

# An Introduction to Isaiah

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## Table of Contents

SUBJECTS.....	6
NOTES.....	6
CONCLUSION.....	9

In reading Matt. 1, 2, we learn, among other things, how the word of prophecy ought to be used; but we see also, how the carnal intellect treats it; and thus it furnishes a sound and healthful word to us, when we set ourselves down for a meditation on the prophetic Scriptures; for we are both guided and warned by what we find in those chapters.

The evangelist himself, under the Holy Ghost, shows us one of the right uses of prophecy. He calls the words of the prophets again and again to mind, in the course of those two chapters, as the realization of those words again and again passes before him. In Matt. 1 he remembers Isaiah 7, when the manner of the birth of the child was announced to Joseph by the angel. In Matt. 2 he calls Hosea 11 to mind, when he tells us that Joseph had to take the child down to Egypt. He does the same with Jeremiah 31, when Herod had sent forth and slain the young ones of Bethlehem. And again, when the child had been brought back from Egypt, and was taken to dwell at Nazareth, he remembers, as I may say, the sum of all the prophets, or a common testimony which they would all give in touching such a fact; and, as in their name, expresses it in these words: "He shall be called a Nazarene."

This illustrates, again let me say, one of the godly uses of the prophetic Scriptures. Of course, I know that all this was done in and by the evangelist through the Spirit of God. But it evidences how the word ought to be treasured up in the heart of the saints, that it may come forth with ease, and, as with divine authority, seal one occasion after another, as it arises. It is a beautiful exercise of the renewed mind. It is of ourselves judging what is right. It is discerning the time as we would the face of the sky. (Luke 12: 56, 57). This identifying, with holy intelligence, of the ancient oracle of the *Spirit* of God with the present acting of the *hand* of God, is one form of the obedience and service of faith and worship.

But again. In these same chapters we see the men of the east illustrating, for our further instruction, another use of prophecy. They had, as we may say, kept it in mind, though delivered centuries before. They had waited for it though it tarried, knowing that it would come and would not tarry. They had lived upon it, as I may again say, from the day of Balaam to the day of Christ. And they had counted all but second to it; for as soon as the old oracle was fulfilled, and the star which had been promised appears, they become obedient to the heavenly vision; and, according to it, begin a long untried journey in faith and hope.

This, surely, was another godly use of the word of prophecy, a very fine and noble-hearted use of it, the best and the highest. Beautiful, as we have already marked it, to see the evangelist himself, with a mind fraught, through the Spirit, with Scripture-recollections, able, in holy intelligence, to use and apply them; but it is something finer still, thus at personal cost, to act upon Scripture or prophetic

communications. This was Abraham's or Daniel's use of the Word of God. When the approaching judgment of Sodom was announced to Abraham, he at once acts on what he heard, and intercedes for that wicked city because of the righteous that might be found there. When Daniel knows by the prophetic books that the seventy year's captivity was just running out, he set himself, by prayer and fasting, to seek mercies for his land and people. And after this manner these men of the east here use the Word of God which had been left among them by the prophet of old. And so ought we, beloved, still to use it. The word is not to be as a dead letter in the intellect. Nor is the head to be more busy with it and about it than the heart and the conscience, though this word may surely rebuke some of us; but we are to put it forth to use, and let it prove its value.

All this may well instruct us. But these chapters afford us holy and serious warning also.

The scribes in Herod's court have the prophetic word in the clear, full, and accurate possession of their minds. They can *teach* it to others. It is bright and correct in their intellect and memory. But though this be so, though they can teach it to others, they make no use of it themselves. Solemn sight indeed! They sent the men of the east on their way from Jerusalem to Bethlehem in the bright light of the prophet Micah, but they take not one step along that road themselves. They are rather, morally, in company with that very man Balaam, who had sent these same men of the east on their journey from their own distant land to Jerusalem. Balaam, like these scribes, and these scribes like Balaam, were instructed in the way of God, but remained wholly uninfluenced by it. Balaam loved the world though announcing its doom. These scribes remained in kings' courts, though the star was shining in Bethlehem according to the word of God which they professed and preached.

Surely I may therefore say as to these chapters, that they carry to our souls a serious warning, as well as encouraging instructions and examples. We have to dread mere activity of mind over the Scriptures, and should rather see to it that heart and conscience wait, in their due place, on the light of the oracles of God.

But I would proceed.

Prophets in Israel came forth upon the corruption of the priesthood. (See 1 Samuel 1 - 3.) They were an extraordinary provision of grace upon the failure of the provisions of the established system.

Prophets were either *speaking* or *writing* ministers of the Spirit. Samuel begins the regular line of them, as we learn from Acts 3: 24, though their ministry had been occasional before. Isaiah, however, takes the lead among the *writing* prophets.

They were to the people of Israel what evangelists now are to the world. Their ministry challenged or demanded a change or conversion. They called for repentance. But among the characteristics which distinguish them is this very eminent one — *the Spirit spake through them*. They were nothing else, nothing less or more, only that which the Holy Ghost made them.

This was a high and honourable distinction. It was not thus with the priesthood. Aaron and his sons, priests after the law of a carnal commandment, ministered in their office by title of their own flesh. They were nothing less or more, but only that which the flesh made them. They were the seed of Abraham, and of the family of Aaron. They served in the flesh, not in the presence and energy of the Spirit. In the Prophets the Spirit is speaking *to* Israel, though by the priests the Spirit was not ministering *in* Israel.

This was distinction indeed. This was, also, advance in the progress of the divine way. This was a high and eminent landmark or ensign, in the path which the wisdom of God was travelling for the unfolding of its purposes and treasures.

But further. By the word of prophecy, the Lord treats His elect as *friends*. This is a very blessed truth. When I listen to the gospel of the grace of God, I know myself to be addressed as a sinner. The salvation of God is published, and I, sinner as I am, am called to know it and to take it. When I read the practical, hortatory Scriptures, Scriptures which give me counsel as to walk and conversation, instruct me in duties and services, and undertake to regulate my heart, I see myself trained, and kept, and educated as a saint. But when reading prophetic Scriptures, I have to take knowledge of myself as a friend. The Lord is disclosing His secrets to me. He treats me as one who is entitled to the privileges of personal intimacy. And when we think of this, the prophetic writings, surely, are presented to us in a very wondrous and excellent character.

Are we children and brethren, I may ask, in divine counsels of grace? Yes, servants, worshippers, and heirs also. But in the midst of these relationships we find ourselves friends also. Bethany is the picture of much of this. There Martha was serving; there Mary was worshipping; and there Lazarus was occupying the place of a friend, sitting at one table with his Lord, as in personal intimacy with Him.

Abraham was the friend of God. He is so called. And God communicated to him what He was about to do, though it did not personally concern Abraham himself. Moses spoke to the Lord face to face, as a man would speak with his friend. Jeremiah talked to the Lord about His judgments, expressing his wonder and the difficulty he felt as to some of them. David sat before the Lord as Lazarus did. Moses and Elias, though in glory, were in like intimacy, talking with Jesus on the Holy Mount, thus illustrating in the brightest, surest form, that the intimacy and friendship begun on earth is continued in heaven.

For indeed, beloved, we may say to one another, there is no great moral distance between the earth and the heaven, or the present and the future of God's people. The perfection of that which now we have in spirit or in principle is there. But still, we have entered, morally, on the life of eternity. If, on the journey of Elijah in 2 Kings 2, Bethel came after Gilgal, and Jericho after Bethel, and the Jordan after Jericho, heaven, in like case and naturalness, comes after the Jordan. The journey had these stages. He went from Gilgal to Bethel, from Bethel to Jericho, from Jericho to the Jordan, and across it, and then from the Jordan, on its eastern banks, to heaven. Mysterious ways in that grace that aboundeth, telling of this same personal intimacy! The chariot of Israel and the horsemen thereof waited on Elijah. Elisha had been the companion of his journey before; and now the horsemen of Israel from heaven. In earlier days the Lord was on His way to Sodom; but He must needs turn aside to the plain of Mamre, to tell Abraham what was taking Him there. And just thus is it in prophecy. The Lord is on His way to the judgment of the world and the glories of the kingdom which are to follow. But He stops by the way, to let His elect learn what is before Him. It may in no measure personally concern them; as what the Lord was about to do at Sodom or with Sodom, as I have observed, in no wise concerned Abraham. Still the Lord told him of it, and even turned aside, or tarried by the way, to do so. It was the privilege of the relationship in which Abraham stood; it was the secret of One who had made him His friend. "Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets." (Amos 3: 7.)

But again, I would notice another thing. At times the *personality* of the prophet appear. We are let into the exercises of his own heart, as he pursues his subject under the hand of God. This is very grateful to us. Our own hearts take pleasure in thus being given to understand the experiences of these favoured men. In the book of Jeremiah, this personality of which I speak is perceived and prevails everywhere.

I need scarcely add, that it is very well, in going through any of the Prophets, to acquaint

ourselves with the history or circumstances of the times in which they ministered — and this, of course, we are to do through the kindred inspired historic books of Scripture.

We are also, I would add, though scarcely needed, carefully to mark the quotations made from the prophetic book which we may be reading in the New Testament, and to consider the interest with which the same Spirit who once gave out these communications there uses them, the connection in which He puts them, and the application He makes of them.

These things I would shortly say as to all the prophetic writings found in the New Testament, as from Isaiah to Malachi. But I would now, for a little further moment, speak more specifically of Isaiah, who stands first in the line of the writing Prophets — not first, as we know, in the course of time, but in the order of the books.

When we seat ourselves in company with Isaiah — that is, when we take on us, in the grace of God, to meditate on that volume of divine communications which the Spirit has given us through him, the first thing we have to do, as I may speak, is to discern the measure of each burthen or strain; to discover, I mean, to satisfy ourselves, where it begins and where it ends. As a common guide in doing this, I would observe that the glory or the kingdom, under some form, some notice of it, or another, will be found at *the close*, challenges of corruption or threatenings of judgment, or the like, at *the opening*. Of course there are exceptions to this rule; but this may be received as a hint.

As to his general materials, the subjects he treats, the things he is looking at, I believe that we shall find these five distinct matters; or these five successive eras in the progress of the earth's history are contemplated by Isaiah, generally in all his strains, but under great variety of form and connection.

1. Evil times, days of corruption in Israel, whether in the prophet's own time or otherwise.
2. Judgment of this corruption, whether by the Assyrian, the Chaldean, or others.
3. The present age, "the times of the Gentiles," the interval during which Israel is disclaimed.
4. The crisis, as it is sometimes called, "the times of the end," the last of the seventy weeks of Daniel, when God deals with Israel again, and enters on the closing judgment of the earth and the nations.
5. The glory of the kingdom which follows this crisis or judgment, commonly known by the name of the millennium.\*

\*These last two seasons or eras are called, as I may say, by all the prophets, "the day of the Lord." For that day acts first in *judging*, then in *ruling*. It embraces the crisis and the kingdom. Just as the natural day, which first judges the darkness, turning it out of the creation, and then rules the creation for its appointed time.

These appear to me to be, generally, his subjects, the successive seasons that he is looking at. In dealing with them, most surely and most necessarily, Messiah Himself is introduced, and the remnant or the elect of Israel preserved in days of judgment. But the Church is not seen. That was a mystery hid in God, and not the subject of prophecy. Prophets, as I have already observed, had been called forth upon the corruption and unfaithfulness of the priesthood (see 1 Sam. 1 - 7; Acts 3: 24); and to them and by them divine counsels concerning Israel and the earth and its nations are revealed and communicated. But the mystery hid in God, and which is a divine counsel that does not concern Israel or the earth and its nations, as such, was not made known to them as it is now made known to apostles and prophets of the New Testament by the Spirit. (Eph. 3: 1-9.)

But let me further observe that, in reading Isaiah, we must be prepared at times for his altogether passing over the present long interval, or, as the Lord speaks, "the times of the Gentiles." For he links his own day, or the day of Old Testament corruption in Israel, with the crisis, or "the day of the Lord;" that is, the first of the five eras or seasons which I have numbered, with the fourth of them. He would seem to be writing one unbroken story; and yet the parts of it may be separated by many centuries, and strange and wondrous revolutions in the earth. But in the great *moral* sense this is beautifully consistent. For Israel is taken up by the Lord in the day of the crisis, just as the same corrupt thing which she had been from the beginning. *Chronologically*, Israel is many generations, *morally*, but one.

And, again, Isaiah, like the other prophets, gives us to see the work of the *Spirit* of God with the souls of the people, as well as the dealing of the *hand* of God with their circumstances. Indeed, these things, I may say, of necessity, pervade all these writings. But there will be found large and beautiful variety in the way of treating and presenting these things: and yet, withal, no confusion. Isaiah is commonly read, I can suppose, as if his volume were a mass of materials hard to be distinguished, or reduced to anything like order — though many a brilliant light is perceived to shine there, and many a wondrous forecasting of the future is discovered to be revealed there. And all this has cheered and guided the elect of God in all ages, and strengthened them in faith and hope. But all this is not doing justice to this precious workmanship of the Spirit of God. It is by no manner of means an adequate and worthy apprehension of this book. For the light of God which shines there is a steady light; the voice of God which is heard there gives lie uncertain and no discordant sound. The reader must cease to regard this book as a mere mass of materials, or he will neither do it or himself full justice, in his labour of meditation over it.

I purpose simply to separate this book into what has appeared to me to be its different parts or sections which I have already denominated strains or burthens. They are distinct breathings or effusions of the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, the Spirit of truth, the Holy Ghost. And having done this, having thus separated the sections one from another, I will give each of them a title, such as the section or strain itself may easily or naturally suggest.

And I will add, for I feel the truth of it, that it is specially seasonable, and good for edification, to meditate on prophetic truth at this present time; for the present is, surely, a significant time. The course of the world is rapidly striding towards that consummation of pride and iniquity which all the prophets have anticipated, and which has to be judged in the day of the Lord, ere the glory or the kingdom can be revealed and established.\* But still the glory will be revealed, and the kingdom will be established; for the whole earth, corrupted as it will be throughout, will pass through the crisis into the glory. God will judge; but His judgment shall be purifying, not destructive. The earth outlives it. The rainbow pledges this, the rainbow of Gen. 9 and of Rev. 4 and 10 — distant parts of the divine volume brought together to tell the same tale of mercy and salvation towards this earth, which God at the beginning gave to the children of men, and which He still loves so well Himself. For, as we read, "Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad; let the field be joyful, and all that is therein: then shall all the trees of the wood rejoice before the Lord. Let the sea roar and the fulness thereof, the world and they that dwell therein; let the floods clap their hands, let the hills be joyful together before the Lord." (Ps. 96, 98.) Then shall it be said to the Lord, the Creator, and also of Him, in the words of another Psalm, "Thou sendeth forth thy Spirit, they are created, and thou renewest the face of the earth. The glory of the Lord shall endure for ever, the Lord shall rejoice in his works." (Psalm 104.)

\*Christendom, in these times of the Gentiles, having corrupted itself just like Israel before it, is to be brought into this judicial action of the day of the Lord. The Apocalypse is the great formal witness of this. It deals with corruption, judgment, and glory, like the ancient prophets.

I would now subjoin what I have already mentioned, a kind of index, or "a table of contents," descriptive of the parts into which, as I have judged, this great and precious writing of the Spirit of God may be divided.

There will be found to be eighteen distinct subjects. And it is interesting to add this, that citations from each of them will be found in the New Testament;\* the Spirit thus, if they needed it, scaling afresh His own revelations which were made centuries before.

\*The historic interlude, No. 9, may be an exception — and yet it is scarcely an exception; for that is an historical narrative, and not properly a strain of the prophet.

## **SUBJECTS.**

1. The Preface, Isa. 1.
2. The Day of the Lord, Isa. 2 - 4
3. The Vineyard, Isa. 5
4. The Throne of Judicial Glory, Isa. 6
5. The Confederacy; or, Emmanuel and the Children, Isa. 7 - 9: 7.
6. The Assyrian, Isa. 9: 8 - 12
7. The Threshing of Nations, Isa. 13 - 27
8. The Five Woes, Isa. 28 - 35
9. The Historic Interlude, Isa. 36 - 39
10. Israel in Babylon, Isa. 40 - 48
11. Jesus and Jerusalem, Isa. 49
12. The Risen Jesus and the Remnant, Isa. 50 - 52: 12.
13. The Cross and its Virtues, Isa. 52: 13 - 55
14. The Remnant Manifested, Isa. 56, 57
15. Israel Trained for the Kingdom, Isa. 58 - 60
16. The Two Advents, Isa. 61 - 63: 6.
17. Israel's Prayer and Messiah's Answer, Isa. 63: 7 - 65.
18. The Conclusion, Isa. 66.

I now propose to add a note on each of these distinct strains; but merely with the hope of helping the reader to discover, if need be, the leading thought there.

## **NOTES.**

Isa. 1 contains all the leading materials of the book — corruption, judgment, glory, or the kingdom, together with notice of the remnant, and of the present age or Gentile parenthesis. Because of this, and because it stands by itself, I call it "the preface."

Isa. 2 - 4. Here the kingdom, under the figure of "a mountain," is anticipated at the beginning, and presented in some of its glories, at the end. But corruption and judgment are the great materials of this burthen in the midst of this opening and closing with glory. But the remnant are seen for a moment. (Isa. 3: 10.) Infatuation, which commonly, in God's way, precedes destruction, is anticipated in Isa. 3: 1-9. The judgment of God is called by its common title in Scripture, "the day of the Lord;" which I give, therefore, as the title of this burthen.

Isa. 5. This figure of a vineyard is used to the same intent in Matt. 21 by the Lord Jesus. We get corruption and judgment here-judgment as in the present "times of the Gentiles." But there is no notice or anticipation of the kingdom. And this is quite unusual. Just as it was very unusual with the Lord to speak of His death, without speaking also of His resurrection. The title of "the vineyard" necessarily suggested itself here.

Isa. 6. This throne is one of judgment or of judicial glory. This appears from the chapter itself, as also from references to it in the New Testament. (See Matt. 13; John 12; Acts 28.) The prophet may be said, in a sense, to represent the remnant. He passes through the same process as John in Rev. 1. Infatuation here also precedes destruction, as in Isa. 3. This strain is naturally called, "the throne of glory."

Isa. 7 - 9: 7. Here we see unbelief in Israel followed by present judgment. But confederacies of their foes are finally to be all broken up (of which there is a present pledge given), a remnant is to be reserved and educated, and glory in the kingdom to be reached. Emmanuel and His mystic children are signs of this. Signs or pledges of like kind are given in Genesis. (See also Hosea 1.)

It is natural to call this burthen, "the Confederacy, or Emmanuel and the children."

Isa. 9: 12. Here we learn, that after several slighter chastisements, Israel (not Judah) is finally chastened of God through the Assyrian. (2 Kings 18.) But the Assyrian himself is doomed — his pride and fall anticipated. The fall of the Assyrian, however, leads to the kingdom; and this shows that the Assyrian is not only the captor of Israel as in early days, but the enemy of Israel in the last days — as in Micah 5: 5. (Comp. Isa. 10: 22, and Rom. 9: 27 - 11: 10, and Rom. 15: 12.) This strain is, accordingly, naturally called "the Assyrian." The kingdom or glory in Isa. 12 *is celebrated*, as in Ex. 15 — in Isa. 4 it had rather been *described*.

Isa. 13 - 27. This is the judgment or the threshing (to use prophetic language) of all the nations which had meddled with God's people; and this act of judgment makes way for Israel's deliverance and kingdom. Nebuchadnezzar's conquests in early days are to be read as the typical pledges of those national judgments in the last days which thus usher in the kingdom. Isa. 25 - 27 rehearse certain exercises of soul, and principles of truth, in the remnant, suited to such an era and action as this. Christendom, having had to do with Israel's Lord, as these nations once had to do with Israel themselves, is to find its place and share in these judgments. (See the Apocalypse,) This burthen easily suggests the title, "the threshing of the nations."

Isa. 28 - 35. Unlike the preceding burthen, this addresses itself not to the nations, but to God's people. The woes are successively pronounced on Samaria — on Jerusalem — on the rebellious children who sought *counsel* from Egypt — on those who went down for *help* to Egypt — and then, but not till then, in the fifth and last place, on Israel's spoiler, the great enemy of the last days. But gradually, as we advance through these woes, the promised deliverance and joy is heard more fully — till, at last, all is glory, the fruit of promise. It is simply called, "the five woes."

Isa. 36 - 39. This is "the historic interlude." We have it in the historic books-not, of course, as an

interlude there, but as part and parcel of the subject matter. (See 2 Kings and 2 Chronicles.) We know that Scripture has historic as well as fictitious parables. They are called "allegories" in Gal. 4. And I believe the fragments of history in these chapters are allegories. But I say no more — save that I would add this. Hezekiah's writing is like the song on the Red Sea, Deborah's song, Hannah's song, Jeremiah's Lamentations, and Mary's song in Luke 1. That is, it has a secondary sense. So, his sickness has a secondary sense — like Jonah's shipwreck, Jeremiah's yoke, Hosea's marriage, or Paul's girdle.

Isa. 40 - 48. In this strain of Isaiah, Israel, the people of God, are contemplated as in Babylon; and this being so, God, the Lord of Israel, is presented by the prophet as doing three things.

1. He pleads His own cause with Babylon and her idols; convicting and confounding them.
2. He pleads His own cause with his people there in Babylon; rebuking and instructing them.
3. He pleads His people's cause with Babylon; delivering them out of that iron prison.

These things show a perfect action. This was likewise the divine procedure when His people were aforesaid in Egypt, as we see in Exodus 1 - 15. And these are illustrations of the way of God in and with this world where His elect are. This is simply "Israel in Babylon."

Isa. 49. In this beautiful strain of the prophet, Messiah is heard rehearsing His own history, from the very womb of the Virgin to the throne of the kingdom. But Zion, as though she had been listening to this rehearsal, complains as one forgotten, not finding herself in her place in this history. Messiah answers this fear and this complaint, with good words and comfortable words. This I may therefore call "Jesus and Jerusalem."

Isa. 50 - 52: 12. Here the Lord, as in resurrection, rehearses His own story as from the time the close of Matt. 23, when He put away Israel (turning His back on Jerusalem), to the day of His resurrection, when God justified Him. And then, upon this story, on the ground of it, He counsels and teaches the remnant, His Israel, in the midst of the nations. And under this teaching, the remnant are laid on in grace and truth. Much of the doctrine of the Epistle to the Romans is faintly perceived here. The day of their deliverance is anticipated. This may be fitly called, the risen Jesus and the remnant."

Isa. 52: 13-55. Here the cross, or the crucified Jesus, is looked at alternately by Jehovah and by the true Israel — Israel in the day of their faith and revival. And on the authority of the cross, Jerusalem is addressed in a strain of the richest promises, and sinners in the largest way of grace; this telling us, as we know, what wonders of grace and glory the cross is able to sustain. This burthen is not of the general character, dealing with corruption, judgment, and glory. It has rather its own object, and may justly be called, "the cross and its virtues."

Isa. 56, 57. This strain of our prophet may be separated into three parts.

1. The nation is challenged to render to God fruit under their own covenant; and strangers and eunuchs are promised blessings if they will join themselves to the God of Israel. (Isa. 56: 1-8.)

2. Upon the convicted iniquity of the nation, the beasts (the Gentile empires) are summoned to avenge God's quarrel upon it. (Isa. 56: 9 - 57: 13.)

3. In the midst of the reprobate nation, the remnant is manifested in characters of very great moral beauty. (Isa. 57: 13-21.)

We learn, incidentally, that some of the remnant will be martyred, as in Psalm 79, and the Apocalypse.

The general materials of Isaiah appear here, but we call it, "the remnant manifested."

Isa. 58 - 60. This strain may be separated into five parts.

1. The nation, by command of God, is challenged. (Isa. 58.)

2. The remnant accredit this challenge. They identify themselves with the nation's guilt; as Ezra, Nehemiah, Daniel, and others, in their day. (Isa. 59: 1-15.)

3. In answer, the Lord prepares to rescue His Israel, as all Scripture, I may say, teaches us. (Isa. 59: 15-20.)

4. The Lord then addresses Messiah as in the terms of the new covenant. (Isa. 59: 21.)

5. The glory or the kingdom is then detailed. Isa. 60.)

This burthen, or effusion of the Spirit through the prophet, may be called, "Israel trained for the kingdom."

Isa. 61 - 63: 6. I believe that a day of vengeance was purposed by the Lord's first advent. (Luke 1: 71.) It would then have been on Israel's Gentile oppressors; but Messiah having been refused, that vengeance was not executed, nor was Israel delivered. And now, when the vengeance comes, as it will at the second advent, Israel will have to bear their part in it. Thus they have made trouble for themselves, as we all do at times, and as they did before when they went through the wilderness. Consequently, their path into the kingdom, in Isa. 62, 63, differs from what it would have been, as in Isa. 61. His associates are watchmen, as we see in the Psalms and in Luke 18. See other watchmen in Isa. 52: 8. This burthen may be called, "the two advents."

Isa. 63: 7 - 65. These chapters give a sample of the exercises of the remnant, which we find so largely delineated in the Psalms. They form an appeal and an answer, as between the remnant and Jehovah-Messiah. The Spirit has recorded these experiences of the people of God, as Christian books so commonly do in our own times. For the remnant are the saints in their day; only they are called "remnant," because they will be left for the kingdom out of the judgment of the nation. This strain is a dialogue, and we call it "Israel's prayer and Messiah's answer."

Isa. 66. This last, like the first chapter, contains all the materials which generally characterize the strains or burthens of Isaiah: corruption of the nation, judgment, reservation of an elect remnant, glory or the kingdom, and "the times of the Gentiles." "Mercy" and "judgment" are here alternately the subject. (Psalm 101: 1.) But it suggests the gospel of *the glory* in verse 19, as other Scriptures give us the gospel of *Canaan* (Heb. 4), the gospel of the *heavenly calling*, as now to us (Heb. 4), the gospel of the *kingdom*. (Matt. 24 and Rev. 14.) Zech. 14 may be read in company with much of this chapter; and Acts 17, Paul's sermon at Athens, in company with the first verse of it. We simply call this strain, standing by itself, as it does, like the first chapter, "the conclusion," as we called that "the preface."

These notes are very short. I desired to make them as much so as I could, but yet serving to convey at the least, as I have said, some one leading thought on each of these strains or burthens. I affect nothing more than giving an index to the contents of the book of Isaiah; and then a slight intimation of what I judge to be their general bearing and signification.

## CONCLUSION.

Thus have I desired and attempted to clear the way a little to the further use of this chief man among the writing prophets, as I may call Isaiah.

It is but a small service in that way which this paper has been rendering; but it is a very grateful

task, to be bringing forth the glories and perfections of Scripture just at this time. For the insolence of some men at this time exceedeth, and their heartlessness is equal to their insolence. What little care they must have for the poor, unlettered man who walks in the fear of God, in the light of faith, and the consolations of the Spirit, to assail all the foundations of his peace, and send his soul adrift! And what Amalek-insolence is it, to come forth and dare the glory to its face after this manner! For what, I ask, is the sacred volume but, in another form, a cloudy pillar (the residence of the glory), which is accompanying the wayfaring camp of the elect through this desert-world? Does not glory dwell there? Is not the Scripture a depository, a tabernacle of countless moral glories? And is it not its happy business to light up the path of the present Israel of God? Is it not all this? And if so, is it not Amalek-insolence to come forth, and dare it to its face, withstanding the camp of God who are trusting in it, and walking in the light of it. (Exodus 17.)

What a solemn controversy must the Lord have with these men, when we read at the close of that chapter such a writing as this: "The Lord hath sworn, the Lord will have war with Amalek from generation to generation."

And this is all practising the iniquity which is to mark the closing days of man's world. It is the heart of the children of man exercising itself in that spirit which is to ripen into the infidel daring of "the beast" and his confederates; for they will confront the Rider and His army, though they come from heaven, as once Amalek confronted Israel, though the pillar of glory was at that moment shining over them. (Rev. 19) But we still sing, and will sing,

"A glory fills the sacred page,  
Majestic as the sun!  
It lends a light to every age,  
It lends, but borrows none."