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Isaiah Sees the Saviour

AMONG THE OLD TESTAMENT prophetic books none is better known than Isaiah. Not only does it contain some of the grandest literature ever produced; it also contains some of the fullest and clearest statements of God's relation to suffering humanity.

To the Christian, no part of Isaiah is more important than the unified section that begins in chapter 40 and runs to the middle of chapter 56. This section contains more verses that are quoted in the New Testament than any other Old Testament passage of equal length. From it are drawn several of the most beautiful portions of Handel's Messiah, that oratorio so greatly loved by Christians. No chapter in the whole Old Testament presents the sufferings of Christ more vividly or sets forth their purpose more clearly than Isaiah 53. Every true Christian should love this great section of Isaiah.

Yet it must be said that for most Christians the section seems to consist of a long collection of isolated verses, most of which mean little to him. It contains many beautiful gems, but the passages between them often seem comparatively meaningless. It is as if one were walking through a dark tunnel, and only occasionally passing a small opening through which he might obtain a glimpse of a beautiful distant panorama, as the prophet looks forward to some thrilling aspect of the life of Christ.

This is particularly true of one of the unique features of this section - its depiction of "the Servant of the LORD." At point after point there are glimpses of this important figure, of whom it is said in Isaiah 53:11: "By his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many." Several fairly long passages present aspects of this subject. Yet it is introduced almost casually, and