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Doctrinal Theology.

CHRISTOLOGY.

(Continued.)

In and for the work of redemption, and in the manner and measure requisite for such work, Christ the God-man humiliated himself. The verb, ταπεινώω, means *to lower, to humble*, the contrary being ὑψόω, *to raise, to elevate, to exalt.*¹⁾ With the reflex pronoun, ταπεινοῦν signifies *to humble one's self*, to forego honor or high stations or prerogatives which one might rightfully claim or enjoy. Thus Paul says that he had "abased himself,"²⁾ when he had "preached the gospel of God freely," earning his livelihood with his own hands, and taking what other churches gave him, instead of taking and enjoying what he might have rightfully claimed at the hands of the Corinthians.³⁾ And such was the self-humiliation of Christ, *that, though he was rich, yet for our sakes he became poor;*⁴⁾ *that he, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God; but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men, and being in fashion as a man, he humbled*

1) Matt. 23, 12. Luke 14, 11; 18, 14. Phil. 2, 8. 9.

2) ἑμαυτὸν ταπεινῶν, 2 Cor. 11, 7.

3) 2 Cor. 11, 5 ff.

4) 2 Cor. 8, 9.

Exegetical Theology.

A PEN-PICTURE OF CHRIST DRAWN FROM THE PROPHET ISAIAH.

II. CHRIST'S PUBLIC MINISTRY.

If any one is called to a high office or if he undertakes to carry out a very difficult work, the question is not improper: Is he well qualified for that office, is he equal to the task set before him? Of no man, however, can we predict with indisputable certainty that the administration or execution of his office will be satisfactory in every respect or that he will justify all the hopes and all the confidence placed in him and accomplish perfectly the work which he has undertaken. But with Christ it was different. Heralded by John the Baptist He entered upon His public ministry and set out to accomplish through His suffering and bitter death the redemption of the human race. A more than sufficient guaranty of His qualification for His threefold office and for His final success lies undoubtedly in His divine Sonship. But the prophet Isaiah calls our attention yet to another point or fact by which we are made to understand beforehand that Christ could and would do everything required of Him as the promised Messiah and the Savior of mankind.

Of Christ, the Son of David, we read, Chap. 11, 2: *And the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon Him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord.* Great honor shall be conferred upon the rod out of the stem of Jesse, or, in other words, upon Christ according to His human nature. The Holy Spirit shall rest upon Him. We know that the Spirit of the Lord rested also on the holy men of God, on the prophets and the apos-

bles, yea, holy Scripture tells us also that the Holy Spirit rests upon all believers or that He dwells in the hearts of all true Christians, but neither of prophets nor of apostles nor of any believer it is said: *And the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon Him, the spirit of wisdom*, etc. Upon Christ rests the Spirit without measure and in all its graces and gifts. This is also indicated by the words of the psalmist when he sings, Ps. 45, 7: *Thou lovest righteousness, and hatest wickedness: therefore God, Thy God, hath anointed Thee with oil of gladness above Thy fellows*. The Holy Spirit who rests upon Christ has been called *Spiritus septiformis* or *Spiritus septem donorum*, because seven gifts are mentioned in this prophecy bestowed by Him on Christ. These gifts have been prefigured by the seven branches of the candlestick in the Sanctuary, Exod. 25, 31. The prophet calls this Spirit the Spirit of the Lord or of Jehovah. This term runs parallel with the following and indicates clearly not only from whom this Spirit, who rests upon Christ, comes, but serves mainly to signify a peculiar gift of the Holy Spirit. It is the gift of prophecy (*donum propheticum*) by which Christ shall declare the will of His heavenly Father in words which the Holy Ghost teaches. In a similar manner says Nebuchadnezzar of Daniel the prophet: *In whom is the spirit of the holy gods* (Dan. 4, 8), and Hos. 9, 7 a prophet is called *איש הרוח* a man of the spirit. The Spirit of the Lord is also a spirit of wisdom. True wisdom penetrates into and knows the nature, the causes and effects of things, is aware of the best ways and means to accomplish the desired ends. Thus the spirit of wisdom makes Christ thoroughly and perfectly acquainted with the plan of redemption and the economy of the church. Upon Christ does rest, furthermore, the spirit of understanding or discernment, *בִּינָה*. The spirit of understanding gives to the Messiah the faculty of discerning between good and evil, between that which is wholesome and injurious to His people. As the *spirit of counsel* He enables Christ likewise to invent and give the best

counsel for His people, and not only invent and give the best counsel, but He gives also *strength* to overcome and conquer all difficulties and obstacles which stand in the way of the counsel prompted by Him. The prophet calls this spirit, finally, the *spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord*. This knowledge is, as in many other passages of holy Scripture, a *nosse cum affectu*. The Messiah knows His God, honors, loves Him, to do His will is His meat and his drink, and all this is, according to the context (v. 3—5), to the best of His people. Surely, the One thus furnished and qualified for His office and work will be fully equal to the task set before Him and will not cause any disappointment.

It should, however, not be overlooked that from His very conception Christ possessed the Holy Spirit without measure, inasmuch as the Holy Spirit is true God and with the divine nature of Christ of the same essence and being, and inasmuch as, by virtue of the communication of both natures in Christ, Christ's human nature was really and perfectly permeated by His divine nature, a union which is described in the old dogmatical axiom, *ἡ θεότης χριστοῦ τῆς ἀνθρωπότητος* (the godhead of Christ is the unction of His human nature), and which the ancient teachers have also explained by the similitude of body and soul or a heated piece of iron. The consequence of this real and most intimate union of natures is the communication of attributes (*communicatio idiomatum*), so that Christ possessed all wisdom and understanding, all counsel and might, etc., even according to His human nature from the very first moment of His incarnation, although in the state of humiliation He, as a rule, abstained from the use of this majesty and glory. And, again, it is a characteristic feature of His state of humiliation that, what Christ possessed already according to His human nature, by virtue of the above named union and communication, He received also as a gift of His heavenly Father in order to carry out the work assigned to Him.

Thus only can we understand that great event when immediately after Christ's baptism the heavens were opened and the Spirit descended like a dove lighting upon Him, while at the same time a voice from heaven was heard saying: *This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased.* More yet, however, than Is. 11, 2, Is. 42, 1 reminds us of this singular and remarkable event.

There we read: *Behold my Servant, whom I uphold; mine Elect, in whom my soul delighteth; I have put my Spirit upon Him.* Publicly and solemnly as the Father sent down the Spirit upon the Son, while He declares that He is well pleased in Him, so He declares through the mouth of the prophet before the ears of all Israel that the Messiah, the Son of the Virgin, is His Elect, the only One that He has chosen for the accomplishment of the great work of redemption, the One upon whom all His love and all His affection is bestowed and upon whom He has put, to whom He gives His Spirit in all its fulness. In the Spirit of the Lord God Christ appears amongst His people as the greatest of all the prophets, to whom even Moses, the greatest prophet of the old Covenant, looks with admiration as well as with profound longing when he says to the people of Israel: *The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto Him ye shall hearken.* Deut. 18, 15.

We turn now to Is. 61, in which the Messiah introduces Himself as this great Prophet of whom Moses and indeed all other prophets had spoken. In the very beginning of this chapter we find the words: *The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek.* That another prophet could be meant, is altogether out of question, for it is Christ Himself who applies this prophecy to His own person. Luke 4, 17. Having read this passage in the synagogue of Nazareth and closed the book, He said, while the eyes of all were fastened on Him: *This day is this Scrip-*

ture fulfilled in your ears. Here again we meet with the assertion that the Spirit of the Lord, the Spirit of God is upon Christ. Then He proceeds: *Because the Lord hath anointed me.* "Because" is the correct translation of the Hebrew בְּכִי . The LXX has ὅτι ἔθηκεν , and Luke as well as afterwards Luther in his German Bible has adopted this version. The latter employs *darum*, and the meaning of these words is evidently this: Because the Lord hath anointed me, therefore His Spirit is upon me. The Spirit of the Lord is the true and proper unction of Christ and it is because He is anointed with the Spirit without measure that His name is הַמָּשִׁיחַ or ὁ Χριστός . He, the Messiah, is qualified and prompted by this Spirit, to preach good tidings unto the meek. The subsequent words: *He hath sent me to bind up THE BROKEN-HEARTED*, בְּשִׁבְרֵי לֵב , show that the whole prophecy has to be taken in a spiritual sense and that the meek or, rather, the poor or depressed, עֲנִיִּים , are those that are depressed or poor in the spirit. To them Christ shall bring good tidings. The verb בָּשַׂר is the Greek word ἐπαγγελλίζεν , to preach the gospel. Christ's chief office as a prophet was to proclaim the gospel, the good tidings of the salvation of mankind wrought by Himself. The law was given by Moses, but grace and truth by Jesus Christ. John 1, 17. Of course, Christ preached also the law, and the Sermon on the Mount is a fair sample of His law-preaching. At the conclusion of this sermon we read, Matt. 7, 28. 29: *And it came to pass, when Jesus had ended these sayings, the people were astonished at His doctrine: for He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.* By the law the hearts are to be prepared for the gospel-message, they are to be broken and melted by that hammer and that fire of which God says, Jer. 23, 29: *Is not my word like as a fire? saith the Lord; and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces?* The law brings the sinner to the knowledge of his sins, makes him poor in spirit, despairing of his own virtues and merits,

and if we read in the first verse of Is. 61: *The Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek*, the prophet takes it undoubtedly for granted that Christ will also preach the law, with the intention, however, to proclaim to those that have been brought to the knowledge of their sins and have become sorry for them the good tidings of the grace of God, the forgiveness of their sins, and to give unto them the certain promise of life eternal. In a similar manner God gives to the ministers of the gospel who are sent in Christ's name the command, Is. 40, 1. 2: *Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God. Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned.* Thus Christ's peculiar office and indeed the peculiar charge of the ministry of the new Testament is to preach the gospel in all its grace and beauty. The great difference, however, between Christ and other preachers of the gospel is that Christ brought the gospel to light, that He proclaimed the gospel in His own name and by His own authority, while they receive authority as well as their message from another, namely from Christ who Himself is the Alpha and Omega of the gospel-proclamation. But to convince oneself how wonderfully this prophecy was fulfilled in Christ, we need but look into the writings of the Evangelists and of the apostles who were reminded by the Holy Ghost of the words which Christ had spoken to them and before them during the three years of His public ministry. Everywhere we find words which bring to the despondent and sorrowing sinner an abundance of good tidings and consolation. Yea, the main accusation against Christ produced by the scribes and Pharisees before the Jewish people was: *This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them.* Luke 15, 2.

But Christ's gospel-message is not only a mere indication of good things, as the Reformed Church would have it, much less but an empty sound. On the contrary, it is also a proclamation, a message of singular and wonderful

power and efficacy. In the following the prophet impresses this upon our minds with many words. The prophet or, rather, Christ continues: *He (the Lord God) hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted.* Christ does this by means of the gospel. The gospel sets at ease and rest the heart wounded and troubled by the pangs of conscience and communicates to the sinner heavenly peace, the peace of God and with God. In the gospel Christ applies to the wounds of a broken and a contrite spirit a balm more precious and more costly, than the finest balm of Gilead. But Christ is not only the great Physician or Healer, He is likewise a great deliverer. His mission is, furthermore, to proclaim liberty to the captives and the opening of prison to them that are bound. Through the fall have we all come under the power of Satan, we have been sold under sin, but Christ has come and tells to those that are penitent: You are free, delivered from the power of Satan, from the dread and fear of God's wrath and eternal punishment, He shall gladly receive you as His sons; believe only. Those, however, who believe in this message are really taken out of the kingdom of darkness through the power of the gospel, they have been translated into the kingdom of Christ and made partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light, Col. 1, 12. And not only this, the gospel gives them also strength to walk as the children of God. For this reason says Zacharias in his song of praise, speaking of the fulfillment of God's promises in the time of the new Testament: *That He would grant unto us, that we being delivered out of the hand of our enemies might serve Him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before Him, all the days of our life.* Luke 1, 74. 75. "And the opening of prison to them that are bound." When quoting this passage, Luke employs the expression: *And recovering of sight to the blind* (*καὶ τοῖς τυφλοῖς ἀνάβλεψιν*). In the original פתח stands for opening, and since this word is chiefly, if not exclusively, used of the opening of the eyes and the ears, these two phrases denote

essentially the same. To the prisoners or to those that are bound, לְאִסְרִים, opening of eyes. Prisoners sit in the dungeon and cannot see the glorious light of the day. Men without the gospel, without the enlightenment by the Holy Ghost are spiritually blind and ignorant as to the true God and the way of salvation, the preaching of the cross is foolishness to them. But the gospel of Christ is of such power *as to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith in Christ.* Acts 26, 18.

The second verse reads: *To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn.* Christ proclaims and brings by His proclamation, which is like the blowing of the jubilee trumpet, the great year of release of which the year of jubilee in the old Testament was but a type. Lev. 25, 9. 40. This year of jubilee is also of much longer duration, it lasts through the entire time of the new Covenant until the day of judgment. We find this corroborated 2 Cor. 6, 2, where St. Paul exclaims: *Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.* After Christ has ascended to heaven He makes His voice heard through the voice of His ministers. Before His departure from the earth, He Himself gives to His apostles and in fact to the whole church the command Mark 16: *Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature,* and adds the promise: *He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved.* But precious and powerful to save as His gospel is, it is not to be trifled with or to be refused with impunity. Therefore Christ continues in the same passage: *But he that believeth not shall be damned.* And in Isaiah He says likewise, that He is also sent to proclaim the day of vengeance of our God. The day of ultimate vengeance is the day of judgment, and at that day all unbelievers shall receive their reward and perish from the way. Ps. 2, 12. It is a sore task for Christ and for all the preach-

ers of the gospel to announce the dire wrath of God to the unbelievers. Christ sheds the most bitter tears when He thinks of the final fate of unbelieving Jerusalem. Much more than in proclaiming the divine wrath He finds pleasure in comforting those that need comfort. Thus, after having dwelt but with a few words on this topic, the Messiah returns at once to the description of the saving power of the gospel. The Lord has sent Him, furthermore, *to comfort all that mourn*. He has kind, encouraging words for all His Christians, whatever their sore or sorrow is. His heart goes out with special love and tender care to those who sigh under the dread and curse of the law. *Come unto me*, He tells them, *all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.* Matt. 11, 28—30. Those consolations will not only support them under their sorrows, but turn them into songs of praise. For He gives unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness. The literal translation runs: To put upon them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them a headdress instead of ashes, etc. In the original the beauty of the passage is heightened by an elegant paronomasia—*phur*, beauty or headdress, for *epher*—ashes. It serves also to emphasize the contrast of the two words. Through the preaching of the gospel Christ gives, bestows something upon those that have put ashes on their heads, that are mourning or are laboring under the spirit of heaviness. Since ashes were with the Orientals a symbol of mourning the three last terms signify essentially the same, although it is not to be overlooked that the use of three successive synonymous terms tends to give much force to their meaning. Christ's gospel shall take away the most intense and deepest grief and sorrow and give in return a headgear, the oil of joy and the garment of praise. At days of great festivity the Israelites and other oriental nations

were wont to put upon their heads a beautiful turban or chaplet and to pour over them fine oil that it ran down upon the garments indicating thereby the greatness of their joy and gladness. Thus Christ gives and imparts to them that mourn an abundance of gladness and joy. And as one is wrapped up in a garment, so shall the Lord's people of the new Testament be wrapped up in praise. Their joyfulness shall break forth in songs of praise, of exultation and jubilee. Yea, even out of the mouth of babes and sucklings has Christ perfected praise. Matt. 21, 16. But whence this joy? What is the cause of it? What gift is the real incentive to it? The answer is contained in the following words.

The continuation of the prophecy reads: *That they might be called trees of righteousness*, or, more in conformity with the Hebrew text: It is preached, צְדִיקָה, to them (you are) trees of righteousness. To them that mourn in Zion, it shall be told: You are trees, bearers of righteousness. This is the same righteousness by which, according to Is. 53, 11, the righteous Servant of the Lord shall justify many, the righteousness which Christ has acquired for the sinners. The gospel announces to the penitent sinner that he is righteous for Christ's sake, and imparts to him at the same time that righteousness by working faith in his heart. This righteousness, however, is the most precious gift of the new Testament. It makes the sinner, great as his sins may be, perfectly holy and innocent in the sight of God, so that He shall find no cause in the transgressor of His law to pronounce and execute upon him the sentence of death and damnation. Such a gift as the righteousness of Christ is certainly an abundant cause for great joy and exultation. Another name given to the mourners in Zion is: *The planting of the Lord*. They are God's workmanship, new creatures. By nature they were dead in trespasses and sins, but now they have been quickened into a new spiritual life, they have risen from the dead through the faith of the operation of God. True conversion makes man God's hus-

bandry and God's building. But all this is brought about by the means of the Gospel revealed and preached by Christ and in Christ's name and authority. We read yet at the end of this prophecy of Christ's mission: *That He may be glorified.* All the above named benefits of Christ bestowed upon us by the means of the gospel shall bring us to glorify the Lord by a sincere devotion and exemplary conversation; for herein is the Father glorified, that we bring forth much fruit. His honor, however, demands also that we abide by the scriptural doctrine concerning the gospel and the conversion and regeneration of sinners. But if any man calls the gospel of Christ a dead letter or ascribes the work of the conversion of the sinner to man's reason, power or virtue, either wholly or in part, in spite of this prophecy and many other Scripture testimonies, he shall know that he robs Him of His honor who declares solemnly, Is. 42, 8: *I am the Lord: that is my name: and my glory will I not give to another, neither my praise to graven images.*

Christ, during the time of His public ministry, did not only proclaim the gospel in His own authority and name, but in His own authority He likewise wrought a multitude of miracles, and greater miracles than any prophet before Him. His heart was full of compassion not only with the spiritual, but also with the bodily misery of men, and so He freed from bodily evils many of those that believed in Him, desired and needed His help. But the main object of His miracles was the confirmation of His divine Sonship and the divine authority of His doctrine. This appears from the account given of His very first miracle, the turning of water into wine at Cana. At the end of that account John says, John 2, 11: *This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth His glory; and His disciples believed on Him* (conf. also John 10, 37. 38, etc.). And some of these miracles Isaiah names chap. 35, 5. 6: *Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap*

as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing. By these the prophet refers to the time, when the God of Israel shall come, even Christ, to set up His kingdom of grace in the world. At that glorious time wonders shall be also wrought on men's bodies. *The eyes of the blind shall be opened;* this was often done by our Lord Jesus, when He was upon earth, with a word's speaking, and one He gave sight to, was born blind. Matt. 9, 27. 12, 22. 20, 30. John 9, 6. By His power the ears of the deaf were also unstopped; with one word, *Ephphatha*—be opened,—Mark 7, 34. Many that were lame had the use of their limbs restored so perfectly that they could not only go but leap, as the impotent man healed by Peter in the name of Christ, Acts 3, 8. The dumb were likewise enabled to speak, and no wonder that they were disposed to sing for joy. But that these and many more miracles of Christ which are not mentioned by Isaiah may be also regarded as symbols of still greater miracles performed by Christ on men's soul we can easily infer from a careful comparison of this passage with the context, with Is. 42, 7 and especially Is. 61, 1—3.

But although Christ's miracles gave conclusive evidence of His power and Godhead, He did not step before His people with high pretensions to worldly power, authority and renown. Isaiah says of Him, the Servant of the Lord, chap. 42, 2. 3: *He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause His voice to be heard in the street. A bruised reed shall He not break, and the smoking flax shall He not quench.* The quotation of these words in Matthew, chap. 12, 19. 20, throws light on this passage. Christ comes to His people as the meek and lowly Son of man in spite of His great wonders and powerful preaching of the gospel. It is not His own honor which He seeks, He courts not the favor of the high and mighty, not the mere applause of the multitude anxious to see wonders and signs, He tries not to win in order to establish that worldly kingdom of which the Jewish nation dreamt. Christ has no trumpet

sounded before Him nor any noisy retinue to follow Him, nor does He care to gain notoriety as a mere worker of wonders. More than one time He forbids the multitude to noise abroad His miraculous deeds, and when at one time *He perceived that they would come and take Him by force, to make Him a king, He departed again into a mountain Himself alone.* John 6, 15. The opposition He meets with, He does not strive against, but patiently endures the contradiction of sinners against Himself. He is a King in spite of all His humility and lowliness, but He is the King of Grace and Truth, and the kingdom which He sets up in the world comes not with observation and pompous appearance; its weapons are not carnal but spiritual. By the sweet and gentle power of His gospel He wants to win over the hearts and minds of men from the kingdom of Satan into His kingdom of grace; He makes citizens of His kingdom by speaking comfortably, by consoling those of a broken heart and of a contrite spirit. As one whom his mother comforteth, so does He comfort them. Is. 66, 13. Consistent with the nature of His kingdom and the sweetness of His gospel is also His conduct towards those that resemble a bruised reed or a smoking flax. He does not cast away those that are of little faith, that have but a little spiritual life in them or are oppressed with doubts and fears. On the contrary, He takes special care of them that they might increase and take new courage again. Likewise He does not lay upon them more work or suffering than they can bear, but graciously considers their weak frame. In a tone of reproach He calls His disciples: *Ye of little faith,* He even upbraids them with their unbelief and hardness of heart, yet not with the intention to drive them away from Him, but with a view of making them as cedars in the courts of our God, of fanning the dying spark of their faith into a mighty flame. This great tenderness and care of Christ for the frail and weak in faith is our comfort even to-day yet. If He would break the bruised reed and quench

the smoking flax, if He would not feed His flock like a shepherd, if He would not gather the lambs with His arms and carry them in his bosom or gently lead those that are with young, Is. 40, 10, how could we ever hope to persevere in our faith and to be saved? Surely we had to despair of our soul's salvation in spite of Christ's vicarious suffering and death. But Christ's boundless love and touching tenderness towards the weak and infirm exerted by Him through the gospel makes us quite certain of our salvation, so that in spite of the devil, the world and our own flesh we can exclaim with St. Paul, Rom. 8, 38. 39: *I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

Significant of Christ's lowliness and condescension towards the poor and despised is also what we read in Is. 9, 1. 2: *Nevertheless the dimness shall not be such as was in her vexation, when at the first He lightly afflicted the land of Zebulun, and the land of Naphtali, and afterward did more grievously afflict her by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, in Galilee of the nations. The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined.* A more literal translation of the original is: For there shall not be dimness to the land which was in vexation as about the first time when He made of low estate the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali and afterwards He honored her by the way of the sea, etc.

The prophet speaks here evidently of Galilee, the extreme part of Canaan. It was called Galilee or Galilee of the nations, district of the heathen, because many heathen had settled there. At first the land is in great trouble, darkness has befallen it, God has made this country contemptible; afterwards it shall be brought to honor again.

It was at the very time when the prophet was writing this that this country was greatly oppressed. For in those days came Tiglathpileser, the king of Assyria, whom Ahaz had called to his assistance against Pekah and Rezin, and carried the greater part of the population of Galilee captive to Assyria. 2 Kings 25, 29. With great pride the inhabitants of Judah pointed to that country as stricken and smitten of God. And although the inhabitants of Judah suffered the same fate when in later times they were led captive to Babylon, those who returned looked upon the Galilaeans with the same contempt as their forefathers. Amongst other prejudices they entertained against them there was a current belief amongst the Jews that no prophet would arise from Galilee. Quite in keeping with this belief was what Nathanael said to Philip when the latter had told him: *We have found Him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of Joseph.* John 1, 46. He says to him: *Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth?* But this despised country shall be greatly honored. *The people that walked in darkness, says the prophet, v. 2a, have seen a great light; they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined.* Darkness and shadow of death are figurative expressions for misery, trouble and distress, while light denotes salvation and joy. The time afterwards is the time of the Messiah, that light that breaks forth to dispel the darkness, the salvation which brings joy instead of distress and misery is Christ Himself. This appears not only from the following context, but especially from Matt. 4. There the Evangelist relates that Christ, after His baptism and temptation in the wilderness, departed into Galilee, and leaving Nazareth came and dwelt in Capernaum which is upon the sea coast in the borders of Zabulon and Naphtali. Then, after adding the words: *That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet,* he continues to quote this passage. As Christ had spent by far the greater part of His youth in

Galilee, so the greater part of His public ministry was devoted to this province of the Holy Land. In a town of Galilee, in Capernaum, He made for a time His permanent home. It was in Galilee, where He wrought the first and in fact the most miracles, from Galilee He chose His twelve apostles who carried after Christ's departure from the earth the light unto the Gentiles, and there He preached the gospel to great multitudes. We know that even the vast majority of the Galilaeans ignored their God and Savior because he did not fulfill their carnal expectations and hopes, but still He had there more disciples than in Judaea and Jerusalem. He made, of course, also several journeys up into Judaea and to Jerusalem to manifest Himself in the temple of God and before the rulers of the Jewish nation and the multitudes of pilgrims as the promised Messiah and the Savior of mankind. But where it was to be expected least, He met with the fiercest opposition from the very beginning and only a few believed in Him. The reception, however, which Christ found in Galilee and in Judaea, was quite in accordance with another prophecy of Isaiah. For chap. 8, 14. 15 we read of the Son of the Virgin: *And He shall be for a sanctuary; but for a stone of stumbling and for a rock of offence to both the houses of Israel, for a gin and for a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem. And many among them shall stumble, and fall, and be broken, and be snared, and be taken.* We note that he mentions both houses of Israel, but that he points equally to the inhabitants of Jerusalem. These had the temple of the Lord in their midst and had more opportunities to hear and learn the word of God, both the law and the divine promises of Christ the Savior, than the rest of the houses of Israel. Daily they saw before their eyes the sacrifices of rams and lambs which were to be types and figures of Christ. A very great number of those that were appointed to be builders of Zion (Ps. 118, 22) lived amongst them, namely the high priest, a great many of the priests, elders and scribes of the Jewish nation. But their

opposition and burning hatred against Christ and His doctrine grew stronger every time Christ made a visit to the temple and the city, and this hatred resulted at Christ's last journey up to Jerusalem in His arraignment before the ecclesiastical and civil courts in that city, and in His crucifixion demanded by a clamorous and seditious mob which was instigated and incited to this heinous crime by the teachers and rulers of the people.¹⁾

(Contributed by J. H.)

1) A chapter, by the same contributor, on *Christ, the suffering Messiah*, which is properly the continuation of this article, was published in the January issue of the *QUARTERLY*, pp. 42—67.
