

EXPOSITORY NOTES ON THE PROPHET ISAIAH

by

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ISAIAH CHAPTER FIFTY-NINE ADDERS' EGGS AND SPIDERS' WEBS

HERE we have a very solemn word, God calling the people to repentance and then giving wonderful promises of blessings that are to take place under Messiah's reign. He begins:

“Behold, the LORD’s hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear-heavy, that it cannot hear: But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear. For your hands are defiled with blood, and your fingers with iniquity; your lips have spoken lies, your tongue hath muttered perverseness” (verses 1-3).

He goes on to explain why when they sought the Lord, He did not seem to answer or hear, for there was unjudged sin that needed to be dealt with. The Psalmist had written long before, **“If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me.”** They were covering up their sins and hoping to please God by observance of outward form and attendance to ritual, but he says of them **“They hatch cockatrice’ (or the adder’s) eggs and weave the spider’s web.”**

“None calleth for justice, nor any pleadeth for truth: they trust in vanity, and speak lies; they conceive mischief, and bring forth iniquity. they hatch cockatrice’ eggs, and weave the spider’s web: he that eateth of their eggs dieth, and that which is crushed breaketh out into a viper. their webs shall not become garments, neither shall they cover themselves with their works: their works are works of iniquity, and the act of violence is in their hands. Their feet run to evil, and they make haste to shed innocent blood: their thoughts are thoughts of iniquity; wasting and destruction are in their paths” (verses 4-8). This portion is taken up in the third chapter of the Epistle to the Romans: **“Their feet are swift to shed blood.”**

Here is pictured a people who professedly are the Lord's. They go on with all the outward forms of religion, attending the service of the temple, offering their sacrifices, fasting before men, hoping thus to provide a righteousness which will be satisfactory to God. But He says it is just like hatching out adders' eggs - the preachings, the teachings were false, they were poisonous.

“He that eateth of their eggs dieth.” When people took up with this false teaching, it brought eternal ruin to them. **“They weave the spider’s web,”** but he says, **“Their webs shall not become garments, neither shall they cover themselves with their works.”**

The spider's web is just foam, and proceeds from the spider himself. It looks very beautiful. Many preachers like those spiders spin the webs out of themselves, out of their own heads. They do not bring them from the Word of God. And people who try to clothe themselves with their own righteousness are like those who might try to make garments out of spiders' webs. It has been tried, but found impossible. What a contrast there is between a spider's web and a silk cocoon, though both come out of the creature itself, one from the spider and one from the silkworm. Yet the cocoon furnishes the material that makes the most beautiful and lasting clothing for kings and princes while the other is a bit of foam that soon disappears.

Some years ago there came to Los Angeles, the great metropolis of Southern California, a so-called "human fly." It was announced that on a given day he would climb up the face of one of the large department store buildings, and long before the appointed time thousands of eager spectators were gathered to see him perform the seemingly impossible feat.

Slowly and carefully he mounted aloft, now clinging to a window ledge, anon to a jutting brick, again to a cornice. Up and up he went, against apparently insurmountable difficulties. At last he was nearing the top. He was seen to feel to right and left and above his head for something firm enough to support his weight, to carry him further. And soon he seemed to spy what looked like a grey bit of stone or discolored brick protruding from the smooth wall. He reached for it, but it was just beyond him. He ventured all on a spring-like movement, grasped the protuberance and, before the horrified eyes of the spectators, fell to the ground and was broken to pieces. In his dead hand was found a spider's web! What he evidently mistook for solid stone or brick turned out to be nothing but dried froth!

Alas, how many are thinking to climb to heaven by effort of their own, only to find at last that they have ventured all on a spider's web, and so are lost forever.

Christ, and Christ alone, can save. His Gospel is unfailing and peace-giving. It is no adder's egg nor spider's web, but the **"power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth."**

Here you have the **"garment of salvation," "the best robe," "the robe of righteousness,"** provided by God Himself through the death of His Son for all who own their guilt and trust His grace. **"He gives the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness."**

How futile are human efforts to fit the ungodly for the divine Presence. Spiders' webs will not avail to cover the moral nakedness of Christ-rejecting sinners. **"Their webs shall not become garments, neither shall they cover themselves with their works."** Whoever heard of a dress woven from the web of the spider? But how different is the produce of another tiny creature, the silkworm!

This marvelous little being spins a thread of such strength that it is readily woven into cloth of the utmost beauty and made up into garments of glory. But the silkworm must die that the floss may thus be utilized. Is it too much to say that here we have in nature more than a hint of Him who in the depth of His humiliation could exclaim, **"I am a worm and no man,"** and who gave His life that we might be clothed in glory?

Then we have the omniscient One giving deliverance.

“And he saw that there was no man, and wondered that there was no intercessor: therefore his arm brought salvation unto him; and his righteousness, it sustained him . . . And the Redeemer shall come to Zion, and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob, saith the Lord. As for me, this is my covenant with them, saith the Lord; My Spirit that is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed’s seed, saith the Lord, from henceforth and for ever” (verses 16, 20, 21).

Yes, **“the Redeemer shall come,”** for all hope for guilty man, for Israel as well as for the nations, is in the Man at God’s right hand.

It is the Lord Jesus Christ who speaks here. There was no intercessor, no deliverer, so **“His own arm brought salvation.”** It is for His coming the people will wait. He came in grace the first time to settle the sin question on the Cross. He is coming again to bring in the glory.

~ end of chapter 59 ~

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