

PREFACE

"The Sufferings and the Glory" is a title borrowed from the Apostle Peter (1 Peter 1:11), who used the words to summarize the Old Testament prophecies of the career of Christ. The heart of those prophecies is Isaiah 51:13-53:12. Nowhere in all the Bible is the career of our Lord, wherein by a cross He won a crown, more clearly set forth. This book is an exposition of this heartland of Old Testament prophecy.

In substance, these five addresses were first presented, much as they appear here, to a national church conference meeting at Winona Lake, Indiana. Since then this same series has been presented at several Bible conferences. The writer has also presented the material in much more detailed and technical form to his classes in Hebrew Exegesis in two theological seminaries.

Literature continues to appear, in several languages, on this subject each year. In fact, several books, monographs, and articles have appeared since the publisher began the work of publication. While I have not attempted to report this literature through this book, revisions have been made to keep the work as up-to-date as possible.

A chapter treating the identity of the patient sufferer of Isaiah 53 has since been added to make this small book more useful.

The reader will not be amused or even entertained as he reads. There is nothing amusing or entertaining about the cross of Christ. There is, however, much to solemnize, impress, and even thrill one in the cross. Since the death of Christ is never out of sight in Isaiah 52:13-53:12 (and I hope never out of sight in these expositions), the reader will of necessity linger long at the cross. May "all the light of sacred story" that gathers at the head of the cross shine on and in.

The citations from the text are from the New Translation which I have prepared, and which appears immediately following the table of contents. References to other Scripture portions are from the Authorized Version, except in the introductory chapter where the American Standard Version has been used.

For the benefit of expositors who may wish to see at a glance the general analysis and plan of treatment to follow, an outline of the addresses is furnished with the translation.

The writer is conscious of certain oddities of style in the book. These are due in part to the fact that the first five chapters were prepared first for oral delivery. Revision could not fully remove this. The close adherence to the Hebrew text as far as possible and the restrictions of the fifteen verses of the passage account for more. Frequent use of *Jehovah* rather than LORD or the now popular *Yahweh* as the name for Israel's God is due largely to the habit of using the American Standard Version.

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THE TEXT

Isaiah 52:13-53:12

I. THE MYSTERY OF THE SERVANT

1. His Exaltation

Authorized Version

13 Behold, my servant shall deal wisely; he shall be exalted; and extolled, and be very high.

New Translation

13 Behold, my servant shall act wisely; he shall be exalted; he shall be lifted up, and shall be very high.

2. Astonishment at His Humiliation

14 As many were astonished at thee; his visage was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men:

14 Just as many were astonished at thee: (thus disfigured from a man was his appearance and his form from the sons of mankind)

3. Astonishment at His Exaltation

15 So shall he sprinkle many nations; the kings shall shut their mouths at him: for that which had not been told them shall they see; and that which they had not heard shall they consider.

15 So shall he startle many nations; kings shall shut their mouths at him, because that which had not been told them they shall have seen, and that which they had not heard they shall have discovered.

II. THE REJECTION OF THE SERVANT

1. The Rejection of the Message

1 Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?

1 Who believed what we heard? And to whom was the arm of Jehovah disclosed?

2. The Rejection of the Person

2 For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, 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.

2 And he grew up as a suckling-plant before him, and as a root from very dry ground there was no form to him, and no splendor; and we looked at him and there was no good look that we should delight in him.

3. The Nature of the Rejection

3 He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not.

3 He was rejected and forsaken of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; and as those caused to hide our faces from him so he was despised and we did not esteem him.

III. THE ATONEMENT OF THE SERVANT

1. The Human Occasion

4 Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows; yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.

4 Truly, he himself has borne away our calamity, and as for our sorrows, he carried them. Yet we ourselves did estimate him to be stricken, smitten of God and belabored.

2. The Divine Act

5 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.

5 And he was pierced for our transgressions; crushed for our punishments; the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and by his welt, healing is for us.

3. The Great Confession

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

6 All of us as a flock have gone astray; we have turned each one to his own way, and Jehovah hath caused to strike upon him the punishment due all of us.

IV. THE SUBMISSION OF THE SERVANT

1. In His Suffering

7 He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth.

7 He was harassed and belabored, yet did he not open his mouth; and as a sheep to the slaughter he was led, yet as a ewe before her shearers is tongue-tied so did he not open his mouth.

2. In His Death

8 He was taken from prison and from judgment; and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living; for the transgression of my people was he stricken.

8 From confinement and from judgment he was snatched away; and among his contemporaries, who did consider that he was cut off from the land of living ones on account of the transgressions of my people, to whom the stroke was due?

3. In His Burial

9 And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death, because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth.

9 And there were those who appointed his grave with the wicked ones; yet he was with a rich man in his death, because he had done no violence, and there was no fraud in his mouth.

V. THE EXALTATION OF THE SERVANT

1. To Prosperity

10 Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand.

10 Yet Jehovah pleased to crush him; he did make him sick. When his soul shall place a trespass offering, he shall see posterity; he shall prolong days; and the plan of Jehovah shall succeed in his hand.

2. To Satisfaction

11 He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities.

11 Because of the travail of his soul he shall see; he shall be satisfied by his knowledge. My righteous servant shall procure righteousness for the many, since he himself bears their punishments.

3. To Compensation

12 Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and

12 Therefore I will allot to him a portion among the mighty; and with the powerful he shall divide gain; because he bared his soul to the death, and with transgressors he was numbered; and he himself lifted up the sin

made intercession for the transgressors.

of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.

The
MYSTERY
of the Servant of the Lord
Isaiah 52:13-15

CHAPTER ONE

Behold, my servant shall act wisely; he shall be exalted; he shall be lifted up, and shall be very high.

Just as many were astonished at thee: (thus disfigured from a man was his appearance and his form from the sons of mankind)

So shall he startle many nations; kings shall shut their mouths at him; because that which had not been told them they shall have seen, and that which they had not heard they shall have discovered.

1. THE IMPORTANCE OF THE PROPHECY

There is much obvious evidence that the passage under consideration (Isaiah 52:13-53:12) is one of the most important in the entire Bible. It appears in the responsive readings, at least in part, of almost every modern hymnal. It is read every Sunday morning in hundreds of Christian worship services all over the world. At the Easter season it has perennially attracted the attention of preachers who sought appropriate texts for their sermons. Missionaries have found it one of the most fruitful of all evangelistic texts. Two centuries ago David Brainerd did some of his most effective missionary preaching to the Indians from texts in this passage.

Perhaps the most distinguished thing about it is the fact that this very portion stands in the background of almost every New Testament treatment of the great events connected with our Lord's passion, death, burial, resurrection, ascension, exaltation, and second coming. The tabernacle and its fixtures, the primeval altars, the high priest's office--these and other things *pictured* these events, but these fifteen verses actually *describe* them in detail.

The Ethiopian eunuch of the eighth chapter of Acts memorialized these verses forever in the minds of millions of Bible-reading Christians, when after reading that

"He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; and as a lamb before his shearer is silent, so opened he not his mouth. In his humiliation his judgment was taken away, and who shall declare his generation? For his life was taken from the earth"

he asked, "Of whom does the prophet say this? Of himself, or of some other man?" Then we read, "Philip opened his mouth and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus."

This same passage of Scripture we intend to use for the same important purpose.

2. ITS UNIQUE PLACE IN PROPHECY

Our passage occupies a unique place in Old Testament prophecy. The prophets, beginning with Samuel, had spoken of an age when God would reign over men through a righteous king. Hopes had been fixed on Saul, then David, and on Solomon. The most pious hearts had been assured that one of these might be that king. But Saul was rejected, David died without "receiving the promise," and Solomon turned out to be a disappointment. Then the kingdom was divided and even the chosen line of David, on the Judean throne, at one time became so corrupt that their king Manasseh (2 Chronicles 33:9) caused the people to do worse than the abominations of the Canaanites whom the Lord drove out before them. It was at this period, possibly even during wicked Manasseh's reign, that prophecy took a new turn: God's righteous king was to be not only a glorious monarch but a suffering Servant of Jehovah, who would die for the people. There was to be a crown, all right, but before the crown a cross. This was not the usual thing in prophecy. It was a new element. Isaiah 52:13-53:12 is perhaps the first occurrence of it. And down to the resurrection of Christ nobody understood this new approach. Even the prophets themselves, says Peter (1 Peter 1:10,11), "inquired and searched diligently...searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory which should follow." So here we have the most important prediction of the "sufferings of Christ" together with some of "the glory which should follow."

Coming now to look at this wonderful anticipation of the career of our Lord, one discerns that it is concerned with one person from beginning to end. That one, Jehovah introduces in 52:13 with the words "Behold my servant." Down to the close of the passage, which concludes "he bare the sin of many and made intercession for the transgressors," the subject is ever the same.

3. SIGNIFICANCE OF OPENING WORD, "BEHOLD"

It is to be observed that God frequently uses the word "behold" when something important and new is to be revealed. After God made a man who was to live on the earth, he turned to him and remarked, "Behold, I have given you every herb...and every tree..to you it shall be for food" (Genesis 1:29). And when all the world save eight persons had become corrupt, God told the eight, "Behold, I do bring the flood of waters upon the earth, to destroy all flesh" (Genesis 6:17). To a shocked and surprised Abimelech he said, "Behold, you are but a dead man." (New and important information it was for Abimelech at least!) So the declaration "Behold, my servant" is intended to introduce something startlingly new and wonderfully important both to Israel, who first heard it, and to us today.

4. HEBREW CONCEPT OF A "SERVANT"

A servant in the Hebrew mind (and the Bible is a Hebrew book) was primarily one who did work. The root of the word means that. But because most of the hardest work was often done by slaves, the word came to mean a slave,

and this word עבֹדָה is the one so often rendered "bondservant." By extension it came to mean one who, like a slave, had no will of his own, no liberty of his own, save to do the will of his master. How appropriate an anticipation of our Lord, who said, "My meat is to do the will of him who sent me, and to finish his work" (John 4:34)! *Worshippers* of God were His servants, so Nehemiah (1:10) spoke of his brethren in captivity as God's servants. An *ambassador* or *representative* was also thought of as a servant, so Jehovah through Jeremiah spoke of Nebuchadnezzar as "my servant" (Jeremiah 25:9). Any *intimate* of the Lord was also thought of as His servant--angels (Job 4:18), the *prophets* (Daniel 9:6), *Israel* (Isaiah 41:8,9), and finally in the present passage, the Messiah.

"Behold, my servant"--worshipper, ambassador, intimate of Jehovah--who came with no will of His own save to do his Father's will (Luke 2:49, 22:42, John 4:34, 8:29, Hebrews 10:7). Since His Father's will led by Calvary, He drank that cup, saying, "Nevertheless, not my will but thine be done."

This is what the Lord of hosts means when He says "Behold, my servant."

With these facts in the background, consider this striking portrait of the suffering, dying--living, reigning, man of sorrows, king of glory--the Servant of Jehovah.

First, in 52:13-15 we are reminded of the *mystery* of His career. Next, in 53:1-3 of His utter *rejection* by His people. Then, in 53:4-6 we are told of the *atonement* which He wrought at Calvary, and in verses 7-9 of His complete *submission* both to the abuse of man and to the will of the Father. Finally, in verses 10-12 we glimpse something of the transcendent *exaltation* He bought for Himself and for all who by faith make Him the "captain of our salvation."

We consider now the first section, 52:13-15, which presents the mystery of the career of the servant of Jehovah.

The first verse speaks of

THE EXALTATION OF THE SERVANT OF JEHOVAH (verse 13)

"Behold, my servant shall act wisely; he shall be exalted; he shall be lifted up, and shall be very high."

1. THE SUCCESS OF THE SERVANT'S CAREER

This presents in outline the stages of Messiah's amazing rise, stage-by-stage, till finally He reaches what Franz Delitzsch called "an immeasurable height that towers above everything else." In short, verse 13, looking beyond the suffering, sees only the glory, the exaltation of the son of God--"far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion...all things under his feet" (Ephesians 1:21,22). Here are the stages: "he shall rise up; he shall be lifted up, and be very high."

2. THE CAUSE OF HIS SUCCESS

But first the cause of His rise must be seen. It is that He "shall act wisely." Now comes the question: What is this wisdom, this wise activity? A standard dictionary defines wisdom as sound judgment. The so-called wise men of ancient times were what we now call philosophers--men with ability to reflect on the whole of life. We are not, however, left in doubt as to what this wisdom is! It is to follow the direction of the Spirit of God. This is seen in an earlier portion of Isaiah's prophecy (11:2), where he says of this same servant: "And the spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord." Listen to this! Wise activity is that which is directed by the Spirit of Wisdom! It is received in the "fear of the Lord."

Will this bring success? It certainly will. (The word "deal wisely" is translated "have success" in Joshua 1:8.) And it is said of this same Servant (of Isaiah 42:1-4)--"I have put my spirit upon him." That is the source of His wisdom. But the Lord adds, "He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the street." That is, He will not go about paging Himself and bragging about His spirituality. Men can see when one is filled with the Spirit. "A bruised reed shall he not break"--he is easy to get along with. And finally, "He shall not fail or be discouraged till he have set judgment in the earth."

He did succeed. When on His last earthly night he reported in to His Father in the garden prayer, He could say "I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do" (John 17:4, A.V.). As He died He cried, "It is finished!" Our redemption was finished. And even though men are now often discouraged (even in the Lord's work), though all the hopeful plans of sinful men must ultimately fail, Jesus is not discouraged, for He "shall not fail." The Christian is in His hands, and "he shall not fail." Though the path marked out by the Spirit leads frequently through Gethsemane, the opposition of men, the conniving of the Devil and of his children, even the desertion of our friends--even though there are surely valleys enough and the dark shadow of death, after the cross will come the crown, and beyond the tears there is joy unspeakable.

3. THE STAGES OF HIS RISE

The stages of the Servant's rise are three: "He shall rise up; he shall be lifted up, and be very high." The first verb and the second describe the process and the last the result--very high. Some famous expositors see in these three clauses the three well-known stages in our Lord's historical rise: first resurrection, then ascension, and finally enthronement on high. At least it may be said that there were these three steps in His rise, and this may be a veiled reference to them. In the larger aspect, the passage means that before the full results of the work of Christ are accomplished, they shall have issued in the exaltation of Christ to such an immeasurable height that words fail to describe it. The utmost force of the Hebrew language is here used to set this forth, and the Greek of the New Testament likewise exhausts its superlatives to explain the utmost height of the Lord's exaltation--some of it already past, some yet future. Peter said that He is "by the right hand of God exalted" (Acts 2:33); Paul, that He

"ascended far above all heavens" (Ephesians 4:10) and that God "set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come; and has put all things under his feet and gave him to be head over all things," and then he adds "unto the church" (Ephesians 2:20-22). (See also Ephesians 1:19-21 and Philippians 2:9.)

However tragic the event appeared to be, the most practical, profitable, and successful event in the history of the world was the death of Christ. It was indeed the event of which it could be said it was "the hour...that the Son of man should be glorified" and the hour when the "prince of this world" was "cast out" (John 12:23,31).

Our text continues with a declaration concerning

AMAZEMENT AT CAREER OF THE SERVANT OF JEHOVAH (verses 14,15)

"Just as many were astonished at thee: (thus disfigured from a man was his appearance and his form from the sons of mankind), so shall he startle many nations; kings shall shut their mouths at him; because that which had not been told them they shall have seen, and that which they had not heard they shall have discovered."

There will be a mystery, an incongruity, about the manifestation of the final glory of Christ. How can one so highly exalted be the same meek and lowly carpenter? There was also an incongruity about His past humiliation. How could such perfect humanity be brought as low as He was? These two amazing mysteries are the subject of verses 14 and 15.

1. TWO AMAZEMENTS OBSERVED

The first observation to be made is that *there was an amazement or astonishment described in verse 14 that is the measure of another in verse 15*. This is the force of "just as" at the beginning of the former and of "so" at the beginning of the latter. There is a parallel between the two¹. This needs emphasis because it is very frequently unobserved. The writer did not see it until he read the passage in Hebrew a few years ago, having missed it in the English for many years. This parallel and comparative relationship is also obscured by the translation of the Hebrew for "startle" in verse 15 by the word "sprinkle" in our common version. The A.S.V. margin changes it to "startle," which in my opinion is the only possible translation² in such a construction. To be sure, the word is

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- 1 There is another "so" (Hebrew ׀) in the midst of verse 14, but it is obviously not intended to introduce the apodosis to the first clause of verse 14. It is a part of the protasis.
 - 2 My reasons for the quite dogmatic assertion are as follows:
 - (1) This word is never used with an accusative of the thing which receives the element involved, i.e., the use is, e.g., "He shall sprinkle (׀) the blood (the element) upon the altar (the receptacle)." It is never merely, "He shall sprinkle the altar" without naming the element. Leviticus 13:41 is not an exception. Compare Hebrew.
 - (2) The word is always used with the element sprinkled (not the receptacle) in an accusative relation, either supplied or implied.
 - (3) The use of this verb (׀) in the cognate Arabic shows that it comes from an old Semitic root which may be

properly rendered "sprinkle" in dozens of other cases. But the situation is like this: in each of these cases the object of the verb is the *thing sprinkled*, such as water or blood--never the *thing sprinkled upon*. To illustrate, I say "The priest sprinkled blood on the altar." Never would the construction be dissimilar to that. "The priest sprinkled the altar" could not be said with this Hebrew word. So the nations in this verse are not the thing sprinkled upon, but rather the object which is agitated, like water when it is spurted forth on something else. The nations are "spurted," or more nicely stated, they are "startled." A.B. Davidson, a great Hebraist, said, "It is simple treason against the Hebrew language to render 'sprinkle.' The interpreter who will so translate will 'do anything.'" Those are "fighting words," as we say, for a staid grammarian to use, but they express the general feeling of many competent scholars. The verse teaches that just as Christ in the past shocked mankind in one manner, just so in the future he will shock and startle mankind in another manner.

2. TWO AMAZEMENTS COMPARED AS TO FORCE

The first time Christ came He *astonished* men, but when He comes the second time He will *utterly shock and stun them*. I must speak again of Hebrew words. The word "astonished" in verse 14, used of the impression on men at the first advent, primarily means to shut up. The idea is extended to refer to the way men shut their mouths in dumb astonishment when some unusual thing happens. There is a form of it translated "desolation"-- something horrible and revolting. It is the word used by Daniel and translated "abomination of *desolation*" (Daniel 9:27). There was something very horrible and revolting about the appearance of Christ when He first came that had this effect on men. When He comes again, the shock will be worse, for He shall "startle" them. This appearance will stun them. Is this what is in the Spirit's mind in Revelation 1:7, "Behold, he comes with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also who pierced him; and all the kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him"? I do know that the prophecy of Zechariah 12:4 promises that "in that day, saith the LORD, I will smite every horse with astonishment, and his rider with madness: and I will open my eyes upon the house of Judah, and will smite every horse of the people with blindness."

3. TWO AMAZEMENTS COMPARED AS TO SCOPE

The first time the Servant of Jehovah came the amazement reached a *few individuals* in a small corner of old Syria called Palestine, but when He comes again that Servant will have an aspect which will shock *all nations*.

applied to the leaping up of excess emotion in human beings.

(4) The most ancient version (the Septuagint Greek, 3rd century B.C.) so renders it. The Greek word is *thaumasontai* (from *thaumazo*), to look at with wonder and amazement.

(5) This inward excitement of all nations at the exaltation of God's Servant accords with the teachings of Scripture (Jeremiah 33:9, Revelation 1:7).

(6) This meaning only carries out the parallelism obviously intended to subsist between the reaction to the suffering (v. 14) and the reaction to the glory (v. 15).

(7) The idea of the Servant as a priest sprinkling blood is foreign to the context. He is the oblation itself in this case.

(8) The explanatory clause following demands this.

So agree many authorities.

Such is the force of the contrast between "many" and "many nations...kings shall shut their mouths." Space fails to tell of the world-wide acclaim and terror when Jesus comes to judge and rule the nations. Many prophecies speak of it.

Modern professional psychology, of which a large percentage is frequently intellectual hypocrisy, has taught us to hide our feelings in the presence of misfortune. A minister is supposed to master a special kind of "bed-side manner" quite like the physician's. That the man of God should express sorrow or grief over sickness, or suggest that a man might not get well, is cause for exclamations of alarm, protests, recall, and excommunication. And the worst possible thing a man can do is to be respectfully silent! "Never mind what you say, don't bother whether your words make sense or not, and above all, say something!" seems to be the philosophy. Our less sophisticated ancestors felt differently about it. When Job's three friends came from a distance and found him desperately ill, they sat down with him upon the ground seven days and seven nights, and none spoke a word to him "for," the Bible says, "they saw that his grief was very great" (Job 2:13). If a pastor ever behaved in that way toward a sick person of his flock, the members might wish to add execution and dismemberment to excommunication!

But observe! When men saw the suffering and humiliation of Christ, they laid their hands upon their mouths in dumb-struck astonishment.

However, blessed thought, when He comes back they will do so again; only the whole earth shall do so, not just the peasants and working people, for "kings shall shut their mouths at him." And well they might, for "He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth...Yea, all kings shall fall down before him; all nations shall serve him" (Psalm 72:8,11).

4. TWO AMAZEMENTS CONTRASTED AS TO NATURE

Finally, in contrasting these two amazements, we are told that though the first was an amazement of contempt *for* a suffering Servant, the second shall be one of *admiration* for a reigning King.

At the first, He was "disfigured from a man...and his form from the sons of mankind." The English versions have it that He was "marred *more than* any man," etc. That is grammatically possible but not physically possible, for His body never saw corruption. Two things must be meant. First, His appearance was marred beyond ordinary recognition as anything like the human male in his strength and dignity. Did you ever see the anguish of heartbreak on a weeping man's face? If so, then you know what this means. The manly look had vanished. Only in Christ's case the response evoked was not sympathy but contempt. The second thing is that His figure was marred beyond recognition as fully human--"and his figure from the sons of mankind."³ Again, this means not "more than the sons of mankind." It

3 The Hebrew word for man is אִישׁ the male of the human family in his strength and dignity--frequently translated "husband." The word for mankind is אָדָם the name of the human race, as such. It is also the name of the first man, Adam.

means that He looked like a creature not of our race, so much had sorrow smitten Him.

I do not think we can ever know all about this statement. But I remember what happened in my heart one day when a young man I loved cursed me for trying to help him. I know the pain I felt once when a man whom I thought was a son in the Lord turned his back on me. I remember the distress of a childhood hour when I lost my father's favor for a while. So, I believe I can accept the statement here concerning the injuries His suffering caused and at least in part understand it. The Roman nails didn't hurt too much. Though they pierced His flesh, the thieves felt them also. The thorns pierced His brow, but they may have hurt no more than the tortures of Jeremiah in Zedekiah's dungeon (Jeremiah 39:5,6). The cross was heavy, but others have carried heavy loads. The curses cut His heart, but others have endured cursing too. No one else, however, ever suffered and died so completely for sins that were entirely not his own as did Jesus; and no man ever died so completely alone in spirit as He. He turned to a Father in whose fellowship He had rested for an eternity and cried from the depths of His sobbing, heart-broken soul, "My God! My God! Why hast thou forsaken me?"

Even the sun ran away and hid his face (cf. Matthew 27:45) when Jesus died. No wonder men clasped hands to their mouths in trembling astonishment! Even the thieves and the callous Roman soldiers were much impressed.

When He comes again⁴ the picture will reverse itself. Men will be astonished rather "because that which had not been told them they shall have seen, and that which they had not heard they shall have discovered." Men who have been taught that Jesus is a man perpetually on a crucifix, or a disappointed Hebrew reformer, merely will see something that will shock them more than if the Russian Premier should join the Roman Catholic Church. They shall see the Son of God, this "same Jesus," come "with clouds" of glory. And "every eye shall see him." His glory once was veiled--it is even now veiled from human eyes--but when He comes they shall see it clearly. They shall hear Him too, for "The sun and the moon shall be darkened and the stars shall withdraw their shining. The LORD also shall roar out of Zion, and utter his voice from Jerusalem, and the heavens and the earth shall shake" (Joel 3:16).

Before leaving these matters, I call attention to an application of this last verse of our text made by the Apostle Paul in Romans 15:21. He has just said (verse 20), "Yea, so have I strived to preach the gospel, not where Christ was named, lest I should build upon another man's foundation." Then he adds, quoting our verse from the Greek translation of his day, "But as it is written, 'To whom he was not spoken of, they shall see; and they that have not heard shall understand.'"

One would hesitate to say Paul was interpreting Isaiah 52:15 as directly predicting the preaching of the gospel of Christ in pioneer fields in the

4 I would not leave the reader with the impression that I regard the explanation of this passage on the basis of the two comings as having been fully perceived before Jesus revealed them (John 14:1-3, Acts 1:11) and the apostles explained them (1 and 2 Thessalonians). Isaiah saw both comings but did not distinguish them (1 Peter 1:10,11).

age of grace. But this is certain: this expression of Paul's gives us license to believe that when the gospel is preached to men who have not heard, some of them will believe and stand amazed in the presence of the Lord--in the amazement of saving faith toward the wondrous grace of God in saving sinners.