

Isaiah — Part 4
An Exposition of Isaiah.
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Section 6: Isaiah 49 - 57

Isaiah 49

A new division of Isaiah opens here. It is no longer Babylon and idolatry, and a destruction viewed as the overthrow of image worship in the earth. Here it is the far deeper question of Christ Himself and His rejection by the Jews. We find that this portion runs from Isa. 49: 1 to the end of Isa. 57, where, as the former ending was "There is no peace, saith Jehovah, unto the wicked," so the latter ends with "There is no peace saith my God, unto the wicked". "Jehovah" is in contrast with idols, and "my God" is connected with the still deeper iniquity of the people in refusing "the true God and eternal life," even the Lord Jesus, their anointed King. They were wicked in both respects: wicked in going after false gods of the Gentiles wicked yet more in rejecting their divine Messiah.

The chapter opens with a call to the isles to listen. "Listen, O isles, unto me; and hearken, ye peoples from afar. Jehovah hath called me from the womb; from the bowels of my mother hath he made mention of my name." There was a great providential preparation. "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." There was thus protection also. "And he said unto me, Thou [art] my servant Israel, in whom I will glorify myself" (vv. 1-3). Such was the purpose of God about Israel; but, Israel failing, Christ becomes the true Israel. It is the transition from the people to the Messiah in Whom alone it could be.

"And I said (says Christ), I have laboured in vain, I have spent my strength for naught." Christ substitutes Himself for Israel. They had been the servant nominally and responsibly; Christ becomes the true and righteous servant of God, when the other proved false. Nevertheless, even in Christ all comes to nothing at first through Jewish unbelief, through man's evil and enmity. "I have laboured in vain, I have spent my strength for naught, and in vain; nevertheless my judgement [is] with Jehovah, and my work with my God" (v. 4). The failure, apparently, of the purposes of God in the first instance from man's wickedness only leads to a better establishment of them, and to a more glorious form and display in result. "And now, saith Jehovah that formed me from the womb [to be] his servant, that I should bring Jacob again to him (though Israel be not gathered, yet shall I be glorious in the eyes of Jehovah, and my God shall be my strength)." This is the comfort of Christ, that although the work was not done, and Israel would not be gathered (how often would He have gathered them!) yet would He be glorious. "And he saith, It is a small thing that thou shouldest be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel: I will also give thee for a light to the nations, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth" (vv. 5, 6).

The original thought was to gather Israel, but Israel would not be gathered. Then, says God, That is too small a thing; I will save the nations also. But Christ is first given as a light to the Gentiles. It is rather going out than gathering in: at any rate, such is the turn given to the passage now, under the gospel. While Israel is not yet gathered, Christ becomes a light to the Gentiles. But God's purpose never fails, and so we find, "Thus saith Jehovah, the Redeemer of Israel, his Holy One, to him whom the soul despiseth, to him whom the nation abhorreth" (it is clear that Christ is now viewed as a rejected person, the cross being the great expression of that rejection), "to a servant of rulers, kings shall see and arise, princes and they shall worship, because of Jehovah that is faithful, the Holy One of Israel, who hath chosen thee. Thus saith Jehovah, In an acceptable time have I answered 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 (that is, of Israel), to establish the land (or, earth), to cause to inherit the desolate heritages; saying to the prisoners, Go forth, to them that [are] in darkness, Show yourselves" (vv. 7-9). It is evident that this supposes all to be in ruin, but that the Lord Jesus is the destined repairer of the breaches.

"They shall feed in the ways, and their pastures [shall be] on all bare heights. They shall not hunger nor thirst; neither shall the heat nor sun smite them: for he that hath mercy on them will lead them, and by the springs of water will he guide them. And I will make all my mountains a way, and my highways shall be exalted. Behold, these shall come from afar; and behold, these from the north and from the west; and these from the land of Sinim" (vv. 9-12). It is the return of Israel that is here predicted from all parts of the earth, but a return after they have been dispersed thither; so that not only from the north and south, but even from the land of Sinim — that is, from China — they finally emerge and gather in Palestine. It may not be known to all who read this volume, that the learned Ewald tries to prove, in opposition to the "higher critics" generally, that Egypt was the land, not Babylon, where these closing chapters of Isaiah (or, as they would say, the pseudo-Isaiah) were written. He bases his dream

on the slender ground that there are so many allusions of interest to Egypt and Ethiopia; so much acquaintance with their habits and ways, etc. To this end he binds the name of Sinim to the people of Pelusium. Gesenius, however, was too sensible to overlook that a remote race in the south or east extremity of the world was meant; and even Knobel and Hitzig point to China, the Rabbinical name of which is Tsin.

No wonder that we find not merely a call to the isles, but to heaven and earth to rejoice. "Shout, O heavens; and be joyful, O earth; and break forth into singing, O mountains. For Jehovah hath comforted his people and will have mercy on his afflicted ones" (v. 13). It is the last days, and Jehovah reviewing His goodness and calling upon all the universe to be joyful.

"But Zion said, Jehovah hath forsaken me, and the Lord hath forgotten me." But Jehovah pleads with Zion's reproach, and says, "Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? yea. they may forget, yet will I not forget thee. 'Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of [my] hands: thy walls [are] continually before me. Thy children shall make haste; thy destroyers and they that made thee waste shall go forth from thee" (vv.14-17). The enemies of Israel disappear, and Israel comes forward, long forgotten apparently, but now to be established for ever. So their God calls upon them to see a wondrous sight: "Lift up thine eyes round about, and behold: all these gather themselves together, [and] come to thee. [As] I live saith Jehovah, thou shalt surely clothe thee with them all, as with an ornament, and bind them [on thee], as a bride [doeth]. For [in] thy waste and thy desolate places, and the land of thy destruction, thou shalt even now be too straitened by reason of the inhabitants, and they that swallowed thee up shall be far away. The children of thy bereavement shall yet say in thine ears, The place [is] too strait for me: give place to me that I may dwell" (vv. 18-20).

It is the harvest of joy for the chosen but guilty people, after the long sowing in tears. And now there seems no room to stow away the children. "And thou shalt say in thy heart, Who hath begotten me these (seeing I had lost my children, and was desolate, a captive, and driven to and fro)? and who hath brought up these? Behold, I was left alone, these, where [were] they?" (v. 21). It is the joining together of the dispersed of all Israel, those who had been forgotten. At the present time the Jews are the only ones clearly known to be of Israel; but those so long hidden are the ten tribes. The Jews will have the certainty that they are Israel and yet not known to them. They had been in the dark for ages. But now Jehovah signifies His will to the nations of the earth. "Thus saith the Lord Jehovah, Behold, I will lift up my hand to the nations, and set up my ensign to the peoples; and they shall bring thy sons in [their] bosom, and thy daughters shall be carried upon [their] shoulders. And kings shall be thy nursing fathers, and their queens thy nursing mothers: they shall bow down to thee with [their] faces to the earth, and lick the dust of thy feet; and thou shalt know that I [am] Jehovah, and they that wait for me shall not be ashamed" (vv. 22, 23). Such will be the moral state of Israel in that day. They shall wait for Jehovah and shall not be ashamed.

But, further, they will have no reason to fear their enemies. The last verse shows that the same God, Who deals in such incomparable mercy to Israel, will beat down all those who had plundered them. "Shall the prey be taken from the mighty, or the lawful captives be delivered? For thus saith Jehovah, Even the captive of the mighty shall be taken away, and the prey of the terrible shall be delivered: and I will contend with him that contendeth with thee, and I will save thy children. And I will feed them that oppress thee with their own flesh; and they shall be drunken with their own blood, as with sweet wine: and all flesh shall know that I Jehovah [am] thy Saviour and thy Redeemer, the mighty One of Jacob" (vv. 24-26). The condign vengeance of God upon the enemies of Israel is come. Such is the future that Jehovah guarantees to Israel after the rejection of the Messiah. It is impossible

therefore, if so applied, to exhaust this chapter in the return from the Babylonish captivity; it beyond doubt speaks of the far more complete ingathering at the end of this age. So opens the new subject of Christ's rejection by His people, and of their gathering in after He has been made a light to the end of the earth. But when Zion might have thought herself entirely forgotten, Jehovah turns His hand upon these little ones, and puts down the nations of the earth; when either their kings and queens become the servants of Israel, or He makes an example of them in divine judgement.

Isaiah 50

Our last chapter set forth the vast change which turns on the substitution of Christ, the true servant of God, for Israel His servant publicly and responsibly but in truth the slave of His enemy. The new sin of the people ensued thereon, not idolatry, but rejection of the Messiah by the Jews, only consistent in their unbelief and opposition to God. They would none of Him or His law. They had followed heathen gods, they now refuse His anointed Servant. But this leads in the wisdom of God to the immediate blessing of the Gentiles in the day of grace; as it also becomes in result the basis of the ultimate restoration of Israel and the joy of all the earth in the day of glory. The chapter accordingly sketches the whole sweep of God's ways from the rejection of Christ to the triumphs of the last days.

In Isa. 50 we are in presence of little more than a single point in that great circle of events; but is it not the centre and pivot of all? The humiliation of Jesus, the Servant of Jehovah, but withal Jehovah Himself, their own Messiah, despised not of strangers merely but of His own people! Deliverance and glory were sure in the end. But so was the sad alienation of Israel meanwhile; so moreover was their sale of themselves. How was this? "Thus saith Jehovah, Where [is] the bill of your mother's divorcement, whom I have put away? or which of my creditors [is it] to whom I have sold you? Behold, for your iniquities have ye sold yourselves, and for your transgressions is your mother put away" (v. 1). It was no churl who found his wretched pleasure in putting away the wife who displeased him; it was no selfish parent who relieved his own necessities at the expense of his children. And the proof of their rebellion appears in verses 2, 3. "Wherefore did I come, and there was no man? I called, and there was none to answer? Is my hand at all shortened, that I cannot redeem? or have I no power to deliver? behold, at my rebuke I dry up the sea, I make the rivers a wilderness: their fish stink, because [there is] no water, and die for thirst. I clothe the heavens with blackness, and I make sackcloth their covering." His coming, His call was unheeded, though He had already, since the days of Pharaoh, proved what He was in behalf of His people.

Did the Jews question this? Did they say to Jehovah, as by-and-by the Gentiles will to the King coming in glory, "When saw we thee . . ." (Matt. 25: 37-39)? Here is His answer by anticipation: "The Lord Jehovah hath given me the tongue of the instructed, that I should know how to speak a word in season to the weary. He wakeneth morning by morning, he wakeneth mine ear to hear as the instructed" (v. 4). Nor this only. "The Lord Jehovah hath opened mine ear, and I was not rebellious, I turned not away back" (v. 5). Jehovah had deigned to become a man on earth, and here to walk in obedience, owning God; and this Christianity alone fully explains; for Father, Son, and Holy Ghost were most truly and equally Jehovah. And He, Who came thus to do the will of God as man here below, was, as we know, the Son, Who, Himself God and Jehovah, could look up and say, "The Lord Jehovah hath opened mine ear," etc.

It is not the same truth here as in Ex. 21, where the Hebrew servant might have gone out free, but says, I love my master, my wife, and my children; I will not go out free; and he is brought to the doorpost before the judges and has his ear bored through in sign of perpetual service. So did Christ the true

Servant and Lord of all; He too has pledged Himself to serve eternally. Again, it is not the same as Ps. 40: 6, where "mine ears hast thou digged" is cited from the LXX (so in Heb. 10: 5), as "a body hast thou prepared me." The "boring" of the ear found its answer in the Lord's willing subjection to death, in which He identified Himself with the need and interests of Master, wife, and children. The "digging" of the ear was not after He became a servant, but rather in order to it. Thus was He formed as it were to be a servant, a body fitted in which, though He were a Son, He learned obedience by the things which He suffered. For indeed He did become a man and a servant in this world. Isaiah looks at a time intermediate — neither incarnation, nor death, but His path in life, wherein the opened ear marks lowly intelligent attention to His Father's will; as the closed ear in fallen man's case is significant of disobedience or indifference to the communications of God.

But obedience (especially public service) in such a world as this could only be, to such a One as He, continual, and to us hardly conceivable, suffering. Hence the issue at once follows, "I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair; I hid not my face from shame and spitting" (v. 6). How solemn the thought; and what a picture of God in the presence of man! His humiliation (which should have made Him infinitely more precious, as being the incomparable proof of His love) gave the desired occasion to man under Satan's leading to insult Him to the uttermost, Who reviled not again.

But still He goes on — yea, to death, the death of the cross "But the Lord Jehovah 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 draw near to me. Behold, the Lord Jehovah will help me; who [is] he [that] shall condemn me? Behold, they all shall wax old as a garment; the moth shall eat them up" (vv. 7-9).

Thus Jehovah challenges His foes and sees their ruin sealed in their momentary triumph over Him Whom, if man slew, God raised again from the dead. Notice here what has been often pointed out, that the apostle Paul cites this passage in Rom. 8: 33, and applies to the Christian what the Spirit here predicates of Christ. It would be childish to deny its application to the Lord because of this; but it is hardly less childish to overlook the precious intimation that the same Spirit applies to us now what He uttered then in God's vindication of Christ rejected. Such is the Christian's blessed and present privilege — association with Christ risen after God undertakes to glorify Him Whom the Jews (and Gentiles) cast out. But this plain truth distinguishes those who now believe from Israel in their best estate. Christianity is quite another thing from Israel, though it may inherit promises; for we, being Christ's, are Abraham's seed, heirs according to promise (Gal. 3: 29). But the Christian is also much more, and has a relation to Christ in heavenly glory, which is far beyond Abraham or Israel Even now believers are His body, one with their Head in heaven

The closing verses make this distinction yet plainer and prove its importance. "Who [is] among you that feareth Jehovah, that obeyeth the voice of his servant, that walketh [in] darkness and hath no light? let him trust in the name of Jehovah, and stay upon his God" (v. 10). For thus we have distinguished most definitely the Christian from the future Jewish remnant. The mystery was yet hid in God. Christ humbled and delivered was revealed; our place, not then revealed, is now seen in Him risen and glorified. They on the contrary, walking in darkness and wanting light, will be called to trust in Jehovah and stay on their God, when there is nothing else to lean on. But these, who have no light yet, walking in darkness yet confidingly in hope, shall find a glorious deliverance when He appears. We are children of light now, children of day before it dawns upon the earth; we follow Him in spirit where He is, yea, are brought to God and free of the holiest while here. They must pass through an unequalled tribulation because of Jewish apostasy, but shall be blessed at the end.

As for the apostate mass of the Jews, their portion plainly follows. "Behold, all ye that kindle a fire, that compass [yourselves] about with sparks: walk in the light of your fire, and in the sparks [that] ye have kindled. This shall ye have of my hand; ye shall lie down in sorrow" (v. 11). It is always vain for a sinful man to trust his own devices or the remedies of men to better his condition before God, or to enjoy enduring comfort. The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ is the Father of mercies and the God of all encouragement. But in the day that is at hand the folly and the madness of unbelief will be made apparent. Judgement will demonstrate what it is to confide in self, not in Him to Whom God directs those who hear His word. "Blessed are all they that put their trust in Him," the Son.

But among the Jews, as in Christendom, men will turn from Christ to every idol and abomination Satan puts before them. Then also the day will come, in contrast with the day of salvation now, when He will break them with a rod of iron, and dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel. Rev. 2: 26, 27 is express, that this judicial dealing will only be when the church is glorified, not in the day of grace. "Now therefore be wise, O ye kings: be instructed, ye judges of the earth. Serve Jehovah with fear, and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish in the way, for his wrath will soon be kindled. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him" (Ps. 2: 10-12). This is very different from the gospel now, but it is equally of God in its due season, and will surely go forth when the dealings of divine judgement on man begin. And the wicked among the Jews must suffer more than the Gentiles, and professing Christians more severely than the Jews, as is most righteous.

Expiation is not foreshown here as in Isa. 53, but the divine power that belonged to Him Who came into the humiliation and need of His people, only to prove the depth of His love and of their evil heart of unbelief. In these circumstances of unfathomable trial Christ's entire and lowly submission was proved, and Jehovah's vindication of Him Who, being God, became the Servant of His will and for His glory, with its results for friends and foes.

Isaiah 51

In Isa. 50 we have seen the divine Messiah in the depths of humiliation, but the Lord Jehovah helping and justifying Him. In Isa. 53 (which really begins at Isa. 52: 13) we shall see Him "wounded for our transgressions, bruised for our iniquities," when Jehovah "laid on him the iniquity of us all." (Cp. Ps. 22. and Ps. 69) Between these everlasting foundations of blessing for Israel (or for any), the Holy Spirit gives us awakening appeals of the utmost force, interest, and beauty. It is a complete whole, consisting of seven distinct parts (Isa. 51: 1-3; 4-6; 7, 8; then, 9-16; 17-23; Isa. 52: 1-10; lastly, 11, 12), which trace the gradations of the godly Jewish remnant from their deep distress, fearing Jehovah and obeying the voice of His Servant, though in darkness as yet and having no light, but gradually advancing till they stand in the full glory that was promised them.

The first remark to be made is one of no small importance as affecting the interpretation or rather application of this prophetic strain. It is not under the head of Babylon, but of a rejected Messiah. And in fact the attempt to apply to their state after the return from Babylon either the calls of righteousness to them, or the answers of the Spirit in them, and the final word as of a priest to Jehovah abandoning their old seats of impurity, is not worth a refutation — hardly a notice. Isa. 48 closed the old part of the subject. Isa. 49 opened the new complaint and ground of judgement God lays against His people — not the idolatry judged by the captivity in Babylon, but the refusal of Christ, the ground of their dispersion and distresses under Rome, the fourth Gentile empire. Therefore was Israel divorced from Jehovah; but a remnant, poor in spirit, by grace obey the voice of His humbled Servant. Their moral restoration and final triumph are here brought before us in as orderly a way as is compatible with the sublimest of

prophets.

The first appeal to hear is to them as following after righteousness and seeking Jehovah. Such will be few indeed at first. They may feel themselves alone, the mass of Israel being apostate like the Gentiles. But they are exhorted to look to Abraham and Sarah. "Hearken to me, ye that follow after righteousness, ye that seek Jehovah: look unto the rock [whence] ye were hewn and to the hole of the pit [whence] ye were digged. Look unto Abraham your father, and unto Sarah [that] bare you: for when he was alone I called him, and blessed him, and made him many" (vv 1, 2). Then faith must count on no less but more manifest blessing, after all their sorrow now at its worst. "For Jehovah will comfort Zion; he will comfort all her waste places; and he will make her wilderness like Eden, and her desert like the garden of Jehovah: joy and gladness shall be found therein, thanksgiving and the voice of melody" (v. 3).

The next goes farther and calls them Jehovah's people and His nation. "Listen unto me, O my people; and give ear unto me, O my nation: for a law shall go forth from me, and I will make my judgement to rest for a light of the peoples. My righteousness [is] near, my salvation is gone forth, and mine arms shall judge the peoples: the isles shall wait for me, and on mine arm shall they trust. Lift up your eyes to the heavens, and look upon the earth beneath: for the heavens shall vanish away like smoke, and the earth shall wax old like a garment, and they that dwell therein shall die in like manner; but my salvation shall be for ever, and my righteousness shall not be abolished" (vv. 4-6). "Listen," etc. (the word being a different one from the more general term in verses 1, 7, and implies attention). It is a total mistake in Bishop Lowth to think the address in this case is made not to the Jews but to the Gentiles, "as in all reason it ought to be"! It was the more required as a comfort for the Jews, because they have been so long called Lo-ammi. (Compare Hosea 1 - 2) "The peoples" are distinguished, for whose light His judgement should be established, as His arms should judge them, while His righteousness and salvation made good for ever should be the portion of Israel.

The third calls them to hear, as knowing righteousness and having Jehovah's law in their hearts. Why should such fear the reproach and revilings of men whom the moth and the worm, little and feeble as they are, should devour? "Hearken unto me, ye that know righteousness, the people in whose heart [is] my law; fear ye not the reproach of men, neither be ye dismayed at their revilings. For the moth shall eat them up like a garment, and the worm shall eat them like wool: but my righteousness shall be for ever, and my salvation unto all generations" (vv. 7, 8).

Similarly the Spirit now answers, as it were, in the remnant. First, they call for the power of Jehovah to assert itself against their mighty foes, as of old against proud Egypt. "Awake, awake, put on strength, O arm of Jehovah; awake, as in the ancient days, the generations of old. [Art] thou not he that cut Rahab in pieces, [and] wounded the monster? [Art] thou not he who dried the sea, the waters of the great deep; that made the depths of the sea a way for the ransomed to pass over?" (vv. 9, 10). They predict their deliverance in verse 11, and Jehovah's reply to their trembling hearts in terms as full of pathos as of grandeur in verses 12-16. "And the ransomed of Jehovah shall return and come to Zion with singing; and everlasting joy [shall be] upon their heads: they shall obtain gladness and joy; sorrow and sighing shall flee away. I, I, [am] he that comforteth you: who [art] thou, that thou art afraid of weak man [that] shall die, and of the son of man [that] shall be made [as] grass; and thou hast forgotten Jehovah thy Maker, who stretched forth the heavens, and laid the foundations of the earth; and thou fearest continually all the day because of the fury of the oppressor, when he maketh ready to destroy? And where [is] the fury of the oppressor? The captive exile shall speedily be loosed, and he shall not die [and go down] into the pit, neither shall his bread fail. And I [am] Jehovah thy God, which stirreth up the sea, that the waves thereof roar: Jehovah of hosts [is] his name. And I have put my words in thy

mouth, and have covered thee with the shadow of my hand, to plant the heavens, and to lay the foundations of the earth, and to say unto Zion, Thou [art] my people" (vv. 11-16).

Next, the Spirit of God summons Jerusalem to arise and stand up, with a most vivid description of her reeling under Jehovah's judgement without one of her sons to guide or help, and of His taking the cup from her hand, not here to drink it Himself, but to put it into the hands of their oppressors. "Awake, awake, stand up, O Jerusalem, which hast drunk at the hand of Jehovah the cup of his fury; thou hast drunk — hast drained out the bowl of the cup of staggering. [There is] none to guide her among all the sons [whom] she hath brought forth; neither [is there any] that taketh her by the hand of all the sons [that] she hath brought up. These two [things] are befallen thee; who will bemoan thee? desolation and destruction, and famine and sword; how shall I comfort thee? Thy sons have fainted, they lie at the top of all the streets, as an antelope (or, oryx) in a net; they are full of the fury of Jehovah, the rebuke of thy God. Therefore hear now this, thou afflicted and drunken, but not with wine: thus saith thy Lord Jehovah, and thy God [that] pleadeth the cause of his people, Behold, I have taken out of thy hand the cup of staggering, the bowl of the cup of my fury; thou shalt no more drink it again: and I will put it into the hand of them that afflict thee. who have said to thy soul, Bow down, that we may go over: and thou hast laid thy back as the ground, and as the street, to them that went over" (vv. 17-23). It is no wonder that interpreters should be much divided who apply these appeals and answers of increasing earnestness, either to the past history of the Jews or to the time of the first advent. Neither at all corresponds to the language of the Holy Spirit, Who really looks forward to the gradual progress of Jehovah's dealings with the future remnant and His working in their souls as they rise from their degradation or apprehend their calling.

Isaiah 52: 1-12

Thirdly, Zion is now called on. "Awake, awake, put on thy strength, O Zion; put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the holy city: for henceforth there shall no more come into thee the uncircumcised and the unclean. Shake thyself from the dust; arise, sit thee down, O Jerusalem: loose thyself from the bands of thy neck, O captive daughter of Zion. For thus saith Jehovah, Ye were sold for naught; and ye shall be redeemed without money. For thus saith the Lord Jehovah, My people went down at the first into Egypt to sojourn there: and the Assyrian oppressed them without cause. Now therefore, what have I here, saith Jehovah, that my people is taken away for naught? their rulers make them howl, saith Jehovah, and my name continually all the day [is] blasphemed. Therefore my people shall know my name: therefore [they shall know] in that day that I [and He that saith, Beholds [it is] I" (vv. 1-6). The days of Egypt and of Assyria should never return: no more the oppressor should be known. Jehovah's people shall know His name, Himself as revealed in it, as unchangeable in His mercy to them as in His own being.

Beautiful then in their eyes, as in His, are the feet of him that brings good tidings and publishes peace. Before (Isa. 40: 9) the cities of Judah were told, "Behold your God." Now Zion hears, "Thy God reigneth!" The watchmen lift up their voice, singing, not warning; the very wastes of Jerusalem, so long forsaken, sing together in their irrepressible joy. "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! The voice of thy watchmen! they lift up the voice, together do they sing; for they shall see eye to eye when Jehovah bringeth again Zion. Break forth into joy, sing together, ye waste places of Jerusalem; for Jehovah hath comforted his people, he hath redeemed Jerusalem. Jehovah 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" (vv. 7-10).

Lastly, the strain closes with the peremptory call to act consistently with the holiness of Jehovah and of His sanctuary. "Depart, depart, go out from thence, touch no unclean [thing]; go out of the midst of her; be ye clean, that bear the vessels of Jehovah" (v. 11). Babylon is pointedly dropped: a larger sphere is meant. It should not be, as of old, in haste or in anxiety, however they were guided and delivered then. The greatest triumphs of their fathers fade in the glorious intervention of Jehovah which the children now know. "For ye shall not go out with haste, nor go by flight; for Jehovah will go before you, and the God of Israel [will be] your rearward" (v. 12). It is in truth and in its fullest display the day of Jehovah, when Israel for ever leave the unclean Gentiles, henceforth to be a richer blessing to them than their evils had been a snare and ruin to Israel.

Now that Zion is thus summoned to awake out of ruin and suffering and degradation through her sins, and is by grace bidden to rise and stand forth in the righteousness and beauty Jehovah puts on her, the end of the chapter introduces once more and more fully than ever Him through Whom so blessed a change could come to pass. But it also, to make it adequate, demands that His vicissitudes should be set out distinctly; and this was the more needful, because it seemed unaccountable that One, so infinitely worthy and glorious, should have passed through them, when one thought either of Jehovah on the one hand, or of the Jewish people on the other. This demand gives rise, therefore, to the opening out of the great hidden necessity for Messiah's atoning sufferings, if the divine nature were to be vindicated respecting sin and Israel (or any others) were to be purged and blessed. As we of the church behold Christ glorified on high in answer to His cross, so will Israel see Him set on the summit of earth's universal glory for the same reason.

Isaiah 52: 13-15

The section, of which this passage is the preface, assumes the truth already before us in chap. 1, pursues it farther and more profoundly, and thus completes the foundation of all that follows. It embraces all the next chapter which forms part of it and is of the profoundest interest and importance.

The elder Jewish interpreters did not contest the application to the Messiah. Thus Jonathan Ben Uzziel expressly speaks to this effect in the Chaldee paraphrase (given in the Antwerp, Paris, and London Polyglotts). So the Talmud Babyl. (in Tr. Sanhedrim, cap. helek, fol. 98) applies to the Messiah, Isa. 53: 4. Again, the book of Zohar confirms this in the comment on Exodus (fol. 95 col. 3), and the Mechilta (according to the Jalkut Shimoni, part 2. fol. 90, col. 1) is no less distinct, as even Aben Ezra, Abarbanel, and other distinguished men among their later authors confess. I am indebted to another (who has supplied some of these references) for the striking fact that even now, in the prayers of the synagogue used universally, there is the clearest witness to the same truth. For instance, at the Passover they pray in these terms: "Hasten and cause the shadows to flee away. Let him be exalted and extolled and be high, who is now despised. Let him deal prudently and reprove and sprinkle many nations." Again, in the prayers for the day of Atonement, there is as plain an allusion to the righteous Anointed bearing the yoke of iniquities and transgression, wounded because of it, and men (or Israel at least) healed by His wound. The translator (D. Levi) tries to turn part of the prayer aside to Josiah, as do some of the Rabbis; but the prayer expressly alludes to the Messiah in one of these references to Isaiah 53 just cited, even according to the same person.

The more modern writers, who dread the ancient application of the prophecy to the Messiah by their fathers, have invented a double means of escape, either by applying it to some distinguished man like Josiah or Jeremiah, or to the Jewish people elsewhere styled "My servant" in the prophecy. But in vain. This section is so punctually and exclusively applicable to our Lord that these efforts only prove

the will of unbelief and its failure. In the beginning of chap. 49. we have already seen Christ, the Servant substituted for Israel who had been altogether wanting. We have seen in chap. 1. that the godly Jews are exhorted to obey the voice of this Servant of Jehovah, humbled though He has been among men, but vindicated of God, and indeed He Himself is God.

The three closing verses of 52 open the new and full view of Messiah suffering and exalted in connection with Israel; for this last qualification needs to be borne in mind, lest man should look for that which it is no part of the Spirit's work here to reveal. The union of Jew and Gentile in one body, as well as Christ Head over all things to it, His church, is, as the apostle tells us, a mystery, that is, a secret not revealed in Old Testament times (Eph. 1: 22, 23; Eph. 3: 1-11). Many points true of the church and the Christian are revealed in this prophecy as in others; but nowhere is heavenly union mentioned until after Christ's rejection and ascension, and is not fully made known till the apostle Paul was entrusted with the administration of it.

The exalted Messiah of Israel is then before us, who erst was covered with shame and bent to such humiliation as was never before nor since the portion for any son of man. Hence many were dumb through astonishment, or rather perhaps abhorrence — "shocked" at Him: they had looked for Messiah far otherwise. His lowly mien and surroundings of life and labours first disappointed; His meek acceptance of insult and suffering next drew out all their malice and aversion.

"So shall He sprinkle many nations." The Septuagint translates, "So shall many nations regard him with admiration" that is, it would seem, in contrast with Jewish vexation and hatred; but this supposes a different verb in their Hebrew copies, though differing only very slightly in form. Some of the ablest Jewish critics take it as meaning that the Messiah will drop the word in that manner and so teach if not refresh many Gentiles. Certainly what is said of kings implies a reverent and subject silence before Him. Thus ver. 15 may be considered to stand in antithesis to ver. 14: the one presenting the bitter unbelieving disappointment of the chosen; the other the beneficent dealing with the Gentiles, so that their kings are mute with awe in His presence. This accordingly cannot, save generally, apply at this time, but joins on the effects of His advent in glory in contrast with the days of His flesh (ver. 14), and in unison with the opening words of ver. 13. The apostle only uses the principle of the last words (ver. 15) for his own going out with the gospel where no other had preceded, and no sound of Christ might have yet reached (Rom. 15: 21); but he in no way treats this as the fulfilment of that oracle.

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

men.

*This phrase has tormented the critics. The fathers in general apply it to the spiritual work of Christianity; the ancient Jews for the most part to the judicial effect of Messiah's kingdom in dispersing or casting away the Gentiles. Some of the old versions took the word as expressive of amazement. Gesenius (in his *Thes*) comes pretty much to the same thing considering the word to mean the effect in starting from their seats those who suddenly see some great personage when it was least expected. But "sprinkling" is the literal meaning however we may apply it. Some think it simpler to take it that He, Jehovah, will sprinkle many nations on Him the Messiah. But it is hard to see the superior propriety of such a sense to the common view that the very humiliation for the gracious work of redemption then achieved answers the surprise of many of old at the cleansing of many nations by-and-by.

The humiliation of the Messiah ran so counter to every preconceived thought and wish of the Jew that one can readily understand the advantage which Satan found in urging on the people, leaders and all, to their fatal unbelief and rejection of Him. But there was a deeper ground of aversion in the heart than disappointment in their national ambition, and this charge of dislike to His Person takes in man universally, and not Israel only: "For he was despised and left alone of men." They shrank from One Who sounded and laid bare man's iniquities and enmity to God, Himself the perfection of obeying God and loving man. Hence, notwithstanding the attractiveness of moral beauty and lowly grace, with power that proved itself superior to all the sickness and misery of man, there arose the hatred that grew more intense and deadly as He brought in God to deal with their conscience. To interpret what is predicted of Him as being the state of "that wicked generation" is beyond measure absurd.

It is not here the remnant of the Jews distinguished from the mass by hearkening to the voice of Jehovah's Servant, as in Isa. 50: 10, but many nations and kings in astonishment at His exaltation Who was once so humbled. The inspired word puts every thing and every one in the just place.

Isaiah 53

Here we have the confession and wondering complaint over the unbelief of men, yea, over their own unbelief; for Israel, now broken down in sense of sin, acknowledge that it was not merely those without who heeded little the report of the Messiah, but that they too themselves had been hard and rebellious against Him. "Who hath believed our report? and to whom hath the arm of Jehovah been revealed? For he shall grow up before him as a tender sapling, and as a root out of dry ground; he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we see him, [there is] no beauty that we should desire him. He is despised and shunned of men, a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; and like one from whom they hide [their] faces, he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely he [it is] hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows, and 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 Jehovah hath laid on him the iniquity of us all" (vv. 1-6).

The close of the last chapter (vv. 13-15) gave us Jehovah's contemplation of His Anointed, once put to shame, and now on the summit of glory before every eye. His deity introduced His humiliation in Isa. 50, here His humiliation leads to His glory: expiation was the divine aim in that humiliation. Then in Isa. 53 His people trace, in view of Him, their past and most guilty blindness, as they think of His wondrous humiliation, their misjudgement of His life and death, and their present perception of its cause in their sins and misery from which He had come to save them. When they had of old beheld His path of shame and sufferings from first to last, they understood neither the grace which brought Him

down so low nor the glories that should follow. They now justly feel and own (vers. 1-3) the power of unbelief in the chosen people: a far more humbling fact in them than among the nations sitting in darkness and the shadow of death. Israel had ample testimony; yet what scepticism! The very humiliation of the Messiah which should have endeared Him only drew out aversion. They misread Himself utterly, as if He were under ban like another Gehazi or Uzziah. But now (vers. 4-6) being taught of God, they avow before Him and men that underneath all that humiliation, and, as they wrongly thought, personal obnoxiousness or liability to God's judgement a deeper work was being done: first, the fullest identification with their burden on His own heart, as He went up and down the land, Immanuel's land, entering into the weight of all that He healed (v. 4); and finally atonement before Him (v. 5). They had regarded Him, on the contrary, as an object of God's displeasure, and justly cast out and trampled on. But it was a total misconception of all His marvellous grace, a negligent oversight of their own deep necessities, both in the life that now is, and yet more for that which is to come. Hence Matt. 8: 17 justly applies the first part of verse 4 to the Lord, as He relieved the afflictions of the Jews, and healed their diseases in His ministry, never bringing in bare power merely, but bearing all in spirit before God, while He cured them; as 1 Peter 2: 24, 25 applies verse 5 to His work for our sins on the cross. This recognition of the truth opens the mouth in lowly confession of sin; as the heart will then feel its past evil ways, and each judges himself before God.

In vers. 7-9 Jehovah expresses His delight in the moral beauty which shone in the suffering One, affirming on His part the explanation of the enigma of the cross, though up to His death of shame man was allowed his way in disposing of Jesus. "He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; he was brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and was as a sheep dumb before her shearers, and he opened not his mouth. He was taken from detention and from judgement: and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living; for the transgression of my people was he stricken. And they made his grave with the wicked, but [he was] with the rich in his death,* because he had done no violence, neither [was there] guile in his mouth" (vv. 7-9). The plague stroke was upon Him for the transgression of the people of Jehovah. It was not the outward fact simply of a rejected Messiah to which He was pleased to submit, the awful proof of man's and Israel's moral state; but there is this divine key, and the far more wondrous meeting of a more hidden and a deeper need, even expiation. Yet even in His ignominious death God wrought so that by His resurrection from among the dead He should have honour unexpectedly.

*The phrase used here is most expressive and points to the intensive and exceptional death of the Holy Sufferer as concentrating many — countless — deaths in that one. Henderson takes the phrase to mean "after his death."

Israel then reiterate the blessed truth with their Amen, pursuing the glorious consequences as far as it is theirs to see them. "Yet it pleased Jehovah to bruise him; he hath put [him] to grief: when thou shalt make his soul (or, when his soul shall have been made) an offering for sin, he shall see a seed, he shall prolong [his] days, and the pleasure of Jehovah shall prosper in his hand" (v. 10). Here the atoning work, in the suffering of the Lord for sin, is dwelt on with its issue as far as was suitable then to speak. It is blessedly true that the death and blood-shedding of the Saviour must be for propitiation; but it is as false a thought as any that the enemy of souls ever insinuated that this propitiation or atonement is or could be, according to God and His word, without His sufferings specifically, yea, that suffering which was the deepest expression of God's judgement of our iniquities, when He Who knew no sin was made sin for us and forsaken of God. His blood and death when viewed as expiatory, and not as the evidence simply of man's wickedness, are the blood and death of Him Who really bore our sins in His own body on the tree, and endured the to us unfathomable judgement of God, when not the Jews only but God hid

His face from Him. Can a Christian slight this divine abandonment of Him Who suffered, the Just for the unjust, to bring us to God? He may, but only as he may be guilty of grievous, not to say fatal, error.* God's part in atonement is and must be the deepest.

*It is notorious that Jesuit preachers are wont to draw moving pictures, as of the physical torments of the lost, so of the external sufferings of our blessed Lord (i.e. the human rather than the divine side) Nor does one deny the substantial truth of what they reason is obvious. Unspiritual themselves, they appeal to that which strikes the senses and can excite the feelings or the fears of their least spiritual auditors. But men of a different stamp have always recognized that the word of God reveals a far deeper truth, not of what was before the eye or by the hand of man, merely, but of what passed unseen between God and Christ in that awful hour. So, to take an instance from one of the better sort, Archbishop Leighton rightly distinguishes this: "In that outside of His sufferings there was an analogy with the end and main work which was ordered by the Lord with regard unto that, being a death declared accursed by the law, as the Apostle Paul observes, and so declaring Him that was God blessed for ever to have been made a curse, that is accounted as accursed for us, that we might be blessed in Him, 'in whom,' according to the promise, all the nations of the earth are blessed. But that wherein lay the strength and main stress of His sufferings was this invisible weight that none could see that gazed on Him; but He felt more than all the rest. In this are three things: 1. The weight of sin. 2. the transferring of it upon Christ. 3. His bearing of it.

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

speculators, such as Mr. F. D. Maurice and his friends. It seems rather a peculiar mind which could cite 1 Peter 3: 18 in a paragraph designed to prove that reconciliation or atonement is never in connection with Christ's sufferings specifically. It is false that the statement they oppose separates His sufferings from His blood and death; on the contrary while distinguishing the other points, the object was to insist on the inseparableness of His sufferings with His blood and death for atonement. The admission that they are not separated in the Spirit's mind for atonement is the true thesis, which is yielded. But it is wrong to say, "the two are never separated." It is merely inattention to scripture (which distinguishes them), and it claims no answer.]

The chapter closes with Jehovah's confirmation, repeating the glorious results of both grace and government, and in each case connecting them with the work of salvation. "From (or, of) the travail of his soul shall he see, he shall be satisfied; by his knowledge shall my righteous servant instruct the many in righteousness; and *he* shall bear their iniquities" (v. 11). Such seems the simple, true, and exact sense of the verse which has been lost sight of often by translators, and still more by preachers, as well as (through a very different influence) by Jews. There is no need of importing an evangelical sense, which really misleads as if by the knowledge of Himself," meant the knowledge respecting or concerning the Messiah.* The broad facts in the Lord's history are before us: His ministry, when through His knowledge He instructed the mass in righteousness; His death when He bore their iniquities on the tree. The order is quite clear and sound; and there is no need for taking the copulative in a causal sense, or in any other than its own strict meaning.

*Even Dr. Henderson, who is often free enough from popular prejudice gives this straining of the phrase.

It was thus the Lord taught on the mount as well as in other places and times during His sojourn on earth. Then came another and mightier work which could be shared by none. Others might suffer in love or in righteousness; He not merely in both, but He alone for the sins of others at God's hand, as we were expressly told in the verse before. But the Spirit never tires of the wondrous fact, and loves to present it on all sides, from God to man, and from man to God. Dan. 12: 3 proves irrefutably that the Hebrew will bear the sense of "instruct in righteousness" as well as of "justify": which of the two senses depends on the contextual necessity. There indeed it must mean the former; for, first, teachers cannot "justify" in the forensic sense (which is the true doctrinal force of the word, when thus employed as to the soul of a believer); and, secondly, as it is there a question of the many (the apostate mass of the Jews, which is the technical value of the words in Daniel), it must mean "instruct in," rather than "bring to, righteousness," for they do not bring them. Hence I doubt not it means similarly in Isaiah, though it may be here not so clear that "the many" has the same force. Still the burden of proof would lie on such as contend for a difference in the usage of the two prophets. To most minds their coincidence lends a mutual confirmation.

But sinful souls need far more than instruction, were it ever so perfect, as the Lord's surely must be. Hence it is added, "And he shall bear their iniquities." He suffers for them according to the scriptures, and His suffering for sin is efficacious. The change to "for" was due to the supposition that justification was meant in the previous clause, for which His bearing iniquities was the ground. Abstractly this is true, as all believers admit, according to abundant scripture; but the question here is, whether the text does not convey another truth, apt to be overlooked, in its plain unforced meaning with emphasis on "He."

Jehovah closes His answer with the assured triumph that awaits Messiah, based as it is, for Him alone of conquerors, on His sacrificial death so long misread, and His gracious use of it on behalf of the

transgressors with whom malice had confounded Him. "Therefore will I assign him [a portion] with the great (or, many), and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he poured out (or, bared) his soul unto death, and was numbered with the transgressors; and he bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors" (v. 12).

The notion of the later Jews, (represented by Dr. Philippon for instance), that it is Jacob as a whole is a mere subterfuge, or that Israel's sufferings conduce to the happiness of the nations. "They are become the martyrs of the acknowledgment of the ONE, and by their exaltation the nations will be directed with the strength of conviction to the sole and only God. This view of the prophet is truly sublime.... The doubts, therefore, which the Jewish commentators (Redak and Abarbanel) have raised here, that this procedure would be opposed to the justice of God, which must allow every one to bear the punishment of what he has himself committed, can only be applied to individuals, while the prophet had in view the whole development of mankind." Now the fact is admitted, even by the Rabbis who brought in the idea, that the ancient Jews referred the suffering but righteous Servant of the passage to the Messiah, and this is the admission not of some but of the elders with one mouth. However, not any such confessions are cited as authorities in the least, but scripture only. Here all is light. The "we" of this section, as elsewhere is unquestionably Jewish, not Gentile; as unquestionably distinct from the One Whose position and relation to God they confess had been so fatally misconceived. To understand the "we" of the Gentiles is an impossibility; to take both "we" and "he" as Israel, or the prophetic body, is too absurd and self-contradictory. "He" is a real individual Who suffers from and for Israel, instead of being the same.

Then also, to notice another plea, the interchange of tenses is no more difficult here than elsewhere. It is habitual with the prophets, and with Isaiah no less than others. That Israel was viewed as the servant is true; and Israel failed as such. Then comes Messiah the Servant, Who glorifies God, yet suffers and dies, but, as here we learn, it was for Israel, though not for Israel only; and then Israel, sifted and repentant and believing in Him, are viewed in consequence as servants for His glory by-and by. Such is the scope of these later chapters of Isaiah.

But the idea of Israel being here meant by the suffering One is as false morally as exegetically. For it supposes that the Gentiles will yet acknowledge that Israel had to bear this hard fate solely for their redemption out of their sinful state (vv. 4-6); so that Israel through the patience which they exhibit notwithstanding all their sufferings, since they never departed from the only God, shall be placed on a yet higher eminence (vv. 7-9). Assuredly the Gentiles will yet confess their sins, not only their sins against God, but their cruel persecution and jealousy and envy of Israel. Assuredly they will yet trust with the real faith that is to be, but alas! is not yet, Israel's. But a more flagrant mistake was never made than that Israel can take the ground of unswerving righteousness like the suffering Messiah here. Take alone the very first chapter of Isaiah: we see there Israel suffering; but is it for righteousness? Is it not for their own appalling sins? And if it be said that such they were of old but that all is changed when we arrive at a later day such as in Isaiah 53, I answer let them see their divinely-painted portrait in its neighbourhood, in Isa. 57-59, and let them say where is the conscience which can so trifle with the word of God and the facts of their own hearts and ways.

No; reading Isa. 53 we find ourselves in the midst of sacrificial imagery, of atonement for sin, of intercession for sinners; and these sins are pre-eminently Israel's, as will be the blessedness. We heartily admit this last, and rejoice and give God thanks for the grace He will yet extend to His ancient people. But they by grace will justly prove its genuineness by the confession of their own sins, above all against their own Messiah, not in self-righteousness pretending to have been a suffering Messiah themselves for the Gentiles. There is indeed vicarious suffering here, a holy substitute atoning for the

guilty before God; but it is Messiah for Israel expressly, though not exclusively. For His death embraces every creature to be delivered from evil; and from first to last, not even the most distant hint of Israel suffering for the Gentiles. Jews suffered from them far, far too much; but they will never suffer for them. Jesus, the only spotless Lamb of God, Immanuel, died for that nation, for Israel, though — thanks be to God — for us also (John 11: 51, 52). Worthily therefore is He now exalted, and we are in living union with Him Who sits on the throne of God. This however is not the point here, but His exaltation over the earth and the nations when Israel come to own their sins in the recognition of their suffering but then glorified Messiah. Thus it falls in with the general bearing of Old Testament prophecy, though it contains also the most luminous testimony to His humiliation and atoning work.

The language of the last verse presents no real difficulty save to those who read the first clause in connection with the gospel; whereas it looks on to the day of the world-kingdom of the Lord and of His Christ, when He will come forth before every eye as the Lord of lords and King of kings, sharing with others the fruits of His victory. What gave occasion to the mistake is that the ground laid in the later clauses is His humiliation, atoning death, and intercession. This beyond doubt is the basis and the boast of Christianity. Only it is an inexcusable error to confine it to us who are now called from Gentiles as well as from Jews. The day hastens when the fullness shall have come in; and so Israel shall be saved. Then will this vision (Isa. 52: 13 — Isa. 53: 12) be fulfilled, and not as a whole till then.

Isaiah 54

How beautifully seasonable is the voice of the Spirit calling on Jerusalem to sing after His own clear and full prediction of Messiah rejected of Israel and bruised of Jehovah in atonement! Indeed the last section of the prophecy gave us a most striking and instructive rehearsal or dialogue between God and His people about Messiah, His sufferings, and the glories that should follow. Fitly therefore follows the invitation to her who had sorrowed so long and so justly now to rejoice because of her new blessing in His grace.

"Exult, thou barren, [that] didst not bear; break forth into singing, and shout aloud, thou [that] didst not travail with child: for more [are] the children of the desolate than the children of the married wife, saith Jehovah" (v. 1). Never ought it to have been a question who is meant. The reference undoubtedly is to the heavenly and not to the earthly Jerusalem. As usual however, the commentators have confused what is plain, and agreed in scarce anything but departure from the true sense and aim. The occasion of stumbling they have in general found, partly by their habit of excluding the Jews from the prophets and so judaizing the Christians (limiting themselves to the past and present without taking in the Suture), partly from a misunderstanding of Gal. 4: 27 through mixing it up with the "allegory" of Sarah and Hagar. But who does not see that the citation of the prophet connects itself rather with Jerusalem which is above, in contrast with Jerusalem which then was? When the prophecy is fulfilled in the millennial day, God will count those who now believe to be Jerusalem's children, as well as the race to come in that day. Doubly thus it will be verified that more are the children of the desolate than the children of the married wife. For what fruit of the most flourishing times, say under David or Solomon, could compare with the gathering-in of the Christian saints since the Jews lost their place as the recognised witness and wife of Jehovah; or, again, with the vast progeny which Jehovah will give her after her long desolation, when His reign shall be displayed over the earth? (Consult Isa. 49: 13-23; Isa. 60: 8, 20-22).

It is important to see, on the one hand, that though it is according to scripture to regard Christians mystically as the children of desolate Jerusalem far outnumbering those of her married estate of old, the

church, on the other hand, is not yet presented by God's word as being in the relationship of the wife, either desolate or married. The marriage is future and on high. The bride, the Lamb's wife, will not have made herself ready till she has been caught up to heaven glorified, and the harlot Babylon, the anti church, has been judged of Jehovah God. The real position of the church meanwhile is that of one espoused; her responsibility is to keep herself as a chaste virgin for Christ. The marriage will be in heaven, just before the Lord and His glorified saints appear for the destruction of the Antichrist and all his allies. (Compare Rev. 19)

On the other hand, it is undeniable that the Jews, or Zion if you will, had the place of nearness to Jehovah which is represented under the figure of the marriage-tie, that she had been faithless and played the whore with many lovers (even the idols of the Gentiles), and that in consequence she was divorced, becoming a widow and desolate under the righteous dealing of God. Adultery was her sin, rather than fornication. No one in the least familiar with the prophets can have failed to notice this and more said of Israel. Then it was she became barren and did not bear. Praise is still silent for God in Zion; but the vow shall yet be performed to Him (Ps. 65: 1); and the barren one shall sing and be no more barren but bear, astonished to find during those days of literal barrenness such an abundant offspring in the saints glorified on high, whom grace has been the while actively bringing in.

Nor is this all. "Enlarge the place of thy tent, and let them stretch forth the curtains of thy 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 possess nations, and make desolate cities to be inhabited" (vv. 2, 3). The land, the earth, must be filled with a suited seed; for Jehovah shall be king over all the earth; in that day shall there be one Jehovah and His name one. Yea, Jehovah deigns to be the husband of Zion, not now a mere testimony and display of responsibility of man under law, but in the efficacy of grace when glorying is no more in the flesh but in Jehovah. "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] thy husband: Jehovah of hosts [is] His name, and thy Redeemer the Holy One of Israel; the God of the whole earth shall he be called. For Jehovah hath called thee as a woman forsaken and grieved in spirit, and a wife of youth, when rejected, saith thy God" (vv. 4 6).

Thus, and thus only, our chapter flows in its own proper channel: the exclusion of Israel by-and-by and the appropriation of it to the church as its intended scope produce nothing but violence and confusion by that interpretation. It is not true that God has forsaken the church even for a small moment, nor that in a little wrath He hides His face for an instant from the Christian: such and so great is the efficacy of redemption. Of the Jew as such it is precisely the present fact: as surely will He yet gather in His mercy His ancient people for ever. "For a small moment have I forsaken thee; but with great mercies will I gather thee. In overflowing wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment; but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith Jehovah thy Redeemer. For this [is as] the waters of Noah unto me; since I have sworn that the waters of Noah should no more go over the earth, so have I sworn that I will no more 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 my covenant of peace be removed, saith Jehovah that hath mercy on thee" (vv. 7-10).

No doubt the application to the Maccabean epoch falls incomparably short of the terms of blessing, and such views cast no small slight on the character of the word of God. But this is the fault, not of scripture, but of its misreaders. A people are in question who, having once stood in full favour and near relationship to Jehovah, forfeited it for a season, and finally are restored more than ever and for ever. There is but one such people: impossible that God should fail to have mercy on Israel. Guilty

Christendom is doomed to destruction, and has no promise of restoration. Strong is the Lord God Who is to judge the Babylon that is now, worse and guiltier far than her of old (Rev. 17 - 18).

"O afflicted, tossed with tempest, not comforted! behold I will set thy stones in antimony, and lay thy foundations with sapphires. And I will make thy pinnacles of rubies, and thy gates of carbuncles, and all thy border of pleasant stones. And all thy children [shall be] taught of Jehovah; 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 gathereth together against thee shall fall because of thee. 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 prepared against thee shall prosper; and every tongue [that] riseth against thee in judgement thou shalt condemn. This [is] the heritage of the servants of Jehovah, and their righteousness [is] of me, saith Jehovah" (vv. 11-17). Thus the prophecy is not only of everlasting mercy reinstating the ancient people, but along with it are images of beauty and glory with which Jehovah will adorn them. Truth will be theirs, for they all shall be taught of Jehovah; peace too, great peace, will be enjoyed; and, established in righteousness, they shall be far from oppression and fear, though not from hostile intention (as we know from Ezek. 38 - 39 at the beginning of the millennium, and from Rev. 20: 7-9 at its end). But Israel will have hoped in Jehovah, and not in vain: for with Jehovah is mercy, and with Him plenteous redemption.

See on the two sides the frightful perversion to which all are exposed who allegorize the prophecies, as is the popular fashion of so-called high church and low church and no church; for it is hard to say who is most guilty in this path, ruinous to all faith and practice characteristic of Christianity. "To take an example" (said the late Matthew Arnold) "which will come home to all Protestants, Dr. Newman, in one of those charming Essays which he has of late rescued for us, quotes from the 54th chapter of Isaiah the passage beginning, *I will lay thy stones with fair colours and thy foundations with sapphires*, as a prophecy and authorisation of the sumptuosities of the Church of Rome. This is evidently to use the passage in the way of application. Protestants will say that it is a wrong use of it; but to Dr. Newman their similar use of passages about the beast, and the scarlet woman, and Antichrist, will seem equally wrong. But as to the historical substratum, the primary sense of the passage which Dr. Newman quotes, what dissension can there be? Who can deny that in the first instance, however we may apply them afterwards, and whether this after-application be right or wrong, the prophet's words apply to the restored Zion?"

Now, without profitless wrangling on primary or secondary application, it is certain to faith that the Romanists have corrupted God's word to justify the lusts, vanities, and pomps claimed as her due by the great harlot of Rome, through the same insubjection to scripture which leads others at the opposite pole to make the best of both worlds; whose judgement is alike just. For they are verily inexcusable. The Christian, the church, is called to set the mind on things above, not on things on the earth, where we are called to walk by faith, not by sight, and to suffer both for righteousness' sake and for Christ's, in view of the heavenly glory into which He is gone before, while we await His coming to enjoy it with Him. For Israel it is altogether different. When brought into known relationship with Him, it is in earthly honour and glory; and nothing in nature will be too precious for the adornment of Zion. Beyond doubt they too will be born anew; but the days of the kingdom displayed in power (no longer in patience during the prevalence of evil) account for the radical and evident difference. Then will be the days of restored Zion, as much denied by the rationalist as by the superstitious who both look to man and present things. And thus is God's word made of none effect through man's traditions.

Without faith it is impossible to please God; and there is no real faith where God's great object of

faith, the Lord Jesus does not arrest, command, and satisfy the heart. We speak now of those to whom He has been announced by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven, rather than of the saints who waited for redemption before His first advent. We must not be deceived by or about such as find an entrancing interest, literary or even moral, in the scriptures, without faith in Christ or the gospel. For this may be in the vilest of mankind where intellectual and aesthetic force is strong. Take another instance, to which we are referred in the same page of Mr. Arnold. "Admirably true are these words of Goethe, so constant a reader of the Bible that his free-thinking friends reproach him for wasting his time over it: 'I am convinced that the Bible becomes even more beautiful the more one understands it; that is, the more one gets insight to see that every word which we take generally and make special application of to our own wants, has had, in connection with certain circumstances, with certain relations of time and place, a particular, directly individual, reference of its own.'" Sadly true in its measure, say we; for God dealing with the soul, and hence with the life, by the truth in Christ, and meeting the sin-convicted with the fullness of His grace, was distasteful yea, despised and hated. He, who was never weary of talking about "the good of evil" (a sentiment worthy of Mephistopheles) had God in none of his thoughts, and was as far as possible from the grace and truth which came by Jesus Christ.

Isaiah 55

Our chapter does not, after these remarks, call for many words. Its connection with what goes before is plain and makes its own bearing evident. The call is to Israel, but in such largeness of language as to warrant an aspect to the Gentiles. "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 weigh money for [that which is] not bread? and your labour for [that which] satisfieth not? Harken 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, the sure mercies of David. Behold, I have given him [for] a witness to the peoples, a prince and commander to the peoples" (vv. 1-4). Here plainly some outstanding One is referred to, as to Whom no believer need hesitate. It is the Lord Jesus in royal relation to Israel (v. 3), and withal a witness and commander to the peoples of the earth (v. 4).

The thoughtful mind — at least if taught of God — will not overlook the divine application of verse 3 to the resurrection of our Lord, contra-distinguished from the use of Psalm 2: 7, in Acts 13: 33, 34. It had been indeed implied in Isa. 53: 10, as in Ps. 16: 10, 11; Ps. 21: 4. His resurrection is both the security for the accomplishment of what was promised to Israel, and the occasion for the outflow of the grace which calls and shall yet call Gentiles into a share of God's blessing, and of the knowledge of Himself. Before death and resurrection, though He could never deny His deeper glory or His grace to the faith that saw either, He was not sent save to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

Crucified and risen, Christ is the attractive object for all indiscriminately. And the spirit of this wide grace breathes fragrantly through this chapter. "Behold, thou shalt call a nation thou knowest not, and a nation [that] knew not thee shall run unto thee, because of Jehovah thy God and the Holy One of Israel; for he hath glorified thee. Seek ye Jehovah 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 Jehovah, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon. For my thoughts [are] not your thoughts, neither [are] your ways my ways, saith Jehovah. For [as] the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts. For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater; so

shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth; it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall accomplish that for which I sent it. For ye shall go out with joy, and be led forth with peace: the mountains and the hills shall break forth before you into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap [their] hands. Instead of the thorn shall come up the cypress, and instead of the nettle shall come up the myrtle; and it shall be to Jehovah for a name, for an everlasting sign [that] shall not be cut off" (vv. 5-13).

Certainly the language rises into bright figures, expressive of a joy and blessing incomparably beyond human experience since sin came into the world, and with all the firmness given by Christ's coming to blot out sins by His blood, to establish everlasting righteousness, and to display the mercy and the glory of God here below. But can anything be more unreasonable, to say nothing of the ingratitude of unbelief, than to misuse such modes of expression to get rid of the truth and reduce the living word to inanity? Apply the grace of the chapter as much as can be done truly to the need and comfort of souls now by the gospel; there still remains the clear intimation of "the times of refreshing" reserved for Him Who died and rose, when He comes from heaven to reign over the earth. Doubtless Christ is exalted to the highest in heaven; He sits on the Father's throne; but He is coming to sit on His own throne, and will make His enemies His footstool. This He is not doing, but sitting on high till that moment be arrived. Now He is converting souls, as well as baptising believers into one body by the Spirit. Then He will break the nations with a rod of iron, and dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel. How monstrous to pervert such words to the work of the gospel! It is that execution of divine judgement which inaugurates the Lord's taking His own throne. He is now seated on His Father's throne. When He reigns over the earth, we shall reign with Him, instead of suffering with Him, as we are called to do now.

Even to apply, yet more to restrict, such glowing language and such glorious hopes for Israel, the peoples, and the earth, to the restoration from the Babylonish exile, must always have been an extreme assumption, and it evidently tends to bring on scripture the charge of exaggeration. Yet more than ever in our day men claiming to be critics would reduce it to a promise that the homeward journey of the exiles should be pleasant and comfortable! Truly faith is not the portion of all, least of all, one might sorrowfully say, of critics. It is also flagrant ignorance of the Book they essay to interpret, and of its structure; for we have done with Babylon since Isa. 48 and Isa. 49 has begun the new theme of the rejected but glorified Messiah and the everlasting consequences. This fact alone dissipates all such delusions.

Isaiah 56

The next two chapters carry on the same line of truth we have seen since the rejection and atoning death of Christ came distinctly into view, and pursue the consequences of that infinite fact. As far as a natural division goes, one might be disposed to close the first subject treated in them with Isa. 56: 8, and then to take from verse 9 to the end of Isa. 57 as completing not the second only but the entire section, which began with Isa. 49. According to this we should have here, first, the ways of Jehovah founded on the Messiah's death for sin in respect of the godly, even outside Israel; and, secondly, His ways, when He was displeased with the ungodly, not merely outside but in the midst of Israel. For they are not all Israel who are of Israel.

Some have drawn from the Lord's citation of a clause of this section, that He intimates its then approaching accomplishment in the Christian church. Now it is not denied that as we have broad moral principles of grace on God's part in Isaiah 55, so too in its flowing out to the Gentiles in Isaiah 56,

which are now realised in the gospel and the church, even more fully than anything here developed. But we ought not to overlook the fact that neither in Matthew nor in Luke is the Lord represented as quoting the reference to all the nations: an omission the more notable inasmuch as in both these Gospels, above all others though in each for a special reason, we have more respecting the change of dispensation then at hand, and the call of grace going out to the Gentiles than anywhere else. One cannot but gather thence, that, though in fact, as the full citation in Mark shows, the Lord did quote the words of our prophet without abridgement, yet this marked exclusion of "all nations" in the two Gospels which most insist on the change from Israel to the Gentiles, is meant to intimate that no such application was then in His mind, but simply the gross perversion of Jehovah's house of prayer into a den of robbers before His eyes, even as Jeremiah reproached the Jews of his day. There is nothing therefore, if this be correct, to turn aside the fulfilment of this blessed fruit of the cross from the future, however large the terms may be, and this not without purpose on God's part.

The chapter then opens not with a call to sinners, as such, to repent and believe the gospel; but to the people of God to keep judgement and do justice, though the reason assigned is in no way the law given by Moses, but "My salvation is near to come, and My righteousness to be revealed." When the apostle unfolds the glad tidings, he says that God's righteousness is being revealed in the gospel; that it is manifested apart from law. Clearly this goes farther. Salvation is come, as we find in Eph. 2: 8. "For by grace are ye saved through faith"; though, in view of our resurrection and glory, we as truly say that it is nearer than when we believed. For we through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith (Gal. 5: 5). The righteousness is established, and we are justified in virtue of this already; but we await through the Spirit the hope, the glorious issue, proper to that righteousness, when even in the body we shall be conformed to the image of God's Son: "whom He justified, them He also glorified." But this is the language of the New Testament apostle, not of our Old Testament prophet, who is occupied with the earthly people and their hopes, but in God-given terms of such comprehensiveness as to justify the largest ways of grace.

"Thus saith Jehovah, Keep ye judgement and do righteousness: for my salvation [is] near to come, and my righteousness to be revealed. Blessed [is] weak man [that] doeth this, and the son of man [that] holdeth fast by it; that keepeth the sabbath from profaning it, and keepeth his hand from doing any evil" (vv. 1, 2). The following verse (3) is even more express: the most distant, "the son of the stranger," and the most desperate, "the eunuch," were not beyond the reach of God's merciful and mighty blessing. And this is repeated in the most forcible language as to both classes in the subsequent verses, concluding with the expression of Jehovah's mind to be known and read of all men, that His "house should be called a house of prayer for all peoples." "Neither let the son of the stranger that hath joined himself to Jehovah speak, saying Jehovah hath entirely separated me from his people; nor let the eunuch say, Behold, I [am] a dry tree. For thus saith Jehovah, Unto the eunuchs that keep my sabbaths, and choose [the things] that please me, and hold fast by my covenant, unto them will I give in my house and within my walls a memorial and a name better than of sons and of daughters; I will give them an everlasting name, that shall not be cut off. Also the sons of the stranger that join themselves to Jehovah, to minister unto him and to love the name of Jehovah, to be his servants, every one that keepeth the sabbath from profaning it, and holdeth fast by my covenant — even them will I bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer; their burnt offerings and their sacrifices [shall be] accepted upon my altar: for my house shall be called a house of prayer for all the peoples. The Lord Jehovah who gathereth the outcasts of Israel saith, Yet will I gather [others] to him, with those of his that are gathered" (vv. 3-8).

The second part (from Isa. 56: 9 to Isa. 57: 21) stands out in startling contrast at first sight; but it

flows, without doubt, from the same principle as the first. The grace which goes forth ever so actively to the most miserable is of all things the most intolerant of evil; and its dealing is ever most delicate and jealous with those that are near enough to be so much the more responsible to reflect Jehovah brightly. "All ye beasts of the field, come to devour, all ye beasts in the forest. His watchmen [are] blind, they are all without knowledge; they [are] all dumb dogs, they cannot bark, dreaming, lying down, loving to slumber. Yea, the dogs [are] greedy, they can never have enough; and these [are] shepherds [that] cannot understand: they have all turned to their own way, each one to his gain, from every quarter. Come ye, [say they,] I will fetch wine, and we will fill ourselves with strong drink; and to-morrow shall be as this day, [a day] great beyond measure" (vv. 9-12).

The Gentile oppressors are first invited to lay waste (v. 9). Those who ought to have watched and tended the beautiful flock of Jehovah not only slept, but they awoke to their own greed of gain and love of present ease, as indifferent about God as about His people (vv. 10-12). It is a vivid picture of that living to self and the things that are seen, which at a later date characterised the Sadducees who denied not only the resurrection but angel or spirit. The origin of their name is of small moment, their materialism was ruinous. If, as is said they derived their title from pretension to righteousness, or even claimed to be a sacerdotal aristocracy from the eminent priest who in early days superseded Abiathar, either origin matters little. High-sounding representations among the Jews, as elsewhere, are commonly put forward to cover ungodliness and sensualism. And this frightfully evil state is here declared to have been conspicuous among the watchmen and shepherds of the chosen people. Such corruption laid the people and their leaders open, as we shall see in the chapter that follows, to yet worse, beneath which depth is none lower, idolatry leading the way.

Isaiah 57

On the other hand the Shepherd of Israel neither slumbered nor slept, and if the righteous perished without a soul's laying it to heart, it was but His hand after all taking the righteous away from the evil to come.

The growing apostasy of Judah made it no longer a desirable thing to live long on the earth, though normally it was a special promise for those obedient to the law. Now says the prophet, "The righteous perisheth, and no man layeth [it] to heart; and merciful (or, godly) men [are] taken away, none considering that the righteous is taken away from before the evil. He entereth into peace: they rest in their beds, [each] that hath walked [in] his uprightness" (vv. 1, 2).

Next, the prophet under various figures of uncleanness arraigns the idolatrous Jews. "But draw near hither, ye sons of the sorceress, the seed of the adulterer and the whore. Against whom do ye sport yourselves? Against whom make ye a wide mouth, [and] draw out the tongue? [Are] ye not children of transgression, a seed of falsehood, inflaming yourselves among the oaks (or, with idols) under every green tree; slaying the children in the valleys under the clefts of the rocks? Among the smooth [stones] of the valley [is] thy portion; they, they [are] thy lot: even to them hast thou poured a drink-offering, thou hast offered an oblation. Shall I be appeased for these things? Upon a high and lofty mountain hast thou set thy bed: thither also wentest thou up to offer sacrifice. And behind the doors and the posts hast thou set up thy memorial: for thou hast uncovered [thyself] apart from me, and art gone up; thou hast enlarged thy bed, and made thee [a covenant] with them; thou lovedst their bed, thou sawest their nakedness. And thou wentest to the king with ointment, and didst increase thy perfumes, and didst send thine ambassadors far off, and didst debase [thyself] unto Sheol" (vv. 3-9).

The sketch is most energetic, and the general scope is plain. The only allusion which strikes one

as calling for particular notice is found in verse 9, "And thou wentest to the king with ointment." This will be the climax of Israel's heartless desertion of Jehovah, and rejection of the Messiah. They received not Him Who came in His Father's name; they will receive another who is to come in his own name. The spirit of this has been often verified, doubtless; but it awaits its full final signature in the Antichrist of the last days. He is "the king," as abruptly (but so much the more strikingly) brought in here as he is in Dan. 11: 36-40. Unbelief as blindly acquiesces in the false and evil, as it ignores the truth and hates righteousness and grace. "The king" is not "the woman," "the great whore," but with those that work the destruction of Babylon, though only the more audaciously opposed to God and the Lamb. The Jew will play a solemn part during this last struggle in the end of the age. "The king" will be in Judah and Jerusalem, the land and city destined for the Messiah; the centre of the Babylonish system is the great city of the west, Rome: but God will destroy the one, and the Lamb vanquish the other. The Beast and the false prophet, or "the king," perish together.

As the Jews are thus shown persevering in wickedness and going from bad to worse, only destruction awaits them he alone should inherit the land who put his trust in Jehovah; for a remnant there ever is. "Thou wast wearied with the length of thy way; thou saidst not, There is no hope. Thou didst find a quickening of thy strength; therefore thou wast not faint. And of whom hast thou been afraid and in fear, that thou hast lied and not remembered me, nor laid [it] to thy heart? Have not I held my peace even of long time, and thou fearest me not? I will declare thy righteousness; and as for thy works, they shall not profit thee. When thou criest, let them whom thou hast gathered deliver thee; but the wind shall take them, a breath shall carry [them] all away: but he that putteth his trust in me shall possess the land, and shall inherit my holy mountain" (vv. 10-13).

Thus in the midst of this harrowing description of coming wickedness and woe Jehovah contrasts, with the hopeless destruction of the apostate, him that trusts in Himself as destined to possess the land (so long the prey of one usurping stranger after another) and to inherit His holy mountain (even to this day the boasted spoil of the Gentile infidel). "And it shall be said, Cast up, cast up, prepare the way, take up the stumbling-block out of the way of my people. 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. For the iniquity of his covetousness was I wroth, and smote him: I hid me, and was wroth, and he went on frowardly in the way of his heart. I have seen his ways and will heal him; and I will lead him, and will restore comforts to him and to those of his that mourn. I create the fruit of the lips: peace, peace, to [him that is] afar off and to [him that is] near, saith Jehovah, and I will heal him. But the wicked [are] like the troubled sea, which cannot rest, and whose waters cast up mire and dirt. There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked" (vv. 14-21).

"Except those days should be shortened, no flesh should be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened" (Matt. 24: 22). Yea, Jehovah will heal, lead, and comfort. He creates thankful praise. Peace is His word, peace to him that is far off and to him that is near; but as for the wicked, like the troubled sea that casts up mire and dirt, "There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked." Let the Jew take heed. Certainly the wicked of that people shall not escape. Of all nations, none then so favoured, and therefore were they beyond all responsible; and as they failed to the uttermost, who so guilty? Christendom, favoured much more than the Jew, then, is of all conditions of mankind far the most guilty. Before its eyes Jesus Christ is openly set forth crucified. Yet has it fallen from grace, and gone under law, and turned back again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto they desire once more to be in bondage. Nay, the spirit of the apostasy sets in rapidly, and antichrists multiply far and

wide. "There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked." But the Lord is at hand. Behold, the Judge standeth before the doors.

Let it be observed that it was "saith Jehovah" as against idols. Now that the deeper evil of rejecting God in Christ is discussed, the word is "saith my God." Fancied Elohist or Jehovistic authors have nothing to do with it here or anywhere else. It depends on the nature of what is conveyed by the same writer. This principle of underlying purpose superficial and unbelieving readers failed to see, and betook themselves to the hypothesis of distinct authorship, partly out of their own lack of intelligence, and partly to unsettle and lower the scriptures. Familiar as we are with the rationalistic craze which denies to Isaiah the deep, lofty, and tender closing volume of his prophecy (Isa. 40-66), it would be hard to find a respectable name bold enough to demand an author for Isa. 57 different from him who wrote Isa. 48. In truth the hypothesis is everywhere a baseless dream, mischievous to a high degree, and shutting out the divine light afforded by an intelligent discrimination of those instructive names.

SECTION 7: ISAIAH 58 TO 66

Isaiah 58

To Isa. 58 and Isa. 59 one might add Isa. 60 as completing the series. This is the opening of the last section of the prophecy (chaps. 58 - 66). The Spirit had closed both His counts against God's ancient people, their idolatry, and their rejection of the Messiah, with the consequences in the certainty of judgement, and not peace, for the wicked on either side. We have now a sequel or appendix, consisting of moral argument and appeal to the people, with a positive revelation of Jehovah's intervention and their establishment in glory and blessing. For no prophecy of scripture is of isolated interpretation; each links itself with the kingdom of Jehovah in the last days, however it may apply to lesser and passing circumstances in the prophet's days, or in the times that succeeded. Prophetic scripture does not interpret itself apart from that day, but forms a united system. Though it may be verified in particulars now and then, here or there, it looks onward to the final scenes, and connects what was wrought in the past with the state of things which will necessitate Jehovah's appearance on the scene to introduce His own day. The state of the Jews at the time called for this unveiling of their sins. "Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and declare unto my people their transgression, and to the house of Jacob their sins. Yet they seek me daily, and delight to know my ways, as a nation that doeth righteousness, and forsook not the ordinance of their God; they ask of me righteous ordinances, they delight to draw near unto God. Wherefore have we fasted, [say they,] and thou seest not? [wherefore] have we afflicted our soul, and thou takest no knowledge? Behold, in the day of your fast ye find [your own] pleasure, and exact all your labours" (vv. 1-3). It is the spirit of Pharisaism.

The notion of some* that Protestantism is in question is as unfounded as the unbelief of an older day which turned aside the prophecy from Israel because no part of the blessing has as yet been accomplished in them as a nation. The quotation from this prophecy (Isa. 59: 20), as employed by the apostle in Romans 11: 26, appears clearly to refute both, by giving as the divine key the future salvation of that Israel which is now the most blinded and has stumbled at the Stumbling-stone. The time too is rendered certain; it is unquestionably not present any more than past, but future. For, as the Spirit there interprets the prophecy, we are not to look for its fulfilment in the salvation of all Israel (Isa. 59: 20) till after the fullness of the Gentiles is come in; whereas this is only going on now and therefore is not complete. Hence the moment is not arrived even for commencing to apply to Israel. But

faith can profit by it at any time.

*{Vitringa, Horsley and Fry in modern times.}

Jehovah then deals with the exceeding hypocrisy of this people in their holy things. It was not that they failed to approach His temple, not only professing delight in His ordinances, but fasting and afflicting their souls. In vain! "Behold, in the day of your fast ye find pleasure and exact all your labours. Behold, ye fast for strife and debate, and to smite with the fist of wickedness; ye fast not [this] day to cause your voice to be heard on high" (vv. 3, 4). Nothing of the kind could be acceptable to Jehovah, Who will have truth in the inward parts, with things fair and good in the sight of all men. Hollow and sterile religiousness is abominable in His eyes; and compels Him to judge themselves if He cannot sanction their sin. Hence the expostulation in vers. 5-7. "Is such the fast that I have chosen? the day for a man to afflict his soul — that he should bow down his head as a rush, and spread sackcloth and ashes [under him]? wilt thou call this a fast, and an acceptable day to Jehovah? [Is] not this the fast that I have chosen: to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the thongs of the yoke, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke? [Is it] not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor wanderers to thy house? when thou seest the naked, that thou cover him; and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh?" (vv. 5-7).

Were there a response to His own goodness, in the practice of mercy which became the people of Jehovah to the oppressed and destitute, how would He not bless them! Were they to heed the sabbath, calling it a delight, and honouring Jehovah, how should they not delight themselves in Him, riding in the high places of the earth, and fed with the heritage of their father Jacob! "Then shall thy light break forth as the morning, and thy healing shall spring forth speedily; and thy righteousness shall go before thee, the glory of Jehovah shall be thy rearward. Then shalt thou call, and Jehovah shall answer; thou shalt cry, and he shall say, Here I [am]. If thou take away from the midst of thee the yoke, the putting forth of the finger, and the speaking vanity; and [if] thou proffer thy soul to the hungry, and satisfy the afflicted soul, then shall thy light rise in darkness, and thine obscurity [be] as the noonday: and Jehovah will guide thee continually, and satisfy thy soul in drought, and make strong thy bones; and thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters deceive not. And [they that shall be] of thee shall build the old waste places: thou shalt raise up the foundations of many generations; and thou shalt be called Repairer of the breach, Restorer of paths of habitation. If thou turn back thy foot from the sabbath, [from] doing thy pleasure on my holy day, and call the sabbath a delight, the holy [day] of Jehovah, honourable; and thou honour him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking [idle] words, then shalt thou delight thyself in Jehovah; and I will make thee to ride upon the high places of the earth; and I will feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father: for the mouth of Jehovah hath spoken" (vv. 8-14).

Isaiah 59

"Behold, Jehovah's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; nor his ear heavy that it cannot hear; but your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid [his] face from you, that he doth not hear" (vv. 1, 2). And what a picture follows in verses 3-15! "For your hands are defiled with blood, and your fingers with iniquity; your lips are speaking lies, your tongue muttereth wickedness. None sueth in righteousness, none pleadeth in truthfulness. They trust in vanity, and speak falsehood; they conceive mischief, and bring forth iniquity. They hatch serpents' eggs, and weave the spider's web: he that eateth of their eggs dieth, and that which is crushed breaketh out into a viper. Their webs shall not become garments, neither shall they cover themselves with their works;

their works [are] works of iniquity, and the act of violence [is] in their hands. Their feet run to evil, and they make haste to shed innocent blood; their thoughts [are] thoughts of iniquity; desolation and destruction [are] in their paths. The way of peace they know not; and there is no judgement in their goings: they have made them crooked paths; whosoever goeth therein knoweth not peace. Therefore is judgement far from us, neither doth righteousness overtake us: we look for light, but behold darkness; for brightness, [but] we walk in obscurity. We grope for the wall like the blind, yea, we grope as having no eyes: we stumble at noonday as in the twilight; among the flourishing we [are] as dead [men]. We roar all like bears, and mourn sore like doves: we look for judgement, and there is none; for salvation, [but] it is far off from us. For our transgressions are multiplied before thee, and our sins testify against us; for our transgressions [are] with us, and our iniquities, we know them: in transgressing and lying against Jehovah, and turning away from following our God, speaking oppression and revolt, conceiving and uttering from the heart words of falsehood. And judgement is turned away backward, and righteousness standeth afar off: for truth is fallen in the street, and uprightness cannot enter. And truth is lacking; and he [that] departeth from evil maketh himself a prey. And Jehovah saw, and it displeased him that there was no judgement." Hands and fingers, lips and tongues, all polluted and perverse; justice not called for, truth unpleaded; vanities and lies, mischief and iniquities; subtlety of evil and ever-increasing virulence; active but vain corruption and violence. What sanguinary feet! what iniquitous thoughts! What wasting and destruction in the crooked paths where peace is unknown! Hence, without judgement, they walk in darkness, grope like the blind, and are (? in desolate places) as dead men, whether raging as bears or mourning as doves. Salvation is far off, because of multiplied transgressions and departure from God, with truth fallen in the street, and equity unable to enter, and the godly a prey, so that Jehovah held it evil in His sight that there was no judgement. The Spirit guides into confession and hides nothing.

But such utter moral chaos, hopeless for man, was the call for Jehovah's intervention. "And he saw that there was no man, and wondered that there was no intercessor; and his arm brought salvation unto him; and his righteousness, it sustained him. And he put on righteousness as a breastplate, and a helmet of salvation upon his head; and he put on garments of vengeance [for] clothing, and was clad with zeal as a cloak. According to deeds, accordingly he will repay: fury to his adversaries, recompense to his enemies; to the islands he will repay recompense" (vv. 16-18). It is the picture of the mighty intervention of God for His people in the last days, though not at all resembling what He will do for the heavenly saints. These He will remove from the scene of their pilgrimage to heaven, His earthly people He will deliver from their enemies by judgement in that day. Thereby He will teach the nations wisdom, or at least the beginning of it in His fear. "And they shall fear the name of Jehovah from the west, and his glory from the rising of the sun. When the adversary shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of Jehovah shall lift up a standard against him" (v. 19). It is not by the gospel, but by the execution of judgement on the Gentiles. Can any conclusion be plainer? Our translation to heaven is purely of grace.

It is not, on the one hand, a mere outward interference, but the power of the Spirit will accompany it. On the other hand, here is not the action of the Spirit in the absence of the Lord, as now in Christianity. "And the Redeemer will come to Zion, and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob, saith Jehovah" (v. 20). The apostle (Rom. 11: 26) cites it* as His coming out of Zion. Doubtless both are true and each appropriate in its place. The Redeemer must come to that mountain of royalty in the Holy Land in order to come out thence; and He will come to the righteous remnant, the Israel of God, even to such as turn from transgression in Jacob, as He will also turn away ungodliness from Jacob. There will be conversion of heart before Jehovah appears in the extremity of their distress and to the destruction of their foes; but that appearing will deepen all their feelings toward Himself and bring them into peace and blessing fully and for ever. "And as for me, this [is] my covenant with them, saith

Jehovah, 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 Jehovah, from henceforth and for ever" (v. 21).

*{In the LXX it is different again from both the Hebrew and the apostle, and runs thus: And the deliverer will come on account of Zion. This also appears to be correct enough. The Holy Spirit in modifying the words by the apostle, seems to have had in view Ps. 14: 7; Ps. 53: 6, so that it is absolutely true. Comp Ps. 110: 2.}

Now when the same apostle was opening out to the saints in Rome the gospel of God, he cites weighty and withering words from the early verses of our chapter to convict of sin and ruin, and thus to prove the abject need of grace (Rom. 3: 15-17, 19, 20). But this he follows up with God's justifying freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, Whom God set forth as a mercy-seat through faith in His blood. This is truly good news to the sinner, Jew or Gentile. But the prophet follows up his unveiling of the sins of the people with the intervention of Jehovah in garments of vengeance, rendering fury to His adversaries, recompense to His enemies. This is not what He is doing now, nor is it in any way the gospel of grace. It is His coming in the displayed kingdom. Then indeed will the Redeemer come to Zion, as He will identify Himself with His people Israel; and He will come out of Zion, as manifestly espousing their cause, to tread down their foes.

The Epistle to the Galatians gives no countenance to the prevalent error that all believers now, the church, are the Israel of God. The apostle does apply the phrase only to such Jews as now confess Jesus to be the Christ. They and they only are now acknowledged as the Israel of God; but they are distinguished in the same verse from the general mass of the saints, "as many as walk according to this rule" — the rule not of circumcision or of uncircumcision, but of a new creation in Christ Jesus. And the Epistle to the Romans adds, to the full assertion of the gospel and its effects, the distinct intimation that, when the fullness of the nations, now being called out, shall have come in, all Israel shall be saved. The teaching of the apostle is largely lost by those who do not see the present indiscriminate grace shown to the Gentiles as well as Jews, and the future recall of Israel which shall be "life from the dead."

Isaiah 60

As we have had the failure and guilt of Israel in idolatry and the rejection of the Messiah traced down to their reception of "the king" as well as of idols in the last days, so now we have not a pledge or promise of covenanted blessing under the Redeemer King, but the scene of joy and blessing and honour for Zion, when the hour arrives for His glory to be revealed here below. There is no ground for doubting that, as before we had the dark picture of God's earthly people, so here we are permitted to behold the sure anticipation of the brightness in store for them. The church is not here in question.

"Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of Jehovah is risen upon thee. For, behold, darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the peoples: but Jehovah will arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee. And nations shall walk in thy light, and kings in the brightness of thy rising. Lift up thine eyes round about, and see: all they gather themselves together, they come to thee: thy sons come from far, and thy daughters are nursed upon the side. Then thou shalt see and be brightened, and thy heart shall throb and be enlarged; for the abundance of the sea shall be turned unto thee, the wealth of the nations shall come unto thee. A multitude of camels shall cover thee, dromedaries of Midian and Ephah; all they from Sheba shall come: they shall bring gold and incense, and they shall show forth the praises of Jehovah. All the flocks of Kedar shall be gathered unto thee,

the rams of Nebaioth shall serve thee; they shall come up with acceptance on mine altar, and I will beautify the house of my magnificence" (vv. 1-7).

But there is another picture which sets out the change among men by divine goodness. The ships of the Gentiles play their part now in serving Israel's sons with honour. "Who [are] these [that] fly as a cloud, and as doves to their dove-cotes? Surely the isles shall wait for me, and the ships of Tarshish first, to bring thy sons from afar, their silver and their gold with them, unto the name of Jehovah thy God, and to the Holy One of Israel, for he hath glorified thee. And the sons of strangers shall build up thy walls, and their kings shall minister unto thee: for in my wrath I smote thee, but in my favour have I had mercy on thee. Therefore thy gates shall be open continually (they shall not be shut day nor night); that [men] may bring unto thee the wealth of the nations, and [that] their kings [may be] brought. For the nation and kingdom that will not serve thee shall perish; yea, [those] nations shall be utterly wasted. The glory of Lebanon shall come unto thee, the cypress, the pine (or, plane), and the box-tree together, to beautify the place of my sanctuary; and I will make the place of my feet glorious. The sons also of them that afflicted thee shall come bending unto thee; and all they that despised thee shall bow themselves down at the soles of thy feet; and they shall call thee, The city of Jehovah, The Zion of the Holy One of Israel" (vv. 8-14).

There is no thought here of God's glory revealed in the face of Christ on high and made known by the Spirit to the heart (2 Cor. 4: 6); the earth itself is the theatre of this divine display. Another point to be noticed is that, immediately before the time arrives, darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the peoples. Plainly therefore it is a false interpretation of prophecy that light is to be diffused universally when the time of earthly glory for Israel, as well as the heavenly glory of the church, dawns on the world. Zion is to be visited in the mercy of God when the Gentile lands are enveloped in the grossest ignorance of God. So the apostle predicts the apostasy before that day (2 Thess. 2).

Again, in ver. 3 there is a point of striking contradistinction to the present dealings of God. For now the fall of the Jews has been the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles (Rom. 11: 12); but here all is in contrast: the Gentiles are blessed after Israel is restored to Jehovah's favour, so indeed Rom. 11: 15 teaches us that their reception shall be to the world life from the dead. Hence, when Jehovah's glory shall be seen on Zion, the nations shall come to that light and kings to the brightness of its rising.

The gospel now goes out freely and its light is diffused far and wide, though only as a testimony; for it admits not of the power which binds Satan and changes the face of creation. But in our chapter Jerusalem has its proper central place, as the metropolis of the earth when all shall be settled and governed according to God. Nor is it only sons and daughters that thus come to Zion from far, but strangers too. For there is then to be no such state of things on earth as the church of God, one body, Christ's body. On the contrary Gentiles and Israel, though both blessed by Jehovah, will be distinct and kept so, however harmonious in their relations. So too it is the day when outward things are to be no unmeet offering to Jehovah: camels and dromedaries, flocks and herds, land and sea, shall pour their tribute before His feet. To think now of serving God thus would be to go back to beggarly elements from the revelation of heavenly and eternal things in Christ; whereas gold and incense will be in season, and sacrifices will be then acceptable for His altar and the house of His glory. But no such joy shall be for the isles and the nations and creation generally, till the Holy One of Israel glorifies Zion, rescuing her from the stranger that now treads her down to her sorrow and his own loss. But He shall arise and have mercy on that royal hill, and His servants take pleasure in her stones and favour her dust. Not till then shall the heathen fear His name, and the kings of the earth His glory, as is here described so variously.

But when Jehovah builds up Zion, all shall be turned to Him. God will make this favour to Jerusalem felt universally in due time, after punishing those who think to gain all by the overthrow of His people. All nature will join to adorn the sanctuary of Jehovah; and those who by-and-by represent the nations that once afflicted Israel will then be abject in their homage and prostration when Zion is exalted. Many images here used to mark the glory of the earthly Jerusalem are employed in a more glorious way for the new Jerusalem of Rev. 21-22. But the attentive reader will not fail to mark the essential differences also. Take this one in particular. The nation and kingdom that will not serve the restored earthly Jerusalem shall perish; yea, those nations shall be utterly wasted (ver. 12). The glorified church, the heavenly Jerusalem, on the contrary, is true to her mission of grace even in the day of glory. For as to her not only is there no word of this judicial character, but there is the witness of beneficent and unfailing grace. The tree of life is there, on either side of the river of life. No other tree is seen to threaten death. But the tree of life, while it bears its full and varied yet constant fruits for those within, affords its gracious succour also to the need of those without: its leaves are for the healing of the nations (Rev. 22: 2).

For anything like such heavenly grace as this, Babylon (proud, corrupt, cruel) had no eyes, ears, or heart; she, the false church, did and does arrogate the claims which are alone true of Jerusalem by-and-by. She even ignored and hated the reality of grace which the bride of Christ is called to show. And no wonder; for she is a harlot, and detests Him that is Holy, Him that is True, indulging in lusts and lies and blood, till divine judgement fall.

But the prophet says of Zion, "Instead of thy being forsaken and hated, so that no man went through [thee], I will make thee an eternal excellency, a joy of many generations. Thou shalt also suck the milk of the nations, and shalt suck the breast of kings; and thou shalt know that I Jehovah [am] thy Saviour and thy Redeemer, the mighty One of Jacob. For bronze I will bring gold, and for iron I will bring silver, and for wood bronze, and for stones iron; I will also make thine officers peace, and thine exactors righteousness. Violence shall no more be heard in thy land, wasting nor destruction within thy borders but thou shalt call thy walls Salvation, and thy gates Praise. The sun shall be no more thy light by day; neither for brightness shall the moon give light unto thee; but Jehovah shall be unto thee an everlasting light; and thy God thy glory. Thy sun shall no more go down; neither shall thy moon withdraw itself: for Jehovah shall be thine everlasting light, and the days of thy mourning shall be ended" (vv. 15-20).

Here is evidence overwhelming, were more wanted, that the church on earth or in heaven is not represented here, but the ancient people of God blessed according to His promise and prophecy. For righteousness dealing according to an earthly measure is the rule; and it is the day also not for an elect witness, but "thy people also [shall be] all righteous," and this in prosperous power, instead of knowing the fellowship of Christ's sufferings, being made conformable to His death. "They shall possess the land for ever — the branch of my planting, the work of my hands, that I may be glorified. The little one shall become a thousand, and the smallest a strong nation: I Jehovah will hasten it in its time" (vv. 21, 22).

The main source of erroneous interpretation among the orthodox is the obliteration of Israel to bring the church into their place of promised earthly glory. Therefore minds at all spiritual revolted from these visions of worldly honour, material prosperity, long life, and the like, and sought to make them figures of higher things. But the Christian and the church have their spiritual blessings in heavenly places, as is distinctly set forth in the New Testament; while the Old Testament predicts these wondrous changes in the land and the earth for Israel and the nations, when the kingdom is set up in visible power and glory. There is therefore not only no justification for getting rid of the plain meaning

of the prophets, but we wrong God's ancient people, to say nothing of the nations, of that bright prospect which is revealed for the earth. And good men are guilty of bad reasoning and worse exegesis who dislike to admit the glorious state predicted as a simple literal fact in honour of the Second man, the last Adam. Far be it to accuse such unbelieving believers of Manicheism; but their speculations deprive them of entering into that immense counsel of God which will put the entire universe under Christ's headship, and bind the earth beneath and the heavens above in united blessedness to His own glory, as we may read in Eph. 1: 10; of which Rev. 21 - 22 is the New Testament display prophetically.

Isaiah 61

This forms the beginning of a section (Isa. 61 — Isa. 63: 1-6 which embraces Jehovah-Messiah in His first advent as well as His second for the blessing and glory of Israel and the destruction of their enemies. We have the Lord's own warrant in Luke 4. for declaring that the early portion He read applies to His then presence in grace here below. It has been often and justly observed how He stopped after the first clause of verse 2, closing the book, and in due time saying, This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears. He cites what portrays His character as it was (or about to be) displayed on earth at that time in ways of divine mercy, but forbears even to finish the sentence where the part following alludes to His exercise of judicial wrath. Such was in no way the object of His first coming; and so, if strangely in appearance, with divine wisdom He read no more. "The day of vengeance of our God" awaits the epoch of His appearing in power and glory. "The Spirit of the Lord Jehovah [is] upon me, because Jehovah 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 opening of the prison to the bound, to proclaim the acceptable year of Jehovah, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn; to appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, that beauty be given them instead of ashes, the oil of joy instead of mourning, the garment of praise instead of the spirit of heaviness" (vv. 1-3).

The richest mercy will then indeed be the spring of God's way with Israel. For Jehovah, while He executes earthly judgement, will comfort those that mourn, especially mourners in Zion, giving them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness, "that they might be called oaks of righteousness, the planting of Jehovah, that he might be glorified. And they shall build the old wastes, they shall raise up the former desolations, and they shall repair the waste cities, the desolations of many generations. And strangers shall stand and feed your flocks, and aliens' sons [shall be] your ploughmen and your vine dressers. But ye shall be named Priests of Jehovah: they shall call you Ministers of our God. Ye shall eat the wealth of the nations, and into their glory shall ye enter. Instead of your shame [ye shall have] double; [instead of] confusion they shall rejoice in their portion: therefore in their land they shall possess the double; everlasting joy shall be unto them. For I Jehovah love judgement, I hate robbery with iniquity; and I will give their recompense in truth, and I will make an everlasting covenant with them. And their seed shall be known among the nations, and their offspring among the peoples: all that see them shall acknowledge them, that they [are] a seed Jehovah hath blessed" (vv. 3-9). Restoration of past decayed places shall go forward; strangers shall serve Israel, who shall themselves be called priests of Jehovah. For their shame they should have not merely reinstatement of what had lapsed but double, like Job; and Jehovah, Who as fully loves judgement as He hates robbery with wrong, will make an everlasting covenant with them; so that all who see them will acknowledge that they are indeed the blessed of Jehovah.

Nay more, Jehovah Himself becomes the centre of all joy and the giver of all beauty, causing righteousness and praise to spring forth before all the nations. "I will greatly rejoice in Jehovah, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered

me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh [himself] with the turban, and as a bride adorneth [herself] with her jewels. For as the earth bringeth forth her bud, and as the garden causeth the things that are sown in it to spring forth; so the Lord Jehovah will cause righteousness and praise to spring forth before all the nations" (vv. 10, 11).

We see how the Holy Spirit, having testified to the Messiah and His character which was of the utmost value for souls at His first advent, passes by His rejection and going on high which brought in the church, and hastens on to His establishment of the kingdom in Zion at the latter day. So it is here, as with prophecy in general. They look on to Israel restored in the land when Christ reigns publicly. The fundamental principle of neology, that we have no more than a forecast of what was at the door, is a daring lie against inspired prophecy, the great body of which is on the magnificent and holy reign of the Messiah not yet begun. Hence the desire to treat it as "ideal"; hence indifference to the bright and assured prospects of Israel under Him and the new covenant, not in principle only, but in its fulfilled terms to the joy and blessing of all the nations and of the earth itself.

Theodoret in his comment, like others, saw the church, not the future restoration of Israel and the Lord reigning in Zion after receiving those that now believe to heavenly glory. And such is the prevalent view of Christendom still. They overlook the plain testimony which the New Testament renders to the setting aside, as of the Jew in the past, so of the Gentile in the future, because of failure to continue in the goodness of God. Yet that failure is a fact over which every God-fearing soul mourns; and the apostolic warning of it is set forth beyond doubt in Romans 11, while the judgement of Christendom and the habitable earth is declared in many scriptures from Matthew to the Revelation. When that judgement of the quick is executed, Israel shall be saved, and these bright promises for the earth fulfilled, not before nor otherwise.

Isaiah 62

The Spirit of Christ in the prophet is importunate in intercession for Zion, as we see in the beginning of this chapter. For He it is that praises Jehovah in the name of the people and their capital. He speaks for the Bridegroom and for the earthly bride, so perfectly now in the expression of joy, as once in that of unfathomable grief and infinitely gracious suffering for sin. But it is not now in view of sin and weakness and unworthiness, but that Zion may henceforth shine brightly in her light of righteousness and salvation before the nations and all kings. "For Zion's sake will I not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp [that] burneth. And the nations shall see thy righteousness, and all kings thy glory; and thou shalt be called by a new name, which the mouth of Jehovah shall name. Thou shalt also be a crown of glory in the hand of Jehovah, and a royal diadem in the hand of thy God. Thou shalt no more be termed Forsaken, neither shall thy land any more be termed Desolate: but thou shalt be called Hephzibah, and thy land Beulah; for Jehovah delighteth in thee, and thy land shall be married" (vv. 14). Land and people are bound up in the plans and affections of Jehovah the latter called, My delight is in her; the former, Married. And this mark of favour will prove a divine ground of patriotism for Israel. "For [as] a young man marrieth a virgin, shall thy sons marry thee; and with the joy of the bridegroom over the bride shall thy God rejoice over thee" (v. 1), a still higher source of joy.

The Spirit of Christ working in the prophet also bears witness of the unceasing cry to Jehovah to effect His glorious counsels as to Jerusalem. "I have set watchmen upon thy walls, O Jerusalem; they shall never hold their peace all day and all night: ye that put Jehovah in remembrance, take ye no rest, and give him no rest, till he establish, and till he make, Jerusalem a praise in the earth" (vv. 6, 7). at is

of great interest to observe the place of watchmen here. And blessed the day when it will be not so much their warning men against evil in treachery or violence, as their loudly reminding Jehovah of the mercy that endures and of the reversal of all past sin and shame in Jerusalem established and made a praise in the earth. "Jehovah" on His part "hath sworn by His right hand, and by the arm of His strength, Surely I will no more give thy corn [to be] meat for thine enemies; and sons of the alien shall not drink thy wine, for which thou hast laboured; for they that have garnered it shall eat it, and praise Jehovah; and they that have gathered it together shall drink it in the courts of my holiness" (vv. 8, 9). Assuredly this oath infallibly secures Israel on the earth.

Hence the animation of verse 10: "Go through, go through the gates; prepare the way of the people; cast up, cast up the highway; gather out the stones, lift up a standard for the peoples" (v. 10). The day of Jehovah is there; He the Messiah is there for the salvation of Zion's daughter — His reward with Him, and His work before Him. So Jehovah proclaims to the end of the world as His message to her. "Behold, Jehovah hath proclaimed unto the end of the earth, Say ye to the daughter of Zion, Behold thy salvation cometh; behold, his reward [is] with him, and his recompense before him" (v. 11). "And," on the other hand, "they shall call them, The holy people, The redeemed of Jehovah: and thou shalt be called, Sought out, A city not forsaken" (v. 12).

"Happy people that is in such a case; happy people whose God is Jehovah." He will rejoice over Jerusalem, as a bridegroom over a bride. No more shall His people be called Azubah (Forsaken), no more the land be called Shemamah (Desolate), but Hephzibah (My delight is in her) the one, and Beulah (Married) the other. The blessing henceforward rests on Jehovah-Messiah, Who never did nor can fail; not on the worm Jacob who neither could be, nor ought to have been, relied on. Henceforward it is not the first covenant which claimed but could not find fulfilment fit for Jehovah from sinful Israel. It will be for ever the new covenant, founded on an infinitely better sacrifice which brings the remission of sins, and Jehovah's putting His law in their inwards and writing it in their hearts, Himself their God, and they His people. Messiah's prime interest then will be Israel and Jerusalem, but all the nations and the earth shall be blessed in divine goodness.

Some find a difficulty, because the Revelation (Rev. 19: 21, 22) clearly teaches that the church is the bride, the Lamb's wife; whereas Isaiah says it of Israel, and of their land with Jehovah. But there is really none; for the one speaks of what is for heaven, the other for the earth. And what hinders there being an object especially dear on high, and another here below in that day? But there is no confusion of the two in scripture; still less room for that truly carnal method of interpretation which by a strange hallucination the divines call spiritualizing, the essence of which system is to identify the Jew with the Christian, to metamorphose the land into heaven, to swamp long-suffering grace into the reign of righteousness, and imagine a kingdom of the Spirit to the denial of Christ's world-kingdom, heralded by prophets of old, sung by psalmists, and sealed by the Saviour and the apostles. Both are true, but their spheres are as distinct as the objects themselves, as the character of the relation which Christ bears to each, and even as the languages in which they are respectively revealed. To confound them is to deny the future hopes of Israel, and to lose the heavenly place of the church.

The church has never been forsaken of God; while Zion unquestionably has; nor have we as members of the glorified Christ another fatherland but heaven, which cannot be termed desolate. Apply the language to Israel, and all is clear and unequivocal, without doing violence to a single expression.

Isaiah 63: 1-6

These verses connect themselves with the close of Isa. 62, following up the coming of the

Messiah (as the Deliverer of Zion no longer forsaken but sought out, and all her dispersed children now gathered in) with a most vivid sight, as it were, of His return from executing vengeance on their Gentile foes. The scene of the slaughter is laid in the land of Edom and the city of Bozrah. Horsley seems inconsistent in denying any mention of these places here, while admitting them in Isa. 34: 5, 6. He would translate the proper names as appellatives thus: "Who [is] this that approacheth all in scarlet, with garments stained from the vintage? This [that is] glorious," etc. But that able man had overlooked the chapter just referred to, where the scene demands the proper names. This consideration, in my judgement, gives conclusive support to the ordinary translation.

But commentators in general contradict each other without being able to discern the divine light in the words of the prophet. Thus Origen and Theodoret, Tertullian and Jerome, may illustrate views which have too long prevailed, so far as to lead the compilers of the English Common Prayer Book to read it for the Epistle on the Monday before Easter. They actually regard the scene as prophetic of the Saviour suffering for our sins, instead of seeing in it the Avenger of His long-oppressed Israel; as a pledge of mercy, not as a threat of judgement. Hence the good Bishop of Cyrrhus thinks the prophet here points out Jehovah's ascent to heaven, lays stress on Edom as the red land, connects the pierced side and blood and water with the blood-stained garments, and sees the destruction of the devil and all his host in the treading of the winepress.

Calvin justly objects to such a perversion of the prophecy; but he is quite as far from the true mark as any when he proceeds to apply it not to Christ, but simply to God Himself as such in His dealings of old with the Edomites, and other enemies of His people, when He broke them by the Assyrians of old. This is to make the word of private or isolated interpretation, dislocating it from its true aim and scope in the illustration of the glory of the Lord Jesus, not at His first advent, but when He comes again.

Luther's notion is strange enough: he regards it as a prediction of the punishment of the Jews or Synagogue, not an infliction on their enemies for their rescue in the latter day. The Jew, as is commonly known, conceives that the divine wrath which impends over Rome, as the full meaning of the enemy here named Edom, is the real thought. Bishop Lowth rightly combats Grotius' hypothesis that Judas Maccabeus and his victories make the subject of it; or the subsequent exploits of John Hyrcanus, his brother Simon's son. "It may be asked [he adds], to whom, and to what event, does it relate? I can only answer, that I know of no event in history to which, from its importance and circumstances, it can be applied, unless perhaps to the destruction of Jerusalem and the Jewish polity; which in the Gospel is called the coming of Christ and the days of vengeance. Matt. 16: 28; Luke 21: 22."

This suffices to prove the bewilderment of Christian writers down to our times, which is yet more confessed by some, like the last, owning that "there is no necessity of supposing that it has been already accomplished."

Vitranga, as usual, is more erudite than the mass; but there seems to be no good reason for treating, as he does, the local references as mystical. For when the great day arrives, the world will behold a wonderful reappearance, not of Israel only, but of their ancient rivals and enemies, whom, like the ten tribes, men of the world assume to be for ever extinct. It will be the day of reckoning for the nations, and the end will righteously answer to the beginning. At any rate there is nothing valid enough to set aside the plain mention of these localities, nor the fact of an utter overthrow of the Gentile enemies of Israel there.

But the great fact, overlooked by almost all, is that it is here no question of the heavenly church,

but of the earthly people, Israel. The church is removed from the scene by grace to meet the Lord, and be with Him in the Father's house, though surely also to appear with Him in glory and to reign with Him over the earth. But not such is the character of the deliverance of Israel; and of this Isaiah treats, like the Old Testament in general. It is by the execution on earth of judgements, which have for their object the salvation of the Jews and the destruction of their enemies. This object accordingly accounts for terms, which are hard indeed to be explained when men think of the church in these verses. Believe that Israel is there, and what more proper than such a description of their Deliverer, as "I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save," or "The day of vengeance is in my heart"? Is this the way we think of His love to us, or His attitude even to the world while we are passing through? How can vers. 5, 6 apply to Him as Head of the church? Bring in the question of Israel delivered for His kingdom here below, and all is consistent and clear.

It is then the Lord, Jehovah-Messiah, Who is here seen in the prophetic vision, returning victorious from the spot which more than one prophecy declares to be the theatre of the wrath which shall be poured out unsparingly on the foes of His people. "Who [is] this," asks the prophet identifying himself with the people, "that cometh from Edom, with deep-red garments from Bozrah, this [that is] glorious in his apparel, travelling in the greatness of his strength?" His answer (for it assumes the form of a dialogue) is, "I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save." "Wherefore," asks Isaiah again, "[art thou] red in thine apparel, and thy garments like him that treadeth in the wine-vat?" "I have trodden," answers He, "the wine-press alone: and of the peoples not a man was with me; and I have trodden them in mine anger, and trampled them in my fury; and their blood is sprinkled upon my garments, and I have stained all my raiment. For the day of vengeance [is] in my 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: and mine own arm brought salvation unto me; and my fury, it upheld me. And I have trodden down the peoples in mine anger, and made them drunk in my fury, and I have brought down their strength (*lit.* juice) to the earth" (vv. 1-6).

Manifestly it is no picture of Christ forsaken of God nor even rejected of man, but of His treading down the opposed nations, as grapes in a wine-press. It is not infinite love suffering infinitely that sin might be judged, and God glorified about it, and thence able to justify the believer from all things. It is One trampling down in wrath, and the blood of His enemies sprinkling His garments, not His blood washing them in divine grace. It is not the day of grace but of vengeance, though along with it the year of His redeemed is come when the scattered and peeled people shall be brought to Zion with everlasting joy on their heads. Now it is the day of salvation for the Gentiles who believe, while wrath to the uttermost is come on the Jews who believe not.

The reference is plain to Isa. 61: 2 with the notable difference that here "the day of vengeance" precedes "the year of my redeemed"; whereas in the previous chapter "the acceptable year of Jehovah" takes precedence of "the day of vengeance of our God." And this latter order had a beautiful propriety in the Lord's own application of that part only which illustrated His first advent. For if we have eyes to see according to God, we shall not fail to discern the admirable way in which the Holy Spirit, while looking onward to the day of manifested glory even for Israel and the earth, does not omit to prepare for the grace and humiliation on which that glory is based, that it should have the deepest moral grounds, not mere power or even wisdom. God must intervene for the heart to know Him; and man, believing man, must be cleansed from every sin and all unrighteousness.

Here however it is Jehovah-Messiah executing unsparing judgement on earth, treading the peoples in His anger and trampling them in His wrath. Those who cavil at this as inconsistent with His holy goodness betray their own rebelliousness and the bad conscience which dreads His day at length,

when He summarily puts down the iniquity which has so long destroyed the earth. When divine vengeance has done its necessary and righteous work with the peoples and enemies of Israel, the ways of God succeed in goodness, and the godly remnant, His people, testify to them with praise, as we shall next hear.

Far different is the gospel era. It is truly a time of acceptance, and a day of salvation, quite apart from judgements on either Jew or Gentile. It is based on an incomparably deeper and more mysterious judgement, when God availed Himself of the rejection of the Messiah by both Jews and Gentiles, and wrought the amazing work of His grace toward ungodly and lost man in the sacrifice of His Son, the Lord Jesus, for our sins, and for the redemption of all who believe. In the gospel there is no difference: all sinned; and the same Lord of all is rich toward all that call upon Him (Rom. 3: 23; Rom. 10: 12). In the kingdom there will be a difference, at least in honour; Zion and Israel shall have a position beyond every other place and people under their King, Jehovah of hosts. The church glorified has at that very time a still higher and nearer relationship beyond question; as we are now called to walk in faith and hope. For it is always the special and proper revelation for any given time which is intended of God to act on souls, not merely the general principles of divine truth which apply necessarily from first to last. The coming of our Lord brought this out in the strongest relief as He personally was the truth in all its fullness, His finished work removed all impediments and led to the revelation of the light of God's glory in His face, and the Holy Spirit was thereon sent forth to be in the believer and in the church a spirit of communion, such as never could be before, and never is nor can be again.

Isaiah 63: 7-19

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

Even the least enlightened of modern commentators admits that we open with what seems designed as a formulary of grateful recognition of Jehovah's loving-kindness and tender mercy, but also of humiliation for the Israelites in order to their restoration. "I will record the loving-kindnesses of Jehovah, the praises of Jehovah, according to all that Jehovah hath bestowed on us, and the great goodness toward the house of Israel, which he hath bestowed on them according to his mercies, and according to the multitude of his loving-kindnesses. And he said, Surely they [are] my people, children [that] will not lie; and he became their Saviour. 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 bore them and carried them all the days of old" (vv. 7-9).

Nothing is more suitable than this exordium, whether one thinks of Jehovah first or of His people next. Mercies acknowledged lead to fresh mercy. He was not changed in His loving-kindness, nor they in their deep need of it, as only He could show it to them. Hitherto His love had received no return, nothing but bitter disappointment.* Yet what could exceed His tender care? "But they rebelled and vexed his holy Spirit: and he turned to be their enemy, himself, he fought against them. But he remembered the days of old, Moses [and] his people, [saying], Where [is] he that brought them up out of the sea with the shepherds of his flock? where [is] he that put his holy Spirit in the midst of him, his glorious arm leading [them] by the hand of Moses, dividing the waters before them, to make himself an

everlasting name, who led them through the depths; as a horse in the wilderness [that] they stumbled not? As cattle go down into the valley, the Spirit of Jehovah gave them rest: so didst thou lead thy people, to make thyself a name of glory" (vv. 10-14)

*{It may be well to remark that verse 9 is by no means certain for the reading or sense. Our translation followed the Keri, others (as the Vulgate, the Syriac, the Targum of Jonathan, etc., and of moderns, Houbigant, Rosenmüller, Horsley, De Wette, etc.) follow the Ketib. This would give properly, one may suppose, "in all their straits he was not straitened." The Septuagint, followed by the Arabic, contrasts His personal interest and action. "It was not an ambassador nor an angel, but He Himself saved them," etc.}

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

They are broken in heart and turn in affiance or trustfulness of spirit to Jehovah. Had He of old said, Surely they are My people, children that will not lie? Now they say, Surely Thou art our father, though Abraham be ignorant of us, and Israel acknowledge us not. Yet do they own that there had been judicial hardening over them as erst over Pharaoh and his people.

How deep and persevering the sins that could turn Jehovah against His own people as against their enemies of old! and this too how long! for Israel had enjoyed their inheritance but a little while. Long, long had their adversaries trodden down Jehovah's sanctuary, and Israel had been as those on whom His name was not called, who knew not His rule.

Isaiah 64

This leads out the heart in still more earnestness. "Look down from heaven" suffices no more. "Oh that thou wouldest rend the heavens, that thou wouldest come down — that the mountains might flow down at thy presence, as fire kindleth brushwood, [as] fire causeth the waters to boil — to make thy name known to thine adversaries, [that] the nations may tremble at thy presence! When thou didst terrible things we looked not for, thou tamest down, the mountains flowed down at thy presence. Ever since the beginning of the world they have not heard, nor perceived by the ear, neither hath the eye seen, a God besides thee, who will act for him that waiteth for him" (vv. 1-4).

It is interesting here to note the great difference for which the accomplishment of redemption gives occasion by the gift of the Holy Ghost. (Cp. 1 Cor. 2: 7-10) We see that God now does reveal the things He has prepared for them that love Him. We do not wait for the emergence of the great High Priest to know our blessedness; for while He is still in the holiest, the Holy Spirit, as the gospel teaches, has come out and given us to enter in as anointed of God and made free to go boldly within the veil.

Indeed for us the veil is rent, and all things hidden are revealed. But Israel (and the prophet speaks of Israel) must wait till they see Him Whom their fathers so guiltily pierced, though undoubtedly their heart will be then converted to Jehovah-Messiah. They are born again but not in peace till they actually behold Him, and even then what searchings of heart, what self-reproach!

Hence we have in what follows the language of true repentance. "Thou meetest him that rejoiceth to work righteousness, [those that] remember thee in thy ways (behold, thou art wroth; for we have sinned): in those is perpetuity, and we shall be saved. But we are all as an unclean [thing], and all our righteousnesses as filthy rags; and we all fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away. And there is none that calleth upon thy name, that stirreth up himself to take hold of thee; for thou hast hid thy face from us, and made us melt away through our iniquities But, now O Jehovah, thou [art] our father; we [are] the clay, and thou our potter; and we all [are] the work of thy hand. Be not wroth very sore, O Jehovah, neither remember iniquity for ever. Behold, see, we beseech thee, we [are] all thy people. Thy holy cities are a wilderness, Zion is a wilderness, Jerusalem a desolation. Our holy and our beautiful house, where our fathers praised thee, is burned up with fire; and all our pleasant things are laid waste. Wilt thou refrain thyself for these [things], O Jehovah? wilt thou hold thy peace, and afflict us very sore?" (vv. 5-12).

The truth is that we must leave room in our faith for others to be blessed in the grace of God, when the saints called to a distinctively heavenly portion are no longer on earth. God will prepare Israel, His firstborn son here below, to be His destined chief among all the families of the earth, whom He will surely bless according to promise, and in honour of His Only-begotten Son. And thus it is that the Jew must, after his long and varied failure, undergo so searching a spiritual process to fit him for his assigned post as the most honoured nation. For this he is kept now, the standing witness (in spite of his present heart-unbelief) of divine chastening, in order to obtain mercy in "that day," when he renounces self-confidence, confesses his sins unreservedly in truth, and hails in Jehovah's name Him Whom heretofore he slew by the hand of lawless men. It was a grand discovery for faith, that Jehovah's honour was concerned in their blessing; and that the desolation touched Him at least as much as them, though the sins were theirs and the grace was His.

There is a remarkable form of expression in the Hebrew of ver. 9, where the substantive verb occurs and is repeated, contrary to the well-known Hebrew usage which ordinarily omits it. As its insertion cannot be without a sufficient reason, we are entitled to infer that the revealing Spirit had in His mind by the preterite form employed a continuous state of desolation from a past act of judgement. This entirely agrees with the facts, not so much of the Babylonian infliction but of the more permanent ruin which followed the destruction by the Romans. For God was marking His sense, not only of the national defection of His people in idolatry, but of the returned remnant's still more heinous and fatal rejection of the Messiah. All hope therefore turns on His mercy and faithfulness to His gifts and calling. All must be vain, unless Jehovah rent the heavens and came down in the person of Him Who had already come to suffer for all their iniquities and all their transgressions in all their sins, banishing and effacing their guilt for ever. This, we know from other scriptures, He will assuredly do for His own great name, and in virtue of the atonement already effected.

Isaiah 65

This chapter begins the answer of Jehovah to the appeal of His people, in which He explains not only what is now an accomplished fact, but also what still goes on. "I am sought out 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. I have stretched out my hands all the day unto a rebellious people, who walk in a way [that was] not good, after their own thoughts" (vv. 1, 2). The last two verses of Rom. 10. leave no ground for hesitation as to their bearing. They furnish an inspired comment on our opening verses, and prove beyond controversy that the first intimates the call of the Gentiles which is now proceeding, as the second is the aggrieved witness on God's part of that which gave occasion to their call — the rebelliousness of His ancient people Israel. It is an enemy's work to slight the New Testament use of the passage, as is done by rationalists in order to limit the prophecy to the Jews of the times before and after the Babylonish captivity. Besides, what can be more inconsistent with the evident contrast at the same epoch between verses 1 and 2? The inspired application we might never, unaided, have discovered; but, once made, it approves itself to the spiritual understanding as exactly tallying with notorious facts.

Grace is sovereign and goes out now to those who never so much as looked for it — to the ungodly Gentiles who had till now stood in no recognised relationship with God. But in turning from Israel God was entirely justified by their iniquities: after all their advantages, His name had been blasphemed among the Gentiles through the chosen people. Most gracious was He then in calling from among the Gentiles; most righteous in discarding the Jew. This Jehovah proceeds to prove by a detail of Israel's insulting wickedness in verses 3-5: "The people that provoke me to anger continually to my face; that sacrifice in gardens, and burn incense upon the bricks; who sit down among the graves, and lodge in the secret places, who eat swine's flesh, and broth of abominable [things is in] their vessels; who say, Stand by thyself, come not near to me; for I am holier than thou. These [are] a smoke in my nose, a fire that burneth all the day."

It has been objected by some that these idolatries and superstitions, covered over with hypocritical affectation of holiness, did not occur after the return from Babylon. But we must not forget that the Holy Ghost in prophecy deals with the evils then existing or in progress, the judgement of which was not met by providential chastisement, such as the conquest of Nebuchadnezzar. Just as the idolatry of the wilderness was only checked from time to time, but not judged duly till the nation was carried into captivity beyond Damascus (Amos 5: 27); so these evil ways which Isaiah describes did not meet with adequate condemnation till God turned the stream of His calling into other channels. The principle indeed is fully confirmed by the use our Lord (Matt. 13: 14, 15) and the Spirit (Acts 28: 25-27) make of Isa. 6: 9, 10. The judicial sentence so long suspended from the days of the prophet only fell adequately in gospel times. It is just so here. Also we must bear in mind what we have seen already, that idolatry is to revive in the latter days, when the Jews settle themselves in their land before the Lord appears, judging the evil and establishing the good in order to His millennial reign.

One cannot but think too that the closing words of this divine censure intimate the long patience of God; so that, flatter themselves as they might that He like themselves did not heed the character of their misdeeds, judgement would at length demonstrate that, however loath to break silence, He will recompense the iniquities of both fathers and children. "Behold, [it is] written before me: I will not keep silence, but will recompense, even recompense into their bosom, your iniquities, and the iniquities of your fathers together, saith Jehovah, who have burned incense upon the mountains, and outraged me upon the hills: I will measure their former work into their bosom" (vv. 6, 7).

Thus might seem to threaten total and hopeless ruin to the ancient people. But no: God had promised; and the unfaithfulness of the people, however surely judged, cannot make void the promises of grace. Hence in verses 8-10 God proceeds to make known, not the bringing in of the Gentiles during Israel's temporary excision from the olive-tree of promise and testimony on earth, but the reservation of a portion, the germ of a nation, blessed and a blessing, from Jacob and Judah, according to His early

pledges to their fathers. "Thus saith Jehovah, As the new wine is found in the cluster, and it is said, Destroy it not; for a blessing [is] in it: so will I do for my servants' sakes, that I may not destroy [them] all. And I will bring forth a seed out of Jacob, and out of Judah a possessor of my mountains; and my chosen shall inherit it, and my servants shall dwell there. And the Sharon shall be for a fold of flocks and the valley of Achor a couching-place of herds, for my people that have sought me." His chosen, the remnant, are here definitely distinguished from the rest of the people, or "the many" as Daniel describes them in speaking of the same time.

Then in vers. 11-16 Jehovah contrasts the apostates and the elect of the people, the idol-worshippers and His own servants, with their respective destinies. "But ye that forsake Jehovah, that forget my holy mountain, that prepare a table for Gad,* and fill up mixed wine unto Meni,* I will even number you to the sword, and ye shall all bow down in the slaughter: because I called and ye did not answer; I spoke, and ye did not hear; but ye did the evil in mine eyes, and [that] wherein I delight not ye chose. Therefore thus saith the Lord Jehovah, Behold, my servants shall eat, but ye shall be hungry; behold, my servants shall drink, but ye shall be thirsty; behold, my servants shall rejoice, but ye shall be ashamed; behold, my servants shall sing for joy of heart, but ye shall cry for sorrow of heart, and shall howl for vexation of spirit. And ye shall leave your name for a curse unto my chosen; for the Lord Jehovah will slay thee, and call his servants by another name: so that he who blesseth himself in the earth shall bless himself in the God of truth and he that sweareth in the earth shall swear by the God of truth; because the former troubles shall be forgotten, and because they shall be hid from mine eyes" (vv. 11-16). The old evil will be judged at the close; just as inquisition for all righteous blood shed will then be made. It is a time of judgement which ushers in days of unparalleled enjoyment for this earth: that is, it is the end of this age and the dawn of a new one when former troubles are forgotten. Yet in ver. 16 "the land" may be meant rather than the wider sense of "earth."

*These idolatrous objects have been contested not a little, some arguing for Baal and Ashtoreth, or Sun and Moon, others for the planets Jupiter and Venus as others again for Chance and Fate. Gad means troop, and Meni number.

"For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind. But be 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 over Jerusalem, and joy in my people: and the voice of weeping shall be no more heard in her, nor the voice of crying" (vv. 17-19). The true key to this is that the predicted change from present things begins at the commencement of the day of the Lord, and is only complete before that day gives place to eternity. This alone, as is plainly revealed, will be found to reconcile all the scriptures which treat of the subject. So in Christ the Christian can even now say that "old things are passed away: behold all things are become new"; while in fact this will only be literally verified when he is changed into His image at His coming. Just so the beginning of the day of the Lord will be an incipient accomplishment of "new heavens and a new earthy when Jehovah creates Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy; but the absolute fulfilment awaits the close of the millennial day, when to the fullest all things shall be made new, the earth and heavens that are now being not shaken only but dissolved, the sea for ever gone, and a new heaven and a new earth appearing, wherein righteousness shall dwell, and God shall be all in all. The New Testament naturally dwells on the full issue ultimately involved in the prophecy, as we may see in 2 Peter 3: 12, 13, and in Rev. 21: 1-8. But the Jewish prophet, as naturally, was led of the Spirit to dwell on the earliest pledge of this blessing in its dawn on the land and capital and people of Israel.

That Isaiah does embrace this earlier phase as bearing on the Jews and Jerusalem will be manifest to every attentive reader. For the entire description here suits the millennium rather than eternity. The

special place of Jerusalem and her people has been already pointed out. Now this of itself suffices to prove it; for though the new Jerusalem possesses an abiding character of special glory, the New Testament is explicit that on the new earth all such distinctions as an earthly city or people melt away for eternity.

Next, ver. 20 is decisive against the notion. "There shall be no more thenceforth an infant of days, nor an old man that hath not completed his days; for the youth shall die a hundred years old, and the sinner [being] a hundred years old shall be accursed." Thus death is not wholly extinct in the state of things prominently before our prophet. It is exceptional, but still exists as an instrument of judicial infliction. Man will then fill his days, which he has never yet done — not even before the flood — no, not even Methuselah himself. Not one as yet has stretched across ten centuries. This will be the rule for the righteous who are found alive on earth when the Lord reigns for the thousand years. So thoroughly will death be not the rule but the exception, that one dying a hundred years old will be but a youth; and even so he that dies at a hundred years will be a sinner under some express curse. In eternity death does not exist.

Again, it is written here, "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 [shall be] the days of my people, and my chosen 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 Jehovah, and their offspring with them. And it shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer; while they are yet speaking, I will hear. The wolf and the lamb shall feed as one, and the lion shall eat straw like the ox: and dust [shall be] the serpent's meat. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain, saith Jehovah" (vv. 21-25).

Now, sweet and worthy of God as all this is, it is not heavenly nor eternal in the full sense, though an earnest of final blessedness. It is God's vindication of His character on earth and of His faithful promises to Israel there, when power shall be on the side of righteousness, and the works of the devil shall be manifestly destroyed here below. Not even disappointment shall be known for before men call, Jehovah will answer and will hear while they speak. And the long-groaning earthy freed from its travail, shall yield her increase. The very beasts shall share the general joy, with one solemn and marked exception. Did the enemy of God and man choose one animal to be the vehicle of his temptation with the mother of all men? Even in the otherwise universal joy God cannot forget this, and would have men also to remember it when that active spirit of evil is debarred from his ravages. So if "the wolf and the lamb shall feed together," and the lion shall eat straw like the ox, none the less shall dust be the serpent's meat. "They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain, saith Jehovah." There emphatically, and not there only, is the power of evil broken to the glory of God.

In a Christian effort to defend the Messianic interpretation of these prophecies (with the aim of which one cordially agrees), it is sad to read such incredulity as could say, "The lion could not eat straw like the bullock, and continue to be a lion . . . And even were this change possible, nothing would be gained by it. A lion so transformed would be a defect in creation" (R. P. Smith's *At6th. and Mess. Interp.*, 260, Oxford, 1862). What is the value of such reasoning against the positive word of God?

The New Testament is even more distinct than the Old with regard to the new creation; because apostolic doctrine lays down what the prophets present in the elevated style of poetic prose. Not the Holy Spirit but the Lord Jesus is the revealed Restorer of fallen creation. For He is the Heir of all. As the heavens have now received Him, He will surely come again, not for the destruction but for the restitution of all things. It was on earth that the grace of God appeared in Him; here was accomplished

redemption, here will the glory of God be manifested, though on high it will shine more brightly in the glorified. On the cross Satan was defeated before God, though seemingly he defeated the Saviour; and what the believer knows by faith will be manifested to every eye when the Lord appears again in glory. Meanwhile the dead and risen Christ is received up in glory, and all the angels of God worship Him. But the day comes when the earth shall be full of His glory, though this cannot be without a judgement of the living ungodly, in the most marked contrast with the gospel of His grace which now goes forth to all the world. Those who fail to believe this immense change, being most defective in their apprehensions of the revealed future, set up to prophesy smooth things of man and his progress. Who can wonder that they prophesy falsely? Scripture is direct and express that creation is to be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of glory (Rom. 8: 20, 21); and the Lord Jesus, Who will make it all good in its season, is worthy to receive all "glory and honour and power."

Isaiah 66

The concluding chapter of our prophet pursues what was begun in Isa. 65. — the answer of Jehovah to the supplication which precedes them both.

"Thus saith Jehovah, the heavens [are] my throne, and the earth [is] my footstool: what [is] the house that ye will build unto me? and where [is] the place of my rest? Even all those [things] hath my hand made, and all those [things] have been, saith Jehovah" (vv. 1, 2). It is not that God did not accept the house which king David desired, and his son Solomon was given, to erect for His glory. It is not that He will not have a sanctuary in the midst of Israel in the glorious land; for He has revealed it minutely, with the feasts, sacrifices, priests, and appurtenances, by Ezekiel (Ezek. 40 - 48).

But it is another thing when His people, despising the only Saviour and Lord, their own Messiah, rest in the sanctuary, as of old in the ark to their own shame and discomfiture before their enemies. So it was when the Lord left the temple — no longer God's house but *theirs*, and left to them desolate, Himself its true glory being despised and rejected. So Stephen charged home on them these very words (Acts 7: 48-50). It was not he nor Luke, but Isaiah who declared that the Most High dwells not in temples made with hands: and this in full view of the "exceeding magnificent" temple which Solomon built. Heaven is His throne, earth is His footstool. What can man do worthily for Him to rest in? He needs nothing of human resources. His own hand has made all these things, in comparison with which man's greatest exertions are puny indeed.

Once more among the Jews at the end of the age shall be the state of things which draws out this rebuke of their own prophet. Trusting in the house that they are at length allowed to build in Jerusalem, they must prove afresh that an unbelieving idolatrous heart desecrates a temple, and that not thus can sin be settled between God and the sinner. Earthly splendour in such circumstances is but gilding over iniquity. It is real hypocrisy. They may seek in unbelief to restore "all these things that have been"; but God has a controversy with the people about idolatry and the rejected Messiah not yet judged; and His elect own their sins and look for the new estate He will create in honour of Messiah. The heart must be purified by faith in order to worship acceptably.

"But to this [man] will I look, to the afflicted and contrite in spirit, and trembling at my word" (v. 2). Thus the line is drawn here as before between a godly remnant, and the people apostate as a whole. Hence their oblations are vain. "He that killeth an ox slayeth a man; he that sacrificeth a lamb breaketh a dog's neck; he that offereth an oblation [is as] swine's blood; he that burneth incense [is as] he that blesseth an idol. As they have chosen their own ways, and their soul delighteth in their abominations, I also will choose their delusions, and will bring their fears upon them; because when I called, none did

answer; when I spake, they did not hear: but they did the evil in mine eyes, and chose [that] wherein I delight not" (vv. 3, 4).

The English Bible follows the Septuagint, Syriac, Vulgate, and Arabic, as well as the Chaldee paraphrase. Houbigant, Bishop Lowth, Horsley, De Wette, etc., omit the terms of comparison (inserted in italics in the A. 5), which in their judgement mar the true sense. Their translation makes the verse to intimate the combination of ritual observance with open wickedness and Gentile abominations. Otherwise the statement is that their impiety made their acts of worship to be so many horrors.

In either view the people of Israel had chosen their own path of self-will and disregard of God for the evils they loved; but God's retribution would not be wanting. No delusions among the nations were more complete than Israel's have been and are yet to be; and the evils they dreaded, and sacrificed all to avoid, were just what befell them, and must till the end come. Did they refuse the Messiah? They have been a prey to false Messiahs, and shall yet bow down to the Antichrist. Did they own no king but Caesar? In Caesar they found a destroyer. Did they fear the Romans would come and take away their place and nation? All the world knows how punctually their fear was accomplished; and yet the end is not. Greater abominations shall be seen in them; greater delusions, greater fears, and a greater fulfilment. The abomination of desolation of which the Saviour spoke in Matt. 24: 15 (citing not Dan. 11: 31, which was then past, but Dan. 12: 11, which is still future) must yet be set where it ought not, in the sanctuary at Jerusalem; and then there shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.

It is impossible to interpret of the past Roman siege either Matthew 24, or Daniel 12, or our chapter; but the days for the due fulfilment of all these prophecies are at hand, and the effect of every vision. "Hear the word of Jehovah, ye that tremble at his word, Your brethren that hated you, that cast you out for my name's sake, said, Let Jehovah be glorified; but he shall appear to your joy, and they shall be ashamed" (v. 5).

But hark, what is this that breaks on the ear? "A voice of noise from the city, a voice from the temple, a voice of Jehovah that rendereth recompense to his enemies. Before she travailed, she brought forth; before her pain came, she was delivered of a man-child. Who hath heard such a thing? who hath seen such things? Shall a land be made to bring forth in one day? shall a nation be born at once? for as soon as Zion travailed, she brought forth her children. Shall I bring to the birth, and not cause to bring forth? saith Jehovah: shall I cause to bring forth, and shut [the womb]? saith thy God. Rejoice with Jerusalem, and be glad with her, all ye that love her; rejoice for joy with her, all ye that mourn over her; because ye shall suck and be satisfied with the breasts of her consolations, because ye shall drink out, and be delighted with the abundance of her glory. For thus saith Jehovah, Behold, I will extend peace to her like a river, and the glory of the nations like a flowing stream and ye shall suck, ye shall be borne upon the side, and be dandled upon the knees. As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you; and ye shall be comforted in Jerusalem. And ye shall see [this], and your heart shall rejoice, and your bones shall flourish like the grass: and the hand of Jehovah shall be known toward his servants, and indignation toward his enemies" (vv. 6-14).

Thus no longer by testimony to the heart, but by manifest judgement will Jehovah decide between cattle and cattle. The infidel scoff, which so long harassed the heavenly people, will then be put to shame before the poor in spirit of the earthly people. It is not the gospel that is here described, but the effect of the Lord's taking His great power and reigning, according to Rev. 11: 15 18. It is the world-kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ actually come. Hence judgement is executed on the living destroyers of the earth. Jehovah will be glorified to the joy of such as trembled at His word

before He appears and to the eternal infamy of those who knew Him not and doubted His interest in His despised confessors here below. For Christ and for the church, they were raised or changed and taken on high, leaving the world without a blow or even a notice. But it will not be so for the Jew by-and-by: "A voice of noise from the city, a voice from the temple, a voice of Jehovah that rendereth recompense to his enemies." The Roman destruction of Jerusalem was no adequate fulfilment of this: but it shall be fulfilled to the letter of many prophecies. (Cp. Isa. 9: 3-5; Isa. 18: 3-7; Isa. 29; Zech. 14: 1-4) And then shall follow the new birth or ingathering of Zion's children, no longer to be Abraham's seed nominally but his children in deed and in truth. As nothing of the kind followed the capture by Nebuchadnezzar, no more did it ensue when Titus took Jerusalem. No outpouring of vengeance on the guilty city followed by blessing unexampled for fullness and without sorrow has as yet appeared to satisfy the terms of the prediction. Sudden as it will be, it will also be permanent.

It will be the day of Jehovah when man's and Israel's sad history is to be reversed; and those who loved and mourned for Jerusalem shall rejoice for her and share the rich results of her blessedness. Yet is it in no way the character of gospel joy which blends inward comfort by the Spirit's power with shame and sorrow and rejection in the world. Here contrariwise, "And ye shall see this, and your heart shall rejoice, and your bones shall flourish like the grass; and the hand of Jehovah shall be known toward his servants, and indignation toward his enemies" (ver. 14). It is the future day, not of grace and salvation only as it is to-day, but of vengeance also, when Jehovah will not stop short as once He did on earth (Luke 4: 20). Then He was proclaiming the acceptable year of Jehovah, and this only. By-and-by He will proclaim and accomplish both that year and the day of vengeance. For this is in His heart, and the year of His redeemed is come. Both will be fulfilled then without let or delay. It will be the introduction of His day, and of the millennial reign.

"For, behold, Jehovah will come with fire, and his chariots like a whirlwind, to render his anger with fury, and his rebuke with flames of fire. For by fire and by his sword will Jehovah plead with all flesh: and the slain of Jehovah shall be many. They that sanctify themselves, and purify themselves in the gardens behind one in the midst, eating swine's flesh and the abomination and the mouse, shall perish together, saith Jehovah. And I [know] their works and their thoughts: it cometh, that I will gather all nations and tongues; and they shall come, and see my glory. And I will set a sign among them, and I will send those that escape of them unto the nations, [to] Tarshish, Pul, and Lud, that draw the bow, [to] Tubal, and Javan, [to] the isles afar off, that have not heard my fame, neither have seen my glory; and they shall declare my glory among the nations. And they shall bring all your brethren [for] an offering unto Jehovah out of all the nations upon horses and in chariots, and in covered wagons, and upon mules, and upon dromedaries, to my holy mountain, to Jerusalem, saith Jehovah, as the children of Israel bring an offering in a clean vessel into the house of Jehovah. And of them also will I take for priests, for Levites, saith Jehovah" (vv.15-21). The efforts of ancient and modern commentators to apply this passage, like the rest, to gospel times are desperate but vain. How unequivocally is it a day of judgement, not the glad tidings of salvation by His grace, but His revelation from heaven in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and on them that obey not the gospel! Evidently the Jews in that day will not only set up their ritual again, but be addicted to heathen abominations. The day of divine recompense shall be when old evils revive and amalgamate with novel iniquities, that all may come before Jehovah in judgement, and a new era dawn on both Jew and Gentile over the earth now purged. It will be a question then not of believing the grace of God, but of seeing the glory of Jehovah that is to be revealed. Jewish worship with its priests and Levites is restored in that day.

Vitringa's argument on verse 19 that no future call of Gentiles can be here intended, because those named have long since known the God of Israel, seems to be of no real force. For even

Christendom will then be in a state of apostasy (2 Thess. 2); and, besides, the hearing of Jehovah's fame and seeing His glory refers to the manifestation of Himself that will then be made here below. How little is the future looked for according to God's word!

Thus an unsparing divine judgement will be executed on all the gathered nations when the Jews are dealt with in their pollutions; and those that "escape of them" will be sent of God to the distant nations ignorant of what He has wrought, and Gentiles will bring back all the Jews remaining outside the Holy Land. It appears to be the detail of the prediction in Isa. 18: 7. From all nations shall this offering to Jehovah be brought, and by every means of conveyance. Before this, it will have been only the Jews and not all Israel.

All this is evidently not the same as the gospel or its effects, but in the most certain and evident contrast with it. The offering now is characteristically of the Gentiles, as we see in Rom. 15: 16, and as experience shows. Jews are no doubt now as ever converted, but they are comparatively rare. The prophet contemplates the day when "all Israel shall be saved," the apostates having been surprised by the divine judgement.

And any supposed difficulty of reconciling with John 4: 21 Jerusalem becoming a centre for all nations is imaginary, or rather arises from the confusion of "the hour that now is" with the day that shall be. Our Lord was contemplating the time of His rejection and His approaching absence in heaven; the prophet had in view the day of His glory for the earth, which is still future. Distinguish the times, and the objection vanishes. Jerusalem has no place in the Christian system; in the coming day of Jehovah it will have a greater and holier place than it ever had of old; and no wonder with the name of Jehovah Shammah!

Hence it is obvious that the ordinary strain of argument and interpretation, popular from the days of Origen and Jerome down to the present, is founded on a total confusion of things that differ. Christianity no doubt is very distinct; but that the new age must be a repetition of the same aims, principles, and ways, is an error quite as great as that which fancies the gospel to be only a continuation of the law with a great accession of better privileges. Israel shall be established for ever before Jehovah. "For as the new heavens and the new earth which I will make shall remain before me, saith Jehovah, so shall your seed and your name remain. And it shall come to pass, [that] from new moon to new moon, and from sabbath to sabbath, shall all flesh come to worship before me, saith Jehovah" (vv. 22, 23). There is no solid reason for doubting the literal bearing of the prediction. New moons and sabbaths shall once more figure in the worship of Jehovah; but it will be no more in the letter so hiding Christ or in its range so contracted as of old. For "all flesh" shall share in it, though (from other scriptures we may gather) on no such exalted ground or such dispensed nearness to the King as His chosen people. He is Sovereign, and disposes as He pleases; and our eye should not be evil, because He is good, alike in what is special and in what is common. His house shall be literally a house of prayer for all the peoples, which will in no way hinder the greatness of His name among the nations, or the offering of incense to it or a pure offering in every place.

And as His honour is thus maintained, so is His fear. Not only shall there be an awful outpouring of wrath on His adversaries at the end of this age, but Jehovah will keep up, nigh the very spot where His glory dwells, a salutary warning against transgressors. "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 abhorrence unto all flesh" (v. 24). There is nothing really obscure in this, save to those who, from regarding the passage only in a Christian point of view, deny its full accomplishment in judgement at the end of the age. In its own connection it is most simple, solemn,

and expressive. No doubt by Rev. 20: 11 — Rev. 21: 8 we are shown the still more awful sight of eternal punishment for all the wicked in its full force, when they shall be raised up from death for the second death. Annihilation is a wicked imposture, and an impossibility for all but God, Who, far from intimating any such end, declares that He will judge by His Son Jesus Christ the Lord those that shall come forth from their graves. Universalism is the still more audacious lie of the enemy.

"THE WORD OF OUR GOD SHALL STAND FOR EVER"