

and out over them, the bread which is the staff of physical and of spiritual life. Here a little, and there a little, the two Sacraments of Baptism and Communion were raised to a higher power, as the disciples learned more and more of their Teacher. And at the last, when their hopes were to be crushed and chastened for the last time, He washed their feet and broke bread with them once more.

And it was night. He died and was laid in the tomb. But on the third day He rose again from the dead. Risen, He showed Himself to be not only the Man whom they had known, but also, and now visibly, the Lord who walked the waves and fed every hungry soul. And so the Sacraments, by which Jesus had signified to His disciples the fact of their first adhesion to Him and the fact of their continual dependence upon Him, received a "new significance and fresh result," which raised them above the Baptisms and the Sacramental Meals of the Jews.

J. H. A. HART.

RECENT EXPOSITION OF ISAIAH LIII.

WHEN the Queen of Meroe's minister or agent was asked by the Deacon Philip whether he understood the portion of Isaiah which he was reading in his carriage, his answer was to the effect that the prophecy could not be understood without an authoritative commentary. The commentary provided by the Deacon, who found the application of the prophecy in quite recent events, cannot have been authoritative in the sense of being traditional; and as he did not commence by refuting some older exegesis that had till then held the field, we may conclude that there was no such exegesis current. From this conclusion another inference may be drawn. Either the author's application had been

lost, owing to breaks in the tradition whereby the book had been handed down—the collection of prophecies having emerged at some renaissance of Hebrew literature after a period of oblivion and obscurity—or else the theory of prophecy when the oracles were delivered was similar to that maintained by many spiritualists, who hold it possible for a human being to be the medium for the communication of literary matter of which even the language may be unfamiliar to him, and which he is therefore not expected to understand. If the journals devoted to psychical research could be trusted, this phenomenon is not merely well attested but even common, and is illustrated by whole volumes of automatic writing. Matter of this kind, when supposed to refer to the distant future (and this was certainly the prevalent supposition about Isaiah's oracles), might well be left uninterpreted till those events occurred which left no doubt about its application.

On the other hand, the earnestness and enthusiasm of the oracles give them the appearance of a force which must have had some effect on contemporary history, though its full capacity was revealed at a later age. Enigmatical to posterity, they may have been full of meaning to those who moved in the same environment as the Prophet, and whose minds were in sympathy with his. Their hopes and resentments, their experiences and aspirations, may have supplied ready solutions, where readers of later times look vainly for a key. No private letters nor official chronicles survive, which, by locating the oracles with certainty, would secure that the standpoint of the interpreter was correct. The community by whom they were preserved and cherished are thought by the majority of critics to have misdated them by a century and a half at the least, and to have forgotten their author's name.

An exception to this consensus is to be found in Dr. J. W. Thirtle, who, in a work called *Old Testament Problems*,¹ without excluding Philip's interpretation, identifies the "Servant of the Lord" with Hezekiah, and so assigns the oracles their traditional date. This is part of a general scheme by which the author would give that king an importance for the poetical books of the Bible to be compared with that which a Cambridge scholar recently tried to find for Murena in the Odes of Horace. Since no interpretation would be suggested which was absolutely devoid of plausibility, it may be admitted that with this application the clause (liii. 10) "He shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days" becomes highly significant.

That the "seed" in question turned out to be Manasseh, notorious for paganism and reaction, spoils the savour to some extent; yet if the verse stood alone, this would not be a reasonable objection. It stands, however, towards the end of a long and detailed description, no other sentence of which corresponds accurately with anything that is historically known of Hezekiah, so far as the meaning of the texts can be ascertained. This at least is the impression which will probably be conveyed to most minds by the juxtaposition of "the Writing and the Report" (the Ode of Hezekiah and Isaiah liii.) which is intended "to show to demonstration that the two documents relate to a common subject."

The claims of another Jewish king to be the original of "the Servant of the Lord" are urged by Professor D. Ernest Sellin, of Vienna, [in two treatises.² This commentator had, in an earlier work, discovered the original in Zerubbabel; he claims, however, that this was a working

¹ Frowde, 1907.

² *Studien zur Entstehungsgeschichte der jüdischen Gemeinde. I. Der Knecht Gottes bei Deuterojesaja.* Leipzig, 1901.

hypothesis which proved its value in leading to the final solution of the problem, which is to be found in Jehoiachin, and seven years of continued study have not induced him to modify this opinion.¹ If such problems could be solved by patience and industry, his methods would have secured a final solution; but then such a solution would have been produced long ago.

Jehoiachin is by no means a prominent figure on the Israelitish stage. The compiler of the Books of Kings states that he "did evil in the sight of the Lord," put himself with his family and officers into the power of the king of Babylon, where he remained a prisoner for thirty-seven years, after which time he was released and given honourable treatment. Jeremiah prophesies that he will not prosper and will be childless (xxii. 30), details which do not appear to qualify him for identification with the Servant who is to deal prudently and see his seed. However, as the Arabic proverb says, "the eye of love hides every blemish," and Professor Sellin finds the correspondence between Jehoiachin and the subject of Isaiah liii. as close as Dr. Thirtle finds it between the latter and Hezekiah. The vicarious punishment undergone by the Servant is interpreted of the voluntary capitulation of Jehoiachin to prevent the captivity of the people: and the authority of Josephus is quoted to show that Jehoiachin's act bore this heroic character. Since in spite of it the nation suffered captivity, its vicarious character was momentary, and of no permanent importance. "Without its being expressly asserted," writes Dr. Sellin, "we can read between the lines of 2 Kings xxv. that Amel-Marduk [Evil-Merodach], who reinstated Jehoiachin among the kings, also gave him authority to re-establish his empire." By reading between the lines in this fashion we could produce some remarkable additions to our his-

¹ *Das Rätsel des deuterjesaisianischen Buches.* Leipzig, 1908.

torical knowledge. This particular addition would plainly contradict what is in the lines themselves, which state that Jehoiachin remained an honourable pensioner at the court of the Babylonian king all the days of his life, whence we must conclude that permission was not given him to return to Judaea, which would have been the necessary preliminary for any attempt to re-establish his kingdom.

If there were any evidence in support of this conjecture, it would not be difficult to adduce some striking analogies to the erection of such a fabric of hopes and expectations on the person of a prisoner. Among the romances of history is the foundation of the Fatimide empire, for some centuries supreme in Egypt, North Africa, and Syria, by the champion of an obscure and little known *Mahdi*, which is the Arabic equivalent of Messiah. If the Second Isaiah was not merely a dreamer of dreams, but a man of action and definite purpose, some light might be thrown on his career by that of Abu Abdallah the Shi'ite, the champion to whom reference is made. In the capacity of reading-master he betakes himself to a north African community, where he takes such opportunities as occur to win adherents to the rightful sovereign, living in concealment far away: doubtless by stirring harangues, which have perished, whereas those of the Second Isaiah remain. Presently he is strong enough to resort to the argument of the sword, and at the end of eight years is the head of a warlike state, and can send to his Mahdi, bidding him come and assume his sovereignty. The Mahdi accepts the invitation and comes disguised, but is captured and imprisoned in north Africa before he can reach the subjects who are awaiting his arrival; for three years he pines in confinement before his champion can conquer his oppressors and obtain his release. The malicious assert that he was slain in prison, and that when the prison was opened and no Mahdi found there, Abu Abdallah made

the first prisoner he could lay hands on impersonate him : whether this was so or not, the person warranted by Abu Abdallah received the enthusiastic allegiance of the army which through all these years had been preparing the way for their sovereign. The Mahdi's first task almost immediately after accession was to rid himself by assassination of the champion to whom he owed his throne.

“ It cannot be a matter of doubt,” Dr. Sellin continues, “ that the account of the Servant of the Lord is a rough representation of the life of Jehoiachin, and that it certainly suits no one else, Davidide or non-Davidide, so far as our historical knowledge goes.” Even if we were to grant the accuracy of the first part of this sentence, the concession with which it ends would spoil the result. Supposing that the Prophet's hopes were never fulfilled—and this was surely *ex hypothesi* the case—the world would be unlikely to know on whom they had been based. The miracle which he foresees and which will amaze the world is the glorious resurrection of one who is despised and neglected, from whom men turn away their faces, and (a detail which is sufficient to refute both the Hezekiah and Jehoiachin identifications) whose birth is obscure. What chance have such persons of getting into history at all ? Little, unless the prophecies about them are fulfilled. Had not the champion of the Fatimide Mahdi succeeded, it is unlikely that his name would have been recorded anywhere, although the degree of obscurity implied in Isaiah liii. scarcely attached to him.

Some of the inconsistency of the details with what is known of Jehoiachin's career is smoothed down by Dr. Sellin with the observation that the Second Isaiah writes poetry, not prose. This, though it may veil the inappropriateness of the verses, does not get rid of it. For the principle of exegesis which dissolves one criterion of identification will dissolve others.

Vastly different from either of these is the interpretation given the passage by H. Gressmann, of Kiel University, in a treatise on the Origin of Judaeo-Israelitish Eschatology, bearing date 1905. This writer starts by calling attention to the emphasis which the Prophet lays on the vicarious character of the suffering of the Servant. "The sacrificial idea is clearly expressed in liii. 10: *If his soul (i.e. he himself) shall have accomplished the guilt-offering, he will see seed.* The suffering and death of the Servant constitute an expiatory sacrifice combined with compensation. Although represented as a human scapegoat, he is characteristically distinguished from an ordinary sacrifice by the fact that he is not offered by others, but offers himself (liii. 10). Those who have seen the sacrifice and for whose benefit it is are quite unaware that a sacrifice is going on. They regard the Servant as a man marked out by God, treat him as a leper, and bury him as a felon. Only afterwards do they recognize his innocence, and understand that his act has been a voluntary sacrificial ceremony. The death of the Servant is nothing more nor less than a mystic sacrifice only understood by the initiate, misunderstood by every one else."

It will be understood that the interpretation is made to depend largely on liii. 10, as emended by Giesebrecht.¹ The conclusion is that the chapter is in origin "a hymn belonging to the Mysteries, sung by the Mystae on the death-day of the god." "The mythical form which originally lay at the basis of the idea of the Servant must have been one in which an expiatory death and resurrection are characteristic. Though we cannot actually name this figure, it must belong to the cycle of Adonis or Tammuz myths."

A little consideration shows that Adonis suits the recorded

¹ תשי"ם for תאש"ם.

traits of the Servant far worse than either Hezekiah or Jehoiachin. The name Adonis is proverbial for beauty; and we are told that the Servant had no form nor comeliness. His exciting desire is part of the myth about him: and we are expressly told that the Servant excited none, but aversion. Nor does the death of Adonis as described in the myth bear the least resemblance to the leading of a lamb to the slaughter; and his burial appears to have been accompanied with pomp. There is, further, no evidence adduced to show that the death of Adonis was expiatory; and none to show that in any mystic homily it was ever so interpreted. Had we any such mystic homilies (supposing them to have ever been delivered), it is probable that they would have contained the secret since discovered by Frazer, that the death of Adonis is typical of the death of the corn. Seeing, then, that the identification of the Servant with Adonis does little to help the understanding of the chapter, it is of some consolation to be told that "it is of no interest to us to know what the Second Isaiah may have thought about the details, since his interpretation does not make even the smallest contribution to the understanding of the chapter" either. If we are puzzled, the case of the author (according to Dr. Gressmann) was no better. Yet it may be doubted whether the Second Isaiah would have received with gratitude the information that he was reproducing a hymn to Adonis.

Whilst these new solutions of the problem are being propounded, works are also being issued defending either the popular interpretation, according to which the Servant is to be understood not of an individual but of a community, or the idea which found its most permanent embodiment in Philip's application, according to which the Servant was a future Messiah. This last is the view

maintained in the recent work¹ of Dr. Franz Feldmann, which gives a more intelligible summary of earlier literature than is to be found elsewhere. This writer endeavours to build up his thesis with great care, making sure of each layer, if only certainty in these matters were not so decidedly subjective. More than a third of his space is taken up with refutation of the view which identifies the Servant with Israel, in whole or in part, and which is still probably supported by the most eminent names in Old Testament criticism. The objections urged against this view appear to be exceedingly strong, since the doctrine that Israel's exile was to expiate the sins of the Gentiles appears to be wholly unbiblical, whilst the pious part cannot be said with justice to have suffered *for*, but only *with* the rest. To apply the picture of uncomplaining innocence, which Isaiah liii. offers, to Israel in general would be to do violence to the prophetic view of the national history, according to which Israel was neither innocent nor uncomplaining: but where the punishment overtook all alike, one portion cannot be said to have borne it for the rest. Even the supposition that the persons who speak in Isaiah liii. may have distorted the details seems to be excluded by the difficulty of distributing the parts between the spectators, the prophet, and God.

The positive part of this treatise is intended to re-establish the view which so long prevailed in Christendom of the Messianic signification of these oracles, and to answer objections. If it should meet with acceptance, criticism would come round to the point from which it started, Philip's interpretation turning out to have been right after all. The tons of printed matter which this problem has evoked will not in that case have produced any permanent result. But it is only archaeological discovery from which

¹ *Der Knecht Gottes in Isaias Kap. 40-55.* Freiburg in Breisgau, 1907.

the ultimate confirmation of any hypothesis can be hoped. The recovery of documents appertaining to the environment of the "Second Isaiah" would tell the dwellers in the Cave whether their reconstructions of the realities from the shadow had been correct.

D. S. MARGOLIOUTH.

JOHN THE BAPTIST AND HIS MESSAGE.

THE Evangelists are concerned wholly with the life of Jesus, and the ministry of John the Baptist is of little interest to them, except in its relation to the greater work which was to follow. We may therefore infer that their portrait of John is so coloured as to do him at once more and less than justice. On the one hand his affinities with Jesus are unduly emphasized. All other features in his work are thrown into the background, and he stands before us in his most exalted capacity as the witness to the Light. On the other hand, his appearance is viewed as a mere passing episode. An impression is left on our minds that his mission had no separate value or result, and was immediately merged in that of his Successor.

It is evident, however, from various indications in the New Testament itself, that John was not simply a fore-runner of Jesus, but was an independent teacher, with a message and a programme of his own. When he was thrown into prison his disciples continued his work, apparently unconscious that it had now been superseded. Long after his death we find traces of a community which looked back upon him as its founder, and which was never wholly absorbed into the Christian Church. In order to understand his true relation to Jesus, we require in the first instance to study him by himself, forgetting as far as possible the greater events to which his ministry was the prelude.