

## Behold My Servant

Isa. 52: 13-15, Isa. 53.

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The portion, of which the commencement is now entered on, does evidently assume the form of a dialogue between Jehovah and the godly Jewish remnant about the Messiah. To read it thus on the sure ground of its own clear and unforced evidence adds not a little to its interest. Nor is this confined to our prophet. We have an even greater variety in Psalm 91, among others; for there in answer to Christ's reliance on Jehovah in ver. 2, the godly remnant express their conviction of His security from all evil, and of the judgment of His wicked foes in 3-13; and Jehovah responds to His love with the assurance of love and deliverance and exaltation. The form is poetical, the truth certain and cheering to a high degree, as evincing not only honour for His Anointed but the communion between Himself and His people in that day.

"Behold, my servant shall deal wisely; he shall be exalted and extolled, and be exceedingly high. As many were astonished at thee — his visage so marred more than man, and his form more than sons of men — so shall he startle (or, sprinkle) many nations: kings shall shut their mouths at him; for what had not been told them they shall see, and what they had not heard they shall consider (or, understand)."

It is in Isa. 42 that Messiah is first presented by Isaiah as "My servant" after Israel had been so designated in the chapter before, with help soon to come by means of Cyrus through the judgment of Babylon and its idols. But a greater than Cyrus or Israel is here, however similar the terms employed. "Behold my servant whom I uphold, mine elect [in whom] my soul delighteth! I will put my Spirit upon him; he shall bring forth judgment to the nations. He shall not cry, nor lift up nor cause his voice to be heard in the street. A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench; he shall bring forth judgment in truth. He shall not burn dimly nor be crushed, till he have set justice in the earth; and the isles shall wait for his law." Beyond a doubt it is Messiah in His blessed abnegation or rather absence of self, such as no conqueror ever displayed, and of which He only was capable to perfection, but looking onward to the day when the nations shall submit to His law superseding every false god.

After this glance at Him, the prophet speaks of Israel as Jehovah's servant till the early verses of Isa. 49. where is begun a new section; and Messiah takes the place of Israel who had failed to the uttermost, not only in abject slavery to idols but in still baser rejection of Messiah. He is not only; to deliver Israel but always the true Servant, though Israel be not gathered and the Jews to be again scattered. "And he said to me, Thou art my servant, Israel, in whom I will glorify myself. And I said, I have laboured in vain, I have spent my strength for nought and in vain; nevertheless my judgment is with Jehovah, and my work with my God." Hence it is said to Him, "It is a small thing that thou shouldest be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel: I have even given thee for a light of the nations, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth. Thus saith Jehovah the Redeemer of Israel, his Holy One, to him whom man despiseth, to him whom the nation abhorreth, to a servant of rulers: kings shall see and arise; princes, and they shall worship, because of Jehovah who is faithful, the Holy One of Israel, who hath chosen thee" He is also given for a covenant of the people (Israel), to establish the land, restore the captives, and execute judgment on their foes.

Still more does Isa. 50 prepare the way for all that was afterward told of the sufferings of Christ

and the glories to follow. For here we have His servant with the tongue and ear of the instructed, whatever it might cost. "The Lord Jehovah opened mine ear, and I was not rebellious I turned not away backward. I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheek to those that plucked off the hair; I hid not my face from shame and spitting. But the Lord Jehovah will help me: therefore I shall not be confounded; therefore I have 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 grow old as a garment; the moth shall eat them up. Who is among you that feareth Jehovah, that hearkeneth to the voice of His servant etc.?" This is succeeded by the triple call to hearken in Isa. 51 and to awake, awake, in 51, 52, closing with the announcement on the mountains of him that publisheth peace, good, and salvation, that saith to Zion, "Thy God reigneth.... Jehovah comforteth his people, he redeemeth Jerusalem." Therefore were those that bear His vessels to depart, to go out, to touch nothing unclean; and this not with haste or flight, for Jehovah was both front and rear guard.

On what was this deliverance based? On the suffering Messiah; and as 50 revealed His sufferings from man, so along with them 53 reveals that which makes plain His still deeper and infinitely faithful sufferings from Jehovah. The end of 52 is thus the preface which, while connected with the foregoing chapters, is the due beginning of chap. 53.

Jehovah speaks in general terms to the godly remnant, the earnest of the generation to come. "Behold, my servant shall deal wisely; he shall be exalted and extolled, and be high exceedingly." Christ is God's power as well as God's wisdom. Time was when many were amazed at the depth of His humiliation — "His visage so marred more than man, and his form more than the sons of men." For He went about doing good, and healing all that were under the power of the devil, as neither Moses, nor Elijah, nor Elisha, nor any other ever did. Anointed with the Holy Ghost and with power, He was the lowliest of men and taught subjection to the powers that be. Why then the spite and contempt of men, especially of the Jews, beyond all measure?

They were utterly without excuse. For the same prophet Isaiah in his early visions had announced Him Immanuel (Isa. 7: 14, Isa. 8: 8), and brought together (Isa. 9: 6), for "a child born to us, and a son given to us," the many wonders of His name, "called Wonderful, Counsellor, Mighty God, Father of the age (or, eternity), Prince of Peace." This made His humiliation inexplicable, save to those who see by faith that only thus could God be glorified as to sin in Messiah's atoning death, in order that all who believe might be saved by grace.

Now all was changed. This finds abundant illustration in Isa. 9: 1-5; Isa. 11: 1-10; Isa. 35; Isa. 63; Jer. 33. 14-26; Ezek. 34. 23-31; Ezek. 37: 21-28; Dan. 7: 13, 14; Hosea 3: 5; Micah 5: 1-5; Zech. 12: 9, 10; Zech. 14: 3-9. The Psalms are no less plain: Ps. 2: 6-12; Ps. 8: 5-9; Ps. 22: 27-31; Ps. 45: 2-7; Ps. 72: 1-10. "So shall he startle many nations; kings shall shut their mouths at him," as their menials used to do at them. "For what had not been told them they shall see, and what they had not heard shall they consider." The glory, to say nothing of the grace, which shows us the once despised and hated and suffering Messiah so surpassing all that nations or their kings knew, filled them with unutterable astonishment. Yet this is but the introduction to the colloquy that ensues on the deepest things for both God and man opened out in its course.

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

"Who hath believed our report? and to whom hath the arm of Jehovah been revealed? For he grew (or, shall grow) up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground. No form had he

nor comeliness, and when we see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him. He is despised and shunned by men; a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, and as one from whom men hide their face, he was despised and we esteemed him not" (Isa. 53: 1-3).

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

Messiah's humiliation was an affront to the Jew, as poor as he was proud and filled with nothing but earthly power and grandeur in his dreams of the coming king. And the root of it was the insensibility of the natural man to sin, his own sins and utter evil and ruin before God. But whatever the glorious things designed and assured to Israel, it is impossible that He could overlook iniquity. Of old they had been ready and confident to obey His law; and they made it their boast that they alone had it. But how had they kept it or honoured Him? Their history (and He wrote who knew all) was a record of continual sin and rebellion. While Moses was up the mountain to receive the tables of stone on which Jehovah wrote the Ten Words, the people broke into open revolt, and made Aaron the instrument of setting up a golden calf to fall down and worship as the deliverer from Egypt, covering yet aggravating their apostasy under the proclamation of a feast to Jehovah. Why wonder that such a generation perished in the wilderness?

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

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

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

Yet the dry bones must live, and stand up an exceeding great army, before the union of Judah and his companions with Ephraim and his, to be one in Jehovah's hand (Ezek. 37). The chapter before lets

us know the primary work on their souls when He sprinkles clean water upon them, gives them also a new heart, and replaces their stony heart with a heart of flesh; so that they repent and loathe themselves in their own sight for their iniquities and their abominations.

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

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

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

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

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

It is well that we have the divine application of ver. 4 in the Gospel of Matthew (8: 17), where it is cited from the Septuagint as "Himself took our infirmities and bore our diseases." It is not meant that He suffered under them as a matter of fact; but that He took them on His spirit and was burdened by their weight, whilst He removed them by His gracious intervention. He was perfect in this respect as in all others. What a contrast with Moses in Egypt inflicting scourges on the oppressors of Israel and despisers of the "I am"! and with Elijah in the midst of apostate Israel recalling the guilty king and

people from Baal to Jehovah! Here we have God in Christ, reconciling the world to Himself, not reckoning to them their offences, but not yet the sinless One made sin for us that we might become God's righteousness in Him. It was He who, anointed by God with the Holy Spirit and power, went throughout doing good and healing all that were under the devil's power, because God was with Him. And it appears from this remarkable word of the prophet as applied by the apostle that as He healed in divine energy, He took the infirmities and the sicknesses as a load of sorrow on Himself before God.

Do we not see the detail of this peculiar way especially in the Gospel of Mark? Take the leper in Mark 1, the paralytic of Mark 2, the demoniac of Mark 4, the raised daughter of the synagogue ruler in Mark 5, the deaf and dumb in Mark 7, the blind man of Bethsaida in Mark 8, and the son with a dumb spirit in Mark 9. It was not only power that dispelled the evil, but His deep interest and grace in the way wherein He did it, as the perfect servant of man's need in God's power. Truly "He hath done all things well." Thus we gain a truth through the prophet by understanding ver. 4 of His wondrous way in healing the afflicted, instead of forcing it to speak of His yet distinct work of propitiation for our sins, which required far more and different from the cure of infirmities and diseases appreciated aright before God.

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

The blood of such creatures did all that was available till the Lamb of God came and suffered for us, not only made sin and become a curse on the tree, but for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour. For every shadow met and was more than fulfilled on our account in Him who glorified God as God in His death for sin, as He had in His life glorified Him as His Father in an equally perfect obedience. It is unbelieving blindness to see in His cross nothing more than a martyrdom for the truth and an example of holy love. These elements were in it beyond doubt, but incomparably more: the absolute necessity on God's part as well as ours of One as truly God as man, one mediator both of God and men, Christ Jesus man, who gave Himself a ransom for all, who suffered for sins once (and once was ample), Just for unjust, that He might bring us to God, not yet to heaven (however surely this in due time) but (what was of the utmost moment for the soul now and here) "to God."

And what can be plainer than the prophet's figures? *He* (none other in heaven or on earth could avail), He only, He truly, He effectually "was wounded," not in regard of any good in us, but "for our transgressions." When in their darkness they did esteem Him stricken, smitten of God, it was governmental, and significant of God's displeasure. But now they knew by divine teaching, and state it as a certain truth that only in sovereign grace to helpless and otherwise ruined sinners was *He* therein wounded for our transgressions, bruised for our iniquities. It was God's way to save righteously. If the Jews did not dispute that through one man sin entered into the world, and through sin death; and thus death passed upon all men for that all sinned (adding then their personal sins to Adam's transgression); much rather did the grace of God, and the free gift in the grace of the one man Jesus Christ exceed unto the many. Was it not worthy of God and due to the Saviour, that where sin abounded, grace should exceedingly surpass? Compare the unworthy first man's sin with the all-worthy Second's suffering for

sins. Who but an unbeliever could fail to see the infinite contrast, that grace should flow abundantly for the salvation of the believer, as judgment must act all the more certainly against those who despise such a God and such a Saviour?

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

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

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

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

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

How precious it is to have the true God thus communicating His moral complacency in the rejected Messiah, and in His work of sin-bearing, to those who once despised Him but now share His delight in that meek endurance of all indignity! What a sight for the heavenly host, who at the marvel of His birth of woman appreciated the sign of a babe wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger, yet praising God and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good-pleasure in men! Now it is Jehovah musing on the deepest proof the only-begotten Son could give of the Saviour's love and His own, not only to display the true nature of God where it was unknown, but to save His people from their sins, whose history had been a succession of divine favours followed by deepening

departure and rebellion against Him.

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

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

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

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

Expositors generally assume that the oriental style in the Psalms and the Prophets overflows and must be allowed for in the sober facts. Certainly it is not so in Christ and His cross! The truth exceeds in His grace and His endurance; as shown in the N.T. The reality penetrated more deeply and rose far above any anticipation vouchsafed. But there is another side not to be overlooked. The cross of Christ reveals His moral glory as nothing else could. Where was Jewish righteousness and priestly grace, where Roman law, and Greek letters at that solemn hour? Did not all of man and the world with its religion conspire against the only Righteous Servant, the Lord of glory full of grace and truth? And

what can be said of the disciples, of His apostles, of Peter? Where can there be an atom for boast save in Him who was made a curse upon the tree, abandoned even of God necessarily that we might never be, yet vindicating Him to the uttermost when realising it to the uttermost? Truly it was the hour which stands alone through all eternity, and the Lord Jesus could say of it, Now was the Son of man glorified and God was glorified in Him; if God was glorified in Him God shall also glorify Him in Himself, and shall glorify Him immediately (*i.e.* before the predicted glory of the kingdom be manifested).

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

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

In the preceding section the last clause of ver. 8 is decisive that the speaker can be none other than Jehovah Himself meditating throughout 7-9 on the gracious sufferings of His Messiah. Here in ver. 10 it is no less certain that we hear the remnant's voice about Him in answer to Jehovah, and reckoning on the sure and blessed fruit of Jehovah's part in that momentous trespass-offering. If Jehovah viewed with delight the Holy One of God meekly bowing to all indignity and suffering at the hands of those among whom He deigned to dwell in infinite love, and with heart set on representing aright the true God who was as little known as He is as among the heathen, the godly tell Jehovah of the wonder, once hidden from them but now their delight, that it seemed good in Jehovah's eyes to bruise Him.

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

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

But here the godly view His sufferings in the light of Jehovah's purpose and peace. Whatever

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

perish in their stubborn unbelief. Here too, as the phrase is "the many," it would seem that the same objects are in view.

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

Jehovah ends the strain (ver. 12) with the proclamation of Messiah's earthly exaltation and all the more because of His humiliation in suffering love. "Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong ones." He is the mightiest and most enduring of conquerors; but the spring lay not in strength or wisdom or majesty or glory. It originated in infinite love, it flowed out in divine grace, of which He will be the most suited administrator in the day of glory; because He, to make all effectual both for God's glory and for man's need and blessing, had gone down into suffering unfathomable to all but Himself. So the prophet here expresses it "Because he poured out his soul unto death, and was numbered with the transgressors; and he bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors." He submitted to the last degree of creature weakness; He bowed to the foulest imputation of indignity; He carried the sinful load of not a few but "many," and made intercession not for friends but enemies, "the transgressors," who but for Him had been lost for ever. What possibly plainer here than the sinless One suffering at God's hand sin's punishment, turning to God in bearing their evils that those who believe might be forgiven and purged, blessed and triumphant through Him? Christ is the way, the truth, and the life; but here primarily for repentant Israel. Yet as the substitute for guilty objects, He suffered at the righteous Jehovah's hand beyond all that men can conceive; and for Gentile no less than Jew as the N.T. explicitly declares.

Is it not deplorable that any one bearing the name of the Lord should allow the truth of this wondrously accurate picture which the prophet drew, but speak of "the ideal Sufferer"? The exaltation which startles the kings is not yet fulfilled, because the mystery of the heavenly work is in progress; but it will surely be when He appears in glory to take His world-kingdom (Rev. 11: 15). But why evade the only answer to the sufferings already and exhaustively made good to the full? Why idealise the yet to be fulfilled picture of His earthly reign in Isa. 1: 24-31, Isa. 2: 2-4, Isa. 4: 2-6, Isa. 9: 3-7, Isa. 11, Isa. 12, Isa. 35, Isa. 65. etc.? Indeed it is where the prophets as a whole point and converge. No doubt the early fathers wrote with little intelligence; and later tradition is yet more wide of the mark. But this idealism shirks the truth which convicts the new criticism of unbelief.

W. K.