

But often it must be a painful interest. This is the wonder of it. This is the revelation about heaven. For the angels must hold their hand, as the Father does. What is it that 'their angels' do for the little ones? That we cannot tell. But it is clear that they do not shield them from all harm.

It is clear that they do not shelter them always from foul disgrace and contempt. Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones, for it will be all the more fearful for you that their angels in heaven have observed your neglect and have held their hand.

The Messianic Teaching of Isaiah.

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THE Messianic doctrine of the Old Testament, in its wider sense, embraces the conception of the ideal kingdom of God as well as that of the ideal king. The second of these notions arose historically out of the former, and cannot be understood apart from it. In Isaiah's mind this development of the spirit of prophecy found a chief instrument; and the volume of Isaiah became the great text-book of Old Testament Messianism. The *kingdom* this prophet is always thinking of; the coming *king* was the subject of special and detached oracles, and emerged at a particular crisis in his ministry. But though the passages describing the Messiah-king are few in number and brief in extent (9^{6,7} 11¹⁻⁵:¹ the inclusion of 7¹⁴⁻¹⁶ and 8⁸ in this list is questionable, as will afterwards appear), they occupy a salient position in Isaiah's life-work, and signalize a critical epoch in the growth of his own ideas and in the unfolding of the purposes of God concerning Israel. Is 9^{6,7} and 11¹⁻⁵ stand close together as amongst the summits of Old Testament thought—points at which the inspired genius of Israel reached its loftiest flight and took its furthest view into the future.

The Israelite constitution was fundamentally theocratic, admitting in its original form of no earthly monarch; a revolution was accomplished under the prophet Samuel, which met with decided resistance and took effect only by degrees, when the throne of David was established and a sacrosanct character was conferred upon his line. Henceforth the divine rule was impersonated in the reigning son of David; but his administration

¹ The school of German critics with which Dr. Cheyne associates himself, cuts out these passages, and all other strictly Messianic oracles, from their Isaianic context.

often tended to lower its ideal, and threatened during the reigns of Ahaz and Manasseh its complete effacement from the minds of the people. Especially at such epochs the prophets were compelled to recall and meditate upon 'the pattern shown' them 'in the mount.' They worked under two fixed presuppositions—axioms of prophecy from the date of the oracle of 2 S 7—namely, the ethical perfection and integrity of Jehovah's rule in Israel, and the perpetuity of the Davidic throne. The history of the Judæan monarchy showed, through one bitter experience after another, that these necessities could be reconciled only in a superhuman son of David; they demanded a prince filled with the spirit of Jehovah and furnished with royal qualities such as no child of man had ever shown, one who should stand in a relation of nearness to God hitherto unexampled, and lifting him above human frailties and limitations. As it was with the political *kingdoms* of Israel and of Judah in turn, so it proved with the historical *kings*: from the failure of the actual and the present the religious thinkers of Israel took refuge in the region of the prophetic future, where the true soul of the people learnt abidingly to make its home. Isaiah 'looked for the city which hath the foundations, whose maker and builder is God'; he looked at the same time for the king of that city, the perfect Prince and Son of God, who should be 'set upon the throne of David, to establish it with judgement and with righteousness for ever (Is 9⁷). Otherwise God's promises will be made void; and the holy city and royal house, marvellously preserved in the general overthrow, will have been saved to no purpose. Therefore 'the zeal of Jehovah of hosts will perform this.'

Thus with the calamities falling on the Israelite

kingship, it took on in prophecy a transcendent, superhistorical character; at the same time, it received a wider scope. This double movement characterizes the Isaianic Messianism. Before the eyes of the prophets the Assyrian power, with portentous rapidity, had grown into a world-empire. God's people sit no longer solitary and apart with their Jehovah: their children have been dragged in thousands to distant exile; Judæa is made a fief of Nineveh. Israel is involved in the fate of other nations and in the polity of the great powers around her. The coming king, if he is to bring salvation for *her*, must be able to command *them*. It is no longer enough for the chosen people to 'sit each man under his own vine and fig-tree' in the land of Canaan; there must be 'a highway out of Egypt to Assyria' for international friendship, and 'Israel' must become 'the third with Egypt and with Assyria, a blessing in the midst of the earth' (19^{23, 24}), if God's kingdom is to be securely settled amongst men. Thus the Messianic rule begins to assume world-wide dimensions and to entertain (so to say) imperial ambitions. The horizon of Ps 72 extended no farther than Solomon's domains and the boundaries of Palestine and Syria: 'He shall reign from sea to sea' (from the Mediterranean to the Elanitic gulf?) 'and from the river (Euphrates) to the ends of the land' (the borders of southern Israel). Far different is the prospect over which Isaiah's eye ranges, when he sees 'the mountain of Jehovah's house established in the top of the mountains, and all nations flowing unto it,' when from Zion 'God judges between the nations' and forbids them 'to learn war any more,' when 'the root of Jesse is set for an ensign of the peoples' and 'unto him the nations seek,' while 'the earth is filled with the knowledge of Jehovah, as the waters cover the sea' (Is 2²⁻⁴ 11^{9, 10}).

The Assyrian conquests, which enlarged the range of the Messianic vision, served also, in a negative sense, to determine its contents. The nature and aims and methods of a true world-sovereignty came to be defined by their contraries. Never were invasions more savage and destructive; never have subject populations been treated more inhumanly than were the provinces under the rule of Asshur. The kings of Nineveh combined with daring ambitions and military genius an utter disregard of justice and ignorance of the principles of good government. Hence rebellions occurred at

each opportunity, in almost every quarter of the empire, and the west of Asia was kept in a fever of war. *Righteousness* and *peace* are therefore, in Isaiah's aspirations, the great desiderata of the times; *faithfulness*, *gentleness*, and *wisdom* clothe the Messianic ruler whom he portrays. He dreams of an idyllic state wherein the beasts of prey, which men have learnt to copy, lay aside their fierceness; the fangs of the wolf and the poison of the asp forget their use; swords are fashioned into ploughshares, spears into pruning-hooks (2⁴ 9⁴⁻⁷ 11¹⁻⁹). To this Paradise of the coming age Isaiah's spirit fled from the wasted cities and ravaged lands and corpse-strewn fields of battle that meet his gaze on all sides. The passionate hatred and lofty scorn that breathe in his denunciation of the Assyrian power in chap. 10, supply the prelude and the dark background to his idealization of the true king of men in the exquisite lines of chap. 11¹⁻⁵. Isaiah grasps and unfolds, he first of the prophets, the sublime conception latent in previous revelation, of a universal ethical kingdom of God extending over all nature along with mankind, which shall have its metropolis in Mount Zion, and its ruler, God's true and worthy vicegerent, in the perfect Son of David.

This grand enlargement of the Messianic dominion in no way compromised its relations to Israel; Isaiah held fast to the national form and framework of the Covenant. Moreover, as the nation was reduced by the loss of the Ten Tribes and Israel became synonymous with Judah, the regard of prophecy was concentrated upon Jerusalem and the throne of David. The *people* and the *city* are identified in Isaiah's thoughts; and the grand Biblical conception of 'the city of God' now takes its rise. 'The redemption of Jerusalem' becomes Isaiah's absorbing solicitude. 'The inhabitants of Jerusalem' and the 'men of Judah' form the community to which God makes appeal; they are 'the plant of His delight' (5¹⁻⁷). In the Sennacherib crisis the whole fate and future of the covenant-people turned upon the deliverance of Mount Zion. The blessedness of the coming times is to be realized, specifically, in the moral transformation of Jerusalem: when through the defeat of the besieging heathen Zion has become 'a quiet habitation, a tent that shall not be removed,' and when she can be 'called the city of righteousness, the faithful city,' since 'Jehovah has washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion and has purged the blood of Jerusalem from the midst

thereof' (see 1²⁶ 4⁴⁻⁶ 32^{5,6} 33²⁰⁻²⁴), the millennium will have arrived; then 'the law will go forth out of Zion, and the word of Jehovah from Jerusalem' (2⁸), to fill the world with righteousness and truth. This is the consummation of the kingdom of God, for Israel and the nations, as Isaiah imagined it. But first Zion herself—who is 'Ariel' (the hearth of God)—shall be cleansed 'by the spirit of judgement and the spirit of burning'; she must serve as 'Jehovah's furnace' to consume the pride and glory of Asshur, or (to change the figure) as the rock and 'foundation laid in Zion' on which the hostile nations 'shall be broken in pieces' and the Assyrian power for ever shattered (4⁴ 8⁹ 14²⁵ 28¹⁶ 29¹ 30²⁷⁻³³ 31⁹). The world-kingdom of God is thus focused at Jerusalem; the Mighty One of Israel, the God of the whole earth, is worshipped as 'Jehovah of hosts which dwelleth in Mount Zion' (8¹⁸). This merging of the land in the city, the centring of all the interests of God's kingdom, moral and material, in one sacred spot, is deeply characteristic for the personal genius and situation of Isaiah, and for the epoch of revelation of which he was the exponent. The contest between God's kingdom and the evil powers of the world has taken a shape in which Jehovah's honour, the preservation of His name and faith, were bound up with the safety of a single city—a place which in its existing condition, and judged by its own deserts, is morally indefensible! 'I will defend this city to save it for mine own sake, and for my servant David's sake': so Jehovah defies Senacherib through Isaiah's mouth (37³⁵).

For Jerusalem and her citizens as they are, Isaiah anticipates nothing but suffering and shame. The vision that filled his imagination and guided his policy through forty years of patient struggle with weak or traitorous kings and vain worldly-wise counsellors, is that of a holy city purified and renovated in the fires of judgment and tenanted by a righteous and happy people, obedient to their God, kindly and faithful towards each other. Through the lurid flames of the Assyrian devastation he saw its coming; he counted upon it that Zion would emerge from this trial delivered not only from her secular foe, but from the sins that had wrought her debasement. Now the ideal *king* of Isaiah's visions is the counterpart of the ideal city and kingdom he is looking and working for. The latter, under the given historical situation, implies the former. The new Jerusalem and the

sanctified Israel of the future could not be conceived apart from their redeemer, the God-given deliverer and ruler, who from his throne in Zion shall extend the blessings of righteousness and peace, along with the knowledge of Jehovah, over all surrounding peoples and to the ends of the earth. His person and his rule are set forth in exalted terms passing far beyond the limits of human infirmity and change; he is clothed with the majesty of the God he represents, who executes through His 'son' His gracious designs towards His people and all peoples.

Accordingly, the coming king is adumbrated first in the sign of 'Immanu-el' (*With-us-is-God*, or *the Mighty One*), that was addressed to the distrustful and half-apostate Ahaz (7¹⁰⁻¹⁷). The boy to whom the prophet gives, before his conception, this grand and reassuring name, is the child of some unknown 'damsel.' There is nothing to indicate the mother's connexion with the Davidic house: it may be that fear of Ahaz's jealousy made the reference designedly vague. But his birth under this title at this crisis supplies, to all who are in the secret, a pledge of the presence of Israel's God and the safety of His land. 'Immanuel' will be reared on the produce of fields from which tillage has ceased (v.¹⁵); but before he reaches years of understanding, the forces of Damascus and Samaria, at the moment overpowering Judah, will be shattered (v.¹⁶). So far, indeed, there is no hint of any royal character being ascribed to the boy Immanuel personally; his significance—as in the case of Isaiah's own sons (7⁸ 8^{8,18})—lies in his *name*, and in the conditions under which his infancy will be spent. But when, at a later date and subsequently to the child's birth, the prophet speaks of the Assyrian flood as 'filling the breadth of *thy land*, O Immanuel' (8⁸), it looks as though Judæa belonged to the boy in question, and he were thought of as the destined heir of the throne. Some therefore have identified Immanuel with *Hezekiah*, Ahaz's successor; but chronology forbids this. If the little Immanuel were some other scion of the royal house whose enthronement Isaiah expected, it is strange that nothing more is heard about him and that the prophet, as would appear, acquiesced in his dropping into obscurity. It is safer to suppose, with R. Kittel,¹ that Judæa is called 'Immanuel's

¹ See his *Der Prophet Jesaja (kurzgef. exeg. Handbuch z. A. T.)*, ad loc.

land' as the native land of the boy who bears this glorious name, and that the child is thus distinguished not at all in virtue of his affinity to the ruling house, but as 'the representative of the new generation of Judæans' and as standing for those who believe that 'God is with us,' for the true Israel to whom God's salvation is pledged despite the misery and desolation of the country. The New Testament fulfilment gave to this watchword of Isaiah an import incomparably loftier than that in which the prophet conceived it, but in essential consistency with its primary meaning (see Mt 1²³).

If the name 'Immanuel' gave pledge of the Almighty Presence guarding and redeeming Jehovah's people, the prophecy of chap. 9⁶ points to that Presence as it will be one day personally disclosed by the advent of the king of men, by the birth of that child of God's people through whom its divine character and office will at length be realized: 'A child is born to us, a son is given to us; and the government shall be upon his shoulder.' Another birth is thus foretold, and this time in the royal succession. But the prophet thinks of the coming one as the child of the nation ('is born, is given, *to us*') more than of the Davidic house (even as Jesus styled Himself Son of man, and not Son of David); for he will impersonate and express the genius of Israel, he seeks to lift his race with him to the height of their calling. This great heir of the national destiny receives an unexampled designation; he is *the Prince of the Four Names*: 'Wonder of a counsellor, God of a hero, Father for evermore, Prince of Peace.' In Isaiah's description the idea of the Messiah-king, with which revelation has been charged ever since the age of Samuel, precipitates itself, under the shock of the Assyrian crisis: the labour of prophecy for the last three hundred years comes to its issue. There are no marks of time about the prediction, such as were necessary in the case of the boy Immanuel; only, Isaiah knows that such a glorious ruler must and will be born for God's people.

That this wonderful Counsellor and Prince of Peace will issue from David's family goes without saying. The royalty instituted by God in Zion (28¹⁶) he will lift out of its humiliation, its patent condition of incompetence and impotence (2¹¹⁻¹⁷ 3¹⁴ 7¹⁷); and chap. 11¹⁻⁵ resumes the description of the character and administration of the coming Prince, signifying that he will appear as a 'shoot coming from the stock (*or* stump) of Jesse, and a

sprout from his roots' (comp. Mic 5³). The predictions of chaps. 9 and 11 are assigned to the period about the end of Ahaz's and the beginning of Hezekiah's reign, when the honour of the crown was at its lowest and the dynasty was like a tree cut down to a mere stump (comp. Am 9¹¹). A miraculous revival is thus promised for the empire of David, to be realized in the person of a future king of godlike attributes—a new and nobler Solomon, since he is called Prince of Peace—who will raise his people to undreamed-of happiness, and extend his sway widely through the world and over the domain of nature—whose kingdom appears to know no bounds either of space or time. Chap. 9^{6,7} throws emphasis on the wisdom, power, and grandeur of the destined prince, and the durability of his rule; chap. 11¹⁻⁵ brings out his religious character: he will be endued with the sevenfold spirit of Jehovah; and his administration will be discerning and gracious, bringing defence to the poor and lowly and ruin on their wicked oppressors.

The times in which Isaiah lived demanded above everything strong, wise, God-fearing rulers. 'A king shall reign in righteousness, and princes shall rule in judgement' (32^{1,2})—this was the one hope of society. *A man* is needed, who should be 'as an hiding-place from the wind and a covert from the tempest; as rivers of water in a dry place, and a shadow of a great rock in a weary land.' Monarchy is the universal form of national existence; the disposition and ability of the ruler constitute the chief factor in the public well-being, alike of the little principalities of Palestine and the great empires of Egypt and Assyria. By the end of the disastrous reign of Ahaz, and before the middle of his prophetic career, Isaiah had come to the conviction that through this means the salvation of Israel will be won. He had learnt how much an evil king could do to corrupt and betray the people; he had seen the Assyrian monarchy made a frightful scourge for its neighbours in the west. God, he is thereby taught and inspired to believe, will raise up in Zion a king who shall be in kingly character and in the beneficence of his rule the precise opposite of these examples, whose sway shall be wider and mightier than that of Nineveh, and whose justice and compassion will exceed those of the best princes of David's historic line. The promise originally made to David thus transforms itself and

comes to signify no longer the indefinite perpetuity of the reigning house, but the perfection of kingship that is to be realized in the prince who will prove its consummate flower.

The conception of the Messianic royalty belongs therefore to the epoch of Isaiah, and was its chief contribution to the course of history. As Kittel says,¹ 'The hour in which Isaiah parted from Ahaz gave to the world the thought of the Messiah.' Henceforth this becomes a fixed datum in the religious life of Israel; and it was the product of the soul, and of the age, of this chief of the prophets. The basis of the idea lay in the covenant-promise made to David (2 S 7); and the material out of which it was shaped to its existing form was supplied by the Assyrian-Judæan crisis of the eighth century. The time was ripe for its production; and its origination cannot, with any fair probability, be referred to a later epoch or situation than that of Isaiah of Jerusalem as he confronted Ahaz on the one side and the Assyrian despotism on the other; nor can it be credited to a prophet of lesser genius and force of character than he possessed.

It is true that under Hezekiah, in the latest stage of Isaiah's teaching, the image of the Messianic king retreats from view. The prophet descends from the ideal heights of chaps. 9 and 11. Nor is this to be wondered at. Isaiah was a practical statesman, while he was a preacher and missionary. His attention was engaged by the more immediate future; the deliverance of the city and the reformation of the people became his absorbing interests. Hezekiah, though vacillating and infirm, proved a pious, well-intentioned prince, whose behaviour no longer, like that of his father, drove the prophet into despair of the existing monarchy. 'The king,' whom Jerusalem 'shall see in his beauty' ruling over 'a land of far distances' (33¹⁷), need be none other than the living son of David, raised from the state of fear and disfigurement to which Hezekiah was reduced in the Assyrian siege (37¹). The 33rd chapter, which appears to contain Isaiah's last visions 'concerning Judah and Jerusalem,' reveals 'Jehovah' Himself 'with us in majesty' (comp. the motto 'Immanu-el' of chaps. 7 and 8), whose enthronement there makes 'Jerusalem a secure habitation'; 'Jehovah is our Judge, Jehovah our lawgiver, Jehovah our king,' who 'will save us' (vv. 20-22).

¹ *History of the Hebrews*, vol. ii. p. 346.

Thus Isaiah reverts at the end to the fundamental thought of the theocracy—namely, that Jehovah, and no other, reigns in Israel. In God's eternal glory the Messianic sovereignty disappears, even as St. Paul, with full fidelity to his Lord, conceived the mediatorial reign of Jesus to be consummated by His 'delivering up the kingdom to God the Father, that God may be all in all' (1 Co 15²⁴⁻²⁸).

From the above sketch of Isaiah's Messianic views it will be seen how great a step forward prophecy took in him toward the Christian fulfilment; and yet how remote the prophetic ideal still remained, in its form of imagination and in its material contents, from the reality finally presented in the person and work of the Incarnate Son of God. Seven hundred years of suffering and change must elapse before the vision of the perfect Son of David took shape in Jesus Christ. More distinctly than any earlier seer Isaiah 'saw His glory and spake of Him'; he apprehended the royalty of character belonging to the world's Redeemer and the intimate relations to God in which He must stand. Isaiah predicted in clearer outline and stronger colours than any of his fellows the largeness of the Messiah's empire, the graciousness of His government, and the happiness it brings to men. His prophecies to this effect are even now in course of fulfilment, as the kingdom of Christ extends amongst the nations and gains a complete dominance in human life. But the Isaiah of this period knew nothing of the sufferings by which 'the Christ' was to 'enter into His glory,' nor of His atoning sacrifice for His people's transgressions. This knowledge was reserved for his great pupil and successor of the sixth century (Is 52, 53), and for the people of the exile.

A prolonged and severe discipline was required that Israel might learn how the true Deliverer of men claims to rule, not by right of royal blood but by self-effacing service. The image of the warrior Messiah gave place to that of the despised and suffering 'servant of Jehovah.' Burdened with the guilt and shame of His fellows, by the bearing of this load—not by 'striking through kings in the day of His wrath' and 'filling the battlefield with dead bodies'—He shall win from God His people's restoration, and for Himself a Divine honour and a grateful obedience from mankind such as accrue to no other sovereignty. Suffering and disgrace in abundance Isaiah fore-

sees; but in the shape of chastisement falling on the sinful people itself—a dispensation of judgment out of which Israel, as the prophet hopes, will emerge morally renewed and prepared to receive its true king and to fulfil its part as ‘the

kingdom of priests’ among the multitudes of mankind. How vain these wishes of the patriot prophet were, so far as they concerned the near and national future, Manasseh’s reign was destined to prove.

Recent Foreign Theology.

Nestoriana.¹

It is a misfortune, not only to a writer himself, but to those who come after him and wish to ascertain his teaching accurately, when his works are reported to posterity only through the medium of an opponent. This is the case, almost entirely, with Nestorius. His writings were diligently destroyed by order of the Emperor Theodosius, and we have therefore now to seek for them in those of his adversaries. But even with the best will in the world to be truthful, a controversial writer is apt to misrepresent his adversary; and none would willingly content himself with an opponent’s version of his teaching. No politician would allow his aims and objects to be put before the country by those of the opposite camp. When, then, we have to depend upon Cyril of Alexandria and other orthodox writers for our knowledge of what Nestorius said and taught, we have reason for some hesitation whether in all cases we have got quite the right version. We have more cause for trusting Marius Mercator, perhaps, as though an orthodox writer and the friend of Augustine he was not engaged in direct controversy with Nestorius. He was a diligent translator of Greek works, and rendered into Latin thirteen discourses of Nestorius (with other relative matter) and twelve chapters of Nestorian doctrine; these translations were made known first by the learned Jesuit Garnier in 1673.

Scholars will be much indebted to Professor Loofs for this admirable collection of Nestorius’ works. In an ample introduction of 164 pages he describes the sources from which he draws.

¹ *Nestoriana; Die Fragmente des Nestorius.* Gesammelt untersucht und herausgegeben von Dr. Friedrich Loofs, mit Beiträgen von Stanley A. Cook, M.A., und Dr. Georg Kampffmeyer. Halle: Max Niemayer, 1905. 8vo, pp. x, 407. Price M.15, in paper covers.

Besides Cyril and Marius, he uses the Acts of the Council of Ephesus, the so-called ‘Synodicon,’ ‘Arnobius Junior,’ Eusebius of Dorylæum, Cassian, Evagrius, and other writers, orthodox, Nestorian, and Monophysite. He then gives the texts, some in the original Greek, some in Latin and Syriac translations, and adds three excellent indexes. It is a little remarkable that so little trace of Nestorius’ writings is to be found in Nestorian authors, though the most famous of them, Ebedjesus, who lived in the fourteenth century, knew many of his works which are now lost. Perhaps some quotations may yet be found, as so many Nestorian manuscripts are as yet unpublished, and even, though lying on the shelves of our libraries, unread by European scholars. But the reason for the smallness of the remains of Nestorius to be found among these writers is probably that there was no personal connexion between the heretical patriarch of Constantinople and the independent Church of the Persian Empire, the only bond of union being through the fugitives into Persia after the condemnation of Nestorianism in the Roman Empire. It is noteworthy that the Nestorian *Sunhadhus*, or Book of Canon Law, does not quote Nestorius as one of its authorities, though one would have expected that it would (apocryphally) have ascribed many of its enactments to him. Curiously enough it does quote the Council of Chalcedon. The so-called ‘Liturgy of Nestorius,’ still used by the Nestorians on certain days of the year, is doubtless not the work of that writer, as Dr. Loofs truly observes (p. 5). This would appear from many considerations, notably from the fact that it belongs to a type of liturgy entirely different from that to which Nestorius was accustomed; and a smaller proof may be deduced from the book now under review, for the Words of our Lord in that Liturgy are quite different from those which we find in