

Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit.

CHRISTOPATHY.

A Sermon

INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD'S-DAY, JANUARY 10TH, 1897,

DELIVERED BY

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“With his stripes we are healed.”—Isaiah liii. 5.

BRETHREN, whenever we come to talk about the passion of our Lord,—and that subject is clearly brought before us here by the two words, “his stripes,”—our feelings should be deeply solemn, and our attention intensely earnest. Put off thy shoes from thy feet when thou drawest near to this burning bush, for God is in it. If ever the spirit should be deeply penitential, and yet humbly confident, it ought to be so when we hear the lash falling upon the divine and human person of our blessed Master, and see him wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities.

Stand still, then, and see your Lord and Master fastened up to the Roman column, and cruelly scourged. Hear the terrible strokes, mark the bleeding wounds, and see how he becomes a mass of pain even as to his blessed body. Then note how his soul also is flagellated. Hark how the whips fall upon his spirit, till his inmost heart is wounded with the tortures, all but unbearable, which he endures for us. I charge my own heart to meditate upon this solemn theme without a single wandering thought, and I pray that you and I may be able to think together upon the matchless sufferings of Incarnate Love until our hearts melt within us in grateful love to him.

Remember, brothers and sisters, that we were practically there when Jesus suffered those terrible stripes.

“’Twas you, my sins, my cruel sins,
His chief tormentors were;
Each of my crimes became a nail,
And unbelief the spear.”

We certainly had a share in his sorrows. Oh, that we were equally certain that “with his stripes we are healed.” You smote him, dear friend, and you wounded him; therefore, do not rest until you can say, “with his stripes I am healed.” We must have a personal interest

in this suffering One if we are to be healed by his stripes. We must get to lay our own hands upon this great sacrifice, and so accept it as being made on our behalf; for it would be a wretched thing to know that Christ was stricken, but not to know that "with his stripes we are healed." I would to God that not one should go out from this service without being able to say to himself as he retired, "Yes, blessed be his name, 'with his stripes I am healed.' The disease of sin is put away by the sacred balsam which drops from the side of the Crucified. From that mortal disease which else would surely have destroyed me, I am restored by his sufferings, his griefs, his death." And then, all together, may we be able to say, "with his stripes we are healed."

I. Observe, dear friends, first of all, that GOD HERE TREATS SIN AS A DISEASE.

There would be no need to talk about healing if sin had not been regarded by God as a disease. It is a great deal more than a disease, it is a wilful crime; but still it is also a disease. It is often very difficult to separate the part in a crime which disease of the mind may have, and that portion which is distinctly wilful. We need not make this separation ourselves. If we were to do so in order to excuse ourselves, that would only be increasing the evil; and if we do it for any other reason, we are so apt to be partial, that I am afraid we should ultimately make some kind of palliation for our sin which would not bear the test of the day of judgment. It is only because of God's sovereignty, and his infinite grace, and his strong resolve to have mercy upon men that, in this instance, he wills to look upon sin as a disease. He does not conceal from himself, or from us, that it is a great and grievous fault; he calls it a trespass, a transgression, iniquity, and other terms that set forth its true character. Never in Scripture do we find any excuse for sin, or lessening of its heinousness; but in order that he might have mercy upon us, and deal graciously with us, the Lord is pleased to regard it as a disease, and then to come and treat us as a physician treats his patients, that he may cure us of the evil.

Sin is a disease, first, because *it is not an essential part of man as he was created*. It is something abnormal, it was not in human nature at the first. "God made man upright." Our first parent, as he came fresh from the hand of his Maker, was without taint or speck of sin; he had a healthy body inhabited by a healthy soul. There was about him no tendency to evil, he was created pure and perfect; and sin does not enter into the constitution of man, *per se*, as God made it. It is a something which has come into us from outside. Satan came with his temptation, and sin entered into us, and death by sin. Therefore, let no man, in any sense whatever, attribute sin to God as the Creator. Let him look upon sin as being a something extraneous to a man, something which ought never to have a *locus standi* within our nature at all, a something that is disturbing and destructive, a poisoned dart that is sticking in our flesh, abiding in our nature, and that has to be extracted by divine and sovereign grace.

And, secondly, sin is like a disease because *it puts all the faculties out of gear*, and breaks the equilibrium of the life-forces, just as disease

disturbs all our bodily functions. When a man is sick and ill, nothing about him works as it ought to do. There are some particular symptoms which, first of all, betray the existence of the *virus* of disease ; but you cannot injure any one power of the body without the rest being in their measure put out of order. Thus has sin come into the soul of man, and put him altogether out of gear. Sometimes, a certain passion becomes predominant in a person quite out of proportion to the rest of his manhood. Things that might have been right in themselves, grow by indulgence into positive evils, while other things which ought to have had an open existence are suppressed until the suppression becomes a crime. It is sin that makes us wrong, and makes everything about us wrong, and makes us suffer we know not how much. The worst of the matter is, that we do not ourselves readily perceive that we are the evil-doers, and we begin, perhaps, to judge others who are right, and because they are not precisely in the same condition as ourselves, we make our sinful selves to be the standard of equity, and consider that they are wrong, when all the while the evil is in ourselves. As long as a man is under the power of sin, his soul is under the power of a disease which has disturbed all his faculties, and taken away the correct action from every part of his being. Hence, God sees sin to be a disease, and we ought to thank him that, in his gracious condescension, he deals with it in that way, instead of calling it what it really is, a crime deserving instant punishment.

Further, my friends, sin is a disease because *it weakens the moral energy*, just as many diseases weaken the sick person's body. A man, under the influence of some particular disease, becomes quite incapacitated for his ordinary work. There was a time when he was strong and athletic, but disease has entered his system, and so his nerves have lost their former force, and he, who would be the helper of others, becomes impotent, and needs to be waited upon himself. How often is a strong man brought down to utter helplessness ! He who used to run like a hare must now be led out if he is to breathe the fresh air of heaven ; he who once could cut with the axe, or smite with the hammer, must now be lifted and carried like a child. You all know how greatly the body is weakened by disease, and just so is it with sin and the spirit. Sin takes away from the soul all power. Does not the apostle speak of us as being "without strength" when "in due time Christ died for the ungodly" ? The man has not the power or the will to believe in Christ, but yet he can believe a lie most readily, and he has no difficulty in cheating himself into self-conceit. The man has not the strength to quit his sin, though he has power to pursue it with yet greater energy. He is weak in the knees, so that he cannot pray ; he is weak in the eyes, so that he cannot see Jesus as his Saviour ; he is weak in the feet, so that he cannot draw near to God ; he has withered hands, dumb lips, deaf ears, and he is palsied in his whole system. O sin, thou dost take away from man the strength he needs with which to make the pilgrimage to heaven, or to go forth to war in the name of the Lord of hosts ! Sin does all this, and yet men love it, and will not turn from it to him who alone can destroy its deadly power.

I know that I am speaking to some who are well aware that sin has thrown their whole nature out of order, and taken away all their power to do that which is right. You, my friend, have come into this place, which is like the pool of Bethesda, with its five porches, and you have said in your heart, "Oh, that the great Physician would come and heal me! I cannot step into the pool of his infinite mercy and love, though I would fain lie there waiting upon the means of grace; but I know that I shall find no benefit in the means of grace unless the Lord, who is the Giver of grace, shall come to me, and say, as he said to the man at the pool, 'Rise, take up thy bed, and walk.'" Oh, what an awful mass of disease there is all round about us in these streets, and in these myriads of houses! Sin has done for mankind the most dreadful deeds; it is the direst of all calamities, the worst of all infections.

And, further, sin is like a disease because *it either causes great pain, or deadens all sensibility*, as the case may be; I do not know which one might rather choose, whether to be so diseased as to be full of pain, or to be suddenly smitten by a paralytic stroke, so as not to be able to feel at all. In spiritual things, the latter is the worse of the two evils. There are some sinners who appear to feel nothing; they sin, but their conscience does not accuse them concerning it. They purpose to go yet further into sin, and they reject Christ, and turn aside from him even when the Spirit of God is striving with them, for they are insensible to the wrong they are doing. They do not feel, they cannot feel, and, alas! they do not even want to feel; they are callous and obdurate, and, as the apostle says, "past feeling." When they read or hear of the judgment to come, they do not tremble. When they are told about the love of Christ, they do not yield to him. They can hear about his sufferings, and remain altogether unmoved; they have no fellowship with his sufferings, and scarcely know what the expression means. Sin is dear to them, even though it slew the Lord of glory himself. This paralysis, this deadening of the powers is a very terrible phase of the disease of sin.

In some others, sin causes constant misery. I do not mean that godly sorrow which leads to penitence, for sin never brings its own repentance; but by way of remorse, or else of ungratified desire, or restlessness such as is natural to men who try to fill their immortal spirits with the empty joys of this poor world. Are there not many who, if they had all they have ever wished for, would still wish for more? If they could at this moment gratify every desire they have, they would but be as men who drink of the brine of the sea, whose thirst is not thereby quenched, but only increased. Oh, believe me, you will never be content with the pleasures of this world, if your mind be at all aroused and awakened concerning your state in the sight of God! If you are given over to spiritual paralysis, you may be without feeling; but that is a deadly sign indeed. But if there be any sort of spiritual life within you, the more you sin the more uneasy you will become. There is no way of peace by plunging more deeply into sin, as some think they will do,—drowning dull care in the flowing bowl, or endeavouring to show their hardihood by rushing into still viler forms of lust, in order that they may, somehow or other,

be satisfied and content. No, this disease breeds a hunger which increases as you feed it, it engenders a thirst which becomes the more intense the more you try to satisfy it.

Sin is also like a disease, because *it frequently produces a manifest pollution*. All disease in the body does pollute it in some way or other. Turn the microscope upon the part affected, and you will soon discover that there is something obnoxious there. But sin in the soul pollutes terribly in the sight of God. There are quiet, respectable sins which men can conceal from their fellow-creatures, so that they can keep their place in society, and seem to be all that they ought to be; but there are other sins which, like the leprosy of old, are white upon their brows. There are sins that are to be seen in the outward appearance of the man; his speech betrayeth him, his walk and conversation indicate what is going on within his heart. It is a dreadful thing for the sinner to recollect that he is a polluted being; until he is washed in Christ's precious blood, he is a being with whom God can have no sort of communion. Men have to put infected persons away from the society of other people; under the Jewish law, when men were in a certain stage of disease, they had to be isolated altogether from their fellow-men, and certainly could not come into the house of the Lord. O my hearers, there are some of you who, if your bodies were as diseased as your souls are, would not dare even to show your faces in the streets; and some of us, who have been washed in the blood of Jesus, have felt ourselves to be so foul, so vile, so filthy, that if we could have ceased to exist we would have welcomed annihilation as a boon! I remember the time when, under a sense of sin, I was afraid to pray. I did groan out a prayer of a sort; but I felt as if the very earth must be weary of bearing up such a sinner, and that the stars in their courses must be anxious to shoot baleful fires upon the one who was so defiled. Perhaps some of you have felt as I did, and now you join me in saying, "But we are washed, but we are sanctified, but we are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God." The disease that was upon us was worse than the foulest leprosy, more infectious than the most terrible fever, causing greater deformity than the dropsy, and working in us worse ills than the most foul disease that can ever fall upon the bodies of men. I would to God that men did but see that, although the picture I have tried to draw is terrible indeed, yet it is most gracious on God's part to treat them as diseased persons needing to be cured, rather than as criminals waiting to be executed.

Once more, sin is like disease because *it tends to increase in the man, and will one day prove fatal to him*. You cannot say to disease, "Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further." There are some diseases that seem to come very gradually, but they come very surely. There is the hectic flush, the trying cough, the painful breathing, and we begin to feel that consumption is coming; and very soon,—terribly soon to those who love them,—those who were once hale and hearty, to all appearance, become like walking skeletons, for the fell disease has laid its cruel hand upon them, and will not let them go. So, my friend, as long as sin is in you, you need not deceive yourself, and think you can

get rid of it when you will, for you cannot. It must be driven out by a higher power than your own; this disease must be cured by the great Physician, or else it will keep on increasing until at last you die. Sin will grow upon you till, "when it is finished, it bringeth forth death." God grant that, before that awful ending is reached, the Lord Jesus Christ may come and cure you, so that you may be able to say, "With his stripes we are healed."

Sin is a contagious disease, which passes from one to another. It is hereditary; it is universal; it is incurable; it is a mortal malady; it is a disease which no human physician can heal. Death, which ends all bodily pain, cannot cure this disease; it displays its utmost power in eternity, after the seal of perpetuity has been set upon it by the mandate, "He that is filthy, let him be filthy still." It is, in fact, such a disease that you were born with it, and you will bear it with you for ever and ever, unless this wondrous prescription, of which we are now to speak, shall be accepted by you, and shall work in you the divine good pleasure, so that you shall be able to say, "With his stripes we are healed."

II. Now, secondly, we see from our text that GOD HERE DECLARES THE REMEDY WHICH HE HAS PROVIDED. Jesus Christ, his dear Son, has taken upon himself our nature, and suffered on the cross in our stead, and God the Father has delivered him up for us all, that we might be able to say, "With his stripes we are healed."

First, dear friends, *behold the heavenly medicine*,—the stripes of Jesus in body and in soul. Picture him before your mind's eye. He is scourged by the rough Roman soldiers till the sacred stream rolls down his back in a crimson tide, and he is scourged within as well as without till he cries, in utmost agony, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" He is fastened to the cruel wood, his hands and feet and brow are all bleeding, and his inmost soul is poured out even unto death,—whatever that wonderful expression may mean. He bears the sin of many, the chastisement of their peace is upon him, he is bruised for their iniquities, and wounded for their transgressions. If thou wouldst be healed of sin's sickness, here is the medicine. Is it not singular surgery? Surgeons usually give us pain while trying to cure us, but here is a Physician who bears the pain himself, and thereby heals us. Here is no medicine for us to take, for it has all been taken by him. He suffers, he groans, he dies; and it is by his griefs and agonies that we are healed.

Then, next, *remember that the sufferings of Christ were vicarious*. He stood in our place that we might stand in his place. He took our sin upon himself; and being found with that sin upon him, he was made to bear the penalty that was due to it; and he did bear it, and this is the way whereby we are healed, by Jesus Christ himself taking our infirmities, and bearing our sicknesses. This doctrine of substitution is the grandest of all truths, and though all these years I have continued to preach nothing else but this, what better news can I tell a poor sinner than that the Saviour has taken his sins, and borne his sorrows for him? Take away the doctrine of the substitutionary sacrifice of Christ, and you have torn out the very heart of the gospel. "The blood is the life thereof;" and you have no living gospel to

preach if atonement by blood be once put into the background. But, O poor soul, if thou believest that Jesus is the Christ, and that Christ took thy sins, and bore them in his own body on the tree where he died, "the Just for the unjust, to bring us to God," thou art saved, and saved for ever!

This is how it is that "with his stripes we are healed." *Accept this atonement, and you are saved by it.* Does someone enquire, "How am I to get this atonement applied to my soul?" Well, first, the patient shows his wounds, and exhibits the progress of the disease; then, prayer begs for the divine surgery; next, belief in Christ is the linen cloth which binds on the plaister. If thou believest on Jesus Christ, if thou wilt accept the testimony of God concerning his Son whom he hath set forth to be the propitiation for sin, and rely upon him alone for salvation, thou shalt be saved. Faith, that is, trust, is the hand that brings the plaister to the wound, and holds it there till the blessed balsam has destroyed the venom that is within us. Trust thyself with him who died for thee, and thou art saved; and continuing still to trust him, thou shalt daily feel the power of his expiation, the marvellous healing that comes by his stripes. Repentance is the first symptom of that healing. When the proud flesh begins to yield, when the wretched gathering commences to break, and the soul that was formerly swollen through trying to conceal its sin bursts with confession and acknowledgment of its transgression, then is it being healed by the stripes of Jesus. This is God's wondrous remedy for the soul-sickness of sin.

But let me beg you to notice that *you must let nothing of your own interfere with this divine remedy*: "With his stripes we are healed." You see where prayer comes in; it does not heal, but it asks for the remedy. You see where trust comes in; it is not trust that heals, that is man's application of the great remedy. You see where repentance comes in; that is not what cures, it is a part of the cure, one of the first tokens that the blessed medicine has begun to work in the soul. "*With his stripes we are healed.*" Will you notice that fact? The healing of a sinner does not lie in himself, nor in what he is, nor in what he feels, nor in what he does, nor in what he vows, nor in what he promises. It is not in himself at all; but there, at Gabbatha, where the pavement is stained with the blood of the Son of God, and there, at Golgotha, where the place of a skull beholds the agonies of Christ. It is in his stripes that the healing lies. I beseech thee, do not scourge thyself: "With *his* stripes we are healed." I beg thee, do not think that, by some kind of spiritual mortification, or terror, or horror, into which thou art to force thyself, thou shalt be healed; thy healing is in *his* stripes, not in thine own; in his griefs, not in thy griefs. Come thou away to Christ; and even if thou art tempted to trust in thy repentance, I implore thee, do not make thy repentance into a rival of the stripes of Jesus, for so it would become an anti-Christ. When thine eye is full of tears, look through them to Christ on the cross, for it is not a wet eye that will save thee, but the Christ whom thou mayest see, whether thine eye be wet or dry. In the Christ upon the cross there are five wounds, but you have not to add even another one of your own to them. In him, and in him alone,

is all thy healing; in him who, from head to foot, becomes a mass of suffering, that thou, diseased from head to foot, mightest from the crown of thy head to the sole of thy foot be made perfectly whole.

III. Now I must close with the third reflection, which is this,—that THE DIVINE REMEDY IS IMMEDIATELY EFFECTIVE: “With his stripes we are healed.”

To the carnal mind, it does not seem as if the sufferings of Christ could touch the case at all; but those who have believed in the stripes of Jesus are witnesses to the instant and perfect efficacy of the medicine. We can many of us speak from experience, since we can say that “we are healed.” How are we healed?

Well, first, *our conscience is healed of every smart*. God is satisfied with Christ, and so are we. If, for Christ’s sake, he has put away sin without dishonour to himself, then are we also perfectly content and full of rejoicing in the atonement, and we need nothing else to keep our conscience quiet.

By these same wounds of Christ *our heart is healed of its love of sin*. It was once in love with sin, but now it hates all iniquity. If our Redeemer died because of our sin, how can we live any longer therein? All our past thoughts concerning sin are turned upside down or reversed. Sin gave us pleasure once, but now it gives us the utmost pain, and we desire to be free from it, and to be perfectly holy; there is no evil that we would harbour in our bosoms. It did seem a singular thing that we should look to Christ, and so find pardon, and that at that same moment we should be totally changed in our nature as to our view of sin, yet it did so happen. While sin was on us, we felt as if we had no hope, and therefore we went on in sin; but when sin was pardoned, then we felt great joy, and consequent gratitude and love to God. A sinner repents of his sins much more after they are pardoned than he does before, and so he sings,—

“I know they are forgiven,
But still their pain to me
Is all the grief and anguish
They laid, my Lord, on thee.”

Our cry is, “Death to sin, now that Christ has died for sin!” “If the One died for all, then the all died;” and as in Christ we died to sin, how shall we live any longer therein? You may preach mere morality till there shall be no morality left; but preach the atoning sacrifice of Christ, and the pardoning love of the Father, and then the immoral will be changed, and follow after holiness with a greater eagerness than ever possessed them while they followed after sin.

By this divine remedy *our life is healed of its rebellion*. This medicine has worked within the heart, and it has also worked without in the life. Now has the drunkard become sober, and he hates the cup he used to love. Now has the swearer’s foul mouth been washed, and his lips, once so polluted, are like lilies dropping sweet-smelling myrrh. Now has the cruel and unkind one become tender, gentle, and loving, the false has become true, the proud bends his neck in humility, the idle has become a diligent servant of Christ; the transformation is wonderful, and this is the secret, “With his stripes we are healed.”

Yet once more, *our consciousness assures us that we are healed.* We know that we are healed, and we rejoice in the fact, and we are not to be disputed out of it. There seems to be a theory, held by some people, to the effect that we cannot tell whether we are saved or not. When we have had a disease in our body, we can tell whether we have been healed or not; and the marks and evidences of the supernatural change that takes place within the spirit are as apparent, as a usual rule, and certainly as positive and sure, as the changes wrought in the body by healing medicine. We know that we are healed. I am not talking to you of a thing which I do not know personally for myself. When the text says, "*We,*" my heart says, "*I,*" and I am longing that everybody here should be able to put his own seal to it, and say, "That is true; with *his* stripes we are healed, with his stripes *we* are healed, with his stripes *we are* healed." I will not go into the stories of some who are here,—stories that I know of the marvellous change that grace has made in your characters and lives; but you can bear witness, as can all the saints in heaven, that "with his stripes we are healed."

My last word is that, if you are healed by his stripes, you should go and live like healthy men. When a man is healed of disease, he does not continue to lie in bed; so, dear friends, do not any of you be lazy Christians. When a man is healed, he does not sit down and groan about the disease that is gone; so do not you be continually groaning and croaking and sighing. When a man is healed, he likes to go and tell about the remedy to others; so, dear friends, do not keep to yourselves the news of this blessed heavenly balsam, but go and tell the tidings everywhere, "With his stripes we are healed." When a man is healed, he is joyful, and begins to sing with gladness; so, go and sing, and praise and bless the Lord all your days.

When Christ heals, you know, people do not get the sickness back again. His cures are cures for life, and cures for eternity. If the devil goes out of a man of his own accord, he always comes back again, and brings seven others with him; but, if Christ turns him out, I warrant you that he will never be allowed to come back again. When the strong Man armed has dislodged the devil, he keeps the house that he has won, and takes good care that, neither by the front door nor by the back, shall the old enemy ever come back again. Having by his own right hand and his holy arm gotten the victory, he challenges the foeman to take back his spoil, crying, "Shall the prey be taken from the mighty, or the lawful captive delivered?" No; that shall never be, so you may go on your way rejoicing, and sing as you go, "With his stripes we are healed." This is not a temporary remedy; it is a medicine which, when it once gets into the soul, breeds therein health that shall make that soul perfectly whole, so that at last, among the holy ones before the throne of God on high, that man shall sing with all his fellows, "'With his stripes we are healed.' Glory be to the bleeding Christ! All honour, and majesty, and dominion, and praise be unto him for ever and ever!" And let all the healed ones say, "Amen, and Amen."

Exposition by C. H. Spurgeon.

ISAIAH LIII.

We will read, this evening, the fifty-third chapter of "the Gospel according to Isaiah," as we may very properly call it.

Verse 1. *Who hath believed our report?*

All the prophets reported that which had been revealed to them concerning Christ, they testified what they knew with regard to Jesus of Nazareth, the suffering Saviour; yet how few, comparatively, of the Jewish people,—how few, indeed, of any people, compared with the great mass of mankind, accepted their testimony, and believed their report? No blessing can come through that report if it be not believed, and this is the sorrow of the Lord's servants in every age, that so many refuse to believe it. "Who hath believed our report?"

1. *And to whom is the arm of the LORD revealed?*

For God's power both produces and accompanies faith. No man believes in Christ except as the arm of the Lord is revealed, or made bare, so as to work faith in him. This is the great grief of God's ministers to-day, that so often we have to go back to our homes, and cry, "Who hath believed our report?" It is not a doubtful report, it is not an incredible message, it is not a matter of indifference to our hearers; but it is an all-important declaration the accuracy of which is guaranteed by the God of truth, yet who hath believed it? Oh, that the arm of the Lord were made bare in the hearts of multitudes of men!

What was the reason of this unbelief in the case of the Jews to whom the prophet spoke, and of those to whom the Messiah afterwards came? It was the lowly estate of Christ that caused them to stumble, and they asked, in contempt, "Is not this the carpenter's son?" They looked for external pomp and martial prowess, so they could not perceive the internal beauty and majestic holiness of the Lord Jesus.

2. *For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him.*

Christ hath both form and comeliness to the spiritual eye; but, to the carnal, he seems only like ordinary men, except that his visage is more marred than that of other men, and his form than that of any of the sons of men. "He hath no form nor comeliness." The ungodly look for something that can excite their admiration, or create mirth for them; and they see nothing of this in the Christ of God. But little can we blame them, for, not very long ago, many of us were ourselves just as blind as they now are. Do you not feel, beloved, that you can smite upon your breasts with deepest regret for the length of time in which you were blind to the beauties of your Redeemer? Alas! that the prophet's words were ever true of us, "When we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him."

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

It was not only Christ's humiliation, but his sorrow, which became a stumbling-block in the way of the unbelieving Jews. How could they, who were looking for an earthly deliverer to come in regal splendour, believe in a weeping Messiah? How could they delight in him from whom men hid their faces, when they were expecting a mighty leader before whom, all would submit themselves? Ah, friends, there was a time when we did not esteem the Lord, when we despised him! We also cared not for the Man of sorrows; though all his sorrows were borne on our account, we passed

him by with utter indifference. O wretched heart! Well might I wish to tear thee from my bosom as I think that ever thou shouldst have been callous to thy Lord, the Well-beloved! It was a death indeed which thou didst call life, when thou didst live without thy Lord: "We hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not."

4. *Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows:*

What a discovery this truth seems to be! How it bursts upon the prophet and his hearers, and amazes them! "Surely," they say, "can it be really so that 'he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows'?" Yes, it is indeed so; there is no accounting for the sufferings of the perfect Christ except by this explanation, that he was bearing our griefs, and carrying the sorrows that we ought to have carried for our own sin.

4, 5. *Yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.*

If this does not teach the doctrine of a vicarious atonement, what does it teach? If Christ's sufferings were not endured in our room, and place, and stead, what do these words mean?

6. *All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way;*

All sinning, but each one sinning in his own particular fashion. It is well to acknowledge the common guilt of all men, but it is the token of true repentance that it dwells mainly on its own special offence. Brethren, we have no occasion to find fault with one another, for "all we like sheep have gone astray." But we have great reason for each man to find special fault with himself, for "we have turned every one to his own way."

6. *And the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.*

What a mercy it is that every sort of sin—the sin of the mass, and the sin of the particular sinner,—has been laid by Jehovah himself upon his Only-begotten Son! "Jehovah hath made to meet on him the iniquity of us all." Mark you, not merely "the chastisement" of which the previous verse spoke, but "the iniquity" itself; and albeit there are some who say that this cannot be, and that iniquity cannot be shifted from one person to another, it has been done, and there is an end of it.

7. *He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth:*

The sin laid upon him was none of his, and he might have repudiated it; but he did not; and even when the bitter result of sin came to him, and "He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth."

7. *He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth.*

O friends, what infinite patience is here,—patience which endured woes unknown to us, for our Lord's griefs and agonies were deeper than we shall ever be able to fathom! Yet to the end he bore all without a struggle. I went to see a friend, the other day, who has had a great number of sore afflictions, yet I found her singularly cheerful and content; and when I was speaking with her about the matter, she said, "I have for years enjoyed perfect submission to the divine will, and it was through what I heard you say." So I asked her, "What did I say?" She replied, "Why, you told us that you had seen a sheep that was in the hands of the shearers, and that, although all the wool was clipped off its back, the shears never cut into its flesh; and you said that the reason was because the sheep was lying perfectly still. You said, 'Lie still, and the shears will not cut you; but if you kick and struggle, you will not only be shorn, for God has resolved to do that, but you will be wounded into the bargain.'" O beloved, it is a blessed thing to lie still under the shears, so still as not even to

bleat! "As a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth." May the perfect example of the Lamb of God teach us a holy submissiveness to the will of God!

8. *He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation?*

Are there none to speak up for Christ, none to bear testimony to the purity of his life and the sinlessness of his character?

8. *For he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken.*

Oh, dwell on that great truth! The doctrine of Christ's substitution for his people is the brightest star in the galaxy of Revelation. No more cheering light ever falls upon a tearful eye than this, "for the transgression of my people was he stricken."

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

He died, and was buried, because he had done no violence. Most men who have perished by judicial sentence have had to die because they have done violence, and because deceit was in their mouth; but here is One who is found guilty of nothing but excess of love,—loving sinners so much that he must give his life sooner than that they should perish.

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

Death, in our Lord's case, was the way to the extension of life. He dies that he may see his seed, as he himself said to his disciples, "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit." For Christ, the path to prosperity was by way of adversity. The pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand because it pleased the Father to bruise him. And, oftentimes, it shall be with the servant as it was with the Master; it shall please the Lord to bruise you, and put you to grief, that in after days the pleasure of the Lord may prosper in your hand.

11. *He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied:*

This is a clear proof that he shall live, and he shall triumph. All his griefs shall come to an end; and even the death-pangs of his soul shall be the travail by which multitudes shall be born unto him, so that his infinite heart shall be satisfied.

11. *By his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many;*

By their knowledge of him, by their so knowing him as to trust him, they shall find justification; and "many" shall find it.

11. *For he shall bear their iniquities.*

We are told that the doctrine of substitution is a theory by which we explain the fact of Christ's death, but that it is only a theory. It is not so, for it is of the very essence of the fact. It is by no means our explanation, it is God's own declaration: "He shall bear their iniquities."

12. *Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great,
That is his Father's gift.*

12. *And he shall divide the spoil with the strong;
That is the result of his own conquest.*

12. *Because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.*

For ever blessed be his dear name! Amen.