

# SEARCHING *the* SCRIPTURES

Search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me" — John 5:39.



"These were more noble than those in Thessalonica in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so" — Acts 17:11.

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## IMPOSSIBLE APOSTASY?

No. 5 H. E.

Phillips

In a previous article in this series I stated that any reasonable study of I John 3:9 must consider three questions: (1) Who is born of God? (2) What does "cannot commit sin" — "cannot sin" mean? (3) What does "for his seed remaineth in him" have to do with "he cannot sin?"

Concerning the first question, the term "born of God" (KJV) is found six times: I John 2:29; 3:9; 4:7; 5:1; 5:4; 5:18. In the last article I John 4:7 was studied. Now for the three verses in I John 5.

"Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God: and everyone that loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him" (vs. 1). The love of one's brother has been the theme from early in this epistle. Here the Holy Spirit says that "every one" that loves God, also loves the child of God. Verse 2 makes it clear.

The one (whosoever) "believeth" that Jesus is the Christ is born of God. Literally, he has been born from God. But is not belief that Jesus is the Christ a condition to become a child of God? Is it not a condition rather than a fruit? It certainly is! Philip told the eunuch that he could be baptized if he believed and he said: "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God" (Acts 8:37). Paul told the jailor to "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house" (Acts 16:21). "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" (John 3:16). Jesus said, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved" (Mark 16:16).

How is it then that whosoever "believeth" in I John 5:1 **has been** "born from God?" The tense of the terms used and the context shows that the identity of the child of God is under consideration and not the conditions by which one is born of God. The one who "continues on to believe that Jesus is the Christ" is the one who "has been born from God."

Lenski refers to I John 3:23 where the same word

is used, and he says of the present tense: "The latter means that we 'ever continue believing' just as the next present tense says that we 'ever continue loving.'"

The one who "believeth" (who comes to believe through the word of truth) have the power (right) to become the sons of God (John 1:12). He exercises this power when he obeys the conditions set forth by the Lord to become a child of God. "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God" (Rom. 8:14). The context shows that the one who is led by the Spirit is the one who "walks" or "obeys" the things of the Spirit. That one who comes to believe that Jesus is the Christ is led by the Spirit to repent, confess Christ with the mouth and be baptized for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38; Rom. 6:3-5; Rom. 10:9,10).

But I John 5:1 refers to the "whosoever" that continues to believe that Jesus is the Christ has been born from God. He gives proof that he is the son of God by continuing to believe just as he continues to love his brother.

Why does he say that one to continues to believe that Jesus is the Christ has been born from God? Does not this infer that one who came to believe can cease believing? Yes, and the word of God so teaches. Some elements of Calvinism deny this and that is why this verse is so perverted. Some can depart from the faith (I Tim. 4:1). "Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God. But exhort one another daily, while it is called Today; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin" (Heb. 3:12,13).

**Take heed** is a warning implying some danger. That danger is having an evil heart of **unbelief** in **departing** from the living God. If one cannot depart from God what sense does this warning make? The unbeliever (one who has never believed) could not depart from the living God because he has never been with Him. This **departing** is in **unbelief**. One who believed departs from the living God when he becomes an unbeliever. When he departs in unbelief he sins and is not bearing the fruit of one born from God as in I John 5:1.

That person under consideration in I John 3:9 is the one who has been born from God as evidenced by his life of love for his brother and continuing belief that Jesus is the Christ.

I John 5:4,5 helps us understand this verse. "For whosoever is born of God (has been born from God) overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth (continuing to believe) that Jesus is the Son of God?" If this does not make verse 1 clear, I do not know how language could do so. We overcome, being born of God, by our faith, and this faith is that Jesus is the Son of God.

The KJV says whosoever is born of God "doth not commit sin" and he "cannot sin." The ASV says whosoever is begotten of God "doeth no sin" and he "cannot sin." "Doth not commit sin" or "doeth not sin" does not say inability to sin, but is not or does not sin.

Westcott & Hort Greek Text has the expression: "hamartian ou poiei" and Berry's Greek-English Interlinear gives the literal English as: "sin not practices." The meaning is that everyone born of God is not continuing to practice sin. You could wring the last drop of meaning out of this expression in the original and never come up with the idea that one who has been born cannot possibly commit sin.

Man is always a free moral being with the power of choice just as long as he is responsible to God for his life. If the above expression means that the one born of God cannot possibly sin, it would have to be for one of two reasons: he cannot physically and mentally commit sin, in which case he would lose his power of choice between good and evil; or God will save him without condition. If there are conditions to salvation in heaven, and if man has a choice between obeying or disobeying these conditions, man **can** sin and be lost any where along the span of life from responsibility to death.

W. E. Vine says of the term used here: "The Apostle John, in his Epistles, uses the continuous tenses of **poieo**, to indicate a practice, the habit of doing something, e.g., I John 3:4 (the V.A., 'commiteth' and 'commit' in I John 3:8 and 9, e.g., is wrong; 'doeth' R.V., in the sense of practicing, is the meaning)."

Perhaps a few translations will help us see the sense in the original. **Rotherham's Emphasised Bible** says of I John 3:9: "Whosoever hath been born of God is not committing sin, because a seed of him within him abideth; and he cannot be committing sin, because of God hath he been born." **The New American Standard Bible New Testament**: "No one who is born of God practices sin, because His seed abides in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God."

**Berkeley Version of the New Testament**: "Every-one who has been born of God commits no sin, for a sperm divine remains within him; having been born of God, he cannot practice sinning." **James Moffatt's Translation**: "Anyone who is born of God does not commit sin, for the offspring of God remain in Him, and they cannot sin, because they are born of God."

Baptist doctrine is the most ardent advocate of impossible apostasy, and I John 3:9 is usually the

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most important passage in trying to prove that one born of God cannot possibly sin so as to be lost in hell. The New Testament translation by Charles B. Williams is perhaps the greatest thorn in the side of Baptist preachers in arguing their position on I John 3:9. This translation is published by Moody Press and bears the recommendation of a number of scholars in the Baptist Church. In the Introduction, Edward A. McDowell of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Ky., wrote: "I think that the translation of the New Testament by Dr. C. B. Williams is one of the best English translations in existence. This translation gives the most accurate rendering of the Greek text of any translation with which I am acquainted."

J. R. Mantey, Department of New Testament Interpretation, Northern Baptist Theological Seminary, Chicago, Ill., said: "Dr. Williams has also brought out clearly John's meaning in I John 3:8 and 9 by indicating the progressive action implied in the Greek present tense: 'Whoever practices sin belongs to the devil. ; ; No one born of God makes a practice of sinning.'"

**William's Translation** renders I John 3:9 as follows: "No one who is born of God makes a practice of sinning, because the God-given life-principle continues to live in him, and so he cannot practice sinning because he is born of God."

The Holy Spirit does not say in I John 3:9 that it is impossible for the one born of God to sin. He says he does not keep on sinning. Verse 6 says: "Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not. . ." What if he does not abide in Christ, does he continue to sin not? [John 5:18 explains still further: "We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not" — the fruit of being born of God is that one does not keep on sinning — "but he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not." He keeps himself; that is the reason he does not keep on committing sin.

I John 3:9 says: "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin . . ." This simple phrase deals with the cause and effect. The one born of God acts in a way consistent with this relationship with God. To paraphrase these verses in I John that tell what one born of God does, we have the following:

Every one that has been born from God "doeth righteousness" (2:29). Every one that has been born from God "doth not commit sin" (3:9). Every one that has been born from God "loveth" and "knoweth God" (4:7). Every one that has been born from God "believeth that Jesus is the Christ" (5:1). Every one that has been born from God "overcometh the world" (5:4). Every one that has been born from God "sinneth not" and "keepeth himself" (5:18).

Not one of the passages imply the impossibility of one not to do what is stated of one born of God. It is possible for a child of God to sin, but it is not possible for him to do so and remain consistent with being born of God. "My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous" (I John 2:1). This is addressed to the children of God. This was written that they **sin not**, but if they **sin** — showing the possibility of a child of God sinning. John says: "If **we** (including himself) say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us" — "If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us" (I John 1:8,10). I do not see how these verses could have any meaning at all if I John 3:9 means that a child of God can not possibly sin.

The last part of I John 3:9 says: "... for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God." The reason why he "cannot sin" is that the seed remains in him and he is born of God. "Cannot sin" does not mean total inability, as we have seen from these other verses in I John.

Maybe we can see this if we use another subject in about the same language. "Whosoever is of normal weight does not gain weight; for he is on a diet: and he cannot gain weight, because he does not over eat." Now, can one of normal weight gain weight? Yes. But he cannot remain at normal weight and gain weight at the same time. It is physically possible for him to gain weight, but he cannot do so and remain at normal weight. But why does that one of normal weight not gain weight? Because he is on a diet. But can he leave that diet and gain weight? Yes. But as long as he is on that diet he will not gain weight. He can not gain weight because he does not over eat.

The "seed" that remains in one born of God is

that word by which he was begotten (I Cor. 4:15). Paul said, "for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel." Jesus explained the parable of the sower and said, "Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God" (Luke 8:11). Peter said, "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever." "But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you" (I Pet. 1:23,25). "Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee" (Psa. 119:11). If the word of God, the incorruptible seed, remains in the heart of that one born of God, he will not be sinning — he will not continue to practice sin.

This is clearly taught in the book of Romans. "There is therefore **now** no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit" (Rom. 8:1). This does not say that those who are in Christ Jesus and walk after the Spirit cannot cease to so walk. It states **when** there is no condemnation: "who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit."

"For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God" (Rom. 8:5-8). Can a spiritually minded person become carnal minded? To the church at Corinth who were "sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints" (I Cor. 1:2), Paul wrote: "And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ." "For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?" (I Cor. 3:1,3).

A child of God may become carnal minded and the end is death. "Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh. For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die:" (Rom. 8:12,13). As long as one walks after the Spirit he has no condemnation. But he may become carnal and cease to walk after the Spirit.

The "seed" is the word of God. We are begotten by the gospel, which is the word of God (I Cor. 4:15). When Jesus explained the parable of the sower, he said: "The seed is the word of God" (Luke 8:11). Peter wrote: "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever" (I Pet. 1:23). In the last verse of this chapter he said: "But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you."

When the word of God (the seed) abides in one born of God, he does not commit sin. It is when the word does not abide in the person that he sins. In Romans 8:1 the Holy Spirit said: "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." But does this say that once a man starts to walk after the Spirit he can never cease and turn again to walk after the flesh? The whole book of Romans and the New Testament is against this view. Certainly one can cease to walk after the

Spirit, and when he does he falls under condemnation.

Romans 4 and 5 teach justification by grace through faith in contrast to the works of the law. But grace in contrast to the law of Moses is a body of truth to be believed and obeyed. "For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ" (John 1:17). "And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified" (Acts 20:32). "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us ..." (Titus 2:11,12).

Since we are justified by grace, and grace teaches — it is the word of God through His Son — it must follow that this grace must abide in us if we are to be justified by grace. So in the last verse of Romans 5 we find this: "That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord." Sin separates from God and brings a state of death (Eph. 2:1). But grace reigns through righteousness unto eternal life.

Now what about this grace? Does it keep us regardless of our manner of life? Romans 6 deals with this very question, and it explains how and why the one born of God cannot commit sin when the seed (word) remains in him.

"What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid, How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?" (Rom. 6:1,2).

If you will notice in this chapter, the inspired apostle is not teaching the impossibility of sin. He is teaching that we cannot continue in sin because we are dead to sin. But the very fact that he admonishes to yield your members to righteousness and not to unrighteousness, shows the possibility of sinning. The point, however, is that **when** we are dead to sin by the grace that reigns through righteousness (obedience to the commandments of God — Rom. 10:1-3), we cannot continue to serve sin and at the same time be alive to God by this grace. That is the nature of the question: "Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?" Notice how this question is answered.

"Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin" (vs. 6). The old man (of sin) is put to death, crucified with Christ and buried with him by baptism into death, and this in order that the body of sin might be destroyed — all our sins forgiven — that **henceforth** (from now on), **we should not serve sin**. The reason is: "For he that is dead is freed from sin" (vs. 7). As Christ died to this life not to live in it any more, "Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Let not sin** therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof" (vs. 11,12).

We should not serve sin: "Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body." Why not? Because we are dead to sin and should not continue to live in it. When we allow the word of God to guide and govern our lives, and "yield yourselves unto God, as those

that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God," we will not sin because his seed (word) remaineth in us, and we cannot sin because we are born of God.

We **do not sin** when we obey the word. We cannot keep sinning, "continue in sin" as before, because we are dead to sin and alive to God. We do not sin when the word abides in us, and we cannot sin as one born of God. The only impossibility is to remain as one born of God when we continue to sin.

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## WHY HAVE THEY QUIT DEFENDING IT?

A. C. Grider

The church has witnessed the formation of a new denomination in its midst. The division is complete and there is no fellowship between the original church of Christ and the Institutional group that has sprung up and adopted the various human institutions among us.

For a time the proponents of these societies were willing to defend what they were doing in public debate. But they have ceased to do so. In fact, one never hears a word from the Liberal Brethren about trying to defend what they are doing. It is next to impossible to arrange a debate with one of them. The churches among them won't attempt a defense and the preachers among them are just as reluctant as are the churches. I am sure we know why.

It didn't take long for the people to see who had the truth when the debating was going on. Guy N. Woods rose up and it seemed that he would be happy to continually defend their societies. But he folded up and will not now even talk about debating the issues. Others arose and engaged us in a number of discussions. But they also decided to give up the practice. The result is that there is no talk now of any more debates.

The church of Christ always has been willing to submit what they believed to a public discussion. The church of Christ is **STILL READY** and willing to do so. But, as has been the case many times, factions arise and for a time try to defend their position. Failing, they decide that their cause is better served by refusing to debate. Consequently, debates with any of the factions in the church is just about a thing of the past.

I would hate to hold a position that would not stand an investigation. I would hate to preach something that couldn't stand examination. I would hate to preach for a congregation that wouldn't defend its position on any subject. There is something wrong with a preacher, and a congregation, if they will not defend what they teach. And there is something wrong with a doctrine if it cannot be defended.

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## WORD STUDIES in the Greek New Testament



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### "BY GRACE THROUGH FAITH"

#### A DUAL PLAN

The scheme of redemption is dual in nature: it is both divine and human. Consequently, the scheme of redemption involves dual activity: divine and human. The apostle Paul concisely expresses this concept in Eph. 2:8,9: "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast."

#### THREE VIEWS OF EPH. 2:8,9

There are at least three views of Eph. 2:8,9. Many affirm that these verses teach salvation by grace alone without any human agency whatsoever. This Calvinistic view holds the theory of unconditional election, or, that God has unconditionally elected some to eternal life.

Others affirm that Eph. 2:8,9 teach that salvation is by faith alone before and without any further acts of obedience.

A third view, which I believe to be the Scriptural view, holds that the expressions "by grace" and "through faith" are both used in a comprehensive sense; that "by grace" embraces all divine elements and "through faith" embraces all human elements in the scheme of redemption. This means, then, that salvation is neither by grace alone nor by faith alone.

#### FIRST VIEW

It appears on the very surface of Eph. 2:8,9 that the apostle is not teaching unconditional election, for these verses themselves say that salvation is "through faith." Since faith is an act of man (Rom. 10:17), the verses under consideration cannot be teaching unconditional salvation.

It is often argued that if salvation is by grace it cannot involve any human agency whatsoever; that if man does anything in the plan of salvation, God's grace is either lessened or nullified completely. Surely, this logic would be used only in religion. All believers concede that our physical blessings such as food and raiment are provided by the grace of God, but no believer argues that grace is lessened when we appropriate these blessings. Why, then, should God's grace in the scheme of redemption be nullified simply because man appropriates that grace? Does any believer argue that he is going to quit eating, for fear he will nullify God's grace that provided his food? Does any believer reason that he doesn't drink water lest he make void God's grace

that provides his water? Then, by what logic do believers reason that human agency in the scheme of redemption will lessen God's grace in the matter? God's favor in the spiritual realm is no more lessened by human agency than that same grace in the physical realm is lessened when we appropriate physical blessings.

#### SECOND VIEW

The idea that Eph. 2:8,9 teach salvation by faith alone is actually not consistent with what "faith alone" advocates really believe and teach. More of this will be seen in observing the third view of Eph. 2:8,9.

#### THIRD VIEW

First, we may see that "by grace" and "through faith" are both comprehensive; that divine activity and human obedience, respectively, are embraced in these expressions. Second, we may see what constitutes this activity and obedience.

#### "BY GRACE"

All believers must admit that "by grace" cannot be limited to one act or provision of God. To the contrary, all God has provided in order to man's salvation must be embraced in this expression. It is impossible to list here every divine element involved in redemption, but the few that follow will illustrate the present point. I Tim. 2:3 ascribes our salvation to God. Matt. 1:21 attributes our redemption to Christ. Rom. 1:16 teaches that we are saved by the Gospel. Rom. 5:9,10 credit our salvation to the life and to the blood of Christ. Surely, "by grace" embraces these and every other divine provision in the redemption of man.

#### "THROUGH FAITH"

"Through faith" in Eph. 2:8,9 cannot mean "through faith alone." The Bible nowhere uses the phrases "by faith" and "through faith" to mean "by faith alone" and "through faith alone" when such faith to said to procure the blessings of God. To the contrary, in such instances, the faith contemplated is always active. The eleventh chapter of Hebrews proves this beyond question. A few cases in point from Heb. 11 are the following: "Through faith we **understand** . . ."; "By faith Abel **offered** . . ."; "By faith Noah . . . **prepared** an ark . . ."; "By faith Abraham . . . obeyed . . ."; "Through faith he **kept** the passover..."

From the above instances it may be seen that certain activities were wrought. And yet, the Bible says these activities were wrought by, or, through, faith. We cannot, therefore, miss the point that "by faith" and "through faith" in Heb. 11 contemplate activity. "Through faith" in Eph. 2:8,9 is no exception to this construction.

As further evidence of the fact that saving faith embraces obedience we may note interchangeable uses of "faith" and "obedience." In I Pet. 2:7 the apostle describes those who lack faith as "disobedient." Paul tells us in Rom. 1:8 that the **faith** of the Roman Christians was universally known. And yet, in chapter 16:19 the apostle makes the same comment in reference to their **obedience**. The Revised Version of John 3:36 describes the unbeliever as one who "obeyeth not."

#### FAITH "ALONE": A CONTRADICTION

It was observed in a previous paragraph of this article that the idea of salvation by faith alone is actually not consistent with what "faith alone" advocates really believe and teach. This is true, for these advocates admit that saving faith cannot be divorced from repentance; therefore, the faith of Eph. 2:8,9 cannot be divorced from repentance; therefore, "through faith" in Eph. 2:8,9 cannot mean "through faith alone," inasmuch as it must include repentance.

#### WHAT OBEDIENCE?

Acts 2, particularly verses 36 through 38, teaches that the human activity involved in the plan of salvation is faith, repentance, and baptism. This obedience is "for" or "in order to" the remission of sins. "Through faith" in Eph. 2:8,9 must, therefore, embrace this obedience. Advocates of salvation by faith alone admit that repentance must be implied in Eph. 2:8,9. But the logic that implies repentance in these verses will, and does, imply baptism also.

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## THOSE ISOLATED GROUPS

Irven Lee

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The Freed-Hardeman College Lectures in 1970 were on the theme "The Church Faces Liberalism." The lectures are in print and are worth reading. The list of speakers included some who have been in the forefront in defending the unauthorized agencies of centralization, or denominational machinery. Their work might remind one of the Christian Standard whose writers worked so hard to defend and strengthen the American Christian Missionary Society, and then for decades sought to restrain the huge monster it had tended.

Herald of Truth, which these lecturers defended so earnestly, will likely be as effective an instrument of ultra-modernism as was the ACMS when the Christian Standard began to try to restrain it. The wisdom of God is demonstrated in the fact that the church in New Testament times moved in its local capacity alone. That is, there were no central boards or sponsoring churches. The church gave to the person at work, to the person in need, or to the elders of the church in places of special distress. It has been difficult for men of all ages to avoid trying to reorganize the church for the big display. The Lord knew that ten thousand little efforts would get more done. Periods of rapid growth for the Lord's church have been periods without the "brotherhood" agencies. Mushrooming institutionalism has always brought digression, liberalism, division, and a serious slowing of the back to the Bible efforts. These central agencies were digressive themselves, and they gave men much room to work toward broadening the narrow way of truth.

The latter half of the last century saw the Woman's Board of Foreign Missions, American Christian

Missionary Society, Christian Endeavor, Ladies' Aid Societies, church supported schools, societies for benevolent work, etc. The elders had less and less to do. They could distribute the money and give moral support to these institutions of human origin and be highly honored. Even Sunday Bible classes became organized edification societies with their own officers and treasuries. The liberalism, division, and the serious hindering of the worthy "back to the Bible" efforts, followed this turn back toward denominationalism. Brethren then were copying the denominations rather than walking by faith.

The spirit of the institutionally minded brethren in the last score of years has been identical with the spirit of the promoters in the last half of the last century. The same arguments were made in both periods, with the same bitterness, and with the same results. The division is already here, and the digression has again been more popular than the simplicity of the Bible pattern. Some, who must be blind, say that we will all get back together. They see little real difference between those who do their work through central agencies and those who do not. One big difference is the direction. We came to the forks of the road, and some went one way and some another. With the passing of the years the difference will become much more conspicuous. Think, for example, of the "Disciples of Christ." They were of us until they went out from us. In a few score years they have gotten much closer to the sentiment and thinking of the Methodists than they are to us. Their movement began and continues as a back to denominationalism movement. They have landed in the confused mess of denominations of America.

There are many congregations that are still very close to the safe way. They made the wrong turn at the forks, but they have not yet gone "way out" in the entertainment and institutional craze. They will go further because they refuse to be warned. In some cases this prejudice against the "antis" is almost the only digression. Promoters of church support of entertainment and institutions have worked harder to "quarantine the antis" since the Gospel Advocate suggested it than they have in promoting their unauthorized schemes. These promoters and the devil know the churches will drift their way if the voices of those who would warn of the danger can be silenced. The building of this sound-proof wall is one of the most successful efforts put forth in the last two decades. It is also one of the most unfortunate things that has happened in these two decades as far as the souls of men are concerned.

In one of the Freed-Hardeman Lectures a young man admitted that a few isolated little groups of people he calls "antis" still meet, but he informs us that they are withering away. Is he that ignorant, or is he dishonest? I suppose it is altogether ignorance. The sound-proof wall is very effective. He has not been where we have been, nor has he read what we have read. He has not met as many of the wonderful advocates of the old paths as we have met. The rebuilding process is taking place much faster than it did after the digression of the last century. He does not see these active, growing, and multiplying groups from his ivory tower. There are no windows on our side of his ivory tower. He does not know us, and we do not know him. The "loyal

brethren" do not know the "sound brethren!"

This young lecturer who spoke of these "isolated groups" that are withering seems to have some worthy principles of life. He does not like the arrogant and malicious traits of these offensive people ("antis") who have cut their own throats. These "antis" are such extremists and they take away the true Christian's freedom by making laws that God never made. These fanatics were quick to draw the line of fellowship. Poor fellows! They cut themselves off from the main stream.

This young man does not seem to be dishonest. His ignorance is the outgrowth of the work of many older men who labored to cause him and others to get this view. Any who are arrogant and malicious deserve criticism for this. It seems that many, many times the remarks of the "mainstream" and "loyal" brethren have had the odor of malice and arrogance. It seems that they made a law that we must support "our institutions" or be kicked hard. We may have felt our freedom restricted. We had no trouble deciding about the lines of fellowship. The lines were drawn and pointed out to us in no uncertain terms. Things can appear so different from two sides of the fence. Honestly, this is sad and an occasion for tears, but there is little we can do about it because we are not likely to sit down together to talk, study, and pray. We will just get so far away from each other that we do not even hear of each other.

The young Saul of Tarsus could not at first see the arrogant, malicious, and offensive deceitfulness of those cunning crafty Jews who stoned Stephen. He could see it all later. Let us all be ashamed of our hate. Are there any among our associates as arrogant and bitter as some of those Freed-Hardeman lecturers? Let us then repent in sack cloth and ashes. Another wall may be beginning to take shape foretelling the day when the loyal friends of Freed-Hardeman will cry out earnestly against Lipscomb, Abilene and Pepperdine. Is Freed-Hardeman going out for shortstop somewhere between home plate and the outfield? These are sad days of confusion.

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## "ABOUT THAT OLD POT AND KETTLE"

Ron Halbrook

There has been a rather instructive axiom circulated over the years that says, "The pot shouldn't call the kettle 'black.'" It may have been overworked in past years, but it is nonetheless true. (We should probably explain for many of my generation that the old-time pot and kettle were both the **same color**.) All such gleams of light radiate from the Light of the world, and so it is in this case. Jesus said, "For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again" (Matt. 7:2).

### THE KETTLE

is worldliness (loving to conform to the world of sin). This worldly attitude of heart manifests itself in the form of church-sponsored recreation, human methods of church-cooperation, and general borrowing from the Denominational Storehouse. The Pot will by no means tolerate, condone, or appear in the same clothing (a misplaced, I think, figure of speech) as the Kettle, at least in this matter.

Some Kettle preachers, elders, paper editors, college leaders, teachers, parents, and others have tried to make the subject of the present apostasy a "no-no." (Some spoke and wrote out in certain places, but found the audiences had been conditioned to quit listening or reading at the mention of the subject; others of the audience would smile that "knowing" smile that says, "Oh, well, another crackpot.") The Pot soon found that this spirit of compromise was by no means the exclusive possession of one region.

Some of those who seemed to see the trend was wrong simply said, "It's no use fighting." But the Pot could not compromise. No, not even when the cry was heard, "Well, there is just no clear statement in the Bible on these matters."

The Pot did then, and so continues, to cry, "The Kettle is black! The Kettle is black! We will save as many, or as few as we can. We cannot compromise or accept on unscriptural peace" (enter such quotations as Micah 3:5-7). And rightly so.

The phoney peacemakers ("We mustn't hurt anyone's feelings ... shh ... shh") had a host of excuses, but not a single good argument. 1. "Most of our 'leading preachers' approve." 2. "It's just a matter of expediency and temporary methods." 3. "We should let the elders make their own decisions for the church." 4. "Some churches can't find the willingness to use the Bible way, so we will just substitute with this." The Pot issued a challenge: find one unscriptural arrangement that hasn't been justified with such excuses. And rightly so.

The tolerating, condoning, and participating in apostasy is ungodly and indefensible. The attitude necessary for such compromise is unscriptural and anti-scriptural. It is a ghastly blot upon the church of Christ and a personal insult to Christ ("Ye have done it unto me," the Savior says; his heart must bleed to see such ingratitude and compromise). Apostasy involves lack of respect for Christ, self,

and others. Shall such go unrepented of? If so, it shall **not** go unpunished.

### THE POT

is worldliness (loving to conform to the world of sin). This worldly attitude of heart manifests itself in the form of immodest dress **tolerated** ("We give our children the correct information and then let them make their own choices"), **condoned** ("It's just a fad; why make a big thing out of it?"), and worn ("I can't find anything else").

From my 15 years residence in Florida, I know well that this subject is a "no-no." (In fact, some of the readers who started this article are about ready to quit reading; others have smiled that "knowing" smile that says, "Oh, well, another crackpot.") Recent experiences in Alabama, Kentucky, and elsewhere show the spirit of compromise is by no means the exclusive possession of Florida.

Some preachers (and teachers and parents) simply give this retreat-from-modesty the silent treatment ("it's no use," we are told). Some would speak out, but they have voted with those brethren whose lips drop with honey ("No one thinks anything about it, anyway, except the dirty-minded"), whose marching cry is, "Well, you just can't define modesty." Perhaps a quote from another source is in order. "Thus saith the Lord concerning the prophets that make my people err, that bite with their teeth, and cry, Peace;... Therefore night shall be unto you, that ye shall not have a vision; and it shall be dark unto you . . ." (Micah 3:5-7).

The phoney peacemakers ("You'll hurt someone's feelings") have a host of excuses, but not one single good argument. Here is a fair sample. 1. "Everyone around here has accepted it" (this ticket is good for many points on the Worldly Tour; please present it as you enter Las Vegas, Greenwich Village, and Cannibal Island). 2. "It's just a fad" (so are drinking, hard-rock music, drugs, shop-lifting, and even mugging in some communities). 3. "We let our children make their own choices" (for those who wish a favorable discussion of this viewpoint, please consult **How I Raised Mine**, 1st edition, by Dr. Eli, Flimsy Press, Hadean World; price: your children's purity; also see I Samuel 3:11-14 for additional comments). 4. "We can't find anything else" ("Who can find a virtuous woman ... She maketh herself coverings," Prov. 31; yes, some things are just hard to find). Challenge: find **one** immoral trend that could not be justified by these same excuses.

The tolerating, condoning, and wearing of immodest dress is ungodly and indefensible. The attitude necessary for such compromise is unscriptural and anti-scriptural. It is a ghastly blot upon the church of Christ and a personal insult to Christ ("Ye have done it unto me," the Savior says; his heart must bleed to see such ingratitude and compromise). Immodest dress involves lack of respect for Christ, self, and others. Shall such go unrepented of ("Bring forth fruit in keeping with your repentance," Matt. 3) ??? If so, it shall **not** go unpunished.

### CHRIST SPOKE

to some pots who called kettles "black." He is still speaking today. By quoting his words, we are not judging anyone's motives; we are content to let The



Word do its own work in all our hearts, according to our need. The paraphrases substitute modern Pots for those of Christ's day, but the principles involved are the same. "Hear ye him."

"For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again" (Matt. 7:2).

"Woe unto you," preachers and other brethren, for ye tolerate immodest dress and yet make long prayers for the purity of the church (Matt. 23).

"Woe unto you, ye blind guides, which say," Whosoever shall wear immodest dress, it is nothing; but whosoever shall change the church, he is a debtor! Whoso sinneth in one, sinneth against God; and whoso sinneth in the other sinneth against God.

"Woe unto you," preachers and other brethren, for ye know all the English words which refer to an elder, the shade of difference in the Greek between pomen and episcopos, and the precise limits of an elder's oversight, and have omitted the great necessity of individual piety and personal purity (which involves justice, mercy, and faithfulness, Matt. 23).

"Ye blind guides," which strain at too-regular picnics on the grounds of the meeting-house, but swallow a member who goes two-thirds naked to public beaches or wears short dresses that reveal more than this writer cares to say when they are seated. Neither the gnat nor the camel should be swallowed (Matt. 23).

"And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?" (Luke 7:46).

And do we not even now hear the words yet to be spoken echoing down the halls of the Final Court, "Come, ye blessed of my Father — Depart from me, ye cursed—" (Matt. 25). Let us urge one another with all earnestness and love to hear him gladly now, that we may together hear him gladly then!

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## SPIRITUAL HEARTBURN

Donald R. Givens

It would be a good thing if everyone could experience heartburn. I recommend that all my brethren get a strong case of heartburn. No, not the physical kind, but the spiritual kind.

Listen to Luke's account of two men with spiritual heartburn: "And He said unto them, 'O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that prophets have spoken: Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into His glory?' And beginning from Moses and all the prophets, He expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning Himself ... And their eyes were opened, and they knew Him; and He vanished out of their sight. And they said one to another, 'Did not our heart burn within us, while He talked with us by the way, and while He opened to us the scriptures?'" (Luke 24:25-27 and 31, 32).

Can you imagine the thrill of hearing, in person, the Lord Jesus "open the scriptures" to your ears? The text says that Jesus began from Moses and all

the prophets and interpreted or explained to them the scriptures regarding the Son of God. That, my friends, was an infallible interpretation. These two traveling to Emmaus had their hearts burn within them as Jesus taught the scriptures to them. Here was the Son of God explaining the Word of God.

We today can still have the thrill of "hungering and thirsting after righteousness," and "being filled." But how many of our brethren are truly experiencing this spiritual heartburn?

You ought to be happily afflicted with genuine spiritual heartburn, or come eternity and you will suffer a burn of another kind. How tragic. Eternity is getting closer with every breath you take.

— 4349 Vassar

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## THE GRACE OF GOD

Pryde E. Hinton

We can understand God's wrath toward man better than we can understand "the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge" (Eph. 3:19). I can understand that my love for Him will finally overcome my fear (I John 4:17,18). I understand that my love for Him may be shown by my obeying His commandments (John 14:15). Perfect love would never fail to keep His commandments. And yet, He has promised to not remember my sins and my iniquities (Heb. 8:12) : "What wondrous love is this, for my soul?" How could He love me that much? I shall wonder at this all of my life!

Even when we were sinners and enemies, God loved us enough to give His Son to die for our sins against Him (Rom. 5:6-10) ! Please read this passage, if you do not know it. No wonder Paul said that He determined not to know any thing among the Corinthians but Jesus Christ, and Him crucified (I Cor. 2:1-5). In I Cor. 15:1-4 Paul tells by the Holy Spirit that he had preached to them the gospel, wherein they stood, by which they were saved, and that Christ died for their sins, was buried, and raised the third day, according to the Scriptures. Surely if we are saved, reconciled to God, by the death of His Son, this is that which we should preach to get people to come to Jesus in faith and obedience, and be saved! What else do we have to reconcile men to God? Read in Acts 2:22-36 what the men on that Pentecost heard that pricked their hearts.

I Peter 1:13 tells us that we shall be brought grace at the revelation of Jesus Christ. Hebrews 4:15,16 tells us that upon certain conditions we shall receive mercy and grace, not to mention the grace by which we are saved from our sins (Eph. 2:7-9). We should also read Hebrews 2:9 and see that Jesus tasted death by God's grace for every man. I need all of this grace, because I know that even IF I could and did obey all that He commands us, I would still be an unprofitable servant (Luke 17:10)—He would still have to give me a home in that city foursquare, to which He has gone. May God help us to trust in His grace, mercy, and love, as well as fear lest He has left us a promise of which we fall short (Heb. 4:1,2).

## THE SUFFERING SERVANT (A Commentary on Isaiah 52:13-53:12)

L. A. Mott, Jr.

(Please study this article with an open Bible, preferably the American Standard Version which is used by the author as his basic text.)

"We preach Christ crucified," wrote Paul to the Corinthians. The apostolic message offered to the world not the wonder working Messiah required by Jews nor a philosopher Messiah to suit the wisdom seeking Greeks, but a **crucified Messiah**, one who saves from death by dying and seeks his crown by the path of the cross.

But however such a Christ might disappoint Jewish expectation, the apostles and early evangelists were insistent that just such a Christ was demanded by Old Testament prophecy. Their constant appeal in preaching Jesus as the Christ was to **what is written** (cf., for example, Luke 24:44-47; Acts 3:18; 13:27-29; 26:22-23; I Cor. 15:3).

When Philip approached the Ethiopian treasurer he found him reading in Isaiah about a mysterious suffering servant of Jehovah. When the Ethiopian inquired about the application of this passage which had him thoroughly puzzled, Philip began at that scripture and told him about Jesus.

Isaiah 52:13-53:12 is one of the famous "servant passages" of Isaiah. Isaiah looks upon **Israel** as the servant of Jehovah when he thinks of God's purpose in creating the nation and its divine mission in the world (41:8-10; 44:1-2). But often he will turn from such an ideal view and see Israel **as it is**. It is the servant of Jehovah, to be sure, but deaf and blind (42:18-20), sinful and in desperate need of redemption (44:21-23). But turning yet again from such a view, Isaiah comes to see the servant of Jehovah in terms of an individual representative of the nation (42:1-9; 49:1-7), an individual bearing the name Israel (49:3), yet distinguished from the nation (49:5-6). Just as Jesus took upon himself human form so that he might be the pioneer in and through whom fallen man rises to the exalted position intended for him by his Creator (Heb. 2:5-10), so this individual servant of Jehovah appears, as the Israelite indeed above all others and the perfect representative of the nation, to accomplish that wherein the nation has failed, to rescue a sinful people, and, for the first time ever, perfectly to carry out the ideal implied in the name servant of Jehovah. It is this individual servant of Jehovah whose career is sketched in Isaiah 52:13-53:12.

### CHAP. 52, V. 13-15

The passage begins (52:13) and closes (53:12) with Jehovah himself speaking, telling of the glorious victory and exaltation of his servant. This first paragraph is a prelude or introduction to the whole passage. The theme of the whole text, the exaltation of Jehovah's servant, is first presented in summary fashion in this introductory paragraph, and then elaborated in the chapter following.

**Behold** — an exclamation calling attention to something remarkable and worthy of notice.

**my servant shall deal wisely** — i.e., shall use wisdom in executing his mission. It is this wisdom which explains the success of his mission.

**he shall be exalted and lifted up, and shall be very high** — the necessary consequence of his dealing wisely. The prophet heaps up the terms, one on top of the other, to describe his exaltation. No one term is sufficient adequately to represent his super-exalted state.

**Like as ... so**. The relation between **like as** (beginning of v. 14) and **so** (beginning of v. 15) must be observed. As this, so that. The idea is that one thing is proportionate to another. As was the astonishment of many at him due to his deep humiliation, so will be the effect of his work in his exalted state.

**many were astonished of thee** — cf. Lev. 26:32; I Kings 9:8; Jer. 18:16; 19:8; Ezek. 26:16; 27:35.

**his visage ... sons of men** — a parenthesis explaining the reason for the astonishment. **His** visage (or looks or appearance) **was so marred** (or disfigured) **more than any man**, or as the margin has it, literally, **from that of man** — i.e., his appearance was so disfigured that he was hardly recognizable as a man. This disfigured appearance, Chap. 53 will make clear, was the consequence of his sufferings.

**so shall he sprinkle many nations**. For the relation between this clause and v. 14 indicated by the word **so**, see the comment on **like as** above. Running the references on the Hebrew verb for **sprinkle** reveals a uniform usage. It is used uniformly of sprinkling for the purpose of cleansing or expiation, most often as the action of a priest. As the servant will be viewed as a sacrifice (53:10), so is he here viewed as a priest, applying his blood for the cleansing of the nations. Note how his work is to apply to **many nations** and not just to the Jews.

**kings shall shut their mouths at him** — i.e., with astonishment, in reverence and awe. Cf. Job 29:9; 40:4 on "shut mouths" and Isa. 49:7 on the whole clause.

**for that which had not been told them, etc.** — the reason for their astonishment. They receive knowledge of that which they had not known before, something entirely new to them. The reference would appear to be to the Gentiles. Cf. Paul's application of the statement (Rom. 15:21).

### CHAP. 53, V. 1-3

The prophet interrupts his account of the servant's exaltation and success to lament the fact that so few accept the message concerning the servant. He projects himself into the future and looks back upon the rejection of the message as if it were already past.

The prophecies concerning Jehovah's servant were not believed, for which reason the servant is not recognized as such when he appears. He does not fulfill the expectation of the people. His lowliness and his sufferings cause him to meet with contempt and to be disregarded.

**Who hath believed our message?** So few credit the message that one must ask who believed it. The implication is, Nobody, or: Hardly anybody, or: So few as to be beneath notice.

**to whom hath the arm of Jehovah been revealed?** It is by means of his **arm** that Jehovah moves things, accomplishes work, fulfills his purposes. The nations were to rely upon Jehovah's arm (51:5). A captive people calls upon the arm of Jehovah, seemingly asleep in its apparent inactivity, to awaken and clothe itself with strength (51:9). And it did awaken! "Jehovah hath made bare his holy arm in the eyes of all the nations; and all the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God" (52:10).

God had flexed his muscles and raised up Cyrus to overthrow Babylon and deliver his people (41:1-4; 44:24-45:7). But Israel's real problem was not Babylon; its real problem was within itself. And far more serious than the Babylonian captivity was the captivity to sin. As the arm of Jehovah had raised up Cyrus to deal with the Babylonian problem, it now was at work again in the career of his servant, working out the solution to the sin problem. But hardly anyone recognized the activity of the arm of Jehovah in the work of the servant.

**For he grew up before him.** The verbs, until v. 7, are in the perfect tense (past time, completed action). The KJV handles these "prophetic perfects" in a most inconsistent manner. The standpoint of the prophet is in the future. He sees all these events as done. In fact, in the divine purpose the lamb was slain from the foundation of the world (cf. I Pet. 1:19-20; Rev. 13:8).

**as a tender plant** — or "as a sapling" (Cheyne) or "a suckling" (Alexander).

**and as a root out of a dry ground** — i.e., a parched soil that could produce only a scrawny plant at best. Note that these are similes. He was not a plant or a root, but grew up **like** these.

**he hath no form nor comeliness** — cf. I Sam 16:18 where David is described as "a man of form," the Hebrew idiom being rendered "a comely person."

**and when we see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him.** The servant in his state of humiliation was without those external features which are calculated to attract the attention of the world. He lived among the people; they saw him; but they saw nothing in him to attract them to him.

**He was despised.** Contrariwise, men were repulsed. Those who measure greatness and nobility by external and worldly standards held him in contempt.

**and rejected of men** — or "forsaken of men" (Alexander) or "deserted of men" — "one from whom men held themselves aloof" (Cheyne). Cf Job 19:13-22 for the thought, but especially v. 14 which contains a verbal root which is the same as here.

**a man of sorrows — or pains,** another meaning of the Hebrew word; i.e., one whose chief characteristic is pain or sorrow.

**and acquainted with grief** — or literally, sickness; but not necessarily implying that he was himself sickly; to think of him as one who mingled among

the sick, entering into sympathy with them, suffering under their burdens, would suit the case quite as well.

**and as one from whom men hide their face** — or translating literally with the KJV margin, "as a hiding of faces from him or from us," which words have been variously explained. Thus Alexander: "Like a hiding of the face from us, i.e. as if he hid his face from us in shame and sorrow." The meaning of our versions is: as one that men find so repulsive that they avoid him and turn away their faces from him with disgust. In this manner was he **despised**.

**we esteemed him not** — i.e. had no regard for him, did not value him at all.

#### Vv. 4-6

The meaning of the servant's sufferings is explained. Notice that the prophet seems to speak for the people of the future as their representative — or at least for that portion of the people of the future that finally comes to its senses and recognizes the true character of the servant's sufferings. Penitently they confess how wrong they had been. They had regarded the servant as smitten and afflicted by God. But they now see that in reality it was for their sins that he suffered, not his own.

**Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows** — the explanation of his sufferings and the true state of the case as contrasted with the view of the people presented in the second half of the verse. The Hebrew for **griefs** is literally **sicknesses**. The servant was "a man of sorrows, and acquainted with sickness." But when these sufferings are understood in their true light, it is seen that these were **our griefs** (or **sicknesses**) and **our sorrows** which he bore.

Matt. 8:17 applies this statement to the miraculous healings of Jesus. But this is clearly a secondary application of the passage, a fulfillment like that of Hos. 11:1 in Matt. 2:15, and not the primary application of Isaiah's language. Sicknesses in Isaiah has primary reference to spiritual rather than physical disorders, as appears from the fact that it is **with his stripes**, not by means of miraculous works, that **we are healed**.

**yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.** Having presented the true state of the case (v. 4a.), the prophet now presents, by contrast, the false view of the sufferings held by the people (v. 4b). They regarded him as a sinner, being punished by God, getting his just deserts.

**But he was wounded for our transgressions, etc.** — continuing and elaborating "the true state of the case as contrasted with their false judgment" (Delitzsch). Concerning the words **wounded** and **bruised**, Delitzsch remarks: "There were no stronger expressions to be found in the language, to denote a violent and painful death." V. 8 will make it clear that the sufferings were indeed "unto death."

**the chastisement of our peace** — i.e., the chastisement (or punishment) which brings about or leads to our peace. Cf. the statement in Heb. 12:11 about

the effect of chastening: "afterward it yieldeth **peaceable** fruit unto them that have been exercised thereby." Man's sins had separated, alienated, estranged him from God (Isa. 59:1-2). **Peace** refers to the restored relation with God, reconciliation and fellowship with God. Cf. Eph. 2:14-18; Col. 1:19-23.

**was upon him** — so that he endured the chastisement necessary to our peace.

**and with his stripes we are healed** — combining the thoughts of **he hath borne our sicknesses and the chastisement of our peace was upon him. With his stripes = the chastisement; we are healed**, i.e., from **our sicknesses=our peace**, reconciliation and harmony with God. Again it is evident that the prophet has sins, spiritual disorders, primarily in mind in the word **sicknesses**. The whipping that leaves wounds upon God's servant is the means of our healing.

**All we like sheep have gone astray, etc.** — giving the reason the servant's sufferings were necessary. We were estranged from God like scattered sheep, each choosing its own path rather than following the shepherd.

Cheyne's observation on **all** we is worthy of note: "Consequently 'the Servant' can hardly be a mere personification either of the whole people of Israel, or of its pious kernel, or even of the body of prophets."

**and Jehovah hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. Margin, made to light on him.** So Cheyne and others, translating literally. Sin overtakes a man; it falls upon him. **Compare** Num. 32:23 ("be sure your sin will find you out"), Psalms 40:12 ("mine iniquities have overtaken me"), and II Cor. 5:10 ("...that each one may receive the things done in the body"). But in this case, rather than letting the sin to light upon the sinner and bring about his destruction, Jehovah made the iniquity of us all to light upon his servant (cf. II Cor. 5:21), so that he bears our iniquity and suffers for us. The clause explains how it came about that he suffers for our sins.

If this paragraph (vv. 4-6) does not describe vicarious suffering (one person for or in the place of another), such a thought simply cannot be put into words.

#### Vv. 7-9

The description of the sufferings of the servant is continued with particular reference to the unresisting submission with which he suffered, the manner of his death, and closing with "a retrospective glance at His burial" (Delitzsch).

**he opened not his mouth** — i.e., to protest or resist; "who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, threatened not" (I Pet. 2:23). He voluntarily and unresistingly suffered. Cf. Psalms 38:13-15; 39:9.

as **a lamb** — a simile which gives forceful emphasis to the unresisting manner in which he submitted to his sufferings.

**By oppression and judgment** — or, **from**, as in the margin. The forms of justice were observed. A trial was held; a sentence was passed. But the **judgment** was one that could naturally be coupled with **oppression**— i.e., an oppressive, unjust judgment. In fact,

the servant was the victim of a judicial murder.

**he was taken away** — i.e., out of life by a violent death, as in Ezek. 33:4 ("if the sword come, and take him away"), for this expression finds a parallel in the second half of the verse in **he was cut off out of the land of the living**.

**as for his generation, who (among them) considered, etc.** — probably the most difficult part of the text. The KJV seems to follow the Septuagint in its construction. For a commentary from one who accepts the KJV arrangement, see Barnes. Most nineteenth and twentieth century scholarship seems to support the construction adopted in the ASV. See Alexander, Cheyne, Delitzsch, Young, and RSV. The meaning would then be: Of the men of his generation, who considered that he was slain for the transgression of my people? The implied answer is: No one, or: Hardly anyone. On the contrary, they considered him "stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted." **that he was cut off out of the land of the living** — referring to a violent death. Cf. Dan. 9:26.

**for the transgression of my people.** "The people, then, is distinct from the suffering Servant" (Cheyne).

**to whom the stroke (was due).** The pronoun in the original is plural. Therefore, the ASV follows the construction suggested by Hengstenberg as described in the following from Alexander: "Hengstenberg admits that the pronoun is here plural, but refers it to the people, and supplies a relative — for the transgression of my people who were smitten, literally to whom there was a stroke or punishment, i.e. due or appointed."

However, this plural is often used for a singular, and many competent scholars support the rendering of the KJV, "was he stricken."

**And they made his grave with the wicked, and with a rich man in his death. I agree with Delitzsch.** This is one statement which would be impossible to understand without having its fulfillment before us. But in the light of the historical fulfillment all is perfectly clear. Jesus died the death of a criminal. One would expect that he would have been given the burial of a criminal instead of receiving an honorable burial with his family. But a rich man, Joseph of Arimathaea, intervened, and supplied a rich man's tomb for the body of Jesus. The word **made** is to be understood as meaning **appointed** or **assigned**. Thus Delitzsch explains: "They assigned Him His grave with criminals, and after He had actually died a martyr's death, with a rich man; i.e. He was to have lain where the bodies of criminals lie, but He was really laid in a grave that was intended for the corpse of a rich man. . . . The first clause states with whom they at first assigned Him His grave; the second with whom it was assigned Him, after He had really died a painful death."

The KJV's **he** is somewhat misleading. The ASV has **they**. The pronoun is really indefinite and could be rendered **one**, or the statement could be taken as a passive without changing the meaning — i.e. **his grave was made**.

**although he had done no violence, etc.** Thus he was an **innocent** sufferer, and his suffering was that of

the innocent suffering for the guilty. Vv.

#### 10-12

The way of the cross leads to the crown. So, the last paragraph describes the exaltation of the suffering Servant, the success of his work, and his triumphant end.

**Yet it pleased Jehovah to bruise him** — that is, in the light of the ends to be attained God was pleased to bruise him (Barnes).

**he hath put him to grief** — literally, as in the margin, made him sick.

**when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin** — or, as the margin, when his soul shall make an offering. See below on **he poured out his soul**.

**he shall see (his) seed** — i.e., his posterity or descendants. Among the greatest of blessings for the Hebrew people were (1) length of days and (2) a numerous posterity. The reward of Jehovah's servant is described in these terms. Cf., especially, Gen. 48:11; 50:23; Job 42:16 on **see seed**. Not only would Jehovah's servant have seed, he would **see** them. The reference is to his spiritual posterity, the many who are justified by him (v. lib).

**he shall prolong his days** — i.e., have a long life. This after his suffering and death! Cf. Rev. 1:18.

**and the pleasure of Jehovah shall prosper in his hand**. The servant does not retire from all activity after his suffering. The purpose of Jehovah is placed in his hand, under his control and direction, and is carried forward with great success through his work.

**He shall see of the travail of his soul** — i.e., the agony and suffering undergone by him.

**(and) shall be satisfied** — i.e., find satisfaction in the outcome of the travail. The reference, as suggested by the context, is undoubtedly to the "seed" to be seen by him and to the prospering of Jehovah's pleasure in his hand. The agony was great, but he shall find in its outcome a satisfying sight.

**by the knowledge of himself** — literally, **by his knowledge**, which refers to either the knowledge which he himself possesses (cf. Isa. 11:2; 50:4; Matt. 11:27) or the knowledge others have of him (cf. Jer. 31:34; John 17:3).

**shall my righteous servant justify many** — or, as the margin has it, **make many righteous**. The next clause explains **how**. **He shall bear their iniquities**, taking them away, bestowing forgiveness of sins. Cf. Rom. 4:6-8 for this relation between justification and forgiveness.

**Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great**, etc. The victor's crown is held out to him. He takes his place among the greatest conquerors. The reward of his voluntary suffering is the spoil of victory. However, unlike others among the great, men like Cyrus, Alexander, Caesar, his victory and his empire are spiritual. No other kind could come, as these do, as the fruit of voluntary humiliation and suffering (Hengstenberg).

Others translate, **among the great**, explaining the statement in the light of such passages as 49:7 and

52:15, so that the meaning would be that he makes conquests among the great ones of the earth. See Barnes and Delitzsch for this view.

One should also observe the similarity of language in passages like Matt. 12:29, Eph. 4:8-11, and Col. 2:15.

**because he poured out his soul** — i.e., his life or his life-blood (cf. Lev. 17:11). The voluntary nature of his sufferings is stressed.

**and was numbered with the transgressors** — i.e. regarded as a sinner; treated as a criminal (cf. Mark 15:28; Luke 22:37).

**yet he bare the sin of many** — although himself innocent.

**and made intercession for the transgressors** — cf. Luke 23:34, although this verse does not exhaust the application of Isaiah's thought. See Rom. 8:34; Heb. 7:25.

#### A CLOSING WORD

I have tried simply to give an exegesis of this text without reading anything into it, making reference to the historical fulfillment only when the interpretation seemed to require it. The effort has been to let the passage speak for itself so far as possible. But having done this, I must confess I hardly see how one can fail to see its historical fulfillment in the career of Jesus. I really feel that were a skeptic acquainted with the life of Christ but not with the book of Isaiah, he would surely take this passage for a historical essay and meditation on Jesus. One must be blind indeed not to see Jesus of Nazareth in Isaiah's word portrait of Jehovah's suffering servant.

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