

nals; but God would not allow it. *They must not touch His dead body, not even to take it down from the cross.*

Who shall declare His generation?—or rather, "His manner of life." *Answers of those who answered questions.* Who? It was customary, we are told, when one was condemned to die, for a crier to proclaim before him as he went to execution, what he had done, and who his witnesses had been; and to call upon any one who might know anything that would go to prove him innocent, to come forward and speak in his behalf. The cruel Jews did not allow Jesus even this; *there was no one to speak in His favor* then; there were many now.

3RD. WHAT HIS FRIENDS DID TO HIM.

(3.) *We*—His friends, countrymen, disciples—hid our faces from Him—we esteemed Him not. Some who believed in Jesus were afraid to defend Him; one of the twelve betrayed Him. *He denied Him; they all forsook Him and fled!*

(4.) *We did esteem Him stricken, smitten of God, etc.* They thought God was putting all this sorrow upon Jesus—and so He was—but they never once thought why. If they had thought that Jesus was bearing their grief, and carrying their sorrows; that He was (5) *being wounded for their transgressions and bruised for their iniquities*;—that the chastisement was for their peace, and the stripes for their healing; and that, their inquiries having been laid upon Him, He was dying under their punishment; I think they could hardly have lived for the grief they must have felt. But they knew it afterwards; and many times their hearts must have ached thinking how they had treated this tender and loving Saviour. One thing they did for Him (6) *but it was after He was dead*; they gave Him an honorable grave and a costly burial. What rich men fulfilled this part of the prophecy? John 19:38, 39.

4TH. WHAT HIS FATHER DID TO HIM.

(6.) *The Lord hath laid upon Him (Jesus) the iniquity of us all.* (10.) *It pleased the Lord to bruise Him.* *He (the Father) hath put grief to grief.* How did God do it? By delivering Him into the hands of cruel men, and letting them do with Him just as they liked. Could God have prevented it? If He had had the will to do so, He could; but He had not the will. It pleased Him not to prevent it. Why? Not because He did not love Jesus; not because He loved to afflict Jesus—oh, no, no!—but because He LOVED TO SAVE MEN. HOW DID GOD SAVE MEN? By making Jesus their sin-bearer, and punishing Him for the sins He bore!—that is, instead of the sinner, *Jesus must die* or men must be lost; and so God made the soul (life) of His own offering (sacrifice) for sin. "He who knew no sin, became sin for us."

5TH. HOW JESUS BORE IT ALL.

(7.) *As a lamb etc.*—meekly, patiently, unresistingly *as a sheep in the shearer's hands*—dumb—that is uttering no protest, no reproach. But had Jesus done nothing to deserve it all? No, nothing. (9.) *He hath put grief to grief.* He had done no harsh deed, spoken no unkind word, never been false or deceitful or selfish—not once! Why then did He not resist?—had He not the power? He had not the will to do so. His will and His Father's will were one. He came to save sinners; and this was the only way He could do it—that is, by laying down His life; John 10:18. If He had saved Himself, He could not have saved you. Think of that, dear children.

6TH. WHAT HIS REWARD SHALL BE.

(10.) *He shall see His seed—His* saved, His purchased ones. How many? Rev. 7:9. He shall prolong His days. That is, so far from being destroyed, as His enemies thought; He was going to rise from the dead and

live forever more; Rev. 1:18. Here is a direct prophecy of Christ's resurrection. *The pleasure of the Lord shall prosper etc.* That is, all that it shall please His Father to have done in this world, Jesus shall prosper in doing, or shall do so prosperously.

(11.) *He shall be satisfied.* It will take a great deal we may be sure to satisfy the Lord Jesus for having (12) *poured out His soul unto death*; for having been numbered with transgressors (thieves)—for bearing the sin of many; for having made intercession (prayers) for the transgressors; but no matter how much it takes, He is going to be satisfied! He will see Satan and Sin and Death all conquered; the earth redeemed from the curse; His people gathered into the "place" He has prepared for them; the kingdom given up to His Father; and then, but not till then, HE WILL BE SATISFIED!

May 11th.—The Saviour's Call.—Lesson, Isaiah 55:1-13.

GOLDEN TEXT.—John 7:37.

REMARKS.

In regard to the time of this portion of Isaiah's prophecy, the most that can be said with any approach to certainty is, that it could not have been spoken much less than 700 years before Christ; and it may well fill us with amazement to hear the events of our Lord's life so minutely told, the Gospel call so clearly proclaimed so long before He came in the flesh. We may learn from the Apostle Peter the amazing value of these writings to us; and how much importance we ought to attach to them when He, after telling us that they (the apostles) were eye and ear witnesses of Christ's power and glory, speaks of them as being a MORE SURE WORD of prophecy; thus placing them higher than the testimony of even the bodily senses, and telling us that we do well to take heed to them, "as to a light that shineth in a dark place." It will be noticed that the 5th verse is omitted from this study of the lesson. The words are manifestly addressed either to Christ or the Church, thus breaking the connection between the former and latter portions of the lesson. Hence, as the lesson is sufficiently long without it, it has been omitted.

LESSON TALK.

In this lesson we have:

- 1st. God inviting men.—Verse 1.
- 2nd. God expostulating with men.—Verses 2.
- 3rd. God entreating men.—Verses 3-11.

1ST. THE FREE INVITATION.

(1.) *He, every one that thirsteth etc.* Thirst is a physical want, and water what it demands. But these words do not refer to bodily thirst or to literal water. The word *thirst* is here used figuratively, and signifies the craving of every human soul for happiness. Water is also used figuratively for that which will allay the soul's thirst. This water, then, is Christ, Jer. 2:13; Ps. 42:14. Come—Jesus' own word, Matt. 23:17. To the waters—to the Lord Jesus—the fountain of life; Zech. 13:1. *He that hath a mouth.* If you have ever so much God would not have it from you in payment for salvation.

Buy—that is, receive it upon God's terms as a free gift, Rom. 6:23. *Without price*—that is, without price from you; but do not forget it cost God the life of His precious Son; it cost the Lord Jesus a life of sorrow and privation, and a death of anguish upon the cross. Is not that a costly gift? And yet all God asks of us is to accept it.

2ND. AN EARNEST EXPOSTULATION.

(2.) *Wherefore (why) do ye spend money (time, strength, effort) for that which is not bread?*

Here again we must not understand bread for the body, but bread for the soul; and this, too, means Christ. O how full the whole Bible is of Christ, if we but get its true meaning! Read John 6:35, 51.

Which satisfieth me. Nobody is ever satisfied till he has Christ. He may be pleased for a little while with earthly things, but he is never satisfied. King David had about as many things to please and gratify him as any man ever had, but he did not expect to be quite satisfied until when? See Psalm 17:15. *Hearken*—that is, listen; do not close your ears to God's call. What does God say? *Hearken diligently*—do not miss a single word! *Eat ye that which is good.* This is as much as to say: Now do not be like the foolish prodigal, trying to satisfy yourself with sinful pleasures (vice husks), but *delight yourself in fineness*—that is, in the rich soul-food God has provided for you in Jesus Christ.

3RD. A GRACIOUS ENTREATY.

(3.) *Improve your ear, (listen eagerly) and come UNTO ME!* We can almost seem to see God beckoning to us with His hands, and hear Him say, do come to me, your Father, your Friend, your Redeemer! I am not your enemy; they tell you falsely who say I am; do not believe such a false cruel thing. Come to me and see how much I love you! *Come and I will make a covenant (agreement) with you.* What is this covenant which God offers to make with you? It is to give you the sure mercies of David (Christ)—that is, Acts 13:34-36 resurrection from the dead, eternal life.

(4.) *Behold*—take notice. Of what? *I have given Him*—Whom? Jesus. For (in order to be a witness to the people—all people.) A witness is one who testifies to something. What did Jesus testify to? *That all men are lost*—Luke 15:6, 24; *that He is coming*—see the parable of the fig tree, Luke 19:40—*that He is able to save*—John 10:28; that He will save them—John 10:9. But He was to be more than a witness; He was to be a Leader and Commander. A Leader—John 10:3; Ps. 23; and a Commander—Joshua 5:13-15; Heb. 2:10.

(6.) We have all gone astray from God. God tells us to return to Him; to seek Him; and not rest till we find Him and become reconciled to Him. Matt. 6:7-8. *While He may be found.* He will not always be found. He will not always call; Hosea 5:6; John 7:34. How important, then, to make haste and seek Him while He may be found—that is, while His Holy Spirit He is near. *Call ye upon Him.* Why? Acts 2:21.

(7.) What shall the wicked and the unrighteous man forsake? The first his way—sinful practices. The second his thoughts.

Bad thoughts are the beginnings of bad ways—the little roots from which spring great poison weeds. *Let them return to the Lord.* For what? *Mercy and pardon.* Cannot they get them without returning to God—that is, without repenting and forsaking their sins? No. Luke 13:3. Are they sure to get them if they do? Yes; *He will abundantly pardon*—"He will multiply to pardon."

(9, 10.) Some people think they do not need pardon; some that God cannot pardon; and some that God will not pardon. Well, God says, *My thoughts are not your thoughts neither are your ways*—that is, I do not think like you, and you do not act like me. What is the distance between God's thoughts and ways and our own? Can we measure the distance? Now mark. We see the rain and the snow come down to the earth, but we never see them turn round and go back. They stay and do what God intends they shall. Just so it is with God's wonderful thoughts (promises and threatenings.) Whatever He tells us He will do, that He is certain to do; no matter what people think about it.

(12, 13.) *Ye*—those who seek and find God—*shall go out with joy and be led forth with peace.*