Heb. 2:13). Those who are the branch of God's planting and the work of His hands are the seed who shall declare Christ's generation. These “were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God” (Jn. 1:13).

A Seed Accounted to Christ for a Generation. Though Christ had no fleshly seed, He nevertheless has an innumerable company of seed springing forth from Him by virtue of the new birth, and of new creatureship in Him. “A seed shall serve Him; it shall be accounted to the Lord for a generation” (Ps. 22:30). “And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise” (Gal. 3:29).

“But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness. Wherefore? Because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumblingstone; As it is written, Behold, I lay in Sion a stumblingstone and rock of offence: and whosoever believeth on Him shall not be ashamed” (Rom. 9:31-33; see Isa. 28:16).

Christ is
of Quick
Understanding in
the Fear of the
LORD

Isa. 11:3

“FOR THE TRANSGRESSION OF MY PEOPLE WAS HE STRICKEN”

“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” (Isa. 53:8).

Other Translations. “Who among them considered that He was cut off out of the land of the living [stricken to His death] for the transgression of my [Isaiah's] people, to whom the stroke was due?” (Amplified Version). “who among them considered that he was cut off out of the land of the living for the transgression of my people to whom the stroke was due?” (ASV, see also NASB). “for the wickedness of my people have I struck him” (DRB). “His life was taken away because of the sinful things my people had done” (CEV). “For my people’s transgression, did the stroke fall on him?” (EB). “He was struck because of my people’s rebellion” (HCSB). “who considered that he was cut off out of the land of the living, stricken for the transgression of my people?” (RSV).

The Douay-Rheims Bible, listed above, straightforwardly expresses the thought that God struck Christ for our transgressions. “. . . for the wickedness of my people have I struck him”. The others translations, for the most part, strongly imply that God struck Him. They summon the believer to search, and ponder, and draw holy conclusions: who else could have stricken the Son of God as it is expressed here, with an consequence so large in scope as to justly and effectually make payment for the transgression of an entire people, yea even of the whole world (I Jn. 2:2). Could the smitings of Pilate and the soldiers in the different judgment halls where the Lord Jesus Christ was wickedly interrogated and sentenced to death, possibly have resulted in such a consequence? Could their wicked works conceivably have occasioned the furtherance of God’s eternal purpose in Christ even one iota? For the thoughtful person, to ask such questions as these will result in coming to the proper conclusion.

The wicked men involved here will certainly be brought into judgment for every evil work and word that has proceeded from them (cf. Rev. 1:7; Mt. 12:36; Rom. 2:16). But God alone will be glorified in, by, and as a result of every advancement of His eternal purpose in His Son right down to the last jot and tittle. “For God is my King of old, working salvation in the midst of the earth” (Ps. 74:12), the Psalmist declared. And it ought to be clear that this King reigns and works with no competitors. “He doeth according to His will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay His hand, or say unto Him, What doest Thou?” (Dan. 4:35). The exalted Jehovah is able even to use “wicked hands” in the working out of His eternal purpose, if need be, and yet the possessors of those hands shall be brought into strict account for what they have done. God, however, will be justified in all of His sayings and works, and will overcome when He is judged. In the Day of Judgment it will be evident to all that “the Lord is” indeed “righteous in all His ways, and holy in all His works.”

The Employment of “Wicked Hands” by the God who sits upon the Throne of His Holiness. (See Ps. 47:8). We are speaking here of “the high and lofty One who inhabits eternity”, the faithful God, whose name is Jealous. He is altogether righteous and He uncompromisingly loves righteousness and hates iniquity. He it is who humbles Himself to behold the things both in Heaven and in earth, whose Name alone is Jehovah (the Eternal Self Existent One). He purposes all things after the counsel of His own will, and before whom all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as grasshoppers. This is the God upon whom Abraham believed, and it was accounted unto him for righteousness. This is He before whom even Moses exceedingly feared and quaked, and the God, in whose courts David earnestly yearned to dwell (see Psalm 84).

In the gospel He has been even further revealed to be a God with an eternal purpose which centers exclusively in His Son (the Word who was made flesh and dwelt among us). He is the God who so loved the world that He gave His Son (that Eternal life, which was with the Father, and is now manifested unto us). He has abundantly demonstrated His love in that He sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

He is presently making known the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness towards us by Christ Jesus. His ways are past finding out, as the Scripture declares.

This is the God who ordered the events and circumstances regarding the crucifixion of His beloved Son, and yet has remained, and remains, entirely untainted by the sin and wickedness that was involved in the crucifixion. Faith persuades men even now that this is so, and “the Day will declare it” then before an assembled universe.

Some Examples of This Divine Working. “But as for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive” (Gen. 50:20). From the time that Joseph was sold to the Ishmaelites by his brothers unto the time when he was elevated to the throne in Egypt was an exceeding long duration by men’s reckoning, extending over decades. From the Ishmaelites to servanthood in Potiphar’s house to prison (including a time when his feet were hurt with fetters, and he was laid in iron) and then finally being exalted to rule with Pharaoh, Joseph was called upon to endure many hard trials, with each perfecting and readying him for what was up ahead. The extended duration of time may well have served to erase from his heart and mind any bitterness that he might have harbored towards his brethren. It also enabled him, at the end, to make the correct assessment as to why he was sent down into Egypt ahead of his brethren and the remainder of his family. But with God, this was but a moment on the Divine calendar.

“Surely the wrath of man shall praise Thee: THE REMAINDER OF WRATH SHALT THOU RESTRAIN” (Ps. 76:10). The wrath of man is fully subject to the dominion and control of the all-wise Jehovah. Whatever wrath proceeding from men that does not glorify His name, He restrains. And this is particularly the case with regard to wrath that is vented against His people.

“The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord, and against his Christ. For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together, FOR TO DO WHATSOEVER THY HAND AND THY COUNSEL DETERMINED BEFORE TO BE DONE” (Acts 4:26-28).

“Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know: Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain: Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it” (Acts 2:22-24). In both of these examples from Acts it can be seen how that God is constantly at work in the carrying forward of His eternal purpose in Christ Jesus, and evil men, from time to time, are summoned in and employed to give expression to the thoughts of their own hearts, thus fulfilling a Divine purpose. Nevertheless they shall be brought into strict account for what they had done, and God ever remains unchargeable for any complicity with their evil works.

Transgression Versus Transgressions. When it comes to the matter of God dealing with sins and transgressions, there is a sense in which all iniquities, transgressions, and sins were consolidated into one mass (the sin of the world, the transgression of my people, the iniquity of Jacob). This is what the Lamb of God took away in His awful suffering at Golgotha. This is what Jesus was made to be, even Him who knew no sin, in order that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him (cf. II Cor. 5:21). It was for this cause alone that God smote His Son, and it was by this means that all sin, and iniquity, and transgression has been put away forever from the face of God.

It was by one man (Adam) that sin entered the world, and it was also by one Man (Christ) that sin was put away. Sin entered by the means of our first parents being enticed by pleasures which were for the moment, and it was put away at an unfathomable cost to the Savior, namely, by the incomprehensibly great suffering freely borne by Him. Sin came by one man, and the remedy for sin also came by one Man Jesus Christ. Consider the following declarations:

Adam and Christ Compared. “For if by one man’s offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by One, Jesus Christ.) Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of One the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life. For as by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of One shall many be made righteous. Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound: that as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord” (Rom. 5:17-21).

The Effectuality of Christ’s Redemptive Work. “For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh” (Rom. 8:3). “But the scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe” (Gal. 3:22). “. . . now once in the end of the world hath He appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself” (Heb. 9:26). “So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation” (Heb. 9:28).

A vital part of the good fight of faith is reckoning that, when we do sin on occasion, the particular sin that we have committed was, indeed, part of the sin and transgression and iniquity (in totality) that Jesus put away. This same reality also becomes to believing men an effectual constrainer to purpose, and seek grace, not to sin.

For the Transgression of my People was He Stricken. These are the words of the Prophet Isaiah with regard to what he knew very well about Israel’s transgressions, sins, and iniquities, and also what he was given to see by revelation of God’s unspeakably gracious resolution and determination regarding this matter. He would not make a full end of His people, as He declared elsewhere, but rather He would strike His Son, with all of their iniquity, and transgression, and sin upon Him, and He would be eternally gracious unto them. He would impart righteousness unto them, remission of sins, and everlasting consolation and good hope through grace.

And in gracious repayment to His beloved Son He has now exalted Him, giving Him a name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father. In addition to the tribes of Israel restored to Him, He has also given Christ the heathen for His inheritance, that God’s unsearchable wisdom and His lovingkindness might be magnified through them by Jesus Christ, world without end.

“Search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of Me” (Jn. 5:39).

Christ is
the Prince of
Peace

Isa. 9:6

“HE MADE HIS GRAVE WITH THE WICKED”

“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” (Isa. 53:9).

Other Translations. “And they assigned Him a grave with the wicked” (Amplified Bible). “And they made his grave with the wicked” (ASV, RSV). “And they put his body into the earth with sinners” (BBE). “He was given a grave among the wicked” (CJB). “And, appointed with lawless men, was his grave” (EB). “He was placed in a grave with those who are evil” (GNB). “By restraint and by judgment he hath been taken, and of his generation who doth meditate, that he hath been cut off from the land of the living? By the transgression of My people he is plagued, And it appointeth (appoints) with the wicked his grave” (Isa. 53:8-9, YLT). “His grave was assigned with wicked men” (NASB). “A grave was assigned him among the wicked” (NAB). “And he will be given a place with the impious for his burial” (CPDV). “Then they made his grave with the wicked” (ISV).

Some Varied, but nevertheless Valid Perspectives. “He made His grave”, “they made His grave”, “they assigned Him a grave”, “He was given a grave”, “a grave was assigned Him”. In all of these expressions can be seen the involvement of men with the working of God. It was necessary that the Lord Jesus Christ be buried as other men were buried. He, who knew no sin, and who did no sin, died as one that was deemed to be guilty, and He was buried in the midst of others who were sinners, even in a place where wicked men were buried.

Paul includes Christ’s Burial with things that are to be kept in memory. “. . . and that He was buried” (I Cor. 15:3). Christ’s death and resurrection are matters that are more evident to be kept in memory, if men are to be saved. But Paul includes Christ’s burial together with the His death and resurrection. His burial is a sealed confirmation to faith that He died, died for sins, died for sinners, died in fulfillment of the purpose of God in salvation. It is also a confirmation of His resurrection.

“He Made His Grave with the Wicked”. “He made His grave.” Only the King James Version (along with some of the modernizations of the KJV: AKJV, MKJV, and a few others, Webster, ERB) render it this way. The NKJV changes this expression to read “they made His grave” with a footnote saying that literally, it should read, “He made His grave.” The MKJV reads “He put His grave with the wicked”, but it retains the thought that the Lord was the One who was acting, not being acted upon.

He Made His Grave. From a higher perspective there is a very real sense in which the Lord Jesus Christ Himself did make His grave. “As the Father knoweth Me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down My life for the sheep” (Jn. 10:15). “Therefore doth My Father love Me, because I lay down My life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of My Father” (Jn. 10:17-18). The making of His grave is an integral part of laying His life down, and taking it again. There is a sense in which He (Christ) superintended the entire matter. It had to be this way because of who He is, and because of what the Father had, out of love to His Son and in accordance with His eternal purpose in His Son, commissioned Him to do (Jn. 10:17).

The Burial of Jesus. “Now when the centurion, and they that were with him, watching Jesus, saw the earthquake, and those things that were done, they feared greatly, saying, Truly this was the Son of God. And many women were there beholding afar off, which followed Jesus from Galilee, ministering unto Him: Among which was Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James and Joses, and the mother of Zebedee’s children. When the even was come, there came a rich man of Arimathæa, named Joseph, who also himself was Jesus’ disciple: He went to Pilate, and begged the body of Jesus. Then Pilate commanded the body to be delivered. And when Joseph had taken the body, he wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, And laid it in his own new tomb, which he had hewn out in the rock: and he rolled a great stone to the door

of the sepulchre, and departed. And there was Mary Magdalene, and the other Mary, sitting over against the sepulchre.

Now the next day, that followed the day of the preparation, the chief priests and Pharisees came together unto Pilate, Saying, Sir, we remember that that deceiver said, while he was yet alive, After three days I will rise again. Command therefore that the sepulchre be made sure until the third day, lest his disciples come by night, and steal him away, and say unto the people, He is risen from the dead: so the last error shall be worse than the first. Pilate said unto them, Ye have a watch: go your way, make it as sure as ye can. So they went, and made the sepulchre sure, sealing the stone, and setting a watch” (Mt. 27:54-66).

Joseph of Arimathæa. This was a very tender and precious act of kindness shown by Joseph to the Lord Jesus Christ after His sufferings and death were accomplished. He went to Pilate, he begged the body of Jesus, he took the body and wrapped it in a clean linen cloth. He laid the body in his own new tomb which he had hewn out in the rock. And finally, he rolled a great stone to the door of the sepulcher, and departed.

God and the Glory of God. When we speak of Members of the Godhead, we at once enter into a domain of glory, (speaking as a man, a realm of perspectives, standpoints, of varied, yet valid, perceptions.)

There is a sense in which every created being—from the four living creatures (Ezek. 1:5; Rev. 4:6, 8; 5:6, 8, 14; 6:1; 7:11; 14:3; 15:7; 19:4), to the twenty four elders (Rev. 4:4, 10; 5:8, 14; 11:16; 19:4), to seraphim (Isa. 6:1-6) and cherubim (Gen. 3:24; Exod. 25:18-22; 37:7-9), to the innumerable company of angels (Heb. 12:22), to men, created in the image of God and now made partakers of the redemption which is in Christ Jesus, and even to the whole creation groaning and travailing together (Rom. 8:16-27),—all were created unto one blessedly exalted end and purpose: namely, to behold and bear witness of the glory of God. (For redeemed men, it would also consummate in them being made a partaker of that glory.)

Each created being was made with varied degrees and capabilities of perception and expression. Each is intensely focused upon who God is, and upon what He is doing. All eyes are fastened upon Him. “The eyes of all wait upon Thee; and Thou givest them their meat in due season” (Ps. 145:15). “For God’s redeemed sons and daughters, they have been “created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them” (Eph. 2:10) in order that they might “show forth His salvation from day to day” (Ps. 96:2).

Perspectives of Christ’s Crucifixion. With regard to the crucifixion of the Lord, there is the vantage point of what God Himself exclusively sees. “The LORD seeth not as man seeth” (I Sam. 16:7), the Scripture declares. He sees and knows, yea, He determines, “declaring the end from the beginning” (Isa. 46:10), “and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure”. “All things are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him,” (Heb. 4:13), “who sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins” (I Jn. 4:9-10). He purposes and works “all things after the counsel of His own will” (Eph. 1:11). He sees and judges with the eye of omniscience.

There is also, for example, the perspective of Isaiah 53, of the four gospel writers, and that of the Apostles’ in their epistles. All are valid perceptions, and yet all are somewhat different. With regard to perceptions of the Lord Jesus Christ in the Psalms and in the Prophets, there is the valid perception of One who was coming to suffer greatly for sins. “And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for Himself” (Dan. 9:26). “And one shall say unto Him, What are these wounds in Thine hands? Then he shall answer, Those with which I was wounded in the house of my friends” (Zech. 13:6).

There is another perspective of a great King that was coming to sit in judgment forever on David’s throne (as in Psalms 45, 72, 110, etc.).

Sometimes the Prophets were given to bring these two apparently divergent perspectives together, as

in Psalms 22, 89, and Isaiah 52:12-14, and sometimes they were given to see more of the suffering One, as in Isaiah 53.

The Four Living Creatures and the Twenty Four Elders (ASV). “And out of the midst thereof came the likeness of four living creatures. And this was their appearance: they had the likeness of a man” (Ezek. 1:5).

“Now as I beheld the living creatures, behold, one wheel upon the earth beside the living creatures, for each of the four faces thereof” (Ezek. 1:15).

“And before the throne, as it were a sea of glass like a crystal; and in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne, four living creatures full of eyes before and behind” (Rev. 4:6).

“And the four living creatures, having each one of them six wings, are full of eyes round about and within: and they have no rest day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God, the Almighty, who was and who is and who is to come” (Rev 4:8).

“And I saw in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures, and in the midst of the elders, a Lamb standing, as though it had been slain, having seven horns, and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God, sent forth into all the earth” (Rev. 5:6). “And when he had taken the book, the four living creatures and the four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having each one a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints” (Rev. 5:8). “And the four living creatures said, Amen. And the elders fell down and worshipped” (Rev. 5:14). “And I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seven seals, and I heard one of the four living creatures saying as with a voice of thunder, Come” (Rev. 6:1). “And I heard as it were a voice in the midst of the four living creatures saying, A measure of wheat for a shilling, and three measures of barley for a shilling; and the oil and the wine hurt thou not” (Rev. 6:6).

“And all the angels were standing round about the throne, and about the elders and the four living creatures; and they fell before the throne on their faces, and worshipped God” (Rev. 7:11). “. . . and they sing as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four living creatures and the elders: and no man could learn the song save the hundred and forty and four thousand, even they that had been purchased out of the earth” (Rev. 14:3). “And one of the four living creatures gave unto the seven angels seven golden bowls full of the wrath of God, who liveth for ever and ever” (Rev. 15:7). “And the four and twenty elders and the four living creatures fell down and worshipped God that sitteth on the throne, saying, Amen; Hallelujah” (Rev. 19:4).

*“And he (Abraham) said unto him (the rich man), If they hear not Moses and the Prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead”
(Lk. 16:31).*

Christ is
the Root of Jesse
Isa. 11:10

“YET IT PLEASED THE LORD TO BRUISE HIM”

“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, He shall prolong His days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in His hand” (Isa. 53:10).

The Nature of this Bruise or Bruising

Other Translations. “. . . to bruise Him” (KJV, RSV, Amplified Bible, Emphasized Bible), “. . . to crush him;” (ESV, NASB), “. . . to crush Him severely” (HCSB), “. . . to crush Him with pain” (NJB), “. . . to crush Him with suffering” (God’s Word), “. . . that he should suffer;” (GNB), “. . . to crush him, and he made him suffer” (ISV).

An Unexpected Miscarriage. The bruise that was inflicted upon the Lord Jesus Christ by Satan was one that resulted in an unexpected miscarriage for the Devil, as it was through death, that Christ destroyed the Devil (Heb. 2:14). Through His death Christ destroyed [that is, He spoiled, plundered, rendered ineffective] the Devil for those who are in Christ, abiding in Him, believing on Him, cleaving to Him. The Devil can now be opposed by those who are resisting him “steadfast in the faith” (I Pet. 5:9).

At this point we would like to clarify once again that the Devil is not, and never was, all knowing or all powerful. And now, we, who are in Christ, “are not ignorant of his devices”. The Devil is strapped by limitations, over which those who are living by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ have been made the victors. Those who are outside of Christ are still subject to his wiles and are no match for him, because of their being entrenched, by nature, in “the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life” (I Jn. 2:16). But thanks be unto God who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ! By His grace we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us.

Let us consider once again the utterly malicious designs and intent of “that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan” (Rev. 12:9). He is “a liar”, and “a murderer from the beginning” (Jn. 8:44). He walks “about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour” (I Pet. 5:8) among the sons of men. The only pleasures that he has to hold before men are “the pleasures of sin for a season” (Heb. 11:25). But even those are held out with malicious intent.

In the gospel record there is recounted the temptation in the wilderness where Satan tried to provoke the Savior to sin, and thereby stop any further Divine working in the accomplishment of our salvation (Mt. 4: Lk. 4). Similar to “checkmate” in the game of chess, if Satan could have had the upper hand at this point, it would have brought an end to the work of salvation. The consequences, if he had been successful, would have been incomprehensibly grave, even more so than the serpent was able to grasp. But as the Lord Jesus Christ said, “the prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in Me” (Jn. 14:30). Though He was took part of flesh and blood, like as we are partakers, there was no sinful defilement or defilement of conscience in the Savior for the Devil to appeal to.

And there was also at least one occasion when Satan tried to hinder Jesus from going to the Cross (Mt. 16:23; Mk. 8:33), and there is the other more obvious working whereby the Devil actually had a hand in perpetrating the crucifixion (Lk. 22:3; Jn. 13:2).

In the Scripture the word “destroy” generally does not mean to annihilate, but rather to dispossess of goods, to plunder or to spoil. In this case the goods, of which the Devil was dispossessed by Christ, were those which gave him a firm moral grip upon the sons of men, particularly in the domain of the conscience. Satan is no longer able to tempt men irresistibly, thus causing men to sin and fall into God’s disfavor. Wherever Christ is believed, and believed on, there Satan is no longer able to defile the consciences of men. He is no longer able to hold over men’s eyes and understanding the uncertain gloomy forebodings of death and the grave: that is, wherever the gospel is preached and believed. For in and by and through His death Christ has

“abolished death, and” has “brought life and immortality to light through the gospel” (II Tim. 1:8-10).

The bruise that Satan inflicted upon the Savior’s heel (Gen. 3:15) could never take away sin. But nevertheless Christ’s putting of Himself in harm’s way in our behalf became an ever-enduring demonstration and memorial of His love for us. If the children were to be set free, it was necessary that their Redeemer, not only be a partaker of flesh and blood, but also that He would taste death instead of them.

Death, a Separation, not a Cessation. Death here is speaking of the second death primarily. The first death, which is implied by the term “the second death”, is that of separation of the soul from the body. “The second death” (Rev. 2:11; 20:6, 14; 21:8) is a final separation of the soul from God. “The second death” is clearly identified as “the lake of fire” (Rev. 20:14) and “the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone” (Rev. 21:8). Those who overcome this present evil world by their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ shall not be hurt by the second death. Jesus said, “He that keepeth My saying shall never see death” (Jn. 8:51). Before raising Lazarus from the dead He declared, “Whosoever liveth, and believeth in Me shall never die” (Jn. 11:25-56). To John on the isle of Patmos, He solemnly affirmed, “I am He that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death” (Rev. 1:18).

An Overshadowing Bruise. There was another bruise, however, that was inflicted upon the Lord Jesus Christ, other than the one He received from Satan. It was that which Christ received from God Himself, because of our sins, and it was received in just retribution. All of the holy and righteous “fury” (Isa. 51:17, 20; 51:22; 59:18; 63:3, 5; Mic. 5:15; Nah. 1:6, etc.) that had been justly reserved for men because they had sinned, was poured out upon Christ by God Himself. Jesus Christ was “smitten of God, and afflicted”. On the Cross it was our peace that was being chastised, and it was for our transgressions that Christ was wounded. It was for our iniquities that He was bruised. And the Scripture here in our text declares that it pleased the Lord to bruise Him. This bruise, received from His Father, was indeed “the cup” (Jn. 18:11) which His Father had given Him to drink in our behalf.

But by the inflicting of this bruise upon His only begotten Son, the Son would see His seed, even seed that would be His own possession throughout all eternity. And the pleasure of the Lord would prosper in the hands of Christ, even the Lamb of God, who has taken away the sin of the world.

The Consequence of Satan being Cast out of Heaven. “And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore days. And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, And prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven. And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him. AND I HEARD A LOUD VOICE SAYING IN HEAVEN, NOW IS COME SALVATION, AND STRENGTH, AND THE KINGDOM OF OUR GOD, AND THE POWER OF HIS CHRIST: FOR THE ACCUSER OF OUR BRETHREN IS CAST DOWN, WHICH ACCUSED THEM BEFORE OUR GOD DAY AND NIGHT. AND THEY OVERCAME HIM BY THE BLOOD OF THE LAMB, AND BY THE WORD OF THEIR TESTIMONY; AND THEY LOVED NOT THEIR LIVES UNTO THE DEATH. Therefore rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them. Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time. And when the dragon saw that he was cast unto the earth, he persecuted the woman which brought forth the man child. And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent. And the serpent cast out of his mouth water as a flood after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away of the flood. And the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed up the flood which the dragon cast out of his mouth. And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ” (Rev. 12:6-17).

“HE HATH PUT HIM TO GRIEF”

“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, He shall prolong His days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in His hand” (Isa. 53:10).

He and Him, the Father and the Son. He hath put Him to grief. In other words, the Father put the Son to grief. The Father did not personally grieve the Son, nor did the Son give the Father a cause to be grieved (as is often the case among the sons of men), but rather in putting the Lord Jesus Christ to grief, Christ was bearing our griefs: griefs that were related to iniquity, transgression, and sin. Thus, this putting of the Son to grief was not without a cause. It was agreed upon beforehand in the counsel halls of eternity and is rooted in the eternal purpose, which God purposed in Christ Jesus (Eph. 3:10-11).

Because God does nothing without cause (cf. Ezek. 14:23) and works strictly in accordance with His eternal purpose, therefore men can wholeheartedly trust in Him. The era in which we live, where the just live by faith (Hab. 2:4; Rom. 1:16-17; 3:27-28; 4:16. 22-25; Gal. 3:11; Heb. 10:38), is established upon the rock solid foundation of God’s immutability. “Wherein God, willing more abundantly to show unto the heirs of promise the immutability of His counsel, confirmed it by an oath: that by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us” (Heb. 6:17-18).

To Put to Grief. With regard to the Savior, being put to grief involved Himself being subjected to unutterable misery, toil, and woe. When the Father put the Son to grief, this was not a forced subjection, but rather one that was agreed upon before the foundation of the world (cf. Rev. 13:8; Heb. 10:5-7), and was willingly submitted to by the Son. The Father said in the words of the Scripture, “Thou art My Servant, O Israel, in Whom I will be glorified” (Isa. 49:3). “I will preserve thee, and give Thee for a covenant of the people” (Isa. 49:8). And the Son agreed and replied, “Then said I, Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of Me, I delight to do Thy will, O My God: yea, Thy law is within My heart” (Ps. 40:7-8; cf. Heb. 10:7).

The Scripture beforehand had given expression to some of the grief that the Son would taste of. For example, the Son exclaimed, “He weakened My strength in the way; He shortened My days. I said, O My God, take Me not away in the midst of My days” (Ps. 102:23-24a). Christ’s humanity had, for the moment, overshadowed His divinity. The Father replied, calling to the Son’s remembrance the works that the Son had done of old, replied: “Thy years are throughout all generations. Of old hast Thou laid the foundation of the earth: and the heavens are the work of Thy hands. They shall perish, but Thou shalt endure: yea, all of them shall wax old like a garment; as a vesture shalt Thou change them, and they shall be changed: But Thou art the same, and Thy years shall have no end” (Ps. 102:24-27; cf. Heb. 1:10-12).

In another instance, out of great discouragement, the Son cried out to the Father, “Then I said, I have laboured in vain, I have spent My strength for nought, and in vain: yet surely My judgment is with the LORD, and My work with My God” (Isa. 49:4). Christ, then seeing beforehand the rejection of Him by His own people, summoned to His remembrance the high calling to which the Father had called Him, and declared, comforting Himself: “And now, saith the LORD that formed Me from the womb to be His Servant, to bring Jacob again to Him, Though Israel be not gathered, yet shall I be glorious in the eyes of the LORD, and My God shall be my strength” (Isa. 49:5). To this the Father replied, consoling the Son, “It is a light thing that Thou shouldest be My servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel: I will also give Thee for a light to the Gentiles, that Thou mayest be My salvation unto the end of the earth” (Isa. 49:6).

The Father’s Love for the Son. The Son’s grief can only begin to be comprehended by understanding of the mutual love between the Persons of the Godhead. It is a love that transcends all earthly love. The

Father's love for the Son extends into eternity past before the foundation of the world. It extends back unto times eternal before there were any created beings.

There were several occasion when the Lord Jesus spoke of the love between Himself and the Father, and also where the Father acknowledged before men His love for the Son.

At Christ's Baptism in the River Jordan. "And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is My beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased" (Mt. 3:17). "And there came a voice from heaven, saying, Thou art My beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased" (Mk. 1:11). "And the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon Him, and a voice came from heaven, which said, Thou art My beloved Son; in Thee I am well pleased" (Lk. 3:22).

The Reference to Isaiah's Prophecy regarding God's Servant. "Behold My Servant, whom I have chosen; My Beloved, in Whom My soul is well pleased: I will put My Spirit upon Him, and He shall show judgment to the Gentiles" (Mt. 12:18).

At the Mount of Transfiguration. "While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is My beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased; hear ye Him" (Mt. 17:5). "And there was a cloud that overshadowed them: and a voice came out of the cloud, saying, This is My beloved Son: hear Him" (Mk. 9:7).

The Parable of the Laborers in the Vineyard. "And again he sent another; and him they killed, and many others; beating some, and killing some. Having yet therefore one son, his wellbeloved, he sent him also last unto them, saying, They will reverence my son" (Mk. 12:5-6).

The Son Confessing the Father's Love for the Son. "The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into His hand" (Jn. 3:35). "For the Father loveth the Son, and sheweth Him all things that Himself doeth: and he will show Him greater works than these, that ye may marvel" (Jn. 5:20). Here we see in both of these instances that the love, of reference, also involves a handing over to the Son of all that the Father has, and all that He has to reveal to men unto a wise and prudent administration of them.

The Savior also spoke of this love indirectly, calling upon His hearers to earnestly consider and draw some profitable conclusions. "Jesus said unto them, If God were your Father, ye would love Me: for I proceeded forth and came from God; neither came I of Myself, but He sent Me" (Jn. 8:42).

This Commandment. "Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father" (Jn. 10:17-18). There is a sense in which the Son only had one commandment from the Father to keep when He came into the world. It was that He might lay down His life that He might take it again. Some might ask the question, what about the Ten Commandments? The Father knew that His Son would "magnify the Law, and make it honorable" (Isa. 42:21). He entrusted Him with this commission, and was well pleased for His righteousness' sake. But just as Adam had only one commandment to keep in the garden (not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil), so the Son only was given one commandment when He was sent by the Father to be the Savior of the world.

Love and the Keeping of Christ's Commandments. "He that hath My commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me: and he that loveth Me shall be loved of My Father, and I will love him, and will manifest Myself to him" (Jn. 14:21). "Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love Me, he will keep My words: and My Father will love him, and We will come unto him, and make Our abode with him" (Jn. 14:23).

A Love that Men are Commissioned to Continue In. "But that the world may know that I love the Father; and as the Father gave Me commandment, even so I do. Arise, let us go hence" (Jn. 14:31). "As the Father hath loved Me, so have I loved you: continue ye in My love" (Jn. 15:9).

The Father's regard for men is based solely upon their regard for His Son. "For the Father Himself loveth you, because ye have loved Me, and have believed that I came out from God" (Jn. 16:27).

"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (Jn. 3:16). Think of this very familiar word of the Scripture in connection with the Father's love for the Son.

Jesus' Prayer in John 17. In Christ's prayer recorded in John 17 the love between the Father and the Son is mentioned at least three times. "I in them, and thou in Me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that Thou hast sent Me, and hast loved them, as Thou hast loved Me" (v. 23). "Father, I will that they also, whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am; that they may behold My glory, which Thou hast given Me: for Thou lovedst Me before the foundation of the world" (v. 24). "And I have declared unto them Thy Name, and will declare it: that the love wherewith Thou hast loved Me may be in them, and I in them" (v. 26).

"In the hour of trial, Jesus, plead for me,
Lest by base denial I depart from Thee.
When Thou seest me waver, with a look recall,
Nor for fear or favor suffer me to fall.

"With forbidden pleasures would this vain world charm,
Or its sordid treasures spread to work me harm,
Bring to my remembrance sad Gethsemane,
Or, in darker semblance, cross-crowned Calvary.

"Should Thy mercy send me sorrow, toil and woe,
Or should pain attend me on my path below,
Grant that I may never fail Thy hand to see;
Grant that I may ever cast my care on Thee.

"When my last hour cometh, fraught with strife and pain,
When my dust returneth to the dust again,
On Thy truth relying, through that mortal strife,
Jesus, take me, dying, to eternal life."

—James Montgomery

"Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill" (Mt. 5:17).

Christ is
the Servant of the
LORD

Isa. 42:1

“WHEN THOU (LORD) SHALT MAKE HIS (CHRIST’S) SOUL AN OFFERING FOR SIN”

“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, He shall prolong His days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in His hand” (Isa. 53:10).

Other Translations of this Text. “His soul” (KJV, ASV, Darby, ESV, ISV, JPS, LITV, RV, YLT); “When You and He make His life” (AMP); “When the LORD has made his life”, (GW); “present himself (CJB); “render Himself” (NASB); “when he makes Himself” (RSV); “when You make Him” (HCSB); “t h o u g h the LORD makes His life” (NIV); “if he gives his life” (NAB, NJB); “if he lay down his life” (DRB).

The More Apparent Aspects of Christ’s Sufferings. The more apparent aspects of the sufferings of Christ have to do with the grievous afflictions that He bore in His body. “Who His own self bare our sins IN HIS OWN BODY on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed” (I Pet. 2:24). “And you, that were sometime (at one time) alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, YET NOW HATH HE RECONCILED IN THE BODY OF HIS FLESH THROUGH DEATH, to present you holy and unblameable and unreprieveable in His sight . . .” (Col. 1:21-22). “Wherefore when He (Christ) cometh into the world, He saith, Sacrifice and offering Thou wouldest not, BUT A BODY HAST THOU PREPARED ME” (Heb. 10:5). “Then said He (Jesus Christ), Lo, I come to do Thy will, O God. He taketh away the first (covenant, the Law), that He may establish the second (covenant, which is the New Covenant). By the which will WE ARE SANCTIFIED THROUGH THE OFFERING OF THE BODY OF JESUS CHRIST once for all” (Heb. 10:9-10). God “prepared” Christ’s body to be both a sacrifice and an offering for sin (cf. Heb. 10:5).

When Thou Shalt Make His Soul an Offering for Sin. The Prophet here declares that God did make Christ’s soul to be an offering for sin. When we speak of the suffering that the Lord Jesus Christ bore in His soul because of our sins, the significance of this matter is one that is more veiled from the eyes of men than the sufferings that He bore in His body. It is certain that the sufferings that were borne in Christ’s body had a decisive effect upon His soul, and were acutely felt in His soul, as the body and the soul are mysteriously interwoven, comprising the entire person. But, as Isaiah declares here, there was definitely a sense in which the Lord God uniquely made Christ’s soul to be an offering for sin. The sufferings of Messiah involved a complete sacrifice, an offering up of both His body and His soul to God.

The Witness of the Psalms¹ to Christ’s Inward Sufferings. “Deliver my soul from the sword; my darling from the power of the dog” (Ps. 22:20). “My soul is among lions: and I lie even among them that are set on fire, even the sons of men, whose teeth are spears and arrows, and their tongue a sharp sword” (Ps. 57:4). “Save me, O God; for the waters are come in unto my soul” (Ps. 69:1). “Draw nigh unto my soul, and redeem it: deliver me because of mine enemies” (Ps. 69:18). “For my soul is full of troubles: and my life draweth nigh unto the grave” (Ps. 88:3). “LORD, why castest Thou off my soul? why hidest Thou Thy face from me? (Ps. 88:14). Psalmic expressions such as these are words that the Savior was able to identify with in the days of His flesh.

References in Scripture to Christ’s Soul. “For Thou wilt not leave My soul in hell² [Sheol, the abode of the dead]; neither wilt Thou suffer Thine Holy One to see corruption” (Ps. 16:10). This is a prophecy of the resurrection of Christ, as Peter affirms, citing these words of David on the Day of Pentecost. “For

¹ In our judgment many (not all) of the Psalms, while giving expression to the inward troubles of the Psalmists at the time they were written by them, were also articulating the inward sufferings of Christ in the days of His flesh. “The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy” (Rev. 19:10).

² hell, in this instance is not speaking of the place of eternal torment, but rather of the abode of the dead. In Moses and the Prophets, the word that is translated “hell” in the KJV is generally the Hebrew word “Sheol”.

David speaketh concerning Him, I foresaw the Lord always before My face, for He is on My right hand, that I should not be moved: therefore did My heart rejoice, and My tongue was glad; moreover also My flesh shall rest in hope: because Thou wilt not leave My soul in hell³ (Hades, the abode of the dead), neither wilt Thou suffer Thine Holy One to see corruption” (Acts 2:26-27).

The Isaiah 53 Text. “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, He shall prolong His days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in His hand” (Isa. 53:10). “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” (Isa. 53:11). “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” (Isa. 53:12). Here in these words of the Prophet Isaiah we see that God, the Father, did make Christ’s soul an offering for sin. The Lord Jesus Christ did indeed pour out His soul unto death. And God saw the travail of Christ’s soul, when the iniquity of us all was laid upon Him, and He (God, the Father) was satisfied that sin had been adequately paid for.

Christ’s Total Self Given, both Body and Soul. In the following apostolic expressions it is declared that Christ gave Himself, meaning His total Self, as an offering to God for our sins. “. . . Christ also hath loved us, and HATH GIVEN HIMSELF for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour” (Eph. 5:2). “. . . as Christ also loved the church, and GAVE HIMSELF for it” (Eph. 5:25). Christ, “GAVE HIMSELF for our sins” (Gal. 1:4). The Son of God “loved me, and GAVE HIMSELF for me” (Gal. 2:20). In Christ’s offering of Himself to God for our sins He was giving His entire Self, and not withholding anything. These are matters that must be carefully pondered with the heart, that they not be insensitively glossed over.

Defining the Word “Soul”. The soul is defined by the *Merriam Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary*, Tenth Edition as “a person’s total self”. *The WEBSTER’S Dictionary of AMERICAN English* (1828) defines it this way: “The spiritual, rational and immortal substance in man, which distinguishes him from brutes; that part of man which enables him to think and reason, and which renders him a subject of moral government. The immortality of the soul is a fundamental article of the Christian system. Such is the nature of the human soul that it must have a God, an object of supreme affection.”

Thus the “soul” is that innermost part of him, as distinguished from his body. It is soul that animates the body [even more so than the internal organs, of themselves]. It is the part of man that has a will, the ability to reason, the ability to desire and to be inwardly affected for good or evil. It is soul of man that is accountable to God, and is to be subject to God. The soul is the part of man which only Christ, the great Physician, has the right to access.

The Word “Soul” as it is Used in Scripture. “And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul” (Gen. 2:7). All men are indebted to God, and accountable to God for “the breath of life” which they have from Him. Through the Prophet Ezekiel, God said: “Behold, all souls are Mine” (Ezek. 18:4). God, “in whose hand is the soul of every living thing, and the breath of all mankind” (Job 12:10). This is a necessary perspective for men to have of God, of life, and of all things. “Yea, his soul draweth near unto the grave, and his life to the destroyers” (Job 33:22). “Many there be which say of my soul, There is no help for him in God” (Ps. 3:2). The soul is the citadel of a man, which, when prayerfully sanctified and fortified, enables the believer in Christ to withstand the onslaughts of both men and that old serpent the Devil.

³ hell, similar to the above reference, the word translated “hell” in the KJV in this instance is the Greek word “Hades”, which also means the abode of the dead. Incidentally, when the word “hell” in the KJV has reference to the lake of fire, or the place of everlasting exclusion from the Presence of the Lord, the word in the Greek is “Gehenna”. In Matthew through Revelation, the way the word “hell” is used in the KJV will generally clarify whether the abode of the dead is intended, or the place of eternal torment.

“HE SHALL SEE HIS SEED, HE SHALL PROLONG HIS DAYS”

“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, He shall prolong His days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in His hand” (Isa. 53:10).

Identifying the Persons in the Godhead. In the Psalms and in the Prophets, especially, the pronouns—I, My, Thou, Thee, Thy, He, Him, His, and even Their (see Ps. 2:3)—are frequently used with reference to the Lord Jehovah and His Servant [the Father and His Son Jesus Christ]. Sometimes the LORD is directly addressing His Servant (the Father addressing His Son), sometimes He is speaking of His Servant, and sometimes the LORD’s Servant is addressing the LORD (the Son addressing the Father). We encourage the reader to take due consideration of these things and to read carefully the Psalms the the Prophets with these things in mind. These utterances, though somewhat veiled, are certainly recognizable to those who earnestly desire to possess a blessedly sustaining understanding and knowledge of what God is doing in salvation.

Without a fundamental understanding of Scripture, of the Persons of the Godhead, and particularly, some of the involvements of God’s eternal purpose in Christ, one is frequently left in a realm of uncertainty, not being able to determine who is speaking, or being spoken of, neither the intent of what is being spoken. As was the case with the Ethiopian eunuch the due consideration of these things brought an awareness that there was more here than what appeared on the surface. But also with the eunuch such ones must confess things like, “How can I [understand], except some man should guide me?” (Acts 8:31), and “of whom speaketh the prophet this? of himself, or of some other man?” (8:34).

Examples in the Psalms and in the Prophets. “BEHOLD My Servant, whom I uphold; Mine Elect, in whom My soul delighteth; I have put My Spirit upon Him: He shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles” (Isa. 42:1; see Mt. 12:18-20). If there is any question about who is being spoken of here, the declaration is made here in Isaiah’s prophecy, and it is further clarified by the sacred commentary in Matthew’s gospel.

Behold, My Servant. Here we see God (the LORD Jehovah) addressing His Servant (the Lord Jesus Christ) with a word of recognition of Him, and then a word of promise to Him regarding His indispensably preeminent role in the implementation of God’s eternal purpose. “In the days of His flesh” (Heb. 5:7), the Savior was inwardly strengthened by affirmations such as these in Isaiah 42, being bolstered and enabled by them to finish the work which the Father gave Him to do (cf. Jn. 17:4). God’s eternal purpose in Christ Jesus (see Eph. 3:10-11) is the central theme of all of Scripture, and the unfolding of this purpose is what is being witnessed and declared throughout the Word of God. This eternal purpose, of which Christ is the preeminent Subject, is that which unites all of the Scripture together into one grand accounting of the divine working and intent.

Isaiah 52:13-15. Behold, My Servant shall deal prudently, He shall be exalted and extolled, and be very high. He shall be exalted and extolled. As many were astonied (astonished) at Thee; His visage was so marred more than any man, and His form more than the sons of men: So shall He sprinkle 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. [*My Servant*, that is, the LORD’s Servant Christ].

He shall be exalted and extolled. As many were astonied [astonished, ASV] at Thee; His visage was so marred more than any man. He, Thee, His. The change of persons, in this instance, from the third, to the second, and back to third person, is not uncommon the Psalms and in the Prophets. While the Father is here speaking *about* His Son, He is also speaking *to* His Son.

Identifying the Divine Persons in Isaiah 53

In the twelve verses of Isaiah 53 there are over fifty pronouns, almost all of which are referring to the LORD's Servant or to the LORD Himself.

Isaiah 53:1-2. 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 shall grow up before Him. Though not identified, it is clear that it is the Christ, the Word who was made flesh and dwelt among us, who was growing up before the Father as a tender plant. It was the Lord Jesus Christ, who "in the days of his flesh" (Heb. 5:7), "increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man" (Lk. 2:52). And it was Christ who, in the time of His humiliation, learned "obedience by the things which He suffered" (Heb. 5:10).

Isaiah 53:3-5. "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."

In the previous paragraph each of the underlined pronouns is referring to the Lord Jesus Christ. We shall go so far as to affirm that the pronouns *He* and *Him* and *His* could refer to none other than Christ. Search and look! There is no other person, with whom these thoughts could properly be associated.

We encourage the reader to not simply take our word for these conclusions, but to earnestly consider these matters and search them out for themselves. Every student of the Scripture ought to have a sacred jealousy to possess a proper understanding of the things pertaining to God's eternal purpose in Christ Jesus. We're speaking of a jealousy that will cause them to settle for nothing less than being able to judge and make these kinds of associations themselves.

Isaiah 53:6-10. "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. He was oppressed, and He was afflicted, yet He opened not His mouth: He 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. 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, He shall prolong His days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in His hand."

Here it is necessary to be able to navigate in the sea of God's revelation in order to make a proper judgment regarding the identification of persons.

Isaiah 53:11-12. "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."

It is characteristic of God, when He makes promises, to also frequently speak of sure things that are associated with the promise. If I may so speak, the promises of God, being "exceeding great and precious" (II Pet. 1:4), are an environment of truth, of "things which are most surely believed among us" (Lk. 1:1), and of "things that accompany salvation" (Heb. 6:9), which environment also becomes to the believer an additional confirmation of the faithfulness of God.

Thus, for example, when John the Baptist was in prison and sent two of his disciples to ask the Lord, “Art thou *He* that should come? or look we for another?”, Jesus answered them, “Go your way, and tell John what things ye have seen and heard; how that the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, to the poor the gospel is preached. And blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in *Me*” (Lk. 7:22-23). The Savior knew well that the imprisoned, and soon to be beheaded, John needed not merely a “yes” answer from Him that He was indeed the One looked for, but rather an answer that would minister to his faith and sustain him in his soon coming hour of trial.

Similarly, in the case of the two downcast souls on the road to Emmaus, the Lord gently rebuked them, saying, “O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken: Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into *His* glory? And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, He expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning *Himself*” (Lk. 24:25-27). As He did shortly thereafter with His Apostles, He was confirming to the two Emmaus travelers that “all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning” *Himself* (Lk. 24:44), thus prompting them to live by faith in what the Scripture declares about Him, rather than in their own sensible perceptions of Him. According to divine wisdom He was provoking them to “walk by faith, and not by sight” (II Cor. 5:7).

In much the same way the Father spoke this way to His Son, “in the days of His flesh” (Heb. 4:15). He did not speak to Him in rebuke, of course, but nevertheless He comforted Him regarding the surety of His final overcoming and fulfillment of the Father’s good pleasure in Him, by speaking to Him of things that were attending the final outcome: which included Christ seeing His seed (at last He would see them, cleansed, justified, and glorified, without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing), the prolonging of His days.

Perhaps, the perspective of Psalm 102:11, where He confessed to the Father that His “days” were “like a shadow that declineth,” will help to more fully comprehend the significance of the promise of the Father prolonging Christ’s days. When “the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us” (Jn. 1:14), as the Scripture declares, He “made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men” (Phil. 2:7). “In His humiliation His judgment was taken away” (Acts 8:33). “The Lord of glory” (I Cor. 2:8) and He who “loves righteousness, and hates iniquity” (Heb. 1:9) was brought to trial by ungodly men. Not only that, but He was denied a fair trial, and finally condemned to die, and was “by wicked hands crucified and slain” (Acts 2:23). How could something as unthinkable as this possibly have occurred? It occurred “in His humiliation”, to which He willingly submitted for our sakes. “In His humiliation” “He, who knew no sin, was made to be sin for us”, that “we might be made the righteousness of God in Him” (II Cor. 5:21).

And it is from the perspective of “His humiliation” that the promise of the prolonging of Christ’s days (Isa. 53:10) had very real significance to the Savior in the days of His flesh, and to us also who are presently fighting the good fight of faith. It was indeed “the eternal God” (Deut. 33:27) who was prolonging the days of Him “whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting” (Mic. 5:2). However, the enfleshment of the Lord Jesus Christ had the effect of overshadowing the unceasingly vivid consciousness of eternity, and eternal things, possessed by Him in eternity past, so that He was required to live by every Word of God in the same way that we do. Men are ever plagued with the tendency of underestimating the degree to which Christ humbled Himself for our sakes. But as they are willing to consider, and are given to see into this matter with understanding, they are brought into a fuller realization that we indeed “have a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God” (Heb. 2:17). They are also given to see more clearly that they are some of the “seed” that Christ was given to see in the Father’s promise to Him.

Christ is
the Redeemer Who
Shall Turn Away
Ungodliness from
Jacob

Isa. 59:20

“FOR HE SHALL BEAR THEIR INIQUITIES”

“For He shall bear their iniquities” (Isa. 53:11). “Surely He hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows” (Isa. 53:4). “Who His own Self bare our sins in His own body on the tree” (I Pet. 2:24).

In affirmations such as these lies the foundation for “everlasting consolation and good hope through grace” (II Th. 2:16) for all those who are in Christ Jesus, having believed on Him unto life everlasting. Here can be seen the source of spiritual intrigue which provoked such ones as the Ethiopian eunuch to inquire of Philip, “I pray thee, of whom speaketh the Prophet this? of himself, or of some other man?” (Acts 8:34). “The place of the scripture which he read was this, He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; and like a lamb dumb before his shearer, so opened he not his mouth: In his humiliation his judgment was taken away: and who shall declare his generation? for his life is taken from the earth” (Acts 8:32-33). Here can the believer in Christ anchor his or her soul and find an unspeakably blessed repose that is a source of greatest envy to all mortals whose minds have not been blinded by the old serpent (cf. II Cor. 4:4).

And as Pilgrim [in Pilgrim’s Progress, by John Bunyan] well expressed this thought when, before the Cross, his burden fell off:

*“Thus far I did come laden with my sin;
Nor could aught ease the grief that I was in
Till I came hither: What a place is this!
Must here be the beginning of my bliss?
Must here the burden fall from off my back?
Must here the strings that bound it to me crack?
Blest cross! blest sepulchre! blest rather be
The Man that there was put to shame for me!”*

Some seven centuries before the Cross the Prophet Isaiah was given a stirring graphic vision of the Crucifixion scene as it would, and did, unfold in the annals of time. He speaks almost as one that was present there at the foot of the hill Golgotha. And, being a Prophet, he was given the ability to write a divine commentary on what was *actually* transpiring on that darkest of all days in the annals of time. What he was given to see, even in that early time, of the sufferings of Christ made such an impression upon him that he was constrained to declare: “Surely He hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows.” Most assuredly, He has!

“The preaching of the Cross” (I Cor. 1:18) is the blessed affirmation, and as well the timely reaffirmation, to the hearts of believing men and women, that He has, in truth, borne our iniquities. The proclamation to believing men of what God has accomplished in His beloved Son animates, and effectualizes to the heart, “those things which are most surely believed among us” (Lk. 1:1). It has “pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe” (I Cor. 1:21). “For He shall bear their iniquities.”

The Necessary Companionship of Faith and a good Conscience. The purged conscience, addressed by the Apostle in Hebrews 9 and 10, draws its much needed nourishment from this blessed affirmation. The conscience, being the faithful divinely appointed inward monitor of the moral affairs of man’s heart and soul, has a natural tendency to defilement (cf. Tit. 1:15), and even to becoming “an evil conscience” (Heb. 10:22), wherever it is not kept and maintained by one’s faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. [An evil conscience is one that is unbelieving, being neglectful in embracing wholeheartedly the record which God has given of His Son, along with that record’s many wondrous implications.]

And, correspondingly, a conscience that is not kept pure by the proper and due consideration of what God has done with our sin in the sufferings of Christ will, in all likelihood, lead to eventually overthrowing the faith that was once possessed. “Holding faith, and a good conscience; which some having put away

concerning faith have made shipwreck” (I Tim. 1:19). “Holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience” (I Tim. 3:9). “A pure conscience” (I Tim. 3:19) is possessed by those who have learned, by God’s grace, to walk in the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, namely, in the lively knowledge that Christ has indeed borne our iniquities.

Faith and Conscience Must Become Co-laborers. Faith must feed and nourish the conscience, regularly seasoning it with “the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ” (II Cor. 4:6). A good conscience, on the other hand, [one that has been “purged from dead works to serve the living God” (Heb. 9:14),] bears an essential witness to faith that it is genuine [“like precious faith”, the faith that the Bible talks about]. “With the heart man believes unto righteousness” (Rom. 10:10), and that is the foremost and all-essential work of the soul. It is the work, as Jesus said, that God has appointed unto men to wholeheartedly engage in, in order that they might find acceptance with Him (Jn. 6:29). Nevertheless, the heart must be “sprinkled clean from an evil conscience” (Heb. 10:22, NASB), if men are to draw near unto God.

The conscience that has been purged is one that, by faith, is walking together with God in His efficacious dealing with, and all-seeing assessment of, the sin issue. “He hath not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities. For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is His mercy toward them that fear Him. As far as the east is from the west, so far hath He removed our transgressions from us” (Ps. 103:10-12). By faith the purged conscience is given to see, in measure at least, what God sees with regard to the removal of sin by the Lord Jesus. Even in the time of Moses and the Prophets God began to speak about sin’s complete removal by the Lord Jesus Christ as though it were already accomplished. *“For He shall bear their iniquities.”*

The salvation of a people unto eternal glory by Christ has all along been God’s crowning work, and thus early on He constrained His holy Prophets to begin heralding that which He alone could and would do. *“For He shall bear their iniquities.”* Thus, it remains for men to repent, and believe the gospel, being baptized into Christ, as the Savior commanded. In the time of their earthly sojourn men and women, having obeyed the gospel, are to devote themselves to growing up into Christ in all things, waiting earnestly for His blessed appearing. Let every man, therefore, examine himself to see whether he, indeed, be in the faith, and so a partaker of this blessed benefit. *“For He shall bear their iniquities.”*

Some of the Involvements of Christ Bearing our Iniquities. *Those Pertaining to the Father and the Son.* With regard to the Father, this was not an afterthought, that is, a plan conceived by Him to undo a great dilemma that had arisen. Rather this was a matter of Divine farsightedness, with regard to both the “dilemma” and the undoing of the dilemma, being purposed by Him from the foundation of the world unto the end that His Name would be magnified. Heretofore unknown aspects of His Person would be made manifest and clearly seen by angels, principalities, powers, and all the onlookers in His creation. In the words of Paul the Apostle: “Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ; and to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ: to the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God, according to the eternal purpose which He purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Eph. 3:8-11).

Thus, we must conclude that adversaries, including the chief adversary, the Devil, were necessary unto the demonstration of God’s manifold wisdom. The same can be said of things such as obstacles of varying sorts: the world, the flesh, the Devil, tribulation, patient endurance, adversity, trial, testing, perfecting, chastening, and the like. Multitudinous instances of utter hopelessness would, by His manifold wisdom, be transformed by Him into glorious hope. [Against hope Abraham believed in hope.] Things that are impossible with men would be demonstrated to be possible with God unto the praise of His glory. “And I will give her . . . the valley of Achor for a door of hope” (Hos. 2:15). Instances of untold sorrow would be transformed

into joy unspeakable and full of glory: Rachel weeping for her children, Jacob mourning the loss of Joseph, Jeremiah weeping over recalcitrant Israel, Paul, having great heaviness and continual sorrow for his brethren, his kinsmen according to the flesh, and foremostly the Lord Jesus Christ weeping over Jerusalem “in the days of His flesh”. And “the last enemy that shall be destroyed is death” (I Cor. 15:26).

Pertaining to the Son. Language comes woefully short in giving expression to the bitter entailments pertaining to the separation of the Father and Son which Christ bearing our iniquities necessitated. *Grief of mind, sweating great drops of blood, the Son earnestly requesting of the Father; “if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me.” The telling utterances from the Cross, especially, “My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?” The darkness covering the earth from the sixth hour unto the ninth hour.* These are all things which can only be begun to be fathomed with the heart. The wisdom of men is absolutely of no value in comprehending these things. And yet those who have believed on Him unto life everlasting earnestly desire to probe into these matters by faith. To them the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ is a sumptuous feast unto which they, by God’s grace, have been summoned, and nothing delights them more than to see, yea, to taste of, some new life-begetting facets of the glorified Savior, and His sufferings in their behalf. The Father has sent forth this proclamation among the sons of men: “Behold, I have prepared my dinner: my oxen and my fatlings are killed, and all things are ready: come unto the marriage” (Mt. 22:4).

The Prophet Isaiah also foretold of this gospel feast: “And in this mountain shall the LORD of hosts make unto all people a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined. And he will destroy in this mountain the face of the covering cast over all people, and the vail that is spread over all nations. He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from off all faces; and the rebuke of his people shall he take away from off all the earth: for the LORD hath spoken it” (Isa. 25:6-8). Fat things that make for abiding satisfaction, wines that enable men to completely forget the burdens and vexations associated with this present time, and fat things full of marrow that nourish and sustain the soul.

Christ, Bearing our Iniquities. “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” (Isa. 53:4-6). The Savior is identified here only by words such as “He” and “Him”, thus leaving the reader, or the hearer, to draw his or her own conclusions regarding the Person identified here, much the same as Ethiopian eunuch, who was ministered to by Phillip (see Acts 8:34). When carefully and thoughtfully considered with the heart, one will be brought to the conclusion that there is only one Person that this possibly could be: the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Pronouns He, His, and Him. Consider the use of the pronouns here. “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” (Isa. 53:8). “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” (Isa. 53:12).

Other Corroborative Words. Other corroborative words spoken by the Lord and His Apostles are provided here. Of course, there are many more that the reader can search out and earnestly consider. “Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many” (Mt. 20:28).

“It was therefore necessary that the patterns of things in the heavens should be purified with these; but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into Heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us: nor yet that He should offer Himself often, as the high priest entereth into the

holy place every year with blood of others; for then must He often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath He appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment: so Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for Him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation” (Heb. 9:23-28).

“Who His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by Whose stripes ye were healed” (I Pet. 2:24). “For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit” (I Pet. 3:18). The sufferings of Christ, and the glory that has followed those sufferings, is the very essence and centerpiece of the message that we have been given to preach to men.

“One day when heaven was filled with His praises,
One day when sin was as black as could be,
Jesus came forth to be born of a virgin—
Dwelt among men, my example is He!

“Living, He loved me; dying, He saved me;
Buried, He carried my sins far away;
Rising, He justified freely forever:
One day He’s coming—O glorious day!

“One day they led Him up Calvary’s mountain,
One day they nailed Him to die on the tree;
Suffering anguish, despised and rejected;
Bearing our sins, my Redeemer is He.

“One day they left Him alone in the garden,
One day He rested, from suffering free;
Angels came down o’er His tomb to keep vigil;
Hope of the hopeless, my Savior is He.

“One day the grave could conceal Him no longer,
One day the stone rolled away from the door;
Then He arose, over death He had conquered;
Now is ascended, my Lord evermore.

“One day the trumpet will sound for His coming,
One day the skies with His glory will shine;
Wonderful day, my beloved ones bringing;
Glorious Savior, this Jesus is mine!”

—J. Wilbur Chapman

“The Law and the Prophets were until John: since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it” (Lk. 16:16).

Christ is
the Shadow of a
Great Rock in a
Weary Land

Isa. 32:2

“HE BARE THE SIN OF MANY”

“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” (Isa. 53:12).

Introduction. Christ has now indeed borne the sin of many. While the Prophet Isaiah was given to look ahead several centuries to behold the Lamb of God being offered up for us all, we, on the other side of the Cross, are now privileged to look back upon an accomplished redemption. One of the last words declared by the Savior from the Cross was: “It is finished” (Jn. 19:30).

For believing men and women the knowledge of sins being righteously borne by the LORD’s holy One, the Lord Jesus Christ, lies at the very heart of the gospel message. It is wonderfully good news to the weary, and to the heavy-laden. It is as cold water to the thirsty soul, and a marvelous healing balm for the hopelessly broken hearted. For those whose minds have not been blinded by the god of this world (cf. II Cor. 4:3-4) the knowledge that Christ has borne the sin of many is a precious wellspring of joy and peace, peace that passes all understanding. It is from this blessed stance that we, by God’s grace, are given to look and eagerly reach forward to lay hold of the hope that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith.

The Grievous Consequences of Sin. But from a very different perspective the bearing of one’s sin is an unspeakably grievous matter. “In the day that thou eat thereof, thou shalt surely die”, was the solemn admonition given to Adam regarding the partakement of the forbidden fruit. “The soul that sinneth, it shall die” (Ezek. 18:4, 20), is the uncompromising demand of the Divine righteousness.

Sin, without exception, alienates from God. It alienated (even estranged) our race from Him at the very beginning in Eden’s garden. It made men to become strangers to the God that made them. And sin, wherever it is permitted to enter, continues to alienate men from Him experientially (in the conscience). God created men with an inner self, the conscience, that they must deal with when they sin. The conscience can approve, or excuse, one’s actions. It can become guilty and defiled. It can get to the place where it is “past feeling”, if it is not guarded. But, by the grace of God, the conscience can also be purged through the sprinkling of the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ as He ministers unto us from the right hand of God. Thus we can see our desperate need for our great High Priest to “save” “to the uttermost them that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them” (Heb. 7:25).

God’s Intolerance of Sin Expressed in the Law. “And if a soul sin, and commit any of these things which are forbidden to be done by the commandments of the LORD; though he wist it not, yet is he guilty, and shall bear his iniquity” (Lev. 5:17). “And if any of the flesh of the sacrifice of his peace offerings be eaten at all on the third day, it shall not be accepted, neither shall it be imputed unto him that offereth it: it shall be an abomination, and the soul that eateth of it shall bear his iniquity” (Lev. 7:18). “And if ye offer a sacrifice of peace offerings unto the LORD, ye shall offer it at your own will. It shall be eaten the same day ye offer it, and on the morrow: and if ought remain until the third day, it shall be burnt in the fire. And if it be eaten at all on the third day, it is abominable; it shall not be accepted. Therefore every one that eateth it shall bear his iniquity, because he hath profaned the hallowed thing of the LORD: and that soul shall be cut off from among his people” (Lev. 19:5-8).

The Need for Two Goats. “And the (live) goat shall bear upon him all their iniquities unto a land not inhabited: and he shall let go the goat in the wilderness” (Lev. 16:22). In the two goats offered unto the LORD in Leviticus 16 we see graphically portrayed the need for the satisfaction and appeasement of the Divine Character. Two goats were absolutely necessary. One of them would bear the sins in its body, being offered in sacrifice upon the altar. The other would bear the sins away into a land not inhabited.

He would be taken there by the hand of a fit man. In Christ's suffering He bore our sins in His own body on the tree. And in His death He bore them away from the face of God.

“And thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel, saying, Whosoever curseth his God shall bear his sin” (Lev. 24:15). There is a new covenant parallel to this solemn word found in Leviticus. The Lord Jesus Christ declared: “Wherefore I say unto you, All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men: but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men. And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come” (Mt. 12:31-32). This word of the Savior was spoken particularly in response to the Pharisees when they said that Christ was casting out devils “by Beelzebub, the prince of the devils” (see. Mt. 12:24). The blasphemy of the Holy Spirit amounts to a cursing and a rejection of the exalted Christ, and a thrusting from oneself of the salvation that He has provided. There is no hope for individuals such as this, except they turn from their wicked ways and unrighteous thoughts, and avail themselves of the blessed and only Savior, which God has provided for men.

The Prophet Ezekiel. The Prophet Ezekiel (even one of the holy Prophets) was commanded to illustrate the bearing of both Israel's and Judah's iniquities by conspicuously laying on his side for an appointed number of days. “For I have laid upon thee the years of their iniquity, according to the number of the days, three hundred and ninety days: so shalt thou bear the iniquity of the house of Israel” (Ezek. 4:5). “And when thou hast accomplished them, lie again on thy right side, and thou shalt bear the iniquity of the house of Judah forty days: I have appointed thee each day for a year” (Ezek. 4:6).

Aaron, Bearing the Iniquity of the Holy Things. “And thou shalt make a plate of pure gold, and grave upon it, like the engravings of a signet, HOLINESS TO THE LORD. And thou shalt put it on a blue lace, that it may be upon the mitre; upon the forefront of the mitre it shall be. And it shall be upon Aaron's forehead, that Aaron may bear the iniquity of the holy things, which the children of Israel shall hallow in all their holy gifts; and it shall be always upon his forehead, that they may be accepted before the LORD” (Exod. 28:36-38).

The very best of God's people, who have now been made to be kings and priests unto God in Christ, have sins that yet encumber them “in all their holy gifts”, as they offer up sacrifices unto Him through their great High Priest, the Lord Jesus Christ. These offerings are made acceptable to God through Christ as He ministers both unto us and unto God from the right hand of the Majesty on high. “Now of the things which we have spoken this is the sum: We have such an high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens; A Minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man” (Heb. 8:1-2).

This is not sin that is willfully engaged in, but rather, in the diction of Paul, “the sin which so easily doth beset us”: sins that are perplexing to the heart of the believer in Christ. We must take courage as we minister unto the Lord to ever keep this matter in mind, lest we be overcome with carefulness. We are dependent upon Jesus for the acceptability of our labors, even as we labor. It is truly blessed to know that, in all of our offerings unto the Lord, this marvelous provision is made through the Lord Jesus, our great High Priest.

Christ Bearing our Sins and Iniquities. The ministry of the Law of Moses was to stop mouths (from making excuse for their sin), and by the commandment to make sin exceedingly sinful. It was to drive men to the point of being weary and heavy laden and to make them mourn over personal sin. And that, it effectually accomplished.

But for the Lord Jesus Christ, it seems that the most grievous thing that He was called upon to do by the Father was to bear our sin, thus resulting in His separation from the Father while on the Cross. In Gethsemane's garden He recoiled from the thought of this and made supplication to His Father that, if it be possible, the appointed “cup” of suffering might pass from Him. But if it passed from Him, who would it pass to?

Who could it pass to? It is written in the Law that God will in no wise acquit the guilty. Where sins have been committed by men they must, without exception be borne. But in Christ Jesus God has made a marvelous provision that sins could be borne by Another, even by a Substitute that is approved of God.

“For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously: Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed. For ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls” (I Pet. 2:21-25).

“For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us: Nor yet that he should offer himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy place every year with blood of others; For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment: So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation” (Heb. 9:24-28).

“When the even was come, they brought unto him many that were possessed with devils: and he cast out the spirits with his word, and healed all that were sick: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses” (Mt. 8:16-17).

“But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man” (Heb. 2:9). Christ's tasting of death for every man means that, if any man is finally cast into the lake of fire, he or she will, among other things, be eternally plagued by the realization that they were cast away because of their own neglect of the blessed Savior which God has graciously provided. He tasted death for them, but they did not avail themselves of reconciliation made in their behalf.

Christ has borne both our sin, and our sinful infirmities. In Christ God has made provision for both: in His offering upon the Cross, and in His ministry at the right hand of the Father as our great High Priest. The Cross of the Lord Jesus Christ has a decisive bearing upon the past, the present, and the future, as pertaining to men in relation to God's eternal purpose. Its blessed redemptive effects reach back to the beginning of time, and extend forward unto the day when Christ shall be revealed from heaven with power and great glory. As the Apostle declares, “And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment: So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time without sin unto salvation” (Heb. 9:27-28).

*“For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning,
that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope”
(Rom. 15:4).*

“HE SHALL DIVIDE THE SPOIL WITH THE STRONG”

“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” (Isa. 53:12).

The concept of spoiling and the dividing of the spoils has been well established in Moses and the Prophets. By many graphic expressions in the sacred record men have been prepared for the consideration of the most significant ever occurrence of this matter. That, of course, was when, at His weakest point, the Lord Jesus Christ spoiled wicked principalities and powers, leading captivity captive, and giving gifts unto men. He plundered them all, and seized from them all things that stood in the way of God righteously imparting the glorious benefits of salvation to men which Christ had purchased and secured for them by His death and resurrection. Men were all their lifetime subject to bondage through fear of death, and the Savior abolished death, and has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.

Some Uses of the Word “Spoil”. The word “spoil”, as it is used in Scripture, means to plunder, or to take by force, and does not have the significance that men commonly attach to it today, such as “spoiled milk”, or a “spoiled child”. The following instances in Scripture will serve to illustrate graphically the sense of this word.

“And the LORD gave the people favour in the sight of the Egyptians, so that they lent unto them such things as they required. And they spoiled the Egyptians” (Exod. 12:36). “Nevertheless the LORD raised up judges, which delivered them out of the hand of those that spoiled them” (Jdgs. 2:16). “The land shall be utterly emptied, and utterly spoiled: for the LORD hath spoken this word” (Isa. 24:3). “But this is a people robbed and spoiled; they are all of them snared in holes, and they are hid in prison houses: they are for a prey, and none delivereth; for a spoil, and none saith, Restore” (Isa. 42:22). “Woe unto us! for we are spoiled” (Jer. 4:13). “And when thou art spoiled, what wilt thou do?” (Jer. 4:30). “Because the LORD hath spoiled Babylon, and destroyed out of her the great voice . . .” (Jer. 51:55). “For thus saith the Lord GOD; I will bring up a company upon them, and will give them to be removed and spoiled” (Ezek. 23:46).

With regard to the Lord Jesus Christ the Scripture declares: “And having spoiled principalities and powers, He made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it (His Cross)” (Col. 2:15).

The Spoil. The word *spoil*, in this sense, means “plunder taken from an enemy in war” (Merriam-Webster). “And he (Joshua) spake unto them (Reuben, Gad, and the half tribe of Manasseh), saying, Return with much riches unto your tents, and with very much cattle, with silver, and with gold, and with brass, and with iron, and with very much raiment: divide the spoil of your enemies with your brethren” (Josh. 22:8). “And he (David) brought forth the spoil of the city in great abundance” (II Sam. 12:30). “Thou hast multiplied the nation, and not increased the joy: they joy before thee according to the joy in harvest, and as men rejoice when they divide the spoil” (Isa. 9:3).

Related Scriptures. “What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?” (Rom. 8:31-32). Though the matter of receiving spoils is not the primary emphasis here, yet it nevertheless is used by the Apostle to further bolster his argument for believers in Christ to implicitly trust in the God of their salvation.

The Word of the Psalmist. Several wondrous declarations are made here pertaining to our redemption in Christ. “The chariots of God are twenty thousand, even thousands of angels: the Lord is among them, as in Sinai, in the holy place. Thou hast ascended on high, Thou hast led captivity captive: Thou hast received gifts for men; yea, for the rebellious also, that the LORD God might dwell among them. Blessed be the Lord, who daily loadeth us with benefits, even the God of our salvation. Selah. He that is our God

is the God of salvation; and unto GOD the Lord belong the issues from death. But God shall wound the head of his enemies, and the hairy scalp of such an one as goeth on still in his trespasses” (Ps. 68:17-21).

The Association Made by Paul of the Psalm 68 Text. In making the application of gifts being given to men, Paul does not speak of things that are of value to men in this world, but rather of gifts that are for the perfecting of the body of Christ in preparation for entrance into the world to come. The Apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers were given for the purpose of perfecting the saints in their knowledge and understanding of both the Father and the Son.

“But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ. Wherefore He saith, When He ascended up on high, He led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. (Now that He ascended, what is it but that He also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that He might fill all things.) And He gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: that we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive” (Eph. 4:7-14).

The King of Glory Shall Come In. “Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in. Who is this King of glory? The LORD strong and mighty, the LORD mighty in battle. Lift up your heads, O ye gates; even lift them up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in. Who is this King of glory? The LORD of hosts, He is the King of glory. Selah” (Ps. 24:7-10).

Though the spoils of battle are not specifically named here, yet they are implied in such words as The LORD strong and mighty, the LORD mighty in battle, and The LORD of hosts. By ascribing unto Jesus these exalted names, the angels, no doubt, had in mind specific battles, and particular employments of the angelic hosts accompanying Him. And comparing Scripture with Scripture, we can conclude they were here speaking of a particular one-of-a-kind battle of battles that He was returning from, namely, that of destroying the Devil, and the spoiling of wicked principalities and powers. This unique battle was won through death, through His death on the Cross. The angelic hosts, no doubt, were a comfort to the Savior as they looked on, but the Lord Jesus Christ had to win this battle “by Himself” (Heb. 1:3).

The Application Made by Peter. In the ascension of Christ to the right hand of God the Savior has obtained for us, among many other things, a good conscience towards God. This is something very precious and essential that could not be obtained by our own doing. “For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the Just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit: By which also He went and preached unto the spirits in prison; Which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water. THE LIKE FIGURE WHEREUNTO EVEN BAPTISM DOTH ALSO NOW SAVE US (NOT THE PUTTING AWAY OF THE FILTH OF THE FLESH, BUT THE ANSWER OF A GOOD CONSCIENCE TOWARD GOD,) BY THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS CHRIST: Who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto Him” (I Pet. 3:18-22).

Another Extended Application by Paul. It seems that another valid application of dividing the spoil is in the obtainment of an increased measure of the knowledge of the Father and the Son by the Spirit. Paul speaks of “the riches of His glory” (Rom. 9:23; Eph. 3:16; Phil. 4:19), “the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God” (Rom. 11:33), “the riches of His grace” (Eph. 1:7), “the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints” (Eph. 1:18), “the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus” (Eph. 2:7), “the unsearchable riches of Christ” (Eph. 3:8), “the riches of the glory

of this mystery among the Gentiles” (Col. 1:27), and “riches of the full assurance of understanding” (Col. 2:2). These are all riches to be laid hold of by all who have believed on the name of the Son of God, not only for the so-called religious elite.

“Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints, cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers; that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him: the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of His calling, and what the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, And what is the exceeding greatness of His power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of His mighty power, which He wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: and hath put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be the head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all. And you hath He quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others. But God, who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us, Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast” (Eph. 1:15-2:9).

The Parables of the Talents and the Pounds

In Christ’s parables of the talents and of the pounds we see examples of Him dividing the spoil with the strong. In both of these parables the rewards were meted out to men on the basis of their faithfulness in increasing that which had been given to each of them by the Savior. In both parables the faithful servants were praised and greatly rewarded by the King and the unfaithful ones were severely upbraided and rejected by Him. We learn from these parables of our Lord the great importance of self-examination. What is our regard for that which the Lord has given us to do? Is it a joyous and delightful thing to give ourselves to the work He has given us to do? If so, that is one good sign that all is well between us and Him. But what if it is a drudgery and burden to give ourselves to the work that the Lord Jesus Christ has given us to do? That is definitely not a good sign. If any perceive the Lord to be austere in His demands and requirements of us, such ones must examine themselves to see whether they be in the faith (see II Cor. 13:5). Let them work out their own salvation with fear and trembling, “for it is God which worketh in” us “both to will and to do of His good pleasure” (Phil. 2:12-13).

The Parable of the Talents. “For the kingdom of heaven is as a man travelling into a far country, who called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods. And unto one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one; to every man according to his several ability; and straightway took his journey.

“Then he that had received the five talents went and traded with the same, and made them other five talents. And likewise he that had received two, he also gained other two. But he that had received one went and digged in the earth, and hid his lord’s money.

“After a long time the lord of those servants cometh, and reckoneth with them. And so he that had received five talents came and brought other five talents, saying, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me five talents: behold, I have gained beside them five talents more. His lord said unto him, Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord. He also that had received two talents came and said, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me two talents: behold, I have gained two other talents beside them. His lord said unto him, Well

done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord.

“Then he which had received the one talent came and said, Lord, I knew thee that thou art an hard man, reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not strawed: And I was afraid, and went and hid thy talent in the earth: lo, there thou hast that is thine. His lord answered and said unto him, Thou wicked and slothful servant, thou knewest that I reap where I sowed not, and gather where I have not strawed: Thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the exchangers, and then at my coming I should have received mine own with usury. Take therefore the talent from him, and give it unto him which hath ten talents.

“For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance: but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath. And cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth” (Mt. 25:14-30).

The Parable of the Pounds. “And Jesus said unto him, This day is salvation come to this house, forsomuch as he also is a son of Abraham. For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost. And as they heard these things, he added and spake a parable, because he was nigh to Jerusalem, and because they thought that the kingdom of God should immediately appear.

“He said therefore, A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return. And he called his ten servants, and delivered them ten pounds, and said unto them, Occupy till I come.

“But his citizens hated him, and sent a message after him, saying, We will not have this man to reign over us. And it came to pass, that when he was returned, having received the kingdom, then he commanded these servants to be called unto him, to whom he had given the money, that he might know how much every man had gained by trading.

“Then came the first, saying, Lord, thy pound hath gained ten pounds. And he said unto him, Well, thou good servant: because thou hast been faithful in a very little, have thou authority over ten cities. And the second came, saying, Lord, thy pound hath gained five pounds. And he said likewise to him, Be thou also over five cities.

“And another came, saying, Lord, behold, here is thy pound, which I have kept laid up in a napkin: For I feared thee, because thou art an austere man: thou takest up that thou layedst not down, and reapest that thou didst not sow. And he saith unto him, Out of thine own mouth will I judge thee, thou wicked servant. Thou knewest that I was an austere man, taking up that I laid not down, and reaping that I did not sow: Wherefore then gavest not thou my money into the bank, that at my coming I might have required mine own with usury?

“And he said unto them that stood by, Take from him the pound, and give it to him that hath ten pounds. (And they said unto him, Lord, he hath ten pounds.) For I say unto you, That unto every one which hath shall be given; and from him that hath not, even that he hath shall be taken away from him. But those mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither, and slay them before me” (Lk. 19:9-27).

“That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, The land of Zabulon, and the land of Nephthalim, by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles; The people which sat in darkness saw great light; and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death light is sprung up” (Mt. 4:14-16).

“BECAUSE HE HATH POURED OUT HIS SOUL UNTO DEATH”

“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” (Isa. 53:12).

The Perspective of Divine Accomplishment. He hath Poured out His Soul unto Death. In the sufferings of Christ there was to be no holding back on His part. He offered up His body to God as a sacrifice for sins, and He poured out His soul unto Him as well. The offering up of His body is the part with which men, generally, are the most familiar, if there is any familiarity at all.

Foreshadowed in Drink Offerings. Drink offerings were commanded to be used along with the other sacrifices offered under the Law. “And the drink offering thereof shall be the fourth part of an hin for the one lamb: in the holy place shalt thou cause the strong wine to be poured unto the LORD for a drink offering” (Num. 28:7). “And he shall offer the ram for a sacrifice of peace offerings unto the LORD, with the basket of unleavened bread: the priest shall offer also his meat offering, and his drink offering” (Num. 6:17). “And the fourth part of an hin of wine for a drink offering shalt thou prepare with the burnt offering or sacrifice, for one lamb” (Num. 15:5). “And for a drink offering thou shalt offer the third part of an hin of wine, for a sweet savour unto the LORD” (Num. 15:7). “And thou shalt bring for a drink offering half an hin of wine, for an offering made by fire, of a sweet savour unto the LORD” (Num. 15:10).

Prefigured in the Burning of the Rump and the Fat Covering the Inward Parts. “Also thou shalt take of the ram the fat and the rump, and the fat that covereth the inwards, and the caul above the liver, and the two kidneys, and the fat that is upon them, and the right shoulder; for it is a ram of consecration” (Exo 29:22). In addition, the fat covering “the inwards” (the caul above the liver, and the two kidneys, and the fat that is upon them) of animals offered up unto the LORD were to be burnt upon the altar (Exod. 29:22).

The removal of the fat and the rump. All non-essentials for Christ making a complete and an acceptable sacrifice to God in our behalf were painfully removed from Him. Perhaps, included in these were the sensibility of His filial relation with the Father (Ps. 22:1), and the hallowed memory of “the glory” that He had with the Father “before the world was” (Jn. 17:5).

What Christ Tasted Of. “My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me? why art Thou so far from helping Me, and from the words of My roaring?” (Ps. 22:1). “I am poured out like water, and all My bones are out of joint: My heart is like wax; it is melted in the midst of My bowels. My strength is dried up like a potsherd; and My tongue cleaveth to My jaws; and Thou hast brought Me into the dust of death” (Ps. 22:14-15).

Each of the above phrases are expressions of different excruciatingly painful inward sufferings that Jesus tasted of when He offered Himself to God in our behalf.

Psalms 102. At the end of the Hebrews chapter 1 Paul, through the Spirit, tells us that these words are giving expression to the inward sufferings of the Lord Jesus Christ. “A Prayer of the afflicted, when he is overwhelmed, and poureth out his complaint before the LORD. Hear my prayer, O LORD, and let my cry come unto thee. Hide not thy face from me in the day when I am in trouble; incline thine ear unto me: in the day when I call answer me speedily. For my days are consumed like smoke, and my bones are burned as an hearth. My heart is smitten, and withered like grass; so that I forget to eat my bread. By reason of the voice of my groaning my bones cleave to my skin. I am like a pelican of the wilderness: I am like an owl of the desert. I watch, and am as a sparrow alone upon the house top. Mine enemies reproach me all the day; and they that are mad against me are sworn against me. For I have eaten ashes like bread, and mingled my drink with weeping, Because of thine indignation and thy wrath: for thou hast lifted me

up, and cast me down. My days are like a shadow that declineth; and I am withered like grass. But thou, O LORD, shalt endure for ever; and thy remembrance unto all generations. Thou shalt arise, and have mercy upon Zion: for the time to favour her, yea, the set time, is come” (Ps. 102:1-13; see also vv. 23-27; cf. Heb. 1:10-12). In verses 23-27 of this Psalm the Father is addressing the Son, consoling Him, by reminding Him that the very environment that was, in the time of His humiliation almost overwhelming Him, was part of the heavens and the earth which the Son had created and that He also would roll up as a scroll, and discard it when the need for it was fulfilled. Only God can comfort in this manner!

When God seems like He is far away, that constitutes suffering. When one’s inward parts are distressed out of measure, that constitutes suffering. When the heart, the seat of one’s affection to the Lord, momentarily loses its ability to be affected as before, that constitutes suffering. When strength Godward is diminished or dried up, that constitutes suffering. When the tongue is unable to give loving expression to God as at former times, that constitutes suffering. When living seems, for the time, like it is pointless, that constitutes suffering. Coming from any other man besides Jesus Christ, these words would not be worth listening to, but coming from the Son of God they are a stanza of the song of redemption.

In all of these expressions pertaining to the Lord Jesus Christ and His inward sufferings, this did not at all involve a willful distancing of oneself from God, but rather it was a sense and perception, keenly felt by Him, that God had distanced Himself from Him. At this point the sins of the world were being laid upon Him, and so God could not look upon Him with favor as before. Here we are brought face to face with some of the mystery of godliness: God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself (II Cor. 5:18-19), By Himself Christ purged our sins (Heb. 1:3).

Incidentally, Christ’s suffering entailed the removal from a state and condition unto which He had rightfully belonged and had been blessedly acclimated. In the case of the Lord Jesus Christ, the removal was voluntary on His part. “In the volume of the book it is written of Me, Lo, I come to do Thy will, O God.” From one perspective, this voluntary removal was brief and temporary, but from another it seemed to Him, particularly while on the Cross, like the wheels of time were barely rolling forward.

In our case, suffering entails being removed from a state and a condition for which we, in the purpose of God, were originally created. In God’s Presence is fullness of joy, and at His right hand are pleasures forevermore. We were created to dwell in God’s Presence, to be a people near unto Him, and ultimately to be incorporated into the Godhead. “Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on Me through their word; That they all may be one; as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in Us: that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me. And the glory which Thou gavest Me I have given them; that they may be one, even as We are one: I in them, and Thou in Me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that Thou hast sent Me, and hast loved them, as Thou hast loved Me” (Jn. 17:20-23).

His Soul Was Poured Out unto Death. Rachel, “when her soul was in departing” (Gen. 35:18). Death is essentially a separation, a separation of the soul from the body. He said, it is finished, and gave up the ghost. “And Jesus cried again with a loud voice, and yielded up his spirit” (Mt. 27:50, ASV). With the Lord Jesus Christ this was done voluntarily. He literally dismissed His Spirit. “Therefore doth My Father love Me, because I lay down My life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of My Father” (Jn. 10:17-18).

He Emptied Himself. “Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross” (Phil. 2:5-8). He “emptied Himself” (ASV).

Christ is
a Rod Coming out
of the Stem of
Jesse

Isa. 11:1

“HE MADE INTERCESSION FOR THE TRANSGRESSORS”

“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” (Isa. 53:12).

Introduction. The Lord Jesus Christ made intercession for the transgressors. “Father, forgive them for they know not what they do” (Lk. 23:34). Such were the gracious words that proceeded from the lips of the agonizing Savior as He gazed in pity upon those who crucified Him. What awfulness! What marvelous lovingkindness! What a revelation of the Person and Character of God, as He desires to be known!

“Father, forgive”. In this petition addressed to the Father, the Lord Jesus Christ is not merely setting forth an example to be forgiving for believing men and women, although it is that. (Stephen, it will be recalled, as he was being stoned to death for the testimony that he held (Acts 7:60), offered up a similar petition to the Lord.) *“Father, forgive”*. “The Father sent the Son to be the Savior of the world” (I Jn. 4:14, see also v. 10). “God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them” (II Cor. 5:18-20). “Therefore doth My Father love Me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again” (Jn. 10:17). “And He that sent Me is with Me: the Father hath not left Me alone; for I do always those things that please Him” (Jn. 8:29). I include these words of the Scripture to affirm to you that the Lord Jesus Christ had always the full attention of the Father, and that in making this request, He was praying according to the will and purpose of God. And as John declared, “And this is the confidence that we have in Him, that, if we ask any thing according to His will, He heareth us: and if we know that He hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of Him” (I Jn. 5:14-15). If this can be said of those who have believed on the Name of the Son of God, how much more is it the case with regard to the Son Himself?

Of this the Father will be Inquired of by the Son. In Ezekiel 36 we see a graphic representation of God purposing to work in the behalf of His people coupled together with the indispensable requirement for an Intercessor. [It will be instructive to the reader to consider this chapter in its entirety.] We include here some salient declarations from Ezekiel 36 to show forth the necessity for the great and exalted Jehovah to be inquired of in this manner. “Therefore say unto the house of Israel, Thus saith the Lord GOD; I DO NOT THIS FOR YOUR SAKES, O HOUSE OF ISRAEL, BUT FOR MINE HOLY NAME’S SAKE, which ye have profaned among the heathen, whither ye went. AND I WILL SANCTIFY MY GREAT NAME, which was profaned among the heathen, which ye have profaned in the midst of them; and the heathen shall know that I am the LORD, saith the Lord GOD, when I shall be sanctified in you before their eyes” (Ezek. 36:22-23). “Not for your sakes do I this, saith the Lord GOD, be it known unto you: be ashamed and confounded for your own ways, O house of Israel. Thus saith the Lord GOD; In the day that I shall have cleansed you from all your iniquities I will also cause you to dwell in the cities, and the wastes shall be builded . . . I THE LORD HAVE SPOKEN IT, AND I WILL DO IT. Thus saith the Lord GOD; I WILL YET FOR THIS BE INQUIRED OF BY THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL, TO DO IT FOR THEM” (Ezek. 36:32-37).

Father, Forgive them. Such was also the case, it appears, when the Lord Jesus Christ made intercession for the transgressors. Of this the Father “will be inquired of”, not “by the house of Israel” (cf. Ezek. 36:37), but rather by an Intercessor who unquestionably has God’s ear, and by One from whom He will not turn away. Not even Noah, Daniel and Job (Ezek. 14:14, 20) can stand in the gap to make an intercession of this nature. Such godly men as these cannot even “deliver their own souls” (Ezek. 14:20) when considered against the need for themselves to be cleansed from their iniquities. There was only One who was worthy to make intercession that would have eternal consequence for men.

“Father, forgive them”. *Them*, with reference to the ones at the crucifixion scene immediately respon-

sible for His sufferings and death. *Them*, that is, the nation that had rejected and crucified Him, for whom Christ laid down His life. “He came unto His own, and His own received Him not” (Jn. 1:11). *Them*, meaning Israel in a much larger sense. “And now, saith the LORD that formed Me from the womb to be His Servant, to bring Jacob again to Him, Though Israel be not gathered, yet shall I be glorious in the eyes of the LORD, and My God shall be My strength” (Isa. 49:5). *Them*, with the intent reaching even unto every kindred, tongue, tribe, and nation. “And He said, It is a light thing that Thou shouldest be My Servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel: I will also give Thee for a light to the Gentiles, that Thou mayest be My salvation unto the end of the earth” (Isa. 49:6).

“Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do”. Ignorance is not normally an acceptable excuse that can be pleaded with the Most High. It will not stand up for the neglect of duty, nor the breaking of God’s commandments. The Law made provision for sins of ignorance (see Lev. 4 and 5; Heb. 5:1-4), but nevertheless, they were still regarded to be sins, for which sacrifices were made. Most importantly, claimed ignorance of God’s will for men revealed in the gospel not stand up in the Day of Judgment.

[The gospel’s joyful sound has gone forth into all the world. “But I say, Have they not heard? Yes verily, their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world” (Rom. 10:18). “The judgment of God” shall indeed be “according to truth” (Rom. 2:2) and “in righteousness” (Ps. 96:13; Acts 17:31), but nevertheless the rejection of the gospel of Christ, regardless of whether it is by a man, a people, or a generation, is an offence for which there shall be no exemption from guilt in the Day of Judgment.]

“Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.” It is most remarkable, then, that the Son of God, as He was laying down His life a ransom for many, pleads ignorance, not as an excuse, but rather as the very reason why the Father should hear His petition. As we consider this, we have been ushered into the realm of Divine prerogatives. At that awful crucifixion scene the worst and most heinous sin that was ever committed was being wrought against the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, and Son of man. The kings of the earth rose up, and took counsel together, against the LORD, and against His Christ. This was their “hour, and the power of darkness” (Lk. 22: 53), as Jesus said, prior to His being taken by the soldiers.

For they know not what they do. Though men cannot plead ignorance as an excuse for their deeds and misdeeds, the Son of God, being the Word, and the only begotten of the Father, had the right, or the prerogative, to forgive, and ask His Father to forgive this greatest of all sins that was being committed against Him, if He, the Son, would Himself take upon Himself the responsibility for both the sins and the sinners. And that is precisely what transpired at the Cross. “God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them . . . (II Cor. 5:19). “Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins” (I Jn. 4:10). “For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (Jn. 3:16). God gave His Son to be an offering for the sins of the world. And this was in order that they would not eternally perish, or be cast away from His Presence.

He who bare the sins of many (even the Lord Jesus Christ) has the prerogative, or right, to ask the Father to forgive the perpetrators of this most horrendous of all sins ever committed by men. In what has been called Christ’s great amnesty proclamation, the Savior declared: “VERILY, VERILY, I SAY UNTO YOU, HE THAT HEARETH MY WORD, AND BELIEVETH ON HIM THAT SENT ME, HATH EVERLASTING LIFE, AND SHALL NOT COME INTO CONDEMNATION; BUT IS PASSED FROM DEATH UNTO LIFE” (Jn. 5:24). This He spoke, knowing full well that He would lay down His life, that He might take it up again (Jn. 10:17), and that He would suffer at the hands of sinful men. And this He yet speaks down through the ages, wherever the gospel is preached.

Christ Making Intercession. *Father, forgive them.* If men are not careful in their thinking they are liable to reason that prayers and intercessions are not all that important with regard to the purpose of God:

that perhaps God has merely included the matter of intercession as something, that, perhaps, is an added “incidental”. But the Scripture teaches us that God does nothing without cause (Ezek. 14:23). In the Law and in the Prophets the matter of intercession occurs several times, and each time it is mentioned, it is of vital importance in the context in which it was spoken. Moses and Jeremiah are two of the outstanding examples of interceding in the behalf of disobedient Israel. Isaiah gives expression to the Divine lament that there was no intercessor in his day (Isa. 59:16). [God does not lament over things that are of no consequence to Him.] These examples of intercession were given, in part, instruct men regarding a coming Intercessor, even the Lord Jesus Christ, who would be, and is, absolutely essential to the out-working of God’s eternal purpose in Christ.

The Example of Moses Interceding. “And Moses returned unto the LORD , and said, Oh, this people have sinned a great sin, and have made them gods of gold. Yet now, if thou wilt forgive their sin—; and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written. And the LORD said unto Moses, Whosoever hath sinned against me, him will I blot out of my book” (Exod. 32:31-34). In this record of Moses, the man of God, God is teaching us with regard to the critical nature of intercession in the behalf of His people. But Moses was foreshadowing a coming Intercessor, namely, the Lord Jesus Christ, upon whom not only the incidental plight of the nation of Israel hangs, but even much more than this, the eternal destiny of every last one of the sons of Adam.

The Superior Nature of Christ’s Intercession. “Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit Himself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. And He [God] that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because He [the Spirit] maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God” (Rom. 8:26-27).

“Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God’s elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us” (Rom. 8:33-34). The lively knowledge of Christ’s death, resurrection, *and intercession* in our behalf are foundational for men having confidence in the living God.

Christ, Able to Save to the Uttermost. “By so much was Jesus made a Surety of a better testament. And they truly were many priests, because they were not suffered to continue by reason of death: but this Man, because He continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood. Wherefore He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them. For such an High Priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens; Who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people’s: for this He did once, when He offered up Himself. For the law maketh men high priests which have infirmity; but the word of the oath, which was since the law, maketh the Son, who is consecrated for evermore” (Heb. 7:22-28).

“Therefore speak I to them in parables: because they seeing see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand. And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive: For this people’s heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them”
(Mt. 13:13-15).

Christ is
an Ensign of the
People

Isa. 11:10

THE BLESSED EFFECTS OF MESSIAH'S SUFFERING

The Father Comforting the Son. *“SING, O barren, Thou that didst not bear; break forth into singing, and cry aloud, Thou that didst not travail with child: for more are the children of the desolate than the children of the married wife, saith the LORD. Enlarge the place of Thy tent, and let them stretch forth the curtains of Thine habitations: spare not, lengthen Thy cords, and strengthen Thy stakes; For Thou shalt break forth on the right hand and on the left; and Thy seed shall inherit the Gentiles, and make the desolate cities to be inhabited. Fear not; for Thou shalt not be ashamed: neither be Thou confounded; for Thou shalt not be put to shame: for Thou shalt forget the shame of Thy youth, and shalt not remember the reproach of Thy widowhood any more. For Thy Maker is Thine husband; the LORD of hosts is His name; and Thy Redeemer the Holy One of Israel; The God of the whole earth shall He be called. For the LORD hath called Thee as a woman forsaken and grieved in spirit, and a wife of youth, when Thou wast refused, saith Thy God. For a small moment have I forsaken Thee; but with great mercies will I gather Thee. In a little wrath I hid My face from Thee for a moment; but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on Thee, saith the LORD thy Redeemer. For this is as the waters of Noah unto Me: for as I have sworn that the waters of Noah should no more go over the earth; so have I sworn that I would not be wroth with Thee, nor rebuke Thee. For 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, saith the LORD that hath mercy on Thee. 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 windows of agates, and Thy gates of carbuncles, and all Thy borders of pleasant stones. And 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 be far from oppression; for Thou shalt not fear: and from terror; for it shall not come near Thee. Behold, they shall surely gather together, but not by Me: whosoever shall gather together against Thee shall fall for Thy sake. Behold, I have created the smith that bloweth the coals in the fire, and that bringeth forth an instrument for his work; and I have created the waster to destroy. No weapon that is formed against Thee shall prosper; and 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 (Isa. 54:1-17).*

The Father is here comforting the Son with regard to the awful sufferings that were borne by Him in the putting away of sin once for all, as recorded in chapter 53. Among the many incomprehensible burdens carried by Him on the Cross was also the concern that He would die childless. “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” (Isa. 53:8). In response to this legitimate concern, the Scripture declares of Him: “When Thou (LORD) shalt make His (Christ’s) soul an offering for sin, He shall see His seed, He shall prolong His days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in His hand” (Isa. 53:10). As a direct consequence of Christ’s one offering for sin He was given to see and rejoice in the seed that would be His for all eternity, and in addition to this, the good pleasure of the LORD has now been brought to the forefront of awareness of believing men and women. God is greatly satisfied with the work that His Son has accomplished, and those who are in Christ are greatly satisfied with Him as well.

Isaiah chapter 54, among many other things, is a marvelous amplification of that word of comfort to God’s Son, and to all who are in Him, as well. The seed that the Son will bring forth as a result of His sufferings and death shall be a number that no man can number. And so in the opening verses of chapter 54 Isaiah speaks, in a figure, of the need for enlarging the place of the “tent” where the seed shall be tabernacled, and of strengthening the stakes. Also, the Father assures the Son that He shall be abundantly recompensed for the unspeakably grievous sufferings that He endured in our behalf.

Christ was forsaken of God because of us, and instead of us. He tasted of unknown depths of sorrow because of us, and instead of us. The promises spoken by the Father to the Son, and to us, are such that are able to console those who have been called upon to pass through depths of sorrow and agony. Christ

has by far tasted of the greatest depths of suffering, and so He shall be comforted the most. And those who are in Christ can be greatly comforted by words such as this, particularly as they consider that Christ is the preeminent Sufferer. The sufferings that the people of God partake of are those that the Savior has left behind for them, in order that they might fellowship with Him in His sufferings (see Col. 1:24; Phil. 1:29).

The Marvelous Accomplishments of Christ's Sufferings and Death. The crucifixion of the Lord Jesus Christ was by far the most horrendous, the most egregious, the most unrighteous, and the most iniquitous deed that was ever committed by the "wicked hands" of men. But from a higher perspective, what transpired there on that awful day on Golgotha's hill was all "by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God" (Acts 2:23). Unrepentant men shall indeed be held fully accountable for their part in putting to death of God's Son, nevertheless, from this higher perspective, by the sufferings of Christ "the pleasure of the LORD" was made to "prosper in His hand" (Isa. 53:10). And from this higher perspective, it was God who made Christ's soul to be an offering for sin, and it was God who put His Son to grief (see Isa. 53:10). For our everlasting salvation we are indebted to God for what He did to His Son for the putting away of our sins. We are in no wise indebted to wicked men for their part in the crucifixion of Christ.

The Sufferings of Christ and their Effects

"Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the Just for the unjust" "being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit."	"THAT HE MIGHT BRING US TO GOD" (I Pet. 3:18).
Christ "His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree"	"THAT WE, BEING DEAD TO SINS, SHOULD LIVE UNTO RIGHTEOUSNESS: BY WHOSE STRIPES YE WERE HEALED" (I Pet. 2:24).
"Christ was once offered"	"TO BEAR THE SINS OF MANY" (Heb. 9:28).
Christ was made a curse for us.	"CHRIST HATH REDEEMED US FROM THE CURSE OF THE LAW" (Gal. 3:13).
Christ, who knew no sin, was made to be sin for us.	"THAT WE MIGHT BE MADE THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD IN HIM" (II Cor. 5:21).
Christ, "gave Himself for our sins".	"THAT HE MIGHT DELIVER US FROM THIS PRESENT EVIL WORLD (Gal. 1:4).
Christ, "gave Himself for us".	"THAT HE MIGHT REDEEM US FROM ALL INIQUITY, AND PURIFY UNTO HIMSELF A PECULIAR PEOPLE, ZEALOUS OF GOOD WORKS" (Tit. 2:14).
"The Son of God was manifested".	"THAT HE MIGHT DESTROY THE WORKS OF THE DEVIL" (I Jn. 3:8).

Chart, The Sufferings of Christ and their Effects

AN OVERVIEW OF ISAIAH 54

The thoughts expressed in Isaiah 54 were given birth to in chapters 52 and 53, and even before. And while the flow of thought between the two chapters may not at first be apparent, after due consideration, not only of this immediate portion of the Scripture, but also of the preceding and succeeding portions of Isaiah's prophecy, the connection is seen to be quite clear. The astonishing prophecy of God's suffering Servant begins in chapter 52 v. 13 and continues through chapter 53. There we see unfolded what Israel failed to see when the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us. He came unto His own, and His own received Him not. Their King had come, not to put an end to their bondage to the Romans, but rather to suffer in their stead. He had come to once and for all "put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself" (Heb. 9:26), and in so doing He would also put an end to their enslavement to sin, the flesh, and the Devil.

Israel stumbled at that Stumblingstone and Rock of offence. Perhaps, this was one of the reasons why God was grieved when Israel asked for "a king like all the other nations" (I Sam. 8:5, Amp.). Having such a king would ultimately serve, in part at least, to make unrecognizable to them the King that God Himself had purposed to send them when the fulness of the time was come. The Lord Jesus Christ is the King of kings, and not "a king like all the other nations" have.

In addition to the matter of Christ's unquestionable greatness and superiority in comparison to other kings and other men, there is yet another unique characteristic of His Person and Kingship. Prior to His taking of the dominion over them granted to Him by His Father, He would lay down His life for them. ". . . when He had by Himself purged our sins, (He) sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high" (Heb. 1:3). Christ did not sit down at the Father's right hand until sin was once and for all put away.

And unlike all the other kings of the world, Christ would be granted a kingdom of unquestionably willing subjects. "Thy people shall be willing in the day of Thy power" (Ps. 110:3). All of the subjects of His kingdom love their King. He is their "first love". They love Him because they perceive and know that He first loved them. "And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the Prince of the kings of the earth. Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and His Father; to Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen" (Rev. 1:5-6). Here the love is represented as being personal, and it is perceived to be such by the ones that are so loved.

Any who do not have this love for the Savior and King are excluded for that reason alone. Such ones do not perceive Him for whom He truly is. And here weighs in the critical matter of living by faith, being justified by faith, and for men being partakers of the benefits of the new covenant, with the essential elements of the old covenant continually waxing old and vanishing away in one's manner of reasoning.

One of the primary things that is brought to our attention in Isaiah 54 is Christ's evident desire for a seed that would serve Him alone, and a seed that would be His bride throughout the ages to come (Beulah, Hephzibah). The Father had given this by promise to the Son. But in the days of His flesh (Heb. 4:15) the Father sorely tried the Son's faith to the point that it appeared that He would not receive any seed at all. "He was cut off out of the land of the living" (Isa. 53:8) without any natural seed as was the case with other men. But the Father encouraged Him shortly thereafter with the words: "He (Christ) shall see His (own) seed", "He (Christ) shall prolong His days" in spite of all appearances to the contrary. Perhaps it was a communication of this sort, by which the Son was strengthened when the angel appeared to Him (cf. Lk. 22:43). It was "for the joy that was set before Him" that Christ "endured the cross, despising the shame," and is now "set down at the right hand of the throne of God" (Heb. 12:2).

In another instance He confessed to the Father prophetically, "I have spent My strength for nought, and in vain: yet surely My judgment is with the LORD, and My work with My God" (Isa. 49:4). Again, the Father buoyed up the Son in this hour of great trial with the words: "Though Israel be not gathered,

yet shall I be glorious in the eyes of the LORD, and My God shall be My strength” (v. 5). And, “it is a light thing that thou shouldest be My servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel: I will also give Thee for a light to the Gentiles, that Thou mayest be My salvation unto the end of the earth” (v. 6). The world to come shall be populated with redeemed personalities, who formerly were known to be “desolate heritages” (Isa. 49:8), but now have been washed, sanctified, and justified “in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God” (I Cor. 6:11). “For by one offering He (Christ) hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified” (Heb. 10:14).

There were times, in the days of His flesh, when the Lord Jesus Christ felt Himself to be “afflicted, tossed with tempest, and not comforted” (Isa. 54:11) as part of the necessary trial of His faith. But here in chapter 54, following the graphically detailed prophecy of Christ’s sufferings, the Father comforts the Son with everlasting consolations and good hope through grace. He assures His beloved Son that the incomprehensibly great sufferings that He would endure in our behalf would be abundantly compensated.

Things and Personalities. Those who are created in the image of God can only find satisfaction and fulfillment when they are in a right relationship with other personalities. “Things” cannot afford ultimate satisfaction, as experience so often demonstrates. In this we see a shadow of heavenly things. But even with regard to personalities, complete and unfailing satisfaction can only be had in God Himself, and in the redemption that He has provided in His Son. As the Psalmist expressed the matter: “As for me, I will behold Thy face in righteousness: I SHALL BE SATISFIED WHEN I AWAKE WITH THY LIKENESS” (Ps. 17:15). “THOU HAST MADE KNOWN TO ME THE WAYS OF LIFE; THOU SHALT MAKE ME FULL OF JOY WITH THY COUNTENANCE” (Acts 2:28).

What the Father has promised to the Son did not lie in the realm of impersonal things; He also would not find any satisfaction with *things*, per se, for He made all things, and for His pleasure they are, and were, created. Salvation, redemption, justification, sanctification, glorification and glory all have respect to persons, and personalities, not to things. “And this is life eternal, that they may know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent” (Jn. 17:3).

It was rather the promise of a seed, of a kingdom, and of a bride that was definitely a prominent part of the joy [second only to that of always doing the things that please His Father] that was set before the Son in the days of His flesh. In this promise of the Father, that which appeared to be impossible, by all natural reasoning, had become substantively possible for the Son. He would indeed be granted the desire of His heart, even that which the Father and He had purposed together before the foundation of the world.

The Heritage of the Servants of the Lord. All the benefits promised by the Lord God are inherited by the people of God by virtue of their being in Christ. They belong to Christ first, and secondly, to all those who are in Him. Why would God make promises of this magnitude to men in general? It would be out of character for Him to do so. But He has made them to His Son, who is worthy of all honour, and praise, and blessing, and glory, and He has made them to those who are in His Son. “For all the promises of God in him are yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by us” (II Cor. 1:20).

Their Righteousness is of Me, saith the LORD. If men are going to dwell forever with the Most High it is evident that they need to have a righteousness that passes the Divine scrutiny, yea, they need to be made righteous with a righteousness that comes from God Himself. And this is precisely the kind of righteousness that revealed in the gospel of Christ, for in it (the gospel) “is revealed the righteousness of God from faith to faith” (Rom. 1:16). The expression “revealed from faith to faith” means that to the believer in Christ there is imparted an ever-increasing comprehension of the significance and absolute essentiality of this righteousness, both as it pertains to the individual and to the purpose of God in salvation. By Christ and in Christ it is now a righteous thing for the holy God to save whosoever receives His only begotten Son (see Jn. 1:11-12), and to give all such ones the power to become the sons of God, even to them who believe on Christ’s name.

Christ is
He whom God
Upholds
Isa. 42:1

"ALL THY CHILDREN SHALL BE TAUGHT OF THE LORD"

"It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me" (Jn. 6:45; see Isa. 54:13).

Does God have specific matters that He teaches about? Are the things which He teaches of a critical nature? Is it possible for men to come to Jesus apart from receiving Divine tutelage? The Father addressing the Son in Isaiah's prophecy declared: "And all Thy children shall be taught of the Lord; and great shall be the peace of Thy children" (Isa. 54:13). Again, the Lord Jesus Christ, citing that Scripture in His great Galilean discourse, declared: "It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto Me" (Jn. 6:45). From these and other examples, it at once becomes evident that the manner in which God teaches is of an entirely different order than the teaching of men, even the best of men. If men are going to be taught of God, there must be a willingness to forsake the old values, and to embrace entirely new ones. "Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child shall in no wise enter therein" (Lk. 18:17).

In Jeremiah's landmark prophecy of the new covenant it is declared by the Lord God that "they shall all know Me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them" (Jer. 31:34). And also as Isaiah prophesied, "they shall be all taught by God" (Jn. 6:45, RSV, cf. Isa. 54:13). The nature and content of what God is teaching are not academic, that is, not merely factual, but rather He is teaching men to properly esteem His Christ, in order that they might come to, and whole-heartedly receive the Savior. He is teaching men to take hold of "the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory" (II Tim. 2:10). Consider some of the involvements of this Divine teaching.

Taught by God to Come to the Savior. As the Lord Jesus declared, "Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto Me" (Jn. 6:45). Why is Christ "precious" (cf. I Pet. 2:7) to some, but to others, despised and rejected? Yes, to be sure, it is because such ones have believed, and we would not want to obscure that matter for a moment. However, it is also because the believing ones have "learned of the Father." They have been taught by the Father to value Jesus for who He is in truth. Yes, the preaching of the gospel was, and is involved. And yes, men and women, who are ministers of the reconciliation were employed by God. But the essential teaching of the heart was done by God Himself. This teaching and learning is indispensable for coming to Jesus. He is not welcomed, to say the least, by "the natural man" (I Cor. 2:14) nor by "the carnal mind" (cf. Rom. 8:7-8), which all men have inherited from Adam.

Those who believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, who believe that He is precious, must reason that they have been "taught of God" and that they have "learned of the Father" the great value in coming to Jesus. They now perceive the value within themselves. It is like "treasure hid in a field" (Mt. 13:44). It amounts to "riches" that are "unsearchable" (cf. Eph. 3:8). The riches are boundless and unfathomable. But the value of these riches cannot be taught or learned academically.

Taught by Him to Put Off the Old Man and Put On the New Man. "But you have not so learned Christ; if so be that you have heard Him, and have been taught by Him, as the truth is in Jesus: that you put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; and be renewed in the spirit of your mind; and that you put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness" (Eph. 4:20-24).

Putting off the old man "with his deeds" (Col. 3:9), as well as putting on the new man, are both absolutely essential to new creatureship in Christ. This labor of putting off, and putting on must be taking place in men, or else they are simply not reckoned to be among God's sons and daughters. Such ones are still in the flesh.

Both the old man and the new man are unidentifiable and indiscernible to men apart from the revelation of God's Word. Men have neither the ability nor the wisdom to do this without Divine assistance and counsel. Thus, they must be effectually taught and enabled by God to do this.

Taught by Him to Love One Another. "But as touching brotherly love you need not that I write unto you: for you yourselves are taught of God to love one another" (I Th. 4:9). Concerning the love of Christ's brethren, God teaches believing men and women of the preciousness of other redeemed personalities, who share a common bond of love in the Savior Himself, and a common eternal destiny in the world to come. Those who are begotten of God have a natural inclination toward all others who are begotten of Him (cf. I Jn. 5:1), to frequently associate with them, to do them good as they have opportunity, and to speak with them often concerning the things pertaining to the kingdom of God (cf. Mal. 3:16).

Taught by Him to Overcome Religious Seducers. "And this is the promise that He hath promised us, even eternal life. These things have I written unto you concerning them that seduce you. But the Anointing which you have received of Him abideth in you, and you need not that any man teach you: but as the same Anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, you shall abide in Him" (I Jn. 2:25-27). "You are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is He that is in you, than he that is in the world" (I Jn. 4:4).

The Anointing spoken of here is the Holy Spirit, the "Comforter" (cf. Jn. 14:16-17), sent by the Savior to abide with us forever, as He said. "The Spirit of truth" comforts redeemed personalities by counseling them in the truth. He gives inward instruction and counsel to men by the Scriptures. He shows to believing men and women that the things which are troubling them are "common to man" (I Cor. 10:13), and that their troubles are in order that "may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God" (II Th. 1:5), for which they are suffering. This higher perspective of trouble sweetens the cup of affliction, making it easier to endure.

The Scriptures are, as it were, the raw materials, which the Holy Spirit refines, processes, and personalizes in men's understanding as they earnestly consider them. "The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God" (Rom. 8:16, NASB). God has "sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts" (II Cor. 1:22; cf. Eph. 1:13; 4:30). "By this we know that we abide in Him and He in us, because He has given us of His Spirit" (I Jn. 4:13). The Anointing teaches men and enables them to not be snared by false prophets and false teachers, and thus overcoming them (cf. I Jn. 4:1-4). He brings to their remembrance the preciousness of the Savior and the salvation which Christ has accomplished in their behalf.

"Christ liveth in me,
Christ liveth in me;
Oh! what a salvation this,
That Christ liveth in me."
—Daniel W. Whittle

"To Him (Jesus) give all the Prophets witness, that through His Name whosoever believeth in Him shall receive remission of sins" (Acts 10:43).

“AN EVERLASTING COVENANT, THE SURE MERCIES OF DAVID”

“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. Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread? and your labour for that which satisfieth not? hearken diligently unto Me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness. Incline your ear, and come unto Me: hear, and your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David. Behold, I have given Him for a Witness to the people, a Leader and Commander to the people. Behold, Thou shalt call a nation that Thou knowest not, and nations that knew not Thee shall run unto Thee because of the LORD Thy God, and for the Holy One of Israel; for He hath glorified Thee. Seek ye the LORD while He may be found, call ye upon Him while he is near: Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and He will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon” (Isa. 55:1-7).

Incline Your Ear. The benefits of salvation in Christ are directed to ears that are inclined to hear what God has to say to them in His Word. And particularly in these last days God has spoken unto us by His Son (see Heb. 1:1-2). Today, if you will hear His voice, harden not your hearts, as Israel did in the day of provocation. Those who refuse to hear His voice, or who are not attentive to His voice, have no part nor lot in God’s salvation. Such ones, except they repent, shall be forever cast away from the Presence of the Lord.

An Everlasting Covenant. The “everlasting covenant” spoken of here in Isaiah’s prophecy is one and the same as the New Covenant prophesied by Jeremiah (Jer. 31:31-34). Those who have entered into this covenant are presently being eternalized by virtue of the covenant’s blessed provisions. The eternal God has promised: “I will put My law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be My people.” “. . . THEY SHALL ALL KNOW ME, FROM THE LEAST OF THEM UNTO THE GREATEST OF THEM, saith the LORD: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.” Jesus said, in His prayer to the Father, “AND THIS IS LIFE ETERNAL, THAT THEY MIGHT KNOW THEE THE ONLY TRUE GOD, AND JESUS CHRIST, WHOM THOU HAST SENT” (Jn. 17:3). The knowledge of God, which is one of the fundamental benefits of the New Covenant, is the very essence of life eternal.

The Sure Mercies of David. “*Even the sure mercies of David.*” Another expression describing this everlasting covenant is “the sure mercies of David.” The sure mercies of David have to do with promises that were originally made to David, the son of Jesse, and to his son, Solomon. But ultimately the mercies would have direct application to the Lord Jesus Christ and His dominion at the right hand of God. They have to do with Christ’s “seed” (Isa. 53:10) and His “children” (Isa. 8:18; Heb. 2:13), which He would “see” as a consequence of making “His soul an offering for sin”, as Isaiah records in the 53rd chapter. These mercies were looking ahead to the time when God “would raise up Christ to sit on” David’s “throne” (Acts 2:30). The Apostle Peter speaks of the right hand of God and David’s throne as being one and the same location (see Acts 2:30-33). This location is set for the implementation of God’s eternal purpose in Christ. Christ’s first kingly act after He sat down on the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens was to send forth the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost. The jurisdiction of David’s throne is no longer limited to Jerusalem, Judea, and Israel, but now it extends to the uttermost parts of the earth. The purpose for David’s throne is no longer to rule over Israel and to subdue Israel’s enemies. The purpose rather is for the implementation of God’s purpose in salvation. (See also II Sam. 7:12-17; 23:2-5; Ps. 89:20-35).

Underscoring again the nature of the sure mercies of David, the Paul declared in the synagogue at Antioch in Pisidia: “And we declare unto you glad tidings, how that the promise which was made unto the fathers, God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that He hath raised up Jesus again; as it is also written in the second Psalm, Thou art My Son, this day have I begotten Thee. And as concerning that He raised him

up from the dead, now no more to return to corruption, he said on this wise, I WILL GIVE YOU THE SURE MERCIES OF DAVID. Wherefore he saith also in another psalm, Thou shalt not suffer Thine Holy One to see corruption. For David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell on sleep, and was laid unto his fathers, and saw corruption: but He, whom God raised again, saw no corruption” (Acts 13:32-37).

The Declaration of Glad Tidings. For those possessing faith in Christ everything about the gospel is of the nature of glad tidings, and is conducive to “everlasting consolation and good hope through grace” (II Th. 2:16). Remission of sins, imputed righteousness, and eternal life are but some of the benefits. Life and immortality have now been brought to light through the gospel, meaning that eternal life is now substantively tangible to faith. Those who possess this faith know that they have eternal life (see I Jn. 5:13), and they are presently, by their faith, tasting of the powers of the world to come (see Heb. 6:4-5).

“Rich in mercy, hear the message
Full of blessings from above;
God is calling to the wayward
In the sweetest tones of love:
Rich in mercy, gracious accents,
Falling like a breath from Heav’n;
Souls are purchased with a ransom,
And the contrite are forgiv’n.

“Rich in mercy, wondrous story,
Let us sing it once again;
Sweeter music to the weary,
Than the angels’ glad refrain.

“Rich in mercy, dost thou hear it?
Lost one, weary, helpless, poor;
Wilt thou hasten to believe it?
And a Savior’s love implore:
Are you needy? God has riches
Far beyond what we can know,
And the greatness of His glory
Is not heard of here below.

“Rich in mercy, loud proclaim it!
May the heralds never cease
Until every soul led captive
Finds in Christ a sweet release;
Come, then, sinner, howe’er needy,
All thy wants to Jesus bring;
There are riches, and there’s mercy,
In the presence of the King.”

—H. S. Thursby, 1887

“THE HIGH AND LOFTY ONE WHO INHABITS ETERNITY”

“For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, 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. For I will not contend for ever, neither will I be always wroth: for the spirit should fail before me, and the souls which I have made” (Isa. 57:15-16).

The God whom men ignorantly call “the God of the Old Testament” is indeed “the God of salvation” (Ps. 68:20), even the God who is “working salvation in the midst of the earth” (Ps. 74:12), as the Psalmists declare. The High and Lofty One who inhabits eternity, revealed here in Isaiah’s prophecy, is the God who “so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son” (Jn. 3:16) “that the world through Him might be saved” (Jn. 3:17). Elohim, God Almighty, the Lord Jehovah, names by which God has revealed Himself in Moses and the Prophets, is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, as He is declared in the Apostles’ writings (i.e., Matthew through Revelation). And, as is expressly stated in the opening words of Paul’s epistle to the Hebrews: “GOD, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the Prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son” (Heb. 1:1-2).

Glad Tidings for Humble and Contrite Hearts. *I dwell in the high and holy place, 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.* O what a blessed word this is to the longing heart, and to the thirsty soul! These are expressions of tenderness proceeding from the great and exalted Jehovah, from Him who inhabits eternity, even from the God who sent His Son into the world that we might live through Him. O, the exceeding preciousness of this reviving of the spirit of contrite hearts! Such ones have tasted and know first-handedly of the lovingkindness of Him who fills both Heaven and earth (see Jer. 23:24).

And as Paul declared in Hebrews chapter 1 and elsewhere, the Lord Jesus Christ is the express Image of the God revealed in Moses and the Prophets. Jesus said, “He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father.” God the Father declared through the Prophet Isaiah: “I dwell in the high and holy place, 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.” And now the High and Lofty One is able to dwell with men in an abiding sense, because sins have been put away by the Lord Jesus Christ. In Christ God has come near to us, and abides with us and in us. It is the divine objective and purpose “that Christ may dwell in” our “hearts by faith; that” we, “being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that” we “might be filled with all the fulness of God” (Eph. 3:17-19).

To Revive the Heart of the Contrite Ones. In the New Covenant the law of God is written upon men’s hearts, and in their inward parts. Such ones have “the mind of Christ”, and have been given to think like God does with regard to His beloved Son, and also with respect to “the exceeding sinfulness of sin”. For them, sin is the exception, and not the rule. When they sin, they repent and confess the offense to God, availing themselves of their “Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ, the Righteous” (I Jn. 2:1-2). As a rule of life, they live in the Spirit and walk in the Spirit (Gal. 5:16, 25), walking in fellowship with the Father and the Son (see I Jn. 1:3). Closely related to these considerations, the Holy Spirit, who dwells in them, is jealous for their complete heart’s affection. James expressed it this way: “The Spirit that dwelleth in us lusteth to envy” (Jas. 4:5). “The Spirit God made to live in us wants us only for himself” (ERV).

In the New Covenant this reviving of the spirit of the contrite ones is not an occasional occurrence, but rather it is “day by day” that the inward man is said to be renewed. The renewal can now be “day by day” because the Lamb of God has taken away the sin of the world. Christ has opened up the way for men to draw nigh unto God because sins have now been taken away by Him. Those who are in Christ have “the mind of Christ” (I Cor. 2:16). Such ones have been given to think like God does with regard

to sin, whether it be personal or otherwise. Sin offends, yea even grieves, them in measure in the same way that it offends the Lord. Redeemed personalities “sigh and cry” (Ezek. 9:4) before God over abominations that they behold on every hand: in the professed church, in the world, and sometimes even within themselves.

The Inward Man is Renewed Day by Day. The Father and the Son dwelling in believing men and women is not an “on-again-off-again” phenomenon. As has been said, because sin has now been thoroughly atoned for by the Lord Jesus Christ, the Father and the Son have now come to dwell in men in an abiding sense, in accordance with God’s eternal purpose in Christ. “. . . as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people” (II Cor. 6:16; see Lev. 26:12).

Those who have been baptized into Christ now reckon themselves to be dead indeed unto sin, and alive unto God through their union, by faith, with the risen and exalted Christ. In the New Covenant the reviving is called renewal. “Though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day” (II Cor. 4:16). “But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; which He shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour” (Tit. 3:4-6).

The Burden of Dumah

(See Isaiah 21:11-12)

The burden of Dumah! A voice out of Seir
Cries, Tell me, O watchman! if morning be near.
It cometh—it cometh! Bright gleams in the sky
Proclaiming the promised redemption is nigh!

Soon, soon shall creation’s long midnight be done,
The rest of eternity’s Sabbath begun;
When, casting her weekday soiled garments away,
She stands fresh appareled in vestures of day.

Oh! hasten, Lord! hasten this halcyon time,
When earth shall exult in the bliss of her prime,
The sons of the morning resuming their strain
O’er Eden, restored to her glories again.

The morning it cometh! but also the night!
Lo! visions of vengeance loom dark on the sight!
The meteor of hope, with its bright beaming ray,
To scorers of grace is fast dimming away.

Ere earth shall be girt with its red fiery flood,
Or moon shall dissolve in her ocean of blood,
Ere stars in their courses shall tremble and fall,
The wicked in vain to the mountains shall call.

Great God! in Thy mercy look down from above,
And touch every heart with Thy scepter of love,
Lest, tears unavailing, we come to deplore
That offers of grace can be tendered no more!

—*John R. Macduff*

“AND THE REDEEMER SHALL COME TO ZION”

“So shall they fear the name of the LORD from the west, and his glory from the rising of the sun. When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the LORD shall lift up a standard against him. And the Redeemer shall come to Zion, and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob, saith the LORD. As for me, this is my covenant with them, saith 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, saith the LORD, from henceforth and for ever” (Isa. 59:19-21).

“And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: For this is My covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins” (Rom. 11:26-27). The New Covenant, as it was foretold in Jeremiah’s prophecy (Jer. 31:31-34), was made with “the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah”, and, at first consideration, it might appear that it was made exclusively with them. In the days of His flesh the Lord said in regard to the woman of Canaan who besought Him to heal her daughter: “I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel” (Mt. 15:24). Also, in the early part of the book of Acts the disciples that were scattered abroad preached the gospel “to none but the Jews only” (Acts 11:19).

“And so all Israel shall be saved.” It appears that the greater part of this promise’s fulfillment is yet to come, and possibly may transpire close to the end of the world. As Paul declared in connection with the olive trees in Romans 11:11-32, many of the natural branches (the Jews) were broken off because of their unbelief. But he also affirmed that God is able to graft them (the Jews) in again to their own olive tree. If we understand Paul’s figure of the olive trees (both wild and good) to represent God’s calling of both Jew and Gentile to salvation, once the fulness of the Gentiles is indeed come in (Rom. 11:25), and once the natural branches (they of Israel) are “grafted in” again “into their own olive tree” (Rom. 11:24), then it seems that the next major event on the Divine calendar will be for the Lord Jesus Christ to return from Heaven to consummate this present age.

The Scriptures are replete with sacred testimony witnessing to Israel’s prominent role in the outworking of God’s eternal purpose in Christ. Of the Lord Jesus Christ John records: “He was in the world, and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not. He came unto His own (the Jews), and His own received Him not” (Jn. 1:10-11). “These twelve Jesus sent forth, and commanded them, saying, Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not: but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. And as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand” (Mt. 10:5-7).

Paul grievously lamented over his unbelieving kinsmen according to the flesh, “who are Israelites; to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises; Whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen” (Rom. 9:4-5).

As the Saviour wept over Jerusalem because of the people’s rejection of Him, He said, “Behold, your house is left unto you desolate: and verily I say unto you, Ye shall not see Me, until the time come when ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord” (Lk. 13:35). He thus indicated that a day was coming when Israel, on a large scale, would receive Him to the glory of God.

Until the Fulness of the Gentiles Be Come In. “For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: For this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins.” (Rom. 11:25-27).

Christ is
He Who Shall Set
Judgment in the
Earth

Isa. 42:4

THE GENTILES SHALL COME TO CHRIST'S LIGHT

“Arise, shine; for Thy light is come, and the glory of the LORD is risen upon Thee. For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the LORD shall arise upon Thee, and His glory shall be seen upon Thee. And the Gentiles shall come to Thy light, and kings to the brightness of Thy rising” (Isa. 60:1-3).

“In Him was life; and the life was the light of men” (Jn. 1:4). “Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life” (Jn. 8:12). Christ is not only a light of the nation of Israel. He is the Light of the world, which includes both Jew and Gentile.

Whoever comes to Christ's light, whether it be Jew or Gentile, no longer walks in the moral darkness of this present evil world. Whoever comes to Christ (who is the light of the world), is transformed by coming to Him, and by believing upon His Name. Those who believe on Him now prefer the light over the darkness. They are called “children of light” (Jn. 12:36; Eph. 5:8; I Thess. 5:5).

A dramatic shift of focus took place among those early disciples as they were guided by the Lord through His Apostles, as recorded by Luke, from Acts chapter 10 to chapter 15: it would involve the opening of the door of faith to the Gentiles. Some of the salient events occurring in those chapter are as follows:

1) **Peter at Joppa.** The Apostle Peter, a Jew, was directed by the Lord in a vision to go to the household of Cornelius, a Gentile, to preach the gospel. 2) There Peter was constrained to declare: “Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: but in every nation he that feareth Him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with Him” (Acts 10:34-35). Peter said in view of the thing which occurred at Cornelius' household, “Can any man forbid water, that these (Gentiles) should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then prayed they him to tarry certain days” (Acts 10:47-48).

3) **Paul at Antioch in Pisidia.** Paul, preaching to the unreceptive Jews in Antioch in Pisidia, declared: “Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this Man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: And by Him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses. Beware therefore, lest that come upon you, which is spoken of in the prophets; Behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish: for I work a work in your days, a work which ye shall in no wise believe, though a man declare it unto you. And when the Jews were gone out of the synagogue, the Gentiles besought that these words might be preached to them the next sabbath” (Acts 13:38-42).

4) Regarding “the next sabbath” day, Luke records: “Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles. For so hath the Lord commanded us, saying, I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldest be for salvation unto the ends of the earth. And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord: and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed. And the word of the Lord was published throughout all the region” (Acts 13:46-49).

5) **The Jerusalem Conference.** “And when they (Paul and Barnabas) were come to Jerusalem, they were received of the church, and of the apostles and elders, and they declared all things that God had done with them. But there rose up certain of the sect of the Pharisees which believed, saying, That it was needful to circumcise them, and to command them to keep the law of Moses. And the apostles and elders came together for to consider of this matter. And when there had been much disputing, Peter rose up, and said unto them, Men and brethren, ye know how that a good while ago God made choice among us, that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the word of the gospel, and believe. And God, which knoweth the hearts, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as he did unto us; And put no difference be-

tween us and them, purifying their hearts by faith. Now therefore why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear? But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved, even as they” (Acts 15:4-11).

“THE WHOLE WORLD WAS LOST
IN THE DARKNESS OF SIN,
THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD IS JESUS!
LIKE SUNSHINE AT NOONDAY,
HIS GLORY SHONE IN.
THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD IS JESUS!

“COME TO THE LIGHT, 'TIS SHINING FOR THEE;
SWEETLY THE LIGHT HAS DAWNED UPON ME.
ONCE I WAS BLIND, BUT NOW I CAN SEE:
THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD IS JESUS!

“NO DARKNESS HAVE WE
WHO IN JESUS ABIDE;
THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD IS JESUS!
WE WALK IN THE LIGHT
WHEN WE FOLLOW OUR GUIDE!
THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD IS JESUS!

“YE DWELLERS IN DARKNESS
WITH SIN BLINDED EYES,
THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD IS JESUS!
GO, WASH, AT HIS BIDDING,
AND LIGHT WILL ARISE.
THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD IS JESUS!

“NO NEED OF THE SUNLIGHT
IN HEAVEN WE'RE TOLD;
THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD IS JESUS!
THE LAMB IS THE LIGHT
IN THE CITY OF GOLD,
THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD IS JESUS!”

—Philip P. Bliss

*“It is written in the prophets, and they shall be all taught of God.
Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the
Father, cometh unto Me” (Jn. 6:45).*

Christ is
a Tabernacle for a
Shadow in the
Daytime from the
Heat

Isa. 4:6

“THY PEOPLE SHALL BE ALL RIGHTEOUS” (THE FATHER ADDRESSING THE SON)

“Thy people also shall be all righteous: they shall inherit the land for ever, the branch of My planting, the work of My hands, that I may be glorified” (Isa. 60:19-21).

Thy People Shall Be All Righteous. No doubt this was a sizable part of “the joy that was set before” the Lord Jesus Christ (Heb. 12:2), strengthening Him to endure the Cross, and to despise the shame associated with that unimaginably grueling ordeal. By virtue of Christ, [who knew no sin], being made sin for us, we, who are in Him, have been made to be the righteousness of God in Him (see II Cor. 5:21). And consequently His people shall be ALL RIGHTEOUS.

The Savior was constrained by glorious incentives, set before Him by the Father, to willingly lay down His life a ransom for many. Those, of whom afore time it was written that “there is none righteous, no, not one” (Rom. 3:10; Ps. 14:1-3), are now, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, declared to be “all righteous”. As Paul summarily declared, “For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; to declare, I say, at this time His righteousness: that He might be just, and the Justifier of him which believeth in Jesus” (Rom. 3:23-26).

These words attest to the efficacious working of both the Father and the Son in salvation. The redeemed are spoken of here as Christ’s people. The Father comforts the Son, declaring to Him that His people shall be ALL RIGHTEOUS. There shall be no unrighteousness found in them, because of Christ who suffered in their behalf. At the beginning these same personalities were noted for being “sinners” (Rom. 5:8), “ungodly” (Rom. 5:6), and “the servants of sin”, being “free from righteousness” (Rom. 6:20). But when the purpose of God in salvation shall have been consummated, they shall be ALL RIGHTEOUS. When all things are made new, the flesh shall no longer be lusting against the spirit, neither the spirit lusting against the flesh (see Gal. 5:17), for they shall be ALL RIGHTEOUS. There shall be no more temptation to sin, for those whom God has justified shall be ALL RIGHTEOUS. There shall be no more need for repentance and confession of sin, for the ones for whom Christ offered Himself shall be ALL RIGHTEOUS.

Of those who are “accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead” (Lk. 20:35), it is written, They “shall go no more out” (Rev. 3:12), for they are ALL RIGHTEOUS. Of these it is declared that “they shall walk, O LORD, in the light of Thy countenance” (Ps. 89:15), for they are ALL RIGHTEOUS.

In the Revelation John wrote: “And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire: and them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God. And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvellous are Thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are Thy ways, thou King of saints. Who shall not fear Thee, O Lord, and glorify Thy name? for Thou only art holy: for all nations shall come and worship before Thee; for Thy judgments are made manifest” (Rev. 15:2-4). Of these it can most assuredly be affirmed that they are ALL RIGHTEOUS. Formerly these were among the number of whom it was written, “there is none righteous, no, not one.” But now, because of the marvelous working of God in the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, they are ALL RIGHTEOUS.

The redeemed of the Lord now “through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith” (Gal. 5:5), that is in the blessed prospect of their being ALL RIGHTEOUS. These redeemed personalities are not only declared to be righteous, but they shall indeed be ALL RIGHTEOUS, with no unrighteousness

in them. They shall be ALL RIGHTEOUS because of the incomprehensible sufferings of the Lord Jesus Christ in their behalf. Christ laid down His life for the sheep, and in the glory it shall be said of them that they are ALL RIGHTEOUS. They are here said to be ALL RIGHTEOUS because they have been loved “with an everlasting love” (Jer. 31:3). By grace, they are the objects of “the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Rom. 8:39). “He that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them” (Rev. 7:15), because they shall be ALL RIGHTEOUS. The former things shall not be remembered, nor come into mind (see Isa. 65:17), because Christ’s people shall be ALL RIGHTEOUS.

“Here, O my Lord, I see Thee face to face;
Here would I touch and handle things unseen;
Here grasp with firmer hand eternal grace,
And all my weariness upon Thee lean.

“This is the hour of banquet and of song;
This is the heavenly table spread for me;
Here let me feast, and feasting, still prolong
The hallowed hour of fellowship with Thee.

“Here would I feed upon the bread of God,
Here drink with Thee the royal wine of Heaven;
Here would I lay aside each earthly load,
Here taste afresh the calm of sin forgiven.

“I have no help but Thine; nor do I need
Another arm save Thine to lean upon;
It is enough, my Lord, enough indeed;
My strength is in Thy might, Thy might alone.

“I have no wisdom save in Him who is
My wisdom and my teacher both in One;
No wisdom can I lack while Thou art wise;
No teaching do I crave save Thine alone.

“Mine is the sin, but Thine the righteousness:
Mine is the guilt, but Thine the cleansing blood;
Here is my robe, my refuge, and my peace;
Thy blood, Thy righteousness, O Lord my God!

“Too soon we rise; the symbols disappear;
The feast, though not the love, is past and gone.
The bread and wine remove; but Thou art here,
Nearer than ever, still my Shield and Sun.

“Feast after feast thus comes and passes by;
Yet, passing, points to the glad feast above,
Giving sweet foretaste of the festal joy,
The Lamb’s great bridal feast of bliss and love.”

—*Horatius Bonar*

“SOUGHT OUT, A CITY NOT FORSAKEN”

“Behold, the LORD hath proclaimed unto the end of the world, Say ye to the daughter of Zion, Behold, thy salvation cometh; behold, His reward is with Him, and His work before Him. And they shall call them, The holy people, The redeemed of the LORD: and thou shalt be called, Sought out, A city not forsaken” (Isa. 62:11-12).

The Holy People. Those who are partakers of the salvation that is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory shall throughout the ages to come be known as “the holy people”. They “are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all” (Heb. 10:10). “For by one offering He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified” (Heb. 10:14). By God’s grace they have been brought into full accord with the purpose of God in salvation. Thus in anticipation of, and preparation for, that blessed prospect unto which they have been predestinated, they are now cleansing themselves “from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God” (II Cor. 7:1). They are following “after peace with all men, and the sanctification, without which no man shall see the Lord” (Heb. 12:14, ASV). In Christ Jesus their desires and their appetites are now being cultured to dwell forever in the holy place with the Holy One.

The Redeemed of the Lord. Those who have been purchased by the blood of Christ shall be known in that world as “the redeemed of the Lord”. There will forever be a direct association of their persons and eternal well being with the incomprehensibly great cost of their redemption.

Sought Out. “And Jesus said unto him (Zacchæus), This day is salvation come to this house, forasmuch as he also is a son of Abraham. For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost” (Lk. 19:9-10). “Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you, That in heaven their angels do always behold the face of My Father which is in heaven. For the Son of man is come to save that which was lost” (Mt. 18:10-11).

The Three Parables in Luke 15. In Luke chapter 15 the Lord Jesus Christ teaches three separate parables that declare different perspectives of lostness, as well as some of the necessary involvements of His being sent by God the Father to seek, and to save that which was lost. The three parables are, of course, the one sheep that had gone astray (Lk. 15:3-7), the lost coin (vv. 8-10), and the prodigal son (vv. 11-32).

In the first parable we see the Shepherd, at peril to Himself, going after the one that was lost. Here we behold the steadfast determination of the Shepherd to go after and find His sheep that was lost, and to bring it safely back to the sheepfold. Matthew records: “How think ye? if any man have a hundred sheep, and one of them be gone astray, doth he not leave the ninety and nine, and go unto the mountains, and seek that which goeth astray?” (Mt. 18:12, ASV). Ninety and nine to one. In today’s way of thinking one might just write off the one sheep as a business loss. But in this parable the Lord is teaching us of His tender regard for each of His sheep. And there is no doubt that each of His sheep, at one time or another, can call to remembrance the time when they individually were the one that the Shepherd graciously and tenderly sought after, and found. Praise the Lord!

In the second parable, we see that a diligent search was made for that which was esteemed to be of great value to the one doing the searching. Unlike the first parable, where the lostness involved being away from the fold of safety, this second parable speaks of the possibility of being lost in the very midst of those which are secure. It is possible to be lost in the midst of godly influence, such as within a godly family or assembly of believers. To such ones it seems that God is noticeably at work in everyone except themselves. The acute awareness of this kind of lostness, if it is not quenched, is generally the prelude to one’s being found. The woman in the parable made diligent search until she found the

piece of money that was lost.

And in the third parable we behold the Lord patiently waiting for the one that was lost to come to himself, and to return. The turning point in this parable occurs when the son who went away finally “came to himself” (Lk. 15:17). There comes a time in life’s experience, when because of misdirected affections, that a person must come to himself, or herself, in order that they of a truth may say with Paul, “I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ” (Phil. 3:8).

All three of the parables are a commentary on persons that are returning to God from their sin, not on those who are going away from Him, or on those who are living in ignorance of Him. And for those who have received the salvation that God has abundantly provided in His beloved Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, they can say and know, of a truth, that they are part of this vast number of redeemed personalities, that are here called: “Sought out, a city not forsaken.”

In all three parables we are given to see the divine affectation caused by lostness in relation to God’s purpose in salvation: lostness on the part of that which was *His own*. The shepherd was looking for *his* sheep; the woman was looking for *her* piece of money, and the father of the prodigal was waiting patiently for *his* son to come to himself, and return.

“Seeking the lost, yes, kindly entreating
Wanderers on the mountain astray;
‘Come unto Me,’ His message repeating,
Words of the Master speaking today.

“Going afar (going afar)
Upon the mountain (upon the mountain)
Bringing the wanderer back again, back again,
Into the fold (into the fold)
Of my Redeemer (of my Redeemer)
Jesus the Lamb for sinners slain, for sinners slain.

“Seeking the lost and pointing to Jesus
Souls that are weak and hearts that are sore,
Leading them forth in ways of salvation,
Showing the path to life evermore.

“Thus would I go on missions of mercy,
Following Christ from day unto day,
Cheering the faint and raising the fallen,
Pointing the lost to Jesus, the Way.”

—William A. Ogden, 1886

Christ is
He Who Shall Raise
Up the Tribes of
Jacob

Isa. 49:6

THE FATHER'S COMMITMENT TO THE SON

“Thus saith the LORD, In an acceptable time have I heard Thee, and in a day of salvation have I helped Thee: and I will preserve Thee, and give Thee for a covenant of the people, to establish the earth, to cause to inherit the desolate heritages; that Thou mayest say to the prisoners, Go forth; to them that are in darkness, Show yourselves. They shall feed in the ways, and their pastures shall be in all high places” (Isa. 49:8-9).

The work of redeeming men back to God from sin and transgression was monumental in scope, even for the Lord Jesus Christ. God's Son devoted His entire Person to the task given unto Him by the Father. Here, in Isaiah 49 and elsewhere, the Father comforted the Son and assured Him that His work would be successful because of the divine help and preservation that would be afforded Him. Every step of the way the Son was absolutely dependent upon the Father for the much needed aide and encouragement to finish the work. And the Father supported Him with the all-essential nourishment of comfort and strength. The Lord Jesus Christ was constrained by divine incentives to finish the work that the Father had given Him to do. It was “for the joy that was set before Him” that Christ “endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God” (Heb. 12:2).

Commitments Made by the Father to the Son. The commitments made by the Father to the Son are all centered in God's eternal purpose in Christ. This is a purpose where both mercy and judgment are being righteously demonstrated and brought into clear view before men and angels unto the glory of God the Father. Those who earnestly embrace God's salvation in Christ Jesus are called by the Apostle “the vessels of mercy”, and those who reject it, and cast it from them, are called “the vessels of wrath” (Rom. 9:22-23). The Lord Jesus Christ is the appointed Administrator of both the mercy and the wrath, as can be seen in the following verses, and God has pledged Himself to underwrite and support the Son in this administration.

The Second Psalm. “I will declare the decree: the LORD hath said unto Me, Thou art My Son; this day have I begotten Thee. Ask of Me, and I shall give Thee the heathen for Thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for Thy possession. Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; Thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel” (Ps. 2:7-9).

Behold the demonstrations of both mercy and judgment! Here it can be seen that the heathen (the Gentiles) are given to Christ for His inheritance, and to be recipients of God's salvation in Him. But those who reject the salvation shall be broken in pieces like a potter's vessel. Some will no doubt protest that God is being unfair in conducting Himself in this manner. We would, however, take this occasion to justify Him in all of His ways, and to declare that there is no unrighteousness in Him (whether men are able to perceive this or not). What men generally fail to take into consideration is that they, in their unbelief, are “condemned already” (Jn. 3:18) because of Adam's transgression.

The Demonstration of Both Judgment and Mercy in Psalm 110. “A Psalm of David. THE LORD said unto my Lord, Sit Thou at My right hand, until I make Thine enemies Thy footstool. The LORD shall send the rod of Thy strength out of Zion: rule Thou in the midst of Thine enemies. Thy people shall be willing in the day of Thy power, in the beauties of holiness from the womb of the morning: Thou hast the dew of thy youth. The LORD hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou art a Priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek” (Ps. 110:1-4).

Here in this Psalm it can be seen that Christ has been appointed to deal both with His enemies, and also with His people. Those who remain His enemies, rejecting God's salvation in Him, Christ shall deal with in His wrath and sore displeasure. Those who receive His salvation were once enemies, but now they are His people. And God the Father has made abundant provision to bring such believing ones all the way to the world to come by the appointment of Christ as an High Priest after the order of Melchizedek. Day by day and hour by hour, Christ is working with those who are here declared to be willing in the day of His power. He nurtures, restores, and strengthens those who are engaged in the

good fight of faith. He is their Advocate with the Father and the propitiation for our sins. He personally administers recovery and cleansing from sin in the critical hours when that is needed. When His people with contrition of heart confess their sins, He personally imparts the promised forgiveness and cleansing from all unrighteousness.

Incentives Given by the Father to the Son Enabling Him to Endure the Cross

The Promised Effectuality of Christ's Redemptive Work	"Thy people also shall be all righteous" (Isa. 60:21).
The Blessed Effects and Accomplishments of Messiah's Suffering Expressed in this Psalm of Praise.	The 103rd Psalm in its entirety.
The Anticipation and Desire of Christ for His Brethren.	"I will declare Thy name unto My brethren: in the midst of the congregation will I praise Thee" (Ps. 22:22).
The Promise of the Gentiles Coming to Christ's Light	"And the Gentiles shall come to Thy light, and kings to the brightness of Thy rising" (Isa 60:3).
The Promise of the Christ Being God's Salvation unto the Ends of the Earth	"I will also give Thee for a light to the Gentiles, that Thou mayest be My salvation unto the end of the earth" (Isa. 49:6).
The Promise to Christ, the Present and Eternal Occupant of David's Throne (see Acts 2:22-32), that His seed and His Throne shall Endure forever.	"Once have I sworn by My holiness that I will not lie unto David. His seed shall endure for ever, and His throne as the sun before Me. It shall be established for ever as the moon, and as a faithful witness in heaven" (Ps. 89:35-37).
God's Promise to Jesus that He Would not Leave His Soul in the Abode of the Dead after His Crucifixion. He Has Raised Him from the Dead.	"I have set the LORD always before Me: because He is at My right hand, I shall not be moved. Therefore My heart is glad, and My glory rejoiceth: My flesh also shall rest in hope. For Thou wilt not leave My soul in hell (Sheol, Hades, the abode of the dead); neither wilt Thou suffer Thine Holy One to see corruption" (Ps. 16:8-10).
As the Son of God, God Promises to Christ the Heathen (the Gentiles) for His Inheritance (The Gentiles would become partakers of God's salvation in Christ).	"Yet have I set My King upon My holy hill of Zion. I will declare the decree: the LORD hath said unto Me, Thou art My Son; this day have I begotten Thee. Ask of Me, and I shall give Thee the heathen for Thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for Thy possession." (Ps. 2:6-8).
The Father is here Addressing His Son, as God (see Heb. 1:8-9) where Paul Affirms this very Matter.	"Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: the sceptre of Thy kingdom is a right sceptre. Thou lovest righteousness, and hatest wickedness: therefore God, Thy God, hath anointed Thee with the oil of gladness above Thy fellows" (Ps. 45:6-7).
The Father is here Reminding His Son of His Eternality and of His Being the Creator of the Heavens and the Earth (which things were momentarily eclipsed by Christ's Humbling of Himself) (see Heb. 1:8-12).	"Thy years are throughout all generations. Of old hast Thou laid the foundation of the earth: and the heavens are the work of Thy hands. They shall perish, but Thou shalt endure: yea, all of them shall wax old like a garment; as a vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed: but Thou art the same, and Thy years shall have no end" (Ps. 102:24-27).

(Chart, Incentives Given by the Father to the Son)

It was by incentives such as these that were at least a part of the joy that was set before the Lord Jesus Christ (see Heb. 12:2), the consideration of which encouraged and strengthened the Son of God to finish the work that the Father had given Him to do.

“THE NATION AND KINGDOM THAT WILL NOT SERVE THEE SHALL PERISH”

*“For the nation and kingdom that will not serve Thee shall perish; yea, those nations shall be utterly wasted”
(Isa 60:12). (The Father’s commitment to the Son.)*

Moses’ Prophecy of Christ to Israel as a Coming Divine Spokesman. “The LORD thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto Him ye shall hearken” (Deut. 18:15). Speaking to Moses, God said in this connection: “I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put My words in His mouth; and He shall speak unto them all that I shall command Him. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto My words which He shall speak in My name, I will require it of him” (Deut. 18:18-19).

In one of the first sermons preached in the Book of Acts Peter brings the words spoken by God to Moses to bear upon the people that were standing before him. He said: “Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord; and He shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you: Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began. For Moses truly said unto the fathers, A Prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; Him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever He shall say unto you. AND IT SHALL COME TO PASS, THAT EVERY SOUL, WHICH WILL NOT HEAR THAT PROPHET, SHALL BE DESTROYED FROM AMONG THE PEOPLE. Yea, and all the prophets from Samuel and those that follow after, as many as have spoken, have likewise foretold of these days” (Acts 3:19-24).

We cannot overstate the egregious nature of the sin of not giving heed to the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus said: “And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil” (Jn. 3:19). The condemnation He spoke of is not for violating the commandments written in the Law, but it is rather for rejecting the Christ who is the blessed Remedy for sin provided by God Himself. The condemnation is for men’s preference of the moral darkness of this present world over the glorious light of the gospel of Christ. And finally, the condemnation is for unbelief of the greatest magnitude—namely, the rejection of God’s only begotten Son, who has tasted death for every man!

Those who refuse to believe, and obey the gospel of Christ are in a most precarious position. They are, in the words of the Saviour, “condemned already” (see Jn. 3:14-17). They shall perish forever from the Presence of God, being cast “into the lake of fire” (Rev. 20:15). “This is the second death” (v. 14).

We, thus, call upon all men everywhere to repent, and be baptized for the remission of their sins (see Acts 2:38), and purposefully commit, by God’s grace, to a life of acceptable service to the Lord Jesus Christ, believing “on Him unto life everlasting” (I Tim. 1:16).

Through Isaiah the Prophet God said: “Seek ye the LORD while He may be found, call ye upon Him while He is near: Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and He will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon” (Isa. 55:6-7). God will abundantly pardon because Christ “was wounded for our transgressions”. And it is only for that reason that He can pardon.

The Witness of the Second Psalm. It will be profitable to the reader to muse upon, and become very familiar with, the second Psalm in its entirety. For our purposes here, however, the last two verses in that Psalm underscore the aspect of the truth to which we are drawing attention here. “Serve the LORD with fear, and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son, lest He be angry, and ye perish from the way, when His wrath is kindled

but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in Him” (Ps. 2:11-12). The same Lord Jesus Christ who leads His flock like a Shepherd, and gently leads those that are with young (see Isa. 40:11) is also capable of great wrath and, at the time appointed by the Father, He shall unleash that righteous anger upon all those who do not submit to Him, to receive the reconciliation that God has abundantly provided in Him.

But some man will foolishly say things like: “But what is that to me?”, or “What does that have to do with me?”, or they speak of God as though He were interfering with their lives. We would apprise such ones, however, that they are not their own (I Cor. 6:19-20), as they are living in a world that has been made by Christ. Even such rebellious ones belong to Him for He created them. “FOR BY HIM (CHRIST) WERE ALL THINGS CREATED, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: ALL THINGS WERE CREATED BY HIM, AND FOR HIM” (Col. 1:16).

When His Wrath is Kindled but a Little. *When Christ’s wrath is kindled but a little.* What a sobering and mind-arresting expression that is, as men do not ordinarily think of Christ in association with God’s wrath! But let all men earnestly consider that NOW IS “THE ACCEPTED TIME” and TODAY IS “THE DAY OF SALVATION” (II Cor. 6:2). Now is a precious time, a time of divine favor, as it is “the accepted time”. Today is a wonderfully blessed day because it is “the day of salvation”. But this time of God’s abundant mercy and favor towards men has a time limit, and the time is swiftly drawing to a close.

For individual men and women, this favorable time will come to a close either when they die or when they have hardened their hearts so that they are no longer able to hear the voice of God speaking to them. “TODAY, IF YE WILL HEAR HIS VOICE, HARDEN NOT YOUR HEARTS, AS IN THE PROVOCATION” (Heb. 3:15; see Ps. 95:7-11).

For all men the accepted time and the day of salvation will suddenly terminate when the Lord Jesus Christ comes again with power and great glory. “BEHOLD, HE COMETH WITH CLOUDS; and EVERY EYE SHALL SEE HIM, and they also which pierced Him: AND ALL KINDREDS OF THE EARTH SHALL WAIL BECAUSE OF HIM. Even so, Amen” (Rev. 1:7). Christ shall come again on a day just like today, on a day when men by and large are not expecting Him. For those who are walking contrary to Him, Christ’s coming will prove to be a permanent disruption of life as they now know it. Life in this present world will abruptly grind to a halt, and men shall be swiftly summoned to the Day of Judgment to give an account for the deeds done in the body. That will be a summons that none are able to ignore. Will you delay any longer to obey the gospel while it is yet the accepted time?

The Wrath of the Lamb. “And I beheld WHEN HE HAD OPENED THE SIXTH SEAL, and, lo, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood; And the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind. And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places. AND THE KINGS OF THE EARTH, AND THE GREAT MEN, AND THE RICH MEN, AND THE CHIEF CAPTAINS, AND THE MIGHTY MEN, AND EVERY BOND-MAN, AND EVERY FREE MAN, HID THEMSELVES IN THE DENS AND IN THE ROCKS OF THE MOUNTAINS; AND SAID TO THE MOUNTAINS AND ROCKS, FALL ON US, AND HIDE US FROM THE FACE OF HIM THAT SITTETH ON THE THRONE, AND FROM THE WRATH OF THE LAMB: FOR THE GREAT DAY OF HIS WRATH IS COME; AND WHO SHALL BE ABLE TO STAND? (Rev 6:12-17)

“And when they had appointed him a day, there came many to him into his lodging; to whom he expounded and testified the kingdom of God, persuading them concerning Jesus, both out of the Law of Moses, and out of the Prophets, from morning till evening” (Acts 28:23).

Christ is
a Covert from
Storm and from
Rain
Isa. 4:6

CHRIST, FOUND OF THEM (THE GENTILES) THAT SOUGHT NOT AFTER HIM

"I am sought of them that asked not for Me; I am found of them that sought Me not: I said, Behold Me, behold Me, unto a nation that was not called by My name" (Isa. 65:1).

"But Esaias is very bold, and saith, I was found of them that sought Me not; I was made manifest unto them that asked not after Me. But to Israel He saith, All day long I have stretched forth my hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people" (Rom. 10:20-21).

The Gentile inclusion in God's eternal purpose in Christ Jesus is a matter that is not to be regarded lightly by men. Those in Christ who are of a Gentile heritage must with gratitude ever call to remembrance the time when Gentiles were regarded by God as being "not a people" (I Pet. 2:10), and "strangers from the covenants of promise" (Eph. 2:12). It is true that the inclusion of the Gentiles in God's eternal purpose was something that was on the divine trestle board from the very beginning, but it was purposefully concealed from the eyes of men until the fulness of the time had come.

Paul voices it this way in his letter to the Ephesians: "Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ, which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto His holy Apostles and Prophets by the Spirit; that the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ by the gospel" (Eph. 3:4-6). The mystery of which Paul speaks is a matter that purposefully "was not made known", but "is now revealed". This mystery pertains to the fellow-heirship of both Jew and Gentile in God's eternal purpose in Christ Jesus.

From a higher vantage point this inclusion of the Gentiles was for the purpose of provoking wayward Israel to jealousy. As Paul trumpets forth in his epistle to the Romans: "But I say, Did not Israel know? First Moses saith, I will provoke you to jealousy by them that are no people, and by a foolish nation I will anger you. But Esaias is very bold, and saith, I was found of them that sought me not; I was made manifest unto them that asked not after me. But to Israel he saith, All day long I have stretched forth my hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people" (Rom. 10:19-21). Again he annunciates in the following chapter: "I say then, Have they stumbled that they should fall? God forbid: but rather through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy" (Rom. 11:11).

The jealousy spoken of here is at least twofold in its purposed effect. In the one instance, when it finally dawns upon Israel that the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob has indeed redirected the loving covenantal regard, that for so long had belonged *exclusively* to Israel, to Gentile believers, the effect will be that of provoking Israel to jealousy. The other possible aspect of this jealousy is stated as follows. When Israel actually beholds the very evident fruits of the rich heritage, covenants, and promises, that were once Israel's alone, demonstrated in the lives of Gentile believers who have heartily embraced their Messiah, the result will be that of provoking the Jews to jealousy. And as Paul also affirmed in this connection, "blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in" (Rom. 11:25).

In both of these scenarios the intended effect is to provoke Israel to earnestly desire their Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ, turning to Him in deep contrition and sorrow over their long time rejection of Him, as was graphically expressed by the Prophet Zechariah. He prophesied: "And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: AND THEY SHALL LOOK UPON ME WHOM THEY HAVE PIERCED, and they shall mourn for Him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for Him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn. In that day shall there be a great mourning in Jerusalem, as the mourning of Hadadrimmon in the valley of Megiddon. And the land shall mourn, every family apart; the family of the house of David apart, and their wives apart; the family of the house of Nathan apart, and their wives apart; The family of the house

of Levi apart, and their wives apart; the family of Shimei apart, and their wives apart; All the families that remain, every family apart, and their wives apart” (Zech. 12:10-14). This great mourning and grief, evidencing Israel’s coming to realization of their role in the crucifixion of the Lord Jesus Christ, will be glorifying to God, as He desires “truth in the inward parts”. Both He and they shall finally “see eye to eye”

In the opening thought of the very next chapter the Prophet announces the blessed remedy provided by God for Israel’s complete recovery and restoration. “In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness” (Zech. 13:1). This is a fountain of blood, even the blood of their Redeemer and Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ. For “without shedding of blood is no remission” (Heb. 9:22; see Lev. 17:11).

The Savior spoke of this time of Israel’s return to the Lord at the time when He wept over Jerusalem, because of their rejection of Him. “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee; how often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate: and verily I say unto you, YE SHALL NOT SEE ME, UNTIL THE TIME COME WHEN YE SHALL SAY, BLESSED IS HE THAT COMETH IN THE NAME OF THE LORD” (Lk. 13:34-35). Though all of God’s Prophets, Apostles, and ministers have come to men “in the name of the Lord”, there is indeed One, who has the preeminence over all the rest, that has come in God’s name. And that is the Lord Jesus Christ.

In lovingkindness Jesus came
My soul in mercy to reclaim,
And from the depths of sin and shame
Through grace He lifted me.

From sinking sand He lifted me,
With tender hand He lifted me,
From shades of night to plains of light,
O praise His name, He lifted me!

He called me long before I heard,
Before my sinful heart was stirred,
But when I took Him at His word,
Forgiv’n, He lifted me.

His brow was pierced with many a thorn,
His hands by cruel nails were torn,
When from my guilt and grief, forlorn,
In love He lifted me.

Now on a higher plane I dwell,
And with my soul I know ’tis well;
Yet how or why I cannot tell
He should have lifted me.

—Charles H. Gabriel

“TO THIS MAN WILL I LOOK”

“Thus saith the LORD, The heaven is My throne, and the earth is My footstool: where is the house that ye build unto Me? and where is the place of My rest? For all those things hath Mine hand made, and all those things have been, saith the LORD: but to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at My word” (Isa. 66:1-2).

“Heaven is my throne, and earth is my footstool: what house will ye build me? saith the Lord: or what is the place of my rest? Hath not my hand made all these things? Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye. Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? and they have slain them which showed before of the coming of the Just One; of whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers” (Acts 7:49-52).

To this man will I look. If any would question whether God would receive him or her, let such a one consider what the Lord God is declaring here: “To this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at My word.” God is not a respecter of persons, as the Scripture everywhere declares, but He is a respecter of faith and sincerity of heart towards Him. “Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with Him” (Acts 10:34-35). “Now to him that worketh [to him who keeps God’s law] is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness” (Rom. 4:4-5).

“But this is the one to whom I will look favorably” (ISV). To all such ones as are described in the following verses the God of heaven has committed Himself to look with favor. “For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I DWELL IN THE HIGH AND HOLY PLACE, 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” (Isa. 57:15). “The LORD is nigh unto THEM THAT ARE OF A BROKEN HEART; and saveth SUCH AS BE OF A CONTRITE SPIRIT” (Ps. 34:18). “The sacrifices of God are A BROKEN SPIRIT: A BROKEN AND A CONTRITE HEART, O God, Thou wilt not despise” (Ps. 51:17). “. . . the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show Himself strong in the behalf of THEM WHOSE HEART IS PERFECT TOWARD HIM” (II Chron. 16:9a).

“But this is the one to whom I will look” (ESV). All of Christ’s beatitudes are descriptors of persons who have God’s favorable attention. “Blessed are THE POOR IN SPIRIT: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are THEY THAT MOURN: for they shall be comforted. Blessed are THE MEEK: for they shall inherit the earth. Blessed are THEY WHICH DO HUNGER AND THIRST AFTER RIGHTEOUSNESS: for they shall be filled. Blessed are THE MERCIFUL: for they shall obtain mercy. Blessed are THE PURE IN HEART: for they shall see God. Blessed are THE PEACEMAKERS: for they shall be called the children of God. Blessed are THEY WHICH ARE PERSECUTED FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS’ SAKE: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake” (Mt. 5:3-11).

To This Man Will I Look. In the New Covenant era the ones to whom God is looking has been brought into clearer focus. Those who have believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, and who are lovingly devoted to Him are now seen to be the objects of God’s love and favor. “And this is the will of Him that sent Me, that EVERY ONE WHICH SEETH THE SON, AND BELIEVETH ON HIM, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day” (Jn. 6:40). “WHOSO EATETH MY FLESH, AND DRINKETH MY BLOOD, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day” (Jn. 6:54). “For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that WHOSOEVER BELIEVETH IN HIM should not perish, but have everlasting life” (Jn. 3:16). “Verily, verily, I say unto you, HE THAT HEARETH MY WORD, AND BELIEVETH ON HIM THAT SENT ME, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life” (Jn. 5:24).

Christ is
as Rivers of Water
in a Dry Place

Isa. 32:2

“THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD IS UPON ME”

“The Spirit of the Lord God is upon Me; because the LORD hath anointed Me to preach good tidings to the meek; He hath sent Me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn; to appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, that He might be glorified” (Isa. 61:1-3).

In the Synagogue at Nazareth. “And He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up: and, as His custom was, He went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and stood up for to read. And there was delivered unto Him the book of the prophet Esaias. And when He had opened the book, He found the place where it was written, The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He hath anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor; He hath sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord. And He closed the book, and He gave it again to the minister, and sat down. And the eyes of all them that were in the synagogue were fastened on Him. And He began to say unto them, This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears” (Lk. 4:16-21).

This Day is this Scripture Fulfilled in your Ears. At the onset of the ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ [when “Jesus began to be about thirty years of age” (Lk. 3:23)] the things, which Isaiah the Prophet wrote of Him concerning some of the specific details of His ministry, began to come to pass, as Jesus Himself declared. This was in order to demonstrate that “God was with Him” (Acts 10:38), being “a Man approved of God” (Acts 2:22). From that day forward the Lord Jesus Christ gave Himself to the specific preaching and healing work that God had sent Him to do. That work is continuing even to this day, only on a much larger and grander scale. Wherever the gospel is preached in all the world, men are being healed of their brokenheartedness related to offending God, those who were held captive by the fear of death are being set at liberty from that hard bondage, and those who were blind to the purpose of God in salvation along with its blessed benefits for men are recovering there sight.

Preaching the Gospel to the Poor. The gospel is certainly not about “self-fulfillment”, and it is not about what men need to do in order to please (appease) an unknown deity. It is not about men fulfilling what are called “holy obligations” [praying a certain number of time as day, attending mass or “church” at least once a week, observing holy days, etc.] It rather is all about the ¹God who is revealed in the Scriptures, and about what He has effectually done to remedy the sin issue through the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that has followed.

What is revealed of the Lord Jesus Christ in Scripture is very little known today among myriads of religious people. God anointed Jesus to preach glad tidings to souls that desire to be tenderly submissive to God; to bind up hearts that are broken because of personal sin. He sent Him to proclaim liberty to souls that had long been held captive by the Devil, and by the hard bondage imposed upon men by the Law’s unbending moral requirement. The Savior has come to exchange all yokes of bondage for His blessed yoke (see Mt. 11:28-30). God appointed the Lord Jesus Christ to proclaim to men an accepted time, the Day of salvation, a glorious set time when God would receive believing men and women unto

¹ The God revealed in the Scriptures, also known as “the God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob” (Acts 3:13; 7:32), “Jehovah”, (the Eternal Self-Existent One) (Exod. 6:3), “the Almighty God” (Gen. 17:1; Exod. 6:3), “the God of salvation” (Ps 68:20; 74:12), “the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ” (Eph. 1:3), the God who “so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son” (Jn. 3:16), “the God of all grace” (I Pet. 5:10), “the God of hope” (Rom. 15:13), “the God of peace” (Rom. 15:33; 16:20), etc. These names, as well as many others, are all precise descriptions of the God declared in the Scripture. It is absolutely essential that men come to know Him by the names by which He is called in the Word of God.

Himself on the terms of their obedience to the gospel. But, in addition to that, God also sent Christ to proclaim a day of vengeance, a day when God shall once and for all deal with those rejecting the gospel of Christ. All rebellion and opposition of every kind against the LORD, and against His Christ, shall be then once and for all put down.

To those who are laboring under the burden of guilt because of personal sin we have wonderfully good news to declare! God has given us a Savior who effectually is able to comfort those who mourn, to bind up their broken hearts, and to establish them on the narrow way that leads unto life. Christ is a Savior who gives beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, and the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness. The Lord Jesus Christ, in His sufferings and death, has made an end of sin and transgression, which are ultimately the cause for all mourning and sorrow.

Come unto Me! To those who are laboring under such heavy burdens the Savior gives this gracious invitation: “Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For My yoke is easy, and My burden is light” (Mt. 11:28-30). The Lord Jesus Christ was sent by the God of Heaven to once and for all put away sin and transgression, and to reconcile men back to the living God. He has *not* come to settle family disputes (see Lk. 12:13-14) or other similar petty issues that pertain this present world, but rather He has come to abundantly resolve the grievous controversy that the Most High had with His people, and with all men, because of sin. Christ has not come to make men rich in this world, but rather to make them rich towards God. The salvation in Christ Jesus is not a fallback in the event that something goes wrong in this world. Rather it is a gracious provision that God has made in His beloved Son for men who are “condemned already” (Jn. 3:18), to not “be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power” (II Th. 1:9).

Coming to Jesus. Though there is definitely a first time that a person comes to Jesus, coming to Jesus is nevertheless not a one-time matter. Those who come to the Savior are represented in Scripture as continuing to come to Him throughout life’s experience in this world, even extending into the world to come, to draw upon the essential salvational resources that are resident only in His blessed Person. “Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink His blood, [unless you appropriate His life and the saving merit of His blood] ye have no life in you” (Jn. 6:53). Obviously, this is not a one-time, but rather a continual, eating and drinking, of which the Lord Jesus Christ speaks. For those who have “received Christ Jesus the Lord” (Col. 2:6) the Savior will continue to be absolutely indispensable to such ones unto the sustaining of their souls for the remainder of their days in this present world, and also in the ages to come (see Rev. 7:15-17; 14:4-5).

Invitations Given by Jesus to Come to Him. Jesus said: “Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth My word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life” (Jn. 5:24). “In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto Me, and drink” (Jn. 7:37). “And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to Me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on Me shall never thirst” (Jn. 6:35). “Jesus answered and said unto her (the Samaritan woman at Jacob’s well), Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again: but whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life” (Jn. 4:13-14).

Such are the glad tidings that Christ has been anointed of God to proclaim to men! Will you hear and receive them joyfully, and come unto Him? “For He saith, I have heard thee IN A TIME ACCEPTED, and IN THE DAY OF SALVATION have I succoured thee: BEHOLD, NOW IS THE ACCEPTED TIME; BEHOLD, NOW IS THE DAY OF SALVATION” (II Cor. 6:2).

MESSIAH POURS OUT A COMPLAINT, AND THE LORD COMFORTS HIM

“LISTEN, O isles, unto Me; and hearken, ye people, from far; The LORD hath called Me from the womb; from the bowels of My mother hath he made mention of My name. And He hath made My mouth like a sharp sword; in the shadow of His hand hath He hid Me, and made Me a polished shaft; in His quiver hath He hid Me; And said unto Me, Thou art My Servant, O Israel, in whom I will be glorified. Then I said, I have laboured in vain, I have spent My strength for nought, and in vain: yet surely My judgment is with the LORD, and My work with My God. And now, saith the LORD that formed Me from the womb to be His servant, to bring Jacob again to him, Though Israel be not gathered, yet shall I be glorious in the eyes of the LORD, and My God shall be My strength. And He said, It is a light thing that Thou shouldest be My Servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel: I will also give Thee for a light to the Gentiles, that Thou mayest be My salvation unto the end of the earth. Thus saith the LORD, the Redeemer of Israel, and His Holy One, to Him whom man despiseth, to Him whom the nation abhorreth, to a servant of rulers, Kings shall see and arise, princes also shall worship, because of the LORD that is faithful, and the Holy One of Israel, and He shall choose Thee. Thus saith the LORD, In an acceptable time have I heard Thee, and in a day of salvation have I helped Thee: and I will preserve Thee, and give Thee for a covenant of the people, to establish the earth, to cause to inherit the desolate heritages; that Thou mayest say to the prisoners, Go forth; to them that are in darkness, Show yourselves. They shall feed in the ways, and their pastures shall be in all high places. They shall not hunger nor thirst; neither shall the heat nor sun smite them: for He that hath mercy on them shall lead them, even by the springs of water shall He guide them. And I will make all My mountains a way, and My highways shall be exalted. Behold, these shall come from far: and, lo, these from the north and from the west; and these from the land of Sinim. (Isa. 49:1-12).

Though difficult for some to comprehend, there were times in the days of Christ's earthly ministry when He was tempted to think that He had spent His strength for nothing, and that He had labored in vain. This is a commentary on His identification with us as the Son of man. The Lord Jesus Christ has identified with our race, perhaps, more than we are capable of comprehending in the present time. As the Son of God He is fully God and as the Son of man He is fully Man.

But even in those times of discouragement, as well as in His recovery from them, the Father was preparing the Son to become “a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God” (Heb. 2:17). The Lord Jesus Christ has been enabled to “have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way” (Heb. 5:2). He has been uniquely prepared of God to effectually sympathize with the many sons He is bringing to glory as they engage in the warfare of faith. He is able to encourage, to impart inward grace to “sin not” (I Jn. 2:1), to resist temptation, and to ¹cleanse and restore those who have confessed their sins and repented of them.

The Father comforted the Son with these words recorded in Isaiah: “It is a light thing that Thou shouldest be My Servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel: I will also give Thee for a light to the Gentiles, that Thou mayest be My salvation unto the end of the earth.”

From this we see that Christ's discouragement and encouragement were tied entirely to the success of the mission for which God sent Him into the world. Though not altogether apparent in the present time, the success of Christ's ministry and work will be unrivaled by the paltry successes of that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan. Christ's redemptive work has been underwritten by the great and exalted Jehovah. The Father has committed Himself to undergirding, helping, and preserving His Son unto the consummation of His eternal purpose in Christ. He sent His Son into the world that we might live through

¹ The cleansing from sin, [that is confessed to God], is, and must be, personally administered by our great High Priest, the Lord Jesus Christ. “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (I Jn. 1:9).

Him. He gave Christ a commandment to lay down His life, that He might take it up again. And God appointed Christ to be High Priest over the house of God to ensure that all the sons and daughters of God are brought safely home to glory. The Father and the Son will both be glorified for Their marvelous workings in salvation, “world without end” (Isa. 45:17; Eph. 3:21).

Psalm 102, Another Instance of the Father Comforting the Son. “He weakened My strength in the way; He shortened My days. I said, O My God, take Me not away in the midst of My days: Thy years are throughout all generations. Of old hast Thou laid the foundation of the earth: and the heavens are the work of thy hands. They shall perish, but Thou shalt endure: yea, all of them shall wax old like a garment; as a vesture shalt Thou change them, and they shall be changed: but Thou art the same, and Thy years shall have no end” (Ps. 102:23-27).

Out of deep discouragement the Son makes a grievous lament. He senses His life is being cut short at the age of 33.	“He weakened My strength in the way; He shortened My days”
The Son pours out His complaint to the Lord Jehovah (His Father).	“O My God, take Me not away in the midst of My days.”
The Father comforts the Son in the time of His humiliation, bringing to His remembrance that He is the One who laid the foundation of the earth. And to the Son has been given the commission to fold up the created order when the purpose of God in salvation shall have been finished.	“Thy years are throughout all generations. Of old hast Thou laid the foundation of the earth: and the heavens are the work of thy hands. They shall perish, but Thou shalt endure: yea, all of them shall wax old like a garment; as a vesture shalt Thou change them, and they shall be changed: but Thou art the same, and Thy years shall have no end”

(Chart, The Father Comforting the Son)

The Application Made by Paul in Hebrews 1. Paul, in Hebrews 1, draws out attention to two utterances in the Psalms where the Father was speaking to the Son through the words of the Psalmist. One is in Psalm 45:6-7 and the other in Psalm 102:23-27. In both places Paul is affirming the superiority of Christ over the angels. In Psalm 45:6-7 the Father addresses the Son as God. He declares to the Son: “Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of Thy kingdom . . .” In the Psalm 102 text the Father reminds the Son in a time of great discouragement that He is the one who laid the foundation of the earth . . .” In both instances what was said by the Father to the Son was absolutely essential for the Son to be strengthened in order to finish His earthly mission.

“BUT UNTO THE SON HE (GOD, THE FATHER) SAITH, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of Thy kingdom. Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, even Thy God, hath anointed Thee with the oil of gladness above Thy fellows. AND, THOU, LORD, IN THE BEGINNING HAST LAID THE FOUNDATION OF THE EARTH; AND THE HEAVENS ARE THE WORKS OF THINE HANDS: THEY SHALL PERISH; BUT THOU REMAINEST; AND THEY ALL SHALL WAX OLD AS DOTH A GARMENT; AND AS A VESTURE SHALT THOU FOLD THEM UP, AND THEY SHALL BE CHANGED: BUT THOU ART THE SAME, AND THY YEARS SHALL NOT FAIL” (Heb. 1:8-12; see also Ps. 45:6-7).

“But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets” (Rom. 3:21).

TAKING COURAGE, GOD'S RIGHTEOUS SERVANT MAKES A CONFIDENT DECLARATION

“The Lord GOD hath given Me the tongue of the learned, that I should know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary: He wakeneth morning by morning, He wakeneth Mine ear to hear as the learned. The Lord GOD hath opened Mine ear, and I was not rebellious, neither turned away back. 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. For the Lord GOD will help Me; therefore shall I not be confounded: therefore have I set My face like a flint, and I know that I shall not be ashamed. He is near that justifieth Me; who will contend with Me? let us stand together: who is mine adversary? let him come near to Me. Behold, the Lord GOD will help Me; who is he that shall condemn Me? lo, they all shall wax old as a garment; the moth shall eat them up” (Isa. 50:4-9).

Other Translations. “. . . the tongue of a disciple and of one who is taught” (AMP), “the tongue of them that are taught, that I may know how to sustain with words him that is weary” (ASV), “the tongue of those who are experienced, so that I may be able to give the word a special sense for the feeble” (BBE), “the tongue of the instructed, that I should know how to succour by a word him that is weary” (Darby), “The Lord hath given me a learned tongue, that I should know how to uphold by word him that is weary” (DRB), “. . . That I should know how to succour the fainting, with discourse” (EB), “the tongue of those who are taught, that I may know how to sustain with a word him who is weary” (ESV), “The Sovereign LORD has taught me what to say, so that I can strengthen the weary” (GNB), “. . . the tongue of the wise . . .” (Jubilee), “The sovereign LORD has given me the capacity to be his spokesman . . .” (NET), “The Lord GOD gave me a skilled tongue, To know how to speak timely words to the weary” (Tanakh).

The Tongue of the Learned. “. . . the tongue of one who is taught”, “the tongue of those who are experienced”, “the tongue of the instructed”, “the tongue of the wise”, “a skilled tongue”, given “the capacity to be his spokesman” . . . “to sustain with words him that is weary”, “to uphold by a word him that is weary”, “to know how to speak timely words to the weary”, “that I should know how to succour by a word him that is weary”, “That I should know how to succour the fainting, with discourse”.

The capacity to speak skilfully and effectually to men who are being recovered from sin and condemnation was given by the Father to our great High Priest, the Lord Jesus Christ. It consists of a wide gamut of divine articulations that are for the purpose of implementing God’s eternal purpose in Christ Jesus, being perfectly in accord with that purpose. These articulations include such things as words of consolation, words of encouragement, words of instruction, words of admonition, as well as words of warning and reproof, as each individual case may require. The end objective in all of them is that men would arrive safely in glory. The Lord Jesus Christ ever speaks as a Representative of Heaven, and in precise accord with the will of His Father who has sent Him.

Never Spake Man Like This Man. Consider some of the things that were said of the Lord Jesus Christ in this connection: “And all that heard Him [at the age of twelve] were astonished at His understanding and answers” (Lk. 2:47). “Never man spake like this Man” (Jn. 7:46). “And all bare Him witness, and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of His mouth” (Lk. 4:22). “For He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes” (Mt. 7:29). “And when the sabbath day was come, He began to teach in the synagogue: and many hearing Him were astonished, saying, From whence hath this Man these things? and what wisdom is this which is given unto Him, that even such mighty works are wrought by His hands?” (Mk. 6:2). “And when He was come into His own country, He taught them in their synagogue, insomuch that they were astonished, and said, Whence hath this Man this wisdom, and these mighty works?” (Mt. 13:54). “And they were astonished at His doctrine: for His word was with power” (Lk. 4:32). “And when the multitude heard this, they were astonished at His doctrine” (Mt. 22:33). “And no man was able to answer Him a word, neither durst any man from that day forth ask

Him any more questions” (Mt. 22:46).

Christ’s own Testimony regarding this Matter. “The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He hath anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor; He hath sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord” (Lk. 4:18-19). Expressing another aspect of His teaching ministry He said: “I can of Mine own self do nothing: AS I HEAR, I JUDGE: and My judgment is just; because I seek not Mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent Me. If I bear witness of Myself, My witness is not true. THERE IS ANOTHER THAT BEARETH WITNESS OF ME; AND I KNOW THAT THE WITNESS WHICH HE WITNESSETH OF ME IS TRUE” (Jn. 5:30-32).

This tongue of the learned was nurtured and cultured in the Savior during the time of His humiliation and suffering. Jesus Christ learned “obedience by the things which He suffered” (Heb. 5:8). The obedience learned by the Savior was not obedience to the Ten Commandments, neither to the ceremonially laws foreshadowing His own Person and redemptive work. He was God manifest in the flesh, the express Image of God’s Person. He, in His own Person, magnified the Law of God, and made it honorable (see Isa. 42:21). The particular obedience that Christ learned was in order to once and for all put away sin. The Father gave the Son a commandment to lay down His life, and take it up again (see Jn. 10:17). It was for this express purpose that He came into the world. “This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners . . .” (I Tim. 1:15).

What He learned of the Father was in order to make Him to be “a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God” (Heb. 2:17). As the Son of man the Lord Jesus learned to identify with us by becoming one of us. In all things it behooved Christ to be made like unto His brethren.

He Wakeneth Morning by Morning. It seems that what is being declared here is that the Father yearned for the waking hours of His beloved Son in the days of His flesh. There was at least one time when the Lord Jesus Christ “continued all night in prayer to God” (Lk. 6:12) prior to choosing His twelve Apostles. As the Lord “went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the Devil” (Acts 10:38), it seems that He often wore Himself unto exhaustion. There was the one time recorded in the gospels when He was in the ship with His disciples and fell asleep. Luke records: “But as they sailed He fell asleep” (Lk. 8:23). We have to conclude that when Jesus fell asleep, it was because of extreme weariness of the flesh resulting from His prodigious labors both among men and in His times of prayer to God.

He wakeneth morning by morning, He wakeneth Mine ear to hear as the learned. There were times when the Father woke up the Son to commune with Him, and to prepare Him inwardly for that which He had given the Son to do. The Father prepared the Son to speak to His disciples, to speak to the multitudes, and to speak to His enemies. Day by day He showed the Son the works that He would have Him do. “Jesus answered them, My Father worketh hitherto, and I work” (Jn. 5:17). “Then answered Jesus and said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, The Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He seeth the Father do: for what things soever He doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise. For the Father loveth the Son, and sheweth Him all things that Himself doeth: and He will show Him greater works than these, that ye may marvel” (Jn. 5:19-20).

Discouragement and encouragement are things that are experienced by all men, but particularly so by Christ, the Son of man. In this prophecy we see Messiah taking the necessary courage that would enable Him ultimately to go to the Cross, and bear “our sins in His own body on the tree” (I Pet. 2:24). No man has ever tasted of discouragement worthy to be compared with that of the Son of man. He is called in Scripture, “a Man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief” (Isa. 53:3). Likewise, none has ever been encouraged like Him in the knowledge that the purpose of God for which He was sent into the world was “on track” and moving forward as God had purposed. In abundant compensation to Christ for the unutterably great anguish and sorrow that He endured in our behalf, the Father has now anointed Him with the oil of gladness above all His fellows (see Ps. 45:7; Heb. 1:9).

Christ is
He Who Shall
Restore the
Preserved of
Israel
Isa. 49:6

ISAIAH REJOICINGLY EXHORTS IN PROSPECT OF THE REMOVAL OF SIN BY GOD'S SERVANT

“How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth! Thy watchmen shall lift up the voice; with the voice together shall they sing: for they shall see eye to eye, when the LORD shall bring again Zion. Break forth into joy, sing together, ye waste places of Jerusalem: for the LORD hath comforted His people, He hath redeemed Jerusalem. The LORD hath made bare His holy arm in the eyes of all the nations; and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God. Depart ye, depart ye, go ye out from thence, touch no unclean thing; go ye out of the midst of her; Be ye clean, that bear the vessels of the LORD. For ye shall not go out with haste, nor go by flight: for the LORD will go before you; and the God of Israel will be your rereward” (Isa. 52:7-12).

The Proclamation of Glad Tidings. *Break forth into joy, sing together. Depart ye, go out from thence, touch no unclean thing! Be ye clean, that bear the vessels of the LORD!* In heightened anticipation of the removal of iniquity, transgression, and sin by Messiah, which Isaiah details from the end of chapter 52 through chapter 53 in its entirety, he exhorts unto the proclamation of glad tidings. These are glad tidings that have particular relevance to every man, woman, boy, and girl that has ever lived upon the face of the earth. They are glad tidings that have to do with God's bounteous provision in the Lord Jesus Christ to completely and totally remedy the sin issue. In the language of Daniel the Prophet, through Messiah God has finished the transgression, and made an end of sins, and made reconciliation for iniquity, and brought in everlasting righteousness, and sealed up the vision and prophecy, and anointed the most Holy One (Messiah) (see Dan. 9:24).

The iniquities, transgressions, and sins that have plagued our race from the very onset have been abundantly atoned for by the sufferings of Christ. They have been borne by Christ, the Lamb of God, who has taken away the sin of the world. “As far as the east is from the west, so far hath He removed our transgressions from us” (Ps. 103:12).

The righteousness which those of our race were conscious of, but from the beginning were totally bereft of, has now become the substantive possession and portion of those who are in Christ Jesus, having believed upon His name. In His sufferings, Christ, who knew no sin, was made to be sin for us, and we, who have believed the record that God has given of His Son, have been made the righteousness of God in Him (in Christ).

The vision and the prophecy, that was periodically being updated by what God was revealing to the holy Prophets and Psalmists, has “in these last days” (Heb. 2:1-2) been sealed up, now that God has “spoken unto us by His Son”. What were once distinct, but comparatively shadowy representations of a coming blessedness given by God to the holy Prophets, have now been brought to a glorious substantive fulfillment by the Word being made flesh, and dwelling among us, and by the testimony of the sufferings of Christ, and the glory which has followed. The revelation given by Christ and His Apostles is amply sufficient for faith and hope to be nurtured by. We are given to sense that we need no further revelation, other than the revelation of Christ from heaven, when He shall “appear the second time without sin unto salvation” (Heb. 9:28).

To Anoint the Most Holy One. Christ is the Most Holy One of reference in Daniel's prophecy. God has anointed His beloved Son to be “High Priest over the house of God” (Heb. 10:21), who is “able to save to the uttermost them that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them” (Heb. 7:25). As “High Priest of good things to come” (Heb. 9:11) Christ is now readying God's sons and daughters for eternal glory. He is preparing them for the marriage of the Lamb (Rev. 19:7), and they through their faith and singlehearted devotion to Christ are also preparing themselves for that blessed occasion. He also, in accordance with the purpose of God in salvation, is readying them to take possession of a reign and dominion in the world to come.

The Necessary Heart Preparedness for the Appropriation of God's Salvation in Christ. “Depart ye,

depart ye, go ye out from thence, touch no unclean thing; go ye out of the midst of her; Be ye clean, that bear the vessels of the LORD. For ye shall not go out with haste, nor go by flight: for the LORD will go before you; and the God of Israel will be your ¹rereward” (Isa. 52:7-12).

The realization and awareness that God has brought the great salvation in His beloved Son near to us must be met with a response of great eagerness, sobriety, urgency, and earnest desire on our part. This is no time for indolence, inattentiveness, halfheartedness, or a careless nonchalance. Repent! Prepare! Break up the heart’s fallow ground! Draw nigh unto God! Obey the gospel! “For He saith, I have heard thee IN A TIME ACCEPTED, and IN THE DAY OF SALVATION have I succoured thee: BEHOLD, *NOW IS THE ACCEPTED TIME*; BEHOLD, *NOW IS THE DAY OF SALVATION*” (II Cor. 6:2).

The Proper Response to God’s Salvation in Christ. Peter graphically articulates the proper response, on the part of men, to the sufferings of Christ, and to the abundant provision of salvation and complete justification that God has made for believing men in His beloved Son. But what Peter is declaring here is so strikingly contrary to the ultracasual approach being made by the majority of religious teachers of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. The adamant proclaimers of the now prevalent “²once-saved-always-saved” emphasis clearly did not get their doctrine from the Lord and His Apostles. Hear how Peter exhorts both his hearers and us with regard to a proper response to “so great salvation” (Heb. 2:3; see I Pet. 1:1-12).

“Wherefore GIRD UP THE LOINS OF YOUR MIND, BE SOBER, and HOPE TO THE END FOR THE GRACE THAT IS TO BE BROUGHT UNTO YOU AT THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST [SO BRACE UP YOUR MINDS; BE SOBER (CIRCUMSPECT, MORALLY ALERT); SET YOUR HOPE WHOLLY AND UNCHANGEABLY ON THE GRACE (DIVINE FAVOR) THAT IS COMING TO YOU WHEN JESUS CHRIST (THE MESSIAH) IS REVEALED, (AMP); AS OBE-DIENT CHILDREN, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance: but AS HE WHICH HATH CALLED YOU IS HOLY, SO BE YE HOLY IN ALL MANNER OF CONVER-SATION; BECAUSE IT IS WRITTEN, BE YE HOLY; FOR I AM HOLY.

“And ³if ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man's work, PASS THE TIME OF YOUR SOJOURNING HERE IN FEAR: forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you, who by him do believe in God, that raised Him up from the dead, and gave Him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God” (I Pet. 1:13-21).

¹ that is, rearward, the company taking up the hindermost position.

² In our opposition to, and rejection of, the prevalent “once-saved-always-saved” emphasis, we are certainly not affirming that one cannot know that he or she is accepted in Christ. What we are opposed to is the careless assumption that one is accepted with Him apart from any evidence attesting thereunto. Men must examine themselves to see whether they be in the faith (see II Cor. 13:5). They must prove their own selves by the Scriptures, and by working out their own salvation with fear and trembling (Phil. 2:12-13). We are speaking here of something of such great consequence, that it cannot and must not be taken for granted! “The full assurance of faith” (Heb. 10:22), “the full assurance of hope” (Heb. 6:11), and “the full assurance of understanding” (Col. 2:2) are for those who have themselves taken hold of these blessed provisions, and have evidence of this proceeding from their moment by moment fellowship with the Father and the Son. One must be able to retrace their beginnings with Christ as well as confirm their present continuance with and in Him by the very words of the Scripture.

³ If ye call on the Father . . . that is, if you make a profession of faith in Christ, or if you profess that you belong to Christ, then you are instructed by the Apostle to pass the time of your sojourning here in fear.

THE BLESSEDNESS THAT GOD HAS PREPARED FOR THEM WHO WAIT FOR HIM

“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” (Isa. 64:4-5).

“But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory: which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him” (I Cor. 2:7-9).

The great blessedness that God has prepared for the partakers of His salvation in Christ does not consist of the paltry self-centered pleasures that are associated with this present time. The blessedness rather is described in the Scripture as “joy unspeakable, and full of glory” (I Pet. 1:8). It consists of a sublime fulfillment and of joys that are rooted in God Himself, and in the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. “Thou wilt show me the path of life: in Thy presence is fulness of joy; at Thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore” (Ps. 16:11). “They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of Thy house; and Thou shalt make them drink of the river of Thy pleasures. For with Thee is the fountain of life: in Thy light shall we see light” (Ps. 36:8-9). “Oh how great is Thy goodness, which Thou hast laid up for them that fear Thee; which Thou hast wrought for them that trust in Thee before the sons of men!” (Ps. 31:19).

Consider the following words of the Apostles describing the blessedness that will be the portion of the servants of God when Jesus comes again. “Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness” (II Pet. 3:13). “For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us” (Rom. 8:18). “Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is” (I Jn. 3:2). “And as we have borne the image of the earthy (Adam), we shall also bear the image of the heavenly (Christ)” (I Cor. 15:49). “Behold, I show you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality” (I Cor. 15:51-53). “But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him. But God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God” (I Cor. 2:9-10).

We, that are in Christ, now “have the firstfruits of the Spirit” (Rom. 8:23) and have been “enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and have been made partakers of the Holy Spirit, and have tasted the good Word of God, and the powers of the world to come” (Heb. 6:4-5). “Faith is the substance of things hoped for” (Heb. 11:1), enabling believers in Christ to taste and handle, in measure, the glories that are awaiting them. Compared with Israel of old in their expectation of Messiah we, by the grace of God, have been given a far greater conversancy with the blessedness that shall be our portion when Jesus comes again.

The Coming Blessedness Anticipated by the Psalmist. “Oh how great is Thy goodness, which Thou hast laid up for them that fear Thee; which Thou hast wrought for them that trust in Thee before the sons of men!” (Ps. 31:19).

In the text printed above David saw something that other men of his day did not see. He knew and was persuaded of the goodness and mercy of the Lord that would follow him all the days of his life (Ps. 23:6), even through the valley of the shadow of death. He knew that after being young when he had advanced into old age that he had not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread (Ps. 37:25). The man after God’s own heart confessed a persuasion that when his father and mother would forsake him, then the Lord

would take him up (Ps. 27:10).

But here in the Psalm 31 text we see that God had given David a foretaste of the joy and blessedness that was laid up for the people of the saints of the most High God. With Abraham, David rejoiced to see Christ's day, and he saw it and was made glad (cf. Jn. 8:56). Not only is there a goodness that is enjoyed now in the present time, but much more than this there is also a goodness that is laid up for them that possess a reverential fear of God, and who trust in Him before the sons of men. And that goodness, or blessedness of which David spoke is yet today being reserved and kept in store for those who are waiting for God's salvation. Oh, for grace to ever walk in the blessed awareness by faith of the blessedness that is hastening towards us at the appearing of the Lord Jesus Christ in all of His glory.

An Everlasting Salvation. "But Israel shall be saved in the LORD with an everlasting salvation: ye shall not be ashamed nor confounded world without end" (Isa. 45:17). Some may ask the question, what does this have to do with us who are Gentiles? The answer is this. We, by God's grace, have been grafted into their olive tree (cf. Rom. 11:16-24). Incidentally, Israel, itself, is not the olive tree, but rather the olive tree is theirs by promise made to Abraham. They are "the natural branches." And we, with them, have been made partakers "of the root and fatness of the olive tree." In God's eternal purpose in Christ, both Jews and Gentiles have been made partakers of Christ, and the salvation that is in Him.

Let us here encourage our hearts that we that are in Christ have been appointed to an everlasting salvation. When Israel was delivered out of the hand of the Egyptians, it was not long after that until they needed to be delivered again. And after David was delivered from the lion, and the bear, and from the Philistine, it was not long after that until he had to be delivered again. And the basking and exultation that were associated with these deliverances were short lived. And the memory of each temporal victory and deliverance eventually faded as a leaf.

But those who are accounted worthy to be partakers of this everlasting salvation shall never need to be delivered again! All the enemies shall be cast into the lake of fire, including the last enemy, death (I Cor. 15:26). It appears that in that world there shall be an everlasting memorial to this great and final deliverance from sin, from the course of this world, and from the wrath to come. In the Revelation, John beheld, and "lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth" (Rev. 5:6). At least 22 times we read of "the Lamb" in the Revelation. His Person is the central focus at every significant event recorded there. Throughout the endless ages to come each of the numberless redeemed personalities will walk in constant and acute awareness of their great indebtedness to "the Lamb", the Lord Jesus Christ, for their being present there and for the unspeakably great favor that has been shown unto them.

This is an everlasting salvation! The redeemed shall forever bask and exult in the glory of this deliverance. It shall never become old to them and it shall never take the place of secondary importance. And blessedly happy shall they be who are saved with an everlasting salvation! They "shall not be ashamed nor confounded world without end" (Isa. 45:17). This is speaking of that from which the partakers of this everlasting salvation shall be delivered. Those who are not partakers of God's salvation are destined to be forever ashamed and confounded. Theirs will be the unbearable torments of the lake of fire. The personalities that are there shall be made the objects of everlasting shame and contempt (cf. Dan. 12:1-2). The haughty rejecters of this eternal salvation shall be forever confounded. Their high looks shall be brought low and their boasting tongues shall be forever silenced! They shall be put to confusion, and be forever subject to hurt, and reproach.

A Prepared Blessedness. "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" (Isa. 64:4). Barring the exceptions of prophets like David and Isaiah, from the time of Adam to Moses, and from the time of Moses to Christ, men in general were not aware of what the God of heaven was doing. Many were given to behold some of God's mighty acts and deliverances, but they were not given to consider those workings as being related to an eternal purpose and with a specific direction in which God was leading men.

God has prepared unspeakably wonderful things for men, but they did not perceive it. And the times of this ignorance God winked at, but now He commands all men everywhere to repent. And He commands them to repent so that they may receive the blessed things which He has prepared for them.

A Coming Final Deliverance. “And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen” (Mt. 6:13). Throughout our sojourn through this world we find ourselves continually in need of offering up this petition. We are delivered from evil and from the evil one, only to find ourselves in need of deliverance again. But the day is coming when we shall be forever delivered from evil. The evil one shall be banished to the lake of fire and we shall put off the body of this death. The world with all its associations with the curse shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat.

In the present time there are evil men with wicked devices to be delivered from. There are the evil inclinations of the heart and evil concupiscence to be delivered from. There is an evil conscience and an evil heart of unbelief to be delivered from. There are evil thoughts, evil rejoicings, evil surmisings, and evil speakings to be delivered from. There are evil works and evil workers to be delivered from. And we stand daily in need of deliverance from the evil one. O Heavenly Father, lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil!

The fact that the Lord Jesus taught us to pray this prayer, teaches us that God is fully set to deliver us from all these things as they arise in this life, and then the final deliverance shall come in the world to come. The day is coming when we shall forever be delivered world without end! We shall bid farewell to an evil heart, to evil men and to the wicked one, and we shall have no more to do with them at all. All of our present troubles proceed from this triumvirate of evil. This is good reason for asking for deliverance: because the kingdom, and the power, and the glory belong to God! For the things and the personalities which cause the need for deliverance are set in opposition to God's dominion and glory.

The Salvation to Be Seen by All. “Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be brought low; and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways shall be made smooth; And all flesh shall see the salvation of God” (Lk. 3:5-6). Right now all men are given to behold the first fruits of salvation. But in that day they shall be given to see the fullness of salvation. Some will behold as partakers of the great salvation, and others will behold it as rejecters thereof.

This is the long-awaited deliverance from the curse, from the course of this world, and from the wrath to come. All prior deliverances will seem as the dust of the balance when compared with this one. In this salvation redeemed men shall be the head, and not the tail. They shall have joy unspeakable and full of glory. They shall leave off and forget sorrow and crying. They shall reign in life by One, Jesus Christ. They shall forever be in full possession of the crown of life (Jas. 1:12), the crown of glory (I Pet. 5:4), and the crown of righteousness (II Tim. 4:8). And the effects of this deliverance shall never fade away. It shall forever be characterized by newness, by everlasting strength, and by blessedness. And all flesh shall see it together. For the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.

Deliverance from the Body. “O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord.” (Rom. 7:24-25). It appears that this question, along with his resounding conclusion, was of the nature that it kept coming up again and again with the Apostle Paul until the day that he put off his earthly tabernacle. Then and only then was he completely delivered from the body of this death. We find ourselves daily being opposed by our own body with its carnal mind and sinful flesh. It opposes us in our service rendered to the Father and the Son. It opposes us in the keeping of God's commandments. It resists us in our being joyful in the God of our salvation. And it is presently seeking to oppose our entrance into the world to come.

The Coming Adoption. “And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body” (Rom. 8:23). Let us give thanks for the blessed prospect of the redemption of our body. We shall put off this

mortal, and put on immortality! We shall put off this corruptible, and put on incorruption. We shall put off the vileness, and in its stead put on holiness. We shall put off weakness, and put on everlasting strength!

Right now we are in a state of humiliation because of the “body of sin” (Rom. 6:6), and “the body of this death” (7:24). Some translations call the “vile body” (Phil. 3:21) the body of our humiliation, or “our lowly body” (RSV). But at the redemption of our body, we shall forever be ushered into a state of exaltation and glory, through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. A very vital part of the redemption which is in Christ Jesus is the redemption of our body. By this means we shall serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear throughout the ages to come. We shall never again meet with any opposition or hindrance from our vile and lowly bodies. Our new bodies shall forever be as a blessed “help meet” (Gen. 3:18) for us in our service to the Lord and to His Christ.

1. I am a stranger here, within a foreign land;
My home is far away, upon a golden strand;
Ambassador to be of realms beyond the sea,
I’m here on business for my King.

This is the message that I bring,
A message angels fain would sing:
“Oh, be ye reconciled,”
Thus saith my Lord and King,
“Oh, be ye reconciled to God.”

2. This is the King’s command: that all men, everywhere,
Repent and turn away from sin’s seductive snare;
That all who will obey, with Him shall reign for aye,
And that’s my business for my King.

3. My home is brighter far than Sharon’s rosy plain,
Eternal life and joy throughout its vast domain;
My Sov’reign bids me tell how mortals there may dwell,
And that’s my business for my King.

—Elijah T. Cassel, 1902

“Of which salvation the Prophets have inquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you” (I Pet. 1:10).

Christ is
the Repairer of the
Breach

Isa. 58:12

“I HAVE TRODDEN THE WINEPRESS ALONE”

“WHO is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? this that is glorious in his apparel, travelling in the greatness of His strength? I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save. Wherefore art Thou red in Thine apparel, and Thy garments like him that treadeth in the winefat? I have trodden the winepress alone; and of the people 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” (Isa. 63:1-6).

Those who are not partakers of the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory shall taste of the wrath of God “without mixture” (Rev. 14:10). It shall be a display of His wrath, where mercy is not remembered by Him (see Hab. 3:2). The sobering reality of which we speak is depicted here by the language of the the Lord Jesus Christ *Himself* treading a winepress that is directly associated with “the day of vengeance”. The reason for this appointed day of vengeance is to once-and-for-all put down all rebellion and opposition to God’s eternal purpose in Christ Jesus. This is a day that is on the divine calendar. It is a day that shall come when the longsuffering of God shall, at a time known to Him alone, give way to the expression of His wrath, which shall be “revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness” (Rom. 1:18).

Salvation is a demonstration before “the principalities and powers in heavenly places” of “the manifold wisdom of God” (Eph. 3:10). With regard to this salvation there are those who are earnestly partaking of it, and there are others who are clearly neglecting it, or even casting it from them. In salvation the Allwise God is demonstrating before angelic intelligences His ability to save a people from their sins out of the domain of the prince of darkness, in spite of the wrath of scoffers, mockers, tormentors, persecutors, and even those, to whom it would be given to violently take their lives.

God’s salvation in Christ Jesus is an ongoing display of His holy and righteous character, both in His lovingly tender dealings with redeemed personalities, and with His severity towards and upon them who have rejected the salvation. Just as surely as there is a Day of salvation, there is also coming a day of vengeance, in which “the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power” (II Th. 1:7-9).

“I have Trodden the Winepress Alone”. These are the words of Christ Himself. This winepress is not for the purpose of treading out grapes, but rather for administering the wrath of God to unbelieving and wicked men. For those who neglect so great salvation as God has graciously provided in His beloved Son, there remains for them nothing but condemnation and woe. When the Day of salvation is finally drawn to a close there will be no more gracious overtures towards sinful and ungodly men, urging them to repent, and recover themselves from the snare of the Devil. Those who delayed to receive God’s salvation in Christ shall no more hear Jesus graciously say, “Come unto Me!”, but He rather shall speak the frightfully haunting words: “Depart from Me!” “Depart from Me, all ye workers of iniquity” (Lk. 13:27). “Depart from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels” (Mt. 25:41).

The Winepress of the Wrath of God. “And out of His mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it He should smite the nations: and He shall rule them with a rod of iron: AND HE TREADETH THE WINEPRESS OF THE FIERCENESS AND WRATH OF ALMIGHTY GOD” (Rev. 19:15). In that frightful day, the wicked shall cry out “to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb” (Rev. 6:16).

In the Second Psalm. Here in the second Psalm is one of many places where we behold a twofold working of God: a promise of blessedness to all those who trust in God's Son, and also a solemn warning of perishing from the way to all who reject Him. "Kiss the Son, lest He be angry, and ye perish from the way, when His wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in Him" (Ps. 2:12).

There are myriads of religious people who do not think of the Lord Jesus Christ in association with the wrath of God. Nevertheless, if men do not honor the Son by believing upon His Name, and by fleeing unto Him to lay hold of the abundant salvation provided by God in Christ from the wrath to come, Christ's wrath will be kindled against all such ones, and they shall indeed perish from the way. "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, THAT WHOSOEVER BELIEVETH IN HIM SHOULD NOT PERISH, but have everlasting life" (Jn. 3:16).

Christ's Response to those who did not Prepare for His Coming. In Christ's parable of the certain king, which made a marriage for his son" (Mt. 22:2-14), He expresses His unsympathetic disdain of a certain one who did not prepare himself for the wedding. "And when the King came in to see the guests, He saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment: and He saith unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment? And he was speechless. Then said the King to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. For many are called, but few are chosen" (Mt. 22:11-14).

The Wrath of the Lamb. "And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains; And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne, and from THE WRATH OF THE LAMB: For the great day of His wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?" (Rev. 6:15-17). To believing hearts the Lord Jesus Christ is the precious Lamb of God that has taken away the sin of the world. But those who have rejected God's salvation in Christ shall be given to taste of the wrath of the Lamb.

The Terror of the Lord. "Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men" (II Cor. 5:11). The proper consideration of the gospel produces sobriety in men. Men today have been cuddled and coddled to such an extent by the "smooth things" (Isa. 30:11) pandered to them by a recreant church that the sobering realities associated with the gospel have been almost completely eradicated from their consciences. The church is "the pillar and ground of the truth" (I Tim. 3:15). It is the divinely entrusted custodian of the knowledge of the true God, of His Son Jesus Christ, and of the truth of the gospel. Wherever men have been unfaithful in the discharge of this appointed custodianship, they shall be summoned to give a strict account for their neglect in the Day of Judgment. And to say that it shall go ill with such ones in that day is definitely an understatement.

The gospel of Christ is a declaration of sobering realities. It is a summons for men to turn away from their wicked ways and heartily receive the blessed provision of reconciliation and amnesty that God has abundantly provided in "the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory" (II Tim. 2:10). It is a clarion call for men to hate their life in this world, that they may keep it unto eternal life (see Jn. 12:25). The message that we have been given to preach summons men to deny "ungodliness and worldly lusts," and to "live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ" (Tit. 2:12-13). The gospel is *not* an insurance policy for men to fall back upon when life in this world is ended. Even John 3:16, a scripture that can be quoted by almost anyone who has the least amount of familiarity with the Bible, is a sobering consideration, when duly reflected upon.

In conclusion, joining all of the foregoing thoughts together, men must at all cost avoid being finally cast into this winepress "of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God" (Rev. 19:15). May each of us be given grace to glorify God by our faith in His beloved Son. And finally, may God help us to persuade men of these blessed and sobering realities.

The Wrath of the Lamb

HARK! the curfew of creation,
Covering Time's pale lights with gloom,
Knelling out the lost salvation,
Ushering in the lasting doom!

Christ on the white cloud is seated,
Round His lips no smile of grace;
Heaven and earth and seas have fled
From before His fix-ed face.

All the sum of judgment lieth
In that passionless, calm look;
Every age its doom descrieth,
Writ as in an open book.

This is He who, mild rebuking,
Bade the sinner sin no more;
He who, love's poor service brooking,
Saved the woman weeping sore.

'Neath Zaccheus' roof who tarried,
Tamed the raging Gadarene;
Life to Sychar's lost one carried,
Rescued Mary Magdalene.

Once to Him the worst transgressor
Might have fearlessly appealed;
Now there is no intercessor,
Grace is now a fountain sealed.

All His wounds, once wide and bleeding,
Now are closed to cleanse no more;
All His scars, for vengeance pleading,
Witness to the woes He bore.

'Midst those woes, He sought to borrow
Pity from a human eye ;
But they mocked His matchless sorrow,
On the cross they passed Him by.

Now they call to seas and fountains,
'Wash us from this awful blood;'
Now they call to rocks and mountains,
'Hide us from this Lamb of God.'

But the earth, that silent mother,
Loud accusing lips hath found ;
And the blood of Christ their Brother
Cries against them from the ground.

Earth must all her dead deliver,
May not cover now her slain;
They must shieldless roam for ever,
Smitten with the curse of Cain.

They must bear the brand immortal,
Fugitive through lands of loss;
And the bar on doom's dark portal
Is the Shadow of the Cross.

—*Anne R. Cousin (1824-1906)*

“I CREATE NEW HEAVENS AND A NEW EARTH”

“For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind. But be ye glad and rejoice for ever in that which I create: for, behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy. And I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in My people: and the voice of weeping shall be no more heard in her, nor the voice of crying” (Isa. 65:17-19).

What we are told in Scripture about the new heavens and the new earth is abundantly sufficient to whet our spiritual appetites. For example, John records: “And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and His servants shall serve Him: and they shall see His face; and His name shall be in their foreheads. And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever” (Rev. 22:3-5).

Those who are living by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ are able to be greatly comforted by the knowledge of things that shall NOT BE THERE in the new heavens and the new earth, as well as things that most assuredly WILL BE PRESENT THERE. There are things that are here in this world that greatly trouble, hinder, and annoy; but, praise God, they shall not be there! And there are blessed things that are here, of which we presently by faith have been given a firstfruits taste, that we shall taste of and enter into in the fullest measure there, without any interference or opposition of any kind from the world, the flesh, and the Devil.

“He that overcometh” “shall GO NO MORE OUT” (Rev. 3:12). “They shall HUNGER NO MORE, NEITHER THIRST ANY MORE” (Rev. 7:16). “And there was NO MORE SEA” (Rev. 21:1). “. . . and there shall be NO MORE DEATH, NEITHER SORROW, NOR CRYING, NEITHER SHALL THERE BE ANY MORE PAIN: for the former things are passed away” (Rev. 21:4). “And there shall be NO MORE CURSE” (Rev. 22:3).

Absent from the World to Come	Present in the World to Come
The Opposing Influences of this Present Evil World	God, Who Works All Things after the Counsel of His own Will
The Warfare of Faith and the Romans Seven Conflict	Jesus, the Lamb, the Judge, and Mediator of the New Covenant
The Lust of the Flesh, the Lust of the Eyes and the Pride of Life	The Throne of God and of the Lamb
That Old Serpent, Called the Devil and Satan, and his Angels	The Holy Spirit (indwelling the saints)
The Beast and the False Prophet	The Children of God from Every Age and Generation
Death and the Curse	The Redeemed from Every Kindred, Tongue, Tribe, and Nation
Temptation, Tribulation, Affliction, Persecution	The Innumerable Company of Angels
Sorrow, Crying, Pain, and Sickness	The Tree of Life in the Midst of the Paradise of God
The Voice of the Oppressor	The Water of Life, Living Fountains of Water
Painful Separations and Departures of Every Sort	Life, Immortality, and Joys that are Everlasting
Wicked and Ungodly Men	An Everlasting Reign and Dominion with Christ

(Chart, Things Absent from and Present in the World to Come)

The Former Things. When the present heavens and the present earth shall have passed away, they SHALL NOT BE REMEMBERED, NOR COME INTO MIND. This present evil world with all of its sinful allurements and entanglements shall not be there. Coming short of the glory of God (see Rom. 3:23) will become part of “the former things” (Isa. 66:17). There will no longer be any need for repentance and confession of sin, as there will no more be any liability to sin. [In the present time this is a very real liability.] The necessity to humbly come to grips with failure and disappointment shall not be present there, for every vestige as well as every remembrance of sin and the curse shall have forever passed away. They “shall not be remembered, nor come into mind”.

Flesh and blood shall not enter therein. The lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of

life shall not be there. The Devil, the beast (governmental opposition), and the false prophet (religious opposition) shall be conspicuously absent from the new heavens and the new earth. They shall have been cast into the lake of fire (see Rev. 20:10). Wicked and ungodly men shall not be there. “And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire” (Rev. 20:15). “The heavens and the earth, which are now . . . are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men” (II Pet. 3:7).

The Unrighteous Shall Not Be There. “KNOW YE NOT THAT THE UNRIGHTEOUS SHALL NOT INHERIT THE KINGDOM OF GOD? BE NOT DECEIVED: NEITHER FORNICATORS, NOR IDOLATERS, NOR ADULTERERS, NOR EFFEMINATE, NOR ABUSERS OF THEMSELVES WITH MANKIND, NOR THIEVES, NOR COVETOUS, NOR DRUNKARDS, NOR REVILERS, NOR EXTORTIONERS, SHALL INHERIT THE KINGDOM OF GOD. And such WERE some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God” (I Cor. 6:9-10).

Some at Corinth were previously known for their involvement with the kinds of sins that are listed here by Paul, but at the time of the writing of his first epistle to that church, Paul affirmed that they were washed, sanctified, and justified. Because of their obedience to the gospel and their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, the association with those sins, by God’s grace, had been severed.

“Now THE WORKS OF THE FLESH are manifest, which are these; ADULTERY, FORNICATION, UNCLEANNESS, LASCIVIOUSNESS, IDOLATRY, WITCHCRAFT, HATRED, VARIANCE, EMULATIONS, WRATH, STRIFE, SEDITIONS, HERESIES, ENVYINGS, MURDERS, DRUNKENNESS, REVELLINGS, AND SUCH LIKE: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that THEY WHICH DO SUCH THINGS SHALL NOT INHERIT THE KINGDOM OF GOD” (Gal. 5:19-21). A professed faith in Christ does not somehow give men license to continue their involvement with sin, or return to sinning. [Satan is extremely crafty, and frequently seeks to persuade men by stealth and subtleties that they can engage in sin with impunity. This is a lie proceeding from him who is the father of lies!] “What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?” (Rom. 6:1-2).

Any persons associated with, and not separated from, these kinds of sinful deeds when Jesus comes again shall without question be rejected of Him, and shall become objects of “shame and everlasting contempt” (Dan. 12:2). They shall be appointed their portion with the hypocrites. All such offenders shall without respect of persons be excluded from entrance into the new and eternal order simply because of their rejection of God’s salvation in Christ, evidenced by their willful contrariness and opposition to the kingdom of God. God’s kingdom is an expression of His own uncompromisingly righteous Person, and “there is no unrighteousness in Him” (Ps. 92:15). “The ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous” (Ps. 1:5).

The Throne of God and of the Lamb. “The throne of God and of the Lamb” (Rev. 22:1, 3) shall be there. This is a unique expression that occurs only at the close of the Revelation. “The throne of God and of the Lamb” radiates “fulness of joy” and “pleasures forevermore” (Ps. 16:11) throughout that world’s vast domain. It exudes pardon, divine acceptance, and welcome unto all who are accounted worthy to obtain that world (Lk. 20:35). This throne, as it is represented here, does not make men aware of sinfulness and defilement [see Isa. 6:1-7], not even of a former sinfulness and defilement, but rather of being made wholly accepted in Christ, the Lamb of God.

All redeemed personalities from all ages shall live and walk in the lively awareness of God’s complete acceptance of them in Christ because of this throne. The glory of God will no longer cause men to draw back from His throne as in former ages, but rather it will constrain them to confidently draw near. There in that world the redeemed shall be glorified; they shall have glorified bodies, and shall feel themselves to be at home in the glorified state. All who are accounted worthy to enter therein shall joyously walk in

the light of God's countenance because the throne of God and of the Lamb.

The Day of the Lord. The day of the Lord, which shall bring about the sudden, climactic close of the present age, shall also mark the onset of men's entrance into the new heavens and the new earth. Those who are presently living by faith in the Son of God are now being prepared by "the sufferings of this present time" (Rom. 8:18) to dwell in that eternal domain. It is a domain that is characterized by righteousness.

"But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

"But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.

"Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat?

"NEVERTHELESS WE, ACCORDING TO HIS PROMISE, LOOK FOR NEW HEAVENS AND A NEW EARTH, WHEREIN DWELLETH RIGHTEOUSNESS. Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of Him in peace, without spot, and blameless" (II Pet. 3:10-14).

A New Heaven and a New Earth. "AND I SAW A NEW HEAVEN AND A NEW EARTH: FOR THE FIRST HEAVEN AND THE FIRST EARTH WERE PASSED AWAY; AND THERE WAS NO MORE SEA.

"And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.

"And He that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And He said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful. And He said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely. He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be His God, and he shall be My son.

"But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death" (Rev. 21:1-8).

The Isaiah 65 Text. "FOR, BEHOLD, I CREATE NEW HEAVENS AND A NEW EARTH: AND THE FORMER SHALL NOT BE REMEMBERED, NOR COME INTO MIND. BUT BE YE GLAD AND REJOICE FOR EVER IN THAT WHICH I CREATE: FOR, BEHOLD, I CREATE JERUSALEM A REJOICING, AND HER PEOPLE A JOY. AND I WILL REJOICE IN JERUSALEM, AND JOY IN MY PEOPLE: AND THE VOICE OF WEEPING SHALL BE NO MORE HEARD IN HER, NOR THE VOICE OF CRYING.

"¹There shall be no more thence an infant of days, nor an old man that hath not filled his days: for the child

¹ *There shall be no more thence an infant of days, nor an old man that hath not filled his days, etc.* What we have here, in our considered judgment, is the Prophet giving expression to some of the details of the coming blessedness associated with the new heavens and the new earth in the comparatively infantile language of old covenant prosperity

shall die an hundred years old; but the sinner being an hundred years old shall be accursed. And they shall build houses, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and eat the fruit of them. They shall not build, and another inhabit; they shall not plant, and another eat: for as the days of a tree are the days of my people, and mine elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands. They shall not labour in vain, nor bring forth for trouble; for they are the seed of the blessed of the LORD, and their offspring with them. And it shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear. The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, and the lion shall eat straw like the bullock: and dust shall be the serpent's meat. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain, saith the LORD” (Isa. 65:17-25).

The Isaiah 66 Text. “And they shall bring all your brethren for an offering unto the LORD out of all nations upon horses, and in chariots, and in litters, and upon mules, and upon swift beasts, to my holy mountain Jerusalem, saith the LORD, as the children of Israel bring an offering in a clean vessel into the house of the LORD. And I will also take of them for priests and for Levites, saith the LORD. FOR AS THE NEW HEAVENS AND THE NEW EARTH, WHICH I WILL MAKE, SHALL REMAIN BEFORE ME, SAITH THE LORD, SO SHALL YOUR SEED AND YOUR NAME REMAIN. And it shall come to pass, that from one new moon to another, and from one sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before me, saith the LORD. And they shall go forth, and look upon the carcasses of the men that have transgressed against me: for their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched; and they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh” (Isa. 66:20-24).

In Conclusion. The message is clear then. Isaiah, Peter, and John all have testified with one voice of the coming new heavens and new earth, wherein dwell only righteousness and righteous personalities. In the new and everlasting domain the former (contrary and opposing) things shall be forgotten, neither shall they come into mind. In the new heavens and new earth all things shall be made new by Him who sits upon the throne. All who overcome by their faith and are accounted worthy to enter therein shall see His face, they shall be granted an everlasting dominion in the world to come, and they shall be given to drink of the fountain of the water of life freely.

(see Deut. 28:3-12; 30-33; 38-42). This was simply the best way that it could be said at the time when Isaiah wrote his prophecy. We should not expect find such things as infants, old men, wolves, lambs, lions, serpents, etc., in the new heavens and the new earth. This language, though meaningful and profitable to the ones to whom Isaiah wrote, nevertheless falls woefully short in its ability to adequately express the precise nature of the coming blessedness. To further clarify this matter, we would have the reader consider how that in the present time, we who are in Christ have been raised up together, and made to sit together in heavenly places with Christ Jesus (see Eph. 2:6). By God’s grace we have been enabled to consider the coming blessedness from a higher vantage point than the ones to whom Isaiah wrote his prophecy. We are able to speak about it with greater clarity because of our elevated status in the Lord Jesus Christ. We also sense that there is more to see and more to comprehend, as we are presently limited because we have the heavenly treasure in earthen vessels (see II Cor. 4:7). But with our new and glorified bodies we shall see all things plainly. We shall know, even as we are known.

Christ is
the Restorer of
Paths to Dwell in
Isa. 58:12

CHRIST IS ALL OF THESE, AND MUCH MORE

The following names and descriptions of the Lord Jesus Christ are limited to those which are found in Isaiah's prophecy. Christ is the pure, undiluted, and unalloyed expression of all of these names attributed to Him in the sacred record. These representations of Christ's Person and redemptive work have a momentous bearing and relevance for all men: for believing and unbelieving, for the sincere, and for the insincere and hypocritical. To all those who are believing and trusting in Him, He is Wonderful, He is a place of refuge, He is as rivers of water in a dry place, and much, much more. But to those who are unbelieving, and to those who are living in presumptuous ignorance of Him, to all such ones Christ will prove to be a gin and a snare, a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence.

Unbelieving men fail to comprehend that "by" Christ "all things were created" (Col. 1:16). "All things were created by Him, and for Him." To Christ alone all men are indebted for their very beings, for their breath and sustenance, for their livelihood, and for their possessions. Thus, for men to attempt to conveniently excuse themselves from wholeheartedly submitting to the Lord Jesus Christ, or to make excuse by saying they are not interested in God's salvation in Him, is simply evidence of the blindness of their hearts.

CHRIST is HE WHO SHALL WASH AWAY THE FILTH OF THE DAUGHTERS OF ZION (Isa. 4:4).

CHRIST is HE BY WHOM THE LORD OF HOSTS SHALL BE EXALTED IN JUDGMENT (Isa. 5:16).

CHRIST is HE BY WHOM GOD THAT IS HOLY SHALL BE SANCTIFIED IN RIGHTEOUSNESS (Isa. 5:16).

CHRIST is A TABERNACLE FOR A SHADOW IN THE DAYTIME FROM THE HEAT (Isa. 4:6).

CHRIST is A PLACE OF REFUGE (Isa. 4:6).

CHRIST is A COVERT FROM STORM AND FROM RAIN (Isa. 4:6).

CHRIST is IMMANUEL (Isa. 7:14).

CHRIST is A SANCTUARY (Isa. 8:14).

CHRIST is A GIN AND A SNARE (Isa. 8:14).

CHRIST is A STONE OF STUMBLING AND A ROCK OF OFFENCE (Isa. 8:14).

CHRIST is WONDERFUL (Isa. 9:6).

CHRIST is THE COUNSELOR (Isa. 9:6).

CHRIST is THE MIGHTY GOD (Isa. 9:6).

CHRIST is THE EVERLASTING FATHER (Isa. 9:6).

CHRIST is THE PRINCE OF PEACE (Isa. 9:6).

CHRIST is A ROD COMING OUT OF THE STEM OF JESSE (Isa. 11:1).

CHRIST is HE WHO SHALL SMITE THE EARTH WITH THE ROD OF HIS MOUTH (Isa. 11:4).

CHRIST is THE ROOT OF JESSE (Isa. 11:10).

CHRIST is AN ENSIGN OF THE PEOPLE (Isa. 11:10).

CHRIST is A BRANCH GROWING OUT OF JESSE'S ROOTS (Isa. 11:11).

CHRIST is AN ENSIGN FOR THE NATIONS (Isa. 11:12).

CHRIST is A FOUNDATION STONE (Isa. 28:16).

CHRIST is A TRIED STONE (Isa. 28:16).

CHRIST is A PRECIOUS CORNER STONE (Isa. 28:16).

CHRIST is A SURE FOUNDATION (Isa. 28:16).

CHRIST is A KING REIGNING IN RIGHTEOUSNESS (Isa. 32:1).

CHRIST is A KING RULING WITH PRINCES (Isa. 32:1).

CHRIST is A HIDING PLACE FROM THE WIND (Isa. 32:2).

CHRIST is A COVERT FROM THE TEMPEST (Isa. 32:2).

CHRIST is THE SHADOW OF A GREAT ROCK IN A WEARY LAND (Isa. 32:2).

CHRIST is AS RIVERS OF WATER IN A DRY PLACE (Isa. 32:2).

CHRIST is AS STREAMS IN THE DESERT (Isa. 32:2).

CHRIST is A LIGHT OF THE GENTILES (Isa. 42:6; 49:6).

CHRIST is THE SERVANT OF THE LORD (Isa. 42:1).

CHRIST is THE ELECT OF GOD (Isa. 42:1).

CHRIST is HE WHOM GOD UPHOLDS (Isa. 42:1).

CHRIST is A COVENANT OF THE PEOPLE (Isa. 42:6; 49:8).

CHRIST is HE IN WHOM GOD'S SOUL DELIGHTS (Isa. 42:1).

CHRIST is HE WHO SHALL SET JUDGMENT IN THE EARTH (Isa. 42:4).

CHRIST is HE WHO SHALL RAISE UP THE TRIBES OF JACOB (Isa. 49:6).

CHRIST is HE WHO SHALL RESTORE THE PRESERVED OF ISRAEL (Isa. 49:6).

CHRIST is HE WHO SHALL ESTABLISH THE EARTH (Isa. 49:8).

CHRIST is HE WHO SHALL CAUSE TO INHERIT THE DESOLATE HERITAGES (Isa. 49:8).

CHRIST is A WITNESS TO THE PEOPLE (Isa. 55:4).

CHRIST is A LEADER AND A COMMANDER TO THE PEOPLE (Isa. 55:4).

CHRIST IS THE REPAIRER OF THE BREACH (Isa. 58:12).

CHRIST IS THE RESTORER OF PATHS TO DWELL IN (Isa. 58:12).

CHRIST is all of these things, and much more!

List of Alternate Translations Used for Comparison

Note: The King James Version is the translation used consistently throughout this writing, except occasionally where an alternate text is used for comparison.

ACV – A Conservative Version

AKJV – American King James Version

AMP – Amplified Bible

ASV – American Standard Version

BBE – Bible in Basic English

Brenton – Brenton's English Septuagint

CEV – Contemporary English Version

CJB – Complete Jewish Bible

CLV – Concordant Literal Version

CPDV – Catholic Public Domain Version

Darby – 1889 Darby Bible

DRB – 1899 Douay-Rheims Bible

EB – Emphasized Bible

ERRB – ExeGeses Ready Research Bible

ERV – Easy-to-Read Version

ESV – English Standard Version

GNB – Good News Bible

GW – God's Word

HCSB – Holman Christian Standard Bible

IAV – International Authorized Version

ISV – International Standard Version

JPS – Jewish Publication Society Bible

Jubilee – Jubilee Bible

Lexham – Lexham English Bible

LITV – Literal Translation of the Holy Bible

MKJV – Modern King James Version

MSTC -- MODERN SPELLING TYNDALE/COVERDALE BIBLE®

NAB – New American Bible

NASB – New American Standard Bible

NCV – New Century Version

NKJV – New King James Version

Netfree Bible

NIB – New Jerusalem Bible

NJB – New Jerusalem Bible

NLT – New Living Translation

Noyes – 1869 Noyes Translation

Rotherham – Rotherham's Emphasized Bible

RSV – Revised Standard Version

RV – Revised Version

Wycliffe – Wycliffe Bible

YLT – 1898 Young's Literal Translation

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