

of the darkest superstitions that have tyrannized over the conscience of mankind, it was impossible that men should partake at once of the "table of dæmons," and of *that* Table.

EDWIN JOHNSON.

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THE BOOK OF ISAIAH.—CHAPTERS XL.—LXVI.

V.—ISRAEL, THE SERVANT OF THE LORD.

THE mission given to the Prophet being to preach "comfort" to the people of Israel, the great theme which he enlarges upon is their God. If the people had but right thoughts of God, such thoughts as this prophet entertains, it would be well with them. But, like Hosea, his complaint is that "there is no knowledge of God" among them: "How sayest thou, O Jacob, and speakest, O Israel, my way is hid from the Lord, and my judgment is passed away from my God? Hast thou not known? An everlasting God is Jehovah, creator of the ends of the earth, he fainteth not, neither is weary, there is no searching of his understanding. He giveth power to the faint. The youths faint and are weary; but they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength" (xl. 27). It is characteristic of the Old Testament that it attributes all to God, who is wonderful in counsel and excellent in working. Its conception of humanity is less developed; it has scarcely the beginnings of an anthropology. Salvation is of the Lord, and this salvation is of the nature of a crisis, a great interposition of Jehovah: "The Lord shall come with strong hand, his arm ruling for him." The conception of a humanity, with powers of its own in a certain sense, maturing the germ of redemption committed to its bosom, is due to our Lord, who suggests it in his parables, especially

in that very surprising one in which He speaks of the kingdom of God being as if a man should cast seed into the ground, and should sleep, and the seed should spring and grow up he knoweth not how (Mark iv. 26). But, in this prophet, God is all and man nothing: "All flesh is grass; the grass withereth, but the word of our God shall stand for ever"; "Woe to him that striveth with his maker!—a potsherd like the potsherds of the ground!"

This lofty conception of Jehovah the God of Israel is the primary thought of these prophecies; all else is but deduction from it or expansion of it. It is this thought that interprets history to the Prophet, and by no means history that suggests to him such a thought. It is true that in this prophet more than in any other there is presented a universal scheme of the destiny of the world and the history of mankind, and this evolution has several distinct *momenta* or steps but each of these movements is presided over by Jehovah, who sets it a-going and guides it to its issue. Cyrus shall make an end of the idolatries of the earth, and set free the captives of the Lord; but this is because the Lord has anointed him, holds his hand, goes before him and smooths his way, and breaks in pieces for him the doors of brass, and cuts in sunder the bolts of iron. The great work of regeneration within Israel, needful to their restoration and their becoming the "people" of the Lord, is accomplished by the Servant, who bears their sins, and by his knowledge makes many righteous; but this again is of the Lord, who "upholds" him in his great task, as He also laid it upon him: "It pleased the Lord to bruise him, he put him to grief; the Lord caused to fall upon him the iniquity of us all." Israel restored, or the Servant of the Lord, brings forth right to the Gentiles; his light shines and rolls back the darkness to the ends of the earth, till "every knee bows and every tongue swears" to Jehovah: yet this is because Jehovah has called his Servant from the womb, puts his

spirit upon him, and “keeps him and makes him the light of the Gentiles, that his salvation may be to the ends of the earth.”

Jehovah accomplishes all, and, so far as the world is concerned, He does all with one end in view: “Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth, for I am God, and there is none else.” Each act of his from the beginning contemplates this end: “He made not the earth to be a waste, he formed it to be inhabited” (xlv. 18). He put his word in the mouth of Israel, making it the people of revelation, that He might plant the (new) heavens, and lay the foundations of the earth, and say unto Zion, Thou art My people (li. 16). And the victories of Cyrus, though given him in the first instance that he might know the God of Israel, and in the second place for Jacob his servant’s sake, have this widest purpose in view: “that they may know from the rising of the sun and from the west that there is none beside me: I am the Lord, and there is none else” (xliii. 3 *seq.*). It is the Prophet’s lofty monotheistic conception that enables him to rise to this universalistic idea of the history of man and the destiny of the world, and to perceive that each event belongs as a fragment to a greater whole, that it is but a wave on the breast of an advancing tide, but that which the eye can observe or the ear hear of a motion toiling towards an appointed end, the salvation of the world.

Yet it is obvious that, the Prophet’s conception of Jehovah being such as it is, the teleological movement cannot be supposed to stop at any point short of Jehovah Himself. The salvation of the world is but the point second from the end. He who is the first and the last cannot but be Himself the end towards which all moves. And so He is: “The glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together”; “My glory I will not give to another, neither my praise to graven images.” And both the preservation and

redemption of Israel are for the sake of Jehovah's praise : " For my name's sake do I defer mine anger, and for my praise do I refrain from thee, not to cut thee off " : " For mine own sake, for mine own sake will I do it ; for how should my name be profaned ? and my glory will I not give to another " (xlvi. 9) : " The Lord has redeemed his servant Jacob, and will glorify himself in Israel " (xlv. 23) : " I said unto thee, Thou art my servant, thou art Israel in whom I will be glorified " (xlix. 3 ; cf. xliii. 7). And the same is true in reference to the conversion of the Gentiles : " By myself have I sworn that to me every knee shall bow. . . . Only in the Lord, shall they say of me, is there righteousness and strength " (xlv. 23).

Perhaps the citation of these few passages gives a better idea of the Prophet's conception of Jehovah than any disquisition on what are called the Divine attributes or any attempt to classify them. Such an attempt would scarcely represent the Prophet's way of thinking, who is not an abstract theologian after the manner of the schools, but a highly imaginative religious man. He knows little about Divine attributes ; he knows a living moral Person, who is God, and whose operations are not the illustration of this or that attribute, but the acts of a moral person, who, in an ineffable degree, possesses all the powers of personality, and feels and shews all the emotions of moral being. It would be easy to find in the Prophet proof-texts for everything which theology asserts regarding God, with the exception perhaps of the assertion that He is a Spirit, by which is meant that He is a particular kind of substance. Neither this Prophet nor the Old Testament knows anything of a Divine essence. It does not say that God is spirit, but that He has a spirit ; and by spirit is not meant a substance, but an efficiency. The spirit of God is God operating in any way according to the ineffable powers which He possesses as a moral person. Thus, in proof of his greatness or

omnipotence might be cited the words, "Who measured the waters in the hollow of his hand?" or the words in reference to the nightly parade of the heavenly host, "Who bringeth forth their hosts by number, calling them all by name; for that He is strong in power not one is lacking"; in proof of his absoluteness the question, "Who directed the spirit of the Lord (in creation)?" For his universal lordship and sovereignty, whether in nature or the life of man, or in his saving operations, the beautiful saying in regard to the exiles, "I will make all my mountains a way" for them; or the other, "I will say to the north, Give up, and to the south, Keep not back"; or this, "Who calleth the generations from the beginning"; or this other, "Woe to him that striveth with his maker! Shall the clay say to him that fashioneth it, What makest thou? or thy work, He hath no hands?" For his faithfulness the passage, "Zion said, the Lord hath forsaken me, and my Lord hath forgotten me. Can a woman forget her sucking child? Yea, they may forget, yet will not I forget thee. I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands"; or this, "Kings shall see and rise up; princes, and they shall worship thee; because of the Lord who is faithful, even the Holy One of Israel, who hath chosen thee"; or this other, "But thou, Israel my servant, Jacob whom I chose, the seed of Abraham my friend, . . . thou art my servant, I have chosen thee and not cast thee away." For his mercy and compassion: "In an ebullition of anger I hid my face from thee for a moment, but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy upon thee"; or this, to which there is nothing like, "In all their affliction he was afflicted" (lxiii. 9); or the beautiful words, "Hearken unto me, O house of Jacob, which have been carried by me from the womb; and even to old age I am he, and even to hoar hairs will I carry you" (xlvi. 3). For his free grace in choosing and in forgiving sin the prophecy might almost be quoted bodily. For

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The idea has been thrown out by some modern writers, that the conception of God among the people of Israel was, first, that of some power external to themselves which they perceived in the world, a power making for a moral order or identical with it, and which they afterwards endowed with personality. The Old Testament affords no countenance to this idea. The origin of the ideas both of God's personality and of his moral nature lies beyond the horizon of history. The advance which we observe is not one towards a clearer perception of the personality of Jehovah itself, but towards seeing the consequence which follows from the existence of such a person as He is, namely, that no other Divine person can exist; as it is expressed in this prophet: "Before Me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after Me. Is there a God beside Me? I know not any" (xliii. 10; xliv. 8, and often). And the advance observed in the conception of what is called the spirituality of Jehovah is an advance of the same kind, namely, towards a clearer view of what is involved in it. By spirituality, however, in the Old Testament is not meant positively that Jehovah's essence is that kind of substance which we call spirit, but rather that He is a being of illimitable efficiency, as all power resides in "spirit," while "flesh" is weak and subject to decay, and especially that being the "living" God, He is the source of all life (xl. 28 *seq.*).

It is time, however, to leave the Prophet's conception of Jehovah, the God of Israel, and turn to the other great idea of the prophecy,—that of the "people." The whole contents of the Book might well be embraced under the Prophet's conception of God; for though there are other subjects and agents referred to, their characteristics are all due to Jehovah, and the destiny before them is appointed them by Him, and all the operations which they perform are operations which Jehovah performs through them. In

all the prophets, however, there are two great factors, God and the people. The question has often been put, What were the great designs of Jehovah in choosing a people, and depositing his revelation in the bosom of a nation, rather than in the hearts of individuals? And answers very sufficient have been suggested, such as that in this way national feeling and patriotism were enlisted on the side of truth, the warmth and force of which were thus intensified and conserved, while they might have died out if entrusted to isolated individuals; or that by such means the idea at least of a kingdom of God upon the earth was suggested to men, and a model presented to states to strive after, as well as a prophecy given of that perfect condition of human society which shall be at the last, when the kingdom is the Lord's; or, rather, not only a prophecy given of such a kingdom, but a real beginning made of it, destined to widen out till all men be embraced in it.

These objects were no doubt attained by the choice of a nation; but perhaps the choice itself is but an illustration of a law generally observed. Revelation is never revolutionary. It is difficult to fix on any time when a truth absolutely new was revealed. Each addition to truth is rather an expansion of a germ of truth already known. As a rule, revelation accepts the fragments of truth and adopts the methods of religion already existing, uniting the former into a whole, and purifying the latter for its own purposes. The Hebrew prophecy, for example, was not a thing peculiar to Israel, nor an instrument created of purpose by revelation for itself. There was, so to speak, a natural prophecy both in Israel and among the peoples with which Israel claimed kindred; and this religious method revelation adopted, and, having clarified it of its imperfections and abuses, employed it in its own service. In like manner, in the East each people had its particular god. The god and the people were correlative ideas. That which gave the

individuals of a nation unity and made them a people was the unity of its god ; as, on the other hand, that which gave a god prestige was the strength and victorious career of his people. The self-consciousness of the nation and its religion reacted on one another, and rose and fell simultaneously. This conception was not repudiated, but adopted, by revelation ; and, as occasion demanded, purified from its natural abuses.

One of these abuses, or at least one of the consequences of the idea of this reciprocal relation of god and people, was that the people and its god remained on the same level,—it was like god like people. And as the characteristics of the people were tangible and powerful, while those of the god were only attributed to him from the point of view of the people and the moral plane on which they stood, the god became little more than a personification of the spirit of the nation. All moral advancement was thus rendered extremely difficult, or, rather, moral decline was the almost certain result ; for unquestionably the representation of Scripture, that moral upbuilding or disintegration in a people follows the conceptions of God entertained by it, is sustained by experience and the history of nations. Although Israel, in common with the other nations around it, held fast to the notion of the reciprocal relation of the people and its god, the loftier conception of Jehovah which it entertained, as a moral Person over against the people, in no way involved in it or the reflection of its spirit, but, on the contrary, independent and all-powerful and resolved to impose his own character on it, neutralized the evil consequences of the notion which manifested themselves among other nations.

No date can be assigned as the time when this conception of Jehovah as a moral Person arose in Israel. Neither can any plausible account of its rise be given, but the ordinary one, common to Israel and the Christian Church, which

ascribes it to a communication by the true God of light to Israel different from that given to other nations. The Old Testament knows little of general categories of thought; the ideas of natural and super-natural are probably strange to it. But, though wanting in abstract conceptions, it supplies their place by abundant concrete expressions. It says that Jehovah has not so dealt with any nation as with Israel, that He has put his word in their mouth; that the nations are vanity, while He puts his Spirit upon his servant Israel, who will bring forth judgment to the Gentiles. The distinction which it draws is not that of natural and super-natural, but that of false and true, asserting that there is a true God and that He has communicated true knowledge of Himself to Israel. And the great truth regarding Jehovah, the knowledge of which is indeed salvation, is that He is a transcendent moral Person. Those who argue that Israel reached this knowledge in a "natural" way are really obliged to assume that in behalf of which they argue. They can offer no explanation how Israel reached this conception, while the kindred races fell short of it. They usually avoid this difficulty, and insist that, in fact, they can observe Israel moving step by step towards its true and lofty conception of God. Even if this were the case, the question would still remain, What is the explanation of the movement in Israel, while the kindred races remain stationary or are retrograde? The growth of a flower is hardly explained even by the clearest demonstration that it may be observed growing.

The idea of Jehovah as a transcendent moral Person, God alone, might seem incompatible with the other idea of any particular national relation to Israel. And, in fact, the prophet who is perhaps the oldest of those whose writings we possess seems in danger of denying any relation between Israel and Jehovah of a merely national kind: "Are ye not as the children of the Ethiopians unto me, O children of

Israel? saith the Lord" (Amos ix. 7). No doubt Jehovah brought up Israel out of Egypt, but He also brought the Philistines from Caphtor and the Syrians from Kir—He calleth the generations from the beginning. It has been observed that this prophet does not use the expression "God of Israel." The relation between Jehovah and Israel can subsist only if Israel bears the moral character of its God. Nevertheless the prophet does not absolutely break with the idea of a national relation: "The eyes of the Lord are upon the sinful kingdom, and I will destroy it from off the face of the earth; saving that I will not utterly destroy the house of Jacob, saith the Lord." Neither does any prophet of the Old Testament deny it, least of all the author of the last chapters of the Book of Isaiah. The moral conception of Jehovah, however, introduces an entirely new set of conditions into the relation; it can be maintained only if Israel be converted and renewed, becoming holy as Jehovah is holy. This idea is the source of the whole prophetic literature. It is from this point of view that the prophets foresee disaster to the present Israel and destruction to the existing nationality. These disasters are regarded by different prophets somewhat differently. In one prophet they are chastisements on account of sin; in another they are purifying trials. In all they have the object in view of making Israel moral even as its God is. And this, with whatever delays, is the result attained.

The moral being of Jehovah, however, not only explains his treatment of Israel, now that He is the God of Israel; the prophets carry the idea further in two directions, backward and forward. The fact that Israel is the people of Jehovah is explicable only from the moral nature of the Lord. He "chose" Israel, and He did so because He loved them: "When Israel was a child I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt." Of his goodness He espoused

Israel to Himself in a covenant of love that could not be broken. And the highest proof of his goodness was, not that He "destroyed the Amorite before them, whose height was like the height of the cedars," but that He raised up of their sons for prophets and of their young men for Nazarites (Amos ii. 9). He put his word in their mouth, and gave them the knowledge of Himself, the true God. Of course, the point remains unexplained, why He chose Israel rather than another nation. The prophets content themselves with pointing out that the choice illustrates the moral being of Jehovah; for it was for nothing in Israel that He chose them, as that they were a great and attractive people: it was because He had pleasure in them. And in another direction the moral conception of Jehovah enables the prophets to perceive that his choice of Israel cannot have its end in Israel itself. The chosen people, endowed with true knowledge of God, is Jehovah's instrument for bringing all nations to behold his glory, and take their right place before Him. He keeps Israel, and makes them the light of the Gentiles. Still this universal relation of Jehovah to all peoples does not dissolve his particular relation to Israel. Israel and the nations, even in the final condition of things, do not amalgamate: "Strangers shall stand and feed your flocks; . . . but ye shall be named the priests of the Lord, men shall call you the ministers of our God" (Isa. lxi. 5); "I have put my words in thy mouth, that I may plant the heavens and lay the foundations of the earth, and say unto Zion, Thou art my people" (li. 16). This twofold relation of Israel to Jehovah, as his peculiar people, and as his agent in realizing his universal relation to the world, is expressed in these chapters of Isaiah in the phrase, Israel, the Servant of the Lord.

The use of the expression, "the servant of the Lord," constitutes one of the peculiarities of these chapters, and

considerable difference of opinion has existed as to its meaning. The phrase is evidently used by the Prophet in a wider and in a narrower sense; that is, it is applied to a subject whose bulk contracts or expands, although obviously, as the conception of the "servant" cannot vary, neither can the subject ever be strictly different. It has been suggested by some writers that, in our investigation into the meaning of the phrase, we should begin with those passages where the Prophet's ideal description of the Servant reaches its highest point; *e.g.* chapters xlii., xlix., lii.—liii. This would be a good rule if these passages were perfectly free of ambiguity; but as they are not, it is safest to make a commencement where the Prophet's meaning is unmistakable. The expression first occurs in chapter xli. 8:—

But thou, Israel, my servant,  
 Jacob whom I have chosen,  
 The seed of Abraham my friend;  
 Thou whom I took hold of from the end of the earth,  
 And called thee from the corners thereof,  
 And said unto thee, Thou art my servant,  
 I have chosen thee and not cast thee away:  
 Fear thou not, for I am with thee, etc.

Here it is plain (1) that the Servant is Israel, Jacob, the seed of Abraham the friend of God; (2) that the Servant became so by the "choice" or election of Jehovah; (3) that the Servant came into existence actually when taken hold of from the end of the earth and called from the corners thereof. It might be doubtful whether this referred to the call of Abraham, or to the deliverance from Egypt. The terms used, however, Jacob, Israel, *seed* of Abraham, as well as much else in the prophecy, are decisively in favour of the call from Egypt. It was this act that brought the Servant into existence; it is spoken of as "taking hold of him," "calling him," as elsewhere it is called the

“creating” of him, the forming of him from the womb, and the like. (4) It seems implied in the address that the Servant was conscious of the relation in which he stood to the Lord: “I said unto thee, Thou art my servant.” In the following words the expression, “and not cast thee away,” cannot be part of what was said to the Servant. As often happens, in repeating former expressions, an addition is made reflecting present circumstances; the words mean: I have chosen thee irrevocably. Then follows an assurance that Jehovah will stand by his Servant, and help him, and give him victory over all his enemies, and remove all obstacles that lie in his way (vers. 10–20). Nothing is here said of the office of the Servant or his duties. We might infer something from the term Servant; or we might say that the mission of the Servant will be no other than that of the seed of Abraham (or that of Abraham—“in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed”). In the present passage, however, the mission of the Servant is hardly before the Prophet’s mind. The Lord, by his mouth, is stilling the fears of Israel amidst the commotions of the nations, and in view of the destructive career of Cyrus; and what is insisted on is the relation of Israel, his Servant, to Jehovah, a relation which secures Israel against all dangers. Hence he says, “I have chosen thee and not cast thee away,” and the irrevocable choice is amplified in the musical words that follow: “Fear thou not, for I am with thee; be not dismayed, for I am thy God: I strengthen thee; yea, I help thee; yea, I keep fast hold of thee with the right hand of my righteousness.”

The points gained, then, are these: That Israel, Jacob, the seed of Abraham, as a people, is Servant of the Lord; that it became so ideally by the election of Jehovah, and actually by his delivering it from Egypt and calling it into national existence; that the choice is irrevocable; and that its salvation is secure, for the Lord holds it fast by

the right hand of his "righteousness"—his redemptive purpose; and that Israel is conscious of its relation, it knows itself to be the chosen people of the Lord. Passages corroborative of these positions are not wanting; *e.g.* chapter xlv. 1:—

Yet hear now, O Jacob, my servant,  
 And Israel, whom I have chosen;  
 Thus saith the Lord that made thee,  
 And that formed thee from the womb, thy helper:  
 Fear not, O Jacob, my servant,  
 And thou Jeshurun, whom I have chosen;  
 For I will pour water on him that is thirsty,  
 And streams upon the dry ground:  
 I will pour out my spirit upon thy seed,  
 And my blessing upon thine offspring, etc.

Again, chapter xlv. 21:—

Remember these things, O Jacob,  
 And Israel, for thou art my servant:  
 I have formed thee, thou art my servant,  
 O Israel, thou shalt not be forgotten of me.  
 I blot out as a thick cloud thy transgressions,  
 And as a cloud, thy sins:  
 Return unto me, for I redeem thee.  
 Sing, O ye heavens, for the Lord hath done it,  
 Shout, ye lower parts of the earth: . . .  
 For the Lord hath redeemed Jacob,  
 And will glorify himself in Israel.

And, once more, chapter xlviii. 20:—

Go ye forth of Babylon,  
 Flee ye from the Chaldeans,  
 With a voice of singing declare ye, tell this,  
 Utter it even to the ends of the earth;  
 Say ye, The Lord hath redeemed his servant Jacob;  
 And they thirsted not when he led them through the deserts, etc.

Here the new exodus from Babylon takes place amidst the same wonders as accompanied the former one from Egypt,

and the conception of the Servant of the Lord receives new illustration. Compare also chapter xlv. 4: "For Jacob my servant's sake, and Israel, my chosen, I have called thee by thy name" (Cyrus).

In these passages there can be no doubt who is the Servant of the Lord: it is Israel as a "people." The Servant does not make himself servant, he is chosen by him whose servant he becomes; neither does he do his own will or appoint himself his service, his eyes are to the hand of his master and he executes the work laid upon him. It is evident that to the Prophet's mind the essential points in the idea of Servant are "Jehovah's choice" of him, and his "forming" of him. By the latter, called also "making," "creating," being his "father," and the like, is always meant the calling of the people into national existence at the Exodus. Though the Servant be Israel, therefore, it is not Israel as a mere people, but always Israel under the conceptions the "chosen," the "created" of the Lord, and so forth. The Servant is thus an ideal personification; hence the Prophet addresses him usually in the second person singular. Still there lies always, under the ideal, a certain reality. The Servant is not a mere conception, the genius of Israel; he is Israel under certain conceptions which are inseparable from Israel, whether the actual Israel of any particular time be true to them or not. It is evident how peculiar a subject this is, and how susceptible it is of having a great variety of predicates and descriptive epithets applied to it. The Prophet might speak of Israel as it was when he contemplated it, "a people robbed and spoiled, all of them snared in holes," suffering the penalty of its unbelief; as sinful, despondent, unskilled to detect the working and presence of the Lord in the events of the day (chap. l. 2; liii. 1); as "deaf" and "blind" in spite of its high privileges and great mission. Or, on the other hand, he might regard it from the point of view of its ideal

characteristics, as that which its God had designed it to be and in his purpose made it, as chosen, endowed with the spirit of the Lord, held fast by his redemptive right hand, his messenger whom He sent, Israel in whom He would glorify Himself. We must not forthwith conclude that ideal features cannot be ascribed to Israel, because the actual Israel of the prophet's time, or of any time, did not present them. There is the Israel of God's purpose and thought, and there is the actual Israel. But the actual Israel cannot divest itself of its ideal attributes imposed on it by Jehovah's choice and keeping; the unfaithfulness of some cannot make the faith of God of none effect. Thus we may observe a double contraction and expansion in the conception of the Servant; one, so to speak, in the moral character of the servant, and another in the actual bulk of the servant. The Prophet may look at Israel from the point of view of God's purpose with it and the determinations which He has impressed upon it, or he may regard it from its actual condition in his own day. Or, again, he may speak of it as a people in general, in spite of its dispersion still one, and destined to be gathered together in its former unity and even greatly multiplied; or he may have respect to its dispersed and broken condition, and to the possible apostasy of fragments of it—"there is no salvation, saith my God, to the wicked." All these movements do not touch the idea of the Servant, an idea indestructible because Divine—the idea of Israel the servant of the Lord, chosen, held fast, endowed with the spirit of the Lord, to be redeemed, and to become the glory of the Lord.

In the passages cited above the Prophet deals only with the relation of Israel to Jehovah. He is preaching a homily of comfort to the people. His time, whether real or ideal, was a time of dissolution and weakness, the people seemed wasting away under the wearing forces that on all

sides bore upon them; they were despondent and of little faith, crying: "My way is hid from the Lord, the Lord hath forsaken me, and my Lord hath forgotten me"; Israel seemed about to disappear from the world, and all her hopes to be frustrated; and this Israelite, like another in a subsequent time, trembling with emotion, utters his protest against such thoughts: "Hath God cast away his people? God forbid!" And there pass before his eyes visions, full of glory, of the meaning of this people in God's redemptive purposes, purposes long ago announced and yet assuredly to be fulfilled; and he recalls to the people's mind how God has made them what they are, the relations to Him into which He has brought them, and how his "name" is involved in fulfilling all his promises of grace to them. Hence in these passages nothing seems yet said of any mission of Israel to the world without, or any relation of their God to it; it is the particular relation of Israel to the Lord as his people and servant that fills the Prophet's mind.

Other passages, however, take a wider view. This is notably the case in Chapter xlii. and later chapters. In these chapters, however, a certain change undoubtedly may be observed in the Prophet's use of the term *Servant*. He does not speak of Israel in general as the *Servant of the Lord*, but of some smaller element within the general Israel. This point must be reserved for subsequent reference; but it may be remarked that any strict change, either of the idea of *Servant*, or of the subject who is *Servant*, is really not to be supposed. The idea of the *Servant* cannot change, and the subject can change only so far as its bulk or character is concerned. The *Servant* in the narrower sense must still be Israel, as indeed the Prophet expressly calls him (chap. xlix. 3). Whatever that element in Israel be which the Prophet calls *Servant* in such passages as Chapters xlii., xlix., and lii.-liii., he

must so call it because the Divine determinations imposed on Israel and its nationality of right belong to it. But, this point being left in the meantime, the remarkable passage, Chapter xlii. 18, may be quoted, though its language cannot be understood without reference to the earlier verses of the chapter.

Hear, ye deaf,  
 And look, ye blind, that ye may see.  
 Who is blind but my servant?  
 Or deaf as my messenger that I send?  
 Who is blind as he that is devoted to me,  
 And blind as the servant of the Lord? etc.

Some words in the passage are difficult; but the points to be observed are, *first*, that the Servant of the Lord is here named blind and deaf, words explained a little farther down when it is said: "Seeing many things, but thou observest not; opening his ears, but he heareth not" (ver. 20); or, as is said elsewhere: "Bring forth the people that are blind, though they have eyes; and deaf, though they have ears" (chap. xliii. 8); with which the people's own confession may be compared, Chapters lix. 9 and liii. 1 *seq.*, and the complaint of the Lord in many places, *e.g.* "Woe to him that striveth with his Maker!" etc. (xlv. 9), and, "Why, when I am come, is there no man? when I call is there none that answereth? Is my hand shortened, that it cannot redeem" (chap. i. 2). And, *second*, that the Servant, though blind and deaf, has a mission, however unfit meantime he be to execute it—"Who is deaf, as my messenger that I send?" (or, will send.) These words receive their explanation from the first verses of the chapter: "Behold my servant: . . . he shall bring forth right to the Gentiles" (ver. 1). This is the mission which lies before the Servant; and the Servant, at least from verse 18 onwards, is Israel in general, who is God's messenger to the

nations. The same idea occurs in the beautiful passage already quoted, Chapter xlv. :—

I will pour my spirit upon thy seed,  
And my blessing upon thy offspring :  
And they shall spring up among the grass,  
As willows by the water courses.  
One shall say, I am the Lord's :  
And another shall call himself by the name of Jacob ;  
And another shall subscribe with his hand unto the Lord,  
And surname himself by the name of Israel.

The " one " and " another " here can hardly be any other but the surrounding Gentiles, whom the restored Israel converts to the Lord, according to Psalm lxxxvii., where the same phraseology is used. And the same conception appears even more strikingly in the passage (chap. li. 16) which has so perplexed some writers that they conclude " it once stood in a different connexion," in which, speaking to the people Israel, the Lord says : " I have put my words in thy mouth, and I have covered thee in the shadow of mine hand, that I may plant the heavens, and lay the foundations of the earth, and say unto Zion, Thou art my people."

The passages just quoted may be held to define the idea of the Servant of the Lord ; to state who the Servant is, Israel as chosen and called, created and formed ; and what his mission is. They say, in the words of the Apostle, that Israel is the " people " of the Lord, that the gifts and calling of God are without repentance ; and, in the words of our Lord, that " salvation is of the Jews."

A. B. DAVIDSON.

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