

“OUT OF DARKNESS INTO LIGHT.”

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DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,

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*“That thou mayest say to the prisoners,
Go forth; to them that am in darkness, Shew yourselves.”-Isaiah 49:9.*

THIS, of course, is a prophecy of what the Messiah would do. The Lord Jesus Christ, when he came among the sons of men, was to open the prison doors, and to say to the prisoners, “Go forth,” and to those who, in addition to being in prison, were in a dark cell, shut away from the light, he was to say, “Shew yourselves.”

What wonders Jesus Christ has wrought! There are many of us who are living proofs of what Jesus Christ can do, for, when we were in prison, he said to us, “Come forth,” and we are now free as the air, our spirits are buoyant and full of gladness and rejoicing. Some of us also sat in darkness, gloomy, thick, Egyptian night; but when Jesus came to us, that darkness fled away, and now we walk in the light as he is in the light, and we have fellowship with him, and with his Father, too, through the ever-blessed Spirit. Wonders of grace to Christ belong. He has already wrought enough to keep his redeemed amazed throughout all eternity with the splendor of the achievements of his grace. Though he were never to work another miracle of mercy, he has done enough already to set all heaven in

amazement, throughout all the ages that are yet to come, such a wondrous Savior has he proved himself to be.

The liberty which Jesus gives to prisoners is something very marvelous. To be a prisoner for life, must be a horrible thing; to be immured in a dungeon for all one's days, must be almost worse than death; yet there is a slavery of the soul that is worse than wearing chains upon the wrist, there is an imprisonment of the heart that is far more terrible than being shut up within stone walls or iron bars. When Jesus comes to the soul, he delivers us from that direst of all bondages, fetches us out from that cruellest of all slaveries, the bondage of the spirit, the slavery of the heart.

Then we are told that, if there are any who are in a worse state than that of mere captivity, namely, in darkness as well as in bondage, the Lord Jesus Christ comes to them, and says, "Shew yourselves; rise, and come out of the darkness; hide away no longer, come forth into the light, and enjoy it." And when he speaks, his words are effectual; when he says, "Come forth," they do come forth; and when he says, "Shew yourselves," they do show themselves, He speaks, and it is done, for every word of Christ is the fiat of omnipotent love.

Now I am going to try and deal with those who are, spiritually, in the dark, in the hope that the time has arrived when they are to come forth out of the darkness, and to show themselves. My business will consist, then, in two things; first, I want to find out the characters mentioned in the text; and, secondly, I will repeat the exhortation that it contains.

I. First, I have to try to FIND OUT THE CHARACTERS mentioned in the text: "Them that are in darkness." Some of them are here tonight; let me see if I can, with my Lord's gracious guidance, put my finger on them.

I observe, first, that they were not always in darkness. She was a bright young spirit once, after a fashion; up to all manner of fun and levity; and he, -I know him very well, -he seemed to be everything that mirth could make youth to be, sporting like a butterfly in summer-time among the flowers. It was remarked of him that he seemed to enjoy life perfectly, and certainly it was his intention to do so, even if he shortened his career in the process; he dashed at the flame, even though he singed his wings. But, on a sudden, there came a cloud in the sky, both to her and to him -I mean, to you. It may be that, some time ago, a death happened in the family, or sickness came, or if it was neither of these things, at any rate, the mind

suddenly grew strangely quiet, and a stillness came down upon the spirit, and with that stillness there fell a gloom over the whole being. The fun and levity which had been enjoyed before were like the bubbles and froth upon the cup; there was nothing substantial or real in them at all; so, when the man or woman began to think, the bubbles and froth disappeared, and then life grew flat, stale, dull, and unprofitable.

What, think you, were those thoughts that brought such a sobering influence into the life? They were somewhat like this; I can tell you about them from my own experience, for they happened to me while I was yet a boy. I thought, "I have not lived as I ought to have lived. God made me, yet I have never truly served him. He is my mother's God, but I have forgotten him; my father's God, yet I have never sought him. Ah, me! What shall I do? God must punish me, he must punish me. If he does not do so, he ought; he cannot be God if He does not act justly, and I cannot, in my heart of hearts, reverence him if he winks at my wrong-doing, for much wrongdoing has been mine. What is to become of me?" So I cried out in my agony, and I struggled to be right. I thought it would be easy work to do that which would please God. I went to the helm of my ship, and hoped to reverse its course; but I soon drifted into the old courses again, and what I thought to be very easy I found to be extremely difficult, nay more, absolutely impossible. I seemed plastic as wax towards evil, yet hard as cast-iron or steel towards anything that was good. I could not be moulded, or fashioned aright. Then I grew sad in soul, and heavy of spirit; I forsook the ways of the mirthful, and stole away from my companions that I might get alone. I read my Bible a great deal, and the more I read it the more the darkness thickened about me. Then I tried to pray, and, ah, me

I know now that they were true prayers, but then it seemed as if my prayers were no better than the barkings of a dog; I could not hope that God would accept such prayers as those, and so the darkness increased around me.

I think I hear someone say, "Yes, that is my likeness." So you are here, though your spirit is in the dark. I am right glad to meet you; and while you are there in the dark, I give you my hand, for I sympathize with you, I know what this darkness means. You were not always in that condition; but I thank God you are where you are now. Perhaps you think me cruel to thank God for your misery; but I do, for this is the gateway into a joy that

will be worth your having. This loss of the sham will be the finding of the real thing this nailing of the counterfeit upon the counter will be giving you the minted gold that shall be current in the markets of heaven.

Beside this, a sense of sin has settled upon you. I know it did upon me; I ate my bread at the table, but I sometimes wondered it did not choke me. I walked the earth, and sometimes I was under such a sense of sin that I marveled it should continue to bear me up. I thought of the wrath of God, and it did indeed seem to me to be "the wrath to come." I thank God that I did not, in those days, hear any of those fine preachers who tell you there is no wrath to come; and you need not want to meet with such servants of the devil, for his emissaries they really are. When my conscience convinced me of sin, I verily believe that, if I had heard any of these men, I should have loathed them from my very soul. The arrows of God stuck fast within my heart, and I knew there must be a wrath of God against sin, for I was angry even with myself on account of my guilt. If God had taken me to heaven, with unforgiving sin still within my spirit, I should not have been happy. I was utterly miserable, and I felt that I must continue so unless, by a divine miracle of grace, some great change could be wrought upon me. The conscience of man, when he is really quickened and awakened by the Holy Spirit, speaks the truth; it rings the great alarm bell, and if he turns over in his bed, and says, "A little more sleep, and a little more slumber," that great alarm bell rings out again and again, "The wrath to come! The wrath to come! The wrath to come!"

The soul I am describing is in the dark, and the darkness settles down in conviction of sin; and, dear friend,-for I am speaking to you (though I do not know you, I am speaking straight at somebody,-God knows who,-who is in the dark), you have no hope; you go to hear sermons, longing that some light may break in upon you.

Some of you have been hearing the gospel for a very long time, yet no light has come to you. Why is it? One reason is, because you shut out the light. There are some of you who refuse to be converted; you are like sick men who, when meat is brought to them, refuse it; they turn against it, as the Psalm saith, "Their soul abhorreth all manner of meat." I am not going to blame you, dear heart; but I do deeply pity you, for I know that now you are hardly in your right senses, like the men at sea, of whom the Psalm says, "They reel to and fro, and stagger like a drunken man, and are at their wit's end." You hear and yet you do not hear. You have had the gospel of

Jesus Christ preached to you, and very plainly, too; but you know that it is one thing to hold a lantern to a man's eyes, and it is another thing to take the scales off those eyes, and make him see. So is it with you; your eyes are covered with scales, and you do your utmost to keep them there; you will not come to Christ that you might have life; and, therefore, there is no star visible to you, there is not even the faintest rim of the new moon, much less is there any light of the sun shining upon you. You are in the dark, and at present there is nothing to break through that darkness, or to drive it away.

Worse still, you fear future and eternal night. I think I hear you say, "I am afraid, sir, that I shall die in the dark." I trust not, I trust not, for I have somewhat to say to you which, I hope, may be God's voice to pierce that darkness, and disperse it. It would be an awful thing, certainly, to pass out of this world without a hope, and to take the last dread plunge into the unutterable blackness without 'so much as a single spark of light to guide you on your way; and, since you may die at any moment (remember how our friend was taken away, two Sabbaths ago, just as he entered this house of prayer), since you may die at any moment, see to it that you do not die in the dark. You have but one little candle; do not waste even a fragment of it, but use every beam of light it gives you.

*“While the lamp holds out to burn,
The vilest sinner may return;”*

but if that lamp be once quenched, then will you be for ever beyond the reach of hope, for the gospel is not preached in hell, where your soul will be found if you die unforgiven. Here, mercy is offered to you; but pass away rejecting it, and you have sealed your doom forever.

I am not going to dwell any longer upon the seamy side of my subject, because that might only increase your darkness. Yet I know that you would feel a kind of mournful satisfaction if I were to do so. Do I not remember how I read through the Book of Job, and its blackest pages seemed suitable to me? How did I take to heart the language of Jeremiah in his Lamentations, and how did I roll those unsavoury morsels under my tongue again and again! But I rejoice to believe that it is to people in such a state as this that the gospel of Jesus Christ is sent. Christ did not die to save the righteous; but to save the unrighteous. Salvation is not meant for men who are not lost, but for men who are lost. It is not because of your riches that Christ came, but because of your poverty; not because of your worthiness, but because of your unworthiness. He has not come because

you do not need him, but because you do need him; and the more terrible your necessity, on account of the thick darkness in which your spirit is enshrouded, the more am I encouraged to believe that Jesus Christ has come to save you; yes, even you, for the text saith, “To them that are in darkness, Shew yourselves.”

II. Now, secondly, I am going to REPEAT THE EXHORTATION of the text: “Show yourselves.” What does that mean?

First, it means that, you are running away from divine justice, and that your wisest course will be to go and deliver yourself up. I have been thinking, several times this week, of that unhappy man who is believed to have committed a murder, and who has been going from place to place to escape detection. What a miserable week he must have spent! How he must have trembled every time anyone looked at him! The sight of a policeman must be terrifying indeed to him. I know not where he has been, nor apparently does anybody else, but he is seeking to hide himself away from the officers of justice. There was a murderer, some time ago, who escaped for a time from those who were searching for him; but what a wretched life he lived while he was concealed! Now to any of you who are trying to hide away thus, God says, “Show yourselves; come out of your hiding-place.”

“But what am I to do?” says one. Give yourself up. “What! give myself up to justice?” Yes, to almighty justice. Come and surrender yourself. Do you not know that you are not really hidden? God sees you wherever you are; there is no hiding away from him. I might not ask you to give yourself up to your fellow-man; but I do pray you guilty sinners, who do not like to think of sin, and are trying to hide yourselves, to abandon that folly, and come out, and give yourselves up. “Give myself up to God?” you ask. Yes, that is the very first thing for you to do; to submit yourself to God, to lie at his feet pleading for mercy. I have heard of one, who found that his life was sought for on account of a frightful crime that he had committed. When it was announced that, whoever would bring that man’s head, even though he himself had been a traitor, he should be forgiven, he did a very sensible thing, he obtained admittance to the king, and said, “I have brought this man’s head, and I claim to be forgiven, for I have complied with the condition mentioned in the proclamation.” So he had, though it was his own head that he had brought; and, somehow, the grim humor of the action seemed to touch the heart of the king, and he said, “Well, you

must live.” I want you to do just the same thing as that criminal did; come to God, and say, “Lord, I am a wicked sinner; if there is a man upon the earth who deserves to be cast away from thy presence for ever on account of sin, I am that guilty one.” Deliver thyself up to God, surrender at discretion. Say, “Thou must do with me as thou wilt, Lord; but I cannot run away from thee, nor do I wish to do so. I know that all the earth is but one great prison when thou art seeking me, for thou canst see me anywhere, thou canst spy me out in the darkest night, and find me in my most secret hiding-place; therefore I will deliver myself up into thy hands. Do with me as thou wilt.”

Now then, ye that are in the dark, come and deliver yourselves up. Say, as Esther did, when she resolved to go into the presence of Ahasuerus, “So will I go in unto the king, which is not according to the law: and if I perish, I perish.” I wish I might be privileged to bring you to that point; may the Lord himself bring you there! In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom God anointed to save sinners, I command you who are in darkness to show yourselves, by surrendering yourselves now to your God, submitting yourselves unreservedly to him. “Kiss the Son lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little.”

The next way of showing yourselves is somewhat different: “Say to them that are in darkness, Show yourselves,” that is, you are very, lonely, and you have been avoiding your best friends. You like to get away into a secluded corner, and you do not care to be spoken to about religion; yet all the while you have the heartache, and know not how to get it cured. To you who wish to be always alone, you who are so retiring, so nervous, and so sensitive, that you never speak to anybody about the sorrow you so keenly feel, thus saith the Lord unto you, “To them that are in darkness, Shew yourselves.” Come out of your retirement. If you cannot speak to any mortal man, yet speak to the Immortal Man, the Christ of God; go and tell out all your sorrow to the best of friends. You remember that we sang just now,-

*“Jesu, lover of my soul,
Let me to thy bosom fly.”*

O you lonely one, I want you to speak thus to Jesus, and to fly to His bosom, and tell Him all that ails you! You cannot speak to mother, you say, dear girl; then speak to the Lord Jesus Christ. “Oh, I cannot speak to my father!” says the boy. No, I have often found that the children cannot

talk to their earthly father; but you can go and speak to the Lord Jesus Christ. He will meet you in your little room, he will be by your bedside tonight; get somewhere alone, and say to him, "Lord Jesus, I have not a friend to whom I can go for relief. Perhaps there are many who would be my friends, but I am so frightened and so timid that I dare not go and speak to them. Even when I go to the Tabernacle, I am afraid lest some one should talk to me about my soul." Speak thus to the Lord Jesus first, and it may be that he will give you courage next to allow some Christian person to converse with you, and help you "out of darkness into light." Even if you have not courage enough for that, it shall be an all-sufficient help to you to show yourselves to the Lord Jesus Christ. Seek his acquaintance; and if only like one groping in the dark you do but touch him, and lay hold of him by faith, you will be saved, and in due time you will come forth into the light of his countenance.

Thus I have given you two meanings to the text; I want now to tell you another: "Say to them that are in darkness, Show yourselves." This passage may be applied to you who are sick, who are concealing your disease. I want every man here who is troubled about the state of his heart, and every woman, too, to come and show themselves to Christ, just as they are, in all their sin. I remember a friend of mine, who was for years suffering from an ailment that I need not name, and after a while his malady reached a very sad condition, and he was most seriously ill. A physician was called in, and when he had examined the patient, he said, "This ought to have been seen to years ago. Why was it not properly attended to before? Have you no doctor?" "Oh, yes! the doctor has been in and out of the house many times; he has been here almost every month." "Well, what did he do for you?" "Oh, he prescribed, different things!" Then the physician asked, "But did he never examine you to find out what was the matter?" and the patient replied, "Oh, I always shrank from a medical examination!" "But," rejoined the physician, "you will soon be dead unless God deals very graciously with you; and if you had been examined, and rightly treated, a few years ago, probably this mischief was then such a very small affair that your life might have been saved." Do you not think that such a thing as that often happens; that we are afraid of a thorough examination, and do not want to know our real condition, and therefore it continues to get worse? Well now, I want you who are in darkness to come to God, and to say to him, "Lord, examine me thoroughly." Go and exhibit to the Lord your sins and your sores, ay, though they be putrefying sores! He is accustomed to

seeing such things, therefore hide nothing from him. Go and tell him the tale of all your sins and your sorrows. In your prayers to him, make a full confession of your sin. I remember one who used to pray, "Lord, pardon my sin," and he went over a list of a number of sins that he had not committed, but he used to say very little about those that he had committed. "I am afraid I take a little drop too much," he would sometimes confess; but he never obtained peace until he said straight out, "Lord, I am a hard drinker, I am a drunkard; but by thy grace I will take no more strong drink." Then he was delivered from the evil. If I were a priest, and you were fools enough to come and confess your sins to me, I should not ask you to call a spade a spade, for some spades are better called by another name; but when you go to God, pour out all that is in your heart, confess all your wrong-doing. Own that you are proud and conceited; own that you are murmuring and rebellious; own that you do not want to be converted; own that you have companions you would not like to give up; own that you are living in the practice of a secret sin; own it all, show yourselves, exhibit yourselves to God just as you are. It will be a dreadful sight; but the Great Physician will then operate upon you with his wonderful power, which cures and cleanses, too. Remember this text, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." You who are in darkness, show yourselves to God by a full and wholehearted confession of your sin, and a humble acknowledgment that you deserve to suffer his righteous wrath. Thus I hope I have in another sense put this matter plainly enough:

"Say to them that are in darkness, Shew yourselves."

The next thing you have to do is to show yourselves as healed ones bound to confess him who has cured them. If you believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, then you are healed of the leprosy of sin; if you trust Christ, your sins are forgiven; but remember that this is the full gospel message, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." When the ten lepers were cleansed, our Lord Jesus Christ said to them, "Go, shew yourselves to the priest," in order that he might examine and see whether it was a real cure that had been wrought, and so might bear testimony that Christ had healed the leprosy. Now, if Christ has saved you, you are required to come out, and show yourself. Come to the

Church of God, and ask to be admitted to its fellowship. "Oh but I mean to go to heaven in the dark!" Do you? Do you expect to find a dark heaven when you get there? "But," says one, "there are a great many secret Christians." How do you know that there are? Did you ever know one? "Yes," says somebody, "I remember one." But, if you knew him how could he be a secret Christian? I do not know whether there ever was a secret Christian; I will not say anything about that matter, because I am out of the secret in such a case as that; but this I know, nobody has a right to be a secret Christian. Our Lord Jesus said, "Whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple." "Lord," says one, "I am thy disciple, but I am going to take it easy on the sofa." "No," says Christ, "that kind of life will not do for one of my disciples, for he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me." Ye who were in darkness, if Christ has brought you into light, show yourselves; stand forward, and say, "Here is a proof of what the grace of God has done.

*"I the chief of sinners am,
Yet Jesus died for me;"*

and I desire to come out boldly, and publicly to acknowledge what he has done for me. It is the very least that I can do to show my gratitude to him." I have some times called some of you, who say you love Christ, but do not confess him before men, "rats behind the wainscot." You just come out, as it were, to nibble a bit of cheese, and then go back again into the darkness; but is that the way that a Christian man or woman ought to act?

*"Jesus! and shall it ever be?
A mortal man ashamed of thee!"*

No, let it not be so; ye who have been brought out of the darkness, show yourselves, and confess your Savior and your Lord.

But I am going to carry the text a little farther yet. There are some young men here, perhaps some young women also, who have been saved; they are no longer in the dark, and God has given them grace, and talents, yet still they are hiding themselves away. They are chosen ones doth to take their place of service. You recollect that, when Saul was elected king, the people could not find him; he was a fine tall fellow, who stood head and shoulders above the rest of his countrymen, and though they ought to have spied him out even if he had been sitting down, they could not find him. Where was he? Hidden away among the stuff. He did not appear hardly to

like that idea of being king, so he hid himself away, and the people cried, "Come out, Saul; come out!" and they brought him forth, and proclaimed him king. There are certain brethren whom God means to place where they do not want to be placed. There is one who ought to be a Sunday-school teacher, but he is not willing. Where is he? Come out, sir, come out; I must fetch you out from among the stuff. "Say to them that are in darkness, Show yourselves." There is a young fellow who ought to be preaching the gospel; he made a very pretty speech, the other night, at the Mutual Improvement Society; he can speak well enough as a politician; and if there was an election, we should find him talking fast enough, but he is dumb so far as the Church of Christ is concerned. Come out, brother! If the Lord has saved you, and if he is pleading for you in heaven, it is time you began to plead for him on earth. Perhaps it is for the mission-field that the Master wants you; and, my brother, my sister, if it is so, the message of the Lord comes to you to-night, "Ye that are in darkness, hiding yourselves away, Show yourselves."

And, mark you, our text applies also to persecuted ones who shall be owned and honored of God. There will come a day when God's people, who have long been in the dark through persecution, slander, and misrepresentation, shall hear the Lord speaking to them out of heaven, and saying, "Gather my saints together unto me; those that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice." "Say to them that are in darkness, Show yourselves." What a change will come for God's poor despised people in that day! "Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father," and "they that turn many to righteousness shall shine as the stars for ever and ever." Oh, I know that they sneer at you, and call you ill names, "a Methodist, a Presbyterian, a cant, a hypocrite." Stand ye fast for Christ, and the day will come when he shall say, "Ye that are in darkness, shew yourselves."

Lastly, these words also relate to dead ones called to resurrection. It may be that most of us shall go down to the grave ere Christ shall come, and we shall lie,—"In beds of dust and silent clay," and leave these poor bodies of ours in some cemetery or other. Perhaps in the depths of the sea, or far away in New Zealand, or in the United States or Canada, we shall leave our bones far from the spot where our fathers sleep; but there shall come a day when the silver trumpet of the resurrection morning shall sound aloud, and this shall be its note, "Ye that are in darkness, Shew yourselves," and out from the dark we shall come, the redeemed of the Lord, in resurrection

glory. In the prospect of that day, I feel that I must show myself for my Lord now; I must come to the front, and bear the brunt of the battle for the truth. I must be bold for Christ, for he hath brought me out of darkness into his marvelous light, and he deserves that I should not shrink away, and hide myself. He who has prepared a crown of life for every faithful one, expects that you and I will be faithful even unto death, in the hope of obtaining that crown of life which fadeth not away. Up, up, ye who are hiding yourselves; come out of the bushes in which ye are skulking away! If Jehovah be God, servo him. If Jesus of Nazareth be the Christ of God, own him. If the gospel be worth preaching, proclaim it with trumpet tongue. If the Church of God be for him, be numbered with it, and take your part in its service and in its suffering. God help you, and God bless you, by this message which seems to me to come direct from himself to you! Ye that are in sorrow, show yourselves, and all you that are cowardly, show yourselves, and God bless you, for Jesus Christ's sake! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON

ISAIAH 49:1-17.

In this chapter, we have not merely Isaiah speaking concerning the Christ of God; but it is the Lord Jesus Christ, the Messiah, who here speaks concerning himself.

Verse 1. *Listen, O isles, unto me; and hearken, ye people, from far;*

It is very remarkable how constantly the isles are spoken of in this Book of Isaiah, as if it had been foreseen that, in these far-off islands of the sea, the name of Jesus would be greatly magnified. "Listen," says the Messiah, "O isles, unto me; and hearken, ye people, from far."

1. *The LORD hath called me from the womb; from the bowel of my mother hath he made mention of my name.*

Christ Jesus our Lord was spoken of by the spirit of prophecy from his very birth, and long before it; and when he did come into the world, and was born of the Virgin Mary, the stars of heaven spake concerning him, and guided the wise men from the East to the place where the young child lay.

2. *And he hath made my mouth like a sharp sword;*

There are no words anywhere so piercing as the words of our Lord Jesus Christ. When you are giving quotations from various authors, you need never write the name “Jesus” at the bottom of any of his words, for they proclaim their own origin. “Never man spake like this man.”

2. In the shadow of his hand hath he hid me, and made me polished shaft; in his quiver hath he hid me;

The great weapon of God against sin is his Son Jesus Christ. God has no such means of smiting evil, or effecting his purposes of love, as his own dear Son. This is the “polished shaft” which Jehovah delights to use.

3. And said unto me, Thou art my servant,

Above all others, Christ is the servant of God. He is a Son by nature, a servant by his condescension, a servant for our sakes.

3. O Israel, in whom I will be glorified.

It is very wonderful that the Redeemer should here be called “Israel.” It is not more wonderful, however, than that in another place his people should be called by his name. You remember those two passages in the prophecy of Jeremiah: “This is his name whereby he shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS,” and “This is the name wherewith she shall be called, The LORD our righteousness.” There, the people of God take their Lord’s name; and here, Christ takes the name of his people, and himself deigns to be called Israel. Nor is this an unsuitable name for him, for it is he who wrestled on our behalf, and prevailed even as Israel did at Jabbok. Jesus is a greater Prince with God than Jacob ever was. Well, then, doth Jehovah say to him, “Thou art my servant, O Israel, in whom I will be glorified.”

4. Then I said, 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 Messiah, prophetically looking forward, complained that, during his life on earth, he seemed to labor in vain. The nation was not saved: “he came unto his own, and his own received him not.” He wept over the guilty city of Jerusalem; but those tears did not put out the fires of vengeance. He entreated men to turn to God, but they did not and they would not repent. He seemed to labor in vain, and spend his strength for naught, and in vain.

5. And now, saith the LORD that formed me from the womb to be his servant, to bring Jacob again to him, Though Israel be not gathered, yet shall I be glorious in the eyes of the LORD, and say God shall be my strength.

Even though the Jewish nation be not yet gathered to Christ, his labor was not in vain. God will not suffer his Son to spend his strength for nought.

6. And he said, It is a light thing that thou shouldest be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel: I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth.

What a blessed word of cheer this is for us poor Gentiles! The favored children of Israel thought us to be little better than dogs; and, behold, we have been lifted up into the children's place. If Israel be not gathered, the Messiah hath become a light to the Gentiles, and God's salvation unto the ends of the earth. Yet we cannot help fervently praying, "Oh, that Israel might soon be gathered to Christ!" Her ingathering will be the time of the fullness of the Gentiles.

7. Thus saith the LORD, the Redeemer of Israel, and his Holy One, to him whom man despiseth, to him whom the nation abhorreth,

Who is this but our Divine Lord, Jesus of Nazareth, the Christ of God? These words are spoken of him whom man despised, of him who was despised and rejected of men, of him whom the nation abhorreth, for that favored nation still, alas! abhors the name of Jesus of Nazareth, and will not cherish towards the Christ anything but thoughts of contempt.

7. To a servant of rulers,

For, though he was the King of kings, and Lord of lords, he submitted to be a servant to the kings of the earth, and obeyed the rules of human governors. Yet,-

7. Kings shall see and arise, princes also shall worship, because of the LORD that is faithful, and the Holy One of Israel, and he shalt choose thee.

The day is coming when he that was spit upon shall be the admired of all mankind. No more the crown of thorns, but many diadems of glory shall

rest upon his blessed head; and all men, with loud acclaim, shall salute him as King of kings and Lord of lords.

8. *Thus saith the LORD, In an acceptable time have I heard thee, and in a day of salvation have I helped thee; and I will preserve thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, to establish the earth, to cause to inherit the desolate heritages;*

It is the Lord Jesus Christ who shall establish all that is good, and cast down everything that is evil. He shall staunch earth's bleeding wounds, and repair her wilderness wastes. Where he comes, flowers spring up all around his blessed feet.

9. *That thou mayest say to the prisoners, Go forth; to them that are in darkness, Shew yourselves. They shall feed in the ways, and their pastures shall be in all high places.*

When Christ leads his flock, wherever they go they shall feed; and even if he leads them to the very tops of the hills, he shall make the pastures grow there for them. There is never a place where Christ leadeth us but what it is safe for us to go there. The Shepherd's feet make pasturage for the sheep that follow him; therefore, be not afraid to go wherever he leads you, but rather rejoice that he putteth forth his own sheep, and goeth before them, for "they shall feed in the ways, and their pastures shall be in all high places."

10, 11. *They shall not hunger nor thirst; neither shall the heat nor sun smite them: for he that hath mercy on them shall lead them, even by the springs of water shall he guide them. And I will make all my mountains a way,*

Where, naturally, there could not be a way, on those pathless summits of the loftiest Alps, the Lord says, "I will make all my mountains a way,"-

11. *And my highways shall be exalted.*

"I will throw up causeways." God will make a way for you to get at him if you want to get at him. If you are willing to make a way for God, he will make a way for you; the gulf shall be bridged, the mountain shall be leveled.

12. *Behold, these shall come from far: and, lo, these from the north and from the west; and these from the land of Sinim.*

“The land of Sinim” signifies China. Is it not strange that, in this Book, we should find mention of the land of Sinim, the country of China? But God has a people there, and they shall come to him. I was delighted, last Tuesday, to meet with a brother who had broken bread with us at the Lord’s table; he was a poor Chinaman, so he had helped to fulfill this prophecy:

*“These shall come from the west;
and these from the land of Sinim.”*

13-15. *Sing, O heavens; and be joyful, O earth; and break forth into singing, O mountains: for the LORD hath comforted his people, and will have mercy upon his afflicted. But Zion said, The LORD hath forsaken me, and my Lord hath forgotten me. Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the sort of her womb? yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee.*

Will God ever forget his ancient people, the Jews? Never! They forget their God, but Jehovah never forgets his chosen people: “They may forget, yet will I not forget thee.”

16. *Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands;*

“I cannot work, I cannot even open the palm of my hand without seeing the memorials of my chosen people: ‘I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands.’”

16, 17. *Thy walls are continually before me. Thy children shall make haste; thy destroyers and they that made thee waste shall go forth of thee.*

For God is full of kindness to his people, and cannot forget them. Oh, that they would never forget him!