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Jesus from the bondage of sin and the world. The tyrannic and distorting powers of human opinion and civilization are left behind. Henceforth, "old things are passed away, and all things are become new." We have been baptized "in the cloud and in the sea." The desert stages have begun, and we march:

On to the bound of the waste,
On to the city of God.

OWEN C. WHITEHOUSE.

ISAIAH: AN IDEAL BIOGRAPHY.

vi. THE LAST LABOURS OF THE PROPHET.

THE thoughts of Isaiah during the last decade of his life must, in the nature of the case, have taken a twofold direction. He had come to the full term of fourscore years, and yet, as it had been said of Moses, so it might have been said of him, that his "eye was not dim, nor his natural force abated" (Deut. xxxiv. 7). Never had he spoken with greater force, never had his genius kindled into a diviner glow of inspiration than when, three years before Hezekiah's death, he uttered in the name of Jehovah his indignant defiance of Sennacherib. But it was, as far as we can judge, his last public utterance. There was no occasion for his intervention during the short remainder of the good king's reign. From the hour of Manasseh's accession there was nothing for him but the attitude, first of silent mourning, then of indignant but unrecorded protest, then, as the tradition runs, of the martyr waiting for his doom.

The natural employment of a statesman, thinker, poet, at such a time and under such conditions, is to "set his house in order," to gather together the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost. He looks over his MS. papers, sorts and arranges them, preserves some and de-

stroys others. He takes a survey of his past life, and notes its partial successes and its partial failures, gathers together the lessons of his experience, and seeks with what power yet remains to him to impress those lessons on the generation that is rising up around him. Not seldom is it found true that, at such a time his

> "Old experience doth attain
> To something of prophetic strain."

and the old man forecasts the future which he is not to see, looks out, as from a Pisgah height, on the land of promise which he is not to enter, and sees his nation renewing her youth like an eagle, "at the very fountain itself of heavenly radiance," or taking its leap in the dark, shooting its Niagara of war or revolution, with little thought of what lies beyond it. If he has taken an active share in the events of the history of his time, so that he can say of them *quorum pars magna fui*, he takes measures that the principles on which he acted may not be misunderstood by a later generation.

All these elements were present in the case of Isaiah, and there was nothing in his calling or inspiration as a prophet to hinder their working naturally and normally as they have done with others. Rather, according to any true theory of what has been called a dynamic as distinguished from a mechanical inspiration, they would be penetrated and pervaded by a higher intensity of feeling and illumination, the spiritual not crushing the natural, but intensifying and transfiguring it.

And so, beyond the shadow of a doubt, it actually was. He had begun his life by writing the history of Uzziah. One of his closing labours, though it was not actually their great crown and consummation, was to write the history of Hezekiah. "The rest of the acts of Hezekiah and his goodness," says the Chronicler, "behold, they are written

in the vision of Isaiah the prophet, the son of Amoz" (2 Chron. xxxii. 32). It is clear that the book so referred to must have been something more than that which now stands in the Old Testament canon under Isaiah's name, for that records but few of the acts of Hezekiah, and dwells rather on those which called for the prophet's reproofs than on his acts of beneficence and wisdom. The four historical chapters (xxxvi.-xxxix.) are doubtless extracts from such a book, but we can hardly doubt that it contained also the history of Hezekiah's reformation and of his strivings after the restoration of national unity, which served as the groundwork of the exceptionally full narrative of 2 Chronicles xxix.-xxxi., and with which the Chronicler has interwoven the more minute details which he found in the archives of the Temple.

The work of selection from his prophetic writings or the report of his prophetic preachings was a more difficult one. We cannot imagine for a moment, looking to the intense activity of Isaiah's character, that what we now have contains all that he wrote or spoke. If we accept St. John's words of a ministry that lasted at the outside but three short years, that he supposed, if the things which Jesus did should be written every one, that "the world itself could not contain the books that should be written" (John xxi. 25), as a natural and pardonable hyperbole, much more would such words be true of an activity that spread over sixty or seventy years. In that work of selection and arrangement Isaiah would doubtless have the help of the disciples whom, as we have seen, he had gathered round him (viii. 16), and whom he had trained, as it ultimately turned out, in the school of which martyrdom was the outcome. They—one or more of them—would naturally be to him what Baruch was afterwards to Jeremiah (Jer. xxxvi. 4). We are left to infer the principles on which the work was done, the leading ideas of the choice and the

order, from the result which is now before us. He would begin with what was the complement of his earliest work, that which represented the state of Judah in the closing years of Uzziah's reign,—the warnings and misgivings to which that state gave rise, the forecast, dimly shadowed out, and not by name, of an Assyrian invasion (v. 26–30), —the hopes of a brighter future which were not actually crushed by it (ii. 1–5). In point of time those first five chapters were probably written subsequent to the vision and the call of Chapter vi., but they represented much of what he had thought and felt prior to the call; they explained why he had spoken of himself as dwelling "among a people of unclean lips" (vi. 5), what was meant by the sentence of a judicial blindness and deafness following on the wilful neglect of the light that had been given and of the voice that had been heard behind them (vi. 10), and therefore they were placed in the fore-front of his volume as a natural introduction.

No single chapter in Isaiah, with the exception of the first five which, on this hypothesis, were written in the early years of Jotham, can be assigned with any reasonable probability to the reign of that monarch, and we are carried on abruptly to the great epoch of the Syro-Ephraimite invasion in that of Ahaz. The view that has been given of Isaiah's life supplies at least a natural explanation of the fact. He was occupied with his great work on the history of Uzziah, also with the early joys and hopes of his home-life with his prophetess-bride, possibly also with the responsibilities which devolved on him as the counsellor of Jotham and the tutor of the young Ahaz. His object in collecting his "remains" was not to write his own biography. Rather would he willingly efface himself except so far as he was the mouthpiece of the Holy One of Israel, and therefore all this he deliberately passed over. The first Assyrian invasion, however, and the part which

he had taken in it, seemed naturally too important to be thus dealt with. Then it had been given to him to foresee dangers to which statesmen and princes had been blind, to rebuke the proud boasts of the invader, to declare as an abiding truth that God was with his people (vii. 14), to hold out the hope of ever-fresh manifestations of his presence, culminating in one supreme personal revelation, a time of the restitution of all things, a golden age of peace, the revelation of the sons of God—of *the* Son of God—for which the whole creation had been groaning and travailing together (ix. 6; xi. 1–16). It was fit that the second section of his prophecies should end, not as with the funeral knell of doom which had closed the first—or would have closed it, but that there was the melody of a distant joy wafted across the murky air (vi. 11–13)—but with a psalm of thanksgiving worthy to take its place, as it actually did, in the anthem-book of the temple, and to be used, as it was for centuries, in the solemn procession in which the priests went on the great day of the Feast of Tabernacles with their golden chalice to draw water from the spring of Siloam, as the earthly type of the "wells of salvation" of which Isaiah had spoken (xii. 1–6).

The next division of the volume is the collection of distinct "*burdens*" or "oracles" delivered, as internal evidence points out, mainly in the reign of Hezekiah,[1] chiefly, though not exclusively, dealing with the neighbouring nations who were outside the covenant. Of these, as has been already stated, the first in order is probably the last, or all but the last, in date. It is not likely to have been written before the arrival of the Babylonian ambassadors had brought that city within the horizon of the prophet's outlook. We have seen, in a record the authenticity of

[1] Only two of the "burdens" have distinct notes of time: (1) that against Philistia (xiv. 28–32), which is fixed at the year of the death of Ahaz (B.C. 727), and that connected with Sargon's expedition against Ashdod (xx. 1), of which the date is B.C. 710.

which cannot be disputed, that the first thought which that arrival suggested was that Babylon was to be to Judah what Assyria had been to Israel, that the people should be carried captive thither, that the heirs of the House of David should be eunuchs in the palace of its king. Doubtless the ambassadors had magnified their office, had told of the treasures and the glory of the "gold-abounding" city,[1] had boasted of their alliance with more distant nations, of the rising power of the semi-barbarian Media as ready to co-operate with them against Assyria. The question could not fail to present itself to the prophet's mind, What was to be the future of that great and boastful city, the "glory of the Chaldees' excellency," founded on the right of might, cruel and oppressive? It followed from his conviction of a righteous order visibly asserting itself from time to time in what he calls "days of Jehovah," that he could see in such an empire no element of permanency. Already there dawned upon his mind, as afterwards more fully on that of Ezekiel, that vision of the dark Sheol, the Hades of mighty kings, of the sceptred dead, the "giant forms of empires on their way" to ruin and desolation. To that thought, which might grow out of an experience that became prophetic, inspiration gave the full assurance of conviction. Isaiah already throws himself forward mentally into the time when Lucifer, the bright morning star,[2] shall fall from its heaven of power, and the monarchs of the nations shall rise from their thrones in Hades to welcome the last of its kings (xiv. 9), and the cry shall spread from watch-tower to watch-tower in the wilder-

[1] "Gold-abounding," the ever recurring epithet applied to Babylon in the *Persæ* of Æschylus.

[2] The symbolism was probably determined by the astrology with which Babylon was identified. In Assyrian mythology, Ishtar (=Ashtoreth) represented the planet Venus. The Patristic interpretation which referred the words to the rebellion and punishment of the rebel angels, and so led, through the Vulgate translation for the "morning star," to the use of Lucifer (the light-bearer) as a synonym for Satan, may be noted as perhaps the most extravagant of all the extravagancies of exegesis.

ness, "Babylon is fallen, is fallen" (xxi. 9). Already he sees that, as Babylon had rebelled against Assyria (that fact had come under his direct cognizance), so Media, now the ally of Babylon, would rebel against her, and be, with Elam, also rising into prominence in the north, the destroyer of the golden city. The fact that Isaiah could thus project himself, however vaguely, into the future of the exile of the Jews in Babylon, of the destruction of that city by a Medo-Persian confederacy, of yet another fulfilment of the name Shear-Jashub, another return of "the remnant that should be left," is, it is obvious, not without an important bearing on the psychological problems presented by the great second volume of the prophet's works. The chapters of the "burdens" are followed, as those of the second group had been, by a great hymn, or rather trilogy of hymns. Chapter xxv. begins with the psalm, "O Lord, thou art my God, I will exalt Thee." Chapter xxvi. definitely introduces itself as the hymn which "shall be sung in the land of Judah." Chapter xxvii. hints at another song of the vineyard in contrast with that of Chapter v., ending not, there, in devastation, but in the watchful protection of Jehovah. From Chapter xxviii. to xxxiii. inclusive, we have a series of prophetic utterances which have obviously been put together as beginning with the word "Woe," and which, so far, reminds us, though more extended and applied to different objects, of the like series in Chapter v. They belong to the series of events which preceded the invasion of Sennacherib, and which have already come before us as part of the prophet's life. They denounce the defiant revelry of the people, and their scorn of any teaching that reproved it, and the hypocrisy of their formal worship (Chaps. xxvii. and xxix.). They condemn the Egyptian alliance and the statesmen who were foremost in supporting it (Chaps. xxx. and xxxi.). They paint the picture of a better time, when there shall be righteousness in the inner, and prosperity in

the outer life of Israel (xxxii.). With an impartial indignation, as soon as Sennacherib had put himself openly in the wrong, they condemn him for his treachery and cruelty (xxxiii.), and declare that those who, like the Edomites, had been sharers in the guilt of Assyria, should be sharers also in the punishment (Chap. xxxiv.). Lastly they end, as the other sections have ended, according to a deliberately planned symmetry, with a jubilant and exulting hymn (Chap. xxxv.), of which, if we did not know what place it actually occupied, it would be hard to say whether it belonged to the first or the second volume of Isaiah's works, and which, as it is, reads as if it were manifestly designed as the link which connects the two. Strike out the next four chapters (Chaps. xxxvi.–xxxix), which obviously form an historical appendix, added either by the prophet himself or by some later editor, and were probably taken from the history of Hezekiah which he must have written about this time, and the words which tell how "there shall be a high way, the way of holiness," how "the redeemed of the Lord shall walk there, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy" (xxxv. 8–10), are naturally the prelude which leads on to the yet more glorious proclamation, "Comfort ye, comfort ye, my people, saith your God. . . . Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for your God" (xl. 1–3).

I am not about to discuss in this place, the grounds, critical, historical, philological, on which the authorship of the last twenty-six chapters of Isaiah has been questioned or maintained; the *à priori* assumptions, on the one hand, that there can be no supernatural prevision of the future, and, on the other, that every book in the Canon of the Old Testament must necessarily have been the work of the writer to whom it is traditionally ascribed. I content myself, for the present, with asking the question whether, given the acknowledged phenomena of the case, the hypothe-

sis of Isaiah's authorship fits in with them; whether this is such a book as at the time, and under the conditions which we have assumed, might naturally have been written by him.

I have spoken of these chapters as forming a distinct book, but both terms are more or less misleading. The English division into chapters is modern and artificial. The Hebrew division into *Haphtaroth* (or sections), though more ancient, was not the prophet's own arrangement, but was adopted as a convenient plan for reading the Sabbath lessons in the worship of the synagogue. It is quite clear, on the one hand, that the whole has not the character of a continuous discourse. It is equally clear that it is not without a distinct plan, which gradually develops itself. One of the ablest of modern commentators has indeed, perhaps with an over-subtle leaning to mechanical arrangements, seen in it a series of poems constructed on the pattern of a trilogy, each part of the trilogy containing three lesser triads. As Delitzsch works out this thought, the divisions stand as follows:—

PART I. Chaps. xl.–xlviii. The contrast between Jehovah and the idols, and between Israel and the heathen.

(1) Chap. xl.; (2) xli.; (3) xlii. 1–xliii. 13; (4) xliii. 14–xliv. 5; (5) xliv. 6–23; (6) xliv. 24–xlv. (7) xlvi.; (8) xlvii.; (9) xlviii.

PART II. The contrast between the present suffering of the servant of the Lord and his future glory.

(1) xlix.; (2) l.; (3) li.; (4) lii. 1–12; (5) lii. 13–liii.; (6) liv.; (7) lv.; (8) lvi. 1–8; (9) lvi. 9–lvii.

PART III. The contrast in the heart of Israel itself between the hypocrites and the rebellious,—the outward "congregation" and the faithful and persecuted, the true *Ecclesia*, on the other.

(1) lviii.; (2) lix.; (3) lx.; (4) lxi.; (5) lxii; (6) lxiii. 1–6; (7) lxiii. 7–lxiv.; (8) lxv.; (9) lxvi.

Without adopting this classification, which seems to me somewhat too elaborate, and to follow too closely upon the existing division of the chapters, the scheme is at least suggestive as indicating the way in which the great series of poems is to be read. They are one in the unity of their subject, manifold in their treatment of its varying aspects, separate and yet continuous,—are to be read, as it were, like Herbert's "Temple," or Wordsworth's "Ecclesiastical Sonnets," or Tennyson's "In Memoriam." There is a plan and a purpose in them; but each poem is complete in itself, and, as the whole must have grown to its completeness through many weeks and months, and, perhaps, even years, reflects more or less thoroughly the feelings of the writer at the time. If it were possible to know the circumstances under which each poem was written, we cannot doubt that a new light would be thrown upon its meaning. As that is not possible, we must be content to invert the process, and to infer, as best we may, the circumstances from the poem. To do that adequately would require, of course, a full interpretation of the whole volume, and on that I do not purpose to enter, partly because I hope to find before long another channel for such an examination as is needed, partly because the work will be undertaken in the EXPOSITOR by a scholar more competent than myself. For the present I narrow the limits of the discussion to the enquiry as to the light which the series of poems in this book throw on that "ideal biography" of Isaiah which it has been the object of these Papers to construct. There is something significant in the fact that, according to Delitzsch's division, each part of the trilogy ends with the proclamation of the darker side of the law of Divine retribution; Parts I. and II. in identically the same terms, "There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked" (xlviii. 22; lvii. 21); Part III. in words that express the same thought, and which have risen into a new prominence as having been adopted

and emphatically republished by the Christ Himself ("their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched") as the fittest symbols of the judgment of Gehenna (lxvi. 24; Mark ix. 42–48). It is as though the prophet's experience had taught him that whatever other aspects of the Divine government might be presented to the hopes of men, that addressed to their fears must not be suppressed. It was the final outcome of the belief in the Holy One of Israel, who was, by the necessity of his being, a consuming fire to all unholiness, which had from the first been dominant in the prophet's thoughts. (Comp. xxxiii. 14.)

The new prominence given to the argument against idolatry is, as any thoughtful student will note, and as Delitzsch's arrangement indicates, another characteristic feature of this book. In the earlier years of his ministry he had denounced it, and foretold its overthrow. Now he reasons with it as a man who had come into closer contact with it, and seen how terribly fascinating a power it exercised over the minds of men. It is, of course, open to those who maintain the theory of a later authorship to say that this was the natural outcome of contact with the idolatries of Chaldæa during the Babylonian exile, though all evidence points to the conclusion that that discipline of suffering did its work in producing an intense abhorrence of idols, which became before long as ingrained an element of Jewish nature, as their tendency to yield to the fascination had been before. It is, I believe, quite as natural to think of the prophet watching, during the later years of Hezekiah or the early years of Manasseh, the revival of that tendency which at the opening of the former reign seemed to have been stamped out effectually. That view receives at least some confirmation from the fact that the last chapter, written, on this hypothesis, under Manasseh, contains the most vivid pictures, drawn as by an eye-witness, of the mingling of the false and the true worship. On the one

hand there were the people sacrificing in gardens, and burning incense upon the brick roofs of their houses, and taking up their abodes in the cavern-graves, as if with the purpose of consulting the spirits of the dead, and eating swine's flesh (lxv. 5) as in the worship of the Zidonian Tammuz—a picture which might well have been seen in Palestine under Manasseh, but which was not likely to have any actual counterpart either in Babylon or Palestine at the time of the return from the captivity. On the other hand, there was the outward worship of the sacrifice of oxen and of sheep, the oblation of the meat-offering, the smoke of incense still going on in the Temple, as it had gone on in the days of Uzziah,[1] and each act of that hollow ritual was as offensive in the eyes of Jehovah as the abominations of the heathen (lxvi. 1-3). That also, it seems to me, belongs to the time of Manasseh rather than to the new-born zeal of the days of Zerubbabel and Joshua, of Haggai and Zechariah, as the Temple rose from its foundations.

A time of retrospection such as we have pictured to ourselves must have led a prophet like Isaiah to have asked himself how far his predictions and his hopes had been fulfilled. As far as we can judge, he must have felt that while those which spoke of judgments, Assyrian invasions and the like, and of deliverance from the destruction which those judgments threatened, had had their counterpart in the history of his time, those which spoke of a righteous king, manifesting the righteousness of God, and of a kingdom of peace and blessedness, had received but a very partial fulfilment. Hezekiah, with all his virtues, had yet many weaknesses that counterbalanced them. The material prosperity, the religious reformation, the restored unity of the nation, in which the historian might exult, fell far short of

[1] There is no indication in the historical books that Manasseh closed the Temple, or put a stop to the worship of Jehovah. His sin was that he desecrated that worship by the juxtaposition of that of other gods.

the glorious ideal in which "the sucking child should play on the hole of the asp," and "the earth should be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea" (xi. 1–9). Was he, as such an one as the writer of Ecclesiastes might have done, to abandon all these hopes as vain and visionary illusions, to confess himself *desillusionné*, to fall back on the rock of duty and to do right because it was right, in "scorn of consequence." That might be the natural and legitimate outcome of the experience of one who was simply an ethical teacher, but it was at variance with his whole nature, with his inextinguishable hopes, with his calling as a prophet. What he had to do was to recast his hopes, to give them a wider range, to throw them into a more distant future. He contemplates now nothing less than a "new heavens and a new earth" (lxvi. 22). That hope is connected as before with the calling and election of his people, and therefore it involved their prolonged, if not their perpetuated, existence, and their return from that exile in Babylon which he had been commissioned to announce. It was, as before, to be bound up with a representative of the House of David, ruling the kingdoms of the world. But a new thought had been dawning upon his mind which gradually assumed more distinct proportions, and which gave to those hopes a greater unity, and introduced into them an entirely new element. That mysterious form of the ideal servant of Jehovah, which seems, as we read, to shift and change its aspect, was to Israel what the "colossal man" of the idealist[1] is to humanity at large. As representing the nation, he embodies at once its calling and election and the deafness and blindness which had made it unfaithful to that calling (xlii. 19). Once, in the starting point of its history, that idea

[1] The phrase has become familiar through Bishop Temple's contribution to "Essays and Reviews," but is found (in the form of "cet homme universel . . . qui subsiste toujours et qui apprend continuellement")—I dare not venture to assert found for the first time—in the *Pensées* of Pascal. (Part I. 2.)

of the Servant of the Lord had been personally embodied, though not in all its fulness, in the history of Abraham (li. 1, 2). In the time to come it would again receive another and fuller embodiment in the person of the "stem out of the root of Jesse." The national and the personal embodiments were as concentric circles exhibiting the working of the same laws, the one gathering into itself in an intenser form the experiences of the other. For the nation, as the servant of the Lord, there had been needed the discipline of suffering, the fiery trials of affliction. What he now learnt was that this discipline was needed also for the far-off Christ. This was the new corrective element which characterized Isaiah's later Messianic prophecies. In his earlier visions he had thought of the righteous King as passing at once, because of his righteousness, to victory and power. It seemed so natural, so in accordance with the Eternal Law, that the righteous should simply prosper. Had he seen it so in his own experience, in that of his time and people? Had not suffering, and disappointment, and apparent failure, ending in the prospect of agony and death, been his fate and that of other witnesses for the truth of God, in proportion as they, or he himself, had drawn nearer to the ideal of the true servant of the Lord? Would it not be so in like manner with the true Israel of God, with him who gathered up the whole idea of Israel into his own personality? He too, though he was a Son, would have to take upon him the form of a servant, and to learn obedience by the things which he suffered (Heb. v. 8). He could not be a true servant unless he identified himself with all other servants. He too would have to pass through the ordeal of apparent failure, and to say, as Isaiah might have often said, "I have laboured in vain, I have spent my strength for nought and in vain" (xlix. 4). The stem of the stock of Jesse was to grow up "as a tender plant, as a root of a dry ground," to be "despised and rejected of

men." In proportion to his own freedom from the sins of which affliction might seem the natural punishment, he would have to bear the griefs and to carry the sorrows of others, to bear the reproaches of the blasphemer as though he had been "stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted." Then the law of a power to win men to God through sufferings voluntarily encountered and joyfully accepted, which was partially realized in every true servant of Jehovah, would reach its highest point, and it should be seen that *the* Servant was wounded for the transgressions and bruised for the iniquities of others, that the chastisement which brought peace to mankind was his, and that by his stripes we are healed (liii. 1–5). For him there was to be the patient silent endurance of shame and agony, as of a lamb led to the slaughter, "stricken for the transgressions for his people." He was to pass to the grave as the wicked and the oppressors pass, though in him there was neither violence nor deceit.[1] Yet that seeming failure should issue in an eternal success. He should see of the travail of his soul and be satisfied therewith: by bearing the sins of many he should obtain power to intercede for many, and he should divide the spoil with the strong (liii. 11, 12). Through this victory of the righteous Servant there should come that Kingdom of Heaven, of an Israel redeemed and purified, which the prophet, in immediate sequence to this picture, paints in more glowing colours

[1] The common reference of liii. 9 to the burial of our Lord's body in the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea can hardly, I conceive, be maintained. The two clauses are clearly parallel and not antithetic, and the "rich" of the one are identical with the "wicked" of the other. The type of rich man which the prophet had in view was that sketched in Job xxi. 28 (where "prince" is parallel with "wicked") and xxvii. 13–19, and Ps. lxxiii. 3–12, the ungodly who increase in riches, who die as malefactors, unhonoured and unlamented. The traditional interpretation mars the completeness of the picture of apparent failure and condemnation at the hands of men, by the introduction of an incongruous feature, for the sake of a relatively trivial coincidence, and the loss is greater than the gain. The common view too, it may be added, requires an inversion of the prophet's words. On that hypothesis the Servant of Jehovah was with the wicked in his death, and with the rich in his grave.

than before; the shame of youth and the reproach of widowhood forgotten, the kindness of the Divine Husband and his covenant of peace renewed, and her children taught of Jehovah, so that their peace, their salvation, should be great (liv. 1–13), the spirit poured out on all flesh when the Redeemer should come to Zion (lix. 20, 21), the glory of the Lord rising upon his people, while all around the nations were sitting in the gross darkness, and the Gentiles coming to that light and kings to the brightness of that rising (lx.).

We are all familiar with the interpretation of these and other like passages which find their ultimate fulfilment in the sufferings, the death, the resurrection of the Christ, in the Pentecostal gift, in the expansion of the universal Church. As with other prophetic ideals, it was not given to Isaiah to "know the times and the seasons which the Father had set in his own power" (Acts i. 7), and it may well be that from his standpoint it seemed as if this fulfilment was to blend with, or to follow on, the return of the exiles from their Babylonian bondage. It is as though, with his children's names still present to his thoughts, Shear-Jashub and the true Immanuel were to grow up, as it were, together. The great conqueror who was to be the instrument of God's purpose for that work of deliverance, as Sennacherib had been for the work of destruction, himself the shepherd, yes, even the Messiah of Jehovah (xliv. 28; xlv. 1) might seem almost as the immediate forerunner of the yet greater Redeemer, the true Anointed of the Lord. I do not now discuss in what way the name of that deliverer, the "Koresh" of the Hebrew, the "Kyros" of the Greek, the "Cyrus" of the English version, was made known to the prophet—whether by a supernatural communication, of which no one can say that it is impossible, even while we may admit that it is not analogous with the usual processes of Divine revelation—or whether it found its starting-point in the prophet's knowledge of kingly titles and symbolic

names among the Medo-Persian tribes, who had come within the horizon of his vision during the events that had brought the ministers of Hezekiah into contact with Assyria and with Babylon. It is, at least, a conceivable hypothesis that in this respect the prophecy may have helped to bring about its own fulfilment, and that a conqueror at the head of a people which had many affinities with the faith of Israel, and desiring to enlist the exiles of that faith on his side, may have taken the name which he found in the great prophetic book which they cherished as a Gospel, first in addition to his own, and then in substitution for it.[1]

Into the further question of the relation of the life of the Lord Jesus and the history of the Christian Church to Isaiah's prophecies, I will not now enter further than to note that here also we may expect to meet with what Bacon has called "springing and germinant accomplishments;" the horizon of the far-off Divine event, of the triumph of light over darkness, of good over evil, the restoration of Israel and of mankind, ever receding as we advance on the pathway of the years, and yet, as it withdraws, leaving behind it typical and representative, though partial, fulfilments as pledges and tokens of something better and greater that is still to come. And in a very real sense it may be said that the prophecies of Isaiah, those especially of the closing years of his life with which we are now dealing, have helped to bring about their own fulfilment. More than any other prophetic utterances they served to sustain the hopes of those who looked for the consolation

[1] The chief facts connected with the name are: (1) that it was also the name of a river near Pasargadæ; (2) that Strabo states that Kyros, whose previous name was Agradates, took that by which he is commonly known from the river (Strab., xv. 3, 6); (3) that it was also the name of the grandfather of the great Kyros; (4) that the name was believed by Greek writers (Ctesias and Plutarch) to mean "the sun;" (5) that the weight of the authority of modern Oriental scholars is against this etymology, though it is admitted that it sounds like the Persian word which has that meaning. (Delitzsch, and Cheyne, on Isa. xliv. 28.)

of Israel, for redemption in Jerusalem (Luke ii. 25, 38). Looked at from the human side of their development, the minds of the Forerunner and the Apostles of the Christ, and even of the Christ Himself, were framed and fashioned on this great burst of prophecy, which comes to us as the swan-song of the old and dying seer. What, we may ask, would have been the ministry of the Baptist if he had not started with the conviction that he, and none other, was to be the voice crying in the wilderness, "Prepare ye the way of the Lord" (xl. 3; Matt. iii. 3; Mark i. 3; Luke iii. 4). Can we fail to recognize the fact that the whole life of our Lord, from that first epiphany when He declared that the one supreme purpose of his life was to be "about his Father's business" (Luke ii. 49), was a conscious and deliberate endeavour to realize Isaiah's ideal of the Servant of Jehovah? So it was that when He came to the baptism of John He declared that thus it became Him to fulfil all righteousness (Matt. iii. 15). So it was that, at the outset of his ministry He declared that He came to fulfil the words which Isaiah had put into the mouth of that servant: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor, . . . to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord" (Luke iv. 17, 18). So it was that the thought of his being exalted and lifted up was inseparably associated in his teaching with that of his suffering and death (John iii. 14; viii. 28; xii. 32), as it had been associated in the great prophecy of Isaiah (liii.). So it was that as He drew near to his hour of suffering, from which his purely human will would have naturally shrunk, He gained fresh strength for the great sacrifice by asking Himself, "How then shall the Scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be?" (Matt. xxvi. 54). So, by act as well as word, He made men feel that He, and none other, was that Servant of the Lord, the Beloved in whom the Father was well

pleased, who obeyed in silence, doing his Father's work without clamour and without strife, who would not break the bruised reed nor quench the smoking flax (xlii. 1; Matt. xii. 18–21); to whom it was given to hear morning by morning the voice of his Father, and so to be able to speak a word in season to him that was weary (l. 4; Matt. xi. 28). So, partly perhaps by his own actual interpretation of the words, partly by what may have been the yet more palpably certain proof of the interpretation of facts, the preacher of his truth could answer the question of the student of Isaiah, as he read of the righteous and the silent Sufferer: "Of whom speaketh the prophet this, of himself or of some other man?" by preaching to him Jesus (Acts viii. 34). So, interpreting what yet remained unfulfilled by this conspicuous fulfilment, St. Paul found in Isaiah's guidance that which he needed to sustain his hopes for his people and for mankind, for the restoration of Israel and for the ingathering of mankind (Comp. Rom. ix.–xi. and the many passages from Isaiah there quoted). The thought of the "remnant" is still a living thought. Shear-Jashub and Immanuel, though dead, were yet speaking through the Apostle to far-off generations. Isaiah might still say, "Behold I and the children whom Jehovah hath given me are for signs and for wonders in Israel from the Lord of Hosts which dwelleth in Mount Zion" (viii. 18).

The thoughts thus suggested, considered in their bearing on the interpretation of the New Testament writings, on Christian evidence, on the perpetuated nationality of Israel and its possible restoration to its old country and its old pre-eminence, might furnish materials for a volume. Upon that ground I will not now enter. My aim in these pages has been, as I stated at the outset, to make the historical personality of Isaiah more living and real to myself and others than it has been before, and, so far as that end is attained, the labour has not been lost. "The historical

imagination," as George Macdonald has well said, "can nowhere be more healthily and rewardingly occupied than in endeavouring to construct the life of an individual out of the fragments which are all that can reach us of the history of even the noblest of our race."[1] But as the last application of that method of legitimate inference from acknowledged phenomena, I would suggest the thought whether in that prophetic strain which is the outcome of old experience, some such vision of what he was to be to a far-off age may not have floated before the consciousness of the aged prophet and strengthened him for the last trials of his life—its apparent failure, its closing agony and shame, its forebodings of coming evil. It has, through the whole history of the past, been the consolation and the joy of those who have been before their time, and who have therefore been as a voice crying in the wilderness, standing aloof from, and opposed by, the men of their own generation, to believe that the "age to come will think with them." May not that thought have come as a gleam of hope to light up the dark horizon of the evening of the prophet's life? In some very real sense, as St. John tells us, Isaiah in his prophetic utterances as to the Christ that was to come, "saw his glory, and therefore spake of Him" (John xii. 41). May we not cherish the thought that to him, as afterwards to Daniel and to Stephen, the heavens were opened, and that he saw the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God; that in that Son of Man he saw the sharer of the Divine glory, the true Immanuel, *the* Servant of the Lord who was to be perfected through suffering, exalted to the height of the Father's throne through the humiliation which brought Him to the very gates of Hades, offering his life as a sacrifice for the sins of others, and therefore justifying many, and seeing of the travail of his soul?

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[1] "Essay on the Imagination," in "Orts," p. 17.