

discuss threadbare subjects, compliment each other, and make nice little speeches that cost no effort and are therefore worth nothing after made. Some may think this is putting it too strongly; but downright, hard, earnest, practical work is what is needed now.

How are we to secure these objects by means of a Provincial Convention? may be asked. First, by appointing good officers, who can and will do a large amount of hard work in the interim of the meetings. — A Sunday-school Board, if you please, with full powers. Second, by meeting at the proper time and place. I am confident that no better time and no better place can be found than in connection with the Western Convention, and for several reasons. One is, that representatives from all of our Associations meet then, and must perforce know something about the work that is being done. Another is, that the Provincial S. S. Convention would come to be recognized as a denominational affair by all of our people, and would therefore command greater respect. The effect upon others would be increased from the fact that those who are doing nothing would see others active, and thus be stimulated to activity also. The less favoured would learn and desire to imitate. Indeed there can be no doubt but that in various ways, and for many reasons, did it meet with the Western Convention, the S. S. Convention would exert a better and more extended influence than it can do meeting elsewhere. In this connection I would say that every possible effort should be made to secure a day or a part of a day at the Convention in Brantford, and thereafter in each annual meeting. Let the time be extended, if need be, and a portion of two weeks taken. The expense of holding the two Conventions, and the time spent in going and coming would be lessened, and a much larger attendance would be secured.

The last means I would mention, of promoting the objects of the S. S. Convention, is, not to expect too much, but expect to advance slowly, but surely; to endeavor to take steps in the right direction, even though they are not very frequently taken. All of this will involve much patience, much faith, and much prayer. I would say in conclusion that if our enterprise is a success, we must endeavor to create sentiment and to excite sympathy in its favor; we must strive to educate our people all up to it. Further, we must expect a certain amount of opposition, and be prepared to meet it. We must expect to do patient, earnest, hard work; and, most of all, and above all, that we must expect our Master's blessing.

THIS STOVE IN THE PULPIT.—The late excellent Bishop Gregg of Cork, who was very keen-witted, was being shown over a newly erected church by one of his clergy, who was a clear but cold and unimpassioned preacher. Discouraging upon the interior arrangements the latter remarked to the bishop "I cannot decide whereabouts to place the stove; can you suggest to me a suitable position for it?" The prompt answer of his diocesan conveyed a useful hint: he said, "Put it by all means in the pulpit; that is where it is most needed."

S. S. Lesson Department.

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May 4.—The Suffering Saviour.—Isaiah
53 : 1-12.

GOLDEN TEXT.

Who His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree.—1 Peter 2 : 24.

INTRODUCTION.

After the historic interlude in the book of Isaiah, (ch. 36-39) there follows a portrayal of the deliverances God would work out for His people—first through Cyrus from their captivity in Babylon, and finally through the Messiah; that glorious redemption of which the former deliverance was but a symbol and a suggestion.

The exaltation and power of the Messiah have been dwelt upon in this portrayal, but we know not all the wonders of this Messiah, until we are told of His wonderful humiliation and suffering for our sakes. But the prophet well knows that few will believe the report that this humble and suffering One is that same Messiah, who will subdue the enemies of His people, and rule over the nations of the earth. And yet the words of this chapter can be applied only to Messiah. "It is certain that both ancient and modern Jews interpret this chapter of the Messiah."—*Dawn Allix*. With regard to these two aspects of the Messiah's character, R. Payne Smith says: "The Jews could not understand this contradiction, they divided the prophecies between two Messiahs. To one, the son of Joseph, they gave all those passages which speak of Christ's humiliation and rejection and death. To the other, the son of David, they applied all those which speak of His kingdom, and triumph and glory. In Jesus of Nazareth all these passages are combined in one harmonious yet unexpected solution."

Prophecy a preparation for Christ.—South says of the chapter forming our lesson: "This chapter declares the circumstances of our Saviour's suffering so exactly that it seems rather a history of His passion than a prophecy. And it is so undeniable a proof of the truth of Christianity, that the bare reading of it and comparing it with the gospel history, hath converted some infidels."

EXPOSITION.

V. 1. Who hath believed. There were not many at first to receive the Gospel of a Saviour suffering for us. The world knew Him not, and His own received Him not. Yet, in the end, "He shall see of the travail of His soul and shall be satisfied; by His knowledge shall My righteous servant justify many." Christ is the Arm of the Lord, strong for our salvation.

V. 2. For. This word introduces the reason why so few recognized the Messiah. They who looked for splendour and magnificence, could not see through the veil of His humility. Before Him, that is, before God. As a tender plant. A shoot or sucker springing up from an old, decayed stock. As a root out of a dry ground. "The idea here is, that the Messiah would spring from an ancient family decayed, but in whose root, so to speak, there would be life. . . . Even then, He would not be like a plant of vigorous growth, supplied with abundant rains, and growing in a rich and fertile soil, but He would be like the stunted growth of the sands of the desert. Can anything be more strikingly expressive of the actual appearance of the Redeemer, as compared with the expectations of the Jews."—*Barnes*. We form our conclusions. There is no reference in this to the absence of personal beauty. It simply means

that He came humbly, without the insignia of royalty, with no halo around His brow, no magnificence in His surroundings, only the beauty of perfect holiness, which their sin-dimmed eyes could not perceive.

V. 3. He is despised and rejected.—that is, left alone, deserted by men. A man of sorrows. Sacred name, which has drawn many a stricken heart closer to Christ! He was a man of sorrows. 1st, Because He was sinless in a sinful world, and who can imagine the anguish a perfectly pure heart must experience, when placed in daily contact with the black and perverse badness of a sinful world. 2nd, He was a man of sorrows, because of His sympathy with the sorrows of others. "In all their afflictions He was afflicted;" He can be touched with the feeling of our infirmities. 3rd, The shadow of the cross lay along the pathway of His life. 4th, Men rejected Him. They gave Him insult, scorn, poverty, a crown of thorns, a death of shame and agony. This was their reward for His patience, His love, His self-sacrifice. Oh, how His heart must have pained with the agonizing words. We hid as it were our faces. Or, He hid His face. Probably the meaning is the same, whichever translation we take. We hid our faces from Him as hamed to him, or, He hid His face, at one would when covered with confusion at such treatment of him.

V. 4. He hath borne our griefs. This is the explanation then, of His stricken and sorrowful appearance. It is our sorrows that press upon Him. Ye were old when He was born, and ye were old when He died. We thought God regarded Him with disfavour, with anger, for some wrong done by Himself. We knew not that for us He suffered.

V. 5. But He was wounded for our transgressions. The word rendered *wounded*, signifies *bruised, pierced through*. There may be reference to the actual piercing of the hands and feet of Christ. He was bruised, literally crushed, broken to pieces. The most terrible severity of suffering of body and mind, expressed by these terms. How true a description of the agony endured by our Lord. The chastisement of our peace. "He took upon Himself the sufferings, which would secure the peace of those for whom he died—those which, if they could have been endured by themselves, would have secured their peace with God."

Barnes. By His stripes. The reference is to the marks made by blows or lashes, or, scourging. How literally this was fulfilled. "In the prediction, nothing is vague and general. All is particular and minute, as if He saw what was done, and the description is as minutely accurate as if He was describing what was actually occurring before His eyes."—*Barnes*. We are healed, Christ has not only taken upon Himself our sufferings due to our sins, but He has healed our spirits of the disease of sin. Its power is at once broken within us, and we shall soon be free from every trace of it.

V. 6. All we like sheep have gone astray. Christ did not suffer without necessity. We had wandered from God, we were lost. Like sheep without a shepherd, we were the easy prey of the roaring lion. We had given up the Lord's way for our own way. It was necessary that one should come to seek and to save that which was lost. The Lord hath laid on Him, etc. The margin says: "hath made the iniquities of us all to meet on Him." "The sense is, that He was not overcome by His own sins, but that He encountered ours, as if they had been made to rush to meet Him and prostrate Him. That is, He suffered in our stead."—*Barnes*. "It is impossible to find stronger language to denote the fact that His sufferings were intended to make expiation for sin."—*Barnes*. The death of Christ was not simply a *lynx* carried to the point of self-sacrifice. It was not meant simply to "set forth the spirit of self-sacrifice with an