
Isaiah 50

The Lord loves Israel despite her unfaithfulness. The Lord has not lost His power. The Lord's special relationship with the Father is here alluded to. Messiah is resolute in His obedience to the Father and suffered much for us. We can chose to walk in the light of Christ or our own-made light, but this election is not without consequences.

vv. 1-3. The Lord has not put away Israel forever. Nor has He sold her. Israel has been responsible for the breaking of covenants, not the Lord. The Lord has power—and has always had it—to bless Israel.

1 ¶ **Yea, for thus saith the LORD, Have I put thee away, or have I cast thee off for ever? For thus saith the Lord, Where [is] the bill of your mother's divorcement? To whom † have I put thee away, or to which of my creditors [is it] to whom † have I sold you?; yea, to whom have I sold you? Behold, for your iniquities have ye sold yourselves, and for your transgressions is your mother put away;**

Yea, for thus saith the LORD, Have I put thee away, or have I cast thee off for ever? The Targum (Ⓒ) has, “Thus saith the Lord, Where is the bill of divorcement, which I gave your congregation, that she is cast off.” The LXX (Ⓔ) reads, “Thus saith the Lord, Of what sort was the bill of your mother’s divorce.” The Douay-Rheims (Ⓓ) has, “Thus saith the Lord: What is this bill of the divorce of your mother, with which I have put her away?” The essence of this is the *temporary* nature of the separation between the Lord and His chosen people. Certainly there were enough reasons that Israel (speaking globally of the twelve tribes) merited a divorce, but the *love of God* is so immense: “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved” (John 3:16-17). ¶ *For thus saith the Lord, Where is the bill of your mother's divorcement?* The LXX (Ⓔ) reads, “With which I divorced her?” There are strong allusions to the law of divorce in the Mosaic Law. ¶ **ESSENTIAL BACKGROUND.** We read in Deuteronomy: “When a man hath taken a wife, and married her, and it come to pass that she find no favour in his eyes, because he hath found some uncleanness in

her: then let him write her a bill of divorcement, and give it in her hand, and send her out of his house. And when she is departed out of his house, she may go and be another man’s wife. And if the latter husband hate her, and write her a bill of divorcement, and giveth it in her hand, and sendeth her out of his house; or if the latter husband die, which took her to be his wife; Her former husband, which sent her away, may not take her again to be his wife, *after that she is defiled*; for that is abomination before the LORD: and thou shalt not cause the land to sin, which the LORD thy God giveth thee for an inheritance” (Deuteronomy 24:1-4, emphasis added). To summarize, under the Law of Moses, there were some circumstances under which a man could divorce his wife, but this was *not* to be a game. Once divorced, when the wife *married another*, the first husband could not get her back. The process of divorce required a bill of divorcement or a written note to the effect. Barnes explains that this easy divorce was not to God’s liking: “It originated probably from the erroneous views which then prevailed of the nature of the marriage compact. It was extensively regarded as substantially like any other compact, in which the wife became a purchase from her father, and of course as she had been purchased; the husband claimed the right of dismissing her when he pleased.” The Savior, in Matthew 19:8b tells us: “Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so.” ¶ **FIRST**, let us consider what we have here in ISAIAH. Barnes says: “God here speaks of himself as the *husband* of his people . . . denoting the tender affection which he had for his people.” Nägelsbach suggests: “[The LORD] does not deny that in a certain sense Zion is a divorced wife, her children sold into captivity. But He denies that Zion is definitively divorced by a writing of divorcement, and that the children are sold to a creditor as equivalent for a debt.” This point about not *casting off forever* is made even clearer through modern revelation. The Lord here challenges the children of Israel to produce the bill of divorcement that would justify Israel’s feelings of abandonment. There seems to be an allusion to: “But Zion said, The LORD hath forsaken me, and my Lord hath forgotten me” (Isaiah 49:14). I like what

Whitehouse says: “The interrogative form of the sentence is often employed in Hebrew as a rhetorical mode of expressing a negative. This is the actual force of the interrogative here, ‘Where is . . . ?’ [Nowhere].” ¶ SECOND, let us consider Jeremiah. Elsewhere in the Scriptures we have another figure. After the Israelite Civil War at the time of Solomon’s son, Israel split into the Ten Tribes of the North (sometimes also called Israel and sometimes Ephraim). In Jeremiah 3:8 we read that Ephraim or Israel was divorced for her wicked conduct: “And I saw, when for all the causes whereby backsliding Israel committed adultery I had put her away, and given her a bill of divorce; yet her treacherous sister Judah feared not, but went and played the harlot also.” It is pretty clear from this scripture and others, that Judah did *not* do much better than her sister Ephraim, although we do not have any supporting evidence that Judah was also *divorced* from the Lord. ¶ The *Hosea Principle*, we have said, is one where the Lord follows strong comments against His children with tender ones. And so we read in ISAIAH 54:6 ff., that the Lord is taking back the wife of His youth. Here are some renditions that put the point forward strongly: “You were like a young wife, brokenhearted and crying because her husband had divorced her. But the LORD your God says, ‘I am taking you back!’” (CEV); “For Adonai has called you back like a wife abandoned and grief-stricken; ‘A wife married in her youth cannot be rejected,’ says your God” (CJV); “For the LORD hath called thee as a wife forsaken and grieved in spirit; and a wife of youth, can she be rejected? saith thy God” (JPS); and “For as a woman forsaken and grieved in spirit did the Lord call thee back, and as a wife of youth, that was rejected, saith thy God” (Leeser). Alexander, in ISAIAH 54, points out: “Reduced to a prosaic form and order, this verse seems to mean, that Jehovah had espoused her in her youth, then cast her off for her iniquities, and now at last recalled her from her solitude and grief to be his wife again.” And from the Jewish Study Bible we have: “God assures Zion that He has not divorced her (cf. ISAIAH 50:1–3). God’s anger was brief and brought about a temporary separation; the reconciliation *will last forever*.”¹ ¶ THIRD, can a divorced back be brought back? Of course, the figure in Isaiah does not have to correspond to the one in Jeremiah. But one may properly ask, “Can the rejected—even divorced adulterous wife—be taken back by her husband?” For that is precisely what we see in ISAIAH 54:6 ff., as we shall examine more closely in that chapter. The answer is a resounding *yes*, The Lord may take her back because as unfaithful as she was, Israel (speaking globally of both *Judah* and *Ephraim*,

i.e., the twelve tribes) never took upon herself another *covenant* husband.² As we underscored above, a husband could not take a wife back *after that she is defiled* (Deuteronomy 24:4). In this case, Israel did not take upon another *covenant* relationship with someone else. As a result, the Lord can take her back. ¶ *To whom have I put thee away, or to which of my creditors have I sold you; yea, to whom have I sold you?* The Targum (Ⓢ) has, “Or who is the man, who has a debt against me, unto whom I sold you?” The LXX (Ⓛ) reads, “Or to what creditor have I sold you?” The Douay-Rheims (Ⓟ) has, “Or who is my creditor, to whom I sold you.” Horsley explains that God has not divorced nor sold Israel: “God, therefore, still retains the right of a husband over their mother, whom He has turned out of doors for her perverseness; and the right of a father over the children, whom He has not sold, though they have offended. And inasmuch as He retains these rights, it is implied, that upon their submission He will take both the mother and the children home again.” Whitehouse once again reminds us: “*which of my creditors is it to whom I have sold you?*] again anticipates, like the preceding interrogative, a negative answer: ‘To none.’ The form of the question is based on ancient Oriental custom.” Lowth has: “And fathers, being oppressed with debt, often sold their children; which they might do, for a time, till the year of release: Exod. 21:7. That this was frequently practiced, appears from many passages of Scripture; and that the persons and the liberty of the children were answerable for the debts of the father. The widow, 2Kings 4:1 complains, ‘that the creditor is come to take unto him her two sons to be bondmen.’ And in the parable, Matthew 18:25. ‘The lord, forasmuch as his servant had not to pay, commands him to be sold, and his wife and children, and all that he had, and payment to be made.’” Numerous exegetes point out, however, that the Lord had no debts and no creditors, so that the creditor argument would not fly in court. ¶ *Behold, for your iniquities have ye sold yourselves, and for your transgressions is your mother put away.* The Targum (Ⓢ) has, “Behold, for your sins ye were sold, and for your rebellion your congregation was put away.” The LXX (Ⓛ) reads, “Behold you were sold for your transgressions; and for your iniquities I divorced your mother.” The Peshitta (Ⓟ) has, “for your *iniquities* (Lamsa) / *sins* (BPE) were you sold.” The Douay-Rheims (Ⓟ) has, “Behold you are sold for your iniquities, and for your wicked deeds have I put your mother away.” The idea here is not that the Lord divorced His wife Israel, but rather, that the latter was

¹ Berlin, A., Brettler, M. Z., & Fishbane, M. (Eds.). (2004). *The Jewish Study Bible* (p. 893). New York: Oxford University Press. Emphasis added.

² Christian Attorney Douglas J. del Tondo wrote: “Since there was no remarriage, Israel is like an abandoned wife whom a husband may indeed reconcile with.” (<http://www.jesuswordsonly.com/books/351-israel-a-wife-divorced-question.html> URL accessed: 2 January 2016).

unfaithful to Him and thus expelled from His presence. Kimhi (in Rosenberg) has: “You were sold because of your iniquities, and your ransom is repentance.” This repentance only is efficacious because of the atonement of Christ. “In the scriptures,” explains Elder Dallin H. Oaks about such estrangement from the presence of God, “this separation is called spiritual death.”³ Also Elder Russell M. Nelson: “But there is another type of separation known in scripture as spiritual death. It ‘is defined as a state of spiritual alienation from God’ (Joseph Fielding Smith, *Doctrines of Salvation*). Thus, one can be very much alive physically but dead spiritually.”

2 Wherefore, when I came [~~was there~~] ~~was~~ no man?; when I called [~~was there~~] ~~was~~ none to answer?. O house of Israel, is my hand shortened at all, that it cannot redeem?; or have I no power to deliver? Behold, at my rebuke I dry up the sea, I make their rivers a wilderness; and their fish to stinketh, because [~~there is~~] ~~no~~ the waters are dried up, and they dieth for because of thirst.

Wherefore, when I came there was no man; when I called there was none to answer. The Targum (Ⓢ) has, “Wherefore have I sent my prophets, and they have not repented. They prophesied, but they obeyed not.” The LXX (Ⓛ) reads, “Why, when I came, was there no man? And why, when I called, did none answer?” The Douay-Rheims (Ⓟ) has, “Because I came, and there was not a man: I called, and there was none that would hear.” Several translators use the same word order than the Prophet Joseph Smith for the *ellipsis*, “there was.” This includes ABP, Darby, DRB (Ⓟ), and Geneva (partially). Cowles suggests: “Wherefore did I come and there was no man? Yet the point of the question is *not* to ask why the Lord came, but why, *when he came to his people*, there was none to meet him, none to greet him? Why, when he came home as a husband to his household, was there no loving wife to greet his return? Why was it that when he spake, there was none to answer, and that not even his wife would reply a word to his call?” (different emphasis). Likewise Keith has: “The universal depravity of the nation is expressed by the assertion, that when God came to them he found none (waiting for him); when he called, none answered. That this is the import of these expressions, that they refer to the sin of the nation, appears from parallel texts. Thus, ‘Therefore will I number you to the sword; because when I called

ye did not answer, when I spake ye did not hear, but did evil before mine eyes,’ (ISAIAH 65:12; 66:4). This state of things did not arise, it is said, from the inability or unwillingness of the Lord to save them. His hand was not shortened.” Nägelsbach suggests that Israel’s sin was best expressed in the piercing words found in John 1:11: “He came unto his own, and his own received him not.” The D&C makes it clear, also, that the Savior was speaking about Israel: “In that day *when I came unto mine own*, no man among you received me, and you were driven out.” (D&C 133:66, emphasis added). *Unto my own* is an allusion to Israel, “And I will walk among you, and will be your God, and ye shall be *my people*” (Leviticus 26:12). *You were driven out* speaks to the scattering, perhaps more specifically to the scattering of Judah after the death and resurrection of the Savior. As a nation, Israel failed to heed the words of Jehovah in the meridian of times. Yet there were some who paid strict heed and glorified God, such as Simeon and Anna, and the Lord’s disciples. I suppose that even today those who embrace the Gospel are relatively few. Will we be among these? ¶ *O house of Israel, is my hand shortened at all, that it cannot redeem; or have I no power to deliver? Behold, at my rebuke I dry up the sea, I make their rivers a wilderness.* The Targum (Ⓢ) has, for the first half, “Is my power altogether deficient, so that I cannot save?” The LXX (Ⓛ) reads, “Is my hand unable to save? Or have I no power to rescue? Behold with my rebuke I can dry up the sea, and make the rivers a desert.” The Douay-Rheims (Ⓟ) has, “Is my hand shortened and become little, that I cannot redeem? or is there no strength in me to deliver? Behold at my rebuke I will make the sea a desert, I will turn the rivers into dry land.” The Masoretic text (Ⓜ) has a **vav** before the **interrogatory particle** **וְאֵל**—the **ו** acts as a *marker of contrast* (DBL) such as the word *or*—whereas it is missing from the DSS 1QIsa^a (Ⓟ), **וְאֵל**. Brother Sidney B. Sperry writes: “[The Book of Mormon reading in 2Nephi 7:2, *their rivers*]⁴ is really remarkable from the angle of textual criticism. The King James and Hebrew versions read: ‘Behold, at my rebuke I dry up the sea. I make the rivers a wilderness: their fish stinketh because there is no water, and dieth for thirst.’ The Book of Mormon reads ‘their rivers’ [נְהַרְהָרָם] as against ‘rivers’⁵ [נְהַרְהָרָם]. This is readily explained on the basis that the letter *mem* (‘their’) [regular *mem* מ and final *mem*, ׀] which was attached originally to ‘rivers’ accidentally dropped out of the Hebrew text because the

⁴ In D&C the Savior uses the Masoretic and KJV, “Behold, at my rebuke I dry up the sea. I make the rivers a wilderness; their fish stink, and die for thirst” (D&C 133:68).

⁵ *Rivers*, and not *the rivers*, because the word *the* is often added in English for ease in reading.

³ See, for instance, Helaman 14:16.

very next word (‘wilderness’ [מִדְבָּר]) begins with the same letter [would have been, מִדְבָּרָם]. Such accidents are well-known to textual critics. Furthermore, in the next clause the reading is ‘their fish’ [דִּיגָתָם] which argues well for the correctness of ‘their rivers.’ The ancient Greek reads: ‘And their fish shall be dried up because there is no water, and shall die for thirst.’ It will be noted that the Hebrew omits dried up while the Greek on the other hand omits stinketh. The Book of Mormon retains both, indicating that the Hebrew and Greek each lack elements that were in the original text of Isaiah. On the basis of the Book of Mormon reading the textual critic can reconstruct what happened to the original text. By a most peculiar coincidence the words stinketh [תִּבְאֵשׁ] and dried up [in Joshua 2:10 we have דְּבִישׁ from דְּבִישׁ]⁶ in this Hebrew context have nearly the same sound and look very much alike . . . The accidental dropping of one of these verbs from the original text, or a misreading of either, would occasion considerable difficulty and cause scribes to reconstruct the text in different ways. The present Greek and Hebrew readings illustrate the processes of reconstruction.”⁷ Regarding the expression דִּיגָתָם קִצְרָה, Faussett explains: “*hand shortened*” the Oriental emblem of weakness, as the long *stretched-out hand* is of power (ISAIAH 59:1).” Birks explains: “‘*Wholly shortened.*’ This is the true force of the question, to shew their aggravated sin. They received Him as if He had no power, not as if it were slightly diminished, but as if He were quite unequal to the task of redeeming them . . . But His power, though veiled in the flesh, was not really diminished. He was still the same Lord, who rebuked the sea, and it was dry, and who led them through the deep as through a wilderness.” The Rabbis Slotki/Rosenberg suggest, as do several others, that *at my rebuke I dry up the sea* is a reference to the drying up of the Red Sea during the Exodus (Exodus 14:29). Kimhi (in Rosenberg) again suggests: “It is your fault that you are not yet redeemed, for you have not yet repented . . . for God accepts the penitent whenever they call to Him wholeheartedly and sincerely. Then He is near to them and ready to accept them.” Cheyne suggests, “‘Rebuke’ is the term for the opposite of the creative word. Instead of calling into existence, it sends into non-existence, or at least *confines within bounds*” (emphasis added). ¶ *And their fish to stinketh, because the waters are dried up, and they dieth because of thirst.* The LXX (Ⓞ) reads, “So that the fishes thereof shall shrivel for want of water,

and die for thirst.” The Douay-Rheims (Ⓟ) has, “The fishes shall rot for want of water, and shall die for thirst.” Faussett points us to the power shown by God associated with the exodus from Egypt: “*fish stinketh*] the very judgment inflicted on their Egyptian enemies at the first exodus (Exodus 7:18, 21).”

3 I clothe the heavens with blackness, and I make sackcloth their covering.

The LXX (Ⓞ) reads, “I can clothe the heaven with darkness, and make its covering like sackcloth.” The Douay-Rheims (Ⓟ) has *darkness* instead of *blackness*. ¶ Ibn Ezra suggests that this is much like: “when the sky becomes obscure in the middle of the day, and appears as if covered with sackcloth, which is usually black.” When did the day turn this black in the middle of the day? Wade writes: “The expressions in this verse are probably metaphors for the darkening of the sky with storm clouds (cf. 1Kings 18:45), though there may be a reference to the plague of darkness in Egypt (Exodus 10:21).” Theodoret (Θεοδώρητος Κύρρου) suggests this of the time associated with the crucifixion: “He has done this and will do it. For he did it when he was crucified: ‘From the sixth hour to the ninth the shadows covered the whole earth’ (Matthew 27:45). And he will do it again at the time of the fulfillment [i.e., in the last days—GB], for it says, ‘The sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give off its light’ (Mathew 24:29).”⁸ From the Book of Mormon we see that the period of darkness in the New World would last what seemed to be three eternal days (see 3Nephi 8–10). This truly was a time of mourning and sackcloth: “And it came to pass that there was thick darkness upon all the face of the land, insomuch that the inhabitants thereof who had not fallen could feel the vapor of darkness; And there could be no light, because of the darkness, neither candles, neither torches; neither could there be fire kindled with their fine and exceedingly dry wood, so that there could not be any light at all; And there was not any light seen, neither fire, nor glimmer, neither the sun, nor the moon, nor the stars, for so great were the mists of darkness which were upon the face of the land. And it came to pass that it did last for the space of three days that there was no light seen; and there was great mourning and howling and weeping among all the people continually; yea, great were the groanings of the people, because of the darkness and the great destruction which had come upon them” (3Nephi 8:20-23). Brother Hoyt W. Brewster, Jr. points us to modern day revelation: “The Lord proclaimed that one sign of his second coming will be to ‘clothe the heavens with blackness’ and to ‘make sackcloth their covering’ (D&C 133:69; 2Nephi

⁶ I could not reconstruct the exact Hebrew intended by Sperry from the transliteration offered in the article.

⁷ Sperry, Sidney B. The “Isaiah Problem” in the Book of Mormon. *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 4/1 (1995): p. 148-149.

⁸ *Commentary on Isaiah* 16.50.3. [SC 315:106.] ACCS.

7:3).⁹ Rawlinson beautifully says: “God means to assert his power of leaving all nature in absolute darkness, if he so choose—a power necessarily belonging to him who said, ‘Let there be light; and there was light’ (Genesis 1:3).” Regarding *sackcloth* in Hastings we find: “(שַׂקַּיִם sak, σάκκος, saccus) was a coarse material woven from goats’ and camels’ hair, and hence of a dark colour, as we see from Revelation 6:12: ‘the sun became black as sackcloth of hair’ (σάκκος τρίχινος); cf., for the colour, ISAIAH 50:3, Sir 25:17 ‘her countenance darkeneth like sackcloth,’ reading σάκκος with B.”¹⁰ ¶ Elder McConkie suggests spiritual darkness (in Parry, Parry and Peterson): “Elder Bruce R. McConkie [*Millennial Messiah*, p. 39] gave another interpretation: “‘I clothe the heavens with blackness’ (ISAIAH 50:3), and there is no more revelation . . . Thus saith our God. Such is his promise, spoken prophetically of our day. And here, given in modern times, is his announcement that as he spake, so has it come to pass: ‘Verily, verily, I say unto you, darkness covereth the earth, and gross darkness the minds of the people, and all flesh has become corrupt before my face’ (D&C 112:23).”¹¹

vv. 4-9. The expression “Lord GOD” is repeated four times in these five verses, but incorrectly translated in the AV. Instead, it should be rendered **Lord LORD**, or **Adonai Jehovah**, אֲדֹנָי יְהוָה. ASV, LEB, LITV, Rotherham, WEB, WEBA and YLT correctly have “**Lord Jehovah** [or **Yahweh**],” as do most of the Spanish versions. A few correctly have Lord LORD (e.g., ABP+ and GLB, Der HERR HERR). A couple of versions sadly use *Adonai Elohim* because they never bothered to look at the Hebrew. At any rate, in each of these instances Christ is speaking, through *Divine Investiture*, the words of His Father. Elder McConkie explains: “*How does God reveal himself?* Though the ways may be infinite, the perfect and crowning way is by direct revelation, by visions, by personal visitations. According to the laws of mediation and intercession which the Father himself ordained, he has chosen to reveal himself through the Son, ordaining that all revelation shall come through the Son, though that holy personage frequently speaks in the Father’s name by *divine investiture of authority*; that is, he speaks in the *first person as though he were the Father*, because the

⁹ Brewster, Hoyt W., Jr., *Doctrine and Covenants Encyclopedia*, p.483.

¹⁰ Kennedy, A. R. S. (1911–1912). SACKCLOTH. In J. Hastings, J. A. Selbie, A. B. Davidson, S. R. Driver, & H. B. Swete (Eds.), *A Dictionary of the Bible: Dealing with Its Language, Literature, and Contents Including the Biblical Theology* 4:327.

¹¹ Parry, Donald W.; Parry, Jay A., and Peterson, Tina M., *Understanding Isaiah*, p.439-441.

Father has placed his name upon the Son. The sole reason for the personal appearance of the Father is to introduce the Son, as is illustrated by the appearance of the Father and the Son at the commencement of this dispensation (*Joseph Smith History* 2:12-20). And hence the Biblical statement: ‘No man hath seen God at any time, except he hath borne record of the Son’ (Inspired Version, John 1:19). Christ the Son is, of course, the God of Israel through whom the will of the Father was manifest to that chosen people.”¹² Messiah speaks of God’s gifts to him. Christ is in continual communication with, and obedient to, the Father. Some of the sufferings of Messiah are mentioned. Christ was resolute in His obedience and is justified by the Father. Christ is represented at the judgment bar. Those who oppose Him will fail.

4 ¶ The Lord GOD hath given me the tongue of the learned, that I should know how to speak a word in season **unto thee, O house of Israel, when ye are to [him that is] weary.** He wakeneth morning by morning, he wakeneth mine ear to hear as the learned.

The Lord GOD hath given me the tongue of the learned, that I should know how to speak a word in season unto thee, O house of Israel, when ye are weary. The Targum (Ⓣ) has, “The Lord God hath given me a tongue to teach, to give knowledge, *and* to instruct the righteous with wisdom, who weary themselves with the words of the law.” The LXX (Ⓞ) reads, “The Lord Lord¹³ giveth me an instructed tongue, to know when it is proper to speak a word.” The Peshitta (Ⓢ) does not have the clause, *in season*. The Douay-Rheims (ⓓ) has, “The Lord hath given me a learned tongue, that I should know how to uphold by word him that is weary.” Leeser has: “The Lord Eternal hath given me a tongue for teaching, that I should know how to strengthen the weary with the word.” Kimhi, in Slotki/Rosenberg explains that *the learned* are those “of cultivated and fluent speech.” Barnes explains: “HEB. *the tongue of those who are instructed*; i.e., of the eloquent.” Nägelsbach suggests: “The tongue of a disciple is a docile tongue, willing and capable of learning. The Prophet, therefore, sees in the Servant of God one who must learn, and who likes to learn.” This is not contradictory to what we read in Holy Writ: “And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with

¹² McConkie, Elder Bruce R. *Doctrinal New Testament Commentary*. The Epistle of Paul to Titus – God has a body of flesh and bones.

¹³ See also, Septuaginta, SESB Apparatus Criticus, κυριος] + κυριος B^oLC

God and man” (Luke 2:52). Wordsworth has: “Not only was Christ mighty in Divine power, and gracious in Divine love, as He showed himself to the Hebrew Nation at the Exodus, and at the return from Babylon, but, as Man, He stooped to their weaknesses, and became His Father’s disciple, in order to teach them Divine wisdom. As He Himself says, ‘As My Father hath taught Me, I speak’ (John 8:28).” ¶ *A word in season*: Barnes has: “The Hebrew here is, ‘that I might know how to strengthen with a word the weary;’ that is, that he might sustain, comfort, and refresh them by his promises and his counsels.” This the Messiah has done. And Christ also today reveals to us words through the Comforter, or the Holy Ghost. And we ought to speak by the same spirit when we are one with Him. “The ability to speak suitable words, timely, wise, and helpful, is God’s gift, and one of his best gifts, which we should covet earnestly. ‘A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in baskets of silver’ (Proverb 25:11). We are often pleasantly, and often sadly, reminded how words which we spoke years ago lie in the memories of those who heard, and have exerted continuous influence for weal or woe. And there are few of us who look back over life without regret that golden opportunities for speaking helpful words were missed” (R. Tuck in *Isaiah Pulpit Commentary*). I will never forget the day when, decades ago, I thanked a woman who helped me as I turned in my recycle cans (money which I used to purchase my theological library). She turned to me and said, “Those are the only kind words I have heard today.” And just two days ago I was shocked when a Church member stopped me to say that some kind words spoken had made him want to continue to improve his skills as a teacher. And I believe that sometimes, even more than a word spoken is a word *not* spoken. It is the gift of listening with empathy to what others have to say.¹⁴ ¶ Regarding the word, Elder Gene R. Cook, formerly of the First Quorum of the Seventy, explained: “Since the scriptures come from the mind of Christ, they help us to have the Spirit, which brings us to a oneness of mind and heart with the Lord. Therefore, as you read and study and assimilate the words of the Lord through the scriptures, you are in the process of absorbing the mind of Christ. You begin to think as he thinks. You begin to feel as he feels. You begin to speak as he speaks. How can we know how well we are doing in our scripture reading? We can know we are doing well when we hear his voice (both in the scriptures directly and through revelation), when our hearts burn within us at hearing his word, when we receive the words of Christ into our bosoms, and when we receive them into our minds (and thus we learn how

to feel as he feels and think as he thinks.)”¹⁵ Before we can offer a word in season another we must be filled with the Spirit, “And the Spirit shall be given unto you by the prayer of faith; and if ye receive not the Spirit ye shall not teach” (D&C 42:14). ¶ *He wakeneth morning by morning, he wakeneth mine ear to hear as the learned*. The Targum (Ⓣ) has, “Each morning rising up early to send His prophets, that perhaps the ears of the sinners might be opened, and they might receive instruction.” The LXX (ⓖ) reads, “He gave it me in the morning; he gave me in addition an ear to hear.” Instead of *the learned*, the Peshitta (Ⓢ) has *the teaching* (Lamsa) / *the instruction* (BPE). The Douay-Rheims (Ⓣ) has, “He wakeneth in the morning, in the morning he wakeneth my ear, that I may hear him as a master.” The Masoretic text (Ⓜ), in this passage, twice has *he wakeneth*, יָעִיר, while the DSS 1QIsa^a (Ⓣ), in each instance has *and he wakeneth*, וַיַּעִיר. From the beginning of day, each day, *in morning in morning* [בַּבֹּקֶר בַּבֹּקֶר], i.e., *continually*, the Father spoke to His beloved Son—and He *never ceased* to communicate with Him. Alexander notes: “The present tense (*he wakeneth*)¹⁶ asserts a claim to constant inspiration.” ¶ This is why at that supreme moment in the cross, the absence of the Father was so very painful.¹⁷ “The Servant,” as Cheyne calls the Lord in this instance, was not limited to dreams or other forms of revelation, but rather, “the spirit of prophecy abides constantly upon him.” Cheyne also goes on to say that many of the words found in ISAIAH 50 “are only appropriate in the mouth of an individual.” This is, in contrast to some who wish to make the servant the nation of Israel. Cheyne believes that in some regards, Jeremiah might be a type [and elsewhere calls the Servant *human and superhuman*]. Skinner likewise has: “The figure of the Servant is individualized in a higher degree . . . and contains features which cannot be applied in detail to a community [and after referring that this could apply to a martyr continues] The conception cannot without difficulty be applied to Israel as a whole . . .” Baltzer suggests these verses of Moses. Indeed, Moses and Jeremiah may be *types*. I am grateful for the testimony that I have that Jesus is the Christ and that Isaiah here testifies of the Christ. ¶ Barnes has: “To awaken the ear is to prepare one to receive instruction. The expressions to open the ear, to uncover the ear, to awaken the ear, occur often in the Scriptures in the sense of preparing to receive instruction, or of disposing to receive divine

¹⁴ See *Party-Directed Mediation*, especially chapter 4, Empathic Listening.

¹⁵ Cook, Elder Gene R. *Searching the Scriptures: Bringing Power to Your Personal and Family Study*, p.122-123.

¹⁶ יָעִיר from root, עִיר.

¹⁷ See Elder Jeffrey R. Holland’ moving April 2009 General Conference talk, “None Were with Him.”

communications. The sense here is plain. The Messiah would be taught of God, and would be inclined to receive all that he imparted.” Jennings writes: “For the ear has a strange faculty; sounds may be quite audible, but with the attention elsewhere, they are not really heard at all. Our very hearing, although all the delicate mechanism of the ear is in perfect order, depends still upon our will. In a room full of people, many of whom may be speaking at the same time, we have the power of directing our ear to one particular speaker, and be practically deaf to all the rest. Thus today, a hundred voices in this world are crying, but amid them all is One who says: ‘If any man hear My voice I will come in to him, and will sup with him and he with Me.’”

5 The Lord GOD hath opened appointed mine ears, and I was not rebellious, neither turned away back.

The Targum (Ⓣ) has, “The Lord God hath sent me to prophesy, and I did not refuse, neither turned away back.” The LXX (Ⓥ) reads, “And the instruction of the Lord, Lord¹⁸ (Brenton, ‘the Lord, even the Lord’) openeth mine ears and I am not rebellious, nor do I gainsay.” The Douay-Rheims (Ⓣ) has, “The Lord God hath opened my ear, and I do not resist: I have not gone back.” The Masoretic text (Ⓜ) has *Adonai YHWH*, אֲדֹנָי יְהוָה, while the DSS 1QIsa^a (Ⓤ) has *Adonai Elohim*, אֲדֹנָי אֱלֹהִים. ¶ In Jeremiah 2:27b we read the very opposite, in terms of a refusal to hear the Lord: “. . . for they have turned their back unto me, and not their face: but in the time of their trouble they will say, Arise, and save us.” Similarly, we have Zechariah 7:11-13: “But they refused to hearken, and pulled away the shoulder, and stopped their ears, that they should not hear. Yea, they made their hearts as an adamant stone, lest they should hear the law, and the words which the LORD of hosts hath sent in his spirit by the former prophets: therefore came a great wrath from the LORD of hosts. Therefore it is come to pass, that as he cried, and they would not hear; so they cried, and I would not hear, saith the LORD of hosts.” So also ISAIAH 59:1-2: “Behold, the LORD’S hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear: But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear.” In modern-day scripture we have: “They were slow to hearken unto the voice of the Lord their God; therefore, the Lord their God is slow to hearken unto their prayers, to answer them in the day of their trouble. In the day of their peace they esteemed lightly my counsel; but, in the day of their trouble, of

necessity they feel after me” (D&C 101:7-8). ¶ The Savior always was obedient to His Father and so we read: “And Jesus lifted up his eyes, and said, Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me. And I knew that *thou hearest me always*” (John 11:41b-42a, emphasis added). So it is, that Christ, even in the darkest hour of Gethsemane was obedient to His Father. Jenour says: “He finished the work [the Father] had given him to do, and his cry in his deepest agony was; ‘Not my will but thine be done.’” Rawlinson has: “. . . it is perhaps better to regard it as intended to mark a contrast between the true Servant and the professed servants, or children of Israel. They ‘did not hear; their ear was *not* opened; they were treacherous and rebellious from the womb’ (ISAIAH 48:8). His ear [in contrast] was opened to receive God’s word perpetually . . .” The JST *appointed* my ears, speaks to the pre-mortal calling of the Savior.

6 I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair. I hid not my face from shame and spitting, {for the Lord GOD will help me; therefore shall I not be confounded:}*

* KJV keeps this clause with the next verse. In fact, verses 5-8a constitute only one verse in the JST.

I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair. The LXX (Ⓥ) reads, “My back I have given to scourges, and my cheeks to be slapped with an open hand.” Instead of *plucked off the hair*, the Peshitta (Ⓢ) has *slapped the face*. The Douay-Rheims (Ⓣ) has, “I have given my body to the strikers, and my cheeks to them that plucked them.” Kimhi, in Rosenberg, well says that “Perhaps Isaiah suffered humiliation although *we do not find any evidence* of it in Scriptures” (emphasis added). See similar comments by Rashi also here under ISAIAH 50:6 (50:7 in the Hebrew scriptures). Cheyne, speaks of several Biblical personages as types of Christ: “So the type Jeremiah, ‘I have been in derision continually, everyone mocking me’ (Jeremiah 20:7). So the pious sufferer, also (to say the least) a type, in Psalm 22:7, ‘All they that see me laugh to scorn.’ So the typical righteous man in the Book of Job (30:10), ‘They abhor me, they flee far from me, and withhold not spittle from my face.’” Barnes well says: “I submitted willingly to be scourged, or whipped. This is one of the parts of this chapter which can be applied to no other one but the Messiah.” Wordsworth has: “*I gave my back to the smiters—spitting*] As our Lord Himself declares (Luke 18:31): ‘Behold, we go up to Jerusalem, and all things that are written by the Prophets concerning the Son of Man shall be accomplished. For He shall be delivered unto the Gentiles, and shall be mocked, and spitefully

¹⁸ See Septuaginta Apparatus Criticus, κρυπτον + κρυπτου BS

entreated, and spitted on: and they shall scourge Him, and put Him to death.’ Our Lord is there referring to this place of Isaiah, and is applying it to Himself (Hengstenberg).” Kay says: “*Spitting* was an expression of contemptuous abhorrence (Job 30:10).—As in other prophecies, so eminently in those of Isaiah 50–53, many of even the lesser details (which might have seemed only pictorial imagery) had a literal fulfilment (see Matthew 26:67; 27:30; Luke 18:31-33).” Cowles has: “Jesus submitted to insult and abuse. Scourging is specially named (Mark 15:15); smiting with the hand (Matthew 26:67; John 19:3); spitting in the face (Matthew 26:67 and 27:30). Plucking off the hair of the cheek [the beard] was, in the view of the Orientals, the grossest insult.” Regarding this last point, Poole says: “*Plucked off the hair*] which was a contumely or punishment inflicted upon malefactors, Nehemiah 13:25.”¹⁹ Alford, speaking of Matthew 5:39b [but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also], says, “our blessed Redeemer obeyed it; ‘He gave his back to the smiters, and his cheeks to them that plucked off the hair, and hid not his face from shame and spitting.’”²⁰ And these words from Plumer leaning on Stevenson, “We can never have fiercer, more cruel, or more brutal enemies than had our blessed Lord, Stevenson: ‘Mockery accompanied the Saviour from the garden of Gethsemane till he expired on Calvary. Judas set the example with his insidious kiss. The men, that apprehended him, mocked him. The officers at the several courts mocked him. The chief priests, scribes and Pharisees mocked him. The high-priest, Caiaphas, mocked him. The servants of his house and others surrounded the Saviour, and mocked him. They smote him with their staves, and with the palms of their hands—they did spit in his face—they plucked off the hair—they blindfolded him; then they did buffet him with their fists, saying, “Prophesy unto us, thou Christ, who is he that smote thee?””²¹ ¶ *I hid not my face from shame and spitting, for the Lord GOD will help me; therefore shall I not be confounded:* The Targum (Ⓒ) has, for the second half, “The Lord God is my helper (or, ‘support’), therefore shall I not be confounded.” The LXX (Ⓔ) reads, “And I turned not my face from the shame of spittles. Indeed the Lord Lord²² was my helper; therefore I was not ashamed.”

¹⁹ Poole, M. (1853). *Annotations upon the Holy Bible* (Vol. 2, p. 441). New York: Robert Carter and Brothers.

²⁰ Alford, H. (1976). *Alford’s Greek Testament: an exegetical and critical commentary* (1:52). Grand Rapids, MI: Guardian Press.

²¹ Plumer, W. S. (1872). *Studies in the Book of Psalms: Being a Critical and Expository Commentary, with Doctrinal and Practical Remarks on the Entire Psalter* (p. 304). Philadelphia; Edinburgh: J. B. Lippincott Company; A & C Black.

²² See Septuaginta Apparatus Criticus, κυριος AQS^ε] + κυριος BS*LC

Instead of *I hid not*, the Peshitta (Ⓔ) has *I turned not*. The Douay-Rheims (Ⓔ) has, “I have not turned away my face from them that rebuked me, and spit upon me. The Lord God is my helper, therefore am I not confounded.” The Masoretic text (Ⓔ) has *I hid*, הִסְתַּרְתִּי, (root סָתַר, *hide*) while the DSS 1QIsa^a (Ⓔ) has *I turned aside*, הִסִּירוֹתִי (root סוּר, *turn aside*). Rashi (in Rosenberg), as we alluded to earlier in this verse, suggests that no one stood up against Isaiah in this sort of way. Alexander well summarizes the exegetes: “Some have imagined that by spitting nothing more is meant than spitting on the ground in one’s presence, which, according to the oriental usages and feelings, is a strong expression of abhorrence and contempt. But, as Lowth well says, if spitting in a person’s presence was such an indignity, how much more spitting in his face; and the whole connection shews that the reference is not to any mitigated form of insult but to its extreme.”

7 For the Lord GOD will help me; therefore shall I not be confounded:* therefore have I set my face like a flint, and I know that I shall not be ashamed, {And the Lord [He is] near and he that justifieth me.}**

* JST keeps this clause with the previous verse. In fact, verses 5-8a constitute only one verse in the JST.

** KJV keeps this clause with the next verse.

Therefore have I set my face like a flint, and I know that I shall not be ashamed. The Targum (Ⓒ) has, “Therefore have I set my face strong as a rock, and I know that I shall not be confounded.” The LXX (Ⓔ) reads, “But kept my countenance firm as a rock. I knew indeed that I should not be confounded.” The Douay-Rheims (Ⓔ) has, “Therefore have I set my face as a most hard rock, and I know that I shall not be confounded.” To set the *face like flint* (CJB), פָּנַי כַּחֲלָמִישׁ, or a *hard rock*, is to be unmovable. In Ezekiel we likewise have a similar expression used: “Behold, I have made thy face strong against their faces, and thy forehead strong against their foreheads. As an adamant harder than flint (מִצֵּר)²³ have I made thy forehead: fear them not, neither be dismayed at their looks, though they be a rebellious house” (Ezekiel 3:8-9). DBL-Hebrew has: “hard quartz mineral, with a focus on the hardness of the material, and its resulting difficulty to crack.” Here, *unmovable* in regards to moving forward in truth and righteousness. Rabbi Metsudath David in Slotki/Rosenberg say “of unbreakable determination.” Rawlinson wisely suggests

²³ From a rock.

yet another possible meaning, “*He sets his face like a flint*; i.e. makes it hard, impassive, expressionless, and at the same time determined, fixed not to give way.” Was this not especially true of how He faced his attackers and accusers right before being arrested and crucified? Keith observes: “There is allusion to this characteristic of the Redeemer [resolution and firmness] in his history, as where it is said, ‘He steadfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem.’ Not only did the Father strengthen him for his work, he also justified him, or vindicated his claim to being the Son of God and the Saviour of the world.” ¶ Elder George Q. Cannon admonished: “. . . I notice a difficulty in our own midst, and that is that we yield, to a great extent, to the tendencies of the age, to the influences which surround us on every hand. We must refrain from this, we must set our faces like flint against every species of corruption, against every kind of wrong, in whatever form it may approach us. We must seek with all the energy that we have, to build up in truth and righteousness that which God has committed unto us, and establish impregnably the system of reformation with which we are entrusted. There can be no better way for us to commence than by listening to the counsels that have been given unto us in the past, and which have been the means of producing the peace, happiness and prosperity which we witness among us.”²⁴ President Daniel H. Wells likewise taught: “It is given unto us to overcome every difficulty and continue on our way rejoicing, having our hearts fixed like a flint on the prize before us; yes, no matter what devil stands in our way to prevent our onward march, or to beckon us this way or that way, let us not be moved either by fear or temptation, but exclaim like one of old, ‘As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord!’”²⁵ ¶ *Not be ashamed*. Orelli has: “Despite all abuse and ignominy, he has the confident sense of being free from real dishonour and shame.” ¶ *And the Lord is near and he justifieth me*. The Targum (Ⓣ) has, “My righteousness is near.” The LXX (Ⓞ) reads, “Because he who justified me is near at hand.” The Douay-Rheims (ⓓ) has, “He is near that justifieth me.” Cheyne explains: “*He that justifieth me*] ‘To justify’ in the O. T. almost always (see on ISAIAH 53:11) means to pronounce a man righteous, or to prove him so in act.” Justification means to have a seal of approval put upon a thought, word or action. It is the Holy Ghost who is generally

charged with placing such a seal. Cheyne continues his thoughts: “. . . whereas Job, the type of a *righteous* man, shrinks in terror from the issue, the Servant, human and yet superhuman in nature, has no doubt as to a favourable result.”

8 And the Lord is near and he justifieth me.* Who will contend with me? let us stand together: who [is] mine adversary? let him come near to me, and I will smite him with the strength of my mouth;

✓ the master of my cause?

* JST keeps this clause with the previous verse.

Who will contend with me? let us stand together: The Targum (Ⓣ) has, “Who is he that will contend with me? Let us stand forth together.” The LXX (Ⓞ) reads, “Who is he that contendeth with me? Let him stand up with me face to face.” Cowles writes: “The figure leads the thought here: Who will arraign me before the judge? He who vindicates my cause [God] is near me. Who then will dare contend with me in litigation? Let us stand before the court together [a challenge to join issue].” Kay has: “*that justifieth me*] Acquitting Him from the charge on which He had been condemned.—That charge was, that, in claiming to be *the Son of God*, He had committed blasphemy. The resurrection ‘justified’ Him (Romans 1:4; cp. 1 Timothy 3:16).—In Romans 8:33-34, all the faithful are empowered to use the challenge of this verse; for in Christ’s justification theirs is included (Romans 4:25). *stand together*] before God’s tribunal (Deuteronomy 19:17; Zechariah 3:1).” ¶ *Who is mine adversary? let him come near to me, and I will smite him with the strength of my mouth*. The Targum (Ⓣ) has, “Who is my adversary (literally, ‘who is the Lord of my cause’)? Let him come near me.” The LXX (Ⓞ) reads, “Yes, let my accuser, whoever he be, come near me.” The Douay-Rheims (ⓓ) is missing the last clause, “And I will smite him &c.” Birks says: “The outward ‘adversary’ was the Jewish Sanhedrim; but in a deeper sense it is the Prince of this world, who assailed our Lord in the hour of darkness, and found nothing in which he could prevail. Our Lord ‘endured the cross, despising the shame,’ in firm reliance on the love and wisdom of the Father.” Kay alludes to the legalistic character of these words: “*is mine adversary*] Or, ‘hath a claim against me’ (cp. the Hebrew in Exodus 24:14²⁶).” Wade has: “The expressions *justify, contend,*

²⁴ Cannon, Elder George Q. “Gathering—Its Spirit—Its Object—Duties of the Gathered Saints.” 42nd Semi-Annual Conference, Salt Lake City, October 8, 1872.

²⁵ Wells, President Daniel H. “Increase of the Stakes of Zion—The Saints Co-Workers With God—The Government and Kingdom of God—Our Inheritances—The Poor Receive the Word—The Gospel Incorporates Everything.” Discourse delivered at a Special Conference held at Brigham City, on Saturday afternoon, 18 August 1877.

²⁶ Both verses have שָׁנָה (from the root שָׁנָה), to *come near* or *approach*. LHI has *approach* in both instances, here and in Exodus 24:14. LITV and NASB have *approach* only Exodus. Here, it is clearly a legal term, such as approaching the bar, “Who has a case against Me? Let him draw near [שָׁנָה] to Me” (NASB). Ringgren, in

adversary (literally, *master of a suit*), and *condemn* are forensic²⁷.”

9 For Behold, the Lord GOD will help me; and all they which ~~who [is] he [that]~~ shall condemn me? ~~Lo, behold all they all~~ shall wax old as a garment; and the moth shall eat them up.

For the Lord GOD will help me; and all they which shall condemn me . . . The Targum (Ⓣ) has, “Behold, the Lord God is my helper (or, ‘support’); who is he that shall condemn me?” The LXX (Ⓞ) reads, “Behold the Lord, Lord²⁸ (Brenton, ‘the Lord, the Lord’) will be my advocate; who can do me any evil?” The Douay-Rheims (ⓓ) has, “Behold the Lord God is my helper: who is he that shall condemn me?” In terms of what we find in the Masoretic text (Ⓜ), Whitehouse says, “Here again we note, as in ISAIAH 50:1, that the interrogative is a rhetorical form of expressing a negative, viz. ‘none shall condemn.’” Modern revelation suggests otherwise, that there would be those who would condemn the Lord, and as a result would follow the consequences we see next. Young well says that: “The verb *condemn* is the antithesis of *justify*.” We see the latter in ISAIAH 50:7. ¶ *Behold all they shall wax old as a garment; and the moth shall eat them up.* The Targum (Ⓣ) has, “Lo, they all shall be as a garment that waxeth old, yea, as when the moth eateth it.” The LXX (Ⓞ) reads, “Behold you shall all wax old like a mantle, and the moth shall consume you.” Instead of *wax old*, the Peshitta (Ⓢ) has *wear out*. The Douay-Rheims (ⓓ) has, “Lo, they shall all be destroyed as a garment, the moth shall eat them up.” Rawlinson has: “Who will contend with me? (compare St. Paul’s words in Romans 8:33-34, ‘It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth?’).” And in likening the scriptures unto us, Luther similarly speaks of Romans 8:31b: “If God be for us, who can be against us?” Ibn Ezra has: “And all those that condemn me by their words, they will ‘wax

TDOT explains: “Another meaning of שָׁפַט is ‘go to court.’ Exodus 24:14 stipulates that in Moses’ absence, whoever has a dispute may turn to Aaron and Hur. They are thus appointed as arbiters, and ‘come before them’ means to accept their judgment. We find שָׁפַט used similarly in the fundamental precept of Deuteronomy 25:1: ‘If two men have a dispute and enter into litigation [Leeser has *and they come nigh* {שָׁפַט} into a court of justice] and the judges decide between them, the one in the right is to be vindicated and the one in the wrong is to be condemned.’ Although this text has been interpolated into a law regulating flogging, it is a general description of correct legal procedure (cf. also Dt. 25:9, which deals with a particular case).” How can I not be filled with gratitude to Kay, and others like him, who have eyes to see these little details and lead us to them.

²⁷ One of the definitions of *forensic* is related to jurisprudence.

²⁸ See Septuaginta Apparatus Criticus, κριτος + κυριος B^c

old as a garment.” Such statements reminds us of ISAIAH 40, where we read of the frailty of grass and flowers. So also garments are usually frail and eaten up by moths or otherwise perish. Christ, in contrast, would endure for ever. Alexander observes: “By a perfectly natural and common transition, the writer passes from comparison to metaphor, and having first transformed them into garments, says directly that the moth shall devour them, not as men, in which light he no longer views them, but as old clothes. This is a favourite comparison in Scripture to express a gradual but sure decay (compare ISAIAH 51:8, and Hosea 5:12).” Barnes writes: “The idea is, that the Messiah would survive all . . . attacks; his cause, his truth, and his reputation would live, while all the power, the influence, the reputation of his adversaries, would vanish as a garment that is worn out and then thrown away . . . In eastern countries, where wealth consisted much in changes of raiment, the depredations of the moth would be particularly to be feared, and hence it is frequently referred to in the Bible.” This is particularly true of nations where wool was used for clothing—as contrasted also to the synthetics of today. ¶ Elder Orson Pratt said: “If we are faithful to our covenants, the fury of the oppressor will not harm us, and where will be the strong arm of man? It will be like the flax in the flame, like a moth-eaten garment, the wicked shall vanish away, and there will be no place found for them.”²⁹

vv. 10-11. A contrast is made between those who walk in the path of the Lord and those who walk in their own light.

10 ¶ Who [is] among you that feareth the LORD, that obeyeth the voice of his servant, that walketh [in] darkness, and hath no light? Let him trust in the name of the LORD, and stay upon his God.

Who is among you that feareth the LORD, that obeyeth the voice of his servant, that walketh in darkness, and hath no light? The Targum (Ⓣ) has, “The Prophet said: The Holy One, blessed be He, shall say to all the nations: Who is among you that feareth the Lord, that obeyeth the voice of His servant the prophet, who keepeth the law, being in distress, as a man that walketh in darkness and has no light.” The LXX (Ⓞ) reads, “Who is there among you who feareth the Lord, let him hearken to the voice of his servant. Ye who walk in darkness and have no light.” The Peshitta (Ⓢ) reads something like, “Who among you reveres Yahweh?

²⁹ Pratt, Elder Orson. “The Kingdom of God.” discourse delivered in the Bowery, Great Salt Lake City, 8 July 1855.

Give heed to the voice of his servant. He who walks in darkness and has no light.” The Douay-Rheims (D) has *heareth* instead of *obeyeth*. The DSS 1QIsa^a (Q) gives us the plural form of *feareth* (יִרְאֵי), while the Masoretic text (M) provides the singular (יִרְאֵי). The word, when used with a parent or God, means to *reverence*. Gesenius gives us the example, *to reverence or fear Elohim*, יִרְאֵ אֱלֹהִים. Also, for *walketh*, the DSS 1QIsa^a (Q) gives us הִלְכוּ, while the Masoretic text (M) provides הִלְךָ. According to Kimhi (in Rosenberg), walking in darkness means “they were not enlightened” by scripture but instead followed “the path of evil and darkness.” Clarke well points out that there is a contradiction between those who suggest that we can still walk in darkness while following the Lord. Some translations offer alternative meanings: “Therefore who so feareth the Lorde among you, let hym heare the voyce of his seruaut: Who so walketh in darknesse and no lyght shyneth vpon hym, let hym put his trust in the name of the Lorde, and holde hym by his God” (Bishops); “Who is among you that feareth Jehovah, that obeyeth the voice of his servant? he that walketh in darkness, and hath no light, let him trust in the name of Jehovah, and rely upon his God” (ASV); “Who among you is fearing Jehovah, hearkening to the voice of His servant? He that walketh in darkness, and without a ray of light, let him trust in the name of Jehovah, and stay himself upon his God” (Delitzsch) and “Who is among you that feareth the Lord, that hearkeneth to the voice of his servant? though he have walked in darkness, and had no light: let him trust in the name of the Lord, and lean for support upon his God” (Leeser). Barnes offers an alternative interpretation. That *walk in darkness* points to the human condition, wherein we have to face adversity. When we face such, we can find relief by turning to the Lord and trusting in Him. ¶ In the Hebrew Bible, as I have mentioned repeatedly, some of my favorite scripture begin with the question word מַי, *who*. All those who would follow the Lord and be His disciples are then given an important directive, to leave the darkness and to trust in the Lord. ¶ *Let him trust in the name of the LORD, and stay upon his God.* The Targum (T) has, “he trusting in the name of the Lord, will stay upon the salvation of his God?” The LXX (G) reads, “Trust in the name of the Lord and stay yourselves on God.” The Peshitta (S) reads something like, “Let him place his trust in the name of the Yahweh that he may be saved by his God.” The Douay-Rheims (D) has, “Let him hope in the name of the Lord, and lean upon his God.” In these last verses of ISAIAH 50, Baltzer sees an allusion to *Rain in Due Season*: “. . . as the choice between life and death” and cites Deuteronomy 30:15, “See, I have set before thee this

day life and good, and death and evil.” This is certainly true of *spiritual death* as well of the *second death*. Certainly, we are admonished to trust in the Lord and stay or lean upon the Father that we might have *Eternal Life*.

11 Behold all ye that kindleth a fire, that compass [yourselves] about with sparks: walk in the light of your fire, and in the sparks [that] which ye have kindled; this shall ye have of mine hand, ye shall lie down in sorrow.

Behold all ye that kindleth fire, that compass yourselves about with sparks: walk in the light of your fire. The Targum (T) has, “The nations answered and said to him: O our Lord! it is not possible for us to occupy ourselves with the law; because we continually wage war against each other, and when we gain the victory one over the other, we burn their houses with fire, and bring their children and their treasures into captivity, and in this manner (the Royal Polyglot reads מְזִיָּרָה, ‘fate’ or ‘that which is decreed’) our days are spent; thus it is impossible for us to occupy ourselves with the law. The Holy One, blessed be He, answered and said unto them: Behold, all of you who stir up a fire, and lay hold on the sword; go ye, fall into the fire which ye have stirred up, and by the sword, which ye have laid hold on. This shall be unto you from my Word, ye shall turn to your destruction.” The LXX (G) reads, “Behold you are all kindling a fire and increasing the flame; walk in the light of your fire.” The Douay-Rheims (D) has, for the middle clause, “Encompassed with flames.” The DSS 1QIsa^a (Q) has *all them* (Logos) / *all those* (DSSB), כֻּלָּם, while the Masoretic text (M) has *all ye*, כָּלְכֶם. as does 1QIsa^b (Q) כָּלְכֶם. In ISAIAH 2:5 we read this invitation: “O house of Jacob, come ye, and let us walk in the light of the LORD.” This is in contrast to the light of our own fire. So we read: “This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin” (1John 1:5-7). Instead of *compass about with sparks*, Kimhi (in Rosenberg) suggests that the words מְזִיָּרָה יִקְוֹת refer to “those who create fires by rubbing stones or sticks together.” President Joseph F. Smith warned against the lazy and the proud: “Among the Latter-day Saints, the preaching of false doctrines disguised as truths of the gospel, may be expected from people of two classes, and practically

from these only; they are: FIRST—The hopelessly ignorant, whose lack of intelligence is due to their indolence and sloth, who make but feeble effort, if indeed any at all, to better themselves by reading and study; those who are afflicted with a dread disease that may develop into an incurable malady—laziness. SECOND—The proud and self-vaunting ones, who read by the lamp of their own conceit; who interpret by rules of their own contriving; who have become a law unto themselves, and so pose as the sole judges of their own doings. More dangerously ignorant than the first.”³⁰

¶ *And in the sparks which ye have kindled; this shall ye have of mine hand, ye shall lie down in sorrow.* The LXX (6) reads, “And by the flame which you have kindled. On my account these things have befallen you. You shall lie down in sorrow. The Douay-Rheims (D) has, “And in the flames which you have kindled: this is done to you by my hand, you shall sleep in sorrows.” Here the same thought continues. We have a choice of real, true enduring Light, or of furiously attempting to make our own fire—perhaps with a flint stone. Birks says: “Then the sparks they had kindled went out, their hopes expired in thick darkness; and they lay down in sorrow . . . Hahn justly observes that the enlightening, not the consuming nature, of the fire and sparks is here chiefly intended. Instead of walking in the light of the heavenly Dayspring, they kindled an earthly light, transient and feeble. The true reference, then, is to Pharisaic righteousnesses and human traditions, or to vain, worldly philosophy, by which the unbelieving strive to light up the darkness of the soul. The humble may walk in darkness for a time, but heavenly light will soon dawn on them. The proud may comfort themselves, by false, self-righteous zeal or worldly wisdom, with a seeming light, but it will end in darkness and sorrow.” Horsley has: “Instead of walking by the light of God’s holy doctrine, ye endeavour to raise a light of your own; the light of false philosophy and human imaginations.” Kimhi (in Rosenberg) suggests that those who kindle their own fire will be burnt by the same. So also Rawlinson: “They are condemned to be scorched by the fire which they have themselves kindled, to be made wretched by the strife which they have themselves caused to spring up.” Lowth has: “The fire of their own kindling, by the light of which they walk with security and satisfaction, is an image designed to express, in general, human devices, and mere worldly policy, exclusive of faith and trust in God; which, though they flatter them for a while with pleasing expectations and some appearance of success, shall in the end turn to the confusion of the authors.”

¶ The Prophet Joseph Smith taught: “But in obedience there is joy and peace unspotted, unalloyed [all of this in contrast to cursings and vexations that will lead us to

lie down in sorrow and wailings of everlasting regret]; and as God has designed our happiness—and the happiness of all His creatures, he never has—He never will institute an ordinance or give a commandment to His people that is not calculated in its nature to promote that happiness which He has designed, and which will not end in the greatest amount of good and glory to those who become the recipients of his law and ordinances.”³¹ ¶ What does it mean to lie down in sorrow? Ibn Ezra has: “Compare וישכב דוד ‘and David slept,’ that is, “and David died” (1 Kings 2:10); there are, besides, a great many instances of the use of the verb שכב in this sense. Literally, שָׁכַב means *to lie down* (Gesenius, TDOT, HAL, DCH). Cheyne, however, has: “To ‘lie down’ is not a phrase for dying, but suggests the fate of the guilty souls in the underworld . . . the grave and the underworld are closely allied conceptions, and the tortures of the soul in Hades are ascribed in ISAIAH 66:24.” The word *death* has a number of meanings and ranges, including *spiritual death*. Those who oppose God do not live lives of joy, so when such die, they can be said to die in sorrow. There is a spiritual death that separates man from the presence of God, and there is certainly a strong allusion to such a death here. An allusion which is confirmed in D&C, where portions of Isaiah 50 are included, as mentioned earlier: “And this shall ye have of my hand—ye shall lie down in sorrow. Behold, and lo, there are none to deliver you; for ye obeyed not my voice when I called to you out of the heavens; ye believed not my servants, and when they were sent unto you ye received them not. Wherefore, they sealed up the testimony and bound up the law, and ye were delivered over unto darkness. These shall go away into outer darkness, where there is weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth. Behold the Lord your God hath spoken it. Amen” (D&C 133:70-74).

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³⁰ Widtsoe, John A, and Smith, Joseph F. *Gospel Doctrine*.

³¹ TPJS 256-257.

