

# EXPOSITORY NOTES ON THE PROPHET ISAIAH

by

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## ISAIAH CHAPTER FORTY-TWO

### THE CHOSEN SERVANT

IN CHAPTER forty-two Messiah is brought before us. The forerunner - the voice of one crying in the wilderness - has been spoken of. Now Messiah Himself is presented. This is taken up more fully later, but He is shown here that Israel may have the program of God before them and realize what folly it is to turn away from the living and true God to their senseless idols.

**“Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth; I have put my spirit upon him: he shall bring forth Judgment to the Gentiles. 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: he shall bring forth judgment unto truth. He shall not fail nor be discouraged till he have set judgment in the earth: and the isles shall wait for his law”** (verses 1-4).

This passage is definitely applied to our Lord in Matthew 12:17-21: **“He shall not break the bruised reed, nor quench the smoking flax.”** Wherever there is the least evidence of the heart’s desire to turn to God, He quickens and encourages it and leads on into full assurance of faith at last. These things characterized the Lord’s ministry here. How far different from us! We are apt to go to extremes; either we do not like to talk to anyone about their souls or do any personal work; we pay no attention, no matter what people may say or do, except to preach to them from the platform, or else we are inclined to be very obtrusive and self-assertive and do many things that are hardly in keeping with that Christian culture which we ought to manifest.

This passage helped me greatly when I was a young man. I began my ministry as a Salvation Army officer, and sixty years ago the Salvation Army was a mighty power for good in this country. We used to march the streets of San Francisco in processions of over 1,000, with two or three brass bands, and we won hundreds of souls to Christ, but little by little the organization got away from soul-seeking.

It dwindled down from that, and now it is almost merely a great charitable organization. But we were inclined, perhaps, to go to too great extremes in our intense earnestness, and to do things that possibly were not wise. Instead of impressing people for God, it made them think we were unbalanced impressions of ourselves.

Personally I was so under the power of legality that I felt guilty if I rode in a street car without immediately rising to give my testimony.

As soon as we left the corner I would get to my feet and say, "Friends, I want to give my testimony for Jesus Christ, and I want to tell you how God saved me."

The conductor would come and say, "Sit down. We didn't ask you to come in here to conduct a church service."

Then I was rather rude to him. I said, "Well, I'll sit down if you say so, but you'll have to answer at the judgment-bar of God for preventing these people from hearing the gospel."

I would do the same thing in a railroad train. As soon as we got away from the station, I faced the passengers and began to give my testimony. I felt I had to do it, or be responsible for their souls. I did not realize that this was rude.

The last time that I got up in a railroad train in this way I had just started when a Roman Catholic priest jumped to his feet and said, "What's this? What's this? Do I have to be insulted in this train? Do I have to sit in a Protestant service? Call the conductor!"

The conductor came and said, "Young man, you can't do this - you've no right to interfere with other people's religion when you're riding on a railroad train." And so I had to sit down.

It bothered me. The devil either tries to keep you quiet or makes you think you must do what is unreasonable. What delivered me at last and showed me there was a golden mean between indifference and rudeness was this very passage.

What does it say of the Lord? "**He shall not strive nor cry, neither shall His voice be heard in the street.**"

He went through His service here for God in such a restful, quiet way. When people came to Him and wanted to know how to get eternal life, how to be saved, He was always ready to meet them, and He sought out the lost, like the woman at Sychar's well, but you never find Him doing anything boisterous or uncouth. He was truly "God's gentleman."

When I first saw that expression applied to Him I was rather startled. I picked up a little volume, an old History of the World, in London some years ago, published early in 1600. When it came down to the days of the Roman Empire and Augustus Caesar, it said, "In his days, there was born in Bethlehem of Judea that goodly gentleman, Jesus Christ." As I meditated on that, I thought, why should not that epithet be applied to Him?

What is a gentleman? A gentle man, a gracious man. Jesus was all that - always gentle and gracious. Even when rebuking sin sternly He never did anything that was boisterous or made Him seem uncouth.

**“I will bring the blind by a way that they knew not; I will lead them in paths that they have not known: I will make darkness light before them, and crooked things straight, These things will I do unto them, and not forsake them” (verse 16).**

If God explained all His ways with us beforehand we would no longer walk by faith, but by sight. He leads us along strange paths, and through new and peculiar experiences that we may learn how marvelously His grace can sustain, and how blessedly His wisdom can plan. It is not necessary that we should see the road ahead. It is only necessary that we trust our Guide. He knows the end from the beginning, and He never deviates from His purpose of blessing. When, at last, we have reached the city of God and look back over the way we have come, we shall praise Him for all His dealings with us, and we shall understand the reason for every trial.

**~ end of chapter 42 ~**

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