

durate that even the gracious and mighty works of Christ met only unbelief. This approach would account for the extremely strong statement of the reason for their unbelief which introduces the saying of Is.: "therefore they could not believe because Isaiah says...". This emphasis on the sovereign judicial action of God is further enhanced by the changes John makes in the LXX citation. The original causal area of the Heb. high. by which, grammatically at least, the prophet is commanded to make the heart of the people fat, etc., is rendered in the LXX by a third sing. pass. and by two 3 pls.: the emphasis is put on the people's action in their own hardening as a result of the prophetic preaching, and one verb is made impersonal, with the precise agent left undetermined. In John, by a condensation and precis with the use of ~~xx~~ different words, God is made the agent, and the remainder of the causal area of the high. is explored: God, the prophet (Christ), and the people are all agents in the hardening of their hearts. This emphasis on Divine sovereignty is a characteristic trait of John, discernable in such passages as 6.44; 10.26-29; 5.21; 6.39; 17.2, 6, 12, 24, and the entire ch. The statement by John that the people could not believe because the prophet had predicted it reveals a high view of the finality and authority of Scripture: when God had spoken, it was impossible that it should be otherwise, or fail to be fulfilled.

The citation from Is. is immediately coupled in the same context with another citation from Is. bearing on the same theme of the unbelief of the people. The question, "Who has believed our report?" seems to come from either the prophet or the believing group who see in the Suffering Servant their sin-bearer and Saviour. Thus the question is again raised as to whether Is. does not constantly assume the presence of the believing group or remnant to whom the passages of blessing are spoken, or for whom such passages would be particularly meaningful and comforting.

Acts 28.26,27.

The citation from Is. is here spoken by Paul with reference to the