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## Servant of Jehovah.<sup>1</sup>

*Isaiah lii. 13–liii.*

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BY REV. R. P. STEBBINS, D.D.

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I PROPOSE in this paper to inquire, and if possible to determine, who the “servant of the Lord” is who is spoken of in Isaiah, chaps. xl.–lv., and more especially in the chapters lii. 13–liii. It is not my purpose to give a history of opinions on this subject or a catalogue of writers and works which have discussed it. The results of my own study, almost entirely independent of commentaries, is what I wish to present in this paper and all I propose to offer. Were I to attempt to give a summary of criticisms and opinions, I should not only fail of doing justice to the subject, but detain you to listen to a recital of what you all know equally well with myself at least, and probably better than I do.

The main, if not the exclusive purpose of the prophet is to remove the despondency, and enliven the hopes of the captive people as the day of their deliverance is drawing near. He kindles with prophetic enthusiasm as he sees the tribes gathering, the desert becoming a garden to refresh them on their way, and Zion arising from her ruins and putting on her princely robes. The mountains and the hills break forth into singing, and all the trees of the field clap their hands to welcome back the exiles. The cypress tree grows up instead of the thorn, and instead of the bramble the myrtle tree, that their homeward journey may be pleasant and their home attractive.

The style of the writer is lofty, diffuse, and figurative. He abounds in personification especially, the most bold and impressive of all the figures of speech, and one most difficult of all to sustain at great length without occasionally lapsing into the literal style, as every one knows who has ever attempted to sustain a personification running through even a page. How much more difficult to con-

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<sup>1</sup> Read in June, 1885.

sistently carry it through several pages, applied to different conditions.

Whether the "servant" spoken of in chaps. lii. 13–liii. is a personification or a literal use of the word is the question before me. If it is a personification, and the personification is perfectly adhered to, the work attributed to it, the feelings cherished, the sufferings endured, the hopes indulged, the sacrifices made, would still be described precisely as they would be if the "*servant*" was a real person; and it would be very difficult, if not impossible, to determine which interpretation was the correct one.

It is agreed on all sides, I believe, that this personification, if it is one, is correctly sustained throughout with but one exception, which exception is inconsistent with the "servant's" being a literal person, and indicates a personification. But whether this is a *valid exception* is a matter of dispute among writers, and I omit its consideration till a subsequent part of my paper, since other portions of this section of the prophecy may aid us in determining it.

Some critics have endeavored to bar all questions respecting the real personality of the "servant" here spoken of, by appealing to the use made of this passage by the writers of the New Testament, and by the reported sayings of Jesus himself. If the Master and his apostles have so referred to this passage as to decide the question whether the servant is a real person and not a personification, there is no more to be said on the subject by a believer in their authority in the premises. The only question which can be raised by us, therefore, is, Do they thus decide it? It is necessary, therefore, to seek a correct answer to this preliminary question.

Because passages in the Old Testament, descriptions of persons and events, are quoted and applied to persons and events in the New Testament, it does not necessarily follow that the Old Testament writer or speaker had the *same* person or event in view to which the New Testament writer or speaker applies them. It is too well known for me to discuss it, in this presence, that quotations are often made from the Old Testament by speakers and writers in the New, simply to *illustrate* the subject before them, to *enforce* the truth which they are stating, to *prove* the doctrine which they are maintaining, as well as to show that a prediction of the person or event which they are describing is accomplished. What passages are or are not thus quoted as *the fulfilment of predictions in this original meaning and intent*, I do not pause to show, but only state the *fact* of other purposes of quotations, that it may not lie in the way of a connected discussion

of my subject. I will only say, that there is no passage quoted from the section of the prophecy which I am to examine, which in the *form* of the quotation so strongly indicates that it is the literal fulfilment of a prophecy as that in Matt. ii. 15, "and he [Jesus] was there [in Egypt] until the death of Herod: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet saying, Out of Egypt did I call my son." It is not only conceded, but maintained on all sides, that what is here quoted is *not a prophecy*, but a simple *historical* statement of the fact that Jehovah had called Israel his people, when he was a child, out of Egypt, which people he calls his "son." With this passage as a typical illustration of the manner in which the New Testament writers quote and apply passages from the Old Testament, I proceed to examine the quotations made by them from the section of Isaiah now before me for interpretation.

Paul, Rom. x. 16, quotes Isaiah liii. 1, as describing fitly the slow progress which the gospel was making, "For Isaiah saith, Lord, who hath believed our report?" and John xii. 38 quotes the same passage to illustrate the unbelief of those who had heard the teachings of Jesus, using this formula, "That the word of Isaiah the prophet might be fulfilled which he spake," "Who hath believed our report and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed?" This formula of quotation is not nearly as strong as that used in quoting Hosea, and is far from *proving* that the prophet had the teachings of Jesus in his mind when he spoke it. Indeed, the prophet appears to some critics to be speaking of himself and not of the "servant."

Again: Isaiah liii. 4 is quoted in Matt. viii. 17, with this formula, "And Jesus healed all that were sick: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying, 'Himself took our infirmities and bare our diseases.'" This formula is not as strong as that used in quoting Hosea, which we know was only an adaptation of his language to a modern event. Besides, this is not an exact quotation of the prophet's words, showing that it was not quoted as *proof* but as illustration.

The 7th and 8th verses of chap. liii. are quoted in Acts viii. 32, 33 as a portion of scripture which the eunuch was reading when Philip fell in with him. The passages read thus:—

"He was led as a sheep to the slaughter;  
 And as a lamb before his shearers is dumb,  
 So he openeth not his mouth.  
 In his humiliation his judgment was taken away;  
 His generation who shall declare?"

And when the eunuch said to Philip, "I pray thee, of whom speaketh the prophet this? of himself or of some other?" "Philip beginning from this scripture preached unto him Jesus." Well might Philip do so without saying that the prophet had Jesus in his mind when he spoke these words, but some one who suffered for his people's aid, — a most appropriate and touching text to illustrate the sufferings of the Saviour. We probably have not all that Philip said on this occasion. We are not told that he answered the eunuch's question directly. He may have waived the question, and commenced at once to preach Jesus, as the occasion was so opportune. Ministers to-day appropriate and use passages in the New Testament with much greater freedom than Philip used this, if he did not think the prophet had Jesus of Nazareth in his mind. At all events, the language here used does not *prove*, if it may *imply*, that the prophet spoke of Jesus. Waiving, then, any positive opinion on the subject, and remitting a final decision of its application till further evidence of the prophet's use of the word "servant" is found, I proceed to examine the remaining places in which this section is quoted in the New Testament.

In Luke xxii. 37 Jesus quotes Isaiah liii. 12, "He was numbered with the transgressors" with these words, "this which is written must be fulfilled in me . . . for that which concerneth me hath fulfilment or an end"; a very appropriate application of language used of another to himself. If anything implies that the prophet had reference to Jesus, it must be found in the last clause, "for the things concerning me have an end," or "that which concerneth me hath fulfilment." The translation of this clause I do not think is a good one, and possibly our Saviour's words are not fully reported. The phrase *καὶ γὰρ τὸ περὶ ἐμοῦ τέλος ἔχει* may be freely rendered, "for indeed so my work has its end," that is, to be "numbered with the transgressors."

Peter quotes, in 1 Peter ii. 22-24, the following disconnected fragments from Isaiah liii., with this introduction, "Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example that ye should follow in his steps. Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, threatened not; but committed *himself* to him that judgeth righteously: who of his own self bare our sins in his body upon the tree, that we, having died unto sins, might live unto righteousness, by whose stripes ye are healed. For ye were going astray like lost sheep."

It will be seen at a glance that this is not a verbal quotation, and

that it is interspersed with remarks by the apostle. The language used by the prophet is strikingly descriptive of Christ, and the apostle used this sacred language in his teaching of what Christ had done for the world, to give it force and significance.

These are all the instances in which any portion of this section of the prophecy is quoted in the New Testament. It is obvious that none of these passages are so quoted and used as to *prove* that the prophet had in mind the incidents and persons to which or whom the persons making the quotations applied them. They are all appropriate expressions of a condition of suffering and trial such as our Saviour passed through, and may well have been used to describe them; but whether or not the prophet did have him in mind while writing must be determined by the general drift of his thought, the evident purpose of the previous portion of his prophecy, and the way in which he uses the word "servant," whether as a personification or of a real person; and if as a personification, what is personified; and if as a real person, who he is.

First, then, what is the general drift of thought in the previous portion of this prophecy?

The prophet's mind, as is evident from chapters xl.—lii. 12, is entirely occupied in describing the *captive Jewish people*, the desolate condition of their country, the ruins of their cities, the suffering of those carried captive, and the near approach of their release, their departure from Babylon, their journey across the country to their fathers' homes, and the rebuilding of their cities and temple, and the joy they would feel in their deliverance and rebuilt homes and cities, and replanted vineyards.

The people, the nation, are spoken of as the "Servant of Jehovah"; and their sufferings and captivity and release are spoken of under that name. The low origin of the nation, the watchful care and protection of their God, Jehovah, their unfilialness and frequent rebellions against him, and the ruin of their land, and their captivity, are described under the name of a "servant"; so, also, is their deliverance and subsequent prosperity.

Near the close of this section (chaps. xl.—lv.), the people are personified as a woman, — the mother of the nation, — as divorced for cause, as suffering in destitution (as the "servant" suffered in his exile), but to be restored, and prosperity and multitudes of children to be given her (chap. liv.). Then, as the people — both servant and handmaid — are soon to be established again in the land, the prophet, in loftiest periods, calls upon them to accept the approach-

ing deliverance with devout thanksgiving and inspired alacrity, and not linger by the way as they pass under the waving palm-branches, and behold the rejoicing hill-tops of their native land.

The nation, thus personified as both "servant" and "handmaid," is fully described in all its rebellions, exile, sufferings, release, return, and prosperity. Keeping this style of the prophet constantly in mind, there will be but little difficulty in interpreting, here and there, a sentence or paragraph which otherwise would be obscure, and in accounting for an occasional real or apparent lapse of the personification into literalism, and an apparent confusion of singular and plural pronouns, and second and third persons. I have already said that the continuation of a personification through even one page, without any violation of its use, would be difficult; much more, then, would it be so to continue it, as does this prophet, through fourteen chapters.

I have offered no *proof* that, in chapters previous to chap. lii. 13, the Jewish people are spoken of personified as a person, or "servant," and it can hardly be necessary to offer any proof of it in this presence: yet, for the sake of completeness and to give impressiveness to the opinion that the same personification of the nation is continued through chap. lii. 13–liii., I will examine the manner in which the personification is treated, as well as the fact that it is made in the previous chapters.

The nation is called the "servant" (chap. xli. 8, 9): "Thou, Israel, art my servant, Jacob, whom I have chosen, the seed of Abraham, my friend, whom I have taken from the ends of the earth, and called thee from the chief men thereof, and said unto thee, Thou art my servant . . . and I have not cast thee away. (14) Fear not, thou worm Jacob, [and] ye men of Israel, I will help thee."

Again, in chapter xlii. 1, the prophet says, "Behold my *servant*, whom I uphold; my *chosen* in whom my soul delighteth; I have *put my Spirit* upon him, and he shall bring forth judgment to the nations. . . . (6, 7) I the Lord give thee a light unto the nations, and have called thee to open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners out of the dungeon. . . . (16) I will bring the blind by a way that they know not . . . I will make the darkness light before them, and the crooked places straight. . . . (18) *Hear, ye deaf; and look, ye blind, that ye may see. Who is blind, but my servant? or deaf as my messenger that I sent? Who is blind as he that is at peace with me, and blind as the Lord's servant? . . . (22) But this is a PEOPLE robbed and spoiled; they are all of them snared in holes, and they are hid' in*

prison houses. (24) Who gave Jacob for a spoil, and Israel to the robbers? did not the Lord, he against whom *we* have sinned, in whose ways *they* would not walk, neither were *they* obedient unto his law. Therefore he poured upon HIM the fury of his anger, . . . and it set HIM on fire round about, yet HE knew it not; . . . HE laid it not to heart."

The prophet continues his personification in chap. xliii. 1, and says, "Thus saith the Lord that made thee, O Jacob, and that formed thee, O Israel; fear not, for I have redeemed thee. . . . (5) Fear not; I will bring thy seed from the east, and GATHER *thee* from the west: . . . (6) my sons from far, and my daughters from the ends of the earth. . . . Bring forth the *blind* people that have eyes, and the *deaf* that have ears. . . . (10) Ye are *my witnesses*, saith the Lord, and my *servant* whom I have chosen; . . . (12) there was no strange god among *you*: therefore *ye* are *my witnesses*." Through the rest of this chapter the singular and plural numbers, and the second and third persons, are very frequently interchanged, *when the same subject is spoken of* as literal or personified. "O Jacob, thou hast not honored me with thy sacrifices. . . . (24) Thou hast wearied me with *thine iniquities*. . . . (28) Therefore I will make Jacob a *curse*, and Israel a *reviling* (reproach). (Chap. xlv. 1) Yet now hear, O Jacob, my *servant*, and Israel, whom I have *chosen*, the Lord made thee; fear not, O Jacob, my *servant*, and Israel, whom I have chosen. . . . I will pour *my Spirit upon thy seed*." After sarcastically describing the making of a heathen god, he says, (21) "Remember these things, O Jacob, and Israel, for THOU art my *servant*. I have formed thee; thou art my *servant*. Thou shalt not be forgotten of me. I have blotted out as a thick cloud *thy transgressions*." Then follows a promise of deliverance by Cyrus, and the building of the waste places of Judah (chaps. xlv., xlvi., xlvii.), and also of the destruction of Babylon. Nothing is said of Jacob as a "servant," or of Israel as a chosen one.

In chap. xlviii. 1 the house of Jacob is addressed, and the Lord says (10): "I have chosen *thee* in the *furnace of affliction*. (20) Go ye forth of Babylon. The Lord hath *redeemed his servant Jacob*. (xlix. 1) Listen, O isles, unto *me*. . . . The Lord hath called *me* from the *womb*. . . . He hath made my mouth a sharp sword, . . . and he said to me, Thou art my *SERVANT, Israel*, in *whom I will be glorified*. But *I* said, *I* have labored in vain; *I* have spent my strength for naught and vanity. . . . And now saith the Lord that formed *me* . . . to be his *servant*, to *bring Jacob to him again*, and that Israel be gath-



ered unto him. . . . Yea, he saith, Is it too high a thing that *thou* shouldst be my *servant*, to raise up the tribes of *Jacob* and to restore the preserved of *Israel*: I will give THEE for a light to the Gentiles (nations), that THOU *mayst be my salvation to the ends of the earth*. . . . Thus saith the Lord . . . to *him* whom *man despiseth*, to *him* whom the nation *abhorreth*, to a *servant* of rulers, Kings shall see and arise, princes, and they shall worship, because the Lord is faithful . . . who hath chosen thee. I have helped thee, I will preserve *thee*, and will give *thee* for a *covenant of the people*, to raise up this land, to make them inherit the *desolate heritages*. Sing, O heavens, . . . for the Lord hath comforted his *people*, and will have compassion upon the *afflicted*."

This strain of promise of deliverance and richest blessings to follow it, with the personification of the people as a woman, goes on to the 13th verse of chapter lii.,—the commencement of the section to be interpreted as to the meaning of "servant."

Though I have dwelt so long on the *attributes* and *services* and *sufferings* of the *servant of the Lord*, described in these chapters, I cannot resist the temptation to quote a few more passages respecting him in this concluding chapter (l. 1). "Thus saith the Lord: Where is the bill of *your mother's* divorcement? . . . To which of my *creditors* have I *sold you*? . . . For your *iniquities* were you sold, and for your *transgressions* was your mother put away. (4) The Lord hath given *me* the tongue of them that are taught, . . . that *I* should sustain *him* that is weary. I turned not away backward; I *gave my back to the smiters*, and *my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair*: I hid not my face from *shame* and *spitting*. . . . Who is among *you* that feareth the Lord and obeyeth the voice of his *servant*? (li. 1) Look unto the *rock whence ye were hewn*, and to the *hole of the pit whence ye were digged*. . . . The *captive* exiles shall *speedily be loosed*: for I am the Lord thy God. . . . Awake, awake, put on thy strength, O Zion. Break forth into singing, ye waste places of Jerusalem; for the Lord hath comforted *his people*, he hath *redeemed Jerusalem*."

By this examination of the previous chapters we find that the people or nation personified as a "*Servant of the Lord*," is said to be "feeble," a "worm" (xli. 14), "afflicted" (xlvi. 10; xlix. 13; li. 21), "despised," "abhorred" (xlix. 7); against whom men were "enraged," "incensed" (xli. 11; xlv. 24); he is "poor" and "needy" (xli. 17). This servant is said to be "blind" and "deaf" (xliii. 8; xliii. 16, 18, 19; xlvi. 8), the "friend of God," yet "robbed," "plun-

dered," a "spoil," "bound in prison," and "*prisoners*" (xlii. 22, 25 ; xlix. 9), "witnesses" of Jehovah (xliii. 10) ; he is given up as a "curse" and "reproach" (xliii. 28), "reviled" (li. 7), whose transgressions have vanished like a cloud, and whose "sins" like a mist (xliv. 22) ; "redeemed," taken away for "nought" (lii. 5), yet is said to be "precious," "honorable" (xliii. 4), "loved," as released from captivity in Babylon (xlviii. 20). The personified people, called Jacob and Israel, "the servant of the Lord," is said to be given up for a "spoil" because "WE have sinned against the Lord, and in whose ways THEY would not walk. Therefore, the Lord poured out upon HIM the fury of his anger and set HIM on fire, yet HE knew not ; and it burned HIM, yet HE laid it not to heart.

For similar instances of change of pronouns referring to the same subject see Hosea, chap. ix. 1-5, Rejoice not, O Israel ; "thou" ; "her" ; "they" ; "ye" ; Hosea, chap. x. 1-3, Israel is an empty vine ; "he" ; "they" ; "we" ; "us."

It will be seen at a glance that the same terms are used in describing the "servants," the personified people, in these chapters as are used in chaps. lii. 13-14iii.

In two passages of the prophecy preceding (lii. 13-14iii.), *Zion* is personified as a *woman*, so that we have a "*handmaid*," as well as a "servant," representing the people, and the language used in describing her will illustrate still further the language which is used of the "servant." The passages are chaps. xlix. 14-26 ; l. 1 ; and li. 10-12. She is spoken of as "*unfruitful*," "*childless*," an "*exile*," an "*outcast*," "*oppressed*," "*divorced*," "*dismissed for the sins of the people*," as having drunk the cup of the *Lord's fury to the dregs*," as "*afflicted*," "*deserted*," "*captive*" ; but to be "*ransomed*," "*restored*." The personified people as "*handmaid*" is represented in the same manner as when personified as "*servant*." Uniting the condition of the "*handmaid*" with that of the "*servant*," and also the terms in which her condition is described, — we have the key to the interpretation of the meaning of the prophet, when he speaks of the servant of the Lord in lii. 13-14iii. But confirmation of the accuracy of this interpretation should not be omitted.

A particular examination of two other passages will render still further aid in obtaining the exact meaning of the prophet in the section referred to ; they are chaps. xlii. 1-16 and xlix. 1-13.

There would be no difficulty whatever in understanding the "servant" named in these two passages, as being the personified, ideal people, were it not that the real, captive, imprisoned, scattered people

are to be released by him, to be gathered by him. That is, the *ideal, personified* Israel would be represented as blessing and restoring, as the "servant" of God, the *real, captive* Israel. Jehovah says, "Behold my *servant*, whom I uphold; my *chosen*, in whom my soul *delighteth*; I have put my *spirit* upon him. He shall give laws to the nations. He shall not strive nor cry. . . . He shall not fail, nor become weary, until he shall have established laws in the earth, and distant nations shall wait for instruction. . . . Thus saith Jehovah. . . . I have called *thee* for deliverance; I will hold *thee* by the hand; I will defend *thee*, and make *thee* a mediator to the people, a light to the nations, to open the *blind eyes*, to bring out the *prisoners from the prison*, and them that *sit in darkness out of the prison house*. I am Jehovah, that is my name, and *my glory* [my chosen people] will I not give to another [nation], nor my praise [worship due me] to graven images. . . . I will show myself against my enemies, I will lay waste mountains and hills. . . . Then I will lead the BLIND in an unknown way, I will not forsake them." Such is the main course of thought in the first passage. That those in *prisons* and *bound* are the captive Israelites is made clear by the twenty-second verse: "And yet it is a *robbed* and *plundered people*, they are all of them *bound in prisons*, and hid in dungeons; they have become a spoil."

The second passage, xlix. 1-13, is of the same character, except that the servant, "who is *called at birth*, who is to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel, to be made the light of the nations, he who is *despised* by men, and *abhorred* by the people, the *servant* of tyrants," is said to be "Israel" in the third verse; and he is said to be for a "*mediator for the people*, to restore the land, to distribute the desolated inheritances, to say to the prisoners, Go forth; to them that are in darkness, Come to the light . . . for Jehovah comforteth his people, and hath compassion on his afflicted ones." We are required by this passage to adopt the interpretation that *personified, ideal Israel* is to *succor, deliver, restore* REAL CAPTIVE Israel. But if this interpretation is demanded here by the explicit statements of the text, it may be adopted in the previous passage if it meets the exigencies of the case. That the former passage refers to the same *person* or *personification*, as the latter, is made clear by his characteristics and his work. He is to lead back the people from captivity, and to establish them in the land. This complication of the figure may seem to us hard and unintelligible. It is made so, however, by the length of the passages, and by the minuteness of the description, and not by the figure itself. I will

refer to one or two brief personifications to show this. "Thus saith Jehovah, Where is the bill of your mother's divorcement, by which I dismissed her? Or, who is he among my creditors to whom I sold you? Behold for *your iniquities* are ye sold, and for *your transgressions* was *your mother dismissed* (l. 1). Here the mother is the personified nation, and she is represented as dismissed for the sins of the people, that is, for the sins of the nation itself as a whole. So the *ideal, personified nation is represented as suffering for the sins of the real, sinning people*; precisely the figure in the two passages named above, but not carried to such length of description as to seem awkward, confused. In chap. xl. 1, 21, Zion, the city, is personified, and represented as childless, and says to herself as she sees the people return, her children gather around her, "I surely was childless and unfruitful, an *exile and an outcast*; who then hath brought me these. Behold, I was left alone; these, then, where were they?" Here it is evident that the ideal, childless city is represented also as the captive people, for how could a literal city be an exile?

This, then, is the result of our examination respecting the use and meaning of the word "servant," or phrases, "my servant," "his servant," in this part of Isaiah, till we come to its use in the section under consideration. It *means the people of Israel, the ideal Jacob*, the nation personified. It *never* refers to a personage *yet to come*, but to *one already come*, whose work of deliverance, of instruction, is now going on, or soon to commence.

We are now ready to inquire whether any new person, or usage of the word or phrase, "servant," or "servant of the Lord," is introduced in chaps. lii. 13–liii. To aid us in determining this point, we must call to mind again the drift of the prophecy or discourse, and its harmony or discordance with what precedes, where the same phraseology is used. The section properly commences with chap. lii., 13th verse, and ends with chap. lv. From chap. lii. 13 to the end of chap. liii. is an account of the condition, sufferings, and triumph of the "servant" of the Lord; in chap. liv. is a description of the condition, bereavements, and blessedness of the "handmaid" of the Lord. Chap. lv. contains a triumphant call to the people to accept the divine deliverance, and go forth from their captivity with joy, amidst mountains and hills singing, and trees clapping their hands. With this section ends this particular form of presenting the subject. The word "servant" is not used in the rest of the book.

Let us now return to a more particular examination of the first division of the section including chaps. lii. 13–liii. The "servant"

of the Lord is represented as about to "*prosper*," to be "*exalted*," "*set on high*," and "*greatly exalted*"; as many nations as were "*amazed*" at his "*disfigured*" and "*marred visage*," so many nations shall *exult* on account of him, and *be silent* before him, for they will be *dumb* in view of his unexpected greatness. But who believes us when we say this, and who has recognized the power of Jehovah toward this nation, even among ourselves? For he, "the servant" of the Lord, *grew up unobserved* like a *tender plant*, from a *dry soil*, there was nothing *attractive* about him to awaken delight in him. He was *despised* rather, and *forsaken*, *sorrowful*, and *diseased*, and we *esteemed him not*. But he bore *our diseases* and we esteemed him *smitten of God*. But for *our transgressions* he was *wounded*, for *our iniquities* he was *bruised*, and by *his stripes* are we *healed*; we were all *straying like lost sheep*, but Jehovah *laid on him the iniquity of us all*, yet he was as a *lamb*, he *opened not his mouth*. He was taken away by *oppression*, and who of that generation would consider that he was cut off from the land of the living, that for the transgression of my people chastisement was upon *them*? He was buried with the *wicked*, with the *rich* was his sepulchre, although he had done *no wrong*. Though Jehovah did *bruise* him severely, since he gave himself a *sacrifice for sin*, he shall see *posterity*; free from his *sorrows*, he shall be *satisfied*. My *righteous servant* by his knowledge shall lead many to righteousness, whose *iniquities he bore*. Therefore will I *give him a portion with the mighty*, with *heroes shall he divide the spoil*, because he *poured out his soul unto death*, and was *numbered with transgressors*. It will be perceived that there is nothing affirmed of the "servant" here which has not been affirmed or implied of him elsewhere if we remember the force of figurative language, and that details include no more than the general statement under which they fall. The servant is *despised*, *suffers*, *dies* (as a nation), *triumphs*. That the servant here described is the personified, ideal, chosen people is distinctly hinted in the eighth verse, where it is said that "for the transgression of my people chastisement or smiting was upon *them*." I know that there is a discussion among grammarians and commentators respecting the number of the pronoun in לָמֹן, but the *common usage*, as all admit, is plural, and some of the best critics contend that it is *never* used in the singular, unless in a very few cases as a substitute for a noun of multitude, still retaining its plural meaning. Therefore, unless reasons to the contrary are most imperative, even to altering the text, the pronoun should here be taken as a plural. Some of the most able orthodox critics more than admit, they maintain this.

The "servant" of the Lord here spoken of, then, is the *personified, ideal, chosen people*; and this *personified person* is said, by the double figure noticed before as used by this writer in his personifications, to have suffered for the sins of the *real, literal* people. But blessing was in store for him, the future was all radiant with glory. The Lord would reward him for all his sufferings.

That this view may be still further confirmed, let us notice for one moment the next personification of the people as the handmaid of the Lord. She is exhorted to sing and shout; for though desolate, her children shall be more than of a married woman. "Thy posterity shall *inherit the nations and people the desolate cities*. Fear not, blush not, for thou shalt forget the shame of thy youth (*thy low origin*), and the reproach of thy widowhood (captivity) shalt thou remember no more. For thy husband is thy Maker. For as a woman *forsaken* and *deeply afflicted* hath Jehovah recalled thee, and as a wife wedded in youth that hath been *rejected*, saith God. For a little moment I have *forsaken* thee; but in mercy will I GATHER thee. I call special attention to the word *gather*, קָבַץ, which implies plurality, the *people* of which the handmaid is the personification, as in chap. xliii. 5. Fear not, for I am with thee. I will bring thy children from the east, and *gather them* from the west. In *overflowing wrath* I hid my face from thee for a moment, but with *everlasting kindness* I will have mercy upon thee; as in the time of Noah I swore, so now I swear, that I will not be angry with thee, saith Jehovah, that hath pity on thee. O thou *afflicted, beaten* with the storm, *destitute* of consolation, behold, I lay thy stones in cement of vermillion. All thy children shall be taught of Jehovah; great shall be the prosperity of thy children. No weapon shall prosper against thee."

This outline of the prophet's description shows that the "servant" and "handmaid" are the same, the *people personified*. This last passage *can* mean nothing else. They together are the climax of the prophet's endeavor to describe the sufferings and future triumphs of the chosen people of God, under the figure of a person, his servant Jacob, and he now breaks forth into an exultant appeal to the people to accept the promised deliverance, "Ho every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters."

There are some clauses in chap. liii. which seem at first view incongruous with such an interpretation. But when we remember the difficulty attending writing a long and specific personification, I do not think the incongruities referred to are very marked, at least not

sufficiently marked to raise any serious objection to this interpretation which so harmonizes with the style of the prophet elsewhere, and with the current of his thoughts both before and after the passage.

I understand, then, by the "servant" of Jehovah, in the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah, the personified, chosen people, Israel, described as suffering pain and reproaches for the sins of the real people. I do not understand the body of the prophets, or any one prophet, or the good people of Israel, though this ideal people are generally represented as good. The mere fact that the *sufferings* described *are all past* would show that a future event was not spoken of, nor a person of a future period described. Nor does the fact that the "servant" is said to be buried prove that a real person, and not the personified nation, is intended; for the prophet Ezekiel, who lived at the same time as our prophet, speaks of the *nation* as being buried, and as coming forth out of their graves to return to their own country (Ezek. xxxvii. 12). "O my people, I will open your graves, and cause you to come up out of your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel. And ye shall know that I am the Lord when I have opened your graves, O my people, and brought you up out of your graves, and shall put my spirit in you; and you shall live, and I shall place you in your own land."

Hosea uses the same bold personification (chap. xiii. 14): "I will ransom them [the people] from the power of the grave. I will redeem them from death. O death, where are thy plagues? O grave, where is thy destruction?" Isaiah expresses the deliverance of the people from captivity in still bolder language (chap. xxvi. 19): "Thy dead shall live; my dead bodies shall arise. Awake, and sing, ye that dwell in the dust. . . . The earth shall cast forth the dead." And, while I cannot press the passage as confirming my interpretation of Isaiah liii. 9, I take the liberty of quoting Daniel xii. 2. I understand the prophet to be speaking of the rescue of the conquered nation from its conquerors, and the restoration of its patriots to everlasting honor, and of its traitors to everlasting contempt: "And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake; some to everlasting life, and some to everlasting shame and contempt."

As I have before stated, there are no terms used in the passage which cannot be understood of the *people* personified, as well as of a real, literal person, because a personification, so far as the use of language is concerned, is a *real, literal* person. The question is not, therefore, whether the language is appropriate to a personification, but whether it is appropriate to a person; for, if it is suitable to the latter,

it is demanded by the former. Its appropriateness to a person is self-evident, as the testimony of the great body of critics shows; it is therefore appropriate to a personification. The only question, therefore, is whether this is a personification; and this question I have attempted to answer as fully as the brief time allotted to this paper permits. There are several important matters of criticism incidentally connected with the main subject which it would be very interesting to consider, but must be omitted, as their discussion would add nothing to the force of the argument which I have presented in support of the view which I take of the passage which I have criticised.