

bodily idleness, with the Christians' inward rest, which he calls the Sabbath of the heart. The whole note makes us almost certain that he did not look upon the Lord's Day as a Christian counterpart of the Jewish Sabbath. Equally interesting is a treatise of doubtful authorship and date on *The Sabbath and Circumcision* attributed to Athanasius, in which, although the Lord's Day is not called a Sabbath or placed in any relation to the Fourth Commandment, it is nevertheless shewn to stand in close relation to the Jewish Sabbath. The first Christian Emperor, Constantine, decreed, in A.D. 321, that all judges and people residing in cities rest from work, permitting on Sunday only agriculture. He thus recognized publicly the Day of Rest as a Christian institution.

But neither imperial decrees, nor a commandment of the ancient Law of God, nor tradition of the early Church, are needed by those who have experienced the great and various benefit of the rest and leisure of the Lord's Day. The greatness of the benefit is to them abundant and irresistible proof of the Divine origin and authority of the Christian Day of Rest.

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## *THE BOOK OF ISAIAH: CHAPTERS XL.-LXVI.*

### VI. THE SERVANT OF THE LORD.

THE passages cited in a former paper shew unmistakeably that the Prophet calls the "people" Israel the Servant of the Lord. He is not alone in this, for other prophets, presumably his predecessors, make use of the same phraseology. For example Jeremiah (Chap. xxx. 10), in language which might have found a place in this Prophet, writes: "Therefore fear thou not, O my servant Jacob, saith the

Lord; neither be dismayed, O Israel; for, lo, I will save thee from afar, and thy seed from the land of their captivity; and Jacob shall return, and shall be in rest, and be quiet, and none shall make him afraid." And Ezekiel, promising the restoration of the people out of their captivity, says: "And they shall dwell in the land that I have given to my servant Jacob" (Chap. xxxvii. 21 *seq.*). We are here on sure ground. And it is altogether incredible that the same writer, in the same prophecy, should apply the same term to subjects altogether different. The idea expressed by the epithet "Servant of the Lord" must remain the same in all applications of it, and, this being the case, the subjects to whom the epithet is applied must all have an essential identity. It is, therefore, of extreme importance to make sure of what the idea is which the Prophet has before his mind when he uses the term "Servant of the Lord." A servant does not make himself servant, he is chosen or acquired by him whose servant he is; neither does he choose his own office or work, it is laid upon him by another. Hence the essential point in the idea of the Servant of the Lord, as the expression suggests, lies in the Divine operations in connexion with him and the Divine purpose in the use of him, not primarily in his own character. In any Old Testament writing this might be assumed to be true, but much more may it be assumed in a writer whose conceptions of God are so lofty as those of this prophet. These Divine operations and intentions are usually signalized where the Servant is mentioned, and they must be regarded as the ideas that enter into the general conception of the Servant. They were found to be the Divine "choice" or election, a choice irrevocable; the "calling" or "creation" of him by Jehovah; the putting of God's word in his mouth, or the more general "pouring out" his spirit upon him; and the purpose in view with him, namely that Jehovah may be "glorified" in him and

his praise shewn forth. This last is a thing of several sides ; for the glory of the Lord is not only shewn forth or revealed in the Servant himself ; he becomes the means of making Jehovah glorified among the nations. Now all these things are not consequences of the Servant's being so ; they constitute the analysis of the idea of Servant. And it will hardly be disputed that all these ideas were present to the Prophet's mind when he called Israel the Servant of the Lord. It is Israel as the subject of this irrevocable Divine choice and creation, as the recipient of this Divine endowment, and as the instrument of this Divine purpose, that is the Lord's Servant. It is not, in the first place, any character of Israel's own that makes it Servant, though naturally Israel should possess a character corresponding to these Divine properties, as they may be called, that belong to it. What this character is which Israel should bear the Prophet makes known to us in various ways ; for instance, negatively, when he chides the actual Israel and charges it with want of knowledge of God, with "deafness" and refusal to listen to his word and obey Him, and with "blindness" and inability to perceive the meaning of its sad history and the chastisements under which it suffered, or to see the Lord operating in behalf of its redemption in the great events going on around it ; and, positively, when he describes the Israel of the end : "Thy people shall be all righteous," "that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that he might be glorified" (Chap. lx. 21 ; lxi. 3 ; comp. lxii. 2). It is just by this character of righteousness in his Servant that the Lord's "glory" is perceived and his praise shewn forth. Still even this character, though in one aspect considered due from Israel and its own, is, in another view, impressed upon it by the Lord, who blots out its iniquities and pours out his Spirit upon it, and whose glory, "rising" on Israel, makes it the light of the Gentiles (Chap. lx. 3, 4). And

thus even Israel's righteousness is drawn up among the other Divine determinations impressed on it, which taken together make up the conception of the Servant of the Lord.

Thus the idea of the Servant is that of a "people" chosen and created by Jehovah, having his word committed to it, and being the instrument of his purpose with the world, that all should know Him, and every knee bow to Him as God alone. Israel is the impersonation of this idea, not Israel of this or that age, but Israel of any age; for in every generation the idea becomes incarnate, though it is in Israel of the future that the idea shall be perfectly realized. This idea, not as a mere idea, but an idea incarnate, is so vividly seized by the Prophet that it becomes a real entity to his mind; he personifies it as an individual, calls it "Servant," appeals to it, apostrophizes it, encourages it with its glorious destiny, or upbraids it with its present imperfections. This tendency to idealize and personify is a characteristic of this Prophet's mind. Zion and Jerusalem are personified in the same way, and even Babylon (Chap. xlvii.). Perhaps the circumstances in which the Prophet found himself, the question whether these were real or only realized "in spirit," being left undecided, may in some measure account for his idealization of Israel. In his day the "people" Israel had no actual existence; it was a people robbed and spoiled, scattered to the winds of heaven; it existed only in idea, its place was only in the Divine mind and purpose; it was at present "not the people of God," it was only now again coming into being through the creative word of the returning God, "Comfort ye my people," and its time was in the future. However this be, there is surely nothing unnatural in the Prophet's method of thought. Could we not conceive a Christian orator, when addressing men bearing the Christian name, speaking of the "Church" in the same way? Might he not address his hearers as the

Church of God, elect, and having his Spirit among them, and his word committed to them, as upheld by the presence of the Lord even unto the end, who would present them to Himself a glorious Church when He came to be glorified in his saints; and might he not remind them, as the Church, of the double task lying before them, namely, to gather into one the *disjecta membra* of the house of God, and awaken in them the true spirit, and also to carry the truth to the nations that know not God? Such a general conception of the Church is precisely parallel to the Prophet's idea of the Servant of the Lord. The idea immediately suggests a double antithesis: one quite apparent, that between Israel the Servant and the heathen, the other that between the Servant and the scattered fragments of Israel itself, and those "which are called by the name of Israel . . . which swear by the name of the Lord, but not in truth, nor in righteousness" (Chap. xlvi. 1).

Though the various ideas of "election" and the like notified above enter into the conception of the Servant, the language of the Prophet indicates that, to his mind, the most important elements in the idea of the Servant were that the word of God was in his mouth, and his active use of this word. The conception of Israel as the Servant of Jehovah is closely connected with the Prophet's universalistic doctrine of God. As the God of Israel is Creator of the ends of the earth, He is related to all mankind. This relation must yet be known, the whole human family shall yet acknowledge Him as God alone, for his glory He will not give to another; and Israel is his servant in bringing forth the knowledge of Him to the Gentiles. This knowledge of Himself He has already communicated to Israel; it is his "word" in Israel; and this word is the instrument his Servant wields in his service. In the earlier prophets Israel is not yet conceived as the Servant of the Lord, because the history of the people had not brought

them face to face with the "world," in the shape of the universal empires of Assyria and Babylon. The scope of Jehovah's operations was limited to Israel itself, and the individual prophet was his "servant" to the people. But now the little circle of Israel's history has touched the great circumference of the history of the world, and the prophets are constrained to make wider applications of their doctrine of God. The scope of Jehovah's purpose embraces all the peoples of the earth, and Israel takes towards these peoples the place which the individual prophet held to itself; and, like the single prophet, it does so in virtue of the word of God which is in its mouth. The remarkable passage, Chapter li. 16, addressed to Israel, shews both how wide Jehovah's purpose is and what the force is which shall accomplish it: "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 foundation of the earth, and say unto Zion, Thou art my people." And a similar statement is made of the people (Chapter lix. 21): "This is my covenant with them, saith the Lord; My spirit that is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, saith the Lord, from henceforth and for ever." This "word" is the instrument of Israel's power in the days of her restoration, to which the passage refers. Sometimes, indeed, the power seems to lie in the word of God itself, and not in Israel's use of it. In the very beginning of his address the Prophet said: "All flesh is grass, but the word of our God shall stand for ever;" and the beautiful passage, Chapter lv. 10-12 ascribes an efficiency to the word of God in virtue of which it realizes itself and his purposes: "For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, and giveth seed to the sower and bread to the eater; so

shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and prosper in the thing whereto I sent it. For ye shall go forth with joy," etc. But everywhere the Servant is represented as realizing Jehovah's purpose through his word: "He shall bring forth right to the Gentiles . . . and the isles shall wait for his instruction" (Chap. xlii.); "the Lord hath made my mouth like a sharp sword" (Chap. xlix.); "the Lord hath given me the tongue of the disciples, that I should know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary" (Chap. l. 4); "By his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many" (Chap. liii.). The Servant "opens blind eyes;" he is "the light of the Gentiles." The Prophet regards the knowledge of the true God as salvation; for want of this knowledge the heathen perish; this knowledge God has given to Israel and determined that Israel shall serve Him in making it the possession also of the world; and the time is at hand when this light of God shall envelope all Israel, restored from every land, and the Gentiles shall come to her light (Chap. lx.).

The other essential point in the conception of the Servant, his activity, is suggested by the word "servant" itself. And here the Prophet's personification of Israel differs from another of his personifications, Zion or Jerusalem (for there is no difference between these two, just as there is none between Israel and Jacob). The conception of the Servant Israel is that of a "people" in opposition to the other peoples of the world; the idea of Zion is rather that of a community inhabiting the holy hill and chosen land of the Lord. The one is, so to speak, masculine, active, and entrusted with a mission to the peoples; the Lord is the husband of the other, who is passive and recipient, and instead of executing any service among the nations is served by them—they bring back her sons in

their bosom and carry home her daughters upon their shoulders. The personification Israel, though said to be "loved" by Jehovah (Chap. xliii. 4), was a less suitable subject for pouring out all the floods of Jehovah's affection upon than Jerusalem, the daughter of Zion—a woman forsaken and grieved in spirit, even a wife of youth when she is cast off (Chap. liv. 6). But the two personifications are really identical, for as kings bow down before Zion with their faces to the earth, and lick the dust of her feet (Chap. xlix. 23), so before the Servant kings shall stand up, and princes shall worship (ver. 7; Chap. lii. 15); and the promise made to the Servant that he should be the light of the Gentiles is fulfilled in the restored Zion, to whose light the Gentiles come (Chap. lx.) And, what is not unworthy of attention, especially by those who find difficulty in conceiving how the Servant Israel could be called "a covenant of the people," Zion personified, *i.e.* the community, inhabitress of Zion, is distinguished from the individual members of the community, her sons and daughters. In the exquisite passage, Chapter xlix. 20, which is worth quoting if for no other reason than to correct the ordinary punctuation, it is said: "the children which thou shalt have after thou hast lost the other (*i.e.* the children of her time of restoration, the "other" having been lost by the Exile), shall say again in thine ears,

The place is too strait for me :  
Give place to me that I may dwell.  
Then shalt thou say in thine heart,  
Who hath borne me these? seeing I lost my children and  
was barren ;  
An exile, and wandering to and fro,—and who brought up  
these ?  
Behold I was left alone—these, where were they ?

The Authorized Version entirely misses the pathos of Zion's words by translating, Who hath begotten me these? For



Zion does not enquire who is the father of the children whose number surprises her; she cannot believe that she herself is the mother of them. And there lingers still a flavour of prose even in Mr. Cheyne's note, who says that Zion "supposes that the new children are applying to be adopted by her." The children surely are Zion's own, as it is said: "Thy children make haste. . . . they come all unto thee. As I live, saith the Lord, thou shalt gird thyself with them like a bride"; they are the scattered sons whom kings shall bring home to her in their bosoms, as it is expressed in another passage: "Sing, O barren, that didst not bear. . . . for more are the children of the desolate than the children of the married wife" (Chap. liv. 1)—more are Zion's children now when restored after her desolation than were her children when married in her own land (Chap. lxii. 4) and no calamity had yet befallen her. The personification of the community as a mother is as old as Hosea; and if personified Zion be distinguished from her own members there is nothing strange in Israel personified being distinguished from Israelites, from the fragments of Israel scattered in every land—the tribes of Jacob and the preserved of Israel (Chap. xlix. 6).

The question, who is the Servant of the Lord in such Chapters as xlii., xlix., and lii.-liii.? has received many answers. The question as put by early Christian expositors took mainly this form: In whom have the features of the Servant in these chapters been seen in fact? And the unanimous answer was, In the Christian Messiah. And, indeed, when the question is put in this form, modern interpreters return the same answer, for no other can be given. This answer is not one based merely on the authority of the New Testament, and its application of several passages of these prophecies to Christ; it is an answer which any reader of the history of our Lord, who considers his spirit and methods and work, must give on

his own judgment; it was the answer which Christ's own consciousness gave, as when he read Chapter lxi. before the people in the Synagogue, and the answer given by his contemporaries. But the question put by modern historical exegesis is somewhat different, namely, What subject had the Prophet present to his own mind when speaking of the Servant in these chapters? This question does not take the place of the other question or supersede it; it is merely additional to it. The same interpreter may put both questions; and, while he can give the first but one answer, he may give the second an answer quite different; or various interpreters, while agreeing in their answer to the one question, may differ in their reply to the second. The basis of what is called Typology is the assumption that what was said by Old Testament writers, with Old Testament subjects in their mind, may only find its true fulfilment in Christ and the things of the New Testament. Consequently, to the second question various answers have been returned; such as, Israel according to its true idea, or, those in Israel true to its idea; the prophetic body, or, one of the prophets; an individual who was the "concentration of Israel," realizing in himself fully its idea in the mind and purpose of God. The opinion that the Prophet, when speaking of the Servant, had in his mind the prophetic body has little probability; it is based on the fact that the Servant has the "words" of Jehovah "in his mouth," and is endowed with his spirit; but both things are said numberless times of the people. It is thought by some that Chapter liii. is an elegy or oratory in connexion with some individual prophet; but even if it be, the author of these prophecies has adapted it to other uses; though it is probably true that many touches in his picture of the prophetic Servant were suggested by the labours and sufferings of prophetic men. The choice lies between the first and last suggestions, between Israel according to its idea

and an individual embodying in himself all the Divine determinations impressed on Israel; in other words, between a personification and a person, both of which, however, have identical attributes. A decision in such a case is difficult to give. The argument, urged by Delitzsch and others, that the descriptions in Chapters xlii., xlix. and others are plainly personal, has little value; for the more perfect a personification is the less possible is it to distinguish it from a person: and if the names Zion and Babylon did not suggest to us that they are personifications, we should take them for real women. It is not from the general character of these descriptions that any inference can be drawn; we must watch for any incidental allusions which may betray to us whether the Prophet be thinking of a person, or has a larger subject in his mind. The opinion that the Servant is an individual, the "concentration of Israel," is virtually a return to the Messianic interpretation, but in a form which shews the progress made by exegesis both in conscientiousness and consequential thought. The idea is gone for ever that a prophet may say any thing in any place, or that he may express totally different ideas by the same words, or use the same phraseology of subjects that have no connexion with one another. It is acknowledged that the idea expressed by the phrase "Servant of the Lord" must remain in all places of the prophecy the same, and that the subject also must everywhere be virtually one; so that if the term "Servant" (said first of Israel) be applied to an individual, it is applied to him because he is conceived of as the concentration of Israel. The conception of such an individual is wholly new in Prophecy, and is the creation of this profound Prophet. The conception was verified in the Messiah when He came; and, though it be a conception altogether different from the former Messianic conception of a King of the house of David, and, though probably the Prophet never brought the

two conceptions into connexion, the progress of history and revelation shewed how both coalesced in one Person and became the complements of one another. This is the sense in which those interpreters who find an individual in these prophecies under the name of the "Servant" are entitled to call the individual the Messiah. Various interpreters suggest different lines as those on which the Prophet's mind moved from the national conception of the Servant towards the individual. Delitzsch's figure of a pyramid is well known. According to this figure, the phenomenal or actual Israel forms the basis of the pyramid, Israel "according to the spirit" its middle section, while the apex is an individual in whom all the lines of Israel's endowment and destiny concentrate; and the Prophet's thought of the "Servant" moves upward and downward along these three sections, or contracts and expands according to them, each of them being named by him "Israel" and "Servant." This is very ingenious, and, perhaps, may be attractive to those whose "favourite science is the mathematical;" but this Prophet would probably have been unable to understand the figure if it had been set before him; and to impose ideas upon the Prophet's words which, however familiar to us, must have been entirely strange to him, is scarcely the way to reach his meaning. Such a contraction and expansion (Delitzsch calls it *systole* and *diastole*) of the idea of the Servant through *three* degrees is far from natural. That the Prophet should, at one time, speak of Israel according to its idea and God's purpose with it which it should yet fulfil; and, at another time, should speak of it as it actually presented itself to his eyes, very far from coming up to its ideal or being in a state to realize God's designs with it, was natural and according to the methods of human thought: but Delitzsch's construction seems to annihilate any idealization on the part of the Prophet, and to reduce his language to real descriptions of actual classes

and personages among the people. In a former paper it was remarked that the critical question of the age of these prophecies did not greatly affect the exposition of them. The question of the age of the Author has however some bearing on the enquiry whether the Servant was in his view a person. If Isaiah was the Author, he might have looked forward to such a person in the future, placing him in connexion with the Exile; but, if the Prophet was himself a contemporary of the Exile, the Servant cannot have been an individual; for, otherwise, the Prophet would have been acquainted with him, as there is no doubt that he places the Servant in the circumstances of the Exile, and makes Israel restored look back to his sufferings during this period (Chap. liii.). No one will say that the Prophet's language regarding the Servant is easy to explain; the most that can be said is that it is more naturally to be explained on one hypothesis than on another.

A few verses may be quoted from Chapters xlii. and xlix., which apart from Chapter liii. contain the Prophet's principal statements regarding the Servant. The two Chapters pursue lines of thought perfectly parallel to one another.

- 1 Behold my servant, whom I hold fast;  
My chosen, in whom my soul delighteth;  
I will put my spirit upon him,  
He shall bring forth right to the Gentiles.
- 2 He shall not cry nor lift up (his voice),  
Nor cause his voice to be heard in the street;
- 3 A bruised reed shall he not break,  
And the glimmering light he shall not quench:  
He shall bring forth right in truth.
- 4 He shall not fail nor be discouraged  
Till he have set right in the earth:  
And the isles shall wait for his law.
- 5 Thus saith God, the Lord,  
He that created the heavens, and stretched them forth;  
He that spread abroad the earth, and that which cometh  
out of it

- He that giveth breath unto the people upon it,  
 And spirit to them that walk therein :
- 6 I, the Lord, have called thee in righteousness, and will  
 hold thine hand ;  
 And I will keep thee and make thee a covenant of a  
 people, a light of Gentiles :
- 7 To open blind eyes,  
 To bring out the prisoners from the dungeon,  
 And them that sit in darkness out of the prison house.
- 8 I am the Lord ; that is my name :  
 And my glory will I not give to another,  
 Neither my praise to graven images.

The passage cannot be well understood unless read down as far as Chapter xliii. 7. The connexion is most probably with the end of Chapter xli. There the Lord passed a judgment of condemnation on the idol-worshipping nations and their gods : " Their works are vanity and nought ; " and in opposition to them He points to one who is his Servant, who is possessed of the truth, and who shall impart it to the Gentiles. Verses 1-4 are hardly to be taken as an ideal description of the Servant, independent of all time ; they are rather a real prophecy, though couched in ideal language. Therefore we should rather translate : " I *will* put my spirit upon him," than " I *have* put " (comp. Chap. xliv. 3 *seq.*) ; and verses 5-8 contain an asseveration, based on the attributes of Jehovah and his relation to the Servant, that this prediction shall be verified. In verses 1-4 the Servant is spoken of, in verses 6-8 he is directly addressed. The expression " my Servant " suggests a relation to Jehovah, which is expanded in the words, " I hold him fast," and " in whom my soul is pleased " ; it also suggests a service to be performed, " to bring forth judgment to the Gentiles ; " and there is added the equipment of the Servant for this task, " I will put my spirit upon him." The " spirit " here is mainly the prophetic spirit, and the idea differs little from

“I will put my words in his mouth.” The term translated “judgment” means “right.” It can scarcely be rendered “religion” in the modern sense, it is the equity and civil right which is the result of the true religion of Jehovah; and, though comprehended under religion in the Old Testament sense, is rather, according to our conceptions, religion applied in civil life. Of old the religious unit was the state, and the life of the state was the expression of its religion. Morality was law or custom, but both reposed upon God. A condition of thought such as now prevails, where morality is based on independent grounds, whether natural law or the principles inherent in the mind apart from religion, did not then exist. What the Prophet means by “bringing forth right” is explained in another passage, where it is said that Jehovah’s “arms shall *judge* the peoples,” and that the “isles shall wait for his arm” (Chap. li. 5, comp. Isa. ii. 4). “Judgment” is that pervading of life by the principles of equity and humanity which is the immediate effect of the true religion of Jehovah. This whole passage (vers. 1-4) treats of the Servant’s mission to the Gentiles; it says nothing of his operations among his own people. Verse 2 describes his manner in himself, “he shall not cry”—he uses no force, is not contentious, the truth needs but to be presented, it has an attractive, self-evidencing force of its own, like a light which shines in silence but draws all eyes to it. And verse 3 describes the Servant’s manner with those whom he meets: “the bruised reed he shall not break, the dimly burning light he shall not quench.” This is the singularly humane and compassionate view the Prophet takes of the Gentiles—they are bruised reeds and expiring flames. The heathen religions were religions of violence, the idolatries of Babylon were incarnate in her cruelties. Before the Prophet’s eye there lies a period of desolation which the nations shall have to come through, leaving

them crushed and wellnigh extinguished. It is when they are in this condition that the Servant of the Lord shall turn to the "escaped" of the Gentiles. The expression "a bruised reed he shall not break," etc., means that he shall strengthen and heal it, and he shall nurse into a flame the glimmering light. What the Prophet may refer to is the human virtues, expiring among the nations, but not yet dead; the sense of God, debased by idolatries, but not extinct; the consciousness in the individual soul of its own worth and its capacities, and the glimmering ideal of a true life and a worthy activity almost crushed out by the grinding tyranny of rulers and the miseries entailed by their ambitions—this flickering light the Servant shall feed and blow into a flame. The Evangelist sees a reflexion of the Servant's character and method in those of our Lord when, fearing a collision with the authorities and dissatisfied with the mistaken enthusiasm of his followers, He withdrew Himself. He shunned violent encounters with his enemies, and He disliked the loud applause of his friends. The whole prophecy of the Servant is fulfilled in Christ, not in the superficial sense that certain phrases may be applied to him, but in the sense that the whole spirit and scope of the Prophet's conceptions are verified in Him. "The flickering flame he shall not quench" might serve as the motto of the life and work of Him who came to seek and to save that which was lost. It was not a dead, but a dying, world into which He flung Himself. A dead world would have had no attractions for Him; it was the struggling life among men that drew Him, for virtue, goodness is the love of life. In his day, as somewhat at all times, men had ceased to think or feel under the narcotic of general terms. People were classified as Pharisees, Publicans, sinners and the like; and when one pronounced such terms he felt he had disposed of them. The Son of Man got behind general terms; they



had no meaning to Him. What He sought and found was a bruised reed or a flickering flame; He looked habitually whether He could not find in men some strength amidst weakness, some glimmer of light through the darkness, some "faith to be healed," some coign of vantage from which He could operate upon them; and by sympathy, or the inspiration of hope, or the suggestion of the love of God, or the vision of the beauty of holiness, revive the struggling life within them. Yet, though all this be true, and though the Servant be here represented as a person in his intercourse with other persons among the heathen, it can hardly be doubted that the Prophet's thought is national. It is the future relation of the "people" Israel to other peoples that he describes. The thought which has now taken possession of statesmen of the higher class, that the point of contact between nation and nation need not be the sword, that the advantage of one people is not the loss of another but the gain of mankind, that the land where freedom has grown to maturity and is worshipped in her virgin serenity and loveliness should nurse the new-born babe in other homes, and that the strange powers of the mind of man and the subtle activities of his hand should not be repressed but fostered in every people, in order that the product may be poured into the general lap of the race—this idea is supposed to be due to Christianity. And, immediately, it is; but it is older than Christianity. It is found in this Prophet. And it is not new in him, for a Prophet, presumably a century and a half his senior, had said: "The remnant of Jacob shall be in the midst of many peoples as a dew from the Lord, as showers upon the grass" (Mic. v. 7).

In verse 4 it is said that the Servant shall not fail in executing his task of "setting right in the earth." It was a great task and the suggestion of weariness in it was

natural (Chap. xlix. 4). To set right in the earth looks a great work even in this age of the world; but in those days, when the empires of the earth were incarnate violences, it might seem greater, and especially when it was the task set before "the worm Jacob." The ideas of Scripture have lost their power to us from familiarity, and because we fail to realize the circumstances amidst which they were uttered. That a few despised exiles should exercise such an influence upon mankind might seem the kind of idea begotten of madness or an enthusiasm little different. It was as if one should go out into the darkness with a rushlight in his hand, and expect to create the dawn. But the Servant of the Lord was an incarnate Divine energy. The light with which He should yet shine was the "glory" of the Lord rising on Him—an astonishing conception.

The phrase "the isles shall wait for his law," or instruction, does not seem to mean that they shall wait for it before it come, but that they shall wait for it, defer to it, having come: they shall look for its application to the affairs of their life (comp. Chap. ii. 4; li. 5). The idea of a *gratia præparans* (Del.) does not appear to be expressed.

Verses 5-8 contain an asseveration that the prophecy of verses 1-4, shall yet be fulfilled. The oath is made by Himself, by Him who is the God (alone), Jehovah, Creator of the heavens and the earth (ver. 5); and it is clinched by the thought that, being God alone, He shall make Himself known to be so: "My glory I will not give to another, nor my praise to graven images" (ver. 8). The asseveration itself addressed to the Servant is that, having called Him in righteousness, He will keep Him, and make Him a covenant of the people, a light of the Gentiles—for thus shall He be shewn to be God alone. Much dispute has been occasioned by the phrase "a covenant of a people," or, of the people. The word "people" has been taken to mean "mankind," as it is when it is said: "The people is grass"; and the

idea expressed would be that the Servant should be made the means of bringing the nations into covenant with the Lord, an idea then expressed somewhat differently by saying that He should be "the light of the Gentiles." Such a use of the word "people" is undoubted; but the idea of a "covenant" between Jehovah and the nations is more liable to question. Such an idea seems nowhere expressed in the Prophet. The covenant is always considered to be made with Israel, although others, as the eunuchs for example, may "lay hold of it," or, as it is otherwise expressed, may "join themselves to the Lord" (Chap. lvi. 3-4). The "people" here is rather Israel. Even with this sense the phrase is susceptible of various senses. It has been thought to mean "a covenant of a people," *i.e.* a people who is a covenant, as Esau is called "a wild-ass of a man," that is, a man who is a wild-ass, as a fool of a man is a man who is a fool. The meaning of the phrase so taken is the same as before, namely, that the people Israel should be, so to speak, an embodied covenant—that is, between Jehovah and the nations. Besides the objection first stated, this construction destroys the parallelism with the other phrase "light of the Gentiles," and though syntactically possible, it is rather a grammatical *tour de force*. The natural meaning of the expression is that the Servant shall be the mediator, or rather the basis or medium, of a covenant between Jehovah and his people of Israel. This appears to be the sense required in the parallel passage, Chapter xlix. 8. This he shall be, first; and, then, also he shall be the light of the Gentiles. The phrase "covenant of a people" must not be strained, as if it meant that the Servant was a covenant in person. The natural sense is that he shall be the means of bringing the people again into covenant with the Lord, just as he is the means of bringing the light of the knowledge of God to the heathen. The Prophet has left his idea of "a covenant of a people" in a somewhat undeveloped form.

We hardly discover how the Servant becomes a covenant, nor strictly when. The words that follow in verse 7, however, seem to expand or analyse the idea of becoming a covenant,—“to open blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison house,” or as in Chapter xlix. 8 “to raise up the land, to make them inherit the desolate heritages.” This may be thought to be an effect of the Servant’s being a covenant rather than an analysis of that idea itself. If so, we seem left without any information as to the precise meaning of the expression. At all events the general sense is that the Servant becomes the means of restoring the exiles, gathering the scattered fragments of the nation into their own land, and constituting them again “a people,” the people of the Lord. Perhaps we have an example how the Servant effects this in the beautiful passage Chapter lxi., and in another sense in Chapter liii.

The fact that the Servant of the Lord is said to be made “a covenant of a people,” or, “the people,” is felt by some to be an insuperable difficulty in the way of considering the Servant to be personified Israel. Perhaps the remarks made in the earlier part of this Paper may have in some degree relieved the difficulty. The question is one of extremely little importance. It will rise again in connexion with Chapter xlix., the notes on which must be deferred.

A. B. DAVIDSON.

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*FAITH NOT MERE ASSENT.*

III.

PASSING from the strictly exegetical argument, which formed the subject of our last paper, we now proceed to give fuller and separate treatment to various aspects of faith, some of which have already been touched upon, but which admit of discussion from other points of view.