

The Servant of Jahveh.

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QUESTIONS of authorship and date are outside the scope of this article, which examines rather the content of the phrase in the title. We must distinguish further between the homiletical value of that phrase and its exegetical import; the former may be of greater worth, but is at present irrelevant. As Dr. A. B. Davidson remarks, to interpret a prophet (in the sense here meant) you must think yourself back into his age, not bring him forward into your age. But even when the inquiry is restricted to the meaning of our phrase in its biblical connections, we are still far from finding unanimity among those best qualified to speak. The topic was well treated in this JOURNAL by Dr. Stebbins just ten years ago;¹ but since that time, while the literature of the subject has greatly increased, the tendency is rather to diversity than unity. Among the contributions of the last decade are the commentaries of Bredenkamp (1887), Orelli (1887), Delitzsch in his final edition (1889), Duhm (1892), and Douglas (1895); the General Introductions of Cornill (1891, 1893) and Driver (1891, 1894) and the Special Introduction of Cheyne (1895); works on Messianic Prophecy by Briggs (1886) and Riehm (1885, 1891); Histories of Israel by Stade (1888) and Wellhausen (1894); Schultz (1885, 1892) and Smend (1893) on Old Testament Religion; George Adam Smith's Exposition (1890); and monographs on the Servant by Forbes (1890), Giesebrecht (in his *Beiträge*, 1890), and Ley (1893). The variety of opinions in these works leaves the door open for fresh researches, and repeated attempts to obtain light on the problems connected with the theme.

Exegesis, like other sciences, is too much inclined to narrow its technical terms. When the phrase 'the Servant of Jahveh' is pronounced, one thinks instinctively of a few passages in the book of

¹ In the volume for 1884, which was much delayed. Dr. Stebbins's paper was read before the Society in June, 1885.

Isaiah, occurring in chapters xlii., xlix., and liii. But underlying the whole discussion of their meaning is the half-forgotten fact that this expression is of very frequent occurrence and of very diverse use throughout the Old Testament. I do not include the more general term 'Servant of God.' Nor do I take into account the large number of passages in which the speaker addresses Jahveh with the formula 'thy servant,' since this customary phrase of respect or reverence is practically equivalent to the first personal pronoun, and leaves the implied relation open to question.

Limiting the investigation by these omissions, we note first that עֶבֶד יְהוָה is a term which may be properly applied to any one who serves Jahveh. While this observation has been made by many who have treated the subject, it is but seldom that its natural corollary is impressed upon the mind; namely, that we can feel no certainty, when this phrase is used repeatedly by a given writer, that he always has in mind the same object.² A general statement is of little force here; we must come into contact with the actual usage of the biblical writers.

Moses is the Servant of Jahveh (Jos. i. 1), but so is Joshua in the same book (xxiv. 29). The expression is used in each case in relating the death of the person spoken of, as we say at a funeral, 'Servant of God, well done.' One who might hear that epithet for the first time on such an occasion would have no call to infer that the subject of the obituary had an exclusive right to it. Certainly there is no such exclusiveness in the Old Testament. Caleb is so named (Num. xiv. 24), also Samuel (1 Sam. iii. 9), David (2 Sam. vii. 5), Ahijah (1 Kings xiv. 18), Elijah (2 Kings ix. 36), Jonah (2 Kings xiv. 25), Isaiah (Isa. xx. 3), Eliakim (Isa. xxii. 20), Job (Job i. 8), and Zerubbabel (Hag. ii. 23).

It is no objection to this statement that in most of these references the personal pronoun occurs instead of the full form, 'the Servant of Jahveh.' The case is quite different from 'thy servant' = I; for when Jahveh is the speaker and calls any one 'my servant,' the testimony is the clearest possible. In fact, this is the precise expression (not, 'the Servant of Jahveh') in the classic passages, Isa. xlii., xlix., liii.

It is apparent already that no special claim to this title belongs to the prophets individually, or to the prophetic order, as was held by Gesenius, De Wette, Winer, Hofmann. This is confirmed by the

² Hence Dillmann goes too far in asserting (*Isaia*, p. 471): "The author cannot, without saying so, depict all at once by the same name (Servant of Jahveh) an entirely different subject."

fact that Jahveh himself applies the title directly to a heathen king, Nebuchadnezzar (Jer. xxv. 9 = xxvii. 6; xliii. 10). It is true that the prophets in general are called servants of Jahveh (Ezek. xxxviii. 17, etc.), but so too are the priests (Ps. cxxxiv. 1; cxxxv. 1, 2), and once the 'Servant of Jahveh' is set above the prophets (Num. xii. 6-8). At other times the mass of the people are servants of Jahveh (Ps. xxxiv. 22, etc.), and the same name is even given to the universe as a whole (הַכֹּל, Ps. cxix. 91): 'Heaven and earth abide even now according to thy laws, **בְּיַהֲוָה הַכֹּל עֹבְדֵיהֶּ**.'

It is often asserted that the Servant of Jahveh is a figure distinct from the Messianic King, but Ezekiel identifies the two (xxxvii. 24), and Zechariah in the name of Jahveh so describes the Branch (Zech. iii. 8). Commentators, for example Kay in the *Speaker's Commentary*, have found something peculiar in the occurrence of 'servants' instead of 'servant' of Jahveh in the latter chapters of Isaiah, after the work of the 'Servant' in chapter liii. has been accomplished. But this results from too exclusive attention to the book of Isaiah. The truth is, all the Lord's people are his servants, and were just as naturally called so in ancient Hebrew as in modern English. We meet the phrase in the song of Moses (Deut. xxxii. 36; cf. 43): 'For Jahveh will judge his people, and repent himself for his servants.'

An interesting passage, bringing two ideas of 'service' into contrast, is Lev. xxv. 42 (cf. 55), where Jahveh is the speaker. 'For they [Israel] are my servants' (עֲבָדֵי הָאֵלֹהִים), 'whom I brought forth out of the land of Egypt; they shall not be sold for bondservants' (מִמְכָרֵת עֶבֶד). The kind of service into which they had been brought is indicated by Nehemiah, who prays to Jahveh the God of heaven (i. 5) 'for the children of Israel thy servants' (verse 6), whom he calls 'thy servants who delight to fear thy name' (verse 11). In the Psalter, the people of Jahveh are often called his servants (xxxiv. 22; xc. 13, 16; cii. 14, 28; cxiii. 1; cxxxv. 14). The last is verbatim from Deut. xxxii. 36, as above. Ps. cii. 28, 'the children of thy servants shall continue,' reminds us of Isa. liv. 17, 'this is the heritage of the servants of Jahveh,' and of Isa. lxiii. 17, 'Return for the sake of thy servants, the tribes of thine inheritance.' See also Isa. lvi. 6; lxx. 8, 9, 13-15; lxxvi. 14.

But the Lord's people is also called his servant, in the singular number. Here, too, the usage is not confined to the book of Isaiah. According to Ps. cxxxvi. 22, Jahveh, the God of gods, the Lord of lords, gave the land of Sihon and Og, 'a heritage to Israel his ser-

vant' (cf. Isa. liv. 17, just quoted). We find the same mode of speech in an earlier writer, Jeremiah (xxx. 10 = xlvi. 27, 28): 'Fear thou not, O Jacob my servant, saith Jahveh.' How natural the transition was from the patriarch Jacob, or Israel, the individual servant, to the nation as servant, may be seen from 1 Chr. xvi. 13: 'O ye seed of Israel his servant, ye children of Jacob his chosen ones,' the whole context being almost an exact duplicate of Ps. cv., except that for *Israel* here we read *Abraham* there. This, as Delitzsch remarks (Comm. *in loco*), 'is so far ambiguous that one does not know whether עֲבָדָיו should be referred to יִשְׂרָאֵל the patriarch or to יִשְׂרָאֵל נָרַע, the people; the latter reference would be Deutero-Isaianic. In both texts the LXX reads, עֲבָדָיו (ye his servants). Conversely, the parallelism admits of being made more pronounced by the reading בְּחִירָיו.'

To get a clear conception of the reason why the nation Israel is the servant, as well as the servants, of Jahveh, we must go back to the nation's head. In the oldest portion of the Hexateuch, according to the prevailing scheme of documentary analysis, Jahveh says to Isaac (Gen. xxvi. 24): 'Fear not, for I am with thee, and I will bless thee, and multiply thy seed for the sake of Abraham my servant.' This is an early fulfilment of the primitive promise to Abraham, the Servant of Jahveh; and if we run a longitudinal section along the history of Israel, we meet similar fulfilments, extending like a vein of gold through the whole. Abraham himself is the typical servant, who left everything for the service of Jahveh; justified by faith, he became father of believers; justified by works, he became father of servants. *The solidarity between Abraham and his seed explains the use of the term Servant of Jahveh.*

As Abraham is the first to whom the term Servant of Jahveh is applied, so his service is the archetype; all succeeding servants do but extend his service, as all believers in God exercise not some separate faith, but *the* faith of Abraham. The covenant between Jahveh and Abraham guarantees faithful service by the party of the second part, and the building up of a theocratic nation by the party of the first part. When Abraham is called the Servant of Jahveh, the divine as well as the human side of the compact is implied, and sometimes expressed (as above, Gen. xxvi. 24). At this point it is instructive to compare Gen. xviii. 18, 19; here also Jahveh speaks. Abraham, he says, 'is surely to become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth are to be blessed in him. For I have known him' [cf. Amos iii. 2, of Israel: 'you only have I known of all the families

of the earth'] 'to the end that he may command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of Jahveh, to do justice and judgment; so as for Jahveh to bring upon Abraham that which he spoke concerning him.' We must think ourselves back into Oriental habits of mind. According to modern Western fashions, this scheme would not work; a father might command whatever he chose, and the children would do whatever they chose. It was not so in the days and the land of Abraham. In two senses, physical and spiritual, the life of the ancestor was simply expanded into that of his race. For first, it was not the individuals descended from Abraham, but Abraham himself, who (Jahveh said) was to *become* a mighty nation. And secondly, the divine promise secures that the obedience of Abraham *becomes* that of his seed, and so Jahveh brings upon Abraham that which he spoke concerning him. The logic is thus: Abraham is the Servant of Jahveh; Israel is in Abraham; therefore Israel is the Servant of Jahveh. The antinomy between ideal and actual is left out of consideration, for the Oriental omits from his coronet the jewel of consistency. There is room for various lapses from the ideal, and for partial fulfilments of it; just as on the physical side there are many in Israel not lineally descended from Abraham; but there is no room for the frustration of Jahveh's omnipotent purpose. This is clear, again, from Ex. xxxii. 13, where Moses is praying to Jahveh: 'Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, *thy servants*, to whom thou swarest by thine own self, and saidst unto them, I will multiply your seed as the stars of heaven, and all this land that I have spoken of will I give unto your seed and they shall inherit it forever.' As Jahveh had comforted Isaac with this covenant in Gen. xxvi. 24, Moses now urges it upon Jahveh. 'And Jahveh repented of the evil which he said he would do unto his people.'

Here note two points: first, that the extension of the covenant to Isaac rests upon Jahveh's promise to Abraham. For in Gen. xxvi. 3-5 Jahveh says to Isaac: 'I will establish the oath which I swore unto Abraham thy father, and I will multiply thy seed . . . *because that Abraham* obeyed my voice, and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws'; in brief, because Abraham was the Servant of Jahveh. Isaac's faithful service is assumed; but that is merely Abraham's service in a new form. Second, that Moses clinches his plea with אלהים, which he quotes from the original compact with Abraham (Gen. xiii. 15; also xvii. 7, 8, 13, 19). This repeated insistence by Jahveh himself on the everlasting nature of

the covenant pledges the continuance of Abraham's race ; he could not be the eternal servant of Jahveh except in his seed. The phrase is applied to him again in Deut. ix. 25-29, another version of the interview just given from Ex. xxxii. 13. Israel had apostatized by the worship of the golden calf ; Jahveh had threatened to destroy them, which would have blotted out the covenant race. Moses fell down before Jahveh and prayed and said, 'Adonai Jahveh, destroy not thy people and thine inheritance. . . . Remember *thy servants*, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob ; look not unto the stubbornness of this people, nor to their wickedness nor to their sin . . . they are thy people and thine inheritance.' The faithful service of the patriarch was imputed to his seed, and Jahveh immediately renewed the decalogue.

In Ps. cv. 40-42 Jahveh is said to have given Israel the bread of heaven, and waters from the rock, because he remembered his holy word and Abraham his servant. The holy word is the covenant promise, which is efficacious, according to verse 8, for a thousand generations.

We come now to Isa. xli. 8-10. The whole passage needs to be considered carefully, as it is fundamental in our investigation, and this may excuse the amount of attention given to it.

וַאֲתָהּ יִשְׂרָאֵל עַבְדִּי יִקְרָא אֶלֶּךָ בְּתַרְחֻד וְרַם אַבְרָהָם אָבִיבִי : אֲשֶׁר הִתְקַחְתִּי
 מִקֶּצֶת הָאָרֶץ וּמֵאֲחֵי לֵהָ קְרָאתִיךָ וְאָמַר לְךָ עַבְדִּי אֲתָהּ בְּתַרְחֻד וְלֹא מֵאֲחֵיךָ :
 אֵל תִּדְרָא בִּי עַמּוּד אֲנִי אֵל תִּשְׁתַּחֲוֶה בִּי אֲנִי אֱלֹהֶיךָ אֲמַנְתִּיךָ אַף אֲזַחְחֶיךָ אַף תִּמְסַכְתֶּם
 בַּיַּמִּין צְדָקָי :

Here Israel is the Servant (sing. no.) of Jahveh, and is connected with Abraham as being his seed ; but what is the force of 9^a? Apparently the author is still thinking of Abraham, 'laid hold of from the ends of the earth,' but 'thee' can only mean Israel. The ambiguity of the literal English rendering, 'seed of Abraham who loved me, whom I laid hold of,' etc. (so also in LXX, οὐ ἀντελαβόμην, where the pronoun might be masculine to agree with Ἀβραάμ, or neuter to agree with σπέρμα) is not found in the Hebrew ; the first verb as well as the second in verse 9 has the pronominal suffix of the second person. The difficulty was felt very early, and it gave rise to three different explanations :—

(1) God has now called Israel out of its exile in Babylon, the ends of the earth. So Ibn Ezra and others.

(2) God called Israel out of Egypt, as in Hos. xi. 1

(3) God called Israel potentially, when Abraham was summoned from Ur or Haran.

Vitringa, beyond whom it is seldom necessary to explore the history of Isaian exegesis, presents these views fairly, and objects to the first that the prophet is clearly speaking of some *original* choice and calling of the people. He objects to the second, that Egypt (especially Goshen, so near Canaan) could not well be called the ends of the earth; for while it seems to be so called in Zech. ix. 10, this is only because it includes Ethiopia. He decides therefore for the reference to Abraham, which suits the whole context (cf. Jer. vi. 22; xxxi. 8) and is confirmed by the constant association of a *calling* with Abraham, especially by Isa. li. 2.

Gesenius, holding the exilian origin of these chapters, reverses the reference to the ends of the earth, which from his standpoint indicates Egypt rather than Chaldea. He cites not only Hos. xi. 1, but Deut. xxxii. 10. He objects to the Abrahamic interpretation on the ground that in verse 8 Israel is separated from Abraham.

Hitzig repeats the arguments of Gesenius, and adds Ezek. xx. 5, which much strengthens the case for Egypt.

Ewald, on the other hand, applies the promise to Israel, 'simply as sons of the tribal father, who came from the far north.'

Alexander (with Rawlinson, Cowles, and others) attempts to combine both views, and adds: 'The question in what sense Egypt could be called the ends of the earth is as idle as the answer some give it that it was remote from Babylon. The phrase in question is a common idiomatic expression for remoteness, often used without reference to particular localities (see v. 26; xiii. 2). The idea meant to be conveyed is identical with that expressed by Paul when he says (Eph. ii. 13): "Ye that once were far off are made nigh."' This somewhat peculiar exegesis has not been followed, so far as I am aware.

Hahn, the continuator of Drechsler, is the most decided advocate of an Egyptian reference whom I have met with. Egypt, he says, 'lay on the boundaries of the old world.' 'Nothing else can be thought of here, cf. Hos. xi. 1.' But in almost all recent authorities the sole reference to Abraham prevails.

Orelli is an exception. 'In remote Egypt (not Mesopotamia) God took Israel to be his possession.' But he gives no reasons.

Cheyne holds that the prophet may possibly intend Egypt, but more probably Mesopotamia.

The student should by all means consult the full examination of this point in the recent commentaries of Bredenkamp, Delitzsch,

Dillmann, and Duhm, who all agree in maintaining that xli. 9 refers to the call of Abraham out of Mesopotamia. The trend of exegesis is plainly to that conclusion; Dillmann (p. 379) is in error in citing Bredekamp on the other side.

The objection of Gesenius remains, that in verse 8 Israel is distinguished from Abraham. To this Alexander replied that the objection is futile unless any one supposes that Abraham himself is here the object of address.

Now I hold that practically Abraham *is* here the object of address, and I would meet the objection by claiming that in verse 8 Israel is *not* distinguished from Abraham. If 9^a refers to Abraham, and to Israel only as in Abraham, and if Israel is viewed in the same light in verse 8, the whole context comes into harmony with itself and with the passages previously examined. It is out of harmony only with our modern individualistic attitude of thought, which is stumbled, rather than edified, by the statement that Levi paid tithes to Melchisedec. Whatever one may think of the felicity of Delitzsch's well-known pyramidal construction as an attempt to interpret the Servant in later passages, his remark at xli. 9 expresses, in my opinion, the exact truth:—

'This calling of Abraham is the extreme *terminus a quo* of Israel's existence as the one people; for the leading forth of Abraham was in order to Israel's beginning. Israel pre-existed in him in virtue of the divine purpose. When Jahveh received Abraham as his servant and called him "my servant," Gen. xxvi. 24, Israel received the nature and name of a servant of Jahveh.'

This last reference brings us back to the starting-point; the ends of the circle of our investigation meet; for Isa. xli. 8-10 is strikingly similar to Gen. xxvi. 24, cf. Nägelsbach *in loco*: 'Israel is chosen in its ancestor Abraham, whom already the Lord calls "my servant," Gen. xxvi. 24, which passage easily comes to mind, since Isa. xli. 10 is evidently a citation from it.'

Having traced thus the origin of the term 'Servant of Jahveh' as applied to Israel, let us now try to determine more fully its content. While it is true in general that a servant is any one who serves, the Hebrew עֶבֶד has both a wider and a loftier range of meaning than the English 'serve'; insomuch that Jeremiah, who at one time uses it in a low sense, exclaiming (ii. 14): 'Is Israel an עֶבֶד? is he a בֵּית יְלִיד?' elsewhere applies to Israel the name עֶבֶד יְהוָה as a term of honor. The idea of *worship* is often included

in the word. A clear case is Ex. iii. 12, 'ye shall serve God upon this mountain,' and another is Job xxi. 15, 'What is the Almighty that we should serve him? and what profit should we have if we pray unto him?' In 2 Kings x. the phrase repeatedly rendered 'worshippers of Baal' is simply עֲבָדֵי הַבַּעַל. 'Worship and serve' is a frequent collocation in Deuteronomy and the historical books. (Cf. Delitzsch's fine Hebrew rendering of Rom. i. 25, an eminently Hebraic passage by a Hebrew of the Hebrews.) The call of Abraham, which made him the original and typical servant of Jahveh, was not only a call to service, but an election which marked him out, and his race in him, as worshippers of Jahveh. The promise accompanying the call, that in him all the nations of the earth should be blessed, points to the nature of the service, namely, the diffusion throughout the world of the knowledge and worship of the true God. (See Neh. i. 6, 11, already cited.) This was the mission of Abraham's seed, and the author of Isa. xl.-lxvi. has it constantly in view, commending or condemning the actual Israel according as it conformed to, or deviated from, its norm. All who work for Jahveh in any form, Nebuchadnezzar and the rest, are servants of Jahveh; but *the* Servant of Jahveh, the subject of the great historical mission and covenant, who is to spread the knowledge and love of Jahveh throughout the nations, is Abraham; and in Israel Abraham lives on and serves on.

If, as we now pursue the inquiry, examining each remaining passage in order, we come upon any in which the meaning is plainly different, this has already been provided for; but on the other hand the key we have found is to be applied to every lock which it will naturally fit. The next occurrence is Isa. xlii. 1.

הוּ עֲבָדֵי אֲחִיקָד בּוֹ בְחִירֵי הַצֹּהֵר נִשְׁמַע קוֹלֵי רִיחֵי שָׂלִיז מִשָּׂמַיִם לְנֹחַם יִצְחָק :

Whether or not Matthew had divine authority for attaching a secondary sense to Hos. xi. 1, is a question I do not raise; the primary meaning of 'son of Jahveh' in that place is as unquestionably Israel as in Ex. iv. 22, where it is stated in so many words. I repeat that the secondary meaning, both there and here, may exceed the primary in religious value; but the analogy of the two passages shows that no more here than there are we estopped by any religious application from understanding something different as the natural and primary sense of the term. The question of 'fulfilment' is not before us. Comparing xli. 8-10 with xlii. 1-7 we

find that in each case Jahveh is the speaker, and addresses one whom he calls עֲבָדִי. Jahveh upholds him (xli. 10; xlii. 1) by the hand (xli. 10; xlii. 6). He is not to fear or be dismayed (xli. 10); he is not to fail or be discouraged (xlii. 4). In each case the object of address is Jahveh's elect, בְּחַרְתִּיךָ (xli. 8), בְּחַרְתִּי (xlii. 1). The relation between them is that of mutual love, אָהַבְתִּי (xli. 8), רָצִיתָ נַפְשִׁי (xlii. 1). The Servant in either passage is the subject not only of the divine choice (בְּחַר) but of the divine vocation, קָרָאתִיךָ (xli. 9 = xlii. 6). The meaning of this vocation, as concerns xli. 8, we have learned by tracing that passage to its sources, without the slightest reference to chapter xlii; it is the diffusion throughout the world of the knowledge and worship of Jahveh; precisely this is the mission of the Servant in xlii. 1-7.

Verse 1	מִשְׁפָּט לְנֹחַ יִצְחָק :
" 3	לְאֵמַת יִצְחָק מִשְׁפָּט :
" 4	יֵשׁוּם בְּאֶרֶץ מִשְׁפָּט וּלְחֹרְתוֹ אִים יִחַלּוּ :
" 6	לְבָרִית עַם לְאֹד נֹחַם :

and so metaphorically in verse 7.

The meaning of מִשְׁפָּט in these verses is the divine law as a light to the nations, almost equivalent to our word religion. So Gesenius, *Lexicon*; cf. Batten: The Use of מִשְׁפָּט, in this JOURNAL, xi. 209; also Delitzsch and Dillmann *in loco*, and especially Duhm: *Theologie der Propheten*, p. 289 f.

If we now cancel from the two passages compared their common features, as just ascertained, there is nothing left except, on the one side (xlii. 1-3), the *method* of the Servant; not to conquer the nations in war, but in quietness and patience, in the spirit of Jahveh, to penetrate them with truth³; and, on the other side (xli. 8-10), the *name* of the Servant: 'Israel — Jacob — seed of Abraham.' The value of x seems to be determined.⁴

³ Even so rigidly conservative a scholar as Professor Forbes (*Servant of Jehovah*, p. 43) refers xlii. 1-7 to Israel, and quotes, as parallel to verses 2, 3, Paul's Servant of the Lord (2 Tim. ii. 24).

⁴ I use this algebraic figure for illustration only. It seems needful to say this, because my first publication on Isaiah (*Bib. Sac.*, April, 1881), although professing to deal only with probabilities, was hailed by the *Methodist Quarterly Review* (Jan. 1884) as a 'remarkable arithmetical demonstration of the unity of Isaiah.' On the contrary, I embrace this public opportunity to declare that I now repudiate the mathematical element of that article, perceiving it to be erroneous. Its tables, however, as Cheyne observes of them (*Prophecies of Isaiah*, ii. 288) 'will still be useful companions to the student of the text of "Isaiah."'

It will be objected, however, that even the Synagogue regarded xlii. 1 ff. as Messianic; so the Targum of Jonathan, 'Behold my servant Messiah,' and many Jewish expositors. But while arguments from the concessions of opponents may be weighty in religious controversy, they are only make-weights in exegetical investigation; the closer the acquaintance a modern scholar forms with the ocean of Jewish and Christian dissertations on the Servant that antedate the era of scientific research, the less inclined he will be to surrender his judgment to theirs. Even if the prevailing current of Jewish exegesis was changed in order to support a polemic against Christianity, what of it? If external opinion were in question, the reading of the LXX on Isa. xlii. 1 would be worthy of respectful consideration: Ἰακώβ ὁ παῖς μου · Ἰσραήλ ὁ ἐκλεκτός μου. But this appears to be comment rather than translation.

Other objections, which depend on the connection of chapters xlii., xlix., and liii. with one another, may be deferred for the present.

'Who is blind but my servant? or deaf as my messenger that I send? who is blind as he that is at peace with me, and blind as the Servant of Jahveh?' (xlii. 19).

The details of translation are unimportant to our purpose. That the Servant here is Israel is almost universally conceded. Kay consistently favors the Messianic interpretation, but if that must be abandoned as the primary sense of xlii. 1, no one would think of finding it here. The verses on either side, 18 and 20, compared with vi. 9, 10, should be sufficient to show that 'this people' Israel is meant. The connection with the previous part of the chapter is well brought out by Dillmann (p. 391): 'In a strange contrast with the ideal picture of the Servant, to the realization of which God advances with power, the people as it is at present now stands; and to make clear to it this lapse from duty, there enters here for the first time the voice of grave reproof.'

'Ye are my witnesses, saith Jahveh, and (ye are) my Servant whom I have chosen' (xliii. 10). יְהוָה is predicate, not subject; so Delitzsch, Cheyne, Orelli, Dillmann, Duhm, Douglas, and most moderns; hence this forms one more statement of the equation, Servant of Jahveh = Israel. The context from xliii. 1 is of a piece with the passages already examined. Note especially here how Israel is set over against the nations.

'Jacob my Servant; and Israel (Jeshurun) whom I have chosen' (xliv. 1, 2).

Beginning with xlii. 18 and ending with xliii. 7 the situation

is parallel to that beginning xliii. 22 and ending xlv. 5. In each case Israel has fallen off from its high calling into gross transgression; and yet for his own name's sake Jahveh redeems him and restores him to his mission. Note also the pouring out of the spirit of Jahveh in xlv. 3-5 (= xlii. 1-4), with its result in each case, the conversion of the nations; hence the spirit upon the Servant (xlii. 1) = the spirit upon Jacob's seed (xlv. 3) = the spirit covenanted to abide upon Jacob, his seed, and his seed's seed forever (lix. 21); another testimony to the solidarity of Abraham and his posterity.

'Israel, thou art my Servant' (xlv. 21 *dis*). In the immediate context Jahveh again promises forgiveness and redemption.

'That confirmeth the word of his servant' (xlv. 26). The whole passage refers to predictive prophecy as prevailing over the false science of diviners and boasters. So for the first time in this part of Isaiah we have come upon a case where עֲבָדִי refers more naturally to the prophet himself than to Israel. As was shown in the first part of this article, such an application is entirely consonant with usage, and only an eye fixed exclusively upon Isaiah (Deutero-Isaiah at that; see xx. 3) would ever have seen it otherwise. As it is, the reference to the prophet is maintained by Nägelsbach, Kay, Cheyne, Dillmann (as an alternative); Duhm would change the word to the plural number (so Dillmann, as an alternative). This also would be quite natural, in view of the parallel מְלֹאכֵי.

'For the sake of Jacob my Servant and Israel my chosen, I have called thee by thy name' (xlv. 4).

This is from Jahveh's address to Cyrus. Besides the identification of the Servant with Israel, there is to be noticed here the glimpse given into the divine purposes. Cyrus and the heathen powers are not for the sake of Israel as an ultimate; the true ultimate comes in at verse 6, and blends the mission of Cyrus with that of Israel itself: 'that they may know from the rising of the sun and from the west that there is none beside me.'

'Jahveh hath redeemed his Servant Jacob' (xlviii. 20). The course of prediction grows more definite. The edict of Cyrus is in the foreground; Israel is to go forth from Babylon, is to flee from the Chaldeans; but is then to shout forth its salvation to the ends of the earth; and in the same breath to acknowledge itself the Servant of Jahveh.

עֲבָדִי אֲתָהּ יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲשֶׁר בָּךְ אֲתַפְאֵר (xlix. 3). The immediate speaker is not Jahveh, but some other, who is quoting Jahveh's words as addressed to himself. Since he is called both 'Israel' and 'my

servant,' we have once more the testimony of Jahveh as to the identity of these two. Also יְבָרֶךְ is repeated in verse 6 (cf. יְבָרֶךְ, verse 5). The matter would seem too plain for argument, but the conclusion has proved so unacceptable to many that the utmost ingenuity has been expended in opposing it. For instance, the word 'Israel' is suspected to be spurious, on the ground that it is wanting in just one of the multitude of Hebrew MSS. extant. The bare statement of that fact reveals the strength of the evidence that supports our present text. Duhm gives two other reasons for the omission: (*a*) the metre; he puts 'Israel' in the margin, as though to prevent his distich from limping; but it seems to me that the metre of the Hebrew reads quite as well with the elided word, even if *Maqqeph* is rejected (cf. the close of verse 1); (*b*) the sense; and here Duhm gives half a page to prove the 'Fruchtlosigkeit' of any attempt to explain the passage as it stands. When all is said, the case is exactly parallel to that of an American orator who might say, with equal propriety, 'Thou art the Father of thy country, whom we commemorate this day'; or 'Thou art the Father of thy country, Washington, whom we commemorate this day.' It is to be regretted that Duhm, while stating that Gesenius here omits 'Israel,' overlooks the fact that Gesenius subsequently retracted that view.

Commentators of all schools generally agree that the Servant (whether an individual or a people) has the same significance here as in xlii. 1-7. The only exception that occurs to me is Forbes (*Servant of Jehovah*, 1890), who gives the national reference at chapter xlii., but puts chapter xlix. into the mouth of Jesus the Messiah. The only reason he assigns is a theory of his own as to the structure of the book, and this subjective opinion has no weight against the patent fact that the two passages, by internal evidence, treat of one and the same Servant. Indeed, if there were any occasion to regard the word 'Israel' as a gloss, the parallelism would show it to be a true gloss. The Servant is Jahveh's elect, whose mission is to distant nations (xlii. 1 = xlix. 1). Jahveh will preserve him (אֶצְרֶךָ, xlii. 6 = xlix. 8), he will make him a בְּרִית עִם (xlii. 6 = xlix. 8), an אֱלֹהִים (xlii. 6 = xlix. 6). In view of this great extension of the divine kingdom, creation is summoned to a song of praise (xlii. 10-12 = xlix. 13). The chief difference between the two pictures (for the prophet does not slavishly repeat himself) is that in xlix. Israel is more distinctly personified as an individual. Stress is often laid on these personal features by those who would show that a single historical character is meant. But some of the most individualistic

traits are elsewhere attributed to the nation; e.g. xlix. 2, 'He hath hid me in the shadow of his hand' (= li. 16; see verse 13 and Dillmann on the passage).

The truth is that the characteristics of a personification, provided it is thoroughly carried out, are indistinguishable from those of a person (Stebbins, in this JOURNAL, iv. 66, 78 f.). We may consider, therefore, that the prophet, with high poetic art, has introduced his nation at xlix. 1 as summoning the far-off coasts to listen. 'Jahveh,' says the speaker, 'has called me from the womb; from the bowels of my mother hath he made mention of my name.' This is the call that met us at xli. 9, as is clearly seen by li. 1, 2: 'Hearken to me, ye that follow after righteousness, ye that seek Jahveh; look unto the rock whence ye were hewn, and to the hole of the pit whence ye were digged. Look unto Abraham your father, and unto Sarah that bare you; for when he was but one I called him, and I blessed him and made him many.' It is often objected that the Servant here cannot be Israel, because, according to verse 5 f., he is to work upon Israel as well as the nations: 'to bring Jacob back, to raise up the tribes of Jacob and to restore the preserved of Israel.' But the objection is too prosaic; it is neutralized in the minds of those who can feel the power of an ideal. Is it any more incredible that Israel should redeem first Israel and then the nations, than that the Church should labor first for the Church and then for the world?⁵ Instead of holding our author to a rigid, Western mode of conception, it should be sufficient to refer to the vivid personification which immediately follows the passage before us, viz., xlix. 14-26. Here this same nation, Israel, is depicted in the singular number as a woman named Zion, and is elaborately blended with Israel in the plural number. In verse 16 she is a city; in verse 17 a mother. In verse 18 her people are clothing, in verse 19 inhabitants, in verse 20 children again; in verse 21 she wonders whence they came. In verse 22 the nations bring her sons in their bosom and her daughters on their shoulders; even kings (verse 23) nurse her children and grovel at her feet. In verses 24-26 the foes of Israel are wild beasts and tyrants, from whom Jahveh snatches Israel as prey; but Israel is still the mother (verse 25) of Israel her children. In view of this involved substitute for the prosaic statement that the people are to

⁵ I find in Trench on the Parables (p. 202, n. 3) the following, which he quotes from a friend: 'The Church is both teacher and taught. . . The Church, existing out of time, an unchangeable body, teaches the members of the Church existing in any particular time.'

return from exile and win other peoples, it is a light thing to believe, in accordance with the whole context, that the Servant who raises up the tribes of Jacob is Jacob himself.⁶

Having once projected upon his canvas this figure of the mother, the prophet repeats it at intervals through the next three chapters (l. 1; li. 17-23; lii. 1, 2). The name is now Zion, now Jerusalem, but the meaning is not limited to the city, for Jahveh defines it at li. 16, 'I say unto Zion, Thou art my people.' The antithesis between good and bad in the character of the Servant, which has led so often to the denial that the two can be one, is matched in the portraiture of Zion, the object of Jahveh's tenderest love (xlix. 15, 16; li. 12-16; lii. 9) and yet of his fury (li. 17) and his rebuke (li. 20) on account of her iniquities (l. 1).

Once only in the midst of these chapters the Servant is mentioned. 'Who is there among you that feareth Jahveh, that obeyeth the voice of his Servant?' (l. 10).

It is a fair question whether the prophet speaks here of himself or another. Good reasons can be adduced on either side, and the decision, to my mind, is not very material. For even if Israel is meant in verses 4-9, the writer might allude in verse 10 to his own consciousness of being the mouthpiece of Jahveh; and conversely, if it is the prophet whose ear is wakened morning by morning to hear the message, he might immediately after introduce the Servant as clothed with the authority mentioned in xlix. 1-13. That the whole section l. 4-11 describes the prophet himself (Gesenius, Hitzig, Knobel), has been ably maintained of late by Julius Ley (*Historische Erklärung*, pp. 64, 71). According to Duhm (p. 353) and Cheyne (*Introduction*, pp. 302, 303), verses 10, 11, containing the only mention of the Servant, are a late post-exilic addition. By Delitzsch the whole is referred to the Messiah, but by Dillmann to Israel; the arguments of the latter are certainly strong.

The last mention of the Servant of Jahveh is in lii. 13-liii. 12. The section has always been the great battleground of the whole

⁶ To illustrate the solidarity of Israel in all its history, and its identity with Jerusalem, see Matt. xxiii. 35. The conception of Israel redeeming Israel is not altogether alien even to Western thought. Many still recall the earnestness with which the abolitionists of forty years ago insisted: 'America must rid herself of the curse of slavery,' 'We all have a share in the guilt,' 'We must atone for the blood of the slave by our own blood,' etc. It would be easy for the literalists to prove that such and such a passage in the *Liberator* was a direct prediction of John Brown's raid, or of the disaster at Bull Run.

controversy. The text in several places is obscure ; among the many emendations which have been suggested I note below a few which seem to commend themselves. The phrase in question occurs twice,

lii. 13 : הָגָה יִשְׁכִּיל עֲבָדֵי יְרוּם וְנִשְׂא תָבֵה כְּמֹד:
liii. 11 : בְּרַעְיֵנו תִּצְדִּיק צְדִיק עֲבָדֵי לְרָבִים וְשֹׁנְתָם הוּא יִסְבֵּל:

Cheyne (*Introduction*, p. 306) implies that this whole passage breaks the natural sequence, agreeing neither with what precedes nor with what follows. That he should entirely ignore the excellent connection with chapter liv. which Dillmann establishes is unfortunate. But if, from the point already reached we take a general survey of chapters xlix.-liv., we cannot fail to mark the inner harmony of the whole.

a. Israel as the Servant (xlix.) is restored from captivity and comforted by Jahveh.

b. Israel as Zion (li, lii.) awakes from her desolation and sings of Jahveh's comfort.

c. Israel as the Servant (xlix.) brings Jahveh's salvation to the ends of the earth ; kings and princes bow down.

d. Israel as Zion (xlix.) gathers the nations to the ensign of Adonai Jahveh ; kings and queens bow down.

e. Israel as the Servant (lii. 13-15 ; liii. 10-12) = *a, c.*

f. Israel as Zion (liv.) = *b, d.*

If l. 4-11 is referred to Israel the Servant (so Dillmann and many others), the voluntary suffering which sounds through liii. has been already precluded there ('I gave my back to the smiters,' etc.), and so our section is still more closely bound to the others.

Passing to particulars ; after contrasting the oppression of the Exile with Jahveh's mighty deliverance (lii. 1-6), and after celebrating the Return as a procession beheld by all the nations (lii. 7-12), the prophet compresses into verses 13-15 a picture of the exalted Servant Israel surveyed by the nations who are amazed at this contrast. (For זָרָה, 'sprinkle,' read יִרְגָזוּ agreeing with גִּוִּים, 'So are many nations in commotion.' See Professor Moore's thorough discussion in this JOURNAL, ix. 216 ff.).

The nations spoken of in lii. 15 are the speakers in liii. 1 ff. 'Who would have believed what we heard?' they say. 'Who is this upon whom Jahveh's arm is laid bare? Israel grew up before us' [reading לְפָנֵינוּ with many critics] 'obscure and despised, and when we saw his sufferings we thought him smitten by Elohim ; but

now we see that Jahveh has made him the instrument of our salvation; he bore what we deserved. Taken away as he was by oppression into exile, who of his contemporaries considered that he was stricken to death for *their* transgression?' [for מַשְׁפָּט עַמִּי read, with Giesebrecht, מַשְׁפָּטֵם]. 'His grave was made with the wicked and the violent' [for עֲשֵׂי רָע read עֲשֵׂי רַע with many], 'but Jahveh, accepting his offering, restores him, grants him long life and prosperity, and executes his pleasure through him.'

In verses 11 and 12 Jahveh is the speaker. He pronounces his Servant righteous, and declares that he (the Servant) will bring many to righteousness, that he shall have his reward with the great and the mighty, because of his voluntary sacrifice, when he poured out his soul unto death and was numbered with the transgressors. And when the whole ends with the Servant interceding for the transgressors, we seem to be back at the starting-point, listening to the original and typical Servant of Jahveh, as he intercedes for Sodom.

To depict the exile as the death of Israel and the return as a resurrection from the grave, is just what is done by other prophets. See Hos. vi. 2; xiii. 14; Am. v. 2; Isa. xxvi. 19; and especially Ezek. xxxvii. 12: 'Behold, I will open your graves, and cause you to come up out of your graves, O my people, and I will bring you into the land of Israel.'

To connect the return of Israel from captivity with the confession of the other nations that they had all gone astray is just what is done by Jeremiah (xvi. 14-21).

To represent Israel as bringing to Jahveh a trespass-offering [אֲשָׁם] is not inconsistent with the picture of Israel suffering for the nations, see Luzzato *in loco*: 'If his soul shall make an *asham*; i.e. if his soul resigns itself to death, as though it were a trespass-offering; the meaning being that he would endure his afflictions as a means of atoning for his iniquities, and by so doing admit the justice of God's sentence against him.'

To unite chapter lii. with chapter liii. as above, making the nations speak in the latter chapter, brings out a clear parallel with the second psalm. There the nations set themselves against Jahveh's Son as here against his Servant. There are kings there as here, and their opposition is changed into submission. There they take counsel together, here they consider. The Servant here, as the Son there, receives the nations for his inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession. As it is perfectly natural to supply the

word *saying* at the end of Ps. ii. 2, we need not hesitate to do the same at the end of Isa. lii. 15, and thus bind together

מִשְׁחַת מֵאֵשׁ מִרְאֵי וְתֹאֵר מִבְּנֵי אָדָם:

of lii. 14 with the following in liii. 2 :

לֹא תֹאֵר לוֹ וְלֹא יִדְר וְיִרְאֵי וְלֹא מִרְאֵי וְנִחְמְדֵי:

I cannot feel the force of the objections which Briggs and Duhm have raised, on metrical grounds, against the present connection of the Servant sections. Surely an ancient as well as a modern poet might vary his metres if he chose. The connection of thought is a much safer criterion, and this has already been indicated. But these three chief passages are also very intimately related to each other. The first of them (xlii. 1-7) begins with the words of Jahveh, 'Behold my Servant' just as does the last. The same mission of Israel to the nations underlies both. While this is true also of xlix. 1-13, a closer connection between that passage and lii. 13-15 comes out at xlix. 7. 'Thus saith Jahveh, Israel's Goel, his Holy One, to the despised of men, hated of people' [עַם cannot be *the* nation], 'to a servant of rulers: Kings shall see and arise; princes, and they shall bow down; because of Jahveh who is faithful, the Holy One of Israel who hath chosen thee.' This is simply a condensation of lii. 13-15, which itself is a table of contents for liii. 1-12.

The view maintained above, that in liii. 1-10 the nations are speaking, is very old, but has of late fallen into disfavor, so that Dillmann (p. 474) makes it the least probable of all. Curiously enough, there was published almost simultaneously with his Commentary, so that neither author could refer to the other, a collection of essays by Giesebrecht (*Beiträge zur Jesaiakritik*, 1890), in one of which this view was revived, and defended with much ingenuity and ability.⁷ This essay meets the most serious objection against that interpretation, — namely, that the prophets depict Israel as suffering in exile for its own sins, not for other nations, — by showing that this is not the only point of view from which they regard the Exile. Israel is the holy nation on whom the nations depend for their knowledge of God, yet they have been treading her down and gathering to themselves all the glory of earth. The question of

⁷ Giesebrecht, however, assigns liii. 8-10 to the prophet himself. He does not mention the parallel with Psalm ii.

theodicy presses heavily on our prophet as on Job and the psalmists. His solution is even deeper than theirs. It is an error to assert that he ascribes absolute sinlessness to the Servant ; it is no violence nor deceit, nothing that merited these cruel sufferings, compare Job. But refined in the furnace, the Servant would be a light to the nations ; thus suffering was laid upon Israel for the good of the nations. The next step was natural, to transform suffering *for* the nations into suffering *instead* of them.

The interpretation of the Servant in chapter liii. as Israel does not depend on the above theory that the nations are the speakers in verses 1-10. For, as already shown, the people of Israel can not only use these expressions of universal guilt, but can regard ideal Israel as suffering to redeem the individuals of their race who here confess their sin. This may be regarded as, for substance, the prevalent explanation among the higher ranks of biblical scholars, represented, for example, by Dillmann, Driver, and Stade. Still I am inclined to believe that the view of Giesebrecht will better approve itself the more it is examined ; to me at least it seems the most probable theory.

I may sum up results with the utmost brevity : —

- (1) The servants of Jahveh are all who worship and obey him.
- (2) The Servant of Jahveh is a phrase applied peculiarly to Abraham, as called to bring the nations to the religion of Jahveh.
- (3) As Abraham's life and work are continued in his seed, the phrase in its collective force belongs to Israel the people of God.
- (4) Israel in its ideal totality is set over against the nations (or sometimes over against actual Israel), and this accounts for the contrasted pronouns (he, we) in Isaiah liii.
- (5) Other applications of the term 'Servant of Jahveh' are secondary in an exegetical sense, though they may be primary in a religious sense.