

*The Servant of Jehovah:
The Sufferings of the Messiah and
The Glory That Should Follow*

by
David Baron

CHAPTER VI

"ISRAEL'S PENITENTIAL CONFESSION:
THE HISTORY OF THE SERVANT OF JEHOVAH UNFOLDED"

The second section, into which the whole prophecy divides itself, is, as stated above, primarily the sorrowful lament and confession of repentant Israel in the future. We are transplanted in these verses, by the spirit of prophecy, into that future solemn day of Israel's history which is described in the last chapters of Zechariah—when the spirit of grace and supplications shall be poured upon them, and their eyes shall be opened to look upon Him whom they have pierced. It is then, in the great mourning and weeping which are there described, that they shall break out with this plaintive hymn, which is musical in its sadness and betrays the agony of a broken heart and contrite spirit.

Let me say, at the beginning of this exposition, that the tenses in these verses are perfects, the future being regarded prophetically as already past. "*Who hath believed our report?*"—literally, "that which we hear," namely, the wonderful story about this glorious Servant of Jehovah, who, through His self-humiliation and vicarious suffering even unto death, has accomplished for us so great a salvation, and is now exalted to such height of glory—"*and the arm of Jehovah over (or 'upon') whom has it been revealed?*"

The arm of Jehovah is the emblem of divine power. In the 51st chapter we have the remnant of Israel appealing to it: "*Awake, awake, put on strength, O arm of Jehovah, as in the days of old, the generations of ancient times.*"¹ And in the 52nd chapter we read: "*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.*"²

From the context we see that it is the manifestation of this power of God in and through the Messiah that is here spoken of. "In the Servant of Jehovah who is depicted in this prophecy," an old writer truly observes, "the redeeming arm of Jehovah manifests itself: so to say, personifies itself. The Messiah Himself is, as it were, the outstretched arm of Jehovah," and the message (the proclaiming) concerning Him, "the power of God unto salvation to all who believe." But who hath believed this message? and whose eyes were opened to behold in this despised and humiliated Servant the very embodiment of the power of God and the wisdom of God? The answer implied in the first question is that *very few, if any*, did believe it; and to the second question, that only such upon whom an operation of divine power has been performed, only those "over" or "upon" whom the arm of Jehovah has been *revealed*, could believe it—so marvellous, so utterly incredible to mere human thought and imagination is the wonderful story which, in all its saving power and glory, is now made plain to us. Truly, the message, or "report," of a full and perfect salvation through a suffering Messiah, who through humiliation and death enters into glory, could not have been known or believed, and much less invented, by either Jew or Gentile; but all the more it bears upon it the seal of Divine wisdom and Divine power. "*As it is written, Eye hath not*

1 Chap. li. 9.

2 Chap. lii. 10.

*seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him. But God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit."*³

(1) *The Early Years and Unobtrusive Character of the Servant of Jehovah*

In the plaintive confession which follows there is incidentally unfolded also the whole earthly life-story of the Servant of Jehovah, beginning with His tender youth, which gradually develops into a manhood of suffering, and ends in a violent and ignominious death.

"For (or, 'And') He grew up before Him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground."

"Jehovah's Servant," as has been well said by another, "does not burst upon the world all at once in sudden splendour of daring or achievement, dazzling all eyes and captivating all hearts. He conforms to God's slow, silent law of growth. This law holds in every province of God's empire. Great lives are built up under this law:—a babe on mother's lap, opening its fringed eyelids to look forth wonderingly on an unknown world; a child learning to prattle and play; a boy at school; a young man with bloom on his cheek and splendid purpose in his eye; and so onward throughout successive stages. . . . Even so did 'Jehovah's Servant' grow by a natural human growth."⁴

The word יֹנֵק , *yoneq*, translated "tender plant," literally means "suckling," but is used here figuratively (in a horticultural sense) for the tender twig upon a tree or trunk, or stalk.⁵ Taken in connection with chap. xi. 1, we see that it springs up out of the decayed stump of Jesse, "after the proud cedar of the Davidic monarchy had been felled." But the second verse of Isaiah liii. presents not only a parallel but also a contrast to chapter xi. There, the figure is that of a strong, vigorous shoot coming out of the root of the decayed house of David; here, it is the frail "tender twig" or sapling, struggling out of the dry ground. Here, men are represented as turning away in disappointment, if not in disgust, from this "root" springing up out of such unpromising surroundings; there, we read in the tenth verse, *"And it shall come to pass in that day, that the root of Jesse, which standeth for an ensign of the peoples, unto Him shall the nations seek, and His resting place shall be glory."*

The difference is explained by the fact that whereas in chapter liii. it is Messiah's sufferings and rejection which are depicted, it is especially His millennial glory and reign, the beneficent effects of which extend even to the animal creation, which are described in chapter xi.

But, to return for a moment to a more minute examination of the second verse. We have here incidentally a prophetic description of our Lord Jesus during the early years of His life, concerning which there is so little recorded in the Gospel narrative. According to the manifest suggestion of the passage, "He grew up in obscurity and lowliness. Not as a prince royal, on whom the hopes and eyes of a nation are fixed, and all whose movements are chronicled in Court Gazette or Circular. Here is one living a lowly life in lowly environments. . . . Men expected 'a plant of renown,' fairer and statelier than all the trees in the garden of God, with boughs lifted cedar-like in majesty; instead, there is a suckling, a sprout from the root of a tree that had been cut down, with nothing fair or magnificent about it. It owes nothing to the soil in which it grows. The ground is dry, an arid waste without moisture; the plant is a tender one; and in that unpropitious soil whence no sweet juices can be drawn it grows up stunted, dwarfed, unattractive."

3 1 Cor. ii. 9, 10.

4 James Culross.

5 Ezek. xvii. 22.

The expression "out of dry ground" (which, as Delitzsch correctly observes, belongs to both figures, namely "tender twig," or "suckling," and "root") is intended to depict "the miserable character of the external circumstances in the midst of which the birth and growth of the Servant would take place." The "dry ground" describes the then-existing state of the enslaved and degraded nation; *i.e.* "He was subject to all the conditions inseparable from a nation that had been given up to the power of the world, and was in utter ignorance; in a word, the dry ground is the corrupt character of the age."⁶

And yet, in spite of all the obscure and adverse circumstances of His earthly environment, "*He grew up before Him,*" that is, before Jehovah—"increasing in wisdom and stature and in favour with God and men," with the eye of His heavenly Father ever complacently resting upon Him.

In rendering the last part of the second verse, most modern commentators depart from the accents of the Massoretic text, and translate, "*He had no form and comeliness that we should look on Him, and no beauty that we should desire Him,*" but the English Authorized and Revised Versions properly adhere to the punctuation of the Hebrew text, and render, "*He hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see Him there is no beauty that we should desire Him.*"

There was nothing in His appearance or surroundings that the carnal or worldly minded could be attracted by; everything was so different from what they had pictured or anticipated.

It is not inconsistent with the language of the text to suppose that "there may have been in His aspect, power, grace, majesty, blended with sorrow and meekness. The heart of the thing is, that men did not see the beauty that was there; He did not answer to their ideal; He wanted the qualities which they admired; His greatness was not shaped to their thoughts. Having misread the prophecies, having imagined another Deliverer than God had promised, being blind to the heavenly, while their souls lay open to the carnal and earthly, they found nothing worth gazing upon in Jehovah's Servant when He came. They would have welcomed a plumed and mail-clad warrior, riding forth to battle against the oppressor, would have shouted before him, 'Gird thy sword upon thy thigh, O most mighty, with thy glory and with thy majesty!' They have no admiration and no welcome for One who comes, meek and lowly, to make His soul an offering for sin, and to be God's salvation to the end of the earth. It was not sin that troubled them: how should a Saviour from sin delight them? What was there in a Bringer-in of righteousness to inspire such hearts?"⁷

(2) *The Despised and Rejected of Men*

The penitential confession proceeds in the third verse to set forth the positive aversion and hostility which the nation in its former ignorance manifested towards Jehovah's righteous Servant. "*He was despised and rejected (or 'forsaken') of men.*"

The first description of Him in this line— **נִבְזָה**, *nibhzeh*, "despised"—takes our thoughts back once more to what has already been said of Jehovah's Servant in the seventh verse of the 49th chapter: "Thus saith Jehovah, the Redeemer of Israel, and His Holy One, to Him whom man despiseth, to Him whom the nation abhorreth."⁸

No person in the history of the Jews has provoked such deep-seated abhorrence as He who came only

6 Delitzsch.

7 Culross.

8 Or, "despised of soul," as the words in Isa. xlix. 7 may best be rendered, describing the depth of contempt, *as from the very soul of man*, which He shall encounter.

to bless them, and who even on the cross prayed, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." When on earth, at the end of His three-and-a-half years of blessed ministry among them, they finally rejected Him. Their hatred was intense and mysterious. "Away with this man; release unto us Barabbas. . . . Crucify Him, crucify Him!" was their cry. And all through the centuries no name has provoked such intense abhorrence among the Jews as the name of Jesus.

I have known personally most amiable, and as men, lovable characters among the Jews; but immediately the name "Jesus" was mentioned, a change came over their countenances, and they would fall into a passion of anger. In the course of my missionary experiences these past thirty five or forty years, how often has it been my lot to witness some of my people almost mad with rage—clenching their fists, gnashing their teeth, and spitting on the ground at the very mention of the Name which to the believer "is as ointment poured forth"! Israel's attitude to our Lord Jesus may be gathered also from their literature. In the filthy legends about Him in the Talmud and more modern productions, the very names by which He is called are blasphemous. The precious name Yeshua ("Jesus," Saviour) has been changed into "Yeshu," made up of initial letters which mean, "Let His name and His memory be blotted out."

The Holy One who knew no sin nor was guile found in His mouth, is often styled "the Transgressor"; and another term frequently in the mouth of the Jews is "Tolui" ("the hanged one"), which is equivalent to "the accursed one." There are also other hateful designations, such as "Ben Stada," or "Ben Pandera," which imply blasphemies not only against Him, but against her who is "blessed among women."

And Israel's blind hatred to the Messiah does not stop short at His person, or His virgin mother, but extends to His words and works, and particularly to those of their nation who are ready to take upon them His reproach and to follow Him. Thus His works are still ascribed to witchcraft and Beelzebub; His gospel (the Evangelium) is called Aven or Avon-gillajon, "the sinful or mischievous writing"; while Rabbinic hatred to His followers (especially from among the Jews) was not satisfied with classing them as "apostates" and "worse than heathen," but rose to the height of instituting a daily public prayer in the most solemn part of their liturgy, that "the Nazarenes" may, together with all apostates, "be suddenly destroyed," without hope, and be "blotted out of the book of life"!

This may be painful reading to some Christians, and the Lord knows it is far from my thoughts to write anything which might tend to foster unchristian prejudice against my people, but it is necessary to show how literally the prophetic forecast has been verified, and how deep-seated and mysterious Jewish hatred has been to Him who, according to His human nature, is flesh of their flesh, and bone of their bone, and in whom is bound up all their hope and salvation.

Let it be remembered also that Jewish hatred to Christ and His followers, at any rate in more modern times, is partly to be traced to the sufferings which they have endured at the hands of so-called Christians, and also that it is not our Lord Jesus as we know Him, that Israel in ignorance thus blasphemes, but the caricature of Him as presented to them by apostate persecuting Christendom in the dark ages and since. Often the only way left to the Jews to avenge their terrible sufferings and massacres was to write blasphemously of Him in whose name they were ignorantly perpetrated.

Neither is it to be forgotten that if Christ has been, and alas! to a large extent still is, "abhorred of the nation," there has always been a remnant in the nation to whom He has been "the fairest of ten thousand and altogether lovely," and who, for the love of Him, counted not even their lives dear unto them. It was a man of Israel and a Pharisee who wrote: *"But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ, yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord; for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung that I might win Christ."*

And when the "blindness in part" which has befallen Israel shall be removed, and their eyes are open to behold the true glory of Him whom they have pierced, then the whole nation shall show an example of love and zeal for their Messiah, such as has not been known in the world.

The phrase **חָדַל אִישִׁים**, *chadal ishim*, "rejected (or 'forsaken') of men" has been variously rendered. To quote only two or three examples, Hengstenberg translates the clause, "the most unworthy among men"; Moses Margoliouth, "the meanest of men"; and Von Orelli, "shunned of men." But it seems to me that Franz Delitzsch has caught the true force of the Hebrew idiom. "The predicate *chadal ishim*" (rendered in the Authorized Version "rejected of men"), he says, "is misunderstood by nearly all the commentators, inasmuch as they take *ishim*, the word for 'men,' as synonymous with *b'ne Adam* (children of men), whereas it is rather used in the sense of *b'ne ish* (men of high rank, lords) as distinguished from *b'ne Adam* (ordinary men, or common people). Hence Cocceius explains it thus: 'wanting in men,' *i.e.* having no respectable men with Him to support Him with their authority. In Hebrew **חָדַל**, *chadal*, has not only the transitive meaning to discontinue or 'leave off' a thing, but the intransitive to cease, or be in want, so that *chadal ishim* may mean one in want of men of rank, *i.e.* finding no sympathy from such men. The chief men of His nation who towered above the multitude, the great men of this world, withdrew their hands from Him: He had none of the men of any distinction at His side."

And this, alas! is still the case. The great, mighty, and noble in the world, the "men of high degree" (with few exceptions, for which God be praised), still ignore and despise Him, and use their power and influence to hinder rather than to advance His cause and kingdom. It was a reproach brought against Christianity by Celsus and other early pagan writers, that it was the religion of slaves, and Jewish Rabbis still taunt believers from among their nation that it is to the poor that the gospel is preached, and that those who have been drawn to Christ belong for the most part to "the common people." "Have any of the rulers believed on Him, or of the Pharisees?"⁹ And not only was He "despised and forsaken," especially by the men of high rank, the leaders of the nation, but He was *ish-makh'obhoth vidua choli*—"a man of sorrows" (or, "a man of pains," the Hebrew idiom denoting "*sorrow of heart in all its forms*"), a man whose *chief distinction* was that "His life was one of constant, painful endurance"—and "acquainted" (or, "well acquainted") with grief (or, "sickness"), the meaning of which, as Delitzsch explains, is not that He had by nature a sickly body, falling from one disease into another (as some would explain), but that "the wrath instigated by sin, and the zeal of self-sacrifice,¹⁰ burnt like the fire of a fever in His soul and body." The point emphasised is that sorrow and grief were the very characteristics of the Servant of Jehovah, "the tokens we know Him by." "We have all seen grief and sorrow in our time," writes one; "no one can live long without doing so, God knows; but it is not one sorrow, or two, that makes one 'a man of sorrows,' nor one meeting, or two, with grief that makes him the acquaintance of it.

"How the Servant endured, with what fortitude and patience, with what faith in God and acquiescence in His will, is not here brought into view, but simply the fact that sorrows came thick and heavy upon Him, like wind-driven rain beating on an unsheltered head, and that grief was present with Him as His close companion through life."

And the chief causes of His sorrows and grief were not personal ills, or physical pain, though these were great enough. It was *heart sorrow and grief of soul*. "A noble nature, repelled in all its efforts to bless, is pained unspeakably more by that repulse than by the crowding in of merely personal ills, or by

9 John vii. 47, 48.

10 Ps. lxi. 9.

all the slings and arrows of adversity: and His sorrow came, thus, because His brethren rejected the help He brought, repelled the Helper, and abode in their lost state."

The last two sentences in the third verse form, so to say, a *climax* in the sorrow and humiliation which the righteous Servant of Jehovah had to endure.

The words *kh'master panim mimmennu* (rendered in the Authorized Version, "we hid as it were our faces from Him") have been variously rendered. The marginal reading in the A.V. and R.V. is, "*He hid as it were His face from us,*" which is the translation adopted by Hengstenberg, who sees in it an allusion to the law in relation to the leper, who, according to Leviticus xiii. 45, had to cover his face, and cry "Unclean, unclean"; also by Margoliouth, who translates, "as one who would hide his face from us," by not revealing to us His true character and glory. But it is now pretty generally agreed among scholars that the word *master* is a verbal noun, and that the true translation is that given in the text of the English versions, namely, "*As one from whom men hide their face*"¹¹ "i.e. like one whose repulsive face it is impossible to endure, so that men turn away their face or cover it with their dress" (Delitzsch); or, as another expresses it: "Instead of meeting Him with a joyful gleam in their eyes responding to His grace and help, men turned away from Him—as one looks the other way to avoid the eye of a person whom he dislikes, or as one shrinks from an object of loathing" (Culross).

Lastly, all the predicates of shame and sorrow are summed up in the word with which also this third verse began, נִבְזָה , *nibhzeh*, "He was despised"—to which, however, is added a negative preposition which the Hebrew idiom requires to mark the *depth* of the contempt in which He was held—"and we esteemed Him not." Instead of counting Him dear and worthy, we formed a very low estimate of Him, or rather we did not estimate Him at all, or, as Luther forcibly expresses it: "we estimated Him at nothing."

This, dear Christian reader, will be Israel's brokenhearted confession on the day when the Spirit of grace and supplications is poured upon them, and their eyes are opened at last to the fearful error which they committed as a nation in the rejection of their Messiah. But, as we read these sad and solemn words, "He was despised, and we esteemed Him not," may we not pause for a moment to ask ourselves if this is not true also in professing Christendom to-day?

"How often," writes another Hebrew Christian brother, "do we meet Christians expatiating on the atrocious wickedness of the *Jews* in crucifying the Lord of Glory; implying, in fact, that if He had appeared amongst *them*, He would have met with a more favourable reception. There was a horrid custom once in the Christian Church, which rendered the *Jews* especial objects of hatred and insult during Lent, and more particularly during the ceremonies of Easter week. The Bishop used to mount the pulpit of the Cathedral, and address the people to the following effect: 'You have among you, my brethren, the descendants of the impious wretches who crucified the Lord Jesus Christ, whose Passion we are soon to commemorate. Shew yourselves animated with the spirit of your ancestors; arm yourselves with stones, assail the *Jews* with them, and thus, as far as in you lies, revenge the sufferings of that Saviour who redeemed you with His own blood.' Alas! this custom still prevails in some countries. You may be sure, however, that if Christ humbled Himself once more, and appeared visibly amongst us, He would be treated in the same way as He was by the *Jews*; yea, 'crucified afresh, and put to an open shame.' He would again have to listen to the dogmas of insolent reasoning; He would once more be disgusted with the fiend-like sneers of reprobate man, and the polished cavils of fashionable contempt."¹²

11 A suggestive and possible rendering of the sentence also is: "There was, as it were, a hiding of *God's* face from Him."

12 Moses Margoliouth.

And what about ourselves, who by the grace of God do believe on Him? Do we estimate our Lord Jesus at His true worth? Is He indeed to us the chiefest of ten thousand and altogether lovely? Are we prepared for His dear sake to forsake all and to follow Him outside the camp, esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt?

(3) *The Vicarious Character of His Sufferings*

The veil lifted from their eyes, Israel sees the true cause of Messiah's sufferings, and, "bearing witness against himself, laments his former blindness to the mediatorial vicarious character of the sufferings both of soul and body that were endured by Him."¹³ Oh, *it was for us*—they now say—that He endured all the shame and agony. To translate the 4th verse literally: "*Verily they were our griefs (or 'sicknesses') which He bore, and our sorrows (or, 'pains') with which He burdened Himself, but we regarded Him as one stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.*" No plainer or stronger words could be used to express the thought of vicarious suffering than those employed in the original of this verse.

The verb נָשָׂא, *nasa*, "to bear," is continually used in Leviticus of the expiation effected by the appointed sacrifices, as, for instance, Lev. xvi. 22, "*The goat shall bear upon him all their iniquities unto a solitary land.*" "When construed with the accusative of the sin," as Delitzsch properly explains, "*nasa*" signifies to take the debt of sin upon oneself, and carry it as one's own, *i.e.* to look at it and feel it as one's own (*e.g.*, Lev. v. 1, 17), or more frequently to bear the punishment occasioned by sin, *i.e.* to make expiation for it (Lev. xx. 19, 20; xxiv. 15), and in any case in which the person bearing it is not himself the guilty person (*nasa* signifies to bear sin in a *mediatorial* capacity for the purpose of making expiation for it. It is evident that both the verbs used in this verse, 'He hath borne,' and 'He carried,' are to be understood in the sense of an expiatory bearing, and not merely of taking away, as has been recently maintained in opposition to the *satisfactio vicaria*, as we may see clearly enough from Ezek. iv. 4-8, where *seth 'avon* ('bearing iniquity') is represented by the prophet in a symbolical action. But in the case before us, where it is not the sins, but 'our diseases' and 'our pains' that are the object, this mediatorial sense remains essentially the same. The meaning is not merely that the Servant of God entered into the fellowship of our sufferings, but that He took upon Himself the sufferings which we had to bear, and deserved to bear, and therefore not only took them away (as Matt. viii. 17 might make it appear), but bore them in His own person, that He might deliver us from them. But when one person takes upon himself suffering which another would have had to bear, and therefore not only endures it with him, but in his stead, this is called substitution or representation—an idea which, however, unintelligible to the understanding, belongs to the actual substance of the common consciousness of man, and the realities of the divine government of the world as brought within the range of our experience, and one which has continued even down to the present time to have much greater vigour in the Jewish nation, where it has found its true expression in sacrifice and the kindred institutions, than in any other, at least so far as its nationality has not been entirely annulled."

As I have already explained, in the more literal translations of the text of the 3rd and 4th verses, the words rendered in the English versions, "our griefs" and "our sorrows," mean also "our sicknesses" (or "diseases") and "our pains," and it is in this sense that the Evangelist Matthew quotes this passage from Isa. liii. After recording some of His precious works of healing—how He cast out the spirits with His word, and healed all that were sick, he adds: "that it might be fulfilled which was spoken through Isaiah the prophet, saying, 'Himself took our infirmities and bare our diseases.' "

The question has been raised how Christ's miraculous works of healing can be a fulfilment of this

13 Delitzsch.

Scripture which sets forth Messiah's *vicarious* sufferings for sinners, and in what *sense* did He Himself "take our infirmities and bear our sicknesses"? The answer is that these cures were in fact and in strictness a fulfilment of this Scripture because wrought in His character as Saviour. As one has said: "Christ was sent for the general purpose of *removing by the sacrifice of Himself* the evil which sin *had brought into the world*. And this work He commenced when He cured bodily diseases, for these diseases were the consequences and punishment of sin. And more—they were types of another disease, of the moral and spiritual effects of man's fall, which the prophecy has principally in view, as is evident from the words which follow."¹⁴

To put it still more simply, the mission of the Messiah was to accomplish a full redemption for His people, and this He did not only by taking upon Himself our sins, but our "infirmities" and "diseases," which are the direct consequences of sin, though not always of the sin of the individual. The blessed results of His redeeming work to us therefore are not only pardon and regeneration, but the ultimate redemption of *body* as well as of spirit in resurrection life.

The miracles of healing not only served to certify Him as the Redeemer, and as "*signs*" of the spiritual healing which He came to bring, but were, so to say, pledges also of the ultimate full deliverance of the redeemed, not only from sin but from every evil consequence of it in body as well as in soul. Hence our full salvation includes not only the perfecting of our spirits, but the "*fashioning anew of the body of our humiliation that it may be conformed to the body of His glory.*"

The self-accusing confession of their former blindness as to the true cause of Messiah's sufferings is continued in the second half of the verse. It was for us that He bore all this; it was our crushing burden that He took upon Himself, they say, "*but we regarded Him as stricken (or 'plagued'), smitten of God, and afflicted.*"

Every one of the three expressions, נָגַע , *nagua'*, "one stricken, *i.e.* afflicted with a hateful, shocking disease"—hence used particularly of "the plague" of leprosy (of which נָגַע is, so to say, the *nomen proprium*), and מַכֵּה-אֱלֹהִים , *mukeh Elohim*, "one Smitten of God" ("one who has been defeated in conflict with God his Lord"),¹⁵ and מְעֻנֶה , *m'unneh*, "one bowed down by suffering," is intended to describe one suffering terrible punishment for sin.

The error confessed, as Hengstenberg well observes, is not in their having considered the sufferings which the Servant of Jehovah endured, as a punishment of sin, but in having considered them as the punishment *for the sins which He Himself had committed*. This, alas! is what spiritually blinded Israel has thought for all these centuries, and what most of the Jews still do think. Thus our Lord Jesus, the only sinless man who trod this earth, is called the *Poshe—the transgressor*—who, according to such illustrious exponents of the spirit of Rabbinic Judaism as Moses Maimonides,¹⁶ well deserved the violent death which He suffered; while in the Talmud Jesus of Nazareth is placed in Hell alongside of Titus and Balaam, and as undergoing not only the severest but the most degrading form of punishment.¹⁷

14 William De Burgh, D.D., *The Messianic Prophecies of Isaiah*.

15 Delitzsch.

16 See especially the "Iggereth Teman," the letter addressed by Maimonides to the Jewish communities in Yemen, written in Arabic in 1172, and translated into Hebrew in 1216 by Samuel Ibn Taban, now printed from a MS. in possession of the late Dr. Jellinek, Vienna, 1873.

17 Gittin, 566. The passage in the original, with translation and comment, will be found in *Jesus Christ in the Talmud*, etc., by Professors Gustave Dalman and Heinrich Laible.

We can well imagine, therefore, the deep contrition and *heartbrokenness* of repentant Israel when their eyes are at last opened by the Spirit of God to the true character of this holy Sufferer, and when they perceive that it was for them and in their stead that He endured it all. "In that day" of weeping and mourning over Him whom they have pierced, we can hear, as it were, the sob which will accompany their confession: How base was our ingratitude! How intense was our ignorance! How thick our darkness! How profound our blasphemy against that Holy One, who in His love and compassion condescended to bear *our* griefs and to be laden with *our* sorrows! "Yet we regarded Him as plagued, 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."

The וְהוּא, *v'hu* ("and He"), as contrasted with וְאֵנַחְנוּ, *v'anach'nu* ("and we") in verses 3 and 4, continue to set forth the true cause of Messiah's sufferings in contrast to our former false judgment with regard to Him. "We" in our former blindness and ignorance regarded Him as plagued and smitten of God for His own sin and guilt, while "He"—which is the emphatic word in the 5th verse—this Holy One, whose true glory as our Redeemer we now behold, endured all in our stead, paying *with His own life* for the "transgressions" and "iniquities" which we have committed. And how great were His sufferings, both in life and in death! He was wounded, literally, "He was pierced through" (as the verb חָלַל, *chalal*, primarily means)—or, "wounded to death," as Von Orelli, and others, render it—an expression which reminds us of Zech. xii. 10: "They shall look upon Me whom they have pierced," though the verb for piercing used there is not exactly the same as here. And "He was bruised," literally "crushed" (*m'duka*), by the heavy burden of our sin which He took upon Himself, weighted by the wrath of God.

And it was all—to repeat once again—for *our* iniquities and "for our transgressions." What else, we ask again, can these words mean than that He suffered *vicariously*? Not merely *with*, but *for* others? By no exegesis is it possible to escape this conclusion. And there is nothing in the conclusion that need surprise us.

"It is in keeping with what we know otherwise. You would not abolish vicariousness by getting it eliminated from the Bible. No one can be unfamiliar with instances of one taking upon himself the penalty of another's recklessness or folly, even within the range of what we call 'natural law.' A child, for instance, playing in a room beside his mother, moves a bar which he has been forbidden to touch, and overturns a vessel of scalding water. The mother sees the danger to her child, and in an instant throws herself between him and the deadly peril, voluntarily taking upon herself her child's penalty, and saving his life at the cost of cruel suffering for herself. Cases less or more resembling this are not uncommon within the range of ordinary observation.

"To leave out vicarious suffering were to erase the brightest pages from the story of the past,—of all golden deeds,—of men who have died for their country,—of martyrs who have gone to stake or scaffold for the truth's sake, and helped to pay the purchase-price of our religious light and freedom; and would leave history but a poor record of ignoble selfishness or mean ambition, a record unutterably sad, little better than the record of a herd of wolves or a Newgate Calendar. Seldom, indeed, has there been love absolutely pure from the taint of selfish feeling; and yet it has been strong enough to take upon itself much suffering in the stead of others; and has taught us at least to acknowledge that it is a sweeter thing to do good than to enjoy selfish ease and pleasure, a nobler thing to suffer for others than to win the world's renown.

"Among the Jews, the idea of vicarious suffering was far from strange; their sacrificial system distinctly expressed it. Sin (said the sacrificial system) is an offence unspeakably odious to God, which He cannot look upon, but must punish. Death is the due punishment of sin. But God has no pleasure in the sinner's death. He is full of mercy, and has Himself opened up a channel, through sacrifice, whereby sin may be expiated, and pardon granted in righteousness. The sacrifices under the law had no intrinsic efficacy to put away sin; but only symbolized substitution—the substitution of Jehovah's righteous Servant in place of the guilty. Men may indeed exclaim against the propriety of one suffering for others, and may insist that every man be wounded for his own transgressions and bruised for his own iniquities. But there is no moral reason, so far as I can see, to forbid love from voluntarily stepping in and suffering for others, to save them from badness and misery. Now in this prophecy, here is One suffering for sins which He never committed—enduring what others deserved—standing in the transgressor's place, as if Himself the transgressor.

"Within the human bosom, the world over, are self-accusings and poignant regrets because of ill that has been done, and dread of what may be, when God shall reckon with us. The case may not be clear to the man himself; but the sense of guilt is there, ineradicable;—it is done; I did it; I cannot undo it; no tears or repentings can change the fact; and I dread the future, for I hear a Voice which proclaims with mysterious, awful sovereign authority, 'Woe unto the wicked; it shall be ill with him.' And so the conscience of the sinner is in a condition of pain, varying from mere uneasiness to darkest and intensest remorse.

"A fire smoulders within that may blaze up any hour into fierce misery. Under such conditions, there can be no true peace with God, no true love to Him, no true joy in Him, no true walking before Him; but revolt and aversion whenever His will thwarts and crosses ours.

"Oh, if only that guilty past were blotted out and made as if it had never been! Oh, if only I could go forward into that unknown future a pardoned man! But the question of blotting out that guilty past is not so simple as at first it seems.

"The forgiveness of sins is a question of righteousness as truly as of mercy. If God cannot forgive in righteousness, then He cannot forgive at all. If He were to forgive simply because He is compassionate, or because (being sovereign) He so wills it, or out of mere good nature, He would remove the very ground on which my conscience plants itself in all its moral operations. It behoves that the glory of His character and the rectitude of His government should suffer no eclipse, but, on the contrary, be demonstrated. But now light is thrown on the case—though still deep mystery remains—when it is said, 'The chastisement of our peace was upon Him.' Through His suffering for others, they obtain 'peace,' in the sense of reconciliation to God."¹⁸

The phrase *musar sh'lo menu*—the "chastisement (or punishment) of our peace"—denotes "the chastisement which leads to our peace," or, as more fully expressed by Von Orelli, "The punishment of our well-being—*i.e.* by the bearing of which, on His part, our peace or well-being is secured—*was upon Him,*" *i.e.* He bore the burden of it in our stead. The same thought is differently expressed in the last supplementary clause in this verse: "*By His stripes*" (*ubhachabhuratho*, literally His wounds) "*we were healed (or, healing was brought to us.)*"¹⁹ Peace and healing—two most blessed results which accrue to us from the vicarious suffering and atoning death of our Saviour. Peace *with God* because of His *justifying* grace on the ground of what Messiah bore and did for us; and peace in our own conscience,

18 Culross.

19 תְּבוּרָה , *chabhurah*, denoting a tumour raised by scourging. Margoliouth translates the clause, "By reason of His contusions we were healed." In Isa. i. 6 *chabhurah* is rendered "bruises" in the English Version. It may well lead our thoughts to the cruel scourging endured by our Saviour on our behalf.

which can never be at peace until sin is expiated—and "healing." This, I believe, goes beyond justification, and hints at the regenerating, *sanctifying* grace in the souls of the justified, for the work of our Saviour not only procures pardon and reconciliation with God, but is the ground also of the work of the Holy Spirit, who accomplishes *within us* His mission of renewal and sanctification, so that, delivered from spiritual disease and moral blemish, we may become conformed to His own image.

(4) *The Moral Necessity of Messiah's Sufferings*

The 6th verse, as is well observed by Dr. J. A. Alexander, describes the occasion, or rather the *necessity*, of the sufferings of the Servant of Jehovah, which are spoken of in the verses which precede: "*All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way, and Jehovah hath laid (literally, 'caused to meet') upon Him the iniquity of us all.*" It is because men are wholly estranged from God, and an atonement was required for their reconciliation, that Messiah suffered and died. "As the sea furnishes a thousand illustrations of life or truth to the 'inhabiters of the isles,' so the shepherd and the flock to the Hebrew prophets and psalmists. The picture is that of the scattered flock, all wandering from the pasture and the protection and care of the shepherd. It is not, as in the parable, the wandering of one sheep out of a hundred, ninety-and-nine being left, but the scattering of the whole flock. Under this figure is represented *our iniquity*, the word implying both the sinful act and its guilt. Sheep are not to blame for wandering; they know no better; but in men, with reason, conscience, and heavenly light, wandering means sin."²⁰

Thus, to repeat, "*we all*," without any exception, are involved in this sin and guilt and consequent misery of having strayed from the Great Shepherd, who is Himself also the fountain of life and all blessedness. But while "the sinful alienation is *universal*, the modes of its manifestation are as various as men and their tendencies." "We have turned every one,"²¹ or, more literally, each (one) man, "to his own way," which is the very opposite of the way of God. "We have turned," so that we are not only involved in the sin of the mass, but stand also under a load of personal and individual guilt which we have incurred. But let us not forget that it is primarily still the penitential confession of the remnant of Israel, and the special applicability of the figure employed in this verse to the nation, which, because they have wandered away from God, have for many centuries been a scattered flock, and as sheep having no shepherd.

"Any one taking a view of the state of the Jewish nation, both spiritual and temporal, since they rejected their Messiah," writes a Hebrew Christian brother, "cannot fail to be struck with the graphic description in this concise inspired sentence. '*We have each one of us turned to his own way,*' We have all gone in the path which *we* chose. There was no union in the service of God; no common bond to unite us; we have not entered into the thoughts of God, nor endeavoured to follow His ways, but we went on the broad way of our own. We were like sheep which are scattered; which have no shepherd, which wander where they please, with no one to collect, defend, or guide them. One would wander in one direction, and another in another; and of course solitary and unprotected, they would be exposed

20 Culross.

21 "The second clause is understood by Augustine as denoting selfishness, and a defect of public spirit, or benevolence; and this interpretation is admitted by Hengstenberg as correct 'if taken in a deeper sense,' viz. that union among men can only spring from their common union with God. But this idea, however just it may be in itself, is wholly out of place in a comparison with scattered sheep, whose running off in different directions does not spring from selfishness, but from confusion, ignorance, and incapacity to choose the right path. A much better exposition of the figure, though still too limited, is that of Theodoret, who understands it to denote the vast variety of false religions, as exemplified by the different idols worshipped in Egypt, Phoenicia, Scythia, and Greece, alike in nothing but the common error of departure from the true God" (J. A. Alexander).

to the more danger. Such has been the state of the Jewish nation since they have rejected the Lord of Glory; they have been sifted among all nations like as corn is sifted, and everywhere they turn to their own way; they have neither king, nor prince, nor sacrifice, nor Ephod."

Disunion among themselves as well as corporate wandering from God has marked their history in dispersion. But to return to the more immediate context: while ours was the sin and guilt, Jehovah, in infinite grace and mercy, "*laid* (or more literally, *caused to meet*, or *caused to alight*²²) *upon Him the iniquity of us all.*"

עוֹן , *avon* ("iniquity"), is used to denote not only the transgression itself, but also the guilt incurred thereby, and the *punishment* to which it gives rise. The last word, *kullanu*, translated "of us all," is the very same also with which this verse began, rendered "all we." It is repeated to give emphasis that it is the sin of "all we," primarily of all redeemed Israel, but inclusively also of all the redeemed from among all the nations, yea, of every individual sinner, who in repentance and faith turns to God, for as "all we" are included in the sin and guilt, so also are we all included in the provision of God's redeeming grace.

And it is Jehovah Himself who caused "all this great multitude of sins, and mass of guilt, and 'weight of punishment,'²³ to light upon Him." The previous verses have shown man's guilty hand in the case, now we must mark Jehovah's action. *He* it was who placed this awful burden on His shoulders. This was at once His deepest humiliation and His most glorious distinction.²⁴ "There is a striking antithesis in this verse," writes one. "In *ourselves* we are scattered"—"astray"—"each one turned to his own way"; in *Christ Jesus* we are collected together. By nature we wander and are driven headlong towards destruction; in Christ we find the way by which we are led to the gate of life. Yes, *Jehovah hath caused to meet in Him the iniquity of us all.* He was the object on which all the rays collected on the focal point, fell. These fiery rays which would have fallen on all mankind diverged from divine justice to the east, west, north, and south, were deflected from them and converged in Him. So the Lord caused to meet in Him the punishment due to the iniquity of *all*. How wonderful are God's judgments!²⁵

(5) *The Voluntary Character of His Sufferings*

But while men, in their ignorance of His true character, "and with wicked hands," heaped humiliations and sufferings upon Him, and Jehovah Himself "laid upon Him the iniquity of us all," the righteous Servant of Jehovah endured all the shame and sorrow *voluntarily*. This is set forth in the next three verses, which describe the manner of Messiah's vicarious life and death and burial.

There has been much discussion over the first part of the seventh verse, and quite a number of different renderings have been suggested by the commentators. The Authorized Version reads:

22 הִפְגִּיעַ , *hiph'gia'*, from פָּגַע , *paga'*, signifies to cause anything to strike, or fall upon a person. The rendering in the English Version ("laid upon Him") is objectionable only because it is too weak and suggests the idea of mild and inoffensive gesture, whereas that conveyed by the Hebrew word is necessarily a *violent* one, namely, that of "causing to strike, or fall" (Alexander). The verb is used in such a passage as 2 Sam. i. 15: "Go near and *fall upon him*; and he smote him that he died." "In other passages our iniquity is spoken of as resting on the Holy One, and He bearing it. Here it is spoken of as coming upon Him like a destroying foe and overwhelming Him with the wrath that it brought with it" (B. W. Newton).

23 Delitzsch.

24 Culross.

25 Margoliouth.

"He was oppressed, and He was afflicted; and He opened not His mouth," which the Revised Version has altered to, "He was oppressed, yet when He was afflicted He opened not His mouth."

Delitzsch translates, "He was ill-treated, whilst He bowed Himself," *i.e.* "suffered voluntarily"; and Von Orelli, "He was used violently, though He humbled Himself." To these I may add the rendering given by Bishop Lowth, which is the same as already suggested by Cyril (among ancient writers) and by De Dieu, Tremellius, and others, namely: "It was exacted, and He was made answerable, and He opened not His mouth."

This last rendering comes, according to my judgment, nearer to the true sense of the original, but while **נִגַּס**, *niggas* (rendered in the English versions, "He was oppressed") does indeed mean to *exact*, and may here be used in the *impersonal* sense, the rendering of the second verb (**נָאֵנֶה**, *na'aneh*) by "He was made answerable" is not in accord with its usage in the original, for the word nowhere else conveys the notion of legal responsibility. Margoliouth, on the ground that **נִגַּס**, *niggas*, is sometimes applied to the *rigorous* exaction of *debts*, paraphrases the first part of the verse thus:

"He was rigorously demanded to pay the debt, and He submitted Himself, and did not open His mouth."

That the Messiah in His love and compassion for man became our surety and took upon Himself our great moral debt, paying the ransom with His own life, is a truth set forth in the whole of this great prophecy, even if it be not fully expressed in this particular sentence. What this passage does emphasize is that He "bowed Himself" under this heavy burden, which He took upon our account *voluntarily*. "He was oppressed," "He was used violently," "He was treated tyrannically" (which is yet another suggested meaning of the word *niggas*), and *He*—which is the emphatic word in the verse—"He Himself" it was who "bowed," or "humbled," or "submitted" Himself, and opened not His mouth.

This voluntary endurance is in the second half of the verse set forth in a simile: "As a sheep that is led to the slaughter," and "As a lamb before its shearers is dumb, and opened not His mouth."

"The object of the whole passage is to mark the meek and quiet subjection of our Redeemer in His prolonged suffering. He was the subject of cruel and unjust oppression, yet His persecutors were not crushed. God allowed them to pursue their course and to accumulate sorrows on the head of the Holy One; and He patiently and meekly bowed His head to the infliction, and opened not His mouth."²⁶ "When we suffer," writes one, "how hard we find it to be still! The flames of resentment—how they leap up in our bosom, and flush our cheek with angry red! What impatience there often is, what murmuring, what outcry, what publishing of our sorrow! Or if there is silence, it is at times akin to stoicism, the proud determination not to let men see how we feel. But the spirit of the Servant is loftier and grander unutterably. In sublime and magnanimous silence He endures to the uttermost, sustained by His mighty purpose and by the conviction, *Jehovah wills it*. I see the temper of His mind in this silence; I see His strength; I see His rest in God; and I look down into the unfathomed mystery of Love. He came to do what only Love was equal to—that is abundantly clear—and He shrank from no suffering; raised not His arm, opened not His mouth, in His own defence, wearied not, fainted not, but was dumb with silence."²⁷

But we may, I believe, go a step further. In this wonderful patience and silence of the Servant—which

26 B. W. Newton.

27 Culross.

in the history of fulfilment was exhibited in the silence of our Lord Jesus before the Jewish Sanhedrin and before the Roman Procurator, Pontius Pilate—we see not only His lamb-like meekness and "His love for man, which made Him content to suffer for our redemption," but *His acquiescence in the justice of God* in the punishment of sin, the whole burden of which He bore. To the Christian this verse is specially precious because of the prominence given to it in the New Testament. Not only was it "from this Scripture" that the evangelist Philip "preached Jesus" unto the Ethiopian eunuch; and not only does the Apostle Peter use it as the basis of his exhortation to believers to be patient in suffering and to follow the example of Him, "who when He was reviled, reviled not again, and when He suffered He threatened not, but committed Himself to Him that judgeth righteously"; but, as Delitzsch truly observes, "All the references in the New Testament to the Lamb of God (with which the corresponding allusions to the Passover are interwoven) *spring from this passage in the book of Isaiah.*"

(6) *The Trial and Death of the Servant of Jehovah*

We now come to perhaps the most difficult verse in this great prophecy, the main purport of which is to describe the closing portion of the life of the Servant of Jehovah and the manner of death that He should die.

"No three words in the Hebrew Bible (with the exception perhaps of the four words which follow) have been more variously rendered," says Dr. Henderson, than those which constitute the first sentence in this eighth verse. It would not be to much profit were we to enter into examination of the many translations and paraphrases of these three words in ancient and modern versions and commentaries. The Authorized Version reads, "*He was taken from prison and from judgment,*" and the Revised Version, "*By oppression and judgment was He taken away.*" A suggestive reading, first given by Dr. Henderson, and adopted by Margoliouth, is: "*Without restraint and without a sentence He was taken away,*" which of course fits in with the fulfilment of the prophecy in our Lord Jesus, who exercised no manner of restraint over His persecutors, and was given over to a cruel death in violation of every principle of justice, and without a proper trial or sentence. But this, though a possible and suggestive rendering, does somewhat strain the meaning of the words from their general usage. On the whole, I prefer the reading given by Delitzsch, Von Orelli, and others: "*He was taken away from prison and from judgment,*" which is almost, though not quite, the same as that in the Authorized Version. The principal emphasis (in the sentence) is not laid upon the fact that He was taken away from suffering, but that it was *out of the midst* of suffering that He was carried off.

The idea that is most prominent in the word לָקַח , *luqqach* ("taken away"), is that of being snatched or hurried away.²⁸ The word עֶזְרָר , *otser* (rendered "prison"), primarily means a violent constraint. "Here, as in Ps. cvii. 39, it signifies a persecuting treatment which restrains by outward force, such as that of prison or bonds. . . . The word *mishpat* ('judgment') refers to the judicial proceedings, in which He was put upon His trial, accused and convicted as worthy of death—in other words, to His unjust judgment . . . Hostile oppression and judicial persecution were the circumstances out of which He was carried away by death."²⁹

The second sentence in this verse, consisting of the four words וְאֵת דֹּרוֹ מִיְשׁוּחֵי ,

V'eth doro mi y'soche-ach, has also been very variously rendered and interpreted by translators and commentators.

²⁸ See, e.g., chap. lii. 5; Ezek. xxxiii. 4.

²⁹ Delitzsch.

The Authorized Version reads: "And who shall declare His generation?"

The Revised Version connects the sentence with the words that follow, and translates: "And as for His generation, who among them considereth that He was cut off from the land of the living for the transgression of My people?" etc., which is practically the same as that given by Delitzsch and others. Von Orelli translates: "And among His contemporaries who was concerned."

Of other suggested renderings I may mention the following:—

(1) "As to His generation, who shall set it forth?" *i.e.*, in all the guilt of their iniquity.

(2) "Who shall declare His life?" *i.e.* the mystery of His Being.

(3) "Who can declare the number of His generation?"—*i.e.* of those inspired by His spirit or filled with His life.³⁰ Luther, Calvin, and Vitringa understand the clause to mean, "Who can declare the length of His life hereafter?"; Kimchi, like Hengstenberg, explains it to mean, "Who can declare His posterity?"

Yet another rendering based on the fact that דֹר (dor) sometimes stands for "habitation," or "dwelling," is that given by Hoffmann and Margoliouth, namely, "As for His dwelling, who cares for it?" (or who can speak of it?)³¹

This great variety of opinions by Bible scholars, both ancient and modern, Jewish and Christian, will give the reader an idea of the difficulty of coming to a positive conclusion as to the actual meaning of this clause, and how unbecoming it would be to speak with anything like dogmatism. Yet I may venture to suggest an explanation which seems to me the most probable. In the Hebrew Bible דֹר (dor rendered "generation") signifies "an age," or "the men living in a particular age"; or, in an ethical sense "the entire body of those who are connected together by similarity of disposition," or likeness of moral character.

The Pillel verb שֹׁחַח , soche'-ach (rendered in A.V. "declare," and in R.V. "considereth"), signifies, "a thoughtful consideration," "meditation,"³² but it means also "to speak," "to complain," "to lament," and is used in at least one or two places to describe an exercise very much akin to prayer. As, for instance, Ps. lv. 17, "Evening, morning, and at noonday will I pray, and cry aloud: and He shall hear my voice." The words "will I pray" (the R.V. has, "will I complain") are a translation of this same verb.³³ I would therefore translate "As for His generation—who (among them) poureth out a complaint?" (*i.e.* at His treatment); or, "who among them uttereth a prayer?" (*i.e.* on His behalf). In either case there may be, as suggested already by Bishop Lowth, a prophetic allusion to the custom which prevailed among the Jews in the case of trials for life to call upon all who had anything to say in favour of the accused, to come and "declare it," or "plead" on his behalf.

The following striking passage from the Talmud (Sanhedrin fol. 43) may be cited by way of illustration.

³⁰ Hengstenberg.

³¹ See Isa. xxxviii. 12 R.V. The new American Jewish translation of the Bible renders: "And with His generation, who did reason?"

³² E.G. Ps. cxliiii. 5, "I remember the days of old, I meditate (שֹׁחַח) , soche'-ach) on all Thy doings."

³³ As a noun it is found also in the inscription of Ps. cii.—a prayer of the afflicted when he is overwhelmed and poureth out his complaint (שִׁחוּ , sicho) before Jehovah.

"There is a tradition: On the eve of the Sabbath and the Passover they hung Jesus. And the herald went forth before him for forty days crying, 'Jesus goeth to be executed, because he has practised sorcery and seduced Israel and estranged them from God. Let any one who can bring forward any justifying plea for him come and give information concerning it; but no justifying plea was found for him, and so he was hung on the eve of the Sabbath and the Passover. Ulla said, 'But doest thou think that he belongs to those for whom a justifying plea is to be sought? He was a very seducer, and the All-merciful has said, 'Thou shalt not spare him, nor conceal him.' But the case of Jesus stood differently because he stood near to the Kingdom': or as others translate, "for his place was near those in power."

That this legend about Jesus has for its basis a well-known custom in the procedure of the Sanhedrin in trials for life, there is, I think, no doubt;³⁴ for the principle by which they were supposed to be regulated was that "they sat to justify, and not to condemn; to save life, and not to destroy." That this humane custom of calling upon those who knew anything in favour of the accused to come and declare it, was not observed in the case of Jesus of Nazareth, and that the proceedings at this hasty, *mock* trial before the Sanhedrin were in flagrant contradiction with the regulations which were supposed to govern their procedure, are facts of history, but there is this much truth in this Talmudic passage, that none *dared* to appear in His favour; and that in the great crisis when the Christ of God stood on His trial before the corrupt hostile Jewish hierarchy and the representatives of the then great Gentile world power, no one came forward with a justifying plea "on His behalf" for fear of the Jews. Yea, at that solemn moment, when the sword awoke to smite the Shepherd, the sheep were all scattered; and even His own disciples, who later on when convinced of His resurrection became as bold as lions, and willingly laid down their lives for Him, became demoralized with fear and forsook Him and fled.

And in a sense our Lord Jesus is still on His trial. Are we, His professed disciples, ready now to take our stand as His witnesses in the face of a hostile Jewish and Gentile world, and make our "justifying plea" on His behalf not only in word but by showing forth the power of His gospel over our own hearts and lives?

But this has been somewhat of a digression. The next clause in this verse proclaims clearly the *fact* of His death, and the manner of it. "*For He was cut off out of the land of the living.*" It is by wicked and violent hands that this righteous Servant of Jehovah dies—"cut off," as it were, in the midst of His days. And then, finally, in repudiation once again of their previous false notion that it was for His own sin that He was "stricken and smitten of God" (ver. 4), the *vicarious atoning* character of His sufferings and death is yet again emphasized: "*For the transgression of My people the stroke fell upon Him.*"

Ewald, one of the chief fathers of the German rationalistic school of interpreters, who assigns a different (and earlier) authorship for 53rd chapter than the rest of the writings of the Great Unknown,³⁵ with which, according to him, it has somehow become incorporated, adduces the "frequent repetition of expressions and ideas which occur nowhere else" in the second part of Isaiah, as a ground of his theory; but these "frequent repetitions," as Dr. Alexander observes, "so far from being rhetorical defects, or indications of another author, are used with an obvious design, namely, that of making it impossible for any ingenuity or learning to eliminate the doctrine of vicarious atonement from this passage by presenting it so often, and in forms so varied and yet still the same, that he who succeeds in expelling it from one place is compelled to meet it in another. Thus in this verse, which fills up the last particulars of the humiliation and sufferings of the Messiah even unto death, it is once again repeated that it was "*for the transgression of My people*" that the stroke fell upon Him.

34 Lowth thinks that our Lord referred to this custom in His words to the high priest in John xviii. 20, 21, "I spoke openly to the world. . . . Why askest thou Me? ask them that have heard Me," etc.

35 The name with which the critics have christened their "second Isaiah."

As already pointed out in the introductory part, the term עַמִּי , *Ammi* ("My people"), can only apply to Israel, and is one of the many internal marks which make it impossible to interpret the prophecy of the Jews as a nation, for the servant *suffers* and *dies for* the people, and therefore cannot be confounded *with the people*. Yes, the Good Shepherd laid down His life in the first instance for "*My people*"—the people which in a special sense He calls "His own," and that is the chief ground of our hope and confidence for Israel *as a nation*, but, blessed be God! He died, not for the nation only, but that "He might also gather into one the children of God that were scattered abroad";³⁶ and since Christ came, in whom this prophecy received its minute fulfilment, millions from among all the Gentile nations, "who in time past were no people," are now the people of God.³⁷

(7) *God's Special Interposition in the Burial of His Servant*

The prophetic story of the Servant of Jehovah unfolded in this penitential confession moves on. From His life of vicarious suffering and atoning death we come to His *burial*.

*"And they made (or 'appointed' ³⁸) His grave with the wicked,
And with a rich man in His death,
Because He hath done no violence,
Neither was deceit in His mouth."*

"The predictions concerning Christ in this chapter," writes Moses Margoliouth, "are so numerous and so minute that they could not possibly have been dictated by any but by Him to whom all things are naked and open, and who worketh all things according to the counsel of His own will. The most *insignificant* circumstances connected with our Lord's death are set forth with as much accuracy as those which are most important. If we reflect but for a moment on the peculiar circumstances which attended our

36 John xi. 51, 52.

37 No little controversy has centred round the last line of this verse. It is contended by Jewish

controversialists that לָמוֹ , *lamo* (the last word in the verse which I have rendered "upon Him"), has the plural suffix and ought to be translated "upon them," and this is adduced by some in proof that it is a *collective* subject that the prophet speaks of in this chapter, namely, Israel. But first Kimchi, who originated this argument, himself denied it. In his commentary he says: "I should like to ask the Nazarenes who explain the Parashah of Jesus, how the prophet could have said *to them* (לָמוֹ) when he ought to have said "to him" (לוֹ), for לָמוֹ (*lamo*) is plural, being equivalent to לָהֶם (*la-hem*)." But in his grammar he says: "מוֹ (*mo*) occurs as the affix of the 3rd person singular, as in Job xx. 23; xxii. 2." And again, "מוֹ (*mo*) is used both of many and of one." There are also other instances in the Hebrew Bible besides these two passages in Job quoted by Kimchi where the poetic plural suffix לָמוֹ is used for the singular. We find it even in this second part of Isaiah, chap. xliv. 15—"he maketh it a graven image, and falleth down thereto" (לָמוֹ). But even if it be admitted that *lamo* is here a plural, there would be no ground for the assertion that the subject is a collective one. The translation would then be: "For He was cut off from the land of the living. For the transgression of My people—the stroke or punishment that should have fallen on them." This is admitted in the New American Jewish translation of the Bible, which renders: "*For the transgression of My people, to whom the stroke was due.*"

38 וַיַּיְתֵּן , *vayyitten* (rendered in Authorized Version "He gave"), is, as generally admitted, used here, as in many other places in the Hebrew Bible, impersonally, as in the German *man gab*.

Saviour's last hours, we shall see reason to exclaim with Moses, "The secret things belong unto the Lord our God"; or with Paul, "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God! how unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out!" What could be more unlikely than that the Messiah should be crucified when crucifixion was not a Jewish but a Roman punishment? And yet David (in Ps. xxii.) predicted that such would be the case centuries before Rome was founded. Again, the fulfilment of David's prediction was brought about by the Jews themselves *contrary to their own law and tradition*. The law expressly forbade to choose a heathen for their king, for the following are the words of Moses, whose disciples they averred they were: "*Thou shalt in any wise set him king over thee whom the Lord thy God shall choose; and from among thy brethren shalt thou set a king over thee: thou mayest not set a stranger over thee, which is not thy brother.*"³⁹

Their *Rabbinic* law pronounced the most severe *anathema* against any one who should deliver a Jew to a heathen magistrate. But in *this* case—that the word of God may come to pass—they regard neither their law nor their tradition, but deliver Jesus to the judgment of the Roman Procurator and call upon him to pronounce sentence. And when Pilate, half in remonstrance and half in mockery, said: "Shall I crucify your King?" they replied, "We have no king but Cæsar."

After the remarkable fulfilment of an extraordinary prophecy when Jesus was really put to death according to the *Roman* law, and was crucified between two malefactors, what more likely than that He should be treated as they were? But no: for when Pilate, yielding once more to the clamour of the Jews that the death of the victims should be hastened so that the bodies should not remain on the cross on the Sabbath—"The soldiers came and broke the legs of the first and of the other that were crucified with Him; but when they came to Jesus and saw that He was dead already, they broke not His legs. Howbeit one of the soldiers with a spear pierced His side, and straightway there came out blood and water . . . These things came to pass that the scriptures might be fulfilled, a bone of Him shall not be broken—and again another scripture, They shall look upon Him whom they have pierced." Again, "what more insignificant than that the soldiers should *part His garments* and *cast lots for His vesture*? Yet that too, with a great number of other incidents equally minute, was circumstantially predicted."⁴⁰ And so also was it with His burial.

The Jewish leaders, not content with the humiliations and sufferings they heaped upon Him; not appeased even by the cruel and shameful death to which at their will He was given over, followed Him with hatred even to the grave. "*They appointed His grave with the wicked.*"

"In all countries, I suppose, it has been the rule that persons put to death as criminals have had ignominious sepulture," writes one. "Even after death shame has followed them, though after ages have oftentimes reversed the award and built monuments to them." But this was especially the case among the Jews. This was the law of the time, as stated by Josephus.⁴¹ "He that blasphemeth God let him be stoned, and let him hang upon a tree all that day, and let him be buried in an ignominious and obscure manner." Now, it was as a blasphemer that they condemned Him in their ignorance and blindness, and what more likely than that as He died with criminals He should also be buried with them? *But—"with a rich man (He was) in His death.*"⁴²

39 Deut. xvii. 14, 15.

40 Margoliouth. I have taken the liberty to abbreviate and slightly recast his remarks.

41 *Antiquities*, IV. viii. 6.

42 The word for death is in the plural, and some have argued that it should be rendered, "in His deaths," and have adduced it as yet another proof that the subject of the prophecy is a collective one. But there is no basis for this assertion, for first, if a plurality of persons were intended, it is the *plural suffix* which would be required, and this is here expressed by the singular. "There is no ground," as Pusey correctly observes, "to lay any emphasis on the plural in מְתִים , *methim* 'death,' than חַיִּים , *chayyim* 'life' (in the

Modern scholars have sought to explain the word עָשִׂיר , 'ashir, as being a synonymous parallel to רְשָׁעִים , r'sha'im ("wicked"), in the previous clause. This explanation is, as far as I can trace it, first mentioned by Rabbi Sh'lomoh ben Melekh of Fez in his Mikhlol Yophi (about 1500 A.D.), where he says, " 'Ashir (rich) is considered by Rabbi Yonah to be equivalent to rasha', 'wicked' "; but he himself adds that "it is not allowable to abandon the usual signification 'rich' merely on account of the parallel clause."

This explanation, which Franz Delitzsch properly says, is "untenable," has unfortunately been adopted by Luther, Calvin, and Gesenius, who regard the word "rich" here as suggesting the necessary idea of "one who sets his heart upon his wealth, or puts his trust in it," or makes an unlawful use of it. But this is so arbitrary that some of the later writers abandon the Hebrew usage altogether, and profess to derive the sense "wicked" from an Arabic root. But this, as Dr. Alexander truly says, "is doubly untenable; first, because the Hebrew usage cannot be put aside for an Arabic analogy without extreme necessity, which does not here exist; and secondly, because the best authorities (as Delitzsch also shows) find no such meaning in the particular Arabic word itself."⁴³

It may seem surprising that this forced imposition of a new and foreign meaning on a word so familiar should be thus insisted on. "Luther and Calvin, no doubt, simply followed the rabbinical tradition; but the later writers have a deeper motive for pursuing a course which, in other circumstances, they would boldly charge upon the Reformer's ignorance of Hebrew. That motive is the wish to do away with the remarkable coincidence between the circumstances of our Saviour's burial and the language of this verse, as it has been commonly understood since Capellus" (Alexander).

And this "remarkable coincidence" is truly wonderful, for, in the words of Delitzsch, "if we reflect that the Jewish rulers would have given to Jesus the same dishonourable burial as to the two thieves, but that the Roman authorities handed over the body to Joseph the Arimathæan, a 'rich man' (Matt. xxvii. 57), who placed it in the sepulchre in his own garden, we see an agreement at once between the gospel history and the prophetic words, which could only be the work of the God of both the prophecy and its fulfilment, inasmuch as no suspicion could possibly arise of there having been any human design of bringing the former into conformity with the latter."

And the reason assigned for this honourable burial, which was so different from what had been planned, or "appointed" for Him by His enemies, is that—"He hath done no violence, neither was deceit found in His mouth"—which is yet another reiteration of the absolute innocence of His outward actions and of the inward purity and gentleness of His character. It was vicarious sufferings that He endured; it was a death of atonement for others that He died; but immediately those sufferings were ended and that death accomplished, His humiliation was ended, and no further indignity to His blessed person

preceding verse), which is also in the plural—the singular for 'life' not being used in Hebrew. Many nouns in Hebrew are used in the plural where we Westerns could hardly account for it. The plural is used of a condition as a period of life, or a condition of body. There is then no reason why מָוֹתִים , 'deaths,' if there is any stress on the plural, should not mean 'the state of death,' as חַיִּים , chayyim (the plural for 'life,' the state of life)." In Ezek. xxviii. 10 "deaths" is certainly used "for the death of one." Delitzsch says the plural is used of a violent death, the very pain of which makes it like dying again and again.

43 Ewald, Hoffmann, Böttcher, etc., have tried their hands at altering the original word so as to produce a synonymous parallelism to "wicked," but this is a violent method of handling the sacred text, especially when there is absolutely no necessity for it.

could be permitted. And so, already, in His burial, He was "separated from sinners," and was laid in the tomb of the "rich man of Arimathæa, wherein never man before was laid."⁴⁴

⁴⁴ Luke xxiii. 53.