

HIMSELF TOOK OUR INFIRMITIES AND BARE OUR SICKNESSES.

Matt. 8:17.

Since it is repeatedly stated in Scripture that Jesus was free from sin, both personal and inherited, that "in him was no sin," (2 Cor. 5:21,) that no cause of death was found in him (Luke 22:23), etc., some have wondered how these statements can be reasonably harmonized with others and with the facts of Jesus' life.

We know well that death and all its accompaniments of pain and sorrow are the direct result of sin, and that if any man were actually free from sin, he would be free also from sin's penalty, death. We know that the same law which guarantees that the disobedient shall die, guarantees also that the obedient shall live. (Rom. 10:5; Gal. 3:12.) The question, then, is not an unreasonable one: If Mary's child did no sin and did not receive the imperfect and condemned Adamic life through a human father, but a perfect, unimpaired and uncondemned life transferred from his pre-existent condition, should he be born an imperfect, blemished, pained and dying human being? We answer, no, he should not, and if Jesus was thus born we should assuredly claim that it was an evidence either that in him was sin, and over him death had power and dominion because of sin dwelling in him, or that God's law had been violated and the innocent compelled to suffer the penalty of guilt. But as either of these views would be opposed to the character and word of God, we reject both as erroneous.

Jesus being free from all sin was equally free from all penalties or wages of sin. Were it otherwise he could not have given himself a ransom – an equivalent price – for the sin of the first Adam and its consequences. Had he come into the world under

condemnation of death he would have had no life to lay down for ours, as our redemption price. To be an acceptable sacrifice he must have been (as shown in the types also) a "Lamb without blemish and without spot." (1 Pet. 1:19.) And "the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29) was without blemish, and was therefore an acceptable sacrifice. And let it not be forgotten that this sacrifice was not made in the change of nature from spiritual to human, but was made after he had become a man – "A body hast thou prepared me" for the suffering of death. (Heb. 10:5.) Hence it should be clear to all, that death in no sense had any claim upon him until he offered himself – a man for men (1 Cor. 15:21), and "became obedient unto death." (Phil. 2:8.)

Doubtless the desire to sacrifice himself and thus redeem men, was in the mind of the youthful Jesus long before he reached manhood, and presented himself in consecration to death in the symbol of baptism. But he could not do so until then, for though he had been coming to manhood all those thirty years, he had not come until thirty years of age according to the Law. There, finding himself a man, "he became [by consecration] obedient unto death," and conducted himself in such a way also as to exhaust and use up his perfect life.

If this reasoning be correct and scriptural, it proves that the man Jesus was a perfect being – a PERFECT MAN; hence he possessed not only vitality, but every other quality of body and mind, in a way not possessed by the Adamic race enslaved for centuries to sin and groaning under the bondage of corruption (death). In a word, Jesus at the time of his consecration must have had that perfection of form and feature, of mind and body, originally possessed by Adam before sin and death blighted and withered his crown of glory and honor. (Psa. 8:5; Heb. 2:7.) And the same glorious perfection must have been in the man Jesus

which will be found in all the restored race when in the close of his glorious reign, their Redeemer shall have wiped away all traces and marks of sin and pain and death. (Rev. 21:4.)

We know that Jesus received a special anointing of the Spirit at the time of his baptism, and it may not be possible for us to accurately determine how many of his miracles were the result of this anointing, and how many of his wonderful works were merely the exercise of powers belonging to all perfect men, undegraded and in full fellowship with God. We find to-day prodigies among men, some representing to a greater degree than their fellow-men, one or another human quality; yet it must be apparent, that if one man could be imagined, who possessed the great qualities and powers of all great men, he could be no more than a perfect man, and doubtless then would be found very imperfect, if compared with either of the two perfect men, Adam and Jesus.

Let us remember that the first man lost great dominion, glory and honor which belonged to human nature, when he sold himself to sin (Psa. 8:5; Rom. 7:14.) Let us remember, too, that Jesus possessed that same humanity, and all its crown of glory, honor and dominion, when he became a man. (Heb. 2:9.)

Before considering further Jesus' power as a perfect man, let us examine a scripture usually supposed to teach that Jesus was one of the most disfigured and hideous of men, without a trace of beauty or anything to cause men to admire **[R574 : page 3]** him. This view is the very opposite of the one we are presenting. We claim that the face and form are the very index to the heart and life. So surely and to the extent that dissipation and sin have hold on a man's mind and body, so surely will his face declare it. And as surely as purity and grace reign within, the face will indicate it. If Jesus was a perfect man he must have been as far from physical

deformity and imperfection as the east is from the west. Instead of horrible, we believe him to have been "altogether lovely."

The scriptures in question are found in Isa. 52:14 and 53:2. Please refer and read. Concerning these statements we would say, that the translation of Isa. 52:14 in the common King James' version is not as clear as in others. The Douay translation of verse 14 reads: "So shall his visage be inglorious among men and his form among the sons of men." Young's translation has it: "So marred by man, his appearance and his form by sons of men." In all, the passage has evidently one of two meanings: It might refer to the marring of his beauty with the thorns, nails and sorrows. If he had no beauty he could not have it marred, and the more perfect his feature and form, the more it could be marred; hence if he was "altogether lovely" his beauty might be marred more than others because he had more to mar, and yet not be after all inferior to others in appearance.

Or it may refer to his character, as suggested by the Douay translation. He was deficient in those qualities which the world esteems – inglorious and ignoble in their depraved sight. Depraved man has come to admire many things which in his perfection would have seemed horrible, and he has come to despise that which is good and truly grand. The Jewish people looked for the Saviour and deliverer promised, but looked from the depraved standpoint. Their conception was a mighty warrior who, by plunder and butchery, should accumulate a great army, and with carnal weapons should conquer the world, and thus save them from their enemies roundabout. They overlooked the fact that their Saviour must conquer death first, before subduing all things unto himself; in order that his might be an everlasting dominion.

Hence when Jesus and a few humble disciples walked through Palestine declaring "the kingdom" at hand and Jesus the

king, and all eyes were attracted to him, they DESPISED him. He was a young man and most of his followers the same. He had no army, and no wealth with which to collect one; neither had he any influence among the great. And when he said, "Love your enemies, do good to them that persecute you," "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth," and, "If thine enemy hunger feed him," they concluded that such a one was the least likely to be the long-looked-for DELIVERER.

Even the purity and love and gentleness, blended with firmness and manly fearlessness, which marked his face and bore witness of his sinlessness, were to their depraved taste marks of effeminacy. They would have much more admired the deep set marks of sin, ferocity, passion, with words of malice and hatred, coupled with boasts and threats against their enemies. So when they beheld him his "visage was inglorious among men, and his form among the sons of men."

This last, is our view of the meaning of this text, and it seems to agree perfectly with the context succeeding, which we will now consider – we give the Douay translation (Isa. 53:2-12) – our comments in brackets.

"And he shall grow up as a tender plant before him, and as a root out of a thirsty ground: [His appearance and surroundings seemed unfavorable; he was an unlikely king.] There is no beauty in him nor comeliness; and we have seen him and there was no sightliness that we should be desirous of him." [We found not in him those qualities generally found in earthly conquerors, and preferred to have a robber and murderer among us – Acts 3:14] v. 2.

"Despised and most abject [shunned] of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with infirmity: and his look was as it were hidden and despised, ["As one hiding the face from us" (as in

weeping) – Young's translation,] whereupon we esteemed him not." [Jesus' weariness and sorrow and weeping, etc., were construed by men to result from weakness, instead of as it really was, from that perfection of organism which enabled him to sympathize with the sufferings about him and to alleviate it, at his own loss. The more perfect the organism, the more sympathetic, the finer its quality, the more easily is it pained, and more deeply wounded. You who have never suffered severe privation, but have things comfortable and clean about you, if you will go into some of the garrets and cellars of the large cities, will meet with such squalor, filth and wretchedness, that you would feel that death would be far preferable to life, under such conditions; yet there you will find men, women and children who are so accustomed to such conditions that they can laugh and sing and be merry, even there. The cause, is that their senses and tastes are coarser, more depraved than yours.

Think, then, of how the world must have appeared to the perfect man Jesus, as he saw men grovelling in sin, misery, sickness and death. He had sorrows indeed, but they were ours which his sympathy laid hold of, and by which he was impressed more than others. In his sympathy and love he gave of his own vitality to many of those groaning, dying ones about him. It is a fact coming daily to be more recognized among scientific men, that some persons possess greater vitality than others, and possessing more can communicate it to others who have less; though such are liable to feel for a time the weakness which is cured in the weaker one. Jesus being perfect had an abundance of sympathy; consequently he continued to heal those who came unto him, though each time he was touched with a feeling of THEIR INFIRMITY while they were refreshed and revitalized by his strength.

Few seemingly have noticed; that this is the teaching implied in the Scripture narrative of many of Jesus' miracles. We, therefore, quote some instances. A poor woman, who had been sick twelve years touched his garment and was healed, and "Jesus, immediately knowing in himself, that VIRTUE [power, vitality, strength] HAD GONE OUT OF HIM," said "Who touched me?" (Mark 5:30.) Luke (8:43-46, and 6:19) declares that "The whole multitude sought to touch him: for there went VIRTUE [strength, vitality, power] OUT OF HIM, and healed them all." Matthew 8:17 gives the same testimony: that when Jesus healed the sick it was in fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy which we are now considering, "Himself took our infirmities and bare our sicknesses."

What wonder, then, that such a man is said to have been a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief? But let us never forget that if sorrows and pain left its impress on that noble face and form, it was not because of his own weakness; it was not because pain and sickness and death had hold of him, but that it had hold of our race, and he, full of love and sympathy, was bearing the burdens of others. Oh, how far short of such perfect, boundless love do we find ourselves! It is only when we measure ourselves by such a perfect standard, that we can realize how great was the fall which our race experienced through Adam's disobedience. No wonder we long for the restoration of mankind to such a condition, where each will love his neighbor as himself, and be glad if necessary to share each others' woes; but it will not be necessary then; for when sin and its effects are all removed, its penalty, pain, sickness and death will be removed also.

Our conclusion above, that the sorrow and infirmities which Jesus bore were those of our race, and not his own, is the testimony of the prophet, v. 4, "Surely he hath borne our infirmities and carried our sorrows; and we have thought him, as it were, A

LEPER, and as one struck of God and afflicted." [Leprosy is in Scripture a type of sin. The implication here is, that men considered Jesus one contaminated with sin because he was bearing its penalties, not discerning that it was ours which he carried. They thought him smitten of God, righteously punished, and saw not that in him was no cause of punishment, and that he took the infirmities of his own free will.]

"But he was wounded for our iniquities, he was bruised for our sins. The chastisement of our peace was upon him, and by his bruises we are healed." (verse 5.)

"All we like sheep have gone astray, every one hath turned aside unto his own way, and the Lord hath laid on him [the willing burden-bearer] the iniquity of US ALL." ["Jehovah hath caused to meet on him, the punishment of US ALL." – Young's translation.]

"He was offered because it was His own will, and he opened not his mouth. He shall be led as a sheep to the slaughter, and shall be dumb as a lamb before his shearer, and he shall not open his mouth." [He shall be nonresisting] verse 7.

"He was taken away from distress and from judgment [wickedness]: who shall declare [to] his generation, because [or why] he is cut off from the land of the living? For the wickedness of my people have I struck [smitten] him." [His death would be of so ignominious a nature, that few could realize that he was suffering the just for the unjust.]

"And he shall give [himself among] the ungodly for his burial, and [be with] the rich for [in] his death; because [or although] he had done no iniquity, neither was there deceit in his mouth; and the Lord [Jehovah] was pleased [willing] to bruise him in infirmity: [For] if he shall lay down his life for sin, he shall see a long-lived seed, and the will of the Lord [Jehovah] shall be

prosperous in his hand." [The object **[R575 : page 3]** of his sacrifice was two-fold. He desired to do the Father's will, and he desired to be the "everlasting Father," and to bring many sons to life in the re-generation; bringing them to freedom, liberty, perfection and honor.] "Because his soul hath labored, he shall see [the **[R575 : page 4]** good results of his sacrifice] and be filled" [or satisfied]. verses 8-10.

"By his knowledge shall my just servant justify many, and [or while] he shall hear their iniquities. Therefore [because of his faithfulness and sacrifice] will I distribute [or give] to him very many [inheritances; He becomes sole heir of the inheritance of each one whom he purchased with his own precious blood – very many – all men.] And he shall divide the spoils of the strong." [The strong prince of this world has obtained much spoil from mankind, leaving him destitute; but this great deliverer shall not only bind the strong man, but then shall he spoil his house (Matt. 12:29), and during his reign he shall divide or distribute the spoil to mankind, until at its close they shall be very rich in glory, honor, and dominion of earth, as at first. He shall be enabled to do all this] "BECAUSE he hath delivered his soul unto death, and was reputed [reckoned] with the wicked: and he hath borne the sins of many and prayed [interceded] for the transgressors." verses 11-12.

We conclude, then, that this very prophecy which was supposed to teach that Jesus had an ungainly, disfigured, and hideous appearance – more than any other man, teaches the very reverse of this, that his perfection was ignoble in the sight of depraved men; and that whatever of care, or sorrow, or pain marked that perfect lovely face, was the self-imposed weight of our infirmities and sin.

And, if we recall the various little incidents of his ministry mentioned by the Apostles, as it were by accident, they all bear

witness to the fact that he was a perfect man, and far superior to those about him. In childhood's days he was a prodigy whose questions and answers astonished the Doctors of the Law. As a public teacher he has never had an equal among men. What other teacher ever had five thousand people leave their employment, and negligent of food, follow him three days in the wilderness, marveling at the gracious words that proceeded out of his mouth? (Matt. 14:13-21, and 15:29-39.)

Call to mind the testimony of his enemies, when they came back to report – "Never man spake like this man." (John 7:46.) Mark the wisdom of his replies when they sought to entrap him in his words. (Matthew 22:20-22; and 21:24,25.) Recall their remark, "Whence hath this man this wisdom?" (Matt. 13:54.) Remember, too, the loftiness of his teaching: although there have been great teachers in other days, and among the heathen, men who taught morality of a high type, yet never before was heard such perfection of teaching as that of Jesus. The morality which teaches truthfulness and justice, keeping of covenants and obeying of laws, had been taught, and it had been taught, also, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor and hate thine enemy;" but none had ever gone so far as to say, "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for those who despitefully use you and persecute you." "If thine enemy hunger, feed him, if he thirst, give him drink." Others had said, "Thou shalt not kill," but none before had taught that to hate a brother without cause was a degree of murder. And, with all his meekness and tenderness, he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.

And Jesus' physical form can have been no less perfect and beautiful than were his mental qualities. Crowned with the glory and honor of human nature, he was by reason of his perfection a

king among men, whose very look, calm and benevolent, impressed those about him with reverential awe.

Call to mind how the soldiers who came to take him in the Garden of Gethsemane, overpowered for a time by the majesty of his presence, were obliged to retreat before him, though he rebuked them neither in word nor act. (John 18:3-8.) It was much the same with another company sent to take him, who came away without him. (John 7:30,32,44-46.) When Pilate was beset with the Jewish rabble, headed and instigated by the priests, crying, "Crucify him," he tried various methods to restore order and spare the innocent: but as a last resort he brought Jesus himself before the people, and, as though confident that his glorious face and form would captivate the hearts of the multitude, he said, "BEHOLD THE MAN!" As though he would say, Is that the man you would crucify? If so, his blood be upon you. Nor can we suppose that anything short of the blinding of the god of this world – the prince of darkness – could hinder them from realizing that "he is altogether lovely," "the chiefest among ten thousand."

And even then, had he chosen to give them a reproving look – to speak and to rebuke their sin – again the multitude would doubtless have said, "Never man spake like this man," and again they might have determined to "take him by force and make him a king." But he was there, not to clear himself and prove his innocence, but to suffer, to die, the just for the unjust, to bring us to God; hence he did nothing to interfere with his sacrifice of himself. "He answered him never a word." (Matt. 27:12-14.) He chose rather to give himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.

Behold the perfect man, Jesus, and reflect that through his ransom mankind in general has been redeemed from the present lost condition of degradation and death, and may again reach

perfection through "the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world."

If such be the glory of mankind – a little LOWER than the angels – what must be the glory of that high exaltation to which Jesus has attained as a reward for his obedience – the divine nature "so much BETTER than the angels." Then, while trying to grasp God's plan, remember that though we know not what he is and what we shall be, we do know that we shall see him and be like him as he now is – so much exalted above what he then was, grand as we have seen that to have been. Nor would we be understood to teach that all of Jesus' wonderful works were performed by the powers of manhood; many unquestionably were more than human powers – the direct result of his anointing with the Holy Spirit at baptism, the power of Jehovah in him.

In concluding this subject, we desire to lay before you another translation of Isa. 53. It is by a Hebrew, and is the English translation accepted among that people. From such a source one would not unreasonably expect that every item would be turned as far from fitting the general application of it to Jesus as the language would permit: yet it is clear and strong, and it seems wonderful that in its clear delineation the poor Jew cannot read the life of Christ Jesus our Lord. We give a literal quotation:

ISAIAH 53.

"Who would have believed our report? And the arm of the Lord – over whom hath it been revealed? Yea, he grew up like a small shoot before him, and as a root out of a dry land: He had no form nor comeliness, so that we should look at him, and no countenance, so that we should desire him. He was despised and shunned by men; a man of pains and acquainted with disease; and as one who hid his face from us was he despised, and we esteemed him not."

"But only OUR diseases did he bear himself, and OUR pains he carried; while we indeed esteemed him stricken, smitten of God and afflicted. Yet he was wounded for OUR transgressions, he was bruised for OUR iniquities: the chastisement of OUR peace was upon him; and through his bruising was healing granted to us."

"We all like sheep went astray; every one to his own way did we turn; and the Lord let befall him the GUILT OF US ALL."

"He was oppressed, and he was also taunted, yet he opened not his mouth; like the lamb which is led to the slaughter, and like a ewe before her shearers is dumb, and he opened not his mouth."

"Through oppression and through judicial punishment was he taken away; but his generation – who could tell, that he was cut away out of the land of life, (that) for the transgressions of my people the plague was laid on him?"

"And he let his grave be made with the wicked and with the (godless) rich at his death. Although he had done no violence and there was no deceit in his mouth, but the Lord was pleased to crush him through disease. When (now) his soul hath brought the trespass-offering, then shall he see (his) seed live many days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand."

"(Freed) from the trouble of his soul shall he see (the good) and be satisfied: through his knowledge shall my righteous servant bring many to righteousness, while he will bear their iniquities. Therefore will I divide him (a portion) with the many, and with the strong shall he divide the spoil; because he poured out his soul unto death, and with transgressors was he numbered, while he bore the sin of many; and FOR the transgressors he let (evil) befall him." – Isaac Leeser's translation.
