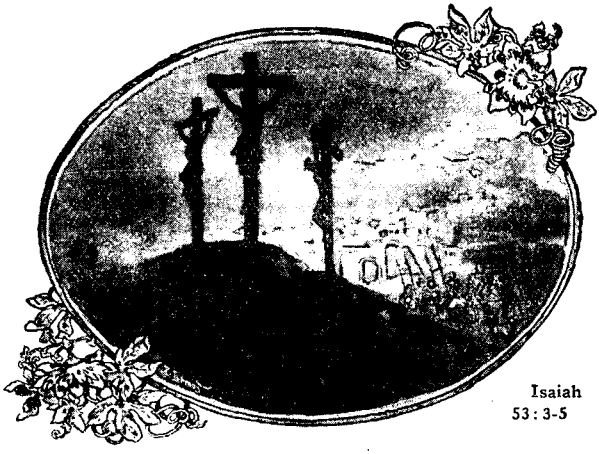
M. L. Andreasen



Isaiah
53:3-5

SABBATH SCHOOL LESSON QUARTERLY

SENIOR DIVISION
Fourth Quarter, 1928

Lessons from The BOOK of ISAIAH

Thirteenth Sabbath Offering, December 29, 1928
INTER-AMERICAN DIVISION

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No. 134 MOUNTAIN VIEW, CAL., OCTOBER, 1928 20c A YEAR

Isaiah, *The Gospel Prophet*

Parts II and III

By M. L. Andreasen

The Sabbath school lessons for this quarter are a continuation of studies from the book of Isaiah; they will continue through the first quarter of 1929. Lesson helps have been prepared by Elder M. L. Andreasen. These are being published in three volumes, one for each quarter. The writer is a keen Bible student, and his comments on the book of Isaiah will be indispensable to Sabbath school officers and teachers. Every member also of the Sabbath school should have these booklets, for special help on the lessons is needed.

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LESSON 1—OCTOBER 6, 1928

"BEHOLD YOUR GOD!"

LESSON SCRIPTURE: Isaiah 40.
MEMORY VERSE: Isa. 40: 9.

INTRODUCTION

Many of the chapters we shall study this quarter have a special application to the latter days. This is true of chapter forty. The keynote of the chapter is, Behold your God! Behold Him as Creator, Saviour, Judge, Shepherd, and coming King. Help on this chapter may be found in "The Desire of Ages," pp. 132-135.

THE LESSON

1. What message does God send to His people? Isa. 40:1, 2.

NOTE.—Sin, wherever found, is abhorrent to God, but doubly so in the case of those who know the truth. Light brings responsibility. Those who know the truth and still persist in sin are more guilty than those who do not have a knowledge of God's message for this time. For this reason God's people have received double punishment. But God does not hate His people any more than the gardener hates the vine which he prunes. God loves His people, and sends them a message of comfort and love.

2. What message is proclaimed by "the voice"? Who is spoken of as having fulfilled this scripture? Verses 3-5; Matt. 3:1-3.

NOTE.—"In this age, just prior to the second coming of Christ in the clouds of heaven, such a work as that of John is to be done. God calls for men who will prepare a people to stand in the great day of the Lord. The message preceding the public ministry of Christ was, 'Repent; publicans and sinners; repent, Pharisees and Sadducees; "repent ye; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."' . . .

"In order to give such a message as John gave, we must have a spiritual experience like his. The same work must be wrought in us. We must behold God, and in beholding Him lose sight of self."—"Testimonies," Vol. 8, pp. 332, 333.

3. What further does "the voice" say? What is all flesh said to be? In contrast with this, what is said of the word of our God? Isa. 40:6-8.

NOTE.—Man and his wisdom shall perish, but "the word of our God" shall stand forever. Men's theories will go down. Their ideas of future peace and of a millennium will not bear the test of "the word." It is well to build on something that will "stand" when everything else is shaken.

4. Where are those who bring good tidings instructed to go? What is Jerusalem to do? What are the people of God to say to the cities? Verse 9.

NOTE.—The message is not to be given in a corner. The messenger is to get up into a high mountain where all can see and hear, and lift up the voice with strength. This is nothing but "the loud cry." And the first part of the message is, "Behold your God!"

"The children of God are to manifest His glory. In their own life and character they are to reveal what the grace of God has done for them. The light of the Sun of Righteousness is to shine forth in good works,—in words of truth and deeds of holiness."—"Christ's Object Lessons," pp. 415, 416.

5. What is a vital part of the message to be given? Verse 10.

NOTE.—"The Lord God will come." This is the advent proclamation, and should be the keynote of every message. The Lord will come "with strong hand." He will "rule." Ps. 2:8, 9. He will also bring the "reward" with Him. Rev. 22:12. The Lord will come to punish and to reward.

6. Under what symbol is Christ presented? How are His love and care revealed? Verse 11; see also John 10:1-16.

7. How does the prophet illustrate the mighty power of God? Isa. 40:12.

8. What further questions are asked? Verses 13, 14.

NOTE.—These questions are so put as to require the negative answer. "No one,"—the strongest way in which such statements can be placed. The positive would be, God has not been taught by anyone; no one has shown Him "the way of understanding." That is, God is the Original One, the Ultimate One, the Source of all things. There was none before Him. No one "instructed" or "taught" Him.

9. To what is the importance of the nations compared? Verses 15-17.

NOTE.—The dripping of a bucket or a little dust blown from the scales are not regarded as great or important. Yet if whole nations are so counted, how much smaller must the individual be? And yet puny man sets himself up against God, and attempts to teach Him! Such indeed must be counted by Heaven "less than nothing, and vanity."

10. What shows that it is impossible to make any comparison to the great God of heaven? How are idols made? Verses 18-20.

NOTE.—The inference is plain. God is the Creator. He has made all things. Idols can not create. They themselves must be made.

11. In what four ways is the question asked concerning our knowledge of God? Where is God represented as sitting? What is said of the inhabitants of earth? of princes and judges? Verses 21-23.

12. How is the shortness of human life spoken of? Verse 24.

NOTE.—The American Revised Version, margin, renders verse 24: "Scarce are they planted, scarce are they sown, scarce hath their stock taken root in the earth, when He bloweth upon them." That is, men hardly begin to live ere they are taken away.

13. In what words are the questions of verse 18 repeated? What are we counseled to do? How are God's wisdom and power shown? Verses 25, 26.

NOTE.—"God calls upon His creatures to turn their attention from the confusion and perplexity around them, and admire His handiwork.

As we study His works, angels from heaven will be by our side, to enlighten our minds, and guard them from Satan's deceptions. As you look at the wonderful things that God's hand has made, let your proud, foolish heart feel its dependence and inferiority. How terrible it is when the acknowledgment of God is not made when it should be made! How sad to humble one's self when it is too late!"—"Counsels to Teachers," p. 457.

14. What do Jacob and Israel say? Verse 27.

NOTE.—The complaint of Jacob and Israel seems to be that "my way," that is, their course and condition of life, is hidden from the Lord, and that "my judgment" or, rather, "my right," escapes His notice. It is really a complaint from the people that God does not pay enough attention to them, that He "passes them by."

15. How does God meet the complaint of the people, and assure them of His knowledge and of His care? Verses 28, 29.

NOTE.—"There is no searching of His understanding." That is, God knows. You may think He does not know your perplexities, or, even worse, that He does not care. Be assured, dear soul, God knows and He cares. Your God not only understands, but He will give you the needed power and increase your strength.

"God's workers will meet with turmoil, discomfort, and weariness. At times, uncertain and distracted, they are almost in despair. When this restless nervousness comes, let them remember Christ's invitation, Come apart, and rest awhile. The Saviour 'giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might He increaseth strength.' "—"Testimonies," Vol. 7, p. 244.

16. What may be the experience of the youth? What is noted of them "that wait upon the Lord"? Verses 30, 31.

NOTE.—"Remember that prayer is the source of your strength. A worker can not gain success while he hurries through his prayers, and rushes away to look after something that he fears may be neglected or forgotten. He gives only a few hurried thoughts to God; he does not take time to think, to pray, to wait upon the Lord for a renewal of physical and spiritual strength. He soon becomes weary. He does not feel the uplifting, inspiring influence of God's Spirit. He is not quickened by fresh life. His jaded frame and tired brain are not soothed by personal contact with Christ."—Id., p. 243. Read Ps. 27:14.

LESSON 2—OCTOBER 13, 1928

JEHOVAH'S CHALLENGE TO FALSE GODS

LESSON SCRIPTURE: Isaiah 41.
MEMORY VERSE: Isa. 41: 10.

INTRODUCTION

"Study the forty-first chapter of Isaiah, and strive to understand it in all its significance."—"Testimonies," Vol. 8, p. 39.

In Isaiah 40, God is presented as the Creator. In this chapter the nations are challenged to appear and witness to God's foreknowledge.

The Lord is about to tell them concerning the future, concerning one "who hath raised up one from the east, whom He calleth in righteousness to His foot." Isa. 41:2, English Revised Version. God will give this man "the nations." He will give him "rule over kings." Verse 2. Though this man is unnamed as yet, he is without doubt Cyrus mentioned by name first in Isaiah 44:28; 45:1, and many years before he was born.

God gives each man ample ground for faith. In this chapter He says in substance to Israel, "I will foretell the future. By that you may know that I am God. I challenge the idols to tell us what shall come to pass. They can not do this. When I now tell you concerning the man I will raise up and you see this come to pass just as I say, then you may know that I am indeed the true God, the Creator of heaven and earth."

Help on this chapter may be found in "Prophets and Kings," pages 143-154, the challenge of Elijah to the false gods.

THE LESSON

1. How does God address the islands and the people? Isa. 41:1.

NOTE.—God calls the nations before Him. He is about to speak to them, so He asks them to keep silence. After God has spoken, "then let them speak."

2. What questions does God ask? What would the "man from the east" do? Verses 2, 3.

NOTE.—The sense of these two verses may perhaps best be presented by this paraphrase: "Who hath raised up one from the east who is always victorious? Who hath given him authority over the nations, and made him rule over kings? His sword drives them like dust, his bow like chaff before the wind. He pursues them and marches forward safely and that so swiftly that he does not tread the path with his feet."

Cyrus is the "man from the east." See Introduction.

3. Who had used Cyrus to do these things? How is God spoken of? Verse 4.

NOTE.—This verse does not say that God is the first and the last. That indeed is true. Rev. 1: 11. But here it states that God is with the last. Even as God was in the beginning, so He will be with His people to the end, with the last.

4. How is the coöperative spirit of the builders of idols described? Verses 5-7.

NOTE.—The prophet is here describing the condition which would accompany the conquests of Cyrus. The islands and the nations would be afraid; they would "draw near," but not to God. This drawing near probably has reference to the league between Lydia, Babylon, and Egypt against Cyrus. But instead of trusting God, they appeal to their idols, and decide to make a particularly good and strong set of gods.

"Well might the words written of the idol builders of old be, with worthier aim, adopted as a motto by character builders of to-day: 'They helped every one his neighbor; and every one said to his brother, Be of good courage.' "—"Education," p. 286.

5. How does God speak of His people? Whence have they come? Verses 8, 9.

NOTE.—"Abraham my friend"! What a wonderful designation! And we are the children of Abraham, God's friend. God's people will come from the ends of the earth. They may not be perfect, but God has not cast them away.

6. Why should we not fear? Why not be dismayed? What exceedingly precious promises are given? Verse 10.

7. What will be the experience of those who are incensed against God's people? Verses 11, 12.

8. How does God lead His people? Why need no one fear? What two names are given to God? Verses 13, 14.

9. What will God make of His people? What will God's people do to the mountains? In whom will God's people glory? Verses 15, 16.

NOTE.—The time was to come when Israel should again reign. As the instrument of the Almighty they would thresh the nations (mountains). A day also lies just ahead when the Israel of God will no longer be a savor of life to a rebellious world. No more will God spare a world in rebellion because of the righteous remnant. Instead, because of their rebellion and their oppression of His people, the vials of His wrath will be poured upon them. The land will be emptied and desolate (Rev. 5:14-17; Jer. 4:23-28) like Babylon of old (Jer. 51:2). But in that day God's people shall rejoice in Him and "glory in the Holy One of Israel." (See Isa. 25:8, 9.)

10. What precious promise does God give the poor and needy? What will God open for them? Verses 17, 18.

NOTE.—This text has a literal application as well as a spiritual one. Speaking of the time of trouble, we read in "The Great Controversy," page 629:

"The people of God will not be free from suffering; but while persecuted and distressed, while they endure privation, and suffer for want of food, they will not be left to perish. That God who cared for Elijah will not pass by one of His self-sacrificing children. He who numbers the hairs of their head will care for them; and in time of famine they shall be satisfied. While the wicked are dying from hunger and pestilence, angels will shield the righteous, and supply their wants. To him that 'walketh righteously' is the promise, 'Bread shall be given him; his waters shall be sure.' 'When the poor and needy seek water, and there is none, and their tongue faileth for thirst, I the Lord will hear them, I the God of Israel will not forsake them.' "

11. What will God plant in the wilderness and in the desert? Why does God do this? Verses 19, 20.

NOTE.—These trees are of the choicest. The desert itself shall be transformed into a grove of stately, beautiful trees. And the object is that men may see in this a demonstration of the creative power of God.

12. What does God call upon the idols of the nations to do? What does He challenge them to show? Verses 21, 22.

13. How does God further challenge the idols? What does God declare them to be? Verses 23, 24.

NOTE.—God's challenge is definite, "Show us the future. Prove your power to predict, or give any proof of life and activity." (See Jer. 10:5.) God's idea of these idols is well expressed in the margin, "worse than nothing," "worse than of a viper."

14. Whom does God say He has raised up? What shall he do to princes? Verse 25.

NOTE.—Cyrus is here again introduced. He is said to have come from the north, also from the east. In fact, he came from the east, though all armies from the east came around the Arabian desert, and hence attacked Palestine from the north.

"Call upon My name." The Cambridge Bible, page 23, makes the following comment: "It is true that in Isaiah 45:4 it is said that Cyrus had not known Jehovah; but it is also said (verse 3) that the effect of his remarkable successes will be 'that thou mayest know that I am Jehovah that calleth thee by thy name, the God of Israel.' There is therefore no difficulty in the idea that Cyrus, who was at first the unconscious instrument of Jehovah's purpose, shall at length recognize that Jehovah was the true author of his success."

15. What questions does God again ask concerning the idols? Verse 26.

16. What will God give to Jerusalem? Verse 27.

NOTE.—The first part of verse 27 in the American Revised Version reads, "I am the first that said unto Zion, Behold, behold them."

17. What does God say He did not find among the idols? What are they again declared to be? Verses 28, 29.

LESSON 3—OCTOBER 20, 1928

THE ELECT OF GOD; A LIGHT OF THE GENTILES

LESSON SCRIPTURE: Isaiah 42.
MEMORY VERSE: Isa. 42: 3, 4.

INTRODUCTION

The work of Christ is definitely set forth in this chapter. He is the elect of God, a term which occurs six times in this portion of Isaiah. He is gentle, quiet, compassionate. He does not come to crush life, but to develop it; not to despise the weak, but to help them. If there is but a dimly burning wick, He does not give up hope. He will not stop until the work is accomplished. Many of the blind shall yet see the light, and the whole earth shall praise the Lord.

THE LESSON

1. What two names does the prophetic word give to Christ? What has God put upon Him? What will He bring to the Gentiles? Isa. 42:1.

NOTE.—Christ is the servant (John 6:38), sent to do the Father's will. He is the elect whom the Father has chosen, and whom He upholds.

"Bring forth judgment." The word "judgment" occurs three times in these first verses, and may be translated "law;" but commentators agree that the word is used here in a larger sense, some rendering the sentence thus: "He shall carry the true religion to the Gentiles."

2. What will be the manner of Christ's working? Verse 2.

NOTE.—Moffatt's translation is, "He shall not be loud and noisy, He shall not shout in public."

"In marked contrast to all this [the manner of the Pharisees] was the life of Jesus. In that life no noisy disputation, no ostentatious worship, no act to gain applause, was ever witnessed. Christ was hid in God, and God was revealed in the character of His Son. To this revelation Jesus desired the minds of the people to be directed, and their homage to be given."—"The Desire of Ages," p. 261.

3. What two examples show Christ's love and tenderness for the weak? Verse 3, margin.

NOTE.—There are few more beautiful passages in the Bible. The reed may be bruised, Christ will not break it. The candle may burn dimly, but He will not blow it out. There may not be much strength, the life may be bruised and broken; there may not be much light, rather smoke and darkness. But Christ does not give up hope. His own light does not burn dimly. By gentle measures the smoking flax may be fanned into a flame. His purpose shall not be broken, and the true religion shall be extended to all the earth.

4. What is Christ's attitude toward His work? What will He accomplish? For what do the isles wait? Verse 4.

NOTE.—The words "fail" and "be discouraged" correspond in the original to "dimly burning" and "broken" in verse 3. (See margin, American Revised Version.)

5. How is the true God revealed? Verse 5.

NOTE.—Again and again the true God is mentioned as the Creator. Here the reading really is, Thus saith the God who alone is truly God.

"That which cometh out of it," probably refers to all that the earth produces,—gold, silver, and vegetation.

6. How does God speak of Christ's appointment to His work? How will God sustain Him? For what will He give Him to the people and to the Gentiles? Verse 6.

7. What is further prophesied concerning the work of Christ? Verse 7.

8. What does God say of His name? What is said concerning the Lord's glory and praise? Verse 8.

9. What has been true of "the former things"? What is said of the future? Verse 9.

NOTE.—The former things which God had foretold had all been fulfilled. He was now telling of new things. These would as surely come to pass.

10. What are we exhorted to do? Who are to sing this song? Verses 10-12.

11. What is the Lord about to do? Verses 13-15.

NOTE.—The reason for singing the new song is given in these verses. God is about to manifest Himself. The second coming of Christ is here brought to view. For a long time God has refrained Himself and kept still when iniquity raised its ugly head. But now God will restrain Himself no more. He will go forth. He will prevail against His enemies.

12. What is God's promise to the blind? How will He lead them? Verses 16-18.

NOTE.—The blind here must have reference to the spiritually blind. In "Prophets and Kings," page 378, this text is applied to "all the honest in heart in heathen lands." There are many who are blind, but honest. That which seems to them to be darkness will then be made light, and the crooked things will be made straight. This should give us hope for many who apparently are rejecting light.

13. Who is spoken of as being blind and deaf? Though many things may be seen and heard, what does the Lord's servant not do? Verses 19, 20.

NOTE.—"The terms 'My servant,' 'Israel,' 'the servant of the Lord,' mean anyone that the Lord may select and appoint to do a certain work. He makes them ministers of His will, though some who are selected may be as ignorant of His will as was Nebuchadnezzar."—"Testimonies," Vol. 9, p. 138.

"God does not wish us to hear all that is to be heard, or to see all that is to be seen. It is a great blessing to close the ears, that we hear not, and the eyes, that we see not. The greatest anxiety should be to have clear eyesight to discern our own shortcomings, and a quick ear to catch all needed reproof and instruction, lest by our inattention and carelessness we let them slip, and become forgetful hearers, and not doers of the work."—"Testimonies," Vol. 1, pp. 707, 708.

14. What is the Lord well pleased to do? Verse 21.

NOTE.—"The beloved disciple, who listened to the words of Jesus on the mount, writing long afterwards under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, speaks of the law as of perpetual obligation. He says that 'sin is the transgression of the law,' and that 'whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law.' He makes it plain that the law to which he refers is 'an old commandment which ye had from the beginning.' He is speaking of the law that existed at the creation, and was reiterated upon Mount Sinai."—"Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing," p. 77.

"The third angel's message, embracing the messages of the first and second angels, is the message for this time. We are to raise aloft the banner on which is inscribed, 'The commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.' The world is soon to meet the great Lawgiver over His broken law. This is not the time to put out of sight the great issues before us. God calls upon His people to magnify the law, and make it honorable."—"Testimonies," Vol. 8, p. 197.

15. What calamities had come upon God's people? What appeal did the Lord make? Verses 22, 23.

16. Who permitted the calamities to come? Why were they permitted? Yet what did the people not do? Verses 24, 25.

LESSON 4—OCTOBER 27, 1928

THE GATHERING OF ISRAEL; WITNESSES FOR GOD

LESSON SCRIPTURE: Isaiah 43.
MEMORY VERSE: Isa. 43: 25.

INTRODUCTION

The lesson of this chapter centers around two main topics. The first seven verses tell of God's great love for His people, His willingness to make any sacrifice to insure their salvation, even to the lives of men and of peoples, to make certain that no honest heart should be lost. He then makes the promise that every member of His family, those called by His name, should all be gathered to Himself.

The second topic deals with the weighing of men in the balances, a testing of their loyalty. God depends upon the witness of His children. We are to testify of what He has done for us, of what we know by personal experience. A witness is allowed to tell only of that which he personally knows to be true. Now what has God done for you? God is looking for witnesses to testify to what He has done for them.

THE LESSON

1. **What comforting statement is made by the Lord to His people? Isa. 43:1.**

NOTE.—"Fear not." This blessed assurance that we need not fear is especially comforting in view of the last verses of the preceding chapter, where it is stated that God will pour out His fury against them that walk not in His ways nor keep His law.

"Called thee by thy name." "Jesus knows us individually, and is touched with the feeling of our infirmities. He knows us all by name. He knows the very house in which we live, the name of each occupant. He has at times given directions to His servants to go to a certain street in a certain city, to such a house, to find one of His sheep. Every soul is as fully known to Jesus as if he were the only one for whom the Saviour died."—"The Desire of Ages," p. 479.

2. **What promises are given to God's people when in trial? Verses 2, 3.**

NOTE.—God's promise to help His people has been wonderfully fulfilled in the past. For example, see Daniel 3: 27 and Exodus 14: 21, 22. When the trials of the last days shall come, these promises will become very precious indeed.

"Often the church militant is called upon to suffer trial and affliction; for not without severe conflict is the church to triumph. 'The

bread of adversity,' 'the water of affliction,' these are the common lot of all; but none who put their trust in the One mighty to deliver will be utterly overwhelmed."—"Prophets and Kings," p. 723.

3. How much does God think of His people? Verse 4.

NOTE.—God loves His people. He loves them so much that their worth can not be expressed in terms of money. He would gladly give Egypt, Ethiopia, and Seba for them. "I will give men for thee." That which is of immeasurably greater value than silver or gold, than property of any kind—men, human lives—God would give for His people. He spared not His own Son, but freely gave Him. He has permitted some of His own to give their lives for those "other sheep" who have not known Him.

4. Why need we not fear? From what parts of the earth will God call His people? Verses 5, 6.

NOTE.—This scripture is now being fulfilled. The message is sounding in all parts of the earth, and God is calling men from every nation, kindred, tongue, and people.

5. What will those who come from the ends of the earth be called? Why was man created? Verse 7.

NOTE.—"Called by My name." Of a certain company it is written that they will have the Father's name written in their foreheads. Rev. 14: 1. God's name is what He is. Ex. 3: 14. Hence, to be called by the name of God means to have His character.

6. What call does God now issue to all nations? What challenge does He make? Verses 8, 9.

NOTE.—God is calling all nations together as to a judgment scene. "Let them bring forth their witnesses," He says. The question is, Who is the true God? He challenges them to "show us former things," that is, things that they have predicted and which have come to pass. If they profess to do this, let them bring forth their witnesses to support their contention. If they can not do this, let them hear God's side of the case and say, "It is truth."

7. What does God call His people? What may they know, believe, and understand? What does God say of Himself? Verse 10.

NOTE.—"Our confession of His faithfulness is Heaven's chosen agency for revealing Christ to the world. We are to acknowledge His grace as made known through the holy men of old; but that which will be most effectual is the testimony of our own experience. We are witnesses for God as we reveal in ourselves the working of a power that is divine. Every individual has a life distinct from all others, and an experience differing essentially from theirs. God desires that our praise shall ascend to Him, marked with our own individuality. These precious acknowledgments to the praise of the glory of His grace, when supported by a Christlike life, have an irresistible power, that works for the salvation of souls."—"Ministry of Healing," p. 100.

8. What does God say of Himself? What three things does God say He has done to which His people are called to witness? Verses 11, 12.

NOTE.—"The people of the world are worshiping false gods. They are to be turned from their false worship, not by hearing denunciation of their idols, but by beholding something better. God's goodness is to be made known. 'Ye are My witnesses, saith the Lord, that I am God.' "—"Christ's Object Lessons," p. 299.

As to being a witness, "This also we shall be in eternity."—"Education," p. 308.

"The redeemed only, of all created beings, have in their own experience known the actual conflict with sin; they have wrought with Christ, and, as even the angels could not do, have entered into the fellowship of His sufferings; will they have no testimony as to the science of redemption,—nothing that will be of worth to unfallen beings?"—Ibid.

9. How does God declare His omnipotence? Verse 13.

NOTE.—The first statement, "Before the day was I am He," is variously translated. The sense seems to be, "I am ever the same." Before the day was, that is, before time began, "I am He." "From this day forth I am He." American Revised Version, margin.

10. How is the fall of Babylon announced? Verses 14-17.

NOTE.—In these verses the fall of Babylon is announced, but in very general terms. We are told that the chariot and horse, the army and the power, shall lie down together and not rise again, that they shall become extinct. When this calamity should come, His people were to know that the Holy One, the Creator of Israel, is their King, and that He will make a way for them in the sea and a path in the mighty waters.

11. What does God say His people are not to remember? What will God do? Who shall show forth His praise? Verses 18-21.

NOTE.—These verses are evidently to be understood in a spiritual sense. God will do a new thing. He will make a way in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert, and there He will give drink to His people, His chosen.

12. What complaint does God bring against His people? What have they not brought? With what has God not wearied them? Verses 22, 23.

NOTE.—God's people have neglected prayers; they have become weary of Him. What an indictment! Against this charge God defends Himself. He has not required very much of His people. He has not wearied them either with offerings or with incense.

13. What further complaint does God make? What does He say they have done? Verse 24.

NOTE.—God now speaks of His weariness of His people. "I have not caused thee to serve," He says, "but thou hast made Me to serve with thy sins." I have not "wearied thee with incense," but "thou hast wearied Me with thine iniquities." All power is of God. When we sin, we use for a base purpose the power God has given us. We make Him to serve with our sins. What a fearful condition!

14. What does God say He is doing? Why? What will He not remember? Verse 25.

NOTE.—It would be natural to expect God to be so weary with our sins that He would turn us away. On the contrary, God blots out our sins, not for our sakes, not because we deserve it, but for His own sake.

15. Of what does God say we are to put Him in remembrance? What invitation is given? Verse 26.

NOTE.—The more probable interpretation is, "Put Me in remembrance of My promises; plead them before Me; declare them, that I may justify thee." What a gracious invitation!

16. Who has sinned? Who have transgressed? What was God therefore forced to do? Verses 27, 28.

NOTE.—"You have no good thing wherewith to come before Me. Your first father sinned; your teachers have sinned. I have punished them. If you escape, it is only because of My great mercy."

LESSON 5—NOVEMBER 3, 1928

THE TRUE GOD; VANITY OF IDOLS; CYRUS, THE SHEPHERD

LESSON SCRIPTURE: Isaiah 44; 45: 1-4.
MEMORY VERSE: Isa. 44: 22.

INTRODUCTION

God will pour out His Spirit, but only upon them that are thirsty. Many will be converted also among the Gentiles and heathen. These shall all acknowledge the true God and keep themselves from idols.

Two things distinguish the true God from false gods. God is the Creator. God is the God of prophecy. He can tell the future.

We may not worship idols of wood and stone. But if we do not acknowledge God as Creator, if we accept evolution as a substitute for creation, we have formed another god and rejected the true One.

God may use nations and kings to fulfill His word. So He did in the case of Cyrus. Our faith should be strengthened as we see fulfilled prophecy.

THE LESSON

1. Whom is God addressing in the first verse of this lesson? How does God again call attention to the fact that He is the Creator? Isa. 44:1, 2.

NOTE.—It is interesting to note how God uses every opportunity to emphasize the fact of creation. Here He announces Himself as the One who made and formed man.

Jeshurun means the "upright one." It may here be used to show the change from "Jacob, the supplanter."

2. Upon whom will God pour water, symbolic of the Spirit? What will be the result of this outpouring? Verses 3, 4.

NOTE.—"There are certain conditions upon which we may expect that God will hear and answer our prayers. One of the first of these

is that we feel our need of help from Him. He has promised, 'I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground.' Those who hunger and thirst after righteousness, who long after God, may be sure that they will be filled. The heart must be open to the Spirit's influence, or God's blessing can not be received."—"Steps to Christ," p. 99.

The result of the outpouring of the Spirit is the springing up here and there of life,—new believers.

3. What will one say? What will others do? Verse 5.

NOTE.—This verse tells of the ingathering of Gentiles as a result of the outpouring of the Spirit.

4. How does God speak of Himself? What proof does He present to show that beside Him there is no god? Verses 6-8.

NOTE.—God is here King, Redeemer, the First and the Last, the only One.

A paraphrase of verse 7 would read: "Who is like Me? For since the beginning, I have prophesied and declared and set in order. Now let them,—the false gods,—tell us the future."

God repeatedly calls attention to prophecy as incontestable proof of divinity. We may do the same. We need not fear. God stands by His predictions.

5. What does God call the maker of graven images? Who makes these images? Verses 9-11.

NOTE.—"Their delectable things." Another name for their idols which are "pets, favorites, treasures." They are their own witnesses. They witness against themselves, for they can neither see nor know. How, then, can they help others? Verse 10 is a rhetorical question, "Who is so foolish as to make an image?"

"His fellows," that is, worshipers.

The workmen are men. And how can men make a god?

6. How is the fashioning of an idol described? Verses 12-17.

7. What have the makers of idols not known? What have they not considered? On what do they feed? What has turned them aside? Verses 18-20.

NOTE.—"He hath shut their eyes." Rather, their eyes are plastered over.

"None considereth." They do not think, they do not reflect. If they did, they would see the folly of their action.

"Feedeth on ashes." (See Prov. 15: 14; Hosea 12: 1.)

"A deceived heart." We need to ask God to help us not to deceive ourselves.

"Can not deliver his soul." Help must come from some outside source. We can not save ourselves. An idol is a lie. Men believe an idol can help. But it is a vain hope.

8. What are Jacob and Israel told to do? What has God blotted out? What invitation is given? Verses 21, 22.

NOTE.—God tells His people to remember these things of which He has just been speaking. And if they do, God will remember them. They shall not be forgotten. God not merely promises to forgive, but

in this text it is spoken of as already done. "I have blotted out." It is as though a father were speaking to a wayward son or daughter who had caused the parents much sorrow and grief, "I have forgiven the past. All is well. Come home. Return to me. I have redeemed you."

9. Why are heaven and earth called upon to break forth into singing? Verse 23.

NOTE.—Rejoice, for the Lord hath done it! The Lord hath redeemed Jacob.

10. How does the Lord again note His creative power? What other references does He make to His power? Verses 24-27.

11. What is said of Cyrus? What should be done to Jerusalem? Verse 28.

NOTE.—The mention of Cyrus by name, one hundred fifty years before his appearance, has been one of the chief factors in the decision of the critics that Isaiah did not write this part of his prophecies. It seems impossible to them that God could give a man's name even before his birth. Such an attitude shows a great lack of faith, and, indeed, most of the work of the critics is founded in unbelief. Josiah's name was announced three centuries before his birth. 1 Kings 13:2. And why should it be thought a thing incredible that God should do this? These very chapters in Isaiah emphasize again and again that God is different from idols. He can foretell the future. They can not. For anyone to hold the view that God can not tell what is to come, is to put Him on a level with idols.

12. What is Cyrus here called? What had God done? What did He say He would do for him? Isa. 45:1.

NOTE.—"His anointed." The only place in the Scriptures where this is spoken of a Gentile.

"The advent of the army of Cyrus before the walls of Babylon was to the Jews a sign that their deliverance from captivity was drawing nigh. More than a century before the birth of Cyrus, Inspiration had mentioned him by name, and had caused a record to be made of the actual work he should do in taking the city of Babylon unawares, and in preparing the way for the release of the children of the captivity. Through Isaiah the word had been spoken. . . .

"In the unexpected entry of the army of the Persian conqueror into the heart of the Babylonian capital by way of the channel of the river whose waters had been turned aside, and through the inner gates that in careless security had been left open and unprotected, the Jews had abundant evidence of the literal fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy concerning the sudden overthrow of their oppressors."—"Prophets and Kings," pp. 551, 552.

13. What would God do for Cyrus? Who would break in pieces the gates of brass? Why would this be done? Verses 2, 3.

NOTE.—God would go before and help Cyrus. He is the One who would cause the gates to open. God would so work that Cyrus could not fail to know that some supernatural power was helping him. Babylon, according to Herodotus, had one hundred gates, all of brass. The city could not be taken in any ordinary manner.

14. For whose sake was Cyrus called by name? Verse 4.

NOTE.—To establish the faith of His people, God called Cyrus by name. When we see prophecy fulfilled, our faith should become stronger. The fulfillment of prophecy in the signs of the times occurring all about us should have the same effect.

LESSON 6—NOVEMBER 10, 1928

THE VANITY OF FALSE GODS; ONE ONLY SAVIOUR

LESSON SCRIPTURE: Isaiah 45: 5-25; 46.
MEMORY VERSE: Isa. 45: 18.

INTRODUCTION

The warnings against idolatry do not have reference only to the time of Isaiah. Anything that comes between us and our God is a false god, an idol. Whether it be worldly pleasure, the lusts of the flesh or of the eye, worldly wisdom, the follies and fashions of the hour, or position or honor, or the plaudits of the crowd,—all these are condemned as idolatry.

But there are other dangers,—dangers threatening the church of God. Anything or anyone besides Christ which we trust to help us to obtain God's favor, becomes a vain hope, a false god. No works of our own can take the place of Christ. There is only one Saviour. Isa. 45:21. He saves to the uttermost. Remember the admonition, "Keep yourselves from idols." 1 John 5: 21.

THE LESSON

1. What does the Lord proclaim concerning Himself? What had He done for Cyrus? Isa. 45:5.

NOTE.—"I girded thee." As God loosed the loins of the adversaries (verse 1), to weaken them, so He "girded" those of Cyrus, to strengthen him.

2. For what purpose was this done? Verse 6.

3. What does God form? Create? Make? Verse 7.

NOTE.—"Create evil." The "evil" here mentioned is not moral evil but physical, and could well be translated calamity. God punishes for sin, and it is these calamities to which the prophet refers. (See Amos 3:6.)

4. What blessings are promised to God's people? Verse 8.

NOTE.—These words indicate in figurative language the blessed consequences of opening the heart to God's righteousness. Reference is here made to the creative power of God manifested in the new life.

5. What warning is given concerning murmuring against our Maker? Verses 9, 10.

6. How does God here make known His creative power and foreknowledge? Verses 11-14.

NOTE.—God had raised up Cyrus, and would direct his ways. He was to conquer Egypt and Ethiopia, and they were to acknowledge God's dealings.

7. What is God said to do? What will be the experience of idolaters? What contrast is shown in the experience of Israel? Verses 15-17.

NOTE.—God sometimes hides Himself. He "moves in a mysterious way, His wonders to perform." Rom. 11:33.

"An everlasting salvation." Not saved to-day and lost to-morrow. Not a wonderful mountain-top experience one year at some great meeting, and then an intermediate lapse into the valley.

"World without end." Literally, to all eternity.

8. For what purpose did God form the earth? Verse 18.

9. How has God spoken to mankind? Verse 19.

NOTE.—God may at times hide Himself, but He does not speak in secret. Deut. 30:11-14. He does not ask men to seek Him in vain, literally, in chaos, that is, without definite guidance and without hope of result.

10. Who are told to assemble themselves? What do those do who have no knowledge of God? What questions are asked? What answers are given? To whom are the ends of the earth to look? Verses 20-22.

NOTE.—"Ye that are escaped of the nations." This call is to all who "are escaped," that is, those whom God has called and who have responded.

"Tell ye." Announce, or, as in the American Revised Version, "declare," His message of mercy to the nations.

11. What has God sworn concerning the people of earth? Verse 23.

NOTE.—Referring to events to take place at the close of the millennium, the following description is given: "Now Christ again appears to the view of His enemies. Far above the city, upon a foundation of burnished gold, is a throne, high and lifted up. Upon this throne sits the Son of God, and around Him are the subjects of His kingdom. The power and majesty of Christ no language can describe, no pen portray."—"The Great Controversy," pp. 664, 665.

"As if entranced, the wicked have looked upon the coronation of the Son of God. They see in His hands the tables of the divine law, the statutes which they have despised and transgressed. They witness the outburst of wonder, rapture, and adoration from the saved; and as the wave of melody sweeps over the multitudes without the city, all with one voice exclaim, 'Great and marvelous are Thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are Thy ways, Thou King of saints;' and falling prostrate, they worship the Prince of life."—Id., pp. 668, 669.

12. In whom do we have righteousness and strength? In whom are we justified? Verses 24, 25.

13. What is said of the downfall of the Babylonian gods? What will happen to them? Isa. 46:1, 2.

NOTE.—Bel and Nebo were Babylonian gods, answering to Jupiter and Mercury. (See Acts 14:12.) Bel is the same as Baal, mentioned elsewhere in the Bible.

The picture here is of the Babylonians trying to save their gods. They put them on beasts, and they make a load. "They could not deliver." Their gods can not save them. They themselves, the gods, are "gone into captivity."

14. How does God, by contrast, speak of Himself? What beautiful promises are given to those who are growing old? Verses 3, 4.

NOTE.—The contrast here is striking. While the Babylonians must carry their idols to save them, God carries and delivers. God will not forsake. "Even to your old age I am He."

15. How is an idol made? Verses 5-7.

16. What does God counsel us to remember? Verses 8, 9.

NOTE.—Remember this, and show yourselves men! In a time of idolatry, when the whole current of life is downward, it takes courage to stand against popular superstitions and customs. God calls for men.

"The greatest want of the world is the want of men,—men who will not be bought or sold; men who in their inmost souls are true and honest; men who do not fear to call sin by its right name; men whose conscience is as true to duty as the needle to the pole; men who will stand for the right though the heavens fall."—"Education," p. 57.

17. What does God declare from the beginning? What shall stand? Verse 10.

NOTE.—God again calls attention to the prophetic word, saying He has declared "the end from the beginning." Even in the first chapter of the Bible the heavenly bodies are mentioned as being signs.

"My counsel shall stand." Isa. 14:24.

"My pleasure," rather, My purpose.

18. How is Cyrus spoken of? To whom does God appeal? What will He bring near? What does He say of His salvation? Verses 11-13.

NOTE.—Cyrus is here likened to a ravenous bird, as Nebuchadnezzar was likened to an eagle. Eze. 17:3. The royal Persian ensign was an eagle.

LESSON 7—NOVEMBER 17, 1928

THE FATE OF BABYLON; GOD'S FINAL APPEAL TO HIS PEOPLE

LESSON SCRIPTURE: Isaiah 47; 48.
MEMORY VERSE: Isa. 48: 18.

INTRODUCTION

Babylon was given to pleasure, was tender and delicate. Vice and folly sapped her strength. Gluttony, effeminacy, overrefinement, luxury, pride, self-exaltation, were among her besetting sins. Babylon said in her heart, "I am, and none else beside me." Pride was a dominant trait. And pride goes before destruction.

The sins that caused Babylon's fall are prevalent now, and will bring about the same results.

In Isaiah 48, God makes another appeal to His creative power and to prophecy as the proof of His being the true God. In Isaiah's day it was the Creator against false gods, idols. To-day it is the same. False, evolutionary teachings are among the many theories by which a scientific age would set aside the true God, the Creator of the heavens and the earth.

THE LESSON

1. What message came to the ruler of Babylon? Dan. 4:31; Isa. 47:1-5.

NOTE.—"To the ruler of Babylon came the sentence of the divine Watcher: O king, 'to thee it is spoken: The kingdom is departed from thee.'

" 'Come down, and sit in the dust, O virgin daughter of Babylon,
Sit on the ground; there is no throne. . . .
Sit thou silent,
And get thee into darkness, O daughter of the Chaldeans;
For thou shalt no more be called the lady of kingdoms.' "—"Education," p. 176. This was fulfilled in the time of Belshazzar.

"While still in the festal hall, surrounded by those whose doom had been sealed, the king is informed by a messenger that 'his city is taken' by the enemy against whose devices he had felt so secure; 'that the passages are stopped, . . . and the men of war are affrighted.' Even while he and his nobles were drinking from the sacred vessels of Jehovah, and praising their gods of silver and of gold, the Medes and the Persians, having turned the Euphrates out of its channel, were marching into the heart of the unguarded city. The army of Cyrus now stood under the walls of the palace; the city was filled with the soldiers of the enemy, 'as with caterpillars;' and their triumphant shouts could be heard above the despairing cries of the astonished revelers. 'In that night was Belshazzar the king of the Chaldeans slain,' and an alien monarch sat upon the throne."—"Prophets and Kings," p. 531.

2. Because of the sins of His people, what had God done to His inheritance? How had Babylon treated the captives? Isa. 47:6.

NOTE.—God's people had sinned, and He had been wroth. Isa. 64: 5, 9. The inheritance, the holy land, had been polluted, and Israel carried into captivity. Babylon had shown Israel but little mercy, and the ancient people, literally, aged people, had been compelled to work hard.

3. What had Babylon said? To what was Babylon given? How did she not expect to sit? What should come in one day? Verses 7-9; Rev. 18:7, 8.

NOTE.—"Given to pleasures." Babylon is not much different now. "Dwellest carelessly." Belshazzar was dancing and drinking while Death stalked without! Dancing the last night of probation! Dancing on the brink of the abyss! Dancing while the Hand was about to write Babylon's doom!

4. What had Babylon further said? What had perverted her? What had she said in her heart? Isaiah 47:10.

NOTE.—"None seeth me." So think they that are now of Babylon.

5. What would Babylon not be able to put off? How was desolation to come? What challenge was given? Verses 11, 12.

NOTE.—Punishment for sin is sure. It may be delayed, but it can not be put off indefinitely. Destruction will come, and come suddenly. Verse 12 is a challenge to the sorcerers and enchanters to come forth with their enchantments, to see if they can avert the evil. The prophet here taunts the sorcerers as Elijah did the prophets of Baal.

6. What further challenge does the prophet issue? What does he say of those who make false claims? What can they not do for themselves? Verses 13-15.

NOTE.—"The astrologers and stargazers were men who pretended to read the future from a study of the position of the stars. The monthly prognosticators were such as prepared monthly almanacs in which coming disasters were foretold, and lucky and unlucky days pointed out."—Cambridge Bible.

The destruction of Babylon by fire would not be a "fire to sit before," not one merely to warm one's self by, but an all-consuming destruction.

7. Whom does God here address? What is said of their sincerity? Of what city do they boast? In whom do they profess to take refuge? Isa. 48:1, 2.

8. What has God declared from the beginning? What does He say of the fulfillment of His word? How does He speak of His people? Why did God make known the events of the future? Verses 3-5.

NOTE.—If God had not prophesied beforehand what should come to pass, some would have given the credit to idols, saying that their idols had done it or commanded it.

9. What has God shown? Why had He not shown them before? Verses 6-8.

NOTE.—These verses might be paraphrased thus: "Thou hast heard all this, and now thou seest it fulfilled. I will show thee from this time new things, which thou hast not known before. They are entirely new, and before to-day thou hast not heard them, lest thou shouldest say, Behold, I knew them."

10. For His own sake, what did God do? What had He done to Israel? Whence did He choose them? For whose sake does He do this? Verses 9-11.

NOTE.—Instead of cutting off Israel, God purified them in the furnace of affliction. He might leave Israel, but it would mean destruction. The only alternative is the furnace. So it is with us. God has good reason for leaving us to our own way. But that would mean eternal loss. Our only hope is God's purifying fire,—trials.

11. In what terms does God again proclaim Himself the Creator? How do heaven and earth obey Him? Verses 12, 13.

12. What will God do to Babylon? Whom has He called? Verses 14-16.

NOTE.—God now again calls upon the nations to hear Him. Babylon shall fall. Verse 14. God has called him, that is Cyrus, and will prosper him. Verse 15. Now, let every one hear this, for God is not speaking in secret. One hundred fifty years before Cyrus appears, God is saying this: Cyrus shall destroy Babylon. My word has always been fulfilled; and when you see this come to pass, when you see Babylon fall by a man whom I have named years before his birth, you may know that I am God.

This is the last time Cyrus is mentioned in Isaiah. And with this chapter God closes the argument which He has so often used to prove His divinity, the facts of prophecy and creation.

13. By what names is God called? What does God teach His people? How does He lead? Verse 17.

14. What desire does God express? If the desire had been realized, what would result? Verses 18, 19.

NOTE.—"Those who take Christ at His word, and surrender their souls to His keeping, their lives to His ordering, will find peace and quietude. Nothing of the world can make them sad when Jesus makes them glad by His presence. In perfect acquiescence there is perfect rest."—"The Desire of Ages," p. 331.

15. What call is given to God's people in Babylon? In what spirit will this call be given? How far will the message be sent? What will they say? Verse 20.

NOTE.—This verse is prophetic of the last call to come out of Babylon. Rev. 18:4.

"With a voice of singing." Clear, definite, musical. Not gloomy, but happy, for a way of escape has been found.

This message will go to the end of the earth, and with it the blessed assurance that God has redeemed His people.

16. How did God preserve His people when they fled from Egypt? Verse 21.

NOTE.—This verse should be a source of comfort to God's people at this time. The way may be rough and thorny, but God will not leave His own. Psalm 91.

17. What do the wicked lack? Verse 22.

NOTE.—God "gives no one liberty to gloss over the sins of His people, nor to cry, 'Peace, peace!' when He has declared that there shall be no peace for the wicked. Those who stir up rebellion against the servants whom God sends to deliver His messages are rebelling against the word of the Lord."—"Testimonies," Vol. 4, p. 185.

THIRTEENTH SABBATH OFFERING

December 29, 1928

INTER-AMERICAN DIVISION

THE SERVANT: HOPE FOR THE DISCOURAGED

LESSON SCRIPTURE: Isa. 49: 1-23.
MEMORY VERSE: Isa. 49: 15, 16.

INTRODUCTION

With this chapter begins a new section of the book of Isaiah. The term "the servant" is often mentioned. This refers to Christ, but in some cases it has a double application and refers also to God's people. However, there need be no confusion on this point, as the references are clear.

THE LESSON

1. In the beginning of this chapter, who are called upon to listen? To what has God compared the mouth? What does God say of His people? Isa. 49:1-3.

NOTE.—"Isles," literally, countries; "people," literally, peoples. The whole world is called upon to hear the announcement, for it concerns the whole world.

"The Lord hath called Me." Luke 1:31-33.

"Mention of My name." Matt. 1:21.

"Sharp sword." Heb. 4:12.

"A polished shaft," or arrow, even sharper than a sword.

The description of "the servant" is that of Christ.

"The Desire of Ages," pages 678, 679, quoting Isaiah 49:4, 5, 7-10, applies the scripture to Christ. "Testimonies," Vol. 7, pages 191, 192, quoting Isaiah 49:2-6, applies it to the people of God. Hence we accept these references as having a double application, first to Christ, then to Israel, old and new.

2. What brought discouragement to "the Servant"? In what words did He leave the matter with God? Verse 4.

NOTE.—"As the world's Redeemer, Christ was constantly confronted with apparent failure. He, the messenger of mercy to our world, seemed to do little of the work He longed to do in uplifting and saving. Satanic influences were constantly working to oppose His way. But He would not be discouraged. Through the prophecy of Isaiah He declares, 'I have labored in vain, I have spent My strength for naught, and in vain: yet surely My judgment is with the Lord, and My work with My God.' "—"The Desire of Ages," p. 678.

If Christ could feel a sense of discouragement, is it surprising that we sometimes feel the same way? Let us follow His example: leave ourselves with the Lord, and take courage.

The American Revised Version translates the latter part of the verse: "Yet surely the justice due to Me is with Jehovah, and My recompense with My God."

3. For what purpose was "the Servant" called? How was He regarded by the Lord? Verse 5.

NOTE.—This verse seems to have definite reference to Christ. He was called to bring "Jacob" back to God, and also, as the American Revised Version has it, "that Israel be gathered unto Him."

Christ was glorious, or honorable, in the sight of God. Yet He did not take glory to Himself. He said, "I can of Mine own self do nothing." John 5: 30.

4. What does God say is a light thing? To whom did God say He would also make the Servant a light? For what purpose? Verse 6.

NOTE.—"This prophecy was generally understood as spoken of the Messiah, and when Jesus said, 'I am the light of the world,' the people could not fail to recognize His claim to be the Promised One."—"The Desire of Ages," p. 465.

"Prophets and Kings," pages 688, 689, says that it was generally understood that the coming of the Messiah was referred to in the prophecy of Isaiah 49:6.

This prophecy, however, also has an application to the people of God. After quoting Isaiah 49:6, "Testimonies," Vol. 7, page 192, says:

"This is the word of the Lord to all who are in any way connected with His appointed institutions. They are favored of God, for they are brought into channels where the light shines. They are in His special service, and they should not esteem this a light thing."

A paraphrase of Isaiah 49:6 would read: "It is too small a work for you to labor only among those who already know the truth. I will send you for a light to the heathen, that you may bring salvation to the ends of the earth."

This is an excellent foreign-missionary text. God's ministers are not constantly to hover over the churches. The call is to send the message to the ends of the earth. Nor must the people demand that their tithes and offerings be spent in ministering to themselves, thus consuming their own gifts.

5. How is Christ spoken of? What prophecy is made concerning Him? Verse 7.

NOTE.—This verse refers definitely to Christ. "It is to Christ that the promise is given," says "The Desire of Ages," page 678, quoting Isaiah 49:7-10. He was despised of men. Isa. 53:3. It is not the Jews only who cry, "Away with Him." John 19:15. "A servant of rulers," taunted and scourged by such rulers as Herod and Pontius Pilate. Luke 23:11; John 19:1, 16. Nevertheless the time will come when kings and rulers shall "see and arise." Wonderful change!

6. When did God hear? When did He help? For what would God give Christ to the people? What should be done to the earth? Verse 8.

NOTE.—Christ is here again spoken of as the covenant. (Compare chapter 42:6.) He has become the mediator of a new covenant (Heb. 8:6), and hence may be spoken of in the terms of our text.

"Establish the earth," rather, raise up the earth, that is, lift it out of its present degraded, sin-cursed condition. Christ came to seek and to save that which is lost, and this includes the earth.

7. What shall be said to the prisoners? What to those in darkness? What shall these liberated prisoners do? Verse 9.

NOTE.—Compare Isaiah 61:1. Moffatt translates the latter part of the verse thus: "On the road home food shall never fail them, they shall find pasture even upon bare hills."

8. What experience shall they not have? How are they protected from these? Verse 10; Ps. 121:6.

9. How shall the way be prepared? Whence do these prisoners come? Isa. 49:11, 12.

NOTE.—By many commentators Sinim is thought to refer to China.

10. Why are the heavens and the earth to rejoice? But what does Zion, or God's people, say? Verses 13, 14.

11. What illustration is used to show forth God's remembrance of His people? What assurance is given? Where are we graven? Who shall be separated from God's people? Verses 15-17.

NOTE.—"Not a single soul who puts his trust in Him will be forgotten. God thinks of His children with the tenderest solicitude, and keeps a book of remembrance before Him, that He may never forget the children of His care."—"Testimonies," Vol. 4. pp. 329, 330.

Verse 17 contains an interesting statement. "Thy destroyers and they that made thee waste shall go forth of thee." While God's people are to go out of Babylon, when it comes to the church, it is not the church that leaves and goes out, but the destroyers, the wasters. It is not those that "go forth" that constitute the church. The church remains.

12. After the wasters and destroyers have gone forth from the church, who shall come to take their place? What solemn statement does the Lord make? Verse 18.

13. What shall be too narrow? What shall these new children say? Verses 19, 20.

14. What questions shall Zion ask? What answer does the Lord give? What is said of kings and queens? Who shall not be ashamed? Verses 21-23.

NOTE.—These latter verses without doubt found their first fulfillment in the coming in of the Gentiles in the Christian era. May we not believe they will find another and even more complete fulfillment, and that they that wait for the Lord shall not be ashamed?

LESSON 9—DECEMBER 1, 1928

"THY SAVIOUR AND THY REDEEMER"

LESSON SCRIPTURE: Isa. 49: 24-26; 50.
MEMORY VERSE: Isa. 50: 10.

INTRODUCTION

To Isaiah had been revealed a comprehensive view of the plan of salvation. He understood that man was Satan's captive, and also that there is One mightier than the mighty who could take away the prey, and that this One was the Lord, "thy Saviour and thy Redeemer."

To the Jew, the word Redeemer was most expressive and meaningful. Sometimes a poor man might sell himself. If so, he could be

redeemed, but only by one near of kin. Lev. 25:47-49. The redemption was effected by the kinsman's paying the just demand in full. Lev. 25:27; 1 Peter 1:18, 19. The story of Ruth is a beautiful illustration of redemption.

This lesson also brings to view the suffering Saviour. What a wonderful picture is given of His passion! He feels the insults to the quick, but does not draw back. His face is set like a flint; that is, He is determined to go through to the end. The Lord will help Him. They will "stand together." Christ passed through darkness. Let others who may be doing God's will, yet are confronted with difficulties and perplexities, take courage. God is still living.

THE LESSON

1. What question is asked concerning the mighty, and the lawful captive? Isa. 49:24.

2. What answer does the Lord give? What does the Lord promise to do? Verse 25.

NOTE.—"The mighty" here spoken of, is Satan. He has some captives, some who have given themselves over to evil, and are justly his captives.

"All who willfully depart from God's commandments are placing themselves under the control of Satan. Many a man tampers with evil, thinking that he can break away at pleasure; but he is lured on and on, until he finds himself controlled by a will stronger than his own. . . .

"Yet his condition is not hopeless. God does not control our minds without our consent; but every man is free to choose what power he will have to rule over him."—"Ministry of Healing," pp. 92, 93.

3. What terrible punishment will be meted out to the oppressors? What shall all men know? Verse 26.

4. What two questions does the Lord ask? Who had sold them? Why were they put away? Isa. 50:1.

NOTE.—When Isaiah wrote this, God had not as yet put away His people, Israel. They deserved this treatment, but God was still merciful. Later on He did divorce Israel. Jer. 3: 8.

In Isaiah 50:1 God asks for proof that He has put Israel away. The answer, of course, is that He has not put them away, nor sold them to the creditors as was sometimes the custom. Neh. 5:5; 2 Kings 4:1. They had, however, sold themselves. Isa. 52:3.

5. What questions does God now ask? Verses 2, 3.

NOTE.—If I have not put you away, but have called you, how is it that no one responds? Is it because you think My hand is shortened so I can not redeem, or that I have no power? God is astonished and perplexed that no one answers His call. He offers the riches of heaven, and men are not interested.

6. What has God given His servant? For what purpose? What does God do every morning? Verse 4.

NOTE.—" 'The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister.' Not for Himself, but for others, He lived and thought and

prayed. From hours spent with God He came forth morning by morning, to bring the light of heaven to men. Daily He received a fresh baptism of the Holy Spirit. In the early hours of the new day the Lord awakened Him from His slumbers, and His soul and His lips were anointed with grace, that He might impart to others. His words were given Him fresh from the heavenly courts, words that He might speak in season to the weary and oppressed."—"Christ's Object Lessons," p. 139.

"Words of kindness are as welcome as the smile of angels."—"Ministry of Healing," p. 158.

7. How did Christ show His willing submission to God? Verse 5.

NOTE.—The ears of the true servant are always open, and those of the rebellious servant are closed. The true servant will hear the word and do it. The wicked servant will not hear. Matt. 7:24-29.

8. To whom did Christ submit His back? His cheeks? From what did He not hide His face? Verse 6.

9. When were these prophecies fulfilled? Matt. 27:26-31; Mark 15:19.

10. What confidence did Christ express in God? How did Christ set His face? What did He know? Isa. 50:7.

NOTE.—"Difficulties will arise that will try your faith and patience. Face them bravely. Look on the bright side. . . . Never let your courage fail. Never talk unbelief because appearances are against you. As you work for the Master, you will feel pressure for want of means, but the Lord will hear and answer your petitions for help. Let your language be, 'The Lord God will help me; therefore shall I not be confounded: therefore have I set my face like a flint, and I know that I shall not be ashamed.' Isa. 50:7.

"If you make a mistake, turn your defeat into victory. The lessons that God sends will always, if well learned, bring help in due time. Put your trust in God. Pray much, and believe. Trusting, hoping, believing, holding fast the hand of Infinite Power, you will be more than conquerors."—"Testimonies," Vol. 7, p. 244.

11. Who is said to be near? What other question is asked? What challenge is made? Verse 8.

NOTE.—Christ was mocked and condemned by the Jewish Sanhedrin and by Rome. But He knew that though He was condemned by man, God would justify Him.

"Let us stand together." With God on his side, who need be afraid? The challenge is issued: "Who is mine adversary? let him come near to me." God is on our side, and victory is sure.

12. Who will ever be our help? What shall happen to the opposers? Verse 9. (Compare with Rom. 8:33, 34.)

13. What questions are asked? In whom are we counseled to trust? Verse 10.

NOTE.—There are those that fear the Lord and obey the voice of His servant, and yet walk in darkness, literally in dark places, that

is, in trouble. Many are doing the best they know, and live up to all the light they have, and still are not free from trouble. What shall they do? "Let him trust in the name of the Lord, and stay upon his God."

14. What is said to those that compass themselves about with sparks of their own kindling? What shall be their end? Verse 11.

NOTE.—The picture is that of a man in darkness, trying to get light by kindling a fire. All that results, however, is a few sparks. Refusing God's light, he tries to make one of his own. But he shall not succeed.

"Many look to their ministers to bring the light from God to them, seeming to think this a cheaper way than to be at the trouble of going to God for it themselves. Such lose much. If they would daily follow Christ, and make Him their guide and counselor, they might obtain a clear knowledge of His will, and thus be gaining a valuable experience. For want of this very experience, brethren professing the truth walk in the sparks of others' kindling; they are unacquainted with the Spirit of God and have not a knowledge of His will, and are therefore easily moved from their faith. They are unstable, because they trusted in others to obtain an experience for them. Ample provisions have been made for every son and daughter of Adam to obtain individually a knowledge of the divine will, to perfect Christian character, and to be purified through the truth. God is dishonored by that class who profess to be followers of Christ, and yet have no experimental knowledge of the divine will or of the mystery of godliness."—"Testimonies," Vol. 2, p. 644.

LESSON 10—DECEMBER 8, 1928

THE RIGHTEOUSNESS AND POWER OF GOD; HIS CARE FOR HIS PEOPLE

LESSON SCRIPTURE: Isa. 51: 1-16.
MEMORY VERSE: Isa. 51: 3.

INTRODUCTION

It is well sometimes to look back. It helps us not to despise the day of small things. We need to look back to the days of the beginnings of this message, when hardship, toil, and privation were the portion of minister and of people. We are living in an age of extravagance and luxury, and there is danger that we partake of the spirit of the times. What we are, we are by the grace of God. Let us keep to the simplicity of the gospel.

The contrast between mortal man and his Maker is clearly brought out in this lesson. Man is like a garment which the moths eat, like a gnat that dies, like wool which the worms eat, like grass which is burned. There is very little place in those terms for the doctrine of natural immortality. On the other hand, God's salvation is everlasting, and His righteousness, that is, His character, His law, shall not be abolished.

THE LESSON

1. Who are asked to hearken unto the Lord? Where are they asked to look? Isa. 51: 1.

NOTE.—"Righteousness here means, not salvation, but righteousness in conduct, a way of life in accordance with the will of God."—Cambridge Bible.

It is well, sometimes, to look back on our own personal history and consider where we would be, and what we would be, had not God found us. Looking back on these things would probably make us more humble and more thankful.

2. To whom are we to look? How was Abraham called? Verse 2.

NOTE.—"Called him alone," literally "as one," before he had children.

"Blessed him." Gen. 24:1.

"Increased him," made him father of many nations. Gen. 17:5.

3. What will the Lord do to Zion and to the waste places? What will He make of the wilderness and of the desert? What shall be found there? Verse 3.

NOTE.—This refers definitely to the new earth state.

"Like Eden," like the garden of the Lord.

"There we shall know even as also we are known. There the loves and sympathies that God has planted in the soul will find truest and sweetest exercise." Read "Education," pp. 306, 307.

4. What will proceed from the Lord? What will God make to rest for a light? Verse 4.

NOTE.—"I will make My judgment to rest." A somewhat unusual construction. Judgment is the same word as in Isaiah 42:1, and might be rendered religion, as the Cambridge Bible has it. God, then, will send the true religion to all peoples, and it will be to them for a light.

5. What is near? What has gone forth? How will the people be judged? On whom do the isles wait? On what do they trust? Verse 5.

NOTE.—This verse may rightly, as does the preceding one, have reference to the last days. God's righteousness and salvation are near. He is about to judge the people. The same arm that brings destruction to sinners will bring salvation to the saints.

6. What change will take place in the heavens? What changes will come to the earth? To the inhabitants? What will remain forever? What will not be abolished? Verse 6.

NOTE.—This verse brings to view the contrast between the things that shall perish and the things that shall remain. The world has this reversed. That which God says shall vanish, men say will stand forever. That which God says shall not be abolished, men professedly believe to be abolished.

7. Who are now directly addressed? Of what are they not to fear or be afraid? Verse 7.

NOTE.—Apparently those who have God's law in their heart will be reviled and reproached.

"Through Satan's temptations the whole human race have become transgressors of God's law; but by the sacrifice of His Son a way is opened whereby they may return to God. Through the grace of Christ they may be enabled to render obedience to the Father's law. Thus in every age, from the midst of apostasy and rebellion, God gathers out a people that are true to Him—a people 'in whose heart is His law.' "—"Patriarchs and Prophets," p. 338.

8. What contrast is made between men and God's righteousness and salvation? Verse 8.

9. What is the Lord exhorted to do? What question is asked of God? Verse 9.

NOTE.—Rahab, literally, the proud one, is symbolically an expression for Egypt. Ps. 89:10, margin. The dragon is another symbol for Egypt. Eze. 29:3. The reference here is to the destruction of Pharaoh's army at the Red Sea. The dragon originally is Satan. Rev. 12:7-9. This term is therefore applied also to the adversaries of God generally.

10. What reference is made to Israel's experience at the Red Sea? Verse 10.

NOTE.—The reference here is clear to the drying up of the Red Sea, that the Israelites might pass over. Ex. 14 21, 22.

11. To what is the prophet's mind now turned? Verse 11.

NOTE.—This verse is nearly identical with Isaiah 35:10, and furnishes a good illustration of how an event of the past, as Israel's deliverance from Egypt, will suggest the greater deliverance that shall soon come to God's people.

12. Of whom should we not be afraid? Whom should we not forget? What question is asked? Verses 12, 13.

13. What will God do for the captive exile? Verse 14.

NOTE.—The American Revised Version is a little clearer: "The captive exile shall speedily be loosed; and he shall not die and go down into the pit, neither shall his bread fail."

14. How does God speak of His power? What is His name? Verse 15.

NOTE.—Reference is again made to the crossing of the Red Sea.

15. What has God done for His people? What does He say to Zion? Verse 16.

NOTE.—The Septuagint renders this verse: "I will put My words into thy mouth, and I will shelter thee under the shadow of Mine hand, with which I fixed the sky, and founded the earth; and the Lord shall say to Zion, Thou art My people."

"The knowledge of God that works transformation of character is our great need. If we fulfill His purpose, there must be in our lives a revelation of God that shall correspond to the teaching of His word."—"Testimonies," Vol. 8, p. 329.

ZION LED FROM UTTER DEFEAT TO TRIUMPHANT VICTORY

LESSON SCRIPTURE: Isa. 51: 17-23; 52: 1-12.
MEMORY VERSE: Isa. 52: 7.

INTRODUCTION

The first picture presented to us in the lesson is that of Jerusalem figured as a woman lying drunk and senseless, unable to help herself. She has drunk to the very dregs the cup of the Lord's indignation, and no one can help her.

The second picture is much more encouraging. Zion is asked to awake, put on her strength and her beautiful garments. God will cleanse and beautify His church, and henceforth no unclean thing shall enter.

The third picture is that of the gospel proclamation to the whole world. God's people are united. They sing together. They are one. And God is baring His holy arm for them. They have left Babylon; they are "clean." God goes before them, and victory is assured.

THE LESSON

1. Who is told to awake? What experience has Jerusalem gone through? Isa. 51:17.

NOTE.—The prophet here by anticipation speaks of the destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar, and the resulting calamities. 2 Kings 25:8-11; compare Jer. 42:18.

2. Who is there to help her? What two things have come upon her? What is said of her sons? Verses 18-20.

NOTE.—"None to guide." When Jerusalem was destroyed and most of the people taken into captivity, the leaders were also taken. Not a few people remained in the land, but there were no leaders. When Jeremiah and Baruch were taken to Egypt, there was none left. Jer. 43:5-7.

"These two things." "Desolation," or wasting produced by the "famine" within the city; and "destruction," produced by the "sword" without the city.

3. Whom does God now address? How does God speak of Himself? What will God do to the cup? What have the nations done to the people of God? Verses 21-23.

NOTE.—"Thy God that pleadeth the cause of His people." This can be none other than Christ.

"I have taken out of thine hand the cup." God will take the cup away from Jerusalem, and give it to the nations that afflicted her. These have trampled upon His people, and now retribution comes.

4. To whom does the call come to awake? Who shall henceforth no more come into the holy city? Isa. 52:1.

NOTE.—The church is here bidden to put on her strength and the beautiful garments of Christ's righteousness. "Souls are perishing

out of Christ, and those who profess to be Christ's disciples are letting them die. Our brethren have talents intrusted to them for the very work of saving souls; but some have bound these up in a napkin, and buried them in the earth. How much do such idlers resemble the angel who is represented as flying in the midst of heaven, proclaiming the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus? What manner of entreaty can be brought to bear upon the idlers that will arouse them to go to work for the Master? What can we say to the slothful church member to make him realize the necessity of unearthing his talent and putting it out to the exchangers? There will be no idler, no slothful one, found inside the kingdom of heaven. O that God would set this matter in all its importance before the sleeping churches! O that Zion would arise and put on her beautiful garments. O that she would shine!"—"Testimonies," Vol. 6, p. 434.

5. What are Jerusalem and the captive daughter of Zion told to do? Verse 2.

NOTE.—"Shake thyself from the dust." Get rid of all sin.

"Loose thyself from the bands of thy neck," literally, the bands of thy neck are unloosened; that is, I have caused thy chains to fall from thee.

6. For what had they sold themselves? How shall they be redeemed? Verse 3.

NOTE.—"The enemy is buying souls to-day very cheap. 'Ye have sold yourselves for a thing of naught,' is the language of Scripture. One is selling his soul for the world's applause, another for money; one to gratify base passions, another for worldly amusements. Such bargains are made daily. Satan is bidding for the purchase of Christ's blood, and buying them cheap, notwithstanding the infinite price which has been paid to ransom them."—"Testimonies," Vol. 5, p. 133.

7. Where did the people aforetime go? How did the Assyrians treat them. Verse 4.

NOTE.—Israel experienced three captivities. The first when they "went down" into Egypt and were made to serve. Ex. 1:13, 14.

The second was the Assyrian captivity. 2 Kings 15:29; 17:6; 18:13.

The third is the Babylonian captivity, referred to in Isaiah 52:5.

8. What question does the Lord ask? How did Babylon treat the captives? What is said of the name of the Lord? What shall they know? Verses 5, 6.

NOTE.—"To the prophet [Isaiah] was given a revelation of the beneficent design of God in scattering impenitent Judah among the nations of earth. 'My people shall know My name,' the Lord declared; 'they shall know in that day that I am He that doth speak.' And not only were they themselves to learn the lesson of obedience and trust; in their places of exile they were also to impart to others a knowledge of the living God. Many from among the sons of the strangers were to learn to love Him as their Creator and their Redeemer; they were to begin the observance of His holy Sabbath day as a memorial of His creative power; and when He should make 'bare His holy arm in

the eyes of all the nations,' to deliver His people from captivity, 'all the ends of the earth' should see of the salvation of God. Many of these converts from heathenism would wish to unite themselves fully with the Israelites, and accompany them on the return journey to Judea."—"Prophets and Kings," pp. 371, 372.

9. What is said of him that bringeth good tidings? What is said to Zion? Verse 7.

NOTE.—The good tidings referred first to the news to Israel in Babylon that they were free to leave the land of their captivity and return to the land of Judea. It is also the gospel proclamation: good tidings, peace, good tidings of good, salvation.

"Thy God reigneth!" God is still ruling in the affairs of men. It may seem that things are going to pieces, that evil is triumphant and the right is perverted. But be of good cheer. "Thy God reigneth!"

10. What do the watchmen do? How do they sing? How do they see? When? Verse 8.

NOTE.—"Never was there so great a diversity of faith in Christendom as at the present day. If the gifts [Eph. 4:11-13] were necessary to preserve the unity of the primitive church, how much more so to restore unity now! And that it is the purpose of God to restore the unity of the church in the last days, is abundantly evident from the prophecies. We are assured that the watchmen shall see eye to eye, when the Lord shall bring again Zion. Also, that in the time of the end the wise shall understand. When this is fulfilled there will be unity of faith with all whom God accounts wise; for those that do in reality understand aright, must necessarily understand alike. What is to effect this unity but the gifts that are given for this very purpose?"—"Early Writings," p. 140.

11. How may the joy of God's people be fitly expressed? What has the Lord done? Verse 9.

12. What has the Lord done in the sight of the nations? What shall the ends of the earth see? Verse 10.

13. What are His people told not to touch? Who must be clean? Verse 11.

NOTE.—God's ministers must be holy, clean. So must His people. This scripture applies to ministers and people.

"The church will rarely take a higher stand than is taken by her ministers. We need a converted ministry and a converted people. Shepherds who watch for souls as they that must give account will lead the flock on in paths of peace and holiness. Their success in this work will be in proportion to their own growth in grace and knowledge of the truth. When the teachers are sanctified, soul, body, and spirit, they can impress upon the people the importance of such sanctification."—"Testimonies," Vol. 5, p. 227.

14. How should God's people not go out? Why is haste and secrecy unnecessary? Verse 12.

NOTE.—"Not go out with haste." This refers first to the departure from Babylonian captivity, as described in Ezra; but the scripture

also has a wider application. God wants His people to be ready, and to do deliberately and with forethought that which needs to be done. God is not in a hurry, and He will go before us. He will also be our rearward. The final triumph of His people at Christ's coming shall likewise be a complete victory in full sight of the nations.

LESSON 12—DECEMBER 22, 1928

THE LAMB OF GOD

LESSON SCRIPTURE: Isa. 52: 13-15; 53: 1-5.
MEMORY VERSE: Isa. 53: 5.

INTRODUCTION

"It would be well to spend a thoughtful hour each day reviewing the life of Christ from the manger to Calvary. We should take it point by point, and let the imagination vividly grasp each scene, especially the closing ones of His earthly life. By thus contemplating His teachings and sufferings, and the infinite sacrifice made by Him for the redemption of the race, we may strengthen our faith, quicken our love, and become more deeply imbued with the spirit which sustained our Saviour."—"Testimonies," Vol. 4, p. 374.

The wrong views which the Jews held in regard to sin and suffering helped decidedly to cause them to reject Christ. If any man suffered, it was clear to them that he must be a great sinner. God knew this, and in the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah corrects the idea. Christ was indeed smitten of God, but it was for our sake; He was scourged, but it was that we might be healed.

Help on this lesson may be found in "Testimonies," Vol. 2, pages 200-215.

THE LESSON

1. What will God's Servant do? Because of this, what will be His position? Isa. 52:13.

NOTE.—"My Servant shall deal wisely."—American Revised Version. The word here used primarily means wisely, but it also includes the success which is normally the result of wise action; hence the margin has "prosper."

Christ did deal wisely in all acts of life. Wisely He chose His disciples not from the rich or learned, lest it be said that influence or learning was the cause of His remarkable success. Wisely He refused to be made king, lest ambition be laid to His charge. Wisely He hid His divinity and did most of His miracles unnoticed, so that the supernatural should not have undue influence in deciding men. Wisely He submitted Himself to civil authority. Wisely He answered subtle questions and avoided others. Wisely He dealt with the erring and downtrodden. No unwise word or action has ever been laid to His charge,—not even by His enemies.

"Shall be exalted." Christ was highly exalted. Phil. 2:9-11.

2. Why were many astonished? Verse 14.

NOTE.—The word "astonied" expresses the thought of blank amazement, mingled with horror, aroused in those who should behold the Saviour's extreme anguish and suffering.

"He bore insult, mockery, and shameful abuse, until His 'visage was so marred more than any man, and His form more than the sons of men.'

"Who can comprehend the love here displayed! The angelic host beheld with wonder and with grief. Him who had been the Majesty of heaven, and who had worn the crown of glory, now wearing the crown of thorns, a bleeding victim to the rage of an infuriated mob, fired to insane madness by the wrath of Satan. Behold the patient Sufferer! Upon His head is the thorny crown. His lifeblood flows from every lacerated vein. All this in consequence of sin! Nothing could have induced Christ to leave His honor and majesty in heaven, and come to a sinful world, to be neglected, despised, and rejected, by those He came to save, and finally to suffer upon the cross, but eternal, redeeming love, which will ever remain a mystery."—"Testimonies," Vol. 2, p. 207.

3. What will He do to many nations? What will kings do? Why? Verse 15.

NOTE.—This verse speaks of the results of Christ's humiliation.

"So shall He sprinkle many nations," rather, "startle." The American Revised Version, putting verses 14 and 15 together, reads, "Like as many were astonished at Thee (His visage was so marred more than any man, and His form more than the sons of men), so shall He startle [astonish] many nations." (See margin.) It should be an astonishing thing that from such an act, the suffering and death of an innocent person, should come such wonderful results.

"Kings shall shut their mouths at Him," in reverence, as princes did in the case of Job before calamity came upon him. Job 29:8, 9.

4. What two questions are now asked? Isa. 53:1.

5. How should Christ grow up? What is said of His appearance? Verse 2.

NOTE.—In the Old Testament it was required that the sacrifice should be perfect, without blemish. Lev. 1:3; 6:6. Concerning Christ's personal appearance, read "Early Writings," page 172.

It was in the spiritual rather than in the physical sense that the Jews rejected Christ. If He had come as a prince and received honor of men; if He had used His miraculous power to free them from the Roman yoke; if He would even continue to feed them as He had done with the five thousand, they might have accepted Him.

"For more than a thousand years the Jewish people had waited the coming of the promised Saviour. Their brightest hopes had rested upon this event. For a thousand years, in song and prophecy, in temple rite and household prayer, His name had been enshrined; and yet when He came, they did not recognize Him as the Messiah for whom they had so long waited. 'He came unto His own, and His own received Him not.' To their world-loving hearts, the Beloved of heaven was 'as a root out of a dry ground.' In their eyes He had 'no

form nor comeliness;' they discerned in Him no beauty that they should desire Him."—"Prophets and Kings," p. 710.

6. How did men treat Christ? What is He called? With what is He acquainted? How did they treat Him? What did they not do? Verse 3.

NOTE.—"Mark the humble life of the Son of God. . . . Behold His ignominy, His agony in Gethsemane, and learn what self-denial is. Are we suffering want? so was Christ, the Majesty of heaven. But His poverty was for our sakes. Are we ranked among the rich? so was He. But He consented for our sakes to become poor, that we through His poverty might be made rich. In Christ we have self-denial exemplified. His sacrifice consisted not merely in leaving the royal courts of heaven, in being tried by wicked men as a criminal and pronounced guilty, and in being delivered up to die as a malefactor, but in bearing the weight of the sins of the world. The life of Christ rebukes our indifference and coldness."—"Testimonies," Vol. 3, p. 407.

7. What has Christ borne and carried? Verse 4, first part; Matt. 8:16, 17.

NOTE.—"The Majesty of heaven pleased not Himself. Whatever He did was in reference to the salvation of man. Selfishness in all its forms stood rebuked in His presence. He assumed our nature that He might suffer in our stead, making His soul an offering for sin. He was stricken of God and afflicted to save man from the blow which he deserved because of the transgression of God's law. By the light shining from the cross, Christ proposed to draw all men unto Him. His human heart yearned over the race. His arms were opened to receive them, and He invited all to come to Him. His life on earth was one continued act of self-denial and condescension."—"Testimonies," Vol. 4, p. 418.

8. How did we esteem Him? Isa. 53:4, last part.

NOTE.—It was generally believed by the Jews that sin is punished in this life. Every affliction was regarded as the penalty of some wrongdoing, either of the sufferer himself or of his parents. It is true that all suffering results from the transgression of God's law, but this truth had become perverted. Satan, the author of sin and all its results, had led men to look upon disease and death as proceeding from God,—as punishment arbitrarily inflicted on account of sin. Hence, one upon whom some great affliction or calamity had fallen had the additional burden of being regarded as a great sinner.

"Thus the way was prepared for the Jews to reject Jesus. He who 'hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows,' was looked upon by the Jews as 'stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted;' and they hid their faces from Him."—"The Desire of Ages," pp. 470, 471.

9. Why was Christ wounded? And bruised? What was upon Him? How are we healed? Verse 5.

NOTE.—"Christ was treated as we deserve, that we might be treated as He deserves. He was condemned for our sins, in which He had no share, that we might be justified by His righteousness, in which we had no share. He suffered the death which was ours, that we might

receive the life which was His. 'With His stripes we are healed.' "—"The Desire of Ages," p. 25.

10. What is sometimes the cause of affliction? John 9:1-3; 11:4.

NOTE.—While sickness is often a result of sin, all sickness is not directly caused by sin. We do not suppose that Christ meant to say that the blind man or his parents had never sinned, but that this affliction had not come to them because of any specific evil they had done. Christ was trying to counteract the idea of the Jews who believed that when people are afflicted, they must be great sinners.

According to these texts, some are sick that "the works of God should be made manifest;" others are sick "for the glory of God." Paul's "thorn in the flesh" may be an illustration of the latter kind.

If, when we are sick, we have searched our hearts for any hidden and unconfessed sin, and have found none, we need not continually distress ourselves over the outcome. God knows best. It may be "that the works of God should be made manifest" in healing; for God will do great things for us if He is asked.

11. Why does affliction sometimes come to God's children? 2 Cor. 1:3-7.

NOTE.—God comforts us in our tribulation, with the intent "that we may be able to comfort" others. According to this, some are afflicted for the "consolation and salvation" of others. Verse 6. This should be a great comfort to many who wonder why God sends certain afflictions to them. Remember, dear one, there may be some poor struggling soul going through deep waters whom God is preparing you to help by causing you to go through afflictions that will make you more understanding and sympathetic. So do not despair. God is giving you certain experiences that will make you a better worker, a better Christian.

LESSON 13—DECEMBER 29, 1928

STRICKEN BECAUSE OF ISRAEL'S TRANSGRESSIONS

LESSON SCRIPTURE: Isa. 53: 6-12.
MEMORY VERSE: Isa. 53: 11.

INTRODUCTION

The suffering, death, and resurrection of Christ must ever be vital in the life and message of every Christian. The subject of the atonement can never grow old. Righteousness by faith rightly understood and practiced is needed more than ever.

"The proud heart strives to earn salvation; but both our title to heaven and our fitness for it are found in the righteousness of Christ. The Lord can do nothing toward the recovery of man until, convinced of his own weakness, and stripped of all self-sufficiency, he yields himself to the control of God. Then he can receive the gift that God is waiting to bestow. From the soul that feels his need, nothing is with-

held. He has unrestricted access to Him in whom all fullness dwells. Isa. 57:15."—"The Desire of Ages," p. 300.

Contemplation of the last scenes in the life of Christ will draw the soul nearer to God. This lesson should serve that purpose.

THE LESSON

1. How has mankind gone astray? Which way have we gone? What has the Lord laid on Christ? Isa. 53:6.

NOTE.—When a whole flock goes astray, it is generally because the leaders have gone astray. Let the first sheep lead the way, and all the rest follow. While God does not excuse those who have thus gone after their own way, He understands that the chief responsibility is upon the leaders.

"The Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all." "Whether they know it or not, all are weary and heavy-laden. All are weighed down with burdens that only Christ can remove. The heaviest burden that we bear is the burden of sin. If we were left to bear this burden, it would crush us. But the Sinless One has taken our place. . . . He has borne the burden of our guilt. He will take the load from our weary shoulders. He will give us rest. The burden of care and sorrow also He will bear. He invites us to cast all our care upon Him; for He carries us upon His heart."—"The Desire of Ages," pp. 328, 329.

2. How was Christ treated? What did He not do? By what word is His death here named? How was His attitude before His judges described in the prophecy? Verse 7.

NOTE.—"He was oppressed." The word denotes harsh, cruel, and arbitrary treatment, such as that of a slave driver. The same word is used in Exodus 3:7.

"As a lamb to the slaughter." Christ's trial was neither just nor legal. It was not an execution but a slaughter.

"He opened not His mouth." "Patiently Jesus listened to the conflicting testimonies. No word did He utter in self-defense. At last His accusers were entangled, confused, and maddened. The trial was making no headway; it seemed that their plottings were to fail. Caiaphas was desperate. One last resort remained; Christ must be forced to condemn Himself. The high priest started from the judgment seat, his face contorted with passion, his voice and demeanor plainly indicating that were it in his power he would strike down the prisoner before him. 'Answerest Thou nothing?' he exclaimed; 'what is it which these witness against Thee?' Jesus held His peace."—"The Desire of Ages," p. 706.

The power of silence! Many people understand the power of words, of oratory. Few understand the power of silence. And yet it is just as important to know when not to speak as to know when to speak.

3. How was the scripture that "He opened not His mouth" fulfilled? Matt. 27:12-14; Luke 23:8, 9.

NOTE.—"Herod was irritated by this silence. It seemed to indicate utter indifference to his authority. To the vain and pompous king, open rebuke would have been less offensive than to be thus ignored. Again he angrily threatened Jesus, who still remained unmoved and

silent. . . . Christ's silence was the severest rebuke that He could have given."—Id., p. 730.

4. Where was Christ taken? What is said of the generations? Why was Christ stricken? Isa. 53:8.

NOTE.—A paraphrase of this verse might read: "They did away with Him unjustly, and who of His generation cared? 'He was cut off out of the land of the living for the transgression of my people to whom the stroke was due.' " See American Revised Version.

5. Where was His grave made? What had He not done? What was not found in His mouth? Verse 9.

NOTE.—The preceding verse states that Christ was unjustly condemned, and verse 7 calls the judicial murder a "slaughter." This verse emphasizes the fact that Christ was sinless, that He had done no violence, and that there was no deceit in Him. Had the leaders in Israel diligently studied the prophecies, they could not but have seen the parallel between Christ and Isaiah 53. They would have known that Isaiah spoke of One who should be condemned unjustly, who should patiently take the insults offered, who should not retaliate or open His mouth in His defense. And when at last the rich Joseph buried Him, had they read the prophecies they could but have seen the climax of what was foretold.

6. How was the prophecy as to Christ's burial fulfilled? Matt. 27:57-60.

7. What did it please the Lord to do? What will take place when His soul is made an offering for sin? Isa. 53:10.

NOTE.—"It pleased the Lord." It was by "the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God" (Acts 2:23) that Christ suffered. It was according to the plan laid from eternity.

"His soul an offering for sin." Christ "made Himself an offering for sin, that we might be justified before God through Him."—"Testimonies," Vol. 4, p. 374.

Now when we shall present that offering before God, "He shall see His seed," that is, we shall then be reckoned among "the seed," we shall be "heirs according to the promise." Gal. 3:29; Ps. 22:30. Christ "shall see His seed" among His true followers. "He shall prolong His days." This is the resurrection. He shall live again.

8. What will Christ see? What effect will this have upon Him? Verse 11, first part.

NOTE.—Christ shall see "the travail of His soul," that is, those for whom He labored and suffered. "Then, in the results of His work, Christ will behold its recompense. In that great multitude which no man could number, presented 'faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy,' He whose blood has redeemed and whose life has taught us, 'shall see of the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied.' "—"Education," p. 309.

9. How will many be justified? Why? Verse 11, last part.

NOTE.—The American Revised Version reads, "By the knowledge of Himself shall My righteous Servant justify many." The knowledge

spoken of here is the knowledge of experience. Christ was made a perfect Saviour by the things He suffered. Heb. 2:10. To really know Christ, that is, to know Him as we ought, is eternal life (John 17:3); but such knowledge is gained only by experience. (See Phil. 3:10, 11.)

10. What has stood throughout the ages as a great beacon of truth?—Ans. Righteousness by faith.

NOTE.—"Through all the ages the great truth of justification by faith has stood as a mighty beacon to guide repentant sinners into the way of life. It was this light that scattered the darkness which enveloped Luther's mind, and revealed to him the power of the blood of Christ to cleanse from sin. The same light has guided thousands of sin-burdened souls to the true Source of pardon and peace."—"Acts of the Apostles," pp. 373, 374. It should be noted that justification and righteousness by faith mean the same thing.

11. Of what do our churches sadly stand in need?

NOTE.—"Our churches are dying for the want of teaching on the subject of righteousness by faith in Christ, and on kindred truths."—"Gospel Workers," p. 301.

12. What is righteousness, and how do we receive it? Rom. 4:3; Gen. 26:5.

NOTE.—"Righteousness is holiness, likeness to God; and 'God is love.' It is conformity to the law of God; for 'all Thy commandments are righteousness;' and 'love is the fulfilling of the law.' Righteousness is love, and love is the light and the life of God. The righteousness of God is embodied in Christ. We receive righteousness by receiving Him.

"Not by painful struggles or wearisome toil, not by gift or sacrifice, is righteousness obtained; but it is freely given to every soul who hungers and thirsts to receive it."—"Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing," p. 34.

13. What is the glory of God which closes the work of the third angel? Rev. 18:1.

NOTE.—"The message of Christ's righteousness is to sound from one end of the earth to the other to prepare the way of the Lord. This is the glory of God, which closes the work of the third angel."—"Testimonies," Vol. 6, p. 19.

14. What will God divide or give to Christ? Why is this given to Him? Isa. 53:12.

NOTE.—The picture here is of a conqueror returning from battle and dividing the spoil. Men here make themselves a name by their heroism and valor, and so Christ also is to be given "a name which is above every name." Phil. 2:9. His "spoil" is the souls He has won in battle. And this victory is won and this reward given "because He hath poured out His soul unto death."

The last time we gave a Thirteenth Sabbath Offering to the Inter-American Division, there was an overflow of $4,352.66. The call this quarter is for $105,000. Make your offering generous, so there will be a liberal overflow.

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