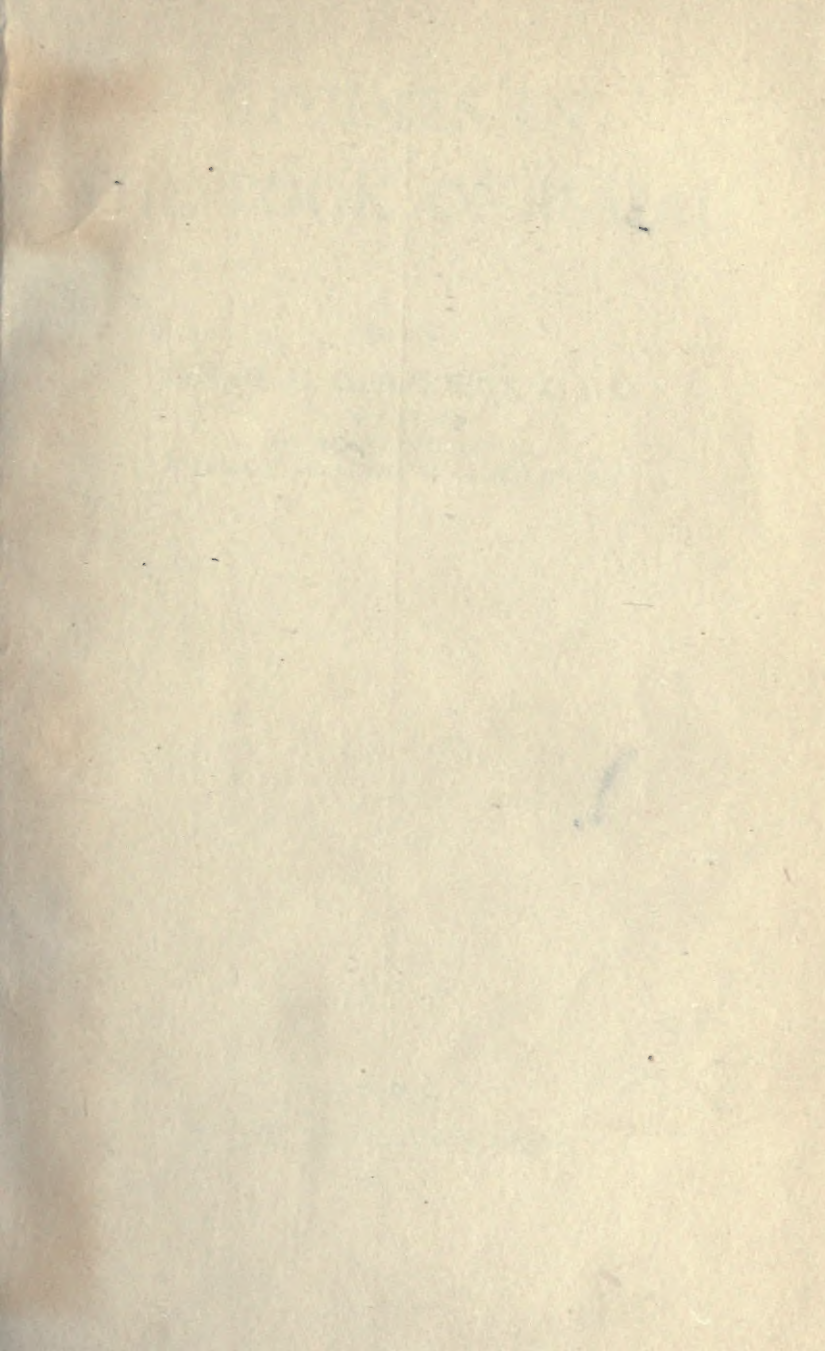





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Comment (O.T.)
Isaiah

STUDIES IN THE BOOK OF ISAIAH

BY THE
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PREFACE

THIS book owes its origin to a course of lectures which I gave some years ago in Bristol, and later (in a revised form) at Norwich. The interest which was expressed in both places led me to believe that some such introduction to the study of Isaiah would be welcomed by a larger circle. However familiar they may be with certain famous chapters, even well-informed people are often at a loss when they try to understand the book as a whole, or to estimate its significance in the history of human thought. They require, in fact, the same kind of equipment which is needed for the study of any other great literary work. They want to know something of the political and social history of the age which produced it; to trace the influence of circumstances upon religious belief; to have a general conception of the moral and religious teaching of each contributory prophet; and to be supplied with such hints about the form and style of Hebrew poetry as are indispensable for a literary appreciation.

All this information is to be found in the standard editions of Isaiah; but not in a form which appeals to the general reader. The specialist is so familiar with the most important facts that he does not care to enlarge upon them: his main interest is devoted to questions

which are new and the subjects of controversy with other scholars: his language is often so technical and allusive as to baffle the uninitiated: and his notes (if he is a German) are printed without any regard to the reader's eyes. Since thirsty souls cannot reach down into these wells of special knowledge, there is need of some one to draw the water for them, and to serve it in convenient cups. That is the familiar task of the professional teacher. He does not originate: he does not speak on his own authority: he only studies the works of the great scholars and acts as their interpreter. Such is the task which I have attempted to accomplish in this volume.

It must, however, be confessed that in one particular I have ventured to speak without the authority of others. The dramatic arrangement of Deutero-Isaiah's prophecies is made entirely upon my own responsibility. Yet the exception is hardly a breach of the rule: for it involves no question of Hebrew scholarship or of special learning, but depends upon general considerations of which any student of literature may aspire to judge.

The design of the book will explain and (I hope) excuse some of its limitations. The most obvious of these is the deliberate exclusion of controversy. The disputed points about the book of Isaiah are so numerous that a discussion of them would fill many volumes, only to weary and confuse the reader. Accordingly, after examining the rival views, I have chosen in each case that which seems to be best supported and have left the others unnoticed. By this method I hope to give the patient reader a consistent impression of the whole in

general accordance with the results of modern scholarship. Such an impression, whether right or wrong, will serve as a useful foundation for further study.

A second limitation excludes everything of the nature of homily. My object being to enable the reader to understand and value the book of Isaiah as part of the world's literature, I have abstained from drawing modern conclusions or making personal applications. Such developments are indeed superfluous for the readers whom I have in view: for those who have once learned to love this great book intelligently will not fail to gain the best kind of edification from their mere communion with the great spirits who were its authors.

A third limitation, which curtails the text, requires a longer defence. The investigations of modern scholars have demonstrated that some whole chapters and many shorter passages in the book of Isaiah were composed in the fourth, the third, and even the second century. The time and talent which have been devoted to explaining them is certainly not wasted. But, though students rightly desire to understand those growths of the Persian or Maccabaeian age which have established themselves in nooks and crannies of the crumbling text, the interest of the general reader, who desires to survey the original structure, demands that they should be cleared away. Such clearance is the more desirable because, while scholars are not agreed as to the date and reference of the accretions, it is certain that in literary merit and religious value they are vastly inferior to the older elements which constitute the main body of the book.

In this volume, therefore, I have included only those prophecies which most modern scholars believe to have been written before the year 400 B.C. They fall naturally into four groups:—

- I. The prophecies of Isaiah, properly so called, which were composed between 740 and 700 B.C. These form a large part of chapters i—xxxix.
- II. Five anonymous prophecies written shortly before the fall of Babylon in 538 B.C. These are contained in chapters xiii, xiv, and xxi.
- III. The writings of the great exilic prophet who is commonly called Deutero-Isaiah, composed about 540 B.C. These include almost the whole of chapters xl—lv.
- IV. The series of prophecies, composed in the age of Ezra and Nehemiah (circa 450 B.C.), which are plausibly, though not with certainty, ascribed to a single author resident in Jerusalem. These are contained in chapters lvi—lxvi.

Should any of my readers wish to inquire into the reasons for assigning the excluded passages to a late date, they will find an admirable summary of the evidence in Mr. Box's valuable edition of Isaiah.

A few words must be said about the new translation which I have ventured to include in this volume. When lecturing for the first time upon the book of Isaiah, I found myself hampered at every turn by the lack of a suitable text, i. e. one which should exhibit the prophecies in the form of verse, freed from interpolations, and arranged in

chronological order. At first I thought the need might be met by simply rearranging the Revised Version. But that proved to be insufficient, for several reasons. In order that the translation, though in prose, may bear somewhat of the aspect of poetry, the lines must have a kind of rhythm and must be approximately equal in length: some, therefore, of the sonorous periphrases which adorn the English Bible had to be replaced by simpler language. In other cases, where a literal translation of the Hebrew text conveys no sense to the English reader, the meaning has been expressed by a paraphrase. The largest changes, however, are due to the admitted corruptions, interpolations, and distortions, which mar the Hebrew text. The Revisers, bound by their instructions, gallantly attempted to translate the untranslatable: and consequently many passages in their version are quite unintelligible. In the thirty years which have passed since their work was finished a great advance has been made. A large number of emendations are generally accepted, and may be regarded as certain. Others, though only the conjectures of individual scholars, offer a probable and poetical sense in the place of confusion. For the purposes of this book I have thought it well to adopt many of the latter class as well as the former. Their sources and authors will be found by the curious in Mr. Box's edition: but the general reader will thank me for not distracting his attention by indicating all the emendations which have been adopted in the text.

In the form of the translation I have largely followed the German of Duhm's great edition: but I owe much,

also, to Dr. Cheyne's kind permission to borrow phrases from his own admirable version. A patchwork, which is designed rather to convey information than to please the ear, cannot be expected to satisfy readers who are familiar with the majestic music of our English Bible. It will serve its purpose if, without needless disturbance, it helps them to understand what they already love so well.

Any value which the translation may possess is largely due to my friend Miss Emery, whose interest in collaboration and exactness in revision have been unfailing. For this help and for the very useful indexes, which are her work, I desire to express my sincere gratitude.

M. G. GLAZEBROOK.

THE COLLEGE, ELY,

May 1, 1910.

NOTE AS TO THE TRANSLATION OF THE TEXT.

Long Hebrew lines cannot be got into one line of English print. In this translation, therefore, they are printed in two halves corresponding to the divisions of the Hebrew; but the second half does not begin with a capital letter.

Words included in square brackets have been conjecturally supplied in the place of Hebrew words which have been lost.

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CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE

CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE

	Judah.	Prophets.	Israel.
Eighth century B. C.	797. AMAZIAH 792. UZZIAH		798. JEHOASH 790. JEROBOAM II
		760-746. AMOS (In the northern kingdom) 760-735 (?) HOSEA (In the northern kingdom)	749. ZECHARIAH and SHALLUM 748. MENAHEM
	740. JOTHAM	740-695. ISAIAH	
	735. AHAZ		738. PEKAHIAH 736. PEKAH 734. HOSHEA
	728. HEZEKIAH	730 (cir.). MICAH	
	711 Sargon invades Palestine		722. Fall of Samaria and end of the northern kingdom
	701. Sennacherib's invasion		
Seventh century B. C.	697. MANASSEH		
	642. AMON 640. JOSIAH		
		630 (cir.). NAHUM 630-620. ZEPHANIAH	
	625-622. Invasion of the Scythians 609. Battle of Megiddo 609. JEHOAHAZ (three months) 608. JEHOIAKIM	626-580. JEREMIAH	
		605 (cir.). HABAKKUK	

Damascus.	Assyria.	Babylon.	Egypt.
		There was a line of kings of Babylon, but they were subject to the kings of Assyria	
738. REZIN pays tribute to Pul	781. SHALMANESER III		
732. Damascus taken by Pul after a long siege — Rezin slain	745. TIGLATH-PILESER II (= Pul)		730. SABAKO, formerly king of Ethiopia
	727. SHALMANESER IV	721. MERODACH-BALADAN independent till 710, when Sargon took Babylon	720. SABAKO defeated by Sargon at Raphia
	720. SARGON Conquers Hamath	704. MERODACH-BALADAN independent for six months	703. TIRHAKA
	705. SENNACHERIB		
Media			
	681. ESAR-HADON		
	672. Invades Egypt		672. Egypt reduced to a province of Assyria under twenty vassal kings
	668. ASSHURBANIPAL (= Asnapper)		
657. PHRAORTES	634. Nineveh besieged by Phraortes and Cyaxares		650. Psammetichus
634. CYAXARES	633-616. Scythian invasion	625. Nabo-polassar	
633-616. Scythian invasion	608. Nineveh besieged by Cyaxares and Nabo-polassar		610. NECHO
	606. Fall of Nineveh	604. NEBUCHADNEZZAR	604. Necho defeated by Nebuchadnezzar at Carchemish

CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE

	Judah.	Prophets.
Sixth century B. C.	597. JEHOIACHIN (three months) First deportation	592. EZEKIEL'S first prophecy 586. JEREMIAH goes to Egypt with the fugitives 570. EZEKIEL'S last prophecy 560-540. DEUTERO-ISAIAH 520. HAGGAI and ZECHARIAH
	596. ZEDEKIAH	
	588. Siege of Jerusalem begun	
	586. Destruction of Jerusalem Second deportation	
	561. Release of JEHOIACHIN	
	536. Return of first band of exiles	
Fifth century B. C.	520. Rebuilding of the Temple	
	483. ESTHER made queen	
	458. EZRA appointed Tirshatha	460-445. TRITO-ISAIAH
	445. NEHEMIAH appointed Tirshatha	
	444. Dedication of the walls of Jerusalem	
	432. NEHEMIAH returns to Babylon	
420 (?). NEHEMIAH a second time in Jerusalem	430. MALACHI	

Babylon.	Media, Greece, &c.
597. NEBUCHADNEZZAR takes Jerusalem	595. Astyages, king of Media
586. NEBUCHADNEZZAR destroys Jerusalem	
562. Evil-merodach	
560. Neriglissar	560. CYRUS, king of Elam, conquers Media
556. Laborosoarchod	
556. Nabonidos	
538. CYRUS conquers Babylon and becomes king	546. Cyrus conquers Croesus, king of Lydia
529. Cambyses	
522. Smerdis	
521. DARIUS Hystaspes (= Darius the Mede)	
485. XERXES (= Ahasuerus)	490. Battle of Marathon 480. Battle of Salamis
465. ARTAXERXES	432. Peloponnesian war begins
425. Darius Nothus	399. Death of Socrates

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CHAPTER I

THE GREAT COMMISSION

THE best introduction to the study of Isaiah's prophecies is that which he wrote himself as a preface to a small 'roll' containing some of his earliest utterances. In that famous passage, which we know as the sixth chapter, he has given a brief but most vivid account of the experience which made him a prophet. One of the most familiar chapters in the Bible, one of the most moving as narrative, one of the most elevating as poetry, it seems to scorn commentary and deft analysis. And yet, if we are to understand its bearing upon the whole life of a great man, we must endeavour to translate that wonderful scene into the language of our own time. We must frame the picture with circumstance, we must throw what light we can upon each part of it, in the hope that so we shall better realize the significance of the whole.

Let us transport ourselves in imagination to the court of Solomon's temple, which was then at the zenith of its glory. The morning sacrifice has just been offered, with all the pomp of a splendid ritual, while the multitude looked reverently on. The priest, with an air of mystery, has passed through the massive portal into the holy place, and has returned to dismiss the congregation with his blessing. Most of them depart at once. The heat of the sun, as he rises higher in the sky, slowly drives the lingerers away. All but one. Leaning against the southern wall of the court, and facing the great brazen altar and the porch beyond, there still remains a young man with a rapt countenance. Strange thoughts and emotions,

it would seem, possess him, and teach him to forget the passing of the hours.

Standing among the crowd of worshippers this morning he has felt once more, but with a new intensity, that the imposing ceremony was a pretence, a travesty of true religion. The multitude, who looked so reverent just now, are ignorant, vicious, and servile: and in their view religion means sacrifice and not morality. Those nobles, their rulers, who attended the service with such edifying gravity, and made such lavish offerings, are notorious for their greed, their oppression, and their shameless lust. And the priests, who performed their office with such scrupulous care and impressive dignity, are no better than the nobles. In the name of religion they have won a victory over the weakness of the aged king, and are using it to secure new power for their caste, new means of taxing men's fears and superstitions. And yet priests and nobles and common people alike not only take a pride in the temple service, but believe that it is pleasing to the God of Israel. They are confident that by their rich oblations they can compel Jehovah to bestow wealth upon their city and victory upon their armies.

Petrified with horror at the impious farce, he notes not when the congregation drifts away, and the priests retire to feast upon the flesh of the sacrifice; he feels not the blazing sun: he stands rigid, with his eyes fixed upon the desecrated altar, and his thoughts upon the God whose seat is in the innermost shrine. Gradually the solid front of the temple grows transparent to his view. Through the wall, through the mysterious curtain which veils the sanctuary, he can now see the place where, as the priests declare, the shekinah manifests the presence of Jehovah. There, instead of ark and carved cherubim, he sees the Lord himself, in visible majesty, seated upon a throne, while the trailing folds of his robe cover the floor. Behind him rise the half human, half dragon-like forms of seraphim, whose voices proclaim in a ceaseless chant the

holiness and the power and the glory of Jehovah. The very earth trembles, as if conscious of the near presence of its Lord, and the temple is filled with smoke.

What is the meaning of that smoke? Is it the cloud which Hebrew poetry always associates with the presence of God? Does it rise from the earth like incense, as a tribute to his majesty? Or does it symbolize the dimness of human thought when it attempts to comprehend the all-mighty and the all-pure? The prophet has not told us. Perhaps, if we could ask him, he would answer that it was all these and more besides.

The vision filled Isaiah with fear. It was proverbial that no man could see God and live: and he was not merely a man, but one of a nation which was utterly false and impure. What could such a one expect but instant annihilation? But there was mercy for him. From the great altar, on which the fire of sacrifice was yet burning, one of the seraphim took a glowing stone, and with it touched the young man's lips, and told him that his baptism of fire had made him pure, able to stand in the presence of Jehovah.

Then he became aware that Jehovah himself was speaking. 'Who', asked the voice from the throne, 'will be my messenger to Israel?' Knowing the desperate need of such a message, believing that none else was likely to offer, encouraged by the words of the seraph, Isaiah came forward and said, 'Here am I, send me.' If he had trembled before, how much more must he have trembled when he learned the terms of his dread commission! 'Make the heart of this people fat.' That is, You are to preach the truth to them; but all your preaching will only increase their blindness and their guilt. They will not believe; they will harden their hearts the more; they will add to their present sins the sin of rejecting revelation.

Many people have argued that the thought of the certainty of failure was not part of the original vision, but a comment suggested by after experience. Surely that would destroy half our interest in Isaiah's history. The tragedy of the true

prophet's life lies in the conviction that he will not be believed. That is the kernel of truth in the old Greek legend of Cassandra, to whom Apollo granted the power to foretell the future, but added the condition that none should credit her. But we need not appeal to the traditions which embody human experience. We have the authority of Him who is the type of all true prophecy. When Jesus foretold to His disciples how men would receive His teaching, He used words almost identical with those of Isaiah's commission.¹

One question the new-made prophet ventured to ask. How long should this curse of deafness and blindness rest upon his people? The answer was discouraging. First the land must be laid waste and its inhabitants removed. A remnant should remain, perhaps a tenth, like the stump of a tree which has been cut down. But the farmer applies fire to the stump which he wishes to prevent from sprouting; and so Israel's remnant shall be cast into the fire of fresh afflictions. What is to be the end? That was not revealed. The stump is not uprooted, but left in the ground. Perhaps, in spite of the fire, it may shoot up once more and become a tree.

So the vision ended. We know not through what crisis of pain, of bewilderment, of despondency, the prophet returned from the heights of vision to the level of common life. For six or seven years he kept the whole a secret: and only wrote the brief account of his commission in order to lend authority to the words which he had spoken to Ahaz.

The question naturally arises, Was his vision a reality, or is the narrative a literary device for expressing the prophet's inmost convictions? In later times, no doubt, as prophecy decayed, we can trace a tendency for visions to become a part of poetical machinery. Ezekiel's vision is laboured; those of Zechariah are obviously artificial. But Isaiah stands on different ground. Who can believe that a description so

¹ See St. Luke viii. 10.

brief, so simple, so restrained,¹ and yet so spontaneous and so absolutely convincing, can be the product of mere imagination? Isaiah's vision has only one parallel in history—St. Paul's vision on the way to Damascus: and each of these was the turning-point of a great man's life.

Are we to understand, then, that Jehovah was actually seated upon a throne in the temple? Surely not. Impressions of sense, whether sights or sounds, are the human language into which a divine impulse translates itself. Such impressions may be as various as the natures of men. Intense, but undefined, they are (as St. Paul says) things unutterable. The attempt to describe them in words may lead men into an inaccurate precision, such as we recognize in St. Paul's three conflicting narratives. But behind all varieties of description, greater than all impressions of sense, lies the reality which can inspire the words and the deeds of a lifetime.

In Isaiah's vision we recognize not only the original impulse which made him a prophet but also the germs at least of his most characteristic doctrines. In later chapters they must be discussed at some length: but it is worth while briefly to notice them now.

First, there is his conception of God. Deeply significant is the use of the solemn title Jehovah Sabaoth—Jehovah of Hosts. Whether those hosts be the armies of Israel, or the multitude of the angels, or the stars of heaven—and perhaps all three are included—the title implies that regal power which, in the conception of Israel, is the first attribute of God. No less important is the threefold repetition of the word Holy. In a time of national corruption this attribute of the divine nature needed a special emphasis. Amos had taught that Jehovah was just, Hosea that he was loving. But it was Isaiah's mission to proclaim his holiness. And to holiness is added majesty. The glory of the Holy One of Israel is pre-

¹ The reality and value of these qualities will be felt by any reader who compares Isaiah vi with Ezekiel i and ii.

sented by Isaiah for the first time not merely as an attribute of God but as a motive and a standard for men. The complete phrase—'the whole earth is full of his glory'—has an even greater significance. Hitherto the Israelites had shared the common belief of their age that each country had its own god, who was supreme in his own land, and the champion of his own people. Even Amos and Hosea do not challenge the accepted opinion. But Isaiah, from the hour of that vision, teaches Israel to make no comparison between Jehovah and other gods, but to claim sovereignty for him alone.

In the next place, we find here two main features of Isaiah's doctrine of man. The first is the belief that sin is punished by material suffering. Its inevitable consequences are privation, captivity, and death. The second is that essential solidarity of the nation which was the basis of ancient morality. Not the man, but the family or the tribe, is the moral unit: it is not individuals, but the whole tribe, that are regarded as having relations to God or to other tribes. Not until the exile did what we call personal religion come into prominence.

Lastly, the vision contains the doctrine of the Remnant, which was to play so large a part in Isaiah's teaching. The nation as a whole was too corrupt for a real repentance. The mass would continue in sin despite warnings and punishments. Therefore a visible and material judgment must fall upon the nation. The rotten part must be cut off. The remainder, however small, would alone constitute the nation. If it should prove sound, it would develop into a true people of God.

CHAPTER II

THE PROPHETIC ORDER

THE situation which Isaiah's preface brings before our eyes, if it were not so familiar, would appear very startling. A rich, prosperous, and outwardly religious people is challenged, judged, and condemned to destruction by a single youth, who claims to speak in the name of the very same God whose favour, purchased by ostentatious devotion, has been recently manifested, as men believe, in national wealth and victory. If we wish to realize how strange this is, we must put away the memory of Isaiah's manifold successors. We must forget St. Paul and Mohammed, Dante and Savonarola, Luther and Wesley, and the many others who, in different ways and to different ends, have manifested something of the prophetic spirit; and ask ourselves what would have been the fate of an Isaiah in any other ancient state. In Assyria, in Egypt, in Rome, we can hardly conceive the appearance of such a character; but we may feel sure that, had such a man come forward, his first utterance would have been his last. Yet in Judah the warnings and denunciations of Isaiah obtained a hearing, however impatient, for forty years. On one occasion, at least, he was allowed to determine the conduct of the whole people in a grave crisis. And his writings, treasured at first only by the few, came to be reckoned among the sacred books of the nation. The position which Isaiah held in Judah cannot be understood without reference to the history of the prophetic order in Israel—the most characteristic, the most surprising, and the most momentous element in the growth of that wonderful people.

The Old Testament contains no account of the origin or

history of prophecy, which it always takes for granted as a national institution. No complete picture, therefore, can be drawn of the most interesting feature in the life of Israel. But by collecting and comparing the numerous references to the prophetic order, which are found in the historical books, we can piece together a tolerable outline. In spite of gaps, which are variously filled by conjecture, we can see how in prophecy, as in other things, God's providence worked by no sudden revolutions but by a gradual process of development.

In the books of Judges and Samuel we find two terms which are used to describe two classes of men—Seer (Hebrew Roeh) and Prophet (Hebrew Nabi).

An editor's note in the ninth chapter of the first book of Samuel tells us that 'Seer' is the term in earlier use. The context shows that the change of name corresponded to a change in the character of prophecy. A seer is a man who enjoys what we call 'second sight', and is able to find lost objects or to foretell future events. All ages have produced such men in Western Asia. Such, in the opinion of the common people, was Samuel, to whom Saul offered a fee of half-a-crown if he would recover his father's lost asses. And, although but one other 'seer' (Gad) is mentioned in the Old Testament, the way in which the term is introduced in connexion with Samuel proves that it stands for a recognized profession.

In the tenth chapter we are told how Saul became a 'prophet' (Nabi): and in the nineteenth chapter the meaning of the phrase is partially explained—'And the Spirit of God came upon him also, and he went on and prophesied, until he came to Naioth in Ramah. And he also stripped off his clothes, and he also prophesied before Samuel, and lay down naked all that day and all that night. Wherefore they say: Is Saul also among the prophets?' In outward appearance, that is to say, the prophet of those early days was much like the dervish of our own time. He combined a religious purpose

with a wild enthusiasm which has always commanded respect in the East. Doubtless there were always individuals endowed with such gifts. But it is in the time of Samuel that we first hear of prophets going about in large bands. This form of enthusiasm appears to have spread suddenly over Israel, perhaps in part evoked by the Philistine tyranny. The sons of the prophets had no small share in inspiring the patriotic agitation which led to the election of a king and the expulsion of the foreign oppressors. Of their habits and methods we know very little. They certainly lived in communities, and rarely went about alone. Music and song were among their gifts: and very likely they composed and popularized the patriotic ballads about Israel's heroes, which are occasionally quoted in the historical books. If Samuel, as some suppose, first recognized the value of this new force, enlisted it in the service of Israel's freedom and union, and strengthened it with discipline, then he gave form and purpose to what was destined in God's providence to develop into a great and beneficent institution. At any rate, by uniting in his own person the functions of the seer, the enthusiast, and the hero, he set up a standard for the prophets of the future which, though rarely attained, was never forgotten.

From the days of Samuel to the end of the monarchy the professional prophets occupy an important place in the history of Israel. Their numbers and organization are alike illustrated by the story of the four hundred prophets who were summoned to advise Ahab and Jehoshaphat whether to attack Ramoth-Gilead, and replied with one voice 'Go up and prosper'. The same story shows the fault which was inherent in the institution. An unreasoning loyalty to the tradition of early days, when their patriotism had served their people so well, inspired them with a confidence in the national destiny which was often vain. Intellectually and morally not much above the average of the time, they easily became the tools of popular monarchs or ambitious nobles, and promised the aid of Jehovah for enter-

prises which deserved no such blessing. Thus they are denounced by Jeremiah for joining in an unholy alliance with the priests and the nobles in order to break faith with Babylon. Sometimes, therefore, they are called false prophets: not because that was a recognized class, but because the instinctive 'jingoism' of the professional prophets made them sometimes the champions of wrong causes.

Another reason why the great prophets were in conflict with them was doubtless that they resisted the higher morality and theology which were gradually revealed through that wonderful series of teachers. The professional prophets were naturally conservative, and so fell more and more below the highest standard of the time. At their worst they were probably very much on a level with the friars of the sixteenth century. Of their better side we have no positive knowledge, since the Bible records only their misdeeds. But the very complaints which are made against them imply that they were expected to be teachers of righteousness, and that venality or sensuality was regarded as a declension from their normal standard of conduct.

Whatever we may know or guess about the general position of these friars of antiquity, we can see that the mere existence of their order did one great service to the cause of religion. They kept alive the tradition that God spoke through the lips of inspired men: by their habits of life they made it possible and (so to speak) respectable to perform those quaint symbolic actions by which even the greatest prophets used to impress the multitude: and they formed, as it were, a platform from which the noblest teachers of the age could address a listening people. We must never forget that just as Luther and Erasmus were monks, and Savonarola was a friar, so the professional prophets of Israel could claim fellowship with Elijah and Elisha, Hosea, Isaiah, and Ezekiel. Their title to a place in the history of Israel is their kinship with the great series of teachers whom we call *par excellence* 'the prophets'.

That series, though continuous in its inspiration, is marked off by differences of method into two divisions. Roughly speaking, in the tenth and ninth centuries the prophets were teachers and men of action ; from the eighth century onwards they were teachers and poets.

The first division offers a great variety of characters and gifts. A wide interval separates Nathan, the king's private confessor, from Elijah, the champion of popular and of true worship against an idolatrous tyrant ; or Gad, who foretells a pestilence, from Elisha, who is the soul of the national defence against Syria. Some of the prophets, moreover, are simply preachers and leaders, while others are credited with the power to work miracles and foretell future events. But with all their differences they are united by certain essential qualities. They all speak as the direct representatives of Jehovah. Whatever the manner of their inspiration, they declare his will with perfect confidence. They all give their teaching, not in continuous argument, but by means of such brief pregnant sayings as are the recognized vehicle of wisdom in the East. They all, in the name of Israel's God, condemn the vices of the time, and point to a moral standard higher than that which the people recognize.

We shall best understand the early prophets by reference to the greatest of them. Elijah is the type and summary of the whole series. He is the seer who foretells the drought and the rain. He is the Nabi who goes forty days without food, and runs before the king's chariot from Carmel to Jezreel. He is the political leader who maintains the law of property upon which the social system of Israel was founded. He is the religious reformer who forces the people to renounce the worship of Baal. Yet he is no teacher of abstract doctrines, no weaver of long orations. His brief and rugged sayings have a direct bearing upon concrete examples of religious or moral principle. Moreover, his life is full of those picturesque habits and actions which commended the prophets to the multitude.

His long shaggy locks, his rough dress, his feats of strength and endurance, his wonderful escapes, his supreme acts of courage and his miraculous deeds, all combined to express a personality as attractive as it was majestic. He became a type for all ages; his influence is manifest in later prophets whose nature was very different: his memory, never forgotten by the common people, gave to the prophetic office a place in the life of Israel which none might challenge.

The second or literary series of prophets begins with Amos. The prosperous reigns of Uzziah in southern and of Jeroboam II in northern Israel brought the wealth and security which are the foster parents of literature. Poetry was no longer traditional on the lips of men, but was written down and found readers. A new weapon of immense power was thus placed in the hands of the prophet. Hitherto the condition of success had been that his spoken words must make an immediate impression upon king or people. To fail in that was to fail altogether. But now, though he might fail, as Amos did, even to win a hearing, and be driven ignominiously back to his native wilds, yet his message, condensed and ordered in regular verse, written down and multiplied, could be delivered again and again until it commanded attention. Thus the same prosperity which produced the sins of a luxurious people was made to furnish a new instrument by which those sins might be corrected.

Amos was a great man—a great teacher, a great poet, and the founder of a new school of prophecy. Yet his life as a prophet lacks completeness. He tells us himself how he went to the court of Samaria, delivered to deaf ears the message which God had put into his heart, and then returned to his flocks at Tekoa. That prophecy was the one incident in an otherwise quiet life. He wrote it down in a literary form for circulation, and there his activity ended. Hosea approaches more nearly to the prophets of the older school. Not only did he preach and write, he also went through a sym-

bolic experience which may have occupied several years. But he too lived, on the whole, apart from the great stream of events. He too was able in retirement to write the history of his experience, and to cast his doctrine into the forms of poetry. To the limitation of his activity we owe the completeness of his book.

The perfection of the prophetic life, which combines active influence with poetical composition, is to be found in Hosea's great successor. For forty years Isaiah lived in Jerusalem avowedly as a prophet. Allied by birth and education and instinct to the nobles who formed the court, he was always in contact with the rulers, touching the springs which moved the national life. Like Elisha, he was at home in the circle of the princes, and at one moment was their recognized leader. Yet, like Elijah, he was an ascetic. For a long time he was dressed in a scanty garment of sackcloth; and for three years he walked the city naked and barefoot. Like Elijah, too, he was the champion of social and political rights against the interests and prejudices of the noble and the wealthy. His life was one long battle against superstition, against immorality in private, and disloyalty in public conduct. Yet Isaiah was a poet too. Like Amos and Hosea he wrote down in lyric form some of the discourses which he had addressed to the people. But his life was too large, his activity too manifold, the need of publication too pressing, for him to wait and sum up all his experience in a single book. After each crisis he published a 'roll' containing a group of prophecies: he sometimes bade his disciples preserve a saying for the future: but a book in our sense of the word he never attempted to write.

Not only does Isaiah combine the functions of the active and the literary prophet: all the elements of influence which we find distributed among other prophets are united in him and raised to a higher power. As Elijah is the climax of the first series, Isaiah is the crown of both together. He is a seer: he foretells future events, some near at hand, others remote.

But his are no petty predictions : he is concerned with nothing less than the fall of kings and the destiny of empires. He is a Nabi : he is subject to the mysterious rapture whose crude form was exhibited in Saul. But what an infinite distance separates the wild aimless excitement which initiated Saul into the fraternity of the Nabis, and the majestic solemnity of that baptism of fire which transformed the Jewish noble into the prophet of all the world. The miracles which were ascribed to him are on the same scale. He does not make iron swim, or multiply the oil, but he turns the sun backward in its course. He is the censor, not of this or that vice, but of all the evils which corroded the private and public life of the age. He is the champion of the true worship of Jehovah : but he is not content to bid Israel worship the God of Israel : he reveals him as the ruler of the world, with power and goodness beyond all that men had ever conceived. And he is a poet so great that the utterances even of Amos sound thin beside his majestic tones. Even in the disguise of a prose translation, made from a text which is sorely marred by corruptions and interpolations, his words have power to kindle the imagination and touch the hearts of all who are sensible to the noblest impressions.

CHAPTER III

THE TRADITIONAL TEXT

It is necessary, before we proceed to the explanation of Isaiah's prophecies, to give some account of the state of the text. Otherwise the selection of passages printed at the end of this volume would seem arbitrary, and their order unintelligible.

We have seen in the last chapter that, while it was natural for Amos and Hosea to write the whole of their prophetic experiences in a single volume, Isaiah's long and busy life put such a course out of the question. Let us first inquire what he tells us himself about his writings. Once we read (viii. 1) that he wrote a striking phrase in large characters on a tablet, which he set up in a public place for the people to read. Twice he speaks of writing down prophecies for use at some future time. In viii. 16 (circa 734 B. C.) he says, 'I will bind up the testimony, and seal up the instruction among my disciples.' And in xxx. 8 (circa 703) he receives the command, 'Now go thou in; write it down and inscribe it in a book, that it may be for days to come, a testimony for ever.' The natural inference from these words appears to be that, after delivering a prophecy or a series of prophecies, Isaiah would sometimes write them out on a small roll, in order that they might be circulated or at least preserved. That conclusion is confirmed by the discovery in our existing text of groups of prophecies which might well have filled such rolls. One of these (vi. 1-viii. 18) opens with a formal preface. We may find further support in the practice of Jeremiah, who gives us in his 36th chapter a full account of the writing and use of such a 'roll'. We can hardly doubt that there was a difference between the

spoken word and the permanent literary form. The elaborate structure and artistic finish of such poems as § 10 or § 32 make it almost inconceivable that they were addressed exactly in that shape to a popular audience.

It is one thing to issue an occasional pamphlet : it is quite another to publish such a large collection of writings as that which occupies twenty-three pages in our Revised Version. Isaiah himself does not speak of making such a collection ; indeed, he seems by implication to disclaim it ; and, as we have seen, the circumstances of his life create a presumption against the belief that he did so. We have therefore no authoritative history of the collection of writings which tradition hands down under the name of Isaiah. It is only by internal evidence, that is, by studying the book itself, that we can hope to discover how and when it was put together. By 'the book' I mean the first thirty-nine chapters. I take for granted the well established belief, for which reasons will be given later, that chapters xl to lxvi are the product of a later age.

A little observation will show the reader that these chapters fall naturally into four groups. The first twelve chapters constitute a whole, which has a formal introduction and conclusion. The second group, comprising chapters xiii to xxvii, can scarcely be called a whole, since its parts are obviously independent of each other. But a principle of unity is found in the fact that the prophecies which it contains are all, roughly speaking, of the same class. They are 'doom-songs' or elegies describing by anticipation the fall of different cities or nations. The third group (chapters xxviii to xxxv) might be regarded as a separate work, treating of the crisis before Sennacherib's invasion. Lastly, in chapters xxxvi to xxxix we have an historical appendix which is (with the exception of Hezekiah's psalm) taken verbatim from the second book of Kings.

The nature of this fourth section throws some light upon the structure of the whole book. Obviously it cannot have been inserted until after the book of Kings had been published ;

and that was not till after the final captivity of Judah. The compilation, therefore, of the book of Isaiah was not completed within a century after the prophet's death.

As the fourth section does not profess to be the work of Isaiah, and plainly cannot be so, we may put it aside for the present and turn to the others. The second section, though it presents many interesting problems, is the least difficult of the three, for the dates of several of the doom-songs are practically certain. The two dirges about the fall of Babylon, which occupy chapters xiii and xiv, were obviously composed about the year 540. The brief apocalypse (chapters xxiv to xxvii) with which the section ends bears the mark of the age of the Greek domination. Intermediate between these are prophecies of various dates. Some are admittedly the work of Isaiah, others contain references to later times. They differ from one another very widely in style, in tone, and in poetical merit. It is plain that in chapters xiii to xxvii we have a comparatively late collection of prophecies, only some of which can reasonably be attributed to Isaiah.

The first and third sections resemble each other in their structure, which is very different from that of the other two. Each of them contains a series of prophecies which are arranged in something like chronological order, and each covers a large part of Isaiah's active life. But whereas the first section extends from 740 B. C. to 700, the second begins with 726 and ends about 702. No one who was editing Isaiah's prophecies with a free hand would adopt such an order. It is clear that these are two separate collections, which were joined together after they had become too familiar to be re-arranged.

In one respect the first section differs from the third. Some of the prophecies which it contains show traces of having been originally published by themselves as 'Tracts for the Times'. Such are the passages ii. 6-iv. 1 and vi-viii, and the long denunciation which begins at ix. 8. Each of these appears to have been in circulation for some time by itself, and to

have had later prophecies attached to it, before they were all incorporated in a large collection. This would account for the occasional violations of chronological order.

Upon these observations, and upon a number of others which it would take too long to mention, scholars have based a consistent and plausible theory about the structure of the whole book. The following is a bare outline of it. From time to time the prophet issued written copies of the discourses which he had addressed to the king or the people. Some of his 'rolls' (to use Jeremiah's term) contained only single prophecies of a few verses; others comprised a series such as would make up several of our chapters. These rolls were treasured by his disciples and others. But in the bloody reaction under Manasseh they were a dangerous possession. All of them were hidden; some were lost; many were mutilated. When better times came, and the spirit of Isaiah was once more powerful, men began to make collections of such complete prophecies and fragments as they could find. After seventy years of persecution it was not easy to be sure of the order or connexion of different passages, nor of the accuracy of the text. In spite of these difficulties three books were gradually compiled, which correspond to our first three sections. In the course of the next three hundred years each of them received additions from later hands. At last, perhaps in the second century before Christ, these three books were united in one by an editor, who incorporated with them a narrative of the Assyrian invasion, taken from the book of Kings.

The same great series of scholars who by the labour of half a century, after many mistakes and changes, have made the results which I have summarized, if not certain, at least highly probable, have devoted even greater pains to two other lines of investigation. They have tried to distinguish between the genuine words of Isaiah and the accretions of later times, so as to present each prophecy in its original form. At the same time they have used every kind of available evidence to ascer-

tain, to what event each prophecy refers, and at what date it was composed. How far they have been successful is a matter of dispute. I could not discuss that question adequately without doubling the size of this volume. My endeavour will be to set forth clearly such results as seem tolerably certain, and to associate with them such other results as, without being more than plausible, are at least less improbable than the rival theories. It is not consistent with the plan of this book to offer alternative views or arguments requiring technical knowledge.

Before closing this chapter it is necessary to say a few words about the corruptions in the text of Isaiah. In the course of centuries his prophecies passed through the hands of countless readers, and were copied many times. Readers of manuscripts are very apt to make notes or corrections: copyists are as a rule mechanical and unintelligent. The text of Isaiah, like those of the Greek classical writers, has suffered from their failings, but for special reasons it has suffered in a greater degree. It is therefore worth while to mention the chief causes which are known to produce corruption.

(1) Readers often make marginal notes. Sometimes it is a pious exclamation: sometimes an apt quotation from another book; sometimes a word or a sentence to explain a phrase or allusion in the text. One of the commonest errors of copyists is to imagine that these notes are a part of the text, and to incorporate them in their copies. For example, in ix. 11 the word Rezin was a correct marginal note to explain 'adversaries': but its insertion in the text with an 'of' makes nonsense. Verse 15 of the same chapter is a reader's explanation of the phrase 'head and tail'; and unfortunately it is a wrong explanation. In li. 11 we have a whole verse quoted from xxxv. 10 to illustrate the use of a word. In vi. 11 'the holy seed is the stock thereof' is a reader's note on the word 'stock'. It is a correct explanation: but its insertion in the text has caused much confusion.

(2) Another common fault of copyists is to omit a line or two through carelessness, and then to insert them below, where they make no sense ; or again, to repeat a line which has been written already. The second chapter of Isaiah seems to have suffered from both these causes.

(3) Not infrequently, when manuscripts come to be written in pages instead of rolls, a page is torn out and put back in the wrong place. The copyist fails to notice the break in the sense, and goes straight on. That is why some verses which should follow x. 4 appear in our texts as v. 25-29.

(4) A fourth cause of corruption is almost peculiar to the Hebrew prophets. The pious Jews of the fourth and third centuries before Christ read the prophecies not for literary pleasure but for edification. Consequently they felt no scruple in making additions if they found material that seemed to them helpful. Do not let us misunderstand the motive of such insertions. The writers had no more thought of deception than the excellent clergymen of our own time who have 'improved' Wesley's or Newman's hymns by adding verses of their own. As a rule such additions betray themselves by their style or by implied references to the events of a later age. A large number of them belong to a single type, and contain little beside promises of prosperity for Israel and threats of destruction for their enemies. A few are distinguished from the genuine compositions of Isaiah by being written in prose¹ instead of verse.

(5) When a manuscript is either badly written or has grown indistinct with age, it is very easy to mistake one word for another, especially if one is rare and the other common. And when such a mistake has been made it often leads to more, for other words in the sentence have to be 'corrected' in order to make sense or grammar. One part of the scholar's duty, whether his text be a Hebrew or a Greek poet, is to reverse this process of error and reconstruct the original phrase.

¹ Cf. iii. 18-23.

Often, of course, he can only guess : but some emendations are quite convincing.

A sacred text which has been thus corrupted must be handled with tender care, like some picture of Raphael's which has been marred by neglect and retouching : but handled it must be. For unless the accretions are removed and the blunders corrected, the reader can gain no true impression of the poem's original beauty and power. I have been compelled, therefore, to print a new translation of the text. It is of course based upon the Revised Version : but the necessary alterations are very numerous. Such a patchwork cannot possibly satisfy the ear or the imagination of readers who are familiar with the stately music of the Authorized Version. Some day, we may hope, some one who is both a Hebrew scholar and a poet will make an entirely new translation, worthy of the great original. Meanwhile I trust that my humble attempt will assist the reader's comprehension, however little it may please his taste.

If we may assume that the process of sifting has been successfully performed, so that the selections here printed are substantially all the surviving prophecies of Isaiah, an interesting observation may be made. Except the two dirges on Babylon, which are assigned to a later age, the reader will not miss any of the great familiar passages from the first thirty-nine chapters of the book of Isaiah : and he will find that the most famous passages are just those which have required least emendation. In other words, the Christian world, without any critical rules or doubt about authorship, has instinctively fixed its affections upon Isaiah's genuine prophecies ; and among these it has preferred those which were least marred by the errors of transcription. The result of the scholar's investigation has been to confirm the collective judgment of the Church.

CHAPTER IV

THE POLITICAL SITUATION

THE introductory note which stands at the head of the first chapter tells us that the vision of Isaiah belongs to the reigns of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah. Although the great vision described in the sixth chapter is dated in the last year of Uzziah, the account of it was plainly written some years later: and the earliest prophecies which have been preserved refer to the reign of Jotham. The whole book, therefore, covers the years from about 740 to 700 B.C. From beginning to end it is full of allusions to the political condition, not only of Israel, but of Western Asia and Egypt. No one, therefore, can understand and appreciate the prophecies without first mastering, at least in outline, the history of all these countries during the eighth century, and the relations between Judah and her most important neighbours. For the sake of such readers as have not already acquired this knowledge I propose briefly to state the main facts. For those who know them already it will be superfluous to read this chapter.

Knowing as we do the supreme importance of Israel in the religious history of the world, and remembering how patriotic historians celebrate the power and splendour of its kings, we are apt to fancy that it filled a large space in the eyes of the ancients. That is almost as great a mistake as if, impressed by Goethe's fame, we were to suppose that the forces of Saxe Weimar were a serious item in the calculations of Napoleon. A glance at the map will show us how the Assyrians, whose standard was that of material power, must have regarded the kingdoms of Jerusalem and Samaria, whose joint area was not much greater than that of Yorkshire, while their population was much less. To the ordinary eye they were merely two of

the numerous small states into which Syria was divided, while on either side, north and south, there stretched the almost illimitable empires of Egypt and Assyria. These were the two poles of the civilized world. In antiquity, in wealth and the arts of life, as well as in military force, they so far surpassed all other states that they could be compared only with each other. Accordingly our survey must begin with them.

Egypt in the eighth century could already look back upon some four thousand years of civilization and empire. For hundreds of years, as the records prove, Southern Syria had been governed by Egyptian satraps, and Rameses II had carried his conquests as far as the Euphrates. About the time of the Exodus internal dissensions had paralysed the power of Egypt, and caused her to withdraw from Palestine and the Sinaitic Peninsula. Since that time (*circa* 1300), in spite of a revival under Shishak I, who overran Palestine in the old style (*circa* 950), Egypt had been on the whole inactive. The country was often divided among rival kings, and was constantly threatened by the growing power of Ethiopia. Only when the Ethiopian monarchs had united the country under their rule (*circa* 750) did Egyptian influence once more become important in Syria. It was an influence rather of intrigue than of actual force. As Isaiah seems to have realized, a foreign dynasty could not effectively handle the national forces. Sabako yielded Syria to Sargon after a single defeat (720): and Tirhakah was content if he could keep Sennacherib from invading his own country (701). But, in spite of her real weakness, the reputation, the vastness, the splendour, and above all the nearness, of Egypt lent her a fatal attraction in the eyes of a strong party in each of the small Syrian monarchies. From the middle of the eighth century till the captivity there was always an influential section of the nobles of Jerusalem who sought to escape from the domination of Assyria by means of an Egyptian alliance. And alliance, when one of the allies is a great military power and the other a small

tribe of shepherds and farmers, is but a euphemism for subjection.

The Assyrian empire was of comparatively recent origin, having been founded by colonists from Babylon in the nineteenth century before our era. A succession of able monarchs rapidly increased its power and extent: and before the tenth century began it had established a suzerainty over the parent state of Babylon. Till the middle of the ninth century Lebanon was the extreme limit of advance towards the south-west, and the Euphrates was the virtual boundary. But Shalmaneser II (859-825) began a definite movement for the conquest of Syria. In 854 he defeated at Karkar a coalition of Syrian kings, among whom was Ahab, and reduced Damascus to submission. In 842 he besieged Damascus, and received tribute from several of the neighbouring states. Among the tributaries who are pictured on Shalmaneser's black obelisk, which is in the British Museum, are the envoys of Jehu, King of Israel. Rammanirari penetrated still further, invading Edom and Philistia. But about the year 800 the tide turned, and for the next fifty years the whole force of Assyria was absorbed in unsuccessful wars against Armenia, which resulted in serious loss of territory.

The accession of Tiglath-Pileser in 745 marked the beginning of a new era. He recovered the lost provinces in the north, reduced Babylonia to a province of his empire, and then turned his attention to Syria. He was not only a conqueror; he introduced a new organization. Hitherto the monarchs of Assyria had followed the ordinary custom of the east, allowing subject states to retain their autonomy on condition of paying tribute and furnishing contingents to the Assyrian armies. These loose bonds were easily broken when Nineveh suffered any disaster. But when Tiglath-Pileser conquered a country, he destroyed its government, deported its leading inhabitants, filled their places with exiles from some other land, and appointed a satrap of his own. Deprived of their natural leaders, hampered by the presence of foreigners, and jealously

watched by a hostile governor the subject countries were reduced to a condition of uniform impotence.

In 738, having dealt with Babylon and Armenia, Tiglath-Pileser began a series of campaigns in the west. First he reduced Hamath and other northern States to submission. Then he advanced into Philistia and defeated the king of Gaza. In the meantime Pekah, king of Samaria, and Rezin, king of Damascus, tried to organize a coalition against him. Ahaz, king of Judah, whose country they invaded in order to force him into the alliance, appealed to Tiglath-Pileser for help. This led to the campaign of 733 and 732, in which Samaria was overrun, Pekah dethroned, and Damascus utterly destroyed. From that time until his death in 727 Tiglath-Pileser was undisputed master of all Syria. But his death encouraged a revolt. His son and successor, Shalmaneser, invaded Syria in 724, and laid siege to Samaria. After a brave resistance, the city surrendered to Sargon, an Assyrian general, who had murdered Shalmaneser and succeeded to the throne. After receiving the submission of the various small states of Syria, Sargon occupied himself in conquests elsewhere. But in 711 he was recalled by a new coalition, which was organized by Merodach-Baladan, who had made Babylon revolt in 721, and was now its king. A single campaign disposed of the coalition; and in 710 Merodach-Baladan was defeated, and Babylon restored to the empire. Sargon's death in 705 once more encouraged the subject states to revolt. Sennacherib, his son and successor, had first to reconquer Babylon, and then in 702 marched westwards to punish the Syrian princes and the Egyptian king who had promised them assistance. Of this campaign, as well as those in 732, 722, and 711, further details will be given in connexion with Isaiah's prophecies which refer to them.

In the annals of Israel the Assyrian empire appears only as a ruthless destroying force. But a walk through the Assyrian galleries of the British Museum will convince any one that

Nineveh was the centre of a highly developed civilization. Among the ruins of the great cities thousands of clay tablets have been exhumed which bear witness to an organized and cultured society. These contain not only the records of land surveys, legal contracts, and private accounts, but also long poems, histories, and prayers, which deserve to rank as literature. The art of the eighth century, though it had not attained the splendour of the age of Assurbanipal, might well challenge comparison with Egypt. The huge palaces and temples, whose avenues were lined with gigantic winged bulls, and their walls covered with sculptured representations of battles and lion-hunts, must have been among the most impressive buildings that the world has ever seen. From the height of all this wealth and power and magnificence the kings of Nineveh must have looked down upon the petty princes of Palestine much as Louis XIV looked down upon the little German states, which his armies devastated with an almost Assyrian ferocity.

Between the two great rival empires lay a comparatively small area which each of them was inclined to claim as its 'sphere of influence'. Syria was divided into at least a dozen small states, all of which, except Philistia, were allied by similarity of race, language, and institutions. Northernmost of these was the monarchy of Hamath. Occupying a fertile plain, completely surrounded by mountains, it had little to do with Syrian politics until self-defence obliged it to make common cause with its neighbours. Southward on the Mediterranean coast lay Tyre and Sidon, the twin Phoenician cities whose commerce was famous throughout the world. Not desiring to make conquests by land, they were content with a strip of coast which reached nearly to Mount Carmel. South of Mount Carmel the coast was in the hands of the Philistines, a league of five cities, each with its own king. Though they had long ceased to invade or harass Israel, they commanded considerable resources, and their fortified cities

were reckoned almost impregnable. To the south and south-east of Philistia the Edomites occupied the whole range of Mount Seir, which runs from the Dead Sea to the Gulf of Akabah, together with a wide space of barren land to the west of it. The fertile valleys on the eastern side of Mount Seir, and Elath, the port for trade with Arabia and India, had been taken from them by Uzziah in the early part of his reign. East of the Red Sea lay a wilderness over which the nomad Arabs wandered with their flocks. North of them and east of Judah the kingdoms of Moab and Ammon occupied the fertile country and pastures which lay between the Jordan and the desert. North of the Jabbok the province of Gilead was claimed alternately by Israel and Damascus. In the ninth century the territory of Damascus had stretched from the Jordan almost to the Euphrates: but in 750 Gilead and Bashan had been reclaimed by Israel, and the eastern provinces had been annexed by Assyria. The power of Damascus was so broken that Isaiah could describe it in 734 as the tail of a smoking firebrand.

Girt in by this curious belt of kindred peoples, with which they had so much in common, but marked off from them by their mountainous country, were the twin monarchies of Israel and Judah. As has already been said, their joint area was normally about the same as that of Yorkshire. But during the first half of the eighth century both had extended their borders. Uzziah had conquered parts of Edom and Moab, while Jeroboam II had carried his arms to the gates of Damascus. In race, in religion, in language, industries, and form of government, there was little to distinguish the two states. Even the corruptions of their religion were almost identical. Nothing kept them from uniting but the tribal jealousies which had divided them after the death of Solomon. The northern state was the larger, the richer, and the more progressive: and it always took the lead. When they quarrelled, Israel was usually victorious; when they were allied, Israel ordered the cam-

paign ; when a new fashion, social or religious, was introduced, Israel set the example. The worship of the Phœnician Baal, for example, began at Samaria, and then passed to Jerusalem. It was in Samaria that the two great developments of prophecy originated in the persons of Elijah and Amos. One reason for the predominance of the northern kingdom was geographical. Its situation laid it open to external influences. The great trade route between Egypt and Assyria passed right through the plain of Esdraelon, which was almost the heart of Israel. Tyre on the west, and Damascus on the east, came close to its borders. The Assyrian armies often advanced to the foot of Lebanon. So we find that while Judah remained a simple agricultural state among its native hills, Israel was already in the ninth century importing the art and religion of Tyre, fighting for existence against Syria, and enrolling itself among the tributaries of Nineveh.

Till about 850 B.C. the little brotherhood of Syrian states lived almost as if there were no outside world. Egypt had withdrawn from all enterprise in that direction, and Assyria had not yet come. So they made wars and treaties among themselves, and held grand courts, quite in the style of the German princes of the eighteenth century. The great danger to their equilibrium was the size and activity of Damascus, which seemed at one time likely to absorb northern Israel. But just then Shalmaneser II began to invade Syria, and Damascus bore the brunt of his attack. Weakened by Shalmaneser, and almost ruined by his grandson Ramman-nirari (811-783), Damascus ceased to be a danger to its neighbours, and ere long fell a prey to the revived power of Israel. Jeroboam II, the last of the vigorous dynasty of Jehu, conquered a large part of Syria, and even established a residency in Damascus. The forty years of his reign (782-742) were the most prosperous period in the history of the northern kingdom. Conquest brought rich tribute and increased commerce : and the whole people advanced in wealth, luxury,

and self-confidence. The kingdom of Judah shared the same movement. Uzziah, who reigned from 792 to 740, was in close alliance with Jeroboam. Secure on his northern frontier, he turned his arms against Moab and Edom. The spoils gained from them, and the trade of which the port of Elath made him master, brought much wealth into the country: and long security from invasion developed its natural resources.

To those who did not see very far, both Israel and Judah in Isaiah's childhood must have appeared richer, stronger, and more prosperous than ever before. To us, who can read the annual register of the Assyrian kings, with its boastful yet businesslike record of battles and prisoners, of countries reduced to ruin, of thousands of men and women butchered in cold blood, and can trace on our maps the gradual extension of the empire's boundaries, it may seem strange that the politicians of Jerusalem and Samaria were blind to their real danger. No doubt the attacks of Armenia greatly weakened Assyria all through Jeroboam's reign. But no one who knew the intense energy of the Assyrian race could doubt that a revival was at hand. The prophet Amos, who understood the real conditions, uttered a deep note of warning. But priests and people alike laughed him to scorn, and drove him back from Samaria to his native hills. They were confident that all was well. Jehovah, pleased with their rich sacrifices, was sure to continue his favour: and with his aid they expected to make fresh conquests and to gain still greater wealth.

CHAPTER V

THE YOUNG REFORMER

THE external prosperity, which Israel and Judah enjoyed during the first half of the eighth century, could not but produce great internal changes. Conquest is always a searching test of national character : for the sudden wealth which it bestows tends to upset the existing social order. In the case of an agricultural people, accustomed to an unchanging routine of life, and to fixed relations between classes, the consequences are likely to be very serious. Old standards of living are discredited or challenged ; individuals acquire an importance which is independent of their birth and status ; above all, the opportunity of borrowing money ruins the more improvident among the small farmers. Roman history supplies us with the most familiar example of this truth. In the second century before Christ the wealth of Asia, suddenly poured into Italy, proved the destruction of the yeomanry. Rich men lent them money, and soon got possession of their farms : a new system of large holdings, worked by slave labour, excluded them from employment : homeless and desperate, they drifted to Rome, there to form a class of discontented idlers, dangerous to the state. So the old social order was broken up, and the traditional morality was undermined. A hundred years of revolution was the price which Rome paid for her conquests.

The people of Israel were even less able to endure the test of sudden wealth. They had not the energy of character which conquest usually implies : for their successes were the fruit, not of their own martial vigour, but of Assyrian policy. Surrounded by nations whose sensual religions had always a dangerous attraction for them, when the protection of

poverty was taken away, they found the temptations irresistible. We cannot, therefore, be surprised to find the prophets denouncing sins of pride and luxury, sensuality and greed, profanity and idolatry. The national decay was in an earlier stage when Amos made his great protest. When Isaiah began to prophesy, social disorder was aggravated by political collapse. As we read through his early utterances, belonging to the first five years of his activity, we shall see that no element of corruption was lacking in the people whom he addressed. Let us consider the prophecies one by one, in chronological order. I shall refer to them by the numbers (§ 2—§ 10) which mark them in the Appendix.

§ 2. This little prophecy is the only one of Isaiah's recorded utterances whose style may fairly be called immature. Not only do we find in it several echoes of Amos and Hosea; it also lacks the force and inevitableness which are so characteristic of Isaiah. Youthful, too, is the attempt to compress a complete system of teaching into two short stanzas. For these few lines contain a sort of summary of the preaching which is to follow. In quick succession we read of the faithlessness of Israel, the corruption of her rulers, the degradation of the common people, their punishment and their destined restoration. We miss one familiar topic—the captivity. Its absence is another mark of early date. The youthful prophet did not venture to pronounce the fatal name of Assyria.

Style and substance alike, therefore, mark this modest little ode as the earliest word which Isaiah spoke as a prophet. We can almost feel how his lips trembled as he spoke. But we shall soon see how he gained confidence; how he renounced imitation and spoke with his own unrivalled vigour and picturesqueness.

§ 3. These six lines are plainly a fragment of a prophecy in which the religious declension of Israel and Judah were denounced. The worship of sacred trees was a survival of early demon worship. There are frequent references to such

trees in the book of Genesis. Hosea,¹ Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Trito-Isaiah protest against the worship of them, and thereby prove its continuance. It has in fact continued down to the present day. The 'gardens' here mentioned encircled sacred springs, to which a similar worship was offered. If we are inclined to wonder that superstitions can have been so persistent, we need only refer to the magical rites which are still practised by the peasantry in modern Christendom.

§ 4. The second chapter presents the most difficult and confused text in the whole of Isaiah. To read it through in the Revised Version is to get an impression of noble phrases without any consecutive sense. These challenge us to attempt a reconstruction of the wreck. We will do so: but must remember that the best we can attain is only a probability. Two sentences recur three times each—one in verses 10, 19, 21, the other in verses 9, 11, 17. From that we may fairly conclude that this prophecy, like many others, consisted of three stanzas with a burden. But we can only find the materials of two stanzas; which differ slightly in their rhythm. The arrangement of the prophecy which I have printed is due to the Swiss scholar Marti. Though decidedly bold, it has the great merit of giving a consecutive and impressive sense.

The first stanza enumerates the sins of Israel; the second pronounces judgment upon them. Both alike begin with a cry of warning, and end with a promise that the pride of man shall be brought low. Perhaps the most remarkable feature of the poem as a whole is the wonderful effect produced by perfectly simple enumeration. In the first majestic catalogue the prophet links the pride of wealth with the vices which naturally follow in its train: luxury, superstition, and idolatry. In the second he pictures the ruin of all those outstanding features of the land, and all those works of man, which seem to be symbolic of pride.

§ 5. The next prophecy has come down to us in perfect

¹ Hos. iv. 13, Jer. ii. 27, Ezek. vi. 13, Isa. lvii. 4.

preservation. Though the exact year of its composition cannot be determined, there is but a small margin of doubt. It cannot be earlier, obviously, than 740 B.C. And it cannot be later than 735; for there is no suggestion of danger from the side of Assyria, and no emphasis is laid upon the enmity of Damascus.

The prophet begins with a warning that God will punish the people by depriving them of their natural leaders (verses 1-4). Then he pictures the anarchy which results from a weak government. No dignity is respected, no rights are secure. The people in their confusion appeal to the few remaining representatives of the ruling class: but these will shrink from the ungrateful and dangerous task of bringing order into such a chaos (verses 5-7). Next he traces the evil state of Judah back to its causes—the shameless profanity of the multitude, and the weakness of their rulers (verses 8-12). The prophecy concludes with a brief denunciation of these rulers. Since they manage so ill, Jehovah will set them aside, and order the government by his own power (verses 13-15).

The characteristic image with which the poem ends has found a place in our common speech. 'To grind the faces of the poor' means to crush all that is most noble and tender in them between the millstones of pride and wealth. It is a phrase which has all Isaiah's vividness and simplicity.

We cannot help observing, here and elsewhere, how thoroughly aristocratic was Isaiah's conception of human society. Everything, in his eyes, depends upon the character of the ruling class. If they fail there is no hope, for the masses cannot help themselves. Unlike his contemporary Micah, who promised that a new David should arise from the peasantry and redress the wrongs of the poor, Isaiah saw the ruin of all in the fall of 'the mighty man and the man of war, the judge and the prophet'. Herein he was a true Oriental. For in Asia it has always been true that the nation is what the king and the nobles make it. And even to Micah,

the champion of the peasants, democracy is inconceivable. His new saviour of society is to be an absolute monarch.

§ 6. The pride of man shows itself in the lust of power : the pride of woman in a reckless love of pleasure. Jerusalem, the scene of so much misery and oppression, can yet be called 'the joyous city', because the women of the richer class are given up to gaiety. In a simple style, so simple that some commentators will not allow it to be Isaiah's, the young prophet warns his countrywomen to give up their folly, and turn to mourning for the evil days which are soon to come.

§ 7. In striking contrast with the ballad-like simplicity of the last ode stands the terse intensity of another poem on the same subject. Three stanzas present three pictures which, once realized, can never be forgotten. First we see the proud city dame in her prosperity, exhibiting all the languorous ostentation of Oriental wantonness. Then follows the misery to which she is reduced by her country's ruin. We see her in filth and rags and loathsome sores. The third stanza tells of a pitiful struggle between a number of these helpless, desperate women, all eager to win the protection of a man's name against the dangers of that cruel time.

In order to show this wonderful little poem in its perfection, it was necessary to omit a pair of interpolations. In the middle of the second stanza some archaeologist of a later age has inserted a complete inventory of the city dame's toilet. Such an intrusion would be highly unpoetical even if it were in polished verse. But this is written in plain prose, which makes it impossible for any reader of the Hebrew to imagine it a part of the poem. Even in our English translation, which veils the difference between the prose and verse of the original, a careful reader will feel at once how little the catalogue of costume fits the context. The second interpolation is a fragment from an apostrophe to the city of Jerusalem, and is therefore quite out of place in the middle of an address to the women.

§ 8. The parable with which the fifth chapter opens is so simple in its beauty that it defies commentary. It consists of an introductory couplet, three stanzas of eight short lines, and a conclusion in two couplets. We can hardly avoid connecting it with the parable in the thirteenth chapter of St. Luke, where the main point is the same. Only in St. Luke it is a fig-tree, planted in a vineyard, which fails to give fruit in season.

No English version can reproduce the double assonance which, in the original, gives point to the final couplet. It is, however, admirably rendered in German by Duhm :

Und er hoffte auf gut Regiment, und siehe da! ein Blut-
regiment :
Auf Rechtsprechung, und siehe da! Rechtsbrechung.

§ 9. Whether it was chronology, or similarity of subject, or a fine sense of contrast, which induced an editor to place the ninth prophecy immediately after the eighth, certainly the collocation gives us an admirable idea of the range of the young prophet's power. From a graceful parable, full of idyllic imagery, we pass to a stern denunciation expressed in the plainest and most direct language, with no ornament but the flame-like passion which burns in every line. Unhappily it is but a fragment. Of the seven original stanzas only three are tolerably complete, and one is represented by a single couplet. Enough remains, however, to show the plan of the whole. Each stanza describes one of the main vices of Israel, and ends with a threat of punishment to come. Taken as a whole, this prophecy gives the most complete picture of the national corruption which called for heaven's vengeance.

The first stanza condemns the land-hunger, so characteristic of new-made wealth, which was driving the yeomanry from their holdings, and robbing them thereby of their place in the social order. The meet reward for this is the desolation of the broad lands which the rich have gained by wrong.

Next follows the coarsest form of the luxury for which wealth gives opportunity. Feasting and drinking from an early hour in

the day till late at night, the 'nobles' of Israel are earning for themselves the hunger and thirst of a deserved captivity.

We may conjecture that the subject of the third stanza was the lasciviousness which so inevitably follows upon drink. But only the latter half remains, describing the ruin which that vice will draw upon Jerusalem.

Those who have got so far naturally advance one step further, to a shameless avowal of evil and denial of God's judgment.

The fourth stanza, though sadly mutilated, gives vivid expression to the cynical insolence of men who have ceased to believe in the divine government of the world.

The fifth tells of that moral blindness—that hardening of the heart—which is the supreme punishment of obstinate sin. Men who have passed through the other stages reach a point at last where the very meaning of moral terms is reversed.

The sixth stanza is so mutilated that we can but guess at its meaning. Perhaps it refers to the blind self-confidence, such as is described in the twenty-eighth chapter, which is the prelude to political ruin.

In the final stanza we find greed, which is the child of luxury, perverting justice and so bringing rottenness into the whole state. That was the crowning social evil of the time. In describing the doom which follows, the poet's rising passion finds expression in a fine image. 'Their root shall be rottenness, and their blossom shall go up as dust.'

§ 10. The longest of this group of early prophecies, and perhaps the most interesting, can be dated with tolerable exactness. Its elaborate structure and developed power forbid us to place it in the first years of Isaiah's activity: while we are debarred by verse 11 of the ninth chapter from assigning a later date than 735. For when the prophet in that verse pictures Ephraim as being beset by the Syrians before and the Philistines behind, he makes it evident that he had as yet no idea of that alliance between Syria and the northern

kingdom of Israel which took effect in 734. We may therefore reasonably assume that this prophecy was written either late in 736 or early in 735 B.C. It follows naturally upon the last. For while the fifth chapter enumerates the sins which were destined to bring destruction, the ninth describes the successive phases which that destruction was to present. Of the six or perhaps seven original stanzas only five remain to us complete. The same accident which removed the last stanza from its proper place in chapter x to the end of chapter v has destroyed the greater part of the last but one, and possibly the whole of another. Happily the text of those which remain is in such a good condition as to cause little difficulty.

The first stanza denounces the insensate pride which led Israel to make light of disasters which were God's warnings to repent. Syria had already been making assaults upon Palestine: the Philistines were always ready for a war with their hereditary foes. But the insolent nobles of Samaria treated the losses as trivial, and boasted that they would soon be more than recovered. Therefore greater disasters must follow. For all that, declares the burden which is repeated at the end of each stanza, God's wrath remains, and there is further punishment to come.

The second stanza describes how some great battle will destroy the generals and decimate the people.

Upon this, the third stanza declares, will follow anarchy and all the horrors of civil war.

The fourth tells how the unjust and selfish rulers, at this crisis, will betake them to the Egyptian idols, in which they put their trust. But that will be all in vain, for

Beltis¹ falls in pieces, Osiris is broken,
And they fall down under the slain.

The first part of the fifth stanza, now lost, must have con-

¹ Beltis (fem. of Baal, and meaning our Lady) is used as a title for the Egyptian goddess Isis, who was the wife of Osiris.

tained a further picture of their despair ; probably also of some wild attempt to get help from a foreign nation. This profane alliance, perhaps, increases the anger of Jehovah, whose retribution is described in the fragment which remains.

The prophecy concludes with an unmistakable prediction of an Assyrian invasion. Assyria is the nation whose characteristic weapon is the bow, whose chariots charge like a whirlwind, whose indomitable energy is painted in the phrase 'none shall be weary or stumble among them'. And in case those marks should not be clear enough, they are compared to the fierce and ruthless lions which they so often hunted for pastime. This last stanza does not end with the burden which has already five times threatened further woe. The reason is obvious. The climax has been reached, for Assyrian conquest means not only the captivity of part of the people but the loss of national existence. Instead of Israel, a mixed race of aliens will dwell in the sacred land.

The reader may be inclined to ask why this most important of the early prophecies was addressed to Israel and not to Judah. A twofold answer may be given. As other prophecies show (e.g. chapter xxviii), Isaiah was deeply interested in the northern kingdom, and felt that he had a commission to address it. And, as was pointed out in the last chapter, the two Israelite kingdoms were so closely connected, and the northern was so definitely the leader, that what happened one year to Samaria was only too likely to befall Jerusalem in the next. This great ode, therefore, serves a double purpose, being at once a lament over Ephraim and an object lesson addressed to Judah.

At last Isaiah has sounded what is to be the keynote of all his dirges in the time to come. The final doom appointed for the sins of Israel and Judah alike is not this or that single disaster, a defeat by the Philistines, or a raid of the Syrians, but captivity beyond the Euphrates. That is the fatal goal upon which henceforth his eyes are fixed. Henceforth we

shall notice a change in tone and style. In view of the awful calamity which threatens Judah, the prophet spends less thought upon the sins of the people, and more upon the political conduct of their rulers. His great effort is now to direct the national policy in the path of reason and loyalty, so as to avoid a breach with Assyria. The sins of the people are not forgotten, but they are veiled by the horror of the impending punishment. And so denunciation is merged in guidance and counsel.

CHAPTER VI

THE SMOKING FIREBRAND

WE have seen in a previous chapter¹ how the almost simultaneous awakening of the two giant nations of Egypt and Assyria about the middle of the eighth century threatened to produce a conflict in which the small buffer states of Syria must inevitably be crushed. This conflict was destined to endure for more than a century, so that all through Isaiah's life it was the dominant factor in the history of Western Asia. Accordingly the main groups of Isaiah's prophecies have reference to successive acts in the drama of Assyrian aggression. Unfortunately the group which we have first to consider consists mainly of fragments. Still we are able, with the aid of the Assyrian chronicles, to bring them into relation with each other, and piece them together so as to give some idea of their original bearing.

Tiglath-Pileser, whose new policy of aggression has already been described,² made his first westward movement about the year 740, and in 738 he already numbered Damascus, Hamath, Tyre, and Samaria among his tributaries. He confirmed the usurper Menahem upon the throne of Israel, receiving a thousand talents of silver as the price of his support. The princes of Samaria, who were heavily taxed in order to make up the payment, doubtless urged Menahem's successors to revolt. Perhaps they began to see, also, that tribute was only the first stage in the new conqueror's programme, and worse was to follow. If similar conditions existed in the neighbouring states, we cannot be surprised to find a coalition being formed against the common foe. In 735 Samaria and Damascus

¹ See p. 26.

² See p. 24.

renounced their mutual enmity, and united their forces for defence. They were supported by Hamath and other small states which had the same danger to fear. It was important to them that Judah should join the coalition. Her hardy mountaineers made good soldiers, and her capital was an almost impregnable fortress. But Ahaz, perhaps influenced by Isaiah, rejected their overtures: and in consequence the united forces of Rezin and Pekah prepared to advance upon Jerusalem. The danger was not really very great; for, as the prophet foresaw, Tiglath-Pileser was sure to come down upon the rebels very soon. But Ahaz and his court were panic-stricken. In spite of Isaiah's vehement protest, Ahaz 'sent messengers to Tiglath-Pileser, saying: I am thy servant and thy son; come up and save me out of the hand of the King of Syria, and out of the hand of the King of Israel, which rise up against me. And Ahaz took the silver and the gold that were found in the house of Jehovah, and in the treasures of the king's house, and sent it for a present to the King of Assyria' (2 Kings xvi. 7). This invitation doubtless hastened the inevitable advance of the great conqueror. In the next year (734) Tiglath-Pileser overran the northern part of Pekah's kingdom, carrying away many of its inhabitants, and at the same time he authorized Hoshea to murder Pekah and succeed to his throne. A year later he laid siege to Damascus, which capitulated in 732. So the whole of Syria and a part of Israel became provinces of the Assyrian empire. Ahaz had gained some temporary relief, but he had not only cruelly injured Israel; he had opened a channel through which the 'scouring scourge' was to sweep down upon Jerusalem. The critical years 735 and 734, in which Ahaz took his disastrous resolution, are fitfully illuminated by the prophecies numbered 11-19.

§ II. This prophecy marks the transition from the prophet's early style to that of his prime. Though still mainly concerned with the sins of Israel, he now makes a definite reference to a foreign power, and considers its political influence

upon his own people. We are able to fix the date of the prophecy with unusual accuracy. It follows the tenth after an interval, during which Damascus and Samaria have become allies, so that the former can be referred to as 'the bulwark of Ephraim': but there is no thought, as yet, of their assaulting Jerusalem. It cannot, therefore, have been written earlier than the middle of 735 or later than the beginning of 734.

The structure of the poem is very simple. The first stanza predicts the downfall of Damascus. Though no enemy is named, the dread presence of Assyria is unmistakably felt in the background. In the second stanza the prophet, by two striking images, describes the miserable condition to which the kingdom of Samaria, like its ally, will soon be reduced. In the third stanza he assigns idolatry as the reason for this fall.

The particular form of idolatry which is named in the third stanza requires a little explanation. A 'garden of Adonis' was a basket filled with earth and planted with seeds or shoots. Growing up very quickly, and no less quickly withering, these were regarded as symbols of the fate of Adonis, and as such were placed round the bier which was laid out in his honour every spring. Moreover, the fruits and leaves of these 'gardens' were believed to have a magic power of healing, proportionate to the rapidity of their growth. It is that superstition which gives point to the last four lines of the stanza. This curious observance was borrowed by the Israelites from the Syrians, who worshipped the same god in three different aspects under the three names, Adonis, Naaman, and Thammuz.

§ 12. Early in the next year (734) there came news to Jerusalem that the army of Syria had marched to Samaria, and the allied kings were ready to advance upon Jerusalem. Ahaz, in terror, begins to take measures for defence. Almost his first thought is of the water supply, so essential to a besieged city; and he hastens in person to secure the concealed reservoir outside the city. There the prophet goes to meet him, and tries to make him see the danger in its true proportions. The picturesque

phrase which he applies to Rezin and Pekah—'these two tails of smoking firebrands'—suggests a marvellously apt image. These kings, as the prophet had already shown, had had their day. They had been lights of the little world of Western Asia once. But now their substance was exhausted: there was not enough left to give light or even to burn; they could only cause a temporary annoyance, as it were by the smell of their smoke.

The first scene between the king and the prophet ends with the ninth verse. The sequel appears to have followed after an interval. Seeing the king's hesitation and feebleness, Isaiah invited him to ask for a sign whereby the truth of his words may be tested: and though the timid king shrank from asking, he forced a sign upon him. Pointing to a woman who is with child, he says that when her child is born she will give it the name of Emmanuel—God with us. Now according to the custom of Israel, which is illustrated by the story of Ichabod, she could not give her child such a name except to commemorate some notable deliverance of her people. The meaning of the sign, therefore, is that in a few months the enemy would have retreated from before Jerusalem. And Isaiah goes on to say that before the same child can distinguish one taste from another—that is, in two or three years—the land of Syria and of Israel will be reduced to a desert. His words were fulfilled almost to the letter. Within a few months the invaders hurried back from Judah to defend their own capitals against the Assyrians. And within three years the whole of Syria and a large part of Israel had been overrun by the armies of Tiglath-Pileser and their inhabitants carried away into captivity.

The passage which follows this prophecy in our texts (vii. 18–viii. 22) contains a most interesting collection of fragments which an undiscerning editor has attempted to weave together into a continuous discourse. Though all the fragments apparently belong to the same period, the effect of thus uniting them is a desperate confusion. It is as if stanzas had been taken at random from a dozen of Wordsworth's short poems

and printed as a single ode, with short connecting passages by a prosaic editor. Happily the bits of original marble are easily distinguished from the mortar with which the editor has filled the gaps in his strange mosaic. We can disregard his conventional phrases, such as 'It shall come to pass on that day', and concern ourselves only with the precious relics of the prophet. The exact order of their composition being uncertain, we can only group them according to their apparent connexion.

§ 13. This brief narrative describes another of those acted parables which the Hebrew prophets employed with so much effect—Isaiah gave the name of *Maher-shalal-hash-baz*, 'Swift spoil, speedy prey,' to his second son, as a token that within two years the ruin of Damascus should be complete.

§ 14. Despite Isaiah's protest, the frightened king had sent an embassy to beg aid from Assyria. In this brief and beautiful poem we have Isaiah's comment and warning. His thought is expressed by two finely contrasted images. The River (i. e. the Euphrates) is a natural and apt symbol for the power of Assyria. The overwhelming flood of the great river, so different from the petty torrents of Judah which stormed for a day and then were dried up, is the counterpart in the world of nature to the resistless might of the Assyrian armies, which bore down all opposition of man and fortress, and swept over each doomed land, ruthless, destructive, and terrible. On the other hand, the calm and sure protection of Jehovah is compared to the sweet spring water which poured with unceasing gentleness from the upper pool above Siloam to the fountains within the city walls, bringing coolness and refreshment to all Jerusalem's inhabitants.

When we come to a passage like this, and find how the understanding of the poetic words depends upon a knowledge of places and dates and allusions, we are reminded of the old saying that mediaeval Italian history serves mainly as a background to Dante. Might we not hold similar language about the dark and confused tale of defiant weakness and intriguing simplicity

which makes up the history of Judah in the eighth century? The chief reason why it is worth while to trace the tangled threads of policy which are attached to the names of Ahaz and Hezekiah, Pekah and Rezin and Hoshea, is that out of these is woven the dark screen which throws into such glorious relief the heroic figure of the prophet, with the book of golden words in his hand.

§ 15. Unexpected disaster is a severe test of a people's nerve and courage. Instead of blaming their own want of foresight, the mob are always ready to cry out, 'Nous sommes trahis.' So it was with the people of Judah when they were defeated by the advancing armies of Rezin and Pekah. Isaiah rebukes them with characteristic boldness of metaphor. 'Do not talk of conspiracies and traitors', he says in effect. 'It is not this or that man or party in Jerusalem that you have to fear. Such men are only tools in the hand of Jehovah. Fear Him. Call Him, if you will, the arch-conspirator! Your offended God is a gin and a snare and a stone of stumbling to his faithless and disobedient people.'

§ 16. The prophet's thought must often have travelled onward to picture what would happen if the people of Israel or Judah were finally rejected by Jehovah, and given up to their foes. In this vivid fragment we seem to have the record of one such vision of the future. For brevity, intensity, and suggestiveness, it may challenge comparison with anything in Dante's *Inferno*. In six lines Isaiah has drawn a picture of a ruined and desperate people which burns itself into the memory. We feel that they are only part of a larger whole: and yet we can hardly conceive any addition which would not weaken the effect.

§§ 17-19. There remain three brief stanzas to which we cannot assign any place in the sequence. They sound like cries uttered at moments of special anxiety or exaltation. The first (§ 17) is a challenge to the allied powers who were preparing to attack Judah. Vain, he tells them, is their confidence and their preparations, for God is on the other side. He will confound

their plans and crush their armament. The other two describe, by different images, that Assyrian invasion which the prophet sees always in the background. Like a swarm of bees or of hornets they will descend upon the devoted country, infesting and destroying mountain and plain alike, desert and fruitful field. Yet again, the army of Assyria is a razor in the hand of Jehovah, with which he will shave the body of Israel from head to foot, leaving not a hair for dignity or for decency.

§ 20. As the sixth chapter was written to be an introduction to the prophecies which refer to the reign of Ahaz, so these verses form the conclusion. In the opening vision it was foretold that the people would be deaf to all warning. In the epilogue the prophet sadly recognizes that he has spoken to those that would not listen. He turns from the heedless multitude to the small band of his disciples. There is nothing left, he tells them, but to seal up his oracles to be a witness in time to come against the nation which rejected them. Thus may Isaiah and his family fulfil their mission : for God has appointed them to be signs and wonders in Israel ; a strange but most suggestive description of the prophetic calling. Not only when he walks naked for three years in Jerusalem ; not only when he speaks bitter words to 'the drunkards of Ephraim' ; but in the whole scheme of his life and in the very names of his children, the prophet must be an incarnate protest against the evils of the time. His word will live, his spirit will prevail in the end : but not in his own lifetime will recognition come.

CHAPTER VII

THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE PROPHETS

A MAN who feels that all his world is going wrong, who sees authority in the hands of weakness, wealth triumphant over worth, justice perverted to be the instrument of oppression, worship a cloak for debauchery, and faith an excuse for political blindness, may well determine to protest in speech or in writing against the evils of his time. Such an impulse has been felt by men of very different characters in many ages of the world. All of them might in some sense appropriate Juvenal's famous phrase¹:—*facit indignatio versum*. But, granted that their motives are similar, there remains the question of style and method. What tone shall such a writer take? To whom shall he address himself? To what standards shall he appeal? These are important questions, for the answers determine whether the book is to be that of a satirist, a reformer, or a prophet.

We shall, I think, be better able to appreciate the distinctive qualities of Isaiah's writings if we first bestow a little thought upon some of the great men who have come forward in later ages to protest against the moral or social disorders of their own days.

In spite of eighteen centuries, and many imitators, Juvenal still holds the first place among the satirists of the world. He owes this in a great measure to his passionate hatred of wrong, to his power of presenting a situation with dramatic vividness, and to his forcible and picturesque style. Yet he achieved nothing except literary fame. The reasons for this are obvious. While he pours out a perennial stream of anger and scorn upon the vices and follies of Roman society, he offers no alternative

¹ Satire I. 79.

picture of what is right. When he pillories individuals, historical or imagined, who are types of common faults, he forgets to show why they are to blame. His appeal is either to experience, as in the famous passage about conscience, or to common sense. He has no definite creed to offer, no uplifting principle, no concrete example of the better way. So his passion wears itself out in a monotonous declamation against things as they are, while the literary skill, which pictures evil with such fine touches and such wealth of detail, has exposed him to the suspicion of enjoying the scandals which he describes with so much knowledge.

Erasmus is a satirist of a different kind. His strength lies in a kind of cynical humour which colours his representation of men and things. Yet those who have waded through the dreary fun of his *Praise of Folly* are inclined to wish there were less of his jesting and more evidence of earnestness and definite purpose. Such a critical temper, which does not regard any cause as worth a great expenditure of feeling, is incompatible with the zeal of a reformer. Without half Erasmus's wit or knowledge or literary skill, Luther was able to accomplish a great work because he had a constructive intellect and a passion for righteousness.

If the title of reformer may be applied to one who is not a man of action but only a writer, we may claim it for William Langland. The author of *Piers Ploughman* is in deadly earnest. He grieves over the sins of the time and pictures them in vivid colours. He has fine feeling, wit, and keen insight: but his interest lies in the individual rather than in the social order. His attitude is that of sympathy for suffering rather than condemnation of its cause. Too gentle and kindly for a satirist, he is yet no prophet, for he has no new truths to advocate. His only remedy for the miseries of the day is the most impossible kind of reform, a mere return to the old paths.

Dante is perhaps the only great writer of the modern world who has definitely and consciously assumed the attitude of the

prophet. In him, as in Isaiah or Jeremiah, we see at once the representative man, the judge, the reformer, and the teacher. Even his phrases are often echoes from his favourite Jeremiah. In his great poem we see him going through an awful experience, not merely for his own sake, but in order, by a typical act, to show the way of conversion for a human soul. In the spirit of Isaiah, as he traverses hell and purgatory, he passes judgment on men and cities, emperors and popes. He points out and condemns the moral evils which threaten to bring ruin upon Italy. Nor does he fail to suggest a remedy for the troubles which distract all Europe. That remedy bears a kind of resemblance to Isaiah's picture of an ideal king who should heal all the wounds of Israel. For Dante looked for an unprecedented harmony between an ideal pope and an ideal emperor, whose united power, spiritual and temporal, should hold Europe in equilibrium. Unhappily, it proved a chimaera. So far, indeed, as Italy has found salvation at all, it has been by ridding herself of pope and emperor too.

Though this is not the place for a discussion of Dante's style, it will not be amiss to mention two characteristics in which he specially resembles Isaiah. His imagery reveals a minute observation of nature and a love of simple natural objects, such as were unprecedented in the literature of his age. And with all his variety, with all his alternations of drama and narrative, discussion and prophecy, he maintains a lofty seriousness of tone, which is never interrupted by any touch of humour or of raillery.

There is yet another respect in which Dante is akin to the greatest of the Hebrew prophets. He was at once a poet and a man of action. His birth gave him a claim to a place in the Florentine government; he took an active part in her feverish political life; and he suffered a cruel persecution. Consequently the leading events and characters of his age are so interwoven with the texture of his poem that a commentary on the *Divina Commedia* is almost a history of Europe in the thirteenth century.

Partly by resemblance, and partly by differences, these four great men will help us to understand the problems which confronted Isaiah and the way in which he faced them. As we pass in review the main features of his activity as a reformer, we can illustrate them by reference to one or another of that strangely assorted quartet. But we must bear in mind that there remains a large part of his nature to which none but Dante can offer any sort of parallel.

First we may notice once more the unfailing gravity of his tone. Indignation is there, and scorn, and irony; tenderness and sympathy and all a poet's love of beauty; he is by turns simple and elaborate; but he is never humorous, and he never mocks his adversary. Even when he plays upon words, he does so without a trace of jesting. Ezekiel is sometimes humorous; there are touches of raillery in the great prophet of the exile; but Isaiah is as invariably earnest as Dante.

Secondly, while Juvenal and Erasmus and Langland write as men of the people, Isaiah, like Dante, is an aristocrat to the core. His contemporary, Micah, finds a remedy for present evils in the deportation of the upper class and the rule of a new David who should spring from the peasantry. But Isaiah, with all his feeling for the wrongs of the poor, with all his indignation against the vices and cruelty of the rich, speaks of the destruction of the ruling class as the taking away of stay and staff. Only among the purified remnant of the nobility does he expect to find men who shall be 'an hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest; as rivers of water in a dry place, as the shadow of a great rock in a thirsty land'.

Thirdly, he makes no reference to the individual life, nor appeal to the individual conscience. A satirist like Juvenal instinctively seizes upon some personal example of the sins or follies he condemns. An ordinary reformer is touched by the sufferings of individuals, and puts them forward in order to move the feelings of others. A modern preacher or poet appeals, as Dante does, to the hopes and fears of each single

soul about the future life, endeavouring to influence the community through its members. But in Israel the day of the individual did not dawn till the exile. Isaiah holds firmly to that primitive morality which is founded on the assumption that the moral unit is the family, the clan, or the nation. The nation, according to this view, is collectively responsible to God, or to another nation, for the acts of its members.

This principle is not unknown in the modern world. It underlies a great part of what we call international law. It is operative whenever plague or famine or defeat is regarded as a punishment for national sin. Still we cannot deny that the main basis of Christian morality is individualistic. We may therefore be inclined to ask whether an appeal to the collective conscience could have much power to move men, even in early times. The answer is not far to seek. The ground of responsibility is permanence. Those who believe in a future life naturally emphasize individual responsibility. But the Israelites of the eighth century had no such belief. All that instinctive passion for permanence, which finds its true satisfaction in the doctrine of the future life, was concentrated upon the Israelite's love of his race, which was (so to speak) his future self. Between himself and his descendants and his whole nation he recognized a solidarity such as we find it hard to conceive. A Jew, therefore, was almost as much affected by Isaiah's predictions of national disaster or national glory as a mediaeval Italian by Dante's vivid pictures of a personal heaven or hell. We must bear this in mind while we read the prophecies; or else we shall fail to appreciate not only their moral force of appeal but even their literary merit.

Fourthly, as compared with any Christian writer, Isaiah conceives sin and righteousness in a markedly objective manner. What he regards is not the state of man's soul, or his moral attitude, but his positive acts, and the effect which they produce upon the fabric of society. He conceives

Jehovah as the just judge who punishes evil deeds, not as the searcher of hearts who measures motives and intentions. Accordingly, when he frames an ideal for a restored Israel, he pictures a perfectly ordered monarchy in which justice is administered without failure, and all men alike receive the due reward for their deeds.

Fifthly, Isaiah has a definite theory of God's dealings with his people, and therefore a definite aim in his preaching. Juvenal's indignation was barren because he had no serious faith in providence, and no aim beyond rousing disgust. Erasmus's wit fell short of its mark because a reaction against monkish eschatology left him without clear views of the future, and he could only say, 'I wish men would be sensible Christians, instead of the fools they are.' Though Dante's theory of salvation for the individual is clear and simple, his scheme of political salvation for Italy involved many abstract considerations, and was not calculated to appeal to the people at large. Isaiah's teaching, on the other hand, is definite, concrete, and suited to a simple understanding. It is, in fact, the doctrine of natural consequences regarded under a religious aspect. National corruption means national weakness, and weakness invites disaster—at first in a lesser degree, then in overwhelming measure. The minor disasters have already come. Judah's weak government, the effect of moral declension, has tempted the assaults of Syria and the Philistines. Those are Jehovah's warnings, which say in deeds what the prophet says in words: 'If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall taste the good of the land: but if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall taste the sword.' Knowing how deep-seated their disease is, corrupting all the springs of political and social life, the prophet expects they will 'refuse and rebel'. And so he foretells, in language of increasing clearness, that the blindness of their rulers will bring the resistless might of Assyria down upon the land, and the people will be carried into captivity. That was Isaiah's method; and it shows plainly what was his aim.

If possible, he wished, by pointing to the consequences of their evildoing, to win the people to reform. Failing that, he wished them to recognize in their disasters the correcting hand of Providence, so that the remnant who were worthy might profit by the discipline, and some day be restored, and realize the vision of a regenerate Israel.

CHAPTER VIII

THE OVERFLOWING SCOURGE

THE catastrophe of the years 734 to 732, which involved all the petty states of northern Syria, was crushing and complete enough to have banished all thought of further resistance from their minds. Well for Hamath and for Samaria, we might say, if by punctual payment of tribute, and patient endurance of tyranny, they could maintain even the shadow of national existence. To revolt, no matter how sorely provoked, was to court annihilation. But the next five years produced events which appeared to alter the whole situation. In the year 730 the Ethiopian king Sabako (who is called So in the book of Kings), having made himself master of Egypt, resolved to extend his conquests northward. As a preliminary step he sent ambassadors to the courts of all the buffer states, over which Egypt had never renounced her claim of suzerainty. The fair promises which they were empowered to make doubtless appeared doubly tempting in contrast with the brutality of the Assyrian rule, and the constant pressure of a heavy tribute. And among the impoverished nobles at each little court they could easily find some who could be bribed to form an Egyptian party. The growing inclination to revolt was ripened by another event. In 727 the death of Tiglath-Pileser loosened the grasp of Assyria upon all her subjects: for Shalmaneser IV, his son and successor, was obliged to devote his first efforts to securing his throne against rivals at home. Seeing that for a year or two the west was safe from Assyrian invasion, and urged by fresh bribes and promises from Egypt, the short-sighted nobles of Samaria, as well as of the neighbouring courts, determined once more to try their fortune. Urged on by these 'drunkards of Ephraim', and probably by his own

ambition, Hoshea forgot that he was the nominee of Assyria, and raised the standard of revolt. The national consequence, which Isaiah had foretold, followed very soon. In 725 Shalmaneser, having settled his affairs at Nineveh, invaded Ephraim and laid siege to Samaria. That city, however, made such a brave resistance, and the invaders were so much divided by faction, that the siege was prolonged for three years. When Hoshea surrendered in 722 it was not Shalmaneser who received his submission, but Sargon, the general who had murdered him and succeeded to the throne. The usurper was even more vigorous and more ruthless than Tiglath-Pileser, whom he followed in his policy of deportation. In the course of that year he made Samaria a province of the empire under an Assyrian satrap, sent away 27,000 of its inhabitants into exile, and replaced them by captives from rebellious towns of Babylonia. In the next year he crushed a coalition of small Syrian states, headed by the king of Hamath, whom he flayed alive. Having thus asserted his power in the north, he marched down through the Philistine plain to meet the advancing army of Sabako. The great victory which he won at Raphia, near the Egyptian border, made him undisputed master of all Syria and Palestine. Not until 703 did an Egyptian king venture again upon a forward policy.

§ 21. Only one prophecy can with any confidence be referred to this crisis. Brief and simple though it is, the poem which foretells the ruin of Samaria offers a brilliant example of Isaiah's mature style. The picture of Samaria on its hill, as the flower which crowns the head of a drunkard; the image, so simple and yet so startling with which he describes the collapse of the proud city; the masterly interweaving of the symbol and the thing symbolized; the measureless contempt of the phrase with which the dissolute nobles are branded; all these are characteristic of Isaiah, and their combination could be found in no other prophet.

After the battle of Raphia the minor states of Syria settled

down into an abject submission. The fate of Damascus and Hamath and Samaria had taught them a lesson which could not easily be forgotten. Yet it was not very long before they ventured to tempt fate again. In the year 721, while Sargon was busy in the west, a formidable revolt deprived him of his most valuable eastern province. Merodach-Baladan, the king of Chaldaea, made himself master of Babylon, which could never forget its ancient superiority to Nineveh, and asserted his independence. He was not far from success, and actually maintained his position for twelve years. Naturally he tried to strengthen himself by alliances, and, as Sargon's inscriptions tell us, he sent embassies to Egypt and to the states of Syria. About the year 712, under pretence of congratulating Hezekiah upon his recovery from an illness, some of these ambassadors visited Jerusalem. When Isaiah learned that the king had received them graciously and shown them all his treasures, he at once protested, and foretold a disastrous issue. But in spite of warnings Hezekiah persisted in joining the coalition which was being formed by Philistia, Moab, and Edom to co-operate with Merodach-Baladan.

The plot did not escape Sargon, who acted with characteristic vigour. Early in the year 711 he crossed the Tigris and Euphrates while they were still in flood and supposed to be quite impassable. A rapid march brought him into Syria long before he was expected; and the seizure of Ashdod, the chief fortress of Philistia, paralysed the forces of the coalition. How far his army overran Judah we cannot tell with any degree of certainty. If we are right in referring the brilliant fragment of the tenth chapter (§ 26) to Sargon's invasion, the prophet must at least have expected that the enemy would advance upon Jerusalem. But as neither the book of Kings nor the annals of Sargon mention a siege of Jerusalem, it is more probable that by humble submission and a large sacrifice of treasure Hezekiah made his peace with the conqueror in time to avert the horrors of a serious invasion.

Sargon was all the more ready to welcome such a submission because he could not afford the time for what was likely to prove a very long siege. He had yet to deal with Merodach-Baladan, who was the most formidable of all his enemies. Returning, therefore, with all speed, in the next year (710) he took Babylon by storm, and expelled the usurper. He was thus, at last, undisputed lord of his immense dominion. The peaceful years which followed he spent in organizing the empire and in building the splendid palace whose ruins bear witness to his wealth and love of beauty.

Unhappily we cannot attribute any part of the narrative of Hezekiah's illness to the pen of Isaiah. The account of the sickness and recovery is quoted verbatim from the book of Kings: and the psalm which is put in the mouth of the king bears unquestionable marks of the second or third century. But a reference to the narrative is necessary here in order to explain the situation which occasioned the next prophecy. As we have seen, Hezekiah, in spite of a vehement protest from the prophet, persisted in joining the league which Merodach-Baladan's ambassadors were organizing in Syria. The prose record perhaps gives the main sense of a lost prophecy equal in vigour and splendour to those which denounce any alliance with Egypt.

§ 22. Elated by the promises of the Babylonian king, and the projected alliance with Egypt, Philistia, and Moab, the ruling class in Jerusalem assumed the same attitude of swaggering confidence which ten years ago had drawn down the prophet's reproof upon their compeers in Samaria. The dramatic narrative takes us at once into the temple court, where priest and prophet and noble are indulging in the revelry of a sacrificial feast. As they sit by the loaded tables, careless that the people can witness the drunken riot which makes the sacred function a mockery, Isaiah appears and advances towards them. Seeing him approach, and expecting him to repeat some of the stern comments which he has often made before

upon their brutish licence, they break out into stupid taunts. 'Here is this fellow who is always boring us with the same old story that we all know from childhood.' Then follow words of which, though the exact meaning is not known, the sound is expressive enough. 'Zavlazav, Zavlazav, Kavlakav, Kavlakav.' It is a hiccupping parody of the prophet's oft-repeated warnings: and its general sense—if the words are real words at all—may be represented by the English phrase, 'Teach your grandmother.' Isaiah's answer is as apt as its significance is terrible. 'You will not listen to my oft-repeated message. My demand for justice and mercy seems to you but stammering nonsense, like the talk of a barbarian. Well! you shall have a real barbarian for your teacher. The Assyrian, with his strange words and barbarous accent, will give you precept upon precept in a sterner sense.'

§ 23. The sequel, written probably a few days later, is addressed to a wider circle, not merely to the drunken revellers, but to all the rulers of Jerusalem, the 'scornful men' who sympathized with them. 'You think yourselves safe', says the prophet, 'because you have made an alliance with Egypt, and secured yourselves with Egyptian necromancy, (that is the meaning of the "covenant with death and hell"); but the mighty stream of Assyrian invasion will overflow your feeble bulwarks. And even if these were a sufficient defence against Assyria, they will not protect you when Jehovah himself rises in his might to punish your pride and your treachery.'

§ 24. In the spring of the next year (711) Sargon appeared unexpectedly in Palestine, seized Ashdod and broke the confederacy to pieces. The passage which refers so plainly to this event seems to be an extract from a biography of Isaiah, not a composition of his own; for it is written in prose and refers to him in the third person. In spite of corruptions in the text, the main sense is clear. We learn from it that for three years, from 714 to 711, the prophet had walked about Jerusalem naked and barefoot. The curiosity which had been

roused by this vivid acted parable was not satisfied until Sargon's invading army reached Ashdod. The explanation which was then given to the people was serious enough. Naked and barefoot the Egyptian captives, the fruit of Sargon's approaching victory, shall march along the road to Nineveh ; and all the peoples of the Syrian states, who have relied upon Egyptian support, shall be filled with a panic-stricken expectation of the same fate.

§ 25. In the tenth chapter are imbedded the splendid fragments of a prophecy which is most plausibly assigned to the year of Sargon's invasion. When pieced together they present an interesting picture of the prophet's attitude at a time of transition. In the early days we have seen him passionately denouncing the sins of Israel, and pointing to an Assyrian invasion as the just and inevitable punishment. Later we shall find him the confident champion of Jerusalem against Sennacherib, exhausting all the resources of his poetic art to describe the completeness of that enemy's ruin. While Sargon was advancing upon his disloyal subjects in 711, Isaiah's position is midway between these two. On the one hand the prophet recognizes the wickedness of Judah, which cries out for punishment—not least her treachery to her suzerain—and sees in Sargon more clearly than ever the instrument of God's wrath. On the other hand, as the great enemy draws nearer and is realized as a person, not merely as a force, the patriot cannot refrain from denouncing the pride and cruelty which marked all Assyria's dealings with the weaker nations. The image which he employs to describe Sargon's attitude—that of a wanton boy gathering eggs from a bird's nest—is unsurpassed, even in Isaiah, for simplicity and vigour. Here the genuine words of Isaiah in this passage end. The continuation which stands in our texts as verses 15-19 is plainly the work of a later and a feebler hand. Yet it is so far appropriate in its main thought that we may perhaps conjecture that the editor based his own composition upon some hints found amid

the wreckage of the original manuscript. The two themes upon which he descants are, 'Shall the axe boast itself against him that heweth therewith?' and again, 'The glory of his forest will Jehovah consume.' The themes are not unworthy of the prophet, and properly treated might make an adequate conclusion to the poem. But the editor was no poet. His first stanza is made up of feeble repetitions: and the second is a grotesque mosaic of phrases borrowed from Isaiah's other prophecies.

§ 26. A fragment, whose beginning and end are both missing, presents with marvellous vividness one of the incidents of this time. When Sargon's army was in Philistia, not more than thirty miles away, how naturally rumours must have arisen that a division was marching upon Jerusalem. Some such rumour has reached the poet's ears. His imagination at once sets the enemy's march before him in visible movement.

The villages which lie on the route are mentioned in turn, each with some pathetic or picturesque phrase. In several cases the phrase contains one of those puns upon a name of which the Hebrew writers were so fond. The fragment of the poem which remains traces the last ten or twelve miles of the invader's course, till at last he comes in sight of Jerusalem. But the conclusion, which no doubt contained the climax, has not been preserved. Scholars are divided as to the authorship of this poem. Some of them think the puns frigid and unworthy of Isaiah. Others argue that the formal structure suggests the reflective work of a later poet. Subjective arguments of this kind are not very convincing: and one may ask in reply what motive there could be for writing such a poem when the occasion was past. Until some decisive objection is brought forward, it is natural to attribute a poem so simple, so moving, so entirely adequate to the situation, to the author in whose name it stands.

§ 27. When the crisis was over, and Sargon had returned to Nineveh, we may well suppose that the 'drunkards of Judah' and the 'scornful men', who had been the objects of Isaiah's

threats and denunciations (§§ 22, 23), recovered their spirits by degrees. They observed that Jerusalem, far from being utterly destroyed like Samaria, had been let off lightly; and so they began to taunt the prophet with the failure of his predictions. The poem, which is appropriately placed at the end of chapter xxviii, contains Isaiah's reply. If I understand the difficult words rightly, the argument is just that of the Greek¹ proverb which says 'The mills of God grind slowly, but they grind exceeding small'. 'Jehovah', says Isaiah, 'who teaches the farmer to do each part of his work in turn, and not to be always ploughing or always sowing, may be trusted to finish each part of his own work in due season. When your turn comes, be sure that you will have your deserts.'

The date of this poem has not been fixed with certainty. The contents make it plain that it was written in a time of comparative tranquillity. We may therefore place it after 710 and before 705, when the troubles were beginning which resulted in Sennacherib's invasion.

¹ Ὁψὲ θεῶν ἀλέουσι μύλοι, ἀλέουσι δὲ λεπτά.

CHAPTER IX

THE VICTORY OF FAITH

THE interval of quiet in Asia which followed the fall of Babylon was not of long duration. The murder of Sargon gave the signal for disturbances throughout the Assyrian empire; and Sennacherib, who succeeded to the throne, had not only to avenge his father's death, but also to meet a series of formidable revolts. The most pressing danger lay to the east. The veteran Merodach-Baladan had once more raised his standard in Babylonia, and various border tribes were threatening the north-eastern frontier. Sennacherib, therefore, devoted his first campaign to the Chaldaean rebels, whom he crushed with a ruthless vigour worthy of his father. At the end of the year he was able to boast of having sacked 75 cities and spoiled 820 towns: Merodach-Baladan was again a fugitive in the marshes near the mouth of the Euphrates, and all serious danger was past. The next year's campaign restored security to the north-eastern border, and added some large districts to the empire. Now Sennacherib had leisure to think of restoring his authority in the west. Early in the spring of 701 he joined the army which had been assembled for the purpose, and marched into Syria.

It was time. The news of Sargon's death had encouraged the petty states to a passive revolt. Without actually declaring war, they refused to pay their tribute. While they were still uncertain how far they might venture, their conduct was decided by the appearance of a new actor on the scene. The Ethiopian king who was now lord of Egypt saw in the disturbed state of Assyria an opportunity of renewing a forward policy.¹ His emissaries visited all the minor kings of

¹ It is strange that we should be uncertain as to his name. The book of Kings calls him Tirhakah; but most Egyptologists place Tirhakah's acces-

Syria, and persuaded most of them, relying upon Egyptian support, to engage in open rebellion. A coalition was formed between Judah and the Philistines, Edom and Moab, the Ammonites, the Samaritans, and the Phoenicians.

The few princes who remained loyal to Assyria fared badly. For instance, Padi the king of Ekron was seized by the allies and imprisoned in Jerusalem. But the coalition of petty states could do nothing without the active support and leadership of Egypt; and Egypt, as usual, was a day behind the fair. Tirhakah's army, which ought to have occupied the plain of Esdraelon early in the spring, had not passed the Egyptian frontier when Sennacherib burst unexpectedly upon the half-prepared princes of northern Syria. As they were not ready for concerted action, he was able to deal with them separately. One by one the cities of Phoenicia, from Sidon to Acre, were taken by storm. Then the weaker members of the league, without awaiting an attack, sent their submission to the conqueror. The kings of Moab and Ammon and Edom, his inscription tells us, 'all kings of the west land, brought rich presents, heavy gifts with merchandise, before me and kissed my feet.' Only Judah and a few Philistine towns held out, vainly hoping for succour from Egypt.

Up to this point we have been mainly dependent upon Sennacherib's great inscription. But now we are able to supplement it from the picturesque narrative in the book of Kings,¹ which a late editor has transferred almost verbatim to the pages of Isaiah.² Though not quite simple, being in fact a combination of two distinct accounts³ which do not agree in all particulars, it furnishes a vivid and reliable picture of the

sion in 690, assigning the years 707-695 to his father Sabako. Sennacherib's inscription, which would be decisive, gives no name at all, but speaks vaguely of 'the kings of Egypt'. Possibly Tirhakah was associated with his father from about 703, and was therefore practically king.

¹ 2 Kings xviii and xix.

² Isaiah xxxvi, xxxvii.

³ The earlier and longer narrative, comprises Isaiah xxxvi. 1-6, 8-17, 21, 22; xxxvii. 1-5, 7-9, 37, 38. The later and shorter, xxxvii. 9^o-21, 33, 36.

situation within the walls of Jerusalem. From these sources, with the aid of stray references in Isaiah's own prophecies, we can draw a tolerably complete record of the memorable year 701.

Like all invaders of Palestine, Sennacherib marched across the plain of Esdraelon, through the pass which leads from Megiddo to the plain of Sharon, and then along the coast road into Philistia. Some of the Philistine towns, like Ashkelon, submitted at once: others, such as Joppa, were taken by assault: the only serious resistance was offered by Lachish, Ekron, and Eltekeh. While engaged in besieging these towns, Sennacherib dispatched some of his generals to overrun the hill country of Judah. This they did with great thoroughness, if the official account may be trusted. 'Forty-six of his strong cities, his castles, and the smaller towns without number, with warlike engines, by assault and storming, by fire and the axe, I attacked and captured. Two hundred thousand one hundred and fifty people, great and small; horses, asses, oxen and sheep, beyond number, from the midst of them I carried off and counted as spoils. Hezekiah himself I shut up, like a bird in a cage, inside Jerusalem, his royal city. I cast up a mound against him, and barred all issue from the city gates.' The grim prose of this relentless record was translated into moving poetry by the prophet when he wrote:—

Your country is desolate
 your cities are burned with fire!
 Your cultivated land,
 strangers devour it before your face.
 The daughter of Zion alone remaineth
 like a booth in a vineyard,
 Like a lodge in a garden of cucumbers,
 like a solitary watchtower.

When the Assyrian legions appeared before Jerusalem, Hezekiah averted a siege by making submission and surrendering all his treasures—even his harem. His prisoner Padi was of course given up, to be restored to the throne of

Ekron and rewarded for his loyalty with a large slice of Judæan territory. But after all Jerusalem survived; the last refuge of Israel's fugitives was intact. It seemed as if the crisis was past. On second thoughts, however, Sennacherib was not satisfied. Intending to advance into Egypt, he hesitated so far to neglect the rules of strategy as to leave a hostile fortress in his rear. He therefore sent an embassy, backed by an army, to demand the surrender of Jerusalem. Then followed the scenes of which the Jewish historian has given such a dramatic picture. We see the panic-stricken crowd of citizens within the walls urging surrender. We see the bolder spirits seated upon the wall and listening to the good-natured insolence of the Assyrian orator, who, conscious of belonging to a nation infinitely stronger and more civilized than the Jews, has so much pity for their weakness that he condescends to argument. We see the futile court officers going anxiously backwards and forwards between the stern Assyrian and their lachrymose monarch. We see the irresolute Hezekiah protesting to Jehovah and yet not trusting in his protection, praying as a preliminary to yielding. And, towering above all these puppets, we see the majestic figure of the prophet, strong in fearless patriotism, in poetic eloquence, and in the consciousness of divine support and inspiration. It was not the king nor the nobles, but the prophet, that saved the city. Isaiah's lofty confidence restored their courage and gave them spirit enough to defy the foe. He promised in the name of Jehovah that Jerusalem should not be besieged, but the Assyrian army should retreat. His prophecy was fulfilled. According to the later account in Kings, which is confirmed by Herodotus, the deliverance did not come in the exact form which the prophet foretold: but deliverance did come, sudden, dramatic, and complete. The Egyptian army advanced into Philistia. A battle was fought under the walls of Eltekeh, in which Sennacherib was victorious. He captured Eltekeh and Ekron and began to advance upon Egypt. Then his army

was almost annihilated by one of those pestilences to which Oriental armies are peculiarly liable ; and Sennacherib fled in confusion back to Nineveh.

Judah was not, indeed, released from her vassalage. Her country had been ravaged, her people and her treasure carried into captivity : and she had still to pay a heavy tribute to the Assyrian king. But Jerusalem was saved ; the temple still towered above her streets ; and it was not until the Babylonian empire had risen on the ruins of the Assyrian that an invading army once more threatened the sacred city.

CHAPTER X

ISAIAH THE PATRIOT

IF we may judge by the number and power of the prophecies which have survived, the three eventful years recorded in the last chapter were the most productive in the whole of Isaiah's life. It is difficult, if not impossible, to arrange them all in order of date. Their very intensity, and their aptness to the changing passions of the hour, forbid them to bear the ordinary marks of time. A more practicable, and perhaps a more instructive plan, is to divide them into groups according to their subjects, and consider each group separately.

One series of prophecies concerns what we may call foreign policy: the negotiations with Egypt and the advance of Assyria. A second series consists of warnings and exhortations addressed to the people of Jerusalem, which refer wholly or chiefly to their personal conduct. The three great 'Messianic' prophecies are so entirely distinct that they may form a group by themselves.

This chapter will be devoted to the political prophecies, and each of the other groups will have a chapter to itself.

§ 28. This fragment is probably the beginning of a prophecy directed against the Egyptian party among the nobles of Judah, who were always engaged in secret agitation against the Assyrian suzerainty. No doubt their activity had been increased by the news of Sargon's death; but they still believed themselves to be unsuspected.

The state of the text may be explained as follows. All the rest of the prophecy having become illegible through age or accident, an editor undertook (aided perhaps by a word here and there which could still be made out) to supply the deficiency. Both the language and the thought of the lines

which follow point to the second century before Christ as the date of his unsuccessful attempt.

§ 29. The season for secret machination soon passed away. When it became known that Sennacherib was threatened by numerous foes near home, there was a strong popular movement in favour of an Egyptian alliance. Yet in all probability (so slowly did news travel) this movement began just when Sennacherib was winning his final victories in Chaldaea.

As becomes a popular address, this prophecy is perfectly simple in style. In plain and convincing language it sets forth two of Isaiah's great permanent principles—one political and the other religious. Politically an appeal to Egypt is folly, because the Egyptians are a people that cannot profit any one—unstable, dilatory, and treacherous. But more emphasis is laid on the religious argument. All such schemes and alliances are wrong for a people who can claim the protection of Jehovah, the ruler of all the earth. To this principle the prophet appealed when Ahaz wanted to call in Assyria: he appeals to it now when Hezekiah inclines to Egypt. In both cases alike the strength of Israel was to sit still.

The fourth verse of Chapter xxx requires a little comment, for the text is uncertain. If the reading which I have adopted is correct, we are to picture the ambassadors of Judah going in search of the Egyptian king with rich offerings, and waiting in one or other of the chief towns of northern Egypt until summoned to his presence, just as we learn from Demosthenes that the Athenian envoys awaited the leisure of Philip of Macedon.

§ 30. The next fragment shows us Hezekiah's ambassadors on their way to Egypt. The road lay through a long stretch of waterless desert, of which Herodotus gives us a striking account. The same writer tells a story of an invading army which was destroyed near the border of Egypt by a plague of flying serpents. His description may perhaps help us to appreciate the four vivid lines in which Isaiah sketches the

background to his ironic picture of the envoys, carrying rich gifts to a people who accept their offerings and give no help in return. The condensed power, the scorn, the picturesqueness of this fragment mark it as a genuine utterance of the prophet, whom none could rival in vivid concentration.

§ 31. The people still rested their hopes upon aid from Egypt, whose countless war-chariots were to overpower those of Assyria. Yet again the prophet denounces the folly of those who trust in man but will not trust in God. That folly, and the treachery which it involves, will meet their reward when helper and helped alike fall crushed under the wrath of Jehovah.

§ 32. The beautiful ode which begins with the twelfth verse of the seventeenth chapter, and ends with the sixth verse of the eighteenth, is by no means free from difficulty. Those who wish to understand all the points in dispute will find an admirable discussion in Duhm's great edition of Isaiah. I content myself here with assuming the unity of the poem, and giving the explanation which its extreme condensation seems to require.

The situation which the prophecy presupposes is this: The Assyrian army is on the road to Jerusalem, but still far away; perhaps in northern Syria. Meanwhile an embassy has arrived from Egypt, and has been received with favour by the king. Isaiah has also encountered them, and has bidden them return to their own country, since Jehovah can defend his own people without Egyptian aid. In three wonderful stanzas the prophet gives a highly poetical account both of the interview and of the circumstances which lend it importance.

The first of the stanzas describes the dreaded approach of the army which Sennacherib was leading against Palestine—an army almost as miscellaneous as that with which Xerxes, two hundred years later, invaded Greece. But their threats are all in vain; for all the mighty host shall be scattered like chaff before the power of Jehovah.

In the second stanza the prophet addresses the ambassadors who have come sailing down the Nile through Egypt, which is the land of insect plagues. They come from the Ethiopians, the conquering race of tall heroes, whose beardless faces are like polished bronze. Let them return to their people, and bear back a message from the God of Israel, who bids them wait until they hear a signal given, and then watch to see what mighty deeds Jehovah will perform.

What will they see? The third stanza answers the question with a picture, or rather, as it were, a triptych, of which each panel contains a vivid sketch. In three couplets, connected yet strikingly contrasted, the poet describes what has been revealed to him about the fate of the Assyrian host. First comes the central fact, the calm strength of Jehovah, who looks down from on high upon the pride and power of man. The images which express this thought, though together they occupy but a single line, are among Isaiah's masterpieces. As no translation is adequate to their concentrated force, some commentary is needed. 'Clear heat in sunshine' means that intense radiance of a Syrian summer's day which seems to come from beyond the sun—a radiance at once absolutely still and yet charged with immeasurable energy. The 'dew-cloud' is a phrase for what we call 'cirrus'—those delicate feathery clouds which float high in the heaven when the weather is absolutely clear and fine. Turner's water-colour paintings alone have adequately rendered their beauty and interpreted their symbolism. Far above the region of the rain-clouds, above the movement of the winds, light as feathers, yet clear-cut as the hoar-frost, they stand there in calm beauty as an image of the permanence and the predominance of the spiritual. The combination of these two similes finely expresses that union of majestic intensity with calm transcendence which is the attribute of Israel's God.

The second couplet shows us Asshur, like a vine, ripening the fruit of his purpose. 'The vintage is almost ready, when

lo ! the pruning-hook in Jehovah's hand cuts off the fair clusters of grapes and the spreading branches, leaving but a bare stem behind.

In the third couplet we find no image, but a grim literal statement which seems all the more grim by contrast with the beauty of its companions. The vine branches are swept away, and the prophet points us to the soldiers of the invading host, who lie dead upon the plain. All the summer through the vultures will feed upon their countless corpses, and yet leave enough to satisfy the wolf and the jackal when winter drives them down from the mountains.

§ 33. A reader might ask why, if the destruction of the Assyrian army was decreed, it should be allowed first to overrun the land of Israel. Why should not Jehovah save the people from so much suffering? As if to anticipate such a question, the prophet has described what he calls 'the plan of Jehovah'. The theology of the ancient world limited the activity of each god to the territory of his own people. Consequently, if the destruction of Assyria was to be recognized as Jehovah's act, it must be accomplished within the boundaries of Jehovah's land. That is why Isaiah, though himself emancipated from that narrow view of divine power, represents the God of Israel as luring 'the whole earth' (for the Assyrian empire almost covered the known world) into the land of Judah, that he might 'tread them under foot upon his mountains'.

§ 34. Though Jehovah might entice the foe into his own land, yet the prophet was assured that he would never suffer Jerusalem to be violated. That oft-repeated conviction, which inspired Isaiah in this great crisis, is nowhere more strikingly expressed than in a simple little poem, or fragment, which occupies only two verses.

The simile of the lion and the shepherds, in which the thought is enshrined, claims our special attention. It is so thoroughly Homeric that it would be quite at home in one of the battles of

the *Iliad*. Only the lion would then stand for Ajax or Diomedes, and the prey would be the dead body of a friend or a foeman. Here, however, Jerusalem is the prey and Jehovah is the lion who will not yield it up, while the shepherds are the Assyrians. Startling as such a comparison may seem, it is not without parallels in Isaiah. When we come to discuss his style, we shall see that the bold use of imagery is one of his most marked characteristics.

CHAPTER XI

THE PROPHET AS FORETELLER

THE popular notion that the Hebrew prophets were mainly occupied in predicting future events is due largely to the habit of reading only select passages from their writings. It would be corrected by a complete perusal of any one of their books. Undoubtedly they claim and exercise the power of prediction : and Deutero-Isaiah puts that power forward as a proof of their inspiration. But their main function is expressed by the same writer's phrase, 'God's interpreters' (xliii. 27). Their central endeavour is to elevate man's conception of God, and, as a consequence, to raise the standard of morality among their people.

Their predictions are, as a rule, subsidiary to this design. They foretell that national disasters will punish national sins, and sometimes that Damascus or Assyria will be the instrument of the punishment ; but, just because their threats are conditional and may be averted by repentance, they give neither dates nor details when they speak of devastation and captivity. As a rule it is the 'false prophets' who make particular predictions and promises of good fortune. Jeremiah, in rebuking Hananiah, affirms that no prophecy of peace is to be credited until it come to pass (Jer. xxviii. 9). And although the three Messianic prophecies form a notable exception, it is the rule that Isaiah's predictions conform to the type which Jeremiah recognizes as normal, telling of war, and of evil, and of pestilence. The Messianic prophecies are so important that they require separate consideration. In the present chapter I propose to offer a few remarks upon the other predictions which Isaiah made in the course of his long life.

Let us begin with a simple enumeration. Isaiah foretold the

retreat of Rezin and Pekah within a limited time ; the ruin of Damascus ; the ruin and captivity of Samaria ; the Assyrian invasion of Judah, which should yet spare Jerusalem ; the failure of all help from Egypt ; the final disaster to the Assyrians ; Judah's captivity and the ultimate return of a remnant. On the other hand, he was not always right. The fall of Samaria came ten years later than the date he fixed for it, and the final siege was by no means so easy as plucking 'a first-ripe fig'. And it is plain from what he tells us in the twenty-eighth chapter that other prophecies of his were commonly supposed to have failed. Whether fulfilled or not, these prophecies, with one exception, belong to the same class. They are such as might be, and occasionally have been, suggested by the political foresight of ordinary wise men.

None of these was more startling at the time, or more completely fulfilled, than Burke's famous prediction, made in the *French Revolution*, which he published in 1791, that the revolution would lead to a military despotism. In their general scope they closely resemble the corresponding predictions of Demosthenes. The Attic orator watched the growing power of Macedon under Philip much as the Hebrew prophet traced the revival of Assyria under Tiglath-Pileser. He spent the best years of his life first in warning the Athenians of the disaster which threatened them, and then in trying to limit its effects. And when the conqueror was almost at the gates Demosthenes, like Isaiah, put spirit into his panic-stricken countrymen and saved the city from a sack. All through his life he was protesting in vain against the besetting sins of his people—their supineness, their unwillingness to serve their country in the field, their love of pleasure and of argument. In so doing he acted on principle. In his great apology for his political course he describes the conception of duty which he had tried to realize in words that might be applied unchanged to the statesmanship of Isaiah. 'What are the functions of the statesman? To observe mischief in the bud, and to warn others

of it : and wherever he finds delays, backwardness, ignorance, and jealousies—vices inherent and unavoidable in all communities—to contract them into the narrowest compass, and on the other hand to promote unanimity, and friendship, and zeal in the discharge of duty' (*De Corona*, § 246).

With all these resemblances, we are conscious of a fundamental difference. We express it roughly by saying that Isaiah's inspiration was religious : but it is worth while to look a little closer. Burke's famous prophecy was the fruit of political sagacity aided by a wide knowledge of history. Demosthenes could foretell the development of Macedonian ambition because he knew Philip's character and understood the fatal weakness of a divided Greece. But Isaiah, though plainly not inferior in discernment, grounds his predictions, not upon any human reasoning or observation, but upon a settled conviction about the providential government of the world. However sinful and rebellious, Israel is always God's chosen people and his chief care : and therefore the course of history is ordered with a view to their education, so that ultimately they may be worthy of the primacy which is their birthright. Accordingly, the familiar preface, ' Thus said Jehovah,' which sometimes introduces prophecies that ordinary political sagacity might have made, is no mere form of speech, no mere lyrical commonplace. It expresses the profound difference which divides the Hebrew patriot from the Greek. The one spoke with authority as the messenger of Jehovah : the other argued and reasoned as a man somewhat wiser than his neighbours.

This principle, which is the root of Isaiah's confidence, is the reconciliation of prophecies which must at the time have seemed inconsistent. Sin must be followed by punishment. Therefore the ' scouring scourge ' would not spare Judah : her land should be invaded, and her people carried away captive. Yet Jerusalem, the chosen seat of Jehovah, was (in spite of all abuses) the casket in which was stored the jewel of true religion. Therefore God would not allow Jerusalem to fall into the hands

of the heathen. That is how it was possible for the same lips which foretold all the horrors of invasion to say also, 'Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone of sure foundation : he that believeth shall not make haste.'

The same principle explains his attitude towards prophecies that failed. Secure in his central conviction about God's purposes, he could bear with scoffers who pointed to delays or mistakes ; and he could even publish in later years the few predictions which were not fulfilled. What did it matter if some human error was mingled with his interpretation of the divine truth which possessed his soul? In the main he was justified by events. Judah suffered for her sins : yet Jerusalem was saved : and the religion of Israel proved the light of the world.

Among the predictions enumerated just now there is one which is distinguished from all the rest, because it promises a blessing, and a blessing which appears to lie beyond the limits of a statesman's vision. Yet its inclusion in the list was no accident. The belief that, after all Israel's disasters, 'a remnant shall return' and shall grow into a pure and noble nation, is one of the prophet's most firmly-rooted convictions. As early as the reign of Jotham it was registered in the name given to the prophet's son, Shear-Jashub ; it was reiterated in the prophecies of his prime ; and it blends with the Messianic hopes of his old age. The boldness of such a hope must have startled those who first heard it uttered : for they knew that a restoration of exiles could not be accomplished until the settled policy of the Assyrian empire was reversed. And even when Assyria fell and Babylon took its place, the system of deportation and denationalization was maintained. Nothing less was required than that a new empire, based upon new principles, should sweep away the old. Yet that came to pass when Cyrus became lord of the East and fulfilled the hopes which for two hundred years had lain embalmed in Shear-

Jashub's name. When we come to consider the Messianic prophecies we shall have to reflect upon this fact. For the present we may be content with observing that a prediction so strange and so strangely fulfilled is not sufficiently explained by reference to Isaiah's political sagacity. The eye which sees across two centuries is the eye of a prophet.

CHAPTER XII

THE REFORMER'S FINAL PROTEST

HAD the seven 'political' prophecies (§§ 28-34) been Isaiah's only utterances during the years of revolt and invasion, we might have supposed that, when the crisis came, the patriot in him had silenced the reformer. But it was not so. Even when he was most enthusiastically the champion of his people against the invader, he did not forget that the invader was the rod of Jehovah's anger, commissioned to punish the sins of Israel, nor did he desist from preaching repentance. With what vehemence he continued to warn and to threaten, we may judge from seven fragments which have come down to us from those years.

§ 35. The first of them was apparently spoken to the assembled people in the Temple court. It is autumn, we gather, and they have just completed the series of annual observances by celebrating the feast of Tabernacles. The wheat had been garnered, the grapes pressed: gladdened by the fruits of the year's labours, the people gave themselves up to merriment. In their songs, it would seem, the name Ariel (God's hearth) or Arial (hearth of sacrifice) was applied to the Temple or to Zion. Whether the prophet has repeated the word exactly, or whether he purposely altered it from Ariel to Arial, we can only guess: at any rate the name supplied him with a text. In the midst of the noisy mirth, which filled the temple with riot, Isaiah presented himself before the people with words of warning. 'Feast away, for this year and perhaps for another! But I tell you that very soon God will send the foreign foe to besiege this city, which David once besieged and captured. Then your mountain of sinful joy and vain confidence will justify its title. It shall be a hearth of sacrifice in a new sense,

for your blood shall be spilt upon it. Zion shall be besieged by Jehovah himself ; and the daughter of Zion shall be laid in the dust.'

§ 36. Perhaps it was the drunken jollity of the vintage, impervious to all the shapes of prophetic rebuke, that suggested the image in the next fragment. The people's wilful blindness to the signs of the time, Isaiah says, betokens no ordinary intoxication of the spirit. It must be an infatuation sent upon them by Jehovah for their ruin.

Quos Deus vult perdere, prius dementat.

§ 37. One part of their infatuation showed itself in a dull persistence in the forms of religion, when they had renounced all true godliness and even common morality. A signal judgment could alone vindicate Jehovah's claim to be a God of righteousness.

§ 38. Disheartened by his failure to impress the people by his prophecies, Isaiah hears the voice of God bidding him write them all down, so that they may at least bear witness to a later generation. In this fragment, which perhaps formed part of the preface to one of the prophet's 'rolls', three main topics are treated in three stanzas.

The leaders of Israel refuse to listen to either warning or reproof. They silence the prophets who would speak in the name of God : for the Holy One of Israel demands too much of them.

The suddenness of the ruin which will punish their perversity is expressed by a pair of homely images. Their infatuation is compared to a rifted wall, which bulges out and then suddenly collapses. Judah, again, shall be crushed like a potter's vessel, whose fragments are too small to be of any service.

The root of the evil is their refusal to trust in Jehovah's protection. They have insisted on taking political action of their own ; and its perversity will aggravate their inevitable ruin.

§ 39. This prophecy has suffered much from the accidents of time and from editorial intrusion. What remains of the text is almost as elusive as it is brilliant. Of the various interpretations which have been offered I give what seems, on the whole, most probable.

The league against Sennacherib has been formed: the time for assembling the allied army has come: and the Jewish contingent is marching forth from the gates of Jerusalem. The walls and roofs of the city are crowded with eager spectators, who vie with one another in doing honour to their champions. They are intoxicated with vain confidence, as was the Parisian crowd in 1870, which shouted 'À Berlin!' to the troops who were marching to destruction. Aghast at their folly, the prophet rushes wildly in among them, panting out picturesque but incoherent phrases. For he realizes what the fate of this proud host must be—a panic flight, the common soldiers slaughtered as they run, the chieftains taken captive. He will not hear of comfort, for he has seen a vision of a stormed city, whose cry of misery reaches the mountains.

After this, it would seem, he went on to describe how the mixed host of Sennacherib was to besiege the city, and to picture the valleys round Jerusalem filled with chariots and horsemen. But the text is so corrupt that we can only guess the general sense.

§ 40. There follows a description of the manner in which the people bore themselves in the face of the approaching danger. Panic-stricken after the flight of their army, they repair the breaches in the walls of Jerusalem, and hunt up old armour to make good the lack of preparation. But even in their terror they will not approach Jehovah in the right way. Instead of solemn humiliation, they offer rich sacrifices, and in the feast which follows give themselves up to reckless merriment. If Jehovah does not rescue them this feast will be their last, they say. Very well, they will make the most of it. 'Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die.'

§ 41. The next passage carries us into the very heart of the crisis. The enemy has overrun the whole of the land and laid it waste. He has captured and burned the lesser cities of Judah. Jerusalem, which has alone escaped from his violence, stands like a solitary watch-tower in a wilderness: and Jerusalem is now threatened. Her panic-stricken inhabitants crowd into the Temple, bringing multitudes of victims for sacrifice: in the ardour of their appeal they 'trample' the courts of Jehovah. Yet, even now, they are in no fit mood to win God's favour. That is the burden of the message with which the prophet greets them as they approach the altar. They do not even recognize that their national disasters are God's punishment for their sins, but fancy they are suffering from some accidental displeasure which can be appeased by sacrifice. Instead, therefore, of repenting their sins and amending their lives, they are trying to bribe Jehovah with the blood of multitudinous victims. Isaiah points to the hands which they are lifting up in prayer. The blood of sacrifice that stains the hand is the type of the sin which defiles the soul. Not till this has been washed by repentance and reform can a just God listen to their prayers.

This great poem has not the same unity of aim or artful structure which distinguishes Isaiah's more elaborate writings. It seems to be, not a poetical version of one address, but rather the substance of several brief speeches made at different times. However that may be, we may well doubt whether any elaboration of form could add to the effect of this appeal, so pathetic, so passionate, and so picturesque. Nor can we wonder that the final editor of Isaiah's prophecies, disregarding chronological order, assigned the first place to a composition so characteristic of its author.

§ 42. The fragment which is preserved in verse 18, though it is not a part of the preceding address, appears to be connected with it in idea. The prophet, who has poured scorn upon sacrifice and festival, finding the people still cling to their

traditional expiation, challenges them to give proof of its efficacy. In a tone of irony, which recalls Elijah's mockery of the prophets of Baal, he invites them to show how their boasted offerings can whiten souls that are scarlet with sin.

§ 43. The next fragment is perfectly simple. In plain language it offers Israel the alternative so familiar in the prophetic writings—obedience and prosperity, or rebellion and the sword.

§ 44. The prophecy which bears the title, 'Against Shebna, who was over the palace,' has been the subject of much controversy. Shebna is one of the chief officers of state who are mentioned as going to and fro between Hezekiah, Isaiah, and the Rabshakeh. At that time he held the inferior office of 'scribe', and Eliakim was the governor of the palace. Evidently he was a foreigner: and his name suggests that he was a Syrian. Apparently he had incurred Isaiah's anger in two ways. He was plotting with the Egyptian party in Jerusalem, and he, a foreigner, was presuming upon the king's favour, and assuming the airs of a great Jewish noble. So far there is no difficulty. But when was the prophecy written? Before the siege of Jerusalem, say some. But then how did he become scribe instead of governor? When a great official in the east is disgraced, he does not merely descend one step but falls headlong. After the retreat of the Assyrians, say others. Then it can hardly have been in Hezekiah's reign, when the memory of Sennacherib was fresh and Isaiah all powerful. Perhaps Shebna was a leader of the heathen reaction in the first months of Manasseh, and ousted Eliakim from the highest office of state. It would be natural that Isaiah should denounce him, natural also that Shebna should contrive the prophet's death by way of revenge.

This prophecy is remarkable as the only utterance of Isaiah which sounds a personal note. The commentators are unanimous in believing it to be genuine; but the sequel which promises promotion to Eliakim is probably spurious.

CHAPTER XIII

THE LAST VISIONS

WE have still to consider three of Isaiah's most famous utterances—his three pictures of Judah restored to righteousness and prosperity under the rule of an ideal king. Very different opinions have been held about the dates of their composition: and two of them have been assigned to every year from 735 to 700. As it does not come within the scope of this book to discuss questions of criticism, I must be content briefly to indicate the reasons for placing all the three 'Messianic' prophecies among the last of Isaiah's writings.

Each of the three stands near the end of one of those small collections of prophecies of which, as we have seen, the volume is made up. That seems to prove that the original editors of the separate 'rolls' believed the Messianic utterances to be among the latest. When we compare the three prophecies with each other, we find such a close general resemblance between them that it is difficult to believe they were not composed at about the same time. What time could be more appropriate than that which is suggested by the earliest editors? It was in the darkest hour of Judah's history that such visions were most needed, to console and to inspire the people. And, in fact, one of the three prophecies—that in the ninth chapter—bears on its face an unmistakable evidence of its date. It contains a clear reference to the retreat of Sennacherib, not as something future, but as a recent deliverance.

Such, in outline, are the general considerations which point to the invasion of Sennacherib as the occasion of these utterances. The force of these will be greatly increased as we read

the prophecies and observe how perfectly appropriate they are to the circumstances of the time.

§ 45. Time and the copyist have dealt hardly with the great prophecy in chapter xxxii. By some accident it was cut in half, and the address to 'the Women that are at ease' was placed between the two parts. A portion of the second half was lost, so that verse fifteen begins in the middle of a sentence. And further, some editor, seeing that verses 1-5 were plainly incomplete, added a conclusion of his own (verses 6-8), which is merely a commentary upon the fifth verse. When the severed portions have been reunited, we find a very striking and suggestive poem in four stanzas.

The first stanza pictures a righteous king who shall so reform the nobles (or 'princes') that they shall be a true aristocracy, the protectors and helpers of the people. The second stanza describes the consequent moral and intellectual improvement of the commonalty. Those who are now dull shall learn to use their eyes and ears. Men in general will learn to judge truly, and find courage to call things by their right names. The third stanza shows the effect of good government upon the face of the country. What is now rough pasture will be tilled: what are now mere ploughed fields will be planted with fruit-trees: and even in what remains wilderness there will be safe pasture for flocks under the protection of law. In the fourth stanza the poet interweaves the main thoughts of the other three, drawing a picture of a country blessed with peace and security and abundance.

An ideal is often evoked by antagonism to the actual, and that may in part explain this prophecy. At least we could hardly find a more complete contrast than there is between this idyllic picture of Judah's future and the actual state of the unhappy country, when the king was weak, the nobles selfish and oppressive, the people so corrupt as to have lost all higher feeling, and their land almost a wilderness. We are tempted to fancy that the prophet, in spite of his first vision,

had for a long time hoped to effect some real reforms by his preaching ; but that now he turned in despair from the present and set all his hopes upon the future. Had this prophecy stood alone, perhaps such an explanation might have proved sufficient. But the development of thought in the two companion prophecies is such as to be beyond the suggestion of circumstance. We must look deeper for the source of such inspiration.

§ 46. The eleventh chapter, though less complete and less poetical than the thirty-second, is more striking and has attracted far more general attention. It consists of two parts which are artfully contrasted. The first two stanzas describe the ideal king : the last two picture the redemption of nature. The nobles and the common people are left unmentioned, lest the effectiveness of the contrast should be diminished. The king is to be a descendant of Jesse, but apparently not of David : for the new 'shoot' is to spring from the stump of the tree which has been cut down. He is to be endowed with all the gifts of a practical ruler : strong, wise, courageous, penetrating, and religious, he will protect and elevate the weak, and crush the wicked oppressor. The same spirit of God which dwells in the king will also regenerate the animal world. All fierce and dangerous beasts will become tame and gentle. The lion and the serpent will be the playmates of the child.

Whether this poem is complete we cannot be sure. Evidently some editor thought it was a fragment, for he supplied a conclusion of his own. This is composed in the familiar style of late post-exilic writers, and harps upon their two favourite topics—the restoration of all the tribes of Israel, and the unstinted vengeance which they were to execute upon their foes. Some scholars of repute, indeed, claim that the whole poem as well as the conclusion dates from the Macedonian age. They urge truly that the fanciful treatment of the animals is not in Isaiah's usual vein, and that nowhere else has he even suggested that the race of David must come to an end. To

some extent their conclusion is strengthened by the language of the poem. But, though somewhat shaken, I am not yet convinced that we must assign this noble prophecy to an anonymous author of uncertain date.

§ 47. If the vision of an ideal king, cherished by the prophet and his disciples, lent them hope and inspiration even in the darkest hours of the Assyrian terror, how natural it was that, when the cruel conqueror met with a dramatic reverse, their faith should grow stronger, and their hope seem near to its fulfilment! What might not be expected of the people and the king who had been so wonderfully delivered? What gratitude to God, what earnest reformation, what zealous service? These hopes, it seems, gathered round the expected birth of a prince of the royal house. If after the retreat of Rezin and Pekah mothers called their children, who were born in the hour of deliverance, by such names as 'God with us'—Emmanuel, what wonder if a prince born when Sennacherib was in flight from that camp of death, should bear a name expressing in still greater fullness the sense of God's guidance and protection? More than that, was it not reasonable and natural to believe that the prince whose birth was bound up with such mighty events, and whose name was a continual witness to God's power and love, would in some notable way realize the ideal of monarchy which the prophet was holding up to his race?

These thoughts, I believe, give us the key to the wonderful poem in which Isaiah poured out his soul after the great deliverance. The first stanza expresses, by a singularly vivid metaphor, the intense relief of the people when, in the moment of their despair, the danger was dispelled. Judah had for long been the land of shadows; the darkness of death had brooded over it; and suddenly there came a light of hope which changed the whole landscape. In the second stanza there naturally follows a song of triumph over the cruel foe, the relentless oppressor. The poet's instinct has seized upon

two characteristic features for description. The scarlet mantles of the Assyrian chieftains ever dazzled the eyes of their victims. And the soldier's boot with its heavy nails was an apt symbol of the brutal insolence with which the dominant race trampled upon half the world. To see these in the fire was to know that the oppressor's power was broken. The third stanza celebrates the birth of a prince in this auspicious hour, and bestows on him a series of names expressing the new confidence which inspired prophet and people. The fourth stanza briefly describes the peace and prosperity which Judah is to enjoy under the rule of this second David.

Whether the prince then born was named as the prophet wished we cannot tell. Certainly he never reigned, for no such name appears in the annals of Judah. Nor were the hopes which centred round his cradle otherwise fulfilled. The irony of history has seldom found more striking expression than in the contrast between Isaiah's noble picture of the prince as he should be, and the actual character of Hezekiah's successor. If we may believe Jewish tradition, the idolatrous reactionary Manasseh signalized the beginning of his reign by murdering the venerable prophet whose standard for kings was so inconveniently high. Sixty years later, indeed, Isaiah's disciples indulged a hope that Josiah might prove the restorer of Israel, but they were disappointed. After his death the most sanguine could hope nothing from the miserable puppets who trembled on the throne of David till the fall of Jerusalem; and since then Israel has had no native king and no political existence. Yet, after all, as our next chapter will show, their hopes were destined to have a glorious fulfilment.

CHAPTER XIV

THE MESSIANIC HOPE

THE fair visions of Isaiah's old age have remained visions : for no such monarch as he described ever sat upon the throne while Judah remained a nation ; and the whole condition of the world has long since put a literal fulfilment out of the question. Not to speak of the political and social developments which have changed the face of human society, the greatest obstacle of all is the Christian faith. So long as the dominant religion is that which treats the brotherhood of mankind as an axiom, it will be impossible that the religious and political centre of the world should be a state founded, as Isaiah's ideal is, upon a denial of the equality of men before God.¹ His prophecies, therefore, of a restored Israel, under a perfectly wise and righteous king, have not been and cannot be realized in the literal sense. And yet they remain among the most interesting and the most important of human utterances.

It is not necessary to discuss their literary merit : for the world has long ago ranked them among the greatest of Hebrew poems. But I may perhaps refer to one proof of their excellence, which is often overlooked. Late in the first century before the Christian era, as it would appear, a Greek translation of these prophecies fell into the hands of a young Roman, who was becoming famous as a poet. He borrowed from them the main thought, and to some extent the form, of the triumphal ode in which he celebrated the expected birth of a prince of the house of Augustus. Brilliant as the result

¹ For the proof of this see the next chapter, p. 98.

was, deservedly famous as Virgil's fourth Eclogue has always been, it is yet pale and cold beside the utterance of the prophet whose lips were touched with sacred fire. The greatest of Roman poets lacked the vivid imagination, the depth and intensity of thought, and the concentrated force of expression, which combine to make Isaiah one of the world's oracles.

The substance of these prophecies demands our careful consideration from several points of view.

First, we may observe that they are not merely predictions of what is to be, but also judgments of what ought to be. They set up for Israel, and for the world, a new standard by which the government of a state may be measured and valued. So far as we know the literature of the ancient world, though there had been many complaints against evil rulers, no ideal of righteous government and its consequences had ever been presented. Not till more than 300 years later did Plato, in the *Republic*, sketch an ideal state in which the wise alone should bear rule. Avowedly impracticable though it was, and full of paradoxes, Plato's imaginary constitution has exercised an incalculable influence over the thinkers of every subsequent age. Definite, logical, and simple, Isaiah's conception appealed to a wider circle: and its power was increased by the belief, so long entertained, that it was destined to be realized in every detail. We cannot trace its effect, either in the dim records of Israel's dispersion, or in the confused tales of horror which make up the history of the restored people from Nehemiah to Herod; but we shall see presently how deeply its influence has coloured all the prophetic literature of later times.

Still the chief importance of Isaiah's Messianic writings lay in their being predictions. Familiar as we are with ideas about progress and development, we can hardly imagine what a revolution of thought was involved in the simple fact that Isaiah placed his ideal in the future and not in the past. All

nations of antiquity looked back upon a golden age, and deplored their declension from the virtues of that happy time. The Israelites not only recognized an original fall of man, but also traced a series of downward steps in the history of the patriarchs, the judges, and the monarchy. So fully established was this belief that the prophets, who were the great reformers, always professed that their new teaching was a return to the ancient faith and constitution. That is the tone of Elijah, of Amos, and of Isaiah himself in his earlier days. How startling, then, must his hearers have found a change of polarity so absolute! To look forward instead of backward; to let hope take the place of regret; to adopt progress for a watchword instead of conservation; was not this to change the face of the moral world? It would be rash, indeed, to assert either that Isaiah was conscious what a revolution he was preparing, or that his contemporaries welcomed or understood its full meaning. 'The kingdom of heaven', our Lord said, 'is like leaven.' In like manner all great truths and great principles work slowly and gradually upon the mass of existing custom and belief. Yet in the end 'the whole is leavened'. How complete the leavening was in the case of the Jews we may partly infer from the Messianic interpolations which a later age inserted among Isaiah's writings. Not content with his own pregnant words, they would fain attribute to him the more developed ideas of their own generation.

Jewish literature from the sixth century to the Christian era shows the people more and more under the influence of ideals which are placed in the future. Ezekiel, in his exile, draws a complete picture of a new theocracy. Fifty years later, Deutero-Isaiah promises a restoration which is to be full of glory. In the dark days of Ezra and Nehemiah Trito-Isaiah points forward to a better age which is to come. A prophet of the Persian period looks for a time when Egypt and Babylon will both be converted, and be united with Israel in a glorious empire. Naturally enough, under the rule of the priests,

Isaiah's ideal of a Davidic king was obscured. But when the Maccabees revived the monarchy, the people once more founded their hopes upon a king. Two examples may suffice. The ninth chapter of Zechariah, written probably about 165 B. C., promises a peaceful monarch, whose reign is described in language which recalls the ninth chapter of Isaiah. And Psalm cx, written when Simon the son of Mattathias became high priest as well as king, hails him as the founder of a dynasty which will be permanent as well as glorious. 'Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek.'

But before the Maccabean victories had revived the hopes of Israel, the visions of the future had begun to assume a new shape. The dark years at the beginning of the second century gave birth to the first of a long line of Apocalyptic writings. Differing widely in their details, they all agree in one essential. Despairing of any such natural development as the prophets had foretold, they look for deliverance only through miracle. Either by the agency of a supernatural Messiah, or by the direct action of Jehovah, the old order and the existing race of men must be destroyed, and a new kingdom of Israel established in a renovated world. How far the Messiah of the various Apocalypses may be regarded as a development of Isaiah's ideal king we can scarcely hope to determine. Certain it is, however, that in the thought of Jews and Christians alike, during the first century, the two conceptions were always closely connected, and often identified.

Dare we say that men were wrong when they put a single interpretation upon predictions so different as those of Isaiah and Zechariah, of Enoch and Psalm cx? Surely it was a true instinct which recognized a real unity beneath all the distinctions. For the essence of all these predictions was the hope that in due time God would send to Israel a Man, whose influence would create a new and higher social and moral order in Israel and in the world. Nor was that hope disappointed. From the stock of Jesse there did at last come

forth One from whose birth all the world has dated a new era. Not the least wonderful fact in His wonderful life is that all the various and apparently inconsistent hopes of seven centuries, as they sprang from a single source, found their consummation in His single person : in the King whose kingdom was not of this world ; in the Prophet, rejected by Jews and crucified by Romans, whose memory makes the scene of His martyrdom a sacred city for all nations ; in the great High Priest, whose spirit guides and sanctifies the church which He founded, that it may be a true theocracy. What though Isaiah's vision did not reach beyond a near horizon, and the king he looked for was a literal king of a small and feeble nation ? That vision was but the first stage in the development of a great thought which, nourished by the religious experience of ages, was afterwards embodied in a larger and nobler form. In the light of that development the Jewish people were justified in regarding Isaiah's words as prophetic of issues beyond his purview, and the Christian Church in applying the titles, which he designed for a prince of his own day, to another Son of David who was born seven centuries later at Bethlehem.

CHAPTER XV

ISAIAH'S THEOLOGY

EXCEPT the apostle who wrote 'To me to live is Christ', it may be questioned whether any man ever lived so consciously in God's presence as did Isaiah. The evidence of this lies in every page of his prophecies. He speaks always as one for whom the voice of Jehovah is ever sounding, the hand of Jehovah is visibly working in the great movements of history, and the glory of Jehovah pervades and brightens the whole atmosphere. Whatever is the formal subject of his discourse, it always centres round the twin thoughts of God's holiness and man's duty. That is what gives to his lightest utterance a characteristic tone which arrests and thrills every hearer. That is why, in spite of the necessary defects of a prose translation from a corrupt and interpolated text, the book has a power, beyond all other prophetic writings, to brace and elevate the soul.

This influence is all the more powerful, perhaps, because exercised, as it were, indirectly. The prophet offers no formal teaching about the nature of God, such as we find in Amos or Deutero-Isaiah. Whether he confirms a traditional doctrine or lays down a new one, he does it by implication, with an illuminating epithet or a swift-glancing phrase. Although, therefore, the careful reader of the prophecies will surely gain a right general conception of their author's theology, he will not find in them any series of propositions out of which a system can at once be constructed. He will be glad, perhaps, to learn how far a generation of students has been able to formulate the faith which Isaiah held about God's nature and

providence. Elaborate statements are to be found in many learned works. Here it is possible only to give a brief outline.

A prophet's teaching must have a close relation with current opinion. We cannot understand him without knowing something of the atmosphere in which he lived. In Isaiah's world there were two very different influences at work, the popular religion and the preaching of recent prophets. The people as a whole had not advanced beyond the Mosaic Henotheism. In their view Jehovah was one of many gods, each of whom ruled the land of his own people. They worshipped Jehovah, and him only, because he was the God of Israel, and their prosperity depended on his favour. His favour was to be won by worship, especially by sacrifices. These could be offered to him in any of the sanctuaries where his image stood, whether (as was usual) in human form or (as at Bethel) in the form of a bull, for in all these images he was in some sense present. Under the influence of the Canaanites, Israel had declined from the Mosaic doctrine that Jehovah was a god of righteousness, and required right conduct in his people. They had even admitted some gross immoralities as part of his worship. Apart from all questions of morality, they believed that, if Jehovah were pleased by their worship, he would grant fertility to their land and victory to their arms.

The prophets Amos and Hosea, on the other hand, revived that part of the Mosaic religion which insisted upon morality, and advanced beyond its theological conception. If we may try to estimate the combined influence of their teaching, we may state it thus: 'Jehovah is indeed the God of Israel. He chose that people long ago, and loves them with a passionate love. But his love is jealous; it requires that his people shall love him in return, and show their love by righteous conduct. The more he loves them the more he will punish their wrongdoing: for justice is the first of his attributes. He can punish, not merely by plague or famine in the land, but by bringing a

foreign foe to invade it. For he is more than the God of Israel. He is the creator of the world, and has power over the whole of it. Unless the people of Israel repent, the foreigner will be commissioned to carry them into captivity. In vain will they offer sacrifice to appease him. Sacrifice is of no value; it pleases him not. And the images which they worship in his place are an offence to him.' It must be observed that while Hosea protests against images of Jehovah, both he and Amos plainly conceive him as having the form and, to some extent, the passions of humanity. When they speak of his anger, love, pity, or repentance, they are not merely following a poetical convention, but mean to be understood literally.

With regard to one very important point their language leaves us in doubt. Though they take it for granted that Jehovah is lord at least of the neighbouring nations, they do not describe the nature or extent of his power. The conception of omnipotence had not yet been formed, nor the questions asked which would involve a definition. That perhaps explains the silence which both prophets observe about the gods of other nations. Though their principles logically involved a real monotheism, they were not prepared formally to deny the existence of the heathen gods. And as they were addressing an audience who fully believed it, their silence appeared to give consent.

We are now in a position to understand the real significance of Isaiah's teaching about God's nature and providence.

I. Like Amos and Hosea, he preserves a strict silence about the gods of other nations. But it is the silence of contempt, which could hardly be misunderstood by any of his disciples. For with him monotheism is no longer inchoate but developed into a doctrine of God and providence. The teaching of his predecessors about the attributes of Jehovah is not merely accepted, but enlarged and spiritualized. The language in which he addresses both Egypt and Assyria amounts to a claim that Jehovah alone directs the course of all nations, and that they are the instruments of his designs.

This advance naturally involved another. The anthropomorphic conception of God, which he inherited as part of the prophetic tradition, is neither rejected nor criticized: but it is elevated and refined until it becomes almost a new theology. Only once does he approach to a description of the form of Jehovah, and then he reverently turns aside, and speaks only of 'his trailing robe' which 'filled the temple'. In describing the love of God he omits the more human attribute of jealousy. The 'wrath' of God, so prominent in the thought of an earlier age, though it still threatens sinful Judah and presumptuous Assyria, loses its volcanic quality and becomes judicial. Nor is it without significance that the objective term "judgment" is habitually reinforced by the more inward 'righteousness'.

To the prophetic conception of the divine nature, thus purified, two new elements are added, or rather, two familiar terms, known even to the popular theology, receive a new and higher meaning. These are 'holiness' and 'glory'.

The word 'holy', which had been formerly applied to Jehovah in the ritual sense of 'mighty' or 'unapproachable', now acquires an important ethical meaning. From the moment in his great vision when the presence of Jehovah made Isaiah feel that he was 'a man of unclean lips', the Holy One of Israel has been for him a God of awful purity and truth, who demands of his worshippers above all the homage of a moral life. Though he rarely uses the word 'holy', his prophecies are instinct with the feeling which a later prophet expressed by saying that Jehovah is 'of purer eyes than to behold iniquity'.

In the early books of the Old Testament and in Ezekiel the word 'glory' means a physical radiance which proceeds from Jehovah and marks his invisible presence. In the psalms and some of the later prophets the word expresses the manifestation of God's power in acts of judgment or deliverance. This later usage appears to date from Isaiah's vision. The cry of the Seraphim, 'the whole earth is full of his glory,' marks the

momentous transition from a physical conception to a moral intuition.

The use of the phrase 'the whole earth is full of his glory' inevitably raises the question, What has Isaiah to tell us of Omnipotence, Omniscience, and Omnipresence as attributes of God? The answer must be that though he tells nothing directly he implies much. He promises Ahaz that Jehovah will give him a miraculous sign, at his own choice. He affirms that the secret plans of the princes of Judah are all known to their God. He threatens that Jehovah will summon the nations from the uttermost parts of the earth to assail Judah. It has been argued that, as such statements logically imply the three attributes in their fullness, they formed part of Isaiah's conception of the divine nature. Logic, however, is not always a safe guide in such cases; for consistency is not the test of prophetic inspiration. Perhaps, therefore, it would be truer to say that Isaiah had not asked himself the question whether there are any limits to the power, the knowledge, or the present activity of God, but the tendency of his thought is towards the faith which was formulated by the great prophet of the exile.

II. We have already seen (in Chapter VII) how naturally, where there is no belief in a future life, the nation or clan becomes the moral unit. Accordingly, when Isaiah traces the course of God's providence, he regards it as dealing with nations, not with individuals. When the nobles of Israel are mentioned, it is not as individuals, but as the powerful class which determines the character of the community. Their guilt infects the whole nation. Speaking in the name of One who is not only just, but pure and holy and infinitely exalted above the level of man, he gives a wider scope than Amos and Hosea had done to the principle that the standard of conduct for man must correspond to his conception of God. Not content with denouncing the injustice and oppression of the ruling class, he traces these evils back to their source in greed, and greed back

to luxury, and luxury to that pride which is the radical vice of the powerful. The refrain of an early prophecy, which finds echoes in the latest, is a comprehensive curse upon all these forms of sin. 'For the loftiness of man shall be bowed down, and the haughtiness of men shall be brought low.'

With a true prophet the denunciation of evil prepares the way for setting a standard of good. Isaiah does not fail to tell his people how they may live worthily of the God they worship. The ideal which he presents to them is not unlike the social order of Plato's Republic. Justice must be the ruling principle of the community, and each class must play its proper part. The king is to inspire: the nobles are to lead and protect: the commons are to obey with modesty and sobriety. A state so organized, if it has also the crowning virtue of faith in Jehovah, will deserve and enjoy the blessings of prosperity and peace.

Charged as he was with a divine commission to proclaim Jehovah the Lord of all the world, Isaiah might have been expected to lay down these laws of conduct for all nations. In fact, however, he addresses his admonitions to Israel alone. More than this, he speaks of Israel as the only people whom Jehovah regards with favour. They are not merely the chosen people, preferred in some degree to the rest: the others exist only as instruments¹ for their education. An unique sacredness attaches to the soil of Palestine, which is Jehovah's own² land. And Jerusalem is so entirely sacred that it is declared inviolable.³ Assyria and her allies, on the other hand, are but unwitting⁴ tools in the hand of Jehovah, destined to be cast aside and even destroyed so soon as their purpose is fulfilled. The prophet exults in the ruin which is to punish their excessive cruelty in carrying out Jehovah's mandate to chastise the chosen people. It is not too much to say that, unless it be in the complaint of Asshur's pride, there is no hint of a moral

¹ x. 5 (§ 25).

² xiv. 24 (§ 83).

³ xxxi. 5 (§ 34), &c.

⁴ x. 7 (§ 25).

relation between Jehovah and any part of the heathen world. Here, then, is what seems to modern eyes an obvious inconsistency. Jehovah is the creator and ruler of all mankind, and yet has no interest in any but one of the smallest nations. Is it possible to harmonize or to explain these conflicting views of God's providence? Harmony, from the Christian point of view, there cannot be. But it seems possible to lessen the inconsistency, and to explain how the prophet could be unconscious of it.

The world's greatest teachers have rarely seen the whole bearing of the new truths which they proclaimed. Long habit and the influence of environment have prevented them from drawing conclusions which to their disciples of a later generation seem obvious. St. Paul, for instance, the inspired interpreter of Christ's teaching, who laid down principles which logically involved the abolition of slavery, and the recognition of women's equality with men, yet advised the slave to be content with his chains, and spoke of women with no small leaven of Judaic contempt. In like manner, it would appear, patriotic enthusiasm, and the lingering influences of the henotheistic belief which he had discarded, clouded Isaiah's eyes, so that he saw not the full meaning of the message which he delivered. When he declared that Assyria was the rod in Jehovah's hand, he implied a principle which was to sweep away all heathen gods, to make all men the sons of one heavenly Father, and to unite all human history under one providential purpose. Yet, having taken the first and the greatest step, he advanced no further, but stood with one foot in the old faith. He left it for a later prophet explicitly to deny the existence of the heathen gods, and to affirm that all mankind have an interest in God's providence as well as in his judgment. If we are inclined to wonder how he could so halt between two opinions, let us remember that most of our grandfathers believed in an almighty God of love who yet condemned all the heathen and the majority of Christians to

eternal torment. Yet they did not live, like Isaiah, in an age of transition, but enjoyed the leisure and sense of completeness, which are most favourable to the attainment of consistency. The birth-pangs of momentous new truths destroy the calm which is necessary for the formulation of a system.

Yet, even if Isaiah had advanced to the position of his great successor, who wrote, 'Turn unto me, and let yourselves be saved, all ye ends of the earth,'¹ he might, from his new point of view, have claimed that his confidence about Jerusalem was perfectly consistent with the most complete monotheism. For in his age the best hopes, not merely of Judah, but of the human race, were centred in the safety of Jerusalem. The people of Israel were still, with few exceptions, henotheists, and believed that each country was ruled by its own god, who must therefore be worshipped by all who lived within its borders. Had they, in that stage of thought, been carried captive to Assyria, they must have renounced the worship of Jehovah when they crossed the Euphrates, and offered sacrifice to Merodach. Yet their existing faith in Jehovah, imperfect as it was, contained the germ of a true monotheism. With its destruction, humanly speaking, true religion would have perished from the world. Therefore, had Isaiah hoped for the salvation of all mankind, he would have found in that hope an additional reason for the assurance, which he felt, that God would not suffer the sacred city to be taken by the foe. His assurance was justified. Not till another century had passed, and Isaiah's faith was firmly rooted among the people, did Jerusalem, no longer the indispensable shrine of true religion, suffer the ruin which its rulers had so often provoked.

It is not because he freed himself from all the particularist prejudices of his age, nor because he attained a complete system of theology, nor because he formed a consistent theory of providence, that Isaiah holds the first place among the Hebrew prophets. He did none of these things. He left

¹ Isaiah xlv. 22.

many questions to be answered by the great prophet of the sixth century, or later still. But he who sows the seed is greater than he who reaps the harvest. If in Isaiah's inspired intuition we find the germs of a true monotheism, of a philosophy of history, and of the conception of human brotherhood, then we cannot but assign to him the highest rank among the chosen vessels of revelation.

CHAPTER XVI

ISAIAH THE POET

THE Roman poets, when they magnified their office, loved to assume the title of 'seers'. The Greeks attributed to the poets a measure of the same inspired frenzy which dictated the oracles of Apollo. The priestess of Delphi and the Sibyl of Cumae moulded all their mystic utterances in the form of verse. The recognized religious teachers of Greece were Homer and Aeschylus and Sophocles. The ancient world, in fact, with one voice identified the functions of the poet and the prophet. Yet until recently the modern world believed that the greatest prophets of all, of whom the others are but shadows, were exceptions to the rule. To Amos and Isaiah they denied, not indeed the spirit, but the form of poetry, and charged them with inventing that barren hybrid, poetical prose. Unnatural as this may seem, the process by which it came about is easy enough to follow, at least in the case of Isaiah.

The corruptions of the text, of which the causes have been explained in an earlier chapter, tended to obscure the forms of verse. The disorders of the post-exilic age inevitably destroyed literary taste. Before the close of the canon, the tradition that Isaiah was a poet had so far been forgotten that the last interpolators could insert a large patch of bald prose in the very middle of a stanza. And if that were the case in Palestine, where the vernacular was akin to Hebrew, still less likely was the verse to be preserved in Egypt or Asia Minor, where the language of all the Jews was Greek. The Septuagint translation, which for the greater part of the Jewish world was

the Bible, translates the prophets into lame unrhythmical prose. And so, in spite of a remark in Josephus,¹ the true tradition perished in the early centuries of the Christian era. Even in the case of the Psalms, whose intention is so obviously lyrical, men failed to find any rhythm, but supposed the secret of their structure to be mere 'parallelism'.

During the last fifty years the labours of scholars have been gradually recovering the lost tradition. They began, as was natural, with the Psalms: and not till about 1880 did they venture to approach the much more difficult problem of the prophets. Though they have attained a large measure of success, much still remains to be done, and many details must be regarded as uncertain. The following attempt to describe the structure of Hebrew poetry must therefore be limited to the main facts which are established, and leave some interesting questions untouched.

One reason why Hebrew verse so long escaped observation is that in a very important respect it differs from all the verse with which most scholars are familiar. In Greek and in Latin, and in the languages of modern Europe, a verse consists of a certain number of feet, and a foot of a fixed number of syllables in a definite order. Even in English, there can rarely be a doubt about the scansion of a single line; and when there are several lines dispute is impossible. But Hebrew rhythm belongs to a class which has no representative in Greek or Latin, and only a remote parallel in some mediaeval languages. A 'foot', if we may apply the term to so variable a measure, consists of an indefinite number of syllables leading up to a main accent. It is the number of the main accents which determines the character of the line. Thus in Isaiah ii, 14, 15, we have four lines of three accents each:—

We'ál kol-heharím haramím,
We'ál kol-haggeva'óth hannissa'óth,

¹ See Josephus vii. 13, § 2.

We'ál kol-migdál gavóah,
We'ál kol-chomáh betsuráh.

If they are read in a kind of chant, it will be found that the varying number of syllables does not prevent the rhythm from being apparent. The difficulty will be less if we compare these lines with some from Langland's *Piers Ploughman* :—

In a Sómer Séason, when Sóft was the Sún,
I Shóop me into Shróuds, as I a Shéep were,
In Hábit as an Hérmít, unHóly of Works,
Wént Wíde in this Wórlđ, Wónders to hear.

The English lines have one great advantage over the Hebrew. The alliteration, which combines with and emphasizes the accent, makes the rhythm unmistakable ; whereas the Hebrew lines, read by one who was acquainted only with strict syllabic rhythm, might easily pass for prose. Had the opening lines of Deutero-Isaiah, for instance, been alliterative, their poetical character would never have been questioned. I venture to attempt the almost sacrilegious task of so translating them :—

Cómfort ye, Cómfort ye, my Cóuntry, saith He that Cáres for
Cánaan,
Jóy now, speak Jóy to Jerúsalem, and adJúre her Géntly,
That Sóon will her Sláve-bonds be Sévered, and asSóilsied
her Sín,
For Dóuble hath been Déalt her by Dóom of Dólour for all
her mis-Déeds.

Each of the above lines has five accents, and there is a kind of pause after the third. But a line may have any number of accents from two to six. In Isaiah five or six are most usual : in the Psalms three or four. But, as in *Piers Ploughman*, the number of accents in a particular line may occasionally be more or less than the normal.

Hebrew verse has two characteristics which distinguish it from English. Each line must be complete in itself. It is impossible for the sense to run on as it does in Hamlet's :—

No more ; and by a sleep to say we end
 The heart-ache, and the thousand natural shocks
 That flesh is heir to, 'tis a consummation
 Devoutly to be wished.

Again, a line can rarely stand alone. Normally the poetical unit is the couplet, which consists of two lines alike in structure and closely connected in sense. The second line may simply repeat the first in different words, or it may offer a contrast or state a qualification of consequence.

For an example of synonymous parallelism we may quote Psalm xix :—

The heavens declare the glory of God,
 And the firmament showeth his handiwork.

Antithetic parallelism is found in Proverbs x. 1 :—

A wise son maketh a glad father,
 But a foolish son is the heaviness of his mother.

Of the third kind, or synthetic parallelism, there is a good instance in Lamentations v. 7 :—

Our fathers have sinned, and are not ;
 And we have borne their iniquities.

It is naturally in the later poetry that such rules are strictly observed. Writing at an earlier time, and with the conscious power of a great poet, Isaiah allows himself to treat the rules with considerable freedom. Especially where there is an approach to narrative, the relation between the two lines of a couplet is apt to be loose. The following, for instance, is rather an extreme variety of synthetic parallelism :—

For the warrior's boot that stamps in the tumult, and his
 mantle drenched with blood,
 They shall all be for burning, and fuel for the fire.

On the other hand, as this couplet shows us, a long line may be so divided as to have the effect of a couplet in itself. The boots and the mantle balance one another ; and so do the burning and the fuel.

There remains one more point about the structure of Hebrew

verse. Some poems consist of a series of similar couplets, without any further complication. Examples will be found in the sections numbered 1, 15, 23, 25, and 41. But the longer poems are generally divided into stanzas. In some cases, as § 10, the division is made clear by a recurring burden; more often it is indicated by the sense. The length of the stanza varies from three to ten lines.

The management of stanza and couplet is by no means easy. Inferior poets are driven by their requirements into padding and flat repetitions. But in the hands of a master they prove most effective instruments. No careful reader of the ninth and tenth and thirty-second prophecies can fail to notice how much of their moving power is due to the skilful use of the stanza, which lends emphasis to contrast, climax, or reiteration.

Still more remarkable is Isaiah's plastic management of the couplet. In other languages parallelism is a device of rhetoric. There is no great orator who does not make frequent use of it. And yet even Burke or Demosthenes would have stood aghast if told to employ it in every sentence. Our poets use it but rarely, lest any excess should degrade their poetry into a frigid rhetoric. But to the Hebrew, for whom poetry and rhetoric are one and the same art, parallelism is as natural as is rhyme to an Englishman. Just as rhyme is responsible for many absurdities, many meaningless repetitions are due to the exigencies of parallelism. Even Deutero-Isaiah is not always master of his material: and the author of the last chapters of the book is often betrayed into vapidty. But no shackles can impede the free and gracious movements of the greatest of the prophets. Many of us read Isaiah's prophecies without being conscious of any rule of balanced clauses; and to those who do observe it, parallelism seems but to add the charm of an unforced symmetry and the force of a pervading emphasis.

In his mastery of form Isaiah is a perfect artist. Each prophecy is a carefully compacted and elaborately finished

whole. Each line is fashioned with finely cut phrase and dramatic rhythm. Line balances line ; stanza matches stanza ; thought leads on to thought. There is no slovenliness of expression, no confusion of ideas, no clumsy contrast. The last point deserves to be emphasized. It is often said that Isaiah delights in sudden reverses : for instance, that a passage full of gloomy denunciation is wont to be followed by a bright picture of future blessedness. However true that may be of the book as it stands, a very little analysis will prove that these violent contrasts are the work, not of the prophet, but of those who edited and interpolated his prophecies. He was too true an artist habitually to employ such a coarse means of getting an effect. The author of the finely graduated though tremendous vaticinations of prophecy was incapable of setting the Messianic promise of chapter ix immediately after the vision of horror which concludes the eighth chapter.

Aristotle says that the most characteristic and incommunicable attribute of the poet is his command over imagery. Had he been acquainted either with Oriental or with Elizabethan literature, he might perhaps have been inclined to qualify that statement : for it is possible for the luxuriance of metaphor to become a serious defect. Still in our estimate of a poet the quality of his imagery will always be a most important consideration. Now Isaiah's metaphors and similes astonish us by their variety, their aptness, their brilliancy, and even by their audacity. What can be more suggestive than his phrase for the nobles and the commons—'palm branch and rush'? What more brilliant than his picture of the Assyrian king 'gathering all the earth, as one that gathereth forsaken eggs'? What bolder than his comparison of Jehovah to 'a stone of stumbling and a rock of offence'? The merit of these and other images is all the greater, their aptness the more wonderful, because they are all drawn from the experience of common life. Not one of Isaiah's metaphors is far-fetched, scientific or abstract. The rocks, the trees, the rivers, the familiar animals

of the desert or the farm; the homely facts of hunger and thirst and uncomfortable beds; the everyday labours of the field; the rarer, but not less obvious, phenomena of fire and flood;—in these and such as these the poet's genius finds an unfailing source of comparisons which are at once new, beautiful, and illuminating. He is rich, but he never flaunts his wealth in our faces. His use of images shows an almost classical restraint. They are not employed unless they serve a definite purpose: and some prophecies are rigidly and deliberately deprived of all such ornament.

It has been said by a modern critic that the greatest poets are those who express the largest amount of thought in a page. If we apply this test to Isaiah, we shall not find him wanting. In spite of the almost mechanical necessity, imposed by Hebrew verse, of repeating each thought twice over, Isaiah may challenge comparison with Aeschylus, and even with Milton, in respect of the closeness with which ideas are packed in his majestic sentences. A single example may be quoted by way of illustration. In the thirty-second chapter he wishes to describe a state of society in which the leading men shall be true leaders and shepherds of the people. He does it in one picturesque sentence, which seems to leave nothing more to be said. 'Each of them shall be as an hiding-place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest of rain; as streams of water in a parched plain, as the shadow of a great rock in a thirsty land.' Pages of explanation have been written about these four phrases by astonished commentators: but explanation, though it may prove how complete, how pregnant, how masterly, the language is, can hardly add anything to the simple impression which is made by our first hearing.

Artistic finish, wealth of imagination, a fine reserve in the use of power, an unsurpassed concentration of thought:—these are great qualities, but even their union does not explain the influence which Isaiah's language exerts upon the reader. What is most characteristic of all, yet most difficult to analyse

or define, is the quality which makes his style at once incomparably lofty and uplifting. The effect may be compared to that which is produced by the sound of the human voice. Sometimes the *timbre* of a voice, apart from the words used or the thoughts expressed, convinces us that the speaker's nature is noble and pure. So it is with the pervading tone of Isaiah's writings. To read them is to realize that here is the revelation not merely of a great artist, not merely of a political genius, a moral reformer, a gentleman of fine feeling and delicate perception; but of one who lived habitually upon a level of thought and emotion to which all these attain but rarely; one for whom communion with the highest was his native element; one who reflected in his own person the holiness which his eye discerned as the radiance of the Almighty and the All Just. In a word, to commune with Isaiah is to feel that, however hard it may be to define, inspiration is a great reality.

ISAIAH OF JERUSALEM

§ I

vi 1 In the year that King Uzziah died I saw the Lord sitting
upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his trailing robe
2 filled the temple. Round him hovered Seraphim; each
one had six wings: with twain he covered his face, and
3 with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly.
And one cried to another, and said:

Holy, holy, holy, is Jehovah Sabaoth:
The whole earth is full of his glory.

4 And the foundations of the thresholds were moved at
the voice of him that cried, and the house was filled with
smoke.

5 Then said I:

Woe is me! for I am undone!
For I am a man of unclean lips,
And I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips;
For mine eyes have seen the King, Jehovah Sabaoth.

6 Then flew one of the Seraphim unto me, having a hot stone
in his hand, which he had taken with the tongs from off the
7 altar; and he touched my mouth with it and said:

Lo, this hath touched thy lips;
And thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged.

8 And I heard the voice of the Lord saying,

Whom shall I send?
And who will go for us?

Then said I: Here am I, send me.

9 And he said :

Go ; and say to this people :

Hear ye continually, but understand not ;

And see ye continually, but perceive not.

10 Make the heart of this people fat,

And make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes ;

• Lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears,

And their hearts understand, and their health be restored.

11 Then said I, Lord, how long ?

And he answered :

Until ruin comes

Upon cities without inhabitant,

And houses without men,

And the land be left a wilderness,

12 And Jehovah have removed the men far away,

And the desolation be wide in the midst of the land :

13 And if there be yet a tenth remaining,

It shall again be cast into the fire,

Like the stumps of the oak and the terebinth,

Which remain when they are felled.

§ 2

I

i 21 How is the faithful city become an harlot !

[Zion], that was full of judgment : righteousness lodged
in her.

22 Thy silver is become dross ; thy wine mixed with water.

23 Thy rulers are unruly and companions of thieves :

Every one loveth gifts, and followeth after rewards :

They right not the fatherless, nor plead the widow's cause.

2

24 Therefore thus saith the Lord, the mighty one of Israel :

Ah, I will ease me of mine adversaries, and avenge me of
mine enemies.

25 And I will turn my hand upon thee, [and purify thee with lye].

Thy dross will I refine in the furnace, and take away all thy tin.

26 And I will restore thy judges as at the first, and thy counsellors as at the beginning ;

Afterwards thou shalt be called the citadel of righteousness, the faithful city.

§ 3

29 For ye shall be ashamed because of the oaks which ye love,
And confounded for the gardens which ye have chosen.

30 For ye shall be as an oak whose leaf fadeth,
And as a garden that hath no water.

31 The strong man shall be as tow, and his work as a spark,
And they shall both burn together, and none shall quench them.

§ 4

I

ii 19 Enter into the caverns of the rocks,
and into the holes of the earth,
From before the terror of Jehovah,
and from the glory of his majesty.

6 FOR JEHOVAH HATH FORSAKEN HIS PEOPLE,
Because they be filled [with diviners] from the east,
and with soothsayers like the Philistines.

7 Their land also is full of silver and gold,
neither is there any end of their treasures.

Their land also is full of horses,
neither is there any end of their chariots.

8 Their land also is full of idols,
[neither is there any end of their images.]

They worship the work of their own hands,
that which their own fingers have made.

- 11 But the loftiness of men shall be bowed down,
 and the haughtiness of men shall be brought low :
 Jehovah alone shall be exalted
 19 when he ariseth to shake terribly the earth.

2

- 19 Enter into the caverns of the rocks,
 and into the holes of the earth,
 From before the terror of Jehovah,
 and from the glory of his majesty.
 12 FOR THERE SHALL BE A DAY OF JEHOVAH
 Upon all that is proud and haughty,
 and upon all that is lifted up and high ;
 13 Upon all the cedars of Lebanon,
 and upon all the oaks of Bashan,
 14 Upon all the high mountains,
 and upon all the hills that are lifted up :
 15 Upon every lofty tower,
 and upon every fenced wall :
 16 Upon all ships of Tarshish,
 and upon all stately vessels :
 17 And the loftiness of men shall be bowed down,
 and the haughtiness of men shall be brought low,
 Jehovah alone shall be exalted,
 19 when he ariseth to shake terribly the earth.

§ 5

I

- iii 1 For behold, the Lord,
 Jehovah Sabaoth,
 Takes from Jerusalem and Judah
 both stay and staff :
 2 The mighty man and the man of war,
 judge and prophet,

- 4 'I will give children to be their princes
and insolent youths shall rule over them.'
- 5 Oppression shall there be, twixt man and man,
neighbour and neighbour :
Insolence from the child to the elder,
from the churl to the noble.
- 6 Brother shall take hold of brother :
'In thy father's house is a coat,
Be thou our ruler,
and let this ruin be under thy hand.'
- 7 But the other shall cry in that day :
'I will not be an oppressor,
For in my house is neither bread nor clothing,
ye shall not make me ruler of the people.'

2

- 8 For Jerusalem staggers,
and Judah is falling,
Because their tongue and their deeds are against Jehovah,
to provoke the eyes of his glory.
- 9 Their bearing condemns them,
and their sin they publish and hide it not.
Woe unto them
for they have done evil unto themselves.
- 12 My people's lord is a child,
and women rule them ;
My people ! thy guides mislead thee,
and confound thy path.
- 13 Jehovah standeth up to plead,
He cometh to judge his people.
- 14 Jehovah enters into judgment
with the elders of his people and their princes :
'It is ye that have eaten up the vineyards ;
'the spoil of the poor is in your houses.
- 15 'What mean ye that ye crush my people,
'and grind the faces of the poor ?'

§ 6

I

- xxxii 9 Ye women that are at ease,
 hearken to my voice ;
 Ye careless daughters,
 give ear unto my speech !
- 10 In a year and a day
 ye shall shudder, ye careless ones ;
 For the vintage shall fail,
 the fruit shall not be garnered.

2

- 11 Tremble, ye that are at ease,
 shudder, ye careless ones :
 Strip you, make you bare,
- 12 beat upon your breasts,
 For the pleasant fields,
 for the fruitful vine,
- 13 For the land of my people
 given up to thorns and thistles.

3

- No house of mirth is left
 in the joyous city !
- 14 The palace is forsaken,
 the city's stir is desolate !
 Hill and watch tower are made
 heaps of ruins for ever,
 The joy of wild asses,
 the pasture of flocks.

§ 7

I

- iii 16 Moreover Jehovah spake :
 Because they are grown haughty,
 the daughters of Zion,

And walk with stretched-forth necks,
 and wanton eyes,
 Walking and mincing as they go,
 and making a tinkling with their feet :

2

- 17 Therefore the Lord will smite their heads with scabs,
 and lay bare their secret parts ;
 24 Instead of sweet spices there shall be rottenness,
 and instead of a girdle a rope ;
 Instead of curling hair, baldness,
 and instead of a festal robe, a girding of sackcloth.

3

- iv 1 And seven women shall take hold
 of one man in that day,
 Saying, ' We will eat our own bread
 'and wear our own apparel ;
 ' Only let us be called by thy name ;
 ' take thou away our reproach.'

§ 8

- v 1 Let me sing of my well-beloved
 a song of my beloved touching his vineyard.

1

- My well-beloved has a vineyard
 on a very fruitful hill ;
 2 He digged it and removed the stones,
 and planted it with choice vines ;
 He built a tower in the midst of it,
 and hewed out a winepress therein ;
 And he looked that it should bring forth grapes,
 but it brought forth wild grapes.

2

- 3 And now, O inhabitant of Jerusalem,
 and men of Judah,

Judge, I pray you, betwixt me
and my vineyard.

- 4 What more could have been done for my vineyard
that I have not done to it?

When I looked that it should bring forth grapes,
wherefore brought it forth wild grapes?

3

- 5 And now go to, I will tell you
what I will do to my vineyard :

I will take away its hedge, and it shall be eaten up :

I will break down its wall, and it shall be trodden down.

- 6 And I will lay it waste :

it shall not be pruned nor hoed.

There shall come up briars and thorns :

the clouds will I forbid to rain upon it.

4

- 7 For the vineyard of Jehovah is the house of Israel
and the men of Israel his cherished plantation :
And he looked for justice, but, behold, bloodshed ;
for righteousness, but behold, a cry.

§ 9

I

- v 8 Woe unto them that join house to house,
that lay field to field

Till there be no room
in the midst of the land :

- 9 [Therefore] many houses
shall be desolate,

Even great and fair
without inhabitant :

- 10 For ten acres of vineyard
shall yield but one bath,

And a homer of seed
shall yield but one ephah.

2

- 11 Woe unto them that rise up early in the morning
that they may follow strong drink ;
That tarry late into the night
till wine inflame them :
- 12 And lute and harp, tabret and flute
and wine, are in their feasts :
But they regard not the work of Jehovah,
they see not the operation of his hands.
- 13 Therefore my people go into captivity
for lack of knowledge :
And their honourable men are famished,
and their multitudes are parched with thirst.

3

[Woe unto them]

[*Three lines are missing.*]

- 14 Therefore Sheol gapes ravenously
and opens her mouth without measure ;
And the splendour of Zion, and her multitude and
pomp,
and all who rejoice therein, plunge into it.
- 17 And lambs feed [there] as in the wilderness,
and fatlings graze amid the ruins.

4

- 18 Woe unto them that draw guilt on themselves
with bullock-traces,
And sin
with a cart-rope ;
- 19 Who say : Let his work hasten,
let it speed, that we may see it :

Let the counsel of the Holy One of Israel
draw nigh and come, that we may know it.

[*Two lines are missing.*]

5

- 20 Woe unto them that call evil good
and good evil ;
That put darkness for light
and light for darkness ;
That put bitter for sweet
and sweet for bitter.

[*Three lines are missing.*]

6

- 21 Woe unto them that are wise in their own eyes
and prudent in their own sight.

[*Five lines are missing.*]

7

- 22 Woe unto them that are mighty to drink wine,
and men of strength to mingle strong drink.
23 Which justify the wicked for a reward,
and rob the righteous of his righteousness.

[*A line is missing.*]

- 24 Therefore, as the tongue of fire devoureth the stubble,
and hay shrivels in the flame,
So their root shall be rottenness,
and their blossom shall go up as dust,
Because they have scorned the instructions of Jehovah
Sabaoth,
and despised the word of the Holy One of Israel.

§ IO

I

- ix 8 The Lord hath sent a word unto Jacob
and it shall light upon Israel.

- 9 And all the people shall know it,
 even Ephraim and the inhabitants of Samaria,
 [That are exalted] in their pride
 and in the stoutness of their heart, saying ;
- 10 'The bricks are fallen, but we will build with hewn stone ;
 the sycamores are cut down, but we will put cedars in
 their stead.'
- 11 Therefore Jehovah will stir up their foe against them,
 and spur on their enemies,
- 12 The Syrians before and the Philistines behind,
 and they shall devour Israel with open mouth.
 For all this his anger is not turned away,
 but his hand is stretched out still.

2

- 13 Yet the people hath not turned to him that smote them,
 neither have they sought Jehovah Sabaoth.
- 14 Therefore Jehovah will cut off from Israel head and tail,
 palm-branch and rush in one day.
- [*Four lines are missing. Verses 15 and 16 are the unsuccessful attempt of an editor to supply them.*]
- 17 Therefore the Lord spares not their warriors,
 nor has compassion on their orphans and widows.
 For every one is profane and an evildoer,
 and every mouth speaketh folly.
 For all this his anger is not turned away,
 but his hand is stretched out still.

3

- 18 For wickedness burneth as fire ;
 it devoureth the briers and thorns :
 Yea, it kindleth the thickets of the forest,
 and they roll upward in pillars of smoke.
- 19 Through the wrath of Jehovah the land is ablaze,
 and the people are as they that eat one another.

- 20 They carve on the right hand, and are hungry still.
 they bite on the left, and are not satisfied ;
 No man spareth his brother,
 each one devours the flesh of his neighbour.
- 21 Manasseh tears Ephraim, and Ephraim Manasseh ;
 and both together are against Judah.
 For all this his anger is not turned away,
 but his hand is stretched out still.

4

- x 1 Woe unto them that decree unrighteous decrees,
 and the writers that ever write oppression,
 2 To turn aside the humble from judgment,
 and to rob the wretched of their rights,
 That widows may be their sport,
 and they may prey upon the orphans.
- 3 And what will ye do in the day of visitation ?
 and in the tempest which cometh from afar ?
 To whom will ye flee for help ?
 and where will ye take your riches for safety ?
- 4 Beltis falls in pieces, Osiris is broken,
 and they fall down under the slain.
 For all this his anger is not turned away,
 but his hand is stretched out still.

5

[*The first four lines of this stanza are missing.*]

- v 25 Therefore is the anger of Jehovah kindled against his
 people,
 and he stretches forth his hand against them,
 And smites them, so that the hills tremble,
 and their corpses are as refuse in the streets.
 For all this his anger is not turned away,
 but his hand is stretched out still.

6

- v 26 He will lift up an ensign to a distant nation,
and hiss for them to come from the end of the earth :
And behold, they come with speed swiftly,
27 none is weary nor stumbles among them ;
The girdle of their loins is not loosed,
nor the latchet of their shoes broken.
28 Their arrows are sharpened,
and all their bows are bent ;
Their horses' hoofs are like flint,
and their wheels like a whirlwind.
29 Their roaring is like a lion,
yea, they roar like young lions,
And growl and seize their prey
and carry it away safe, and none delivers it.

§ II

I

- xvii 1 Behold, soon shall Damascus cease to be a city,
and sink for ever in a heap of ruins.
2 Her cities shall be given up to the flocks,
which shall lie down there, none making them afraid.
3 The bulwark shall be taken from Ephraim,
and the kingdom from Damascus ;
And the remnant of Aram [shall perish],
for they shall be as the Israelites.

2

- 4 The glory of Jacob shall be brought low,
and the fatness of his flesh shall wax lean :
5 It shall be as when the reaper gathereth the standing corn,
and his arm reapeth the ears ;
As when he gathers ears in the vale of Rephaim
6 and a gleaning is left, as when an olive tree is shaken :

Two or three berries on the uppermost bough,
four or five on the branches of the fruit tree.

3

- 9 Thy cities shall be deserted
like the ruins of the Amorites and Hivites,
10 Because thou hast forgotten the God of thy salvation,
and hast not been mindful of the rock of thy strength.
Therefore, though thou makest a garden of Adonis,
and plantest vineshoots to the strange god,
11 Though on the day of planting thou hedgest them in,
and next morning thou bringest thy seedlings to blossom,
Yet thy harvest shall fail in the day of thy sickness,
and of thy pain which cannot be healed.

§ 12

- vii 2 And it was told the house of David, saying: Syria
has descended upon Ephraim. And the heart of Ahaz was
moved, and the heart of his people, as the trees of the
3 forest are moved with the wind. Then said Jehovah unto
me: Go forth now to meet Ahaz, thou and thy son Shear-
jashub, at the end of the conduit of the upper pool, on the
4 high way of the fuller's field, and say to him:

Take heed to thyself, and be calm,
Fear not, neither let thine heart be faint,
Because of these two tails of smoking firebrands,
The hot wrath of Rezin and the son of Remaliah.

- 5 Because Syria hath counselled evil against thee,
And Ephraim also, and the son of Remaliah:
6 'Let us go up against Judah, and beset it and storm it,
'And set up Tabeel's son as king in its midst,'
7 Therefore thus saith the Lord Jehovah:
'It shall not stand, neither shall it come to pass,
8 For the head of Syria is Damascus,
And the head of Damascus is Rezin;

- 9 And the head of Ephraim is Samaria,
 And the head of Samaria is Remaliah's son.
 If ye will not have faith, ye shall not have staith.'
- 10, 11 And I spake further unto Ahaz, saying: Ask thee a
 sign of Jehovah, thy God; make thy request deep as Sheol,
 12 or high as the height above. But Ahaz said: I will not ask,
 13 neither will I tempt Jehovah. Then I said: Hear now,
 ye house of David; is it a small thing for you to weary
 14 men, that ye will weary my God also? Therefore the
 Lord himself shall give you a sign. Behold a young
 woman is with child, and shall bear a son, and shall call
 16 his name Immanuel; for before the child knows how to
 refuse the evil, and choose the good, the land whose two
 kings thou fearest shall be forsaken.

§ 13

- viii 1 And Jehovah said unto me: Take thee a large tablet,
 and write upon it in common characters 'for Maher-shalal-
 2 hash-baz'; and take, for faithful witnesses to record, Uriah
 the priest and Zechariah the son of Jeberechiah.
- 3 And I went in unto the prophetess, and she conceived
 and bare a son. Then said Jehovah unto me: Call his
 4 name Maher-shalal-hash-baz. For before the boy knows
 how to cry 'my father', and 'my mother', the riches of
 Damascus and the spoil of Samaria shall be carried away
 before the King of Assyria.

§ 14

- viii 5 And Jehovah spake unto me yet again, saying:
 6 Since this people scorneth
 the waters of Siloah that flow softly,
 7 Behold, the Lord bringeth upon them
 the waters of the River strong and many;

He shall come up over all his channels
and go over all his banks,

8 Sweep on into Judah and overflow,
overpass and reach even to the neck.

§ 15

viii 11 For thus spake Jehovah unto me, as his hand over-
powered me, and he warned me that I should not walk in
the way of this people.

12 Cry not 'Treason' whenever this people cries 'Treason';
And what they fear, fear not, nor dread it.

13 Jehovah Sabaoth, count him the Traitor;
Let him be your fear, let him be your dread.

14 He shall be a stone of stumbling
And a rock of offence to both the houses of Israel,
A gin and a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem.

15 Many of the people shall stumble,
Many shall fall and be broken,
Many shall be snared and be taken captive.

§ 16

viii 21 They shall wander through the land, hardly bestead and
hungry;

And when they are hungry, they shall fret themselves,
And shall curse their King and their God.

22 They shall gaze upwards, and look unto the earth,
And behold! distress and darkness, the gloom of anguish,
And into darkness shall they be thrust out.

§ 17

viii 9 Know this ye peoples, and be broken,
Hearken, all the ends of the earth!

Gird yourselves, and ye shall be broken!

10 Make a plan, and it shall come to nought,
Make a resolve, and it shall not stand,
For God is with us.

§ 18

- vii 18 Jehovah will hiss for the flies and the bees,
 19 And they will come and settle, all of them,
 In the gorges of the mountains and the clefts of the rocks,
 And upon all thorn-bushes and upon all pastures.

§ 19

- vii 20 The Lord will shave
 With a razor that is hired beyond the River,
 The head, and the hair of the feet :
 And the beard also will it take away.

§ 20

- viii 16 I will bind up the testimony, and seal up the instruction
 among my disciples. And I will wait for Jehovah, that
 17 hideth his face from the house of Jacob, and in him will I
 18 hope : Behold, I and the children whom Jehovah hath given
 me are signs and warnings for Israel from Jehovah Sabaoth,
 which dwelleth in mount Zion.

§ 21

I

- xxviii 1 Woe to the proud crown of the drunkards of Ephraim,
 And to the fading flower of his glorious beauty
 On the head of those who are prostrate with wine !
 2 Behold, Jehovah hath one ready, who is mighty and strong,
 Like a storm of hail, a destroying tempest,
 Like a storm of mighty waters overflowing,
 Which strikes men down to the earth with violence.

2

- 3 The proud crown of the drunkards of Ephraim,
 It shall be trodden under foot,
 4 And the fading flower of his glorious beauty
 On the head of the rich valley,

It shall be as the first ripe fig before the summer ;
 Scarcely doth a man look upon it ;
 While it is yet in his hand he eateth it up.

§ 22

- xviii 7 These men also reel with wine, and stagger with mead ;
 priest and prophet alike, they reel with mead ;
 They are confused with wine, they stagger with mead,
 they reel amid their visions, they totter as they pronounce
 judgment.
- 8 For all the tables are full of their vomitings ;
 filth and are in every place.
- 9 'Whom would he teach knowledge ? To whom explain
 oracles ?
 Is it the children just weaned, just taken from the breast ?
- 10 For he stammers zavlazav, zavlazav, kavlakav, kavlakav,
 here a little and there a little.'
- 11 Very well ! through stammering lips and a strange tongue
 will he speak to this people—he who said to them :
- 12 'This is the rest, that ye shall give to the weary,
 and this is the refreshment : ' yet they would not hear.
- 13 Therefore unto them shall the word of Jehovah be :
 'zavlazav, zavlazav, kavlakav, kavlakav,
 Here a little and there a little,'
 that they may go, and fall backward, and be broken.

§ 23

- xviii 14 Wherefore hear the word of Jehovah, ye scornful men,
 Rulers of this people which is in Jerusalem !
- 15 Because ye say : 'We have made a covenant with death,
 And with Sheol we have an agreement,
 The scouring scourge, when it comes, will not reach us,
 For we have made lies our refuge, and hidden under
 falsehood.'

- 16 Therefore thus saith the Lord, even Jehovah ;
Behold I lay a foundation in Zion, a tried stone,
A precious corner stone : he that believes will not give way.
- 17 And I will make justice the measuring line, and righteousness the plummet.
And hail shall sweep away the refuge, and waters overwhelm the hiding-place ;
- 18 And your covenant with death shall be disannulled, and your agreement with Sheol shall not stand ;
When the scouring scourge comes, it is you shall be beaten down by it,
- 19 As often as it comes, it will seize upon you.
For morning by morning shall it come, by day and by night :
Then it will be mere terror to explain oracles.
- 20 For the bed is too short to stretch in and the coverlet too narrow to wrap in.
- 21 Jehovah will rise up as in Mount Perazim, he will be wroth as in the valley of Gibeon,
To do his work—strange work it is !
To accomplish his task—passing strange is his task !
- 22 Now therefore be ye not scorers, lest your bonds be made strong,
For a decree of destruction have I heard from Jehovah Sabaoth.

§ 24

- xx 1 In the year that the Tartan came unto Ashdod, when Sargon, the king of Assyria sent him, and he fought against
- 3 Ashdod and took it, Jehovah said : Like as my servant Isaiah hath gone naked and barefoot three years for a sign
- 4 and a warning to Egypt and to Ethiopia ; so shall the king of Assyria lead away the captives of Egypt, and the exiles of Ethiopia, young and old, naked and barefoot, and
- 5 with buttocks uncovered. And they shall be dismayed and ashamed, because of Ethiopia their hope, and of Egypt

6 their boast. And the inhabitants of this coastland shall say in that day: Behold, this is the fate of our hope, to whom we fled for help, to be delivered from the king of Assyria; how then shall we ourselves escape?

§ 25

- x 5 Ho! Asshur, the rod of mine anger,
and the staff of mine indignation!
- 6 I send him against an impious nation,
against the people of my wrath I give him a charge,
To take the spoil and seize the prey,
and to tread them down like the mire in the streets.
- 7 Howbeit this is not his intent,
neither does his heart think so;
But it is in his heart to destroy
and to cut off nations not a few:
- 8 'Are not my captains all of them kings?
9 is not Calno as Carchemish?
Is not Hamath as Arpad?
is not Samaria as Damascus?
- 13 By the strength of my hand have I done it,
and by my wisdom, for I am prudent;
And I have removed the bounds of peoples,
and have plundered their treasures;
I have brought down [the cities] to ashes,
[and to the dust] them that dwelt therein.
- 14 All the riches of the nations
my hand hath grasped like a bird's nest;
As one gathereth forsaken eggs
have I gathered all the earth,
And there was none that moved the wing
or that opened the mouth or chirped.'

§ 26

- x 27 He marcheth on from Pen-Rimmon!
28 He is come to Aiath!

- He has passed through Migron,
 At Michmash he layeth up his baggage.
- 29 They are gone over the pass,
 They lodge for the night at Geba.
 Rama is in panic,
 Gibeah of Saul is in flight,
- 30 Shriek aloud, Bath-Gallim !
 Listen, O Laishah !
 Answer her, Anathoth !
- 31 Madmenah is a fugitive,
 The dwellers in Gebim flee :
- 32 This very day shall he halt at Nob,
 He shaketh his fist at the mount of Zion,
 At the hill of Jerusalem.

§ 27

I

- xxviii 23 Give ye ear, and hear my voice ;
 hearken, and hear my speech.
- 24 Doth the ploughman plough without ceasing ?
 is he always opening and harrowing the ground ?
- 25 When he hath made level the face thereof,
 doth he not scatter fennel and sow cummin,
 And put in the wheat and the barley,
 and plant spelt in the border ?
- 26 [It is Jehovah] that taught him aright,
 his God gave him instruction.

2

- 27 Moreover fennel is not threshed with sledges,
 neither are cartwheels rolled upon cummin ;
 But fennel is beaten out with a staff,
 and cummin with a rod.
- 28 Is bread-corn ever crushed in pieces ?
 nay, he will not ever be threshing it ;

So when he has driven his cart-wheel over it,
he winnows it, and does not crush it.

- 29 This also cometh forth from Jehovah :
wonderful is his counsel, excellent his wisdom.

§ 28

- xiix 15 Woe unto them that hide their counsel deep from Jehovah,
And their works are in the dark [and their doings in shadow]
And they say : Who seeth us, and who knoweth about us ?

§ 29

- xxx 1 Woe to the rebellious children, saith Jehovah,
that carry out a plan which is not from me,
And make an alliance without my consent,
that they may heap up sin upon sin.
2 That will set forth for Egypt,
and have not asked at my mouth,
To flee to the shelter of Pharaoh,
and take refuge in the shadow of Egypt !
3 The shelter shall prove your shame,
and the refuge your confusion.
4 For the princes encamp at Zoan,
and the envoys reach Tahpanes :
5 All of them bring gifts
to a people that cannot profit them,
And gain neither profit nor help,
but shame and reproach therewith.

§ 30

- xxx 6 Through the wilderness of the South Land,
through the land of trouble and anguish,
The lioness and the roaring lion,
the viper and the flying serpent,
They carry their wealth on the shoulders of asses,
their treasures on camels' humps,

To a people that cannot profit them,
 7 whose help is vain and to no purpose.

§ 31

xxxii 1 Woe unto them who journey away
 to Egypt to get help,
 And put their trust in horses
 and in chariots because they are many,
 And trust in horsemen
 because they are very strong,
 But look not unto the Holy One of Israel,
 nor ask counsel of Jehovah !
 2 Yet he also is wise, and bringeth evil to pass,
 and hath not called back his words,
 But will arise against the house of the evil doers,
 and against the help of them that work iniquity.
 3 Now the Egyptians are men and not God,
 and their horses are flesh and not spirit :
 When Jehovah shall stretch out his hand,
 Helper shall stumble and helped shall fall.

§ 32

I

xvii 12 Ha ! the uproar of many peoples,
 which roar like the roaring of the sea !
 And the rushing of mighty nations
 which rush like the rushing of waters !
 13 But [Jehovah] rebukes them,
 and they flee afar off ;
 Chased like chaff before the wind,
 like the whirling dust before the storm.
 14 At eventide behold, terror !
 and before the morning they are not.
 This is the portion of them that spoil us
 and the lot of them that rob us.

2

- xviii 1 Ha ! land of the whirring wings,
 2 land which the rivers divide !
 That sendeth ambassadors by the sea,
 in vessels of papyrus upon the waters !
 Go back, ye swift messengers,
 to the nation tall and smooth,
 To the race that is dreaded far and wide,
 to the people of strength and victory.
 3 All ye inhabitants of the world,
 and dwellers in the earth,
 When the ensign is uplifted, behold !
 when the trumpet is blown, hearken !

3

- 4 For thus hath Jehovah said unto me :
 I will be still in my place and look on,
 Still as the clear heat in sunshine,
 as the dew cloud in the heat of harvest.
 5 For before the harvest, when the blossom is over,
 and the flower becometh a ripening grape,
 He shall lop off the shoots with pruning hooks,
 and the branches shall he cut down and cast away.
 6 They shall be left to the vultures of the mountains,
 and to the wild beasts of the land ;
 The vultures shall summer upon them,
 and all the beasts of the land shall winter upon them.

§ 33

- xiv 24 Surely, as I have planned, so shall it come to pass,
 and as I have purposed, so shall it stand :
 25 To break Asshur in pieces in my land,
 and to tread him under foot upon my mountains.
 26 This is the plan which is made against the whole earth,
 this is the hand stretched out over all nations.

- 27 Jehovah Sabaoth hath planned, and who shall disannul it?
his hand is stretched out, and who shall turn it back?

§ 34

- xxxi 4 Like as when a lion growleth,
and a young lion over his prey,
Though the whole band of the shepherds
is called forth against him,
He is not dismayed by their voice
nor daunted by their clamour ;
5 So will Jehovah Sabaoth
[hold fast] Jerusalem ;
He will shelter and save her,
spare her and bring her into safety.

§ 35

- xxix 1 Woe to thee, Ariel, altar of sacrifice,
city against which David encamped !
Go your way : add year to year :
let the feasts come round !
2 Then I will distress Ariel,
and there shall be mourning and lamentation,
And thou shalt be for me a very altar of sacrifice,
3 and I will encamp like David against thee :
I will shut thee in with entrenchments
and raise siege-works against thee ;
4 Brought down, thou shalt speak out of the ground,
and thy speech shall be low out of the dust.
5 And then suddenly, aye, in an instant,
6 thou shalt be visited by Jehovah Sabaoth
With thunder and earthquake and mighty noise,
with whirlwind and tempest and devouring flame.

§ 36

- xxix 9 Dull yourselves and be dull,
blind yourselves and be blind !

Be drunken, though not with wine,
 stagger, though not with strong drink !
 10 For Jehovah hath poured out on you
 the spirit of deep sleep,
 And hath closed your eyes,
 and your heads hath he covered up.

§ 37

xxix 13 Forasmuch as this people draw nigh unto me with their
 mouth,
 And honour me with their lips, while their heart is far
 from me,
 And their fear of me is but a tradition learned by rote ;
 14 Therefore will I deal with them again, wondrously and
 marvellously,
 And the wisdom of their wise men shall perish, and the
 prudence of their prudent men shall disappear.

§ 38

I

xxx 8 Now go thou in ; write it down,
 and inscribe it in a book,
 That it may be for days to come,
 a testimony for ever.
 9 For this is a rebellious people,
 sons that are liars,
 Sons that will not listen
 to the instruction of Jehovah.
 10 Who say to the seers, See not.
 and to the prophets, Prophecy not truth.
 Speak unto us smooth things,
 prophesy delusions.
 11 Get you out of the way
 turn aside from the path :
 Let us hear no more about
 the Holy One of Israel.

2

- 12 Therefore thus saith the Holy One of Israel :
 Because ye despise this word,
 And trust in crookedness and craft,
 and rely thereon ;
- 13 Therefore shall this evil deed
 bring mischief upon you,
 Like a rift in a lofty wall
 that bulges, threatening ruin,
 Till suddenly, in an instant,
 it falls with a crash.
- 14 It is shattered, like a potter's vessel,
 broken in pieces without pity,
 So that one shall not find a sherd
 among the shattered fragments,
 Wherewith to take fire from the hearth,
 or to carry water from the cistern.

3

- 15 For thus spake the Lord Jehovah,
 the Holy One of Israel :
 In sitting still and in quietness
 lies your safety ;
 In calmness and in trustfulness
 shall be your strength.
 But ye would not ;
- 16 and ye said ' No !
 But we will flee away upon horses ' ;
 therefore ye shall indeed flee.
 ' We will ride upon the swift ' ;
 therefore shall your pursuers be swift.
- 17 Before the threats of five shall ye flee
 until ye be but a remnant,
 Like a flagstaff on the top of a mountain,
 or an ensign upon a hill.

§ 39

- xxii 1 What aileth thee now that thou art gone up
wholly on the house-tops ?
- 2 O thou that art full of shoutings,
a tumultuous city, a joyous town !
Thy slain are not slain with the sword,
neither are they dead in battle.
- 3 All thy chieftains fled away together,
[they that are armed with] the bow :
Captive are all thy mighty ones,
after fleeing afar.
- 4 Therefore I say : Look away from me,
let me weep bitterly :
Hasten not to comfort me
for the ruin of my people.
- 5 For a day of tumult and discomfiture and consternation
cometh from the Lord, Jehovah Sabaoth.
In the valley of vision, the walls are broken
and the cry reaches the mountain.
- 6 And Elam hath taken up the quiver
and Aram rideth upon horses :
Kir hath uncovered the shield
- 7 Thy choicest valleys are full
of chariots and horsemen.
They are set in array before the gate,

§ 40

[*The beginning seems to have been lost.*]

- xxii 3 Then [ye] look to the armour in the house of the forest,
9 and see the breaches in the city of David, that they
are many ;

- 11 But ye look not unto him that doeth all this,
nor respect him that fashioned it long ago.
- 12 And the Lord, Jehovah Sabaoth, calleth you
to weeping and mourning, to baldness and sackcloth ;
- 13 But behold, joy and gladness,
slaying oxen and killing sheep,
Eating flesh and drinking wine,
eating and drinking, for 'to-morrow we may die'.
And Jehovah Sabaoth hath revealed himself in mine ears
'Surely this iniquity cannot be purged until ye die.'

§ 41

- i 2 Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth,
for Jehovah speaketh :
'I have brought up sons and exalted them,
and they have rebelled against me.
- 3 The ox knoweth his owner,
and the ass his master's crib ;
But Israel doth not know,
My people doth not consider.'
- 4 Ah, sinful nation,
a people laden with iniquity,
Seed of evil-doers,
degenerate children !
They have forsaken Jehovah,
and despised the Holy One of Israel.
- 5 On what part would ye still be stricken,
that ye revolt more and more ?
The whole head is sick
and the whole heart faint :
- 6 From the sole of the foot to the head
there is no part sound :
Only wounds and bruises
and fresh stripes—

- They have not been closed nor bound up,
neither mollified with oil.
- 7 Your country is desolate,
your cities are burned with fire.
Your cultivated land,
strangers devour it before your face.
- 8 The daughter of Zion alone remaineth,
like a booth in a vineyard,
Like a lodge in a garden of cucumbers,
like a solitary watch-tower.
- 9 Except Jehovah Sabaoth
had left us a remnant,
We should have been as Sodom,
we should have been like unto Gomorrah.
- 10 Hear the word of Jehovah,
ye rulers of Sodom !
Give ear to the instruction of our God,
ye people of Gomorrah !
- 11 What care I for the multitude of your sacrifices ?
saith Jehovah.
I am full of burnt offerings of rams,
and of the fat of fed beasts :
In the blood of bullocks and lambs,
and of goats, I have no delight.
- 12 When ye come to see my face
who hath required these things of you ?
Trample my courts no more,
bring no more oblations.
- 13 Vain is the smoke of sacrifice ;
it is an abomination unto me.
New moon and sabbath,
the calling of assemblies,
Fast and festival—
I cannot [endure them].
- 14 Your new moons and your appointed feasts,
my soul hateth them :

- They are a burden unto me,
 I am weary to bear them.
- 15 And when ye spread forth your hands
 I will hide mine eyes from you :
 Yea, when ye make many prayers
 I will not hear you.
 Your hands are full of blood ;
- 16 wash you, make you clean :
 Put away the evil of your doings
 from before mine eyes.
- 17 Seek for justice,
 punish them that do violence,
 Help the orphan to his rights,
 maintain the cause of the widow.

§ 42

- i 18 Come now and let us reason together,
 saith Jehovah.
 If your sins are as scarlet,
 make them white as snow !
 If they are red as crimson,
 make them like wool !

§ 43

- i 19 If ye be willing and obedient
 ye shall taste the good of the land :
 But if ye refuse and rebel
 ye shall taste the sword—
 For the mouth of Jehovah hath spoken it.

§ 44

I

- xxii 15 Thus saith Jehovah Sabaoth
 Go now, say to yonder steward

16 That is hewing him a sepulchre on high,
 and carving him a home in the rock,
 What right hast thou here, and what kin,
 that thou hewest thee a sepulchre here?

2

17 Behold, Jehovah will grasp thee, grasp thee ;
 he will roll thee, roll thee together,
 And toss thee, toss thee, thou mighty man,
 18 like a ball, into a far-stretching land.
 There shall go the chariots of thy pomp ;
 There shalt thou die, thou shame of thy lord's house !

§ 45

1

xxxii 1 Behold, a king shall reign in righteousness,
 and princes shall rule with justice.
 2 And each of them shall be as an hiding-place from the wind
 and a covert from the tempest of rain,
 As streams of water in a parched plain,
 as the shadow of a great rock in a thirsty land.

2

3 And the eyes of them that see shall not be closed up,
 and the ears of them that hear shall hearken :
 4 The heart also of the rash shall know how to judge,
 and the tongue of the stammerer shall speak plainly :
 5 No longer will the fool be called noble,
 nor the intriguer be styled exalted.

3

15

 Then the wild pasture will become a fruitful field,
 and the fruitful field be accounted an orchard ;
 16 And justice shall dwell in the wild pastures,
 and righteousness abide in the fruitful field.

4

- 17 And the work of righteousness shall be peace,
and the effect of justice shall be security,
18 And my people shall dwell in the mansions of peace,
and in sure dwellings shall they abide.
20 Happy are ye that dare sow beside all waters,
and let the ox and the ass range free.

§ 46

I

- xi 1 There shall come forth a shoot from the stock of Jesse,
and a sprout from his roots shall bear fruit ;
2 The spirit of Jehovah shall rest upon him,
the spirit of wisdom and understanding,
The spirit of counsel and might,
the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of Jehovah.

2

- 3 He shall not judge after the sight of his eyes,
nor decide after the hearing of his ears :
4 But with righteousness shall he judge the humble,
and decide with equity for the destitute :
He shall smite the tyrannous with the rod of his mouth,
and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked.

3

- 5 And righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins,
and faithfulness the belt about his waist :
6 And the wolf shall dwell with the lamb,
and the leopard shall lie down with the kid ;
And the calf and the young lion will feed together,
and a little child shall lead them.

4

- 7 The cow and the bear shall be friends,
their young ones shall lie down together

And the lion shall eat straw like the ox ;
 8 the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp ;
 And the weaned child shall stretch out his hand
 to the nest of the basilisk.

§ 47

I

ix 2 The people that walk in darkness
 have seen a great light.
 They that dwell in the land of shadows,
 upon them hath the light shined.
 3 Thou hast multiplied their rejoicing,
 thou hast increased their joy ;
 They rejoice before thee as with the joy of harvest,
 as men exult when they divide the spoil.

2

For the yoke of Israel's burden
 and the collar on his shoulder,
 [And] the rod of his oppressor,
 thou hast broken as in the day of Midian.
 5 For the warrior's boot that stamps in the tumult,
 and his mantle drenched with blood,
 They shall all be for burning,
 and fuel for the fire.

3

6 For unto us a child is born,
 unto us a son is given :
 The government shall rest
 upon his shoulder :
 And his name shall be called
 Wonderful Counsellor,
 God-like Hero, Everlasting Father,
 Prince of Peace.

4

- 7 His dominion shall increase,
and of peace there shall be no end,
Upon the throne of David
and upon his kingdom,
To establish it and to uphold it
with justice and with righteousness,
From henceforth and for ever—
This will the zeal of Jehovah perform.

CHAPTER XVII

THE PROPHET'S MANTLE

THE death of Hezekiah, which occurred four years after Sennacherib's retreat, marks the close of an epoch. If not a very strong or very wise king, he had at heart submitted to the influence of the great prophet of the age, and had attempted under his inspiration to reform the religion of Judah. The traditions on this subject are neither clear nor consistent ; so that we cannot speak with certainty : but by sifting them we can arrive at a probable account of the main course of events. The great evil of the time was idolatry, the worship, not of foreign gods, but of images of Jehovah, whether in human or animal form. After the retreat of the Assyrians, when his influence was at its height, Isaiah persuaded the king to forbid the worship of images. Whatever temporary success attended this measure, it was deeply resented by the mass of the people, who did not distinguish between the image and the God. Like the destruction of the altars in English churches in the reign of Edward VI, the attack upon the images of Jehovah led to a violent reaction. Manasseh began his long and prosperous reign with the popular measure of restoring the banished images, and all the lower forms of worship against which the prophets had protested. The high places recovered their lewd rites. The splendour of wasteful sacrifice was renewed. The necromancy which Isaiah tried to crush burst out in new vigour, and the land was filled with wizards. Human sacrifice was revived, and the valley of Hinnom echoed with the cries of children cast into the flames. Not content with debasing the religion of Jehovah, the king introduced the worship of

foreign gods. All the deities of the neighbouring countries had shrines in Jerusalem: and even the temple was invaded by the chariot and horses which were dedicated to the sun.

For seventy years idolatry was triumphant. It was not till the eighteenth year of Josiah, Manasseh's grandson, that a change came. In the course of repairing the temple Hilkiah the high priest discovered a book of the law, which he presented to the king. The book of Deuteronomy (for such it was) worked a revolution in Josiah's mind, and led to his epoch-making reforms. Whether Hilkiah's discovery was merely a dramatic manner of presenting the new law to the nation, or whether the volume had been placed in the temple years before and lain unnoticed, we cannot say with certainty. But we can be quite sure of the main facts about the origin of the book which changed the face of Judah.

In the idolatrous reaction of Manasseh's reign Isaiah himself was killed, his writings suppressed, and his disciples scattered and silenced. Yet, however much the prophetic party may have suffered by death or apostasy, God did not leave himself without a witness in the dark days of Manasseh. There were always some faithful souls who treasured Isaiah's writings and his faith, and waited patiently for the dawn of a happier time, when true religion might once more be preached, and the idols swept away. They were not content merely to wait, but actively engaged in forging a weapon with which, when occasion offered, they might strike down the abuses of the age. That weapon was neither more nor less than the book of Deuteronomy—or rather, the central portion of it, without the historical introduction and the concluding speeches.

It was a bold and original thought to attempt to convert a nation by means of a book. But they had faith in their principles. They believed that if the truths which Isaiah taught could be translated into the form of law, and fitly presented to the people, they might prevail. With great care and with great literary skill they drew up a new code of law, in which

the old customs and forms of worship were only so far modified as was necessary in order that they might be infused with the new prophetic spirit.

The difficulties of the task were enormous. The existing book of laws, which contained only a few chapters of what we now know as Exodus, was adapted for a purely agricultural society, without a central government or a central place of worship. Though its antiquated provisions had largely passed out of mind, the traditional sanctity which attached to it might strengthen the hands of those who fought for the high-places. To secure acceptance, therefore, a new law must be invested with authority equal to that of the old. Again, idolatry could not be abolished without abolishing the high-places: for the Temple at Jerusalem was the only shrine in which Jehovah was worshipped without an image. The change involved disestablishing the powerful priesthood which was rooted in every shrine. If their hostility could be met by the king's power, their sudden poverty must be mitigated by some provision. Once more, the ritual of the Temple had grown beyond anything which was contemplated by the old law; it had become both elaborate and corrupt. A new and more spiritual law must emphatically condemn what was immoral or mischievous, but accept what was edifying, dignified, or at least harmless. Only by a judicious selection could the moral sense of the community be enlisted on the side of reform. Lastly, as none but a king could initiate religious reform, the book must be so written as to appeal in the strongest manner to his conscience.

A problem so complicated might well have seemed insoluble. The solution, however, was greatly aided by the principle which was recognized by most of the nations of antiquity, that their original lawgiver had virtually provided for all occasions. For a thousand years the Romans, by a process of interpretation, educed from the 'twelve tables' of a petty town all the rules which they needed for a huge and highly civilized empire. In like manner the Israelites, believing that the law of Moses was

sufficient for all time, saw no anomaly in ascribing to him whatever ordinances might be necessary for the conduct of the worship of a progressive society. To do so was only to translate his teaching into modern phrase. The authors of the new book, therefore, were able, without any sense of incongruity or unreality—far less of dishonesty—to put the new prophetic law into the mouth of Moses, the first of the prophets. So far from being wrong, in their view, it was a pious duty to assume that the highest truth came from him. So conscience and custom consented to their claiming the authority of Moses. Nor was the difficulty of composition so great as we might suppose. The old law book was too short and too little known for the contrast of style to attract attention. And in the unchanging East, where men assume that their own thoughts and customs are the same as those of their ancestors, anachronisms arouse no suspicion. Still, even taking these advantages into account, we cannot but feel that the authors of Deuteronomy were almost as remarkable for their literary skill as for their elevated morality and earnest religious feeling.

Resisting the temptation to dwell upon the details of this wonderful book, let us be content with observing that its two main features unmistakably embody the spirit of Isaiah.

We have seen what a primacy the prophet assigned to Jerusalem, the chosen seat of Jehovah, the inviolable centre of his worship. We have seen, too, how he denounced the idolatry by which that worship was corrupted. By forbidding sacrifice to be offered except at Jerusalem,¹ and ordering the destruction of all the high-places, the law of Deuteronomy satisfies both his demands. It does away with the images of Jehovah, for they had never been admitted to the Temple, and establishes the unique sanctity of Jerusalem.

Still more important is the other point. Whereas in the early law-book Jehovah is always represented as the God of Israel alone, and even in the first commandment the existence

¹ Deut. xii. 1-14.

of other gods is explicitly recognized, Deuteronomy describes the gods of the heathen as wood and stone,¹ and pictures the nations of all the earth as acknowledging² the power of Jehovah. Though here and there we find conventional phrases which might seem to imply the old henotheism, the tone of the whole book reflects the lofty monotheism of Isaiah.

Josiah's reforms, which in every detail followed the book of Deuteronomy, were but partially successful. There were disappointments and reactions, so that Jeremiah and Ezekiel have still to protest against many of the old evils. But for all that the new code remained as a standard of doctrine and practice, which was acknowledged by the better spirits. Henceforth the official religion of Israel is an ethical monotheism, which condemns all forms of idolatry and sets a rigid limit to sacrifice. Besides this direct result, the reforms led indirectly to a new and more spiritual form of worship. Local sacrifice being forbidden, the pious Israelite who did not live near Jerusalem must have found some other means of expressing his repentance or his gratitude. Though history tells us nothing about it, the inference is almost inevitable that the impulse which had formerly led to sacrifice now found satisfaction in some forms of praise and prayer. The early stages of the development are veiled in silence, but the issue, as we shall see in the next chapter, was the institution of the synagogue.

If the spirit of Isaiah breathed in the book of Deuteronomy, it lived in the person of Jeremiah. No reader with any sense of style can fail to see how Jeremiah's prophecies resemble those parts of Deuteronomy which are of the nature of preaching. Indeed, the conjecture was made many years ago that Jeremiah was himself the author of the book. That was an error: there is, however, no doubt that the resemblance in style is no accident, but the outward sign of a deep spiritual affinity. The main features of Jeremiah's teaching proclaim him, like the authors of Deuteronomy, the spiritual descendant of Isaiah.

¹ Deut. xxviii. 36.

² Deut. xxviii. 10.

It is enough to mention three of these features. Jeremiah emphasizes and develops the monotheism of his master. Not only does he pronounce the gods of the heathen to be naught: not only does he picture all nations alike draining the cup of fury which Jehovah, as judge of the whole earth, condemns them to drink: he even looks forward to a time when all peoples will come from the ends of the earth to confess the power of Jehovah and worship his truth.

Side by side with his teaching about the nature of God stands his championship of honourable dealing with men. A large part of his book is devoted to showing how he insisted that the king should be loyal to his engagements, and denounced the intrigues with Egypt, which once more threatened to bring ruin upon Jerusalem.

Like Isaiah, too, he saw that there would be no real reform in Judah until some signal judgment had fallen upon the degraded people. But the judgment, in his eyes, assumed a new shape. Since the fall of Nineveh in B.C. 606, the empire of Babylon had taken the place of Assyria. It was a Babylonian captivity, therefore, for which Jeremiah looked as the punishment for the sins of Judah. In one respect it was to be a worse disaster than any foretold by Isaiah, for it was to include the destruction of Jerusalem. The reasons which, in Isaiah's time, bound up the interests of monotheism with the sacred city, no longer existed. The people had learned that Jehovah ruled beyond the Euphrates, they were learning that he could be worshipped in spirit as well as in sacrifice. Therefore, whereas in 700 B.C. the fall of Jerusalem would have meant the disappearance of true religion, in 600 B.C. it only meant that religion would be transplanted to a new soil and attain to a higher development. The diffusion of the great and permanent truths which Isaiah preached had superseded his minor and temporary doctrine about Jerusalem.

It is true that, as a man, Jeremiah differs widely from Isaiah. He lacks the courage, the vigour, the hopefulness, the large

and complete personality, which make the older prophet one of the greatest figures in history. But, with his main principles, he inherits the variety of his activities. Jeremiah, too, is at once the picturesque ascetic and the familiar friend of princes, the politician and the seer, the moral teacher and the poet. He too, in spite of his native timidity, comes forward in the hour of his people's ruin to be their leader. And though he failed of success he was worthy to wear the mantle of Isaiah, for he was filled with the same spirit.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE LESSONS OF EXILE

WE have seen how, after seventy years of eclipse, the light of Isaiah shone brightly in the last stormy age of the Jewish monarchy. After the death of Jeremiah, a period of nearly fifty years passed before another prophet arose in whom we recognize the same spirit. Yet the exile was not an age of mere darkness like the reign of Manasseh. Fragmentary as are the records, they enable us dimly to trace varied movements of religious thought and custom, which, if they led to some evil consequences, were mainly in the direction of progress. We must know something of these if we are to understand the transformed Israel for whom Deutero-Isaiah wrote.

After the fall of Jerusalem in 586 B.C., and the deportation of many thousands of its inhabitants, Jeremiah tried to persuade the remaining Jews to settle down peaceably under Babylonian rule. From the moment when the mass of them fled in panic to Egypt, carrying the prophet with them, we hear no more of the land of Judah. Doubtless the bulk of the peasantry were left there: but the centre of gravity of Judaism lay henceforth in Babylon, whither all the more influential of the people had been carried captive. It is therefore with Babylon only that we are now concerned.

The position of the exiles of 586 B.C. was made easier by their finding a Jewish community already organized in Babylon. This was at least in part due to the wise foresight of Jeremiah. Soon after the first deportation of 597 B.C. he wrote a remarkable letter¹ to the exiles in which he foretold the final destruc-

¹ Jer. xxix. 1-23.

tion of Jerusalem, and predicted that the captivity would last for two generations. He therefore urged them, instead of indulging vain hopes, to make the best of their situation; to build houses, engage in industries, and meet together¹ for worship. His words appear to have borne fruit. In later years we find that the exiles are settled in tolerable peace and comfort, industrious and prosperous. They are organized into a community under 'elders',² who probably belonged to the old aristocracy of Jerusalem, and recognize the primacy of the royal house. If they congregate by the water-side³ to weep for Jerusalem, it is tolerably certain that they also had meetings for common worship. It was this organization that saved Israel from being dissolved in the flood of mingled nationalities, and afforded the opportunity for their religious development.

In giving an account of this, it will be convenient to speak first of institutions, and then of beliefs and tendencies.

The exiles took with them one institution which was independent of place, an effective instrument of isolation, and well fitted to be the nucleus of a new religious system. From the opening of their national history some degree of sanctity had belonged to the Sabbath. In the eighth century, at least, it was observed as a holiday⁴ from field work and from trade, and as a time for social intercourse. A hundred years later, as we learn from Jeremiah, in spite of opposition, the standard⁵ of observance was becoming stricter. Before the end of the monarchy, therefore, the Sabbath was generally recognized as a sacred day, whose observance was binding upon all Jews, and distinguished them from the heathen. It naturally became the badge at once of their nationality and of their faith. Exiles, whose patriotism did not fail in adversity, and whose faith stood the test of transplantation, clung to the Sabbath with a new and fruitful enthusiasm. How their growing zeal

¹ Jer. xxix. 12.

² Ezek. xx. 1.

³ Ps. cxxxvii. 1.

⁴ Hos. ii. 11; Amos viii. 5; Isa. i. 13.

⁵ Jer. xvii. 19-27.

accentuated its observance, may be inferred from the rigid enactments of the later¹ Levitical law, as well as from the tone of Ezekiel and Trito-Isaiah. In spite of some regrettable extravagances, their zeal was a wise one ; for it was in the Sabbath that the highest religious life of the exiles found its home.

A fixed day of rest enabled the exiles to meet together, to talk over the sacred memories which united them, to join in worship, and to hear the exhortations of Ezekiel or other leaders. Under what forms their worship was held, whether in their houses or in a building set apart, we cannot tell. At any rate in the third century we find the synagogue a recognized institution in Palestine, where it could never have grown up beside the Temple. Its development can only be ascribed to the special conditions of the exile. Its importance in the history of Judaism, and of the world, can hardly be exaggerated. For the first time in history a purely spiritual worship was offered to the Father of all men.

Though we have no direct knowledge of the forms of worship used in the exile, yet the fixed order of service in later times makes it highly probable that the synagogue (if we may use the term by anticipation) had much to do with the new importance which the Jews now attached to their sacred books. What could be more natural, when they met together as Israelites, than to refresh their patriotism by reading the records of their past greatness, and to confirm their faith by hearing the words of the prophets who had foretold their present estate and promised an ultimate restoration? We cannot doubt that neglected fragments of history and prophecy were now collected and edited, that the old chronicles were revised and carried down to the close of the monarchy, and that the books of Amos and other prophets were copied with care, circulated, and provided with commentaries. At the same time the oral traditions of the Temple, which had accumulated since the publication of Deuteronomy, were collected

¹ Exod. xxxi. 12-17, xxxv. 3, &c.

and written down ; and so the nucleus at least was formed of that later edition of the law which was first put forth by Ezra in Jerusalem. Most natural of all was it that the existing psalms should be reverently chanted, and that the fresh impulse of congregational worship should inspire many new ones. Thus their sacred literature grew both in bulk and in esteem. More and more it took hold of the hearts of the Hebrews and coloured their thought. They found in it at once hope and consolation, an heroic exemplar and a rule of life. And so they became even now in some measure 'the people of a book'.

The whole community must take part, actively or passively, in the growth of an institution which affects all its members. The history, therefore, of the sabbath, the synagogue, and the scripture, if meagre is at least simple. It is otherwise with beliefs and tendencies of thought ; for these generally originate in small groups and spread but slowly ; and contrary tendencies may be at work at the same time in different strata of the same society. This was undoubtedly the case among the Jewish exiles. Accordingly, while we trace the development of a belief or aspiration, we must remember that it was confined, at least for many years, to a part of the community. On the other hand we may sometimes find that two opposite tendencies are at work in the same individual.

Our main authority for the first half of the exile is Ezekiel. A priest at Jerusalem in his early life, and then a prophet in Babylon, he combines two types of authority and of aspiration which are usually opposed. In neither aspect does he reflect the spirit of Isaiah : but his writings are most valuable as witnesses to the tendencies of thought among the exiles.

Naturally the very first of these was idolatry. Those who in their own country, under all the influences of national feeling, had inclined to foreign religions, could scarcely fail, when the old restraints were removed and their God (as they thought) had deserted them, to depart still more from the faith

of their fathers. The twentieth chapter of Ezekiel, which proves how strong their impulse was even before the fall of Jerusalem, prepares us for a large measure of apostasy to come. In fact many of the Israelites deserted their faith, and were merged in the heathen. Syncretism, a fusion of the worship of Jehovah with that of foreign gods, so far corrupted others that they were unwilling, when the opportunity offered, to return to Palestine. At the same time, in the minds of those who were not unfaithful, monotheism was emphasized and developed by opposition. The worship of Jehovah alone, and the scorn of idols, became a passion, of whose intensity we may judge from the post-exilic psalms. All who did not share this passion were ultimately excommunicated; and henceforth the Jews firmly rejected not only foreign idols, but all attempts to make any visible representation of Jehovah.

We find evidence also in Ezekiel of the growth of personal religion. His eighteenth chapter has long been recognized as the first clear assertion of individual responsibility. In view of later developments it is important to realize how much this involved. So long as Israel was a united people in its own land, the prophetic doctrine of retribution, which treated the nation as a whole, was accepted without question. But after the fall of Samaria and the deportation of many captives from Judah, the whole matter wore a different aspect. Whether exiles in Babylon, or still clinging to the wreck of Jerusalem, individual Jews might well ask—as they did—‘Why should we, who are not now a nation, be punished for the sins of the nation in the past? Why should the third and fourth generation, as the second commandment says, suffer for the sins of an ancestor?’ The whole protest was summed up in a witty popular proverb, which is quoted both by Jeremiah and by Ezekiel: ‘The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children’s teeth are set on edge.’ Ezekiel replies, not by maintaining the old law, but by revising it. Speaking with all a prophet’s authority, he sets aside the old tribal basis of morals, and

asserts in plain language the doctrine of individual responsibility. His reply, like the complaint, is summed up in one pregnant sentence, 'The soul that sinneth, *it* shall die.' Here is the root of that new principle of personal religion which was to blossom out in the Psalms, and to bear rich fruit in the life of many a saint, both Jewish and Christian.

The form of Ezekiel's summary, and the nature of his argument, prove that he had no thought of a life beyond the grave. Nor do we find in Deutero-Isaiah, forty years later, any hint of immortality. Yet there is reason to think that some of the exiles attained to this hope. Perhaps the new importance now attaching to the individual taught them to accept the belief in a future life, which had long been an essential part of the Babylonian religion. The pictures of Sheol in the thirty-second chapter of Ezekiel and in the fourteenth chapter of Isaiah seem to imply an advance from the purely necromantic conceptions of the book of Samuel towards a definite and religious view of man's existence beyond the grave. In both passages, however, the prophet seems rather to be borrowing an ornamental thought from the Babylonian eschatology for poetical purposes than setting forth a definite belief of his own. As time goes on we find more traces, though faint and fleeting, of a growing hope. Though no clear statement about resurrection or immortality is to be found before the second century, we may be permitted to regard the doctrine as in part, at least, a fruit of the captivity.

The organization of the exiles in Babylon, to which reference has been made, had a religious rather than a political basis. However unconsciously, the Jews came to feel themselves not a nation but a church. Ezekiel made this tendency very plain when, after writing for many years as a prophet, he spent his last energies in sketching a theocracy. The last nine chapters of his book, written some thirteen years after the latest of his prophecies, are related to them somewhat as the book of Deuteronomy is related to Isaiah. They contain a code which

is to give practical effect to the principles of his earlier teaching. But Ezekiel's code differs widely from that of Deuteronomy. It lays the main emphasis not upon the moral law but upon the ceremonial of worship. Instead of starting from the actual state of Palestine, it postulates a new geography, enabling the land to be divided into parallel strips, which are allocated to the tribes regardless of their historical claims to other districts. And whereas Deuteronomy accepts the traditional authority of the king, merely laying down some rules for his conduct, Ezekiel confined the 'Prince' to such a narrow sphere that he is in fact quite subordinate to the priests. If after only twenty-five years of exile the leader of Jewish thought had advanced so far, it is not surprising to find Ezra, a century later, introducing a pure theocracy, in which there is no mention even of a 'Prince'.

The transformation from nation to church, being both unconscious and as yet incomplete, allowed the exiles, though they forgot the activities, to cherish the antagonisms of nationality. Their situation was calculated to make them regard their conquerors with bitterness. Poor, and despised, helpless before the insolence of the proud and coarse race in whose midst they were prisoners, yet profoundly convinced of their own moral and spiritual superiority, they must have felt, when they contemplated the lewd magnificence of the Babylonian temples, or shrank from the blows and insults of the very slaves of Babylonian princes, the same bitterness as the Puritans of London felt during the rule of the restoration. Not content with maintaining the truths of which they were the guardians, they longed increasingly for revenge upon those proud masters, who were the enemies of their God as well as of their people. For nothing so envenoms the mind as such an unhappy conjunction of personal with religious animosity. It is hardly surprising that their hatred spread beyond Babylon, and enveloped all the heathen tribes or nations with whom they came into contact. We recognize the fruits of this feeling in the fierce

intolerance of Nehemiah, true child of the exile. His insolent refusal to have dealings with the half-Jewish Samaritans, who begged to be admitted to friendship, and his ruthless expulsion of all the foreign wives from Jerusalem, seem to have their root in the days when he saw his kinsfolk mingling the worship of Jehovah with the lascivious rites of Ishtar. His Cameronian zeal is such as naturally develops in the shades of scorn and of apostasy.

The book of Esther exhibits the same feeling in a more dramatic form. Doubtless it is the composition of a later age. But, however slender its historical foundation, we can hardly be wrong in assuming that the race hatred, which glows in every page, was kindled by the sufferings of the captivity. Its legendary massacres are the Israelites' ideal reply to the *Judenhetze* of ancient Babylon.

Many of the Psalms are tinged with the same animosity against heathen races. Even the beautiful and pathetic hymn of exile which begins 'By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, yea, we wept', ends with a furious curse upon the city—'Happy shall he be that taketh and dasheth thy little ones against the rock.' But the uncertain chronology of the Psalms forbids us positively to claim that even the 137th was written during the exile, still more to assign any of them to particular years. If we seek expressions of this racial antipathy which certainly belong to the exile, we must return to the book of Isaiah. In the thirteenth and fourteenth chapters are preserved a pair of elegies by unknown authors which surpass even the most passionate of the Psalms. Beside the poetical brilliance and the incomparable energy of these 'doom-songs', all other expressions of Jewish hatred seem weak and colourless. But these and other voices which heralded the deliverance of the exiles require a chapter to themselves.

CHAPTER XIX

VOICES OF THE DAWN

FIVE anonymous prophecies, differing widely both in style and in substance, are grouped together because they all seem to have been written shortly before the fall of Babylon, and to reflect various phases of Israelite feeling in view of the approaching catastrophe. About the reference of the last three, indeed, there are different opinions. But in the case of the first two (§§ 48, 49) the internal evidence is so clear that all scholars agree in assigning them to the interval of excited suspense when Cyrus, already the conqueror of Media and Lydia, was beginning to threaten the Queen of the nations.

§ 48. The thirteenth chapter is a triumphal ode to celebrate the expected fall of Babylon. Six rapid stanzas carry us through all the stages from the marshalling of the invader's army to the inveterate desolation of the spot where once the great city stood. The first tells how Jehovah himself musters the armies of all nations for a crusade. The second pictures the agony of fear, the panic-stricken confusion, of the doomed people, who stare at one another with 'faces of flame'. The third paints an apocalyptic vision of a ruin which not only overwhelms the earth of which Babylon is queen, but darkens the very lights of heaven. The fourth describes the flight of the defeated Babylonian armies, 'every man to his own land,' the slaughter of all who are not swift enough to escape, and the sack of the city. The fifth, which is sadly mutilated, repeats the story of the fourth with added details. The invaders, now named for the first time, are the cruel Medes, 'whose eye shall not spare children.' And the ruin of Babylon does not stop short with the slaughter of its inhabitants: the very walls will be broken down till the land is like Sodom and Gomorrah. The last stanza points on to the future. The open spaces of ruined

cities were often used as a camping-ground by shepherds or by wandering Arabs : but it shall not be so with Babylon. Even those wild visitors will be scared away by the satyrs—the goat-legged demons—which will dance in its deserted courts. Its tamest and kindest visitors will be the jackal and the ostrich, the owl and the hyena.

§ 49. Moving as this poem is, by reason at once of its vigorous movement, its picturesque phrases, and its lyrical unity, and the intensity of its passion, yet in respect of the highest poetical qualities it must yield to the great ode which follows. Rarely has the dramatic imagination conceived anything so impressive as the grim picture of shadowy kings seated in conclave and rising to greet the new-comer with an exultant dirge. And rarely has the art of contrast achieved a greater triumph than in placing that picture next to the first stanza, with its joyous movement of relief and restoration. The opening lines of the poem show us the whole world of nature and humanity rejoicing together at the fall of the imperial taskmaster, whose whip lashed all mankind, and whose axe felled all fair trees to make the furniture of luxury. By a refinement of phrase which our language cannot reproduce, the 'stilling' of the fallen tyrant is expressed by a verb which might also mean 'keep Sabbath'. The second stanza carries us down into the under-world, the abode of the dead. They are conceived neither in the old Israelite fashion, as ghosts which were unconscious and practically non-existent, except when roused by necromancy to a momentary activity, nor in the later Jewish fashion, as spirits waiting for a reunion with the body. Here we find an intermediate conception, derived from the Babylonians, which nearly resembles the Homeric picture of Hades. In a privileged circle of the gloomy region beneath the earth the ghosts of dead kings are ranged upon shadowy thrones, and Sheol—a personification of their abode, like the Hades of Homer—presides over their assembly. When the king of Babylon comes down to take his place among them, Sheol goes to meet him, while the rest rise in mock ceremony, and greet him with a chant of taunting

welcome. They rejoice that he who was like a god upon earth, is proved subject to the most humiliating conditions of mortality. 'Corruption is spread under thee, and worms are thy covering.'

In the third stanza the poet in his own person takes up the same theme, enlarging upon the contrast between the pride of the king's life and the humiliation of his death. He had thought to ascend to the Babylonian Olympus—the fabled mountain in the far north—and set his throne among the gods: but he goes down instead to the deepest pit of hell.

The disaster does not end there. True to the feeling of antiquity, which made the soul's condition depend upon the treatment which the dead body received, the poet now carries it back to the surface of the earth, and bids us look at the king's corpse. Other kings are housed in honourable tombs, but he lies huddled at the bottom of a trench in the field of battle, into which the undistinguished slain have been cast at random.

The fifth stanza has been so mutilated that the received text affords no sense. If we may accept Duhm's plausible conjecture, the poet turns from the king to his family. By being excluded from the tombs of his fathers he is cut off from the race; and it follows that his descendants will also perish miserably. And so the world will be saved from a restoration of Babylonian tyranny.

A modern poet would have found his climax in the third stanza; and a modern reader is tempted to think that the last two stanzas weaken the effect of the whole poem. In like manner some critics have found fault with the Ajax of Sophocles, because the hero dies in the middle of the play, and the latter half is occupied with a debate about his burial.

To judge thus is to ignore one of the most deeply rooted sentiments of the ancient world. In their view the soul of a man must be forlorn unless his body was duly buried and his children lived in prosperity. For an ancient reader, therefore, of this wonderful dirge, the real climax lies not in the reception of the king's soul in Hades, but in the dishonouring of his corpse and in the extirpation of his race.

In the literal sense both of these prophecies failed of fulfil-

ment. Babylon was not destroyed by Cyrus, nor even sacked : it received him without resistance, and became the second city of his empire. Nabonidos survived his defeat : according to one account he actually served as satrap of Babylon under his conqueror. So far from destroying the images of the Babylonian gods, Cyrus proclaimed himself their champion, and restored the splendour of their neglected temples. In the main prediction, that the tottering empire of Babylon must fall at the first touch of Cyrus's giant hand, the prophet spoke only what all the world must have felt. In the added details, which proved mistaken, he was the mouthpiece of that deadly race-hatred, which had been engendered by long oppression.

Splendid and moving as these two great elegies are, it is almost with a sense of relief that we turn from them to others, which, though much inferior as poetry, show a gentler and more human feeling. The twenty-first chapter contains three short poems, evidently by one author, upon the damage threatening Babylon, Edom, and the Arab tribe of the Dedanites. The style of these poems is peculiar, being at once very simple and very suggestive. The words tell less than half the story, but compel the reader to imagine the rest. Their effect is enhanced by the curious rhythm of the very short lines, of which translation can give but a very imperfect idea.

§ 50. We cannot understand the first of these without reference to a phenomenon familiar to the East, but strange to modern England,—the double consciousness of the seer. There are other examples of this in the Bible—Ezekiel¹ on two occasions feels himself divided, so that while one part of his consciousness remains with his body, the other goes abroad to see distant visions. And when St. Paul tells the Corinthians² that he 'knew a man in Christ' who was 'caught up to the third heaven' he is plainly describing a similar experience. Accordingly in the passage before us the 'watchman' is not another person but another part of the prophet's divided personality. If we realize this, the narrative is not hard to follow.

¹ Ezek. viii, xi.

² 2 Cor. xii, 2-4.

(Verses 1, 2.) The prophet lives in Judah, where the sirocco from the southern desert is a familiar cause of distress. To this he compares a consciousness of approaching evil that seems to come from Babylon, now the land of fear. A voice tells him that the cruel Medes are on their way, and will soon bring down the city's pride. (3, 4.) Then he feels the pangs which precede a complete vision; his senses become dim, horror overpowers him. (5.) Instead of going straight on, he tells us the point of the vision. The princes of Babylon are sitting down to a feast, unwitting that the foe is at hand. He cries out to them to leave the banquet and arm for battle. (6-9.) Now he tells how he reached that point. The divine voice bade his second self go forth towards Babylon, and watch for the approach of an army—which is typified by horsemen and beasts of burden. Ere long this second self—'the watchman'—reported that he saw 'horsemen in pairs'; and then proclaimed the inevitable inference, 'Babylon is fallen.'

(10.) The last verse is addressed to the Israelites, who have been threshed and trampled like corn. To them this news, which the prophet has bought with so much pain, gives a promise of relief. He assures them that he is telling what he has heard from Jehovah. Yet here, as all through, there is no exultation in his tone. He speaks partly as a man dazed with strange experiences, partly as one whose sympathies are divided between persecuted Israel and ruined Babylon.

§ 51. The double consciousness of the seer is again implied in the tiny oracle which follows. Some Edomites have come to the prophet to ask how and when the confusions of the time will end. Doubtless they wish to know whether Cyrus's conquest will affect them more for good or for evil. The prophet translates their question when he asks 'the watchman', 'What hour is it in the night?' But this time the watchman has no clear vision. He sees that bright days are approaching, but also darkness: and answers that the enquirers must come again if they desire a clear reply.

As in the last poem, we note the neutrality of the writer.

In the last struggles of Judah for existence the Edomites had proved cruel foes. Some of the psalmists remembered them with passionate hatred. But here is no trace of hostility: merely the dimness of an imperfect vision.

§ 52. The Dedanites were an Arab tribe whose territory lay on the southern border of Edom. They were great traders, and their caravans were constantly crossing the desert on the way to Tyre and Babylon. As one of the consequences of the fall of Babylon, the prophet pictures a Dedanite caravan flying before the pursuit, or perhaps the mere terror, of the Persians. They dare not halt at the regular camping-grounds, where there is water and shelter, lest the foe should find them. Deserting the regular track, they bivouac for the night on the bare steppe, enduring their thirst as best they may. In pity for their pain the prophet exhorts the people of Tema, the next tribe through whose land they are to pass, to meet and relieve them with food and water. We are reminded of Barzillai, who in the same region went out to meet David and his fugitive band, saying, 'The people is hungry and weary and thirsty in the wilderness.'

It is remarkable that this prophet, far from exulting in the disasters of a hostile tribe, expresses an active sympathy for them. The difference between his tone and that of Jewish exiles generally may perhaps be explained by the probable supposition that he was not an exile but one of the people who were left behind in Judah. Yet such an explanation is not necessary. For even among the Jews in Babylon there were those who from suffering had learned sympathy. The greatest prophet of the exile was no champion of racial hatred, but the first of universalists. In the writings of Deutero-Isaiah, a contemporary of the author of these dirges, we find the loftiest teaching which the Old Testament affords about the relation between Israel and the rest of mankind. To those writings the next eight chapters will be devoted.

¹ 2 Sam. xvii. 27.

ANONYMOUS PROPHECIES OF THE EXILE

§ 48

I

- xiii 2 Set up an ensign upon a bare mountain,
lift up the voice unto them,
Wave the hand, that they may enter
into the gates of the nobles !
- 3 ' I have given charge to my consecrated [host]
for the fulfilment of my wrath ;
Yea, I have summoned my heroes,
even my proudly exulting ones.'
- 4 Hark ! a tumult in the mountains,
as of a great multitude !
Hark ! an uproar of kingdoms,
of nations gathered together !
Jehovah Sabaoth mustereth
an host for the battle.

2

- 5 They come from a far country,
from the uttermost part of heaven,
Jehovah and the weapons of his indignation,
to destroy the whole land.
- 6 Howl ye ! for the day of Jehovah is at hand,
as might from the Almighty it comes !
- 7 Therefore all hands are feeble,
and [the knees of all tremble ;]
And every heart of man doth melt,
and [even the valiant] are dismayed ;

- 8 Pangs and sorrows take hold of them ;
they writhe like a woman in travail :
They stare at one another amazed,
and their faces are faces of flame.

3

- 9 Behold, he cometh, inexorable,
with fury and blazing wrath,
To make the earth a desolation,
and to destroy the sinners thereof.
- 10 For the heavens and their constellations
will not shed their bright beams,
The sun shall be darkened at his going forth,
and the moon shall not give light.
- 11 ' I will punish the world for its evil,
and the wicked for their iniquity,
I will check the arrogance of the proud,
and the haughtiness of the tyrants I will lay low,
- 12 I will make men scarcer than fine gold,
and mortals than the rich ore of Ophir.'

4

- 13 Therefore shall the heavens tremble
and the earth be shaken from her seat,
At the fury of Jehovah Sabaoth,
and in the day of his blazing wrath.
- 14 And then, like a hunted gazelle,
like sheep that no man gathereth,
They shall turn every man to his own people,
and flee every man to his own land.
- 15 Every one that is found shall fall by the sword,
every one that is seized shall be thrust through.
- 16 And their infants shall be dashed in pieces
before their very eyes :
Their houses shall be spoiled,
and their wives ravished.

5

- 17 Behold, I am stirring up against them
 the Medes [and the Elamites],
 Which regard not silver,
 and take no pleasure in gold.
- 18 Bows [and spears do they bear ;
 fearful are they and cruel] :
 [All] the young men [shall they destroy,
 and the maidens] shall be dashed in pieces :
 Their eye shall not spare children ;
 they shall not pity the fruit of the womb.
- 19 And Babylon, the glory of the kingdoms,
 the proud ornament of the Chaldaeans,
 Shall fare as when God overthrew
 Sodom and Gomorrah.

6

- 20 It shall be uninhabited for ever,
 tenantless age after age ;
 Neither shall the Arabians pitch tent there,
 nor the shepherds fold their flocks.
- 21 Wild beasts of the desert shall lie there,
 [and lions shall roar there.]
 Their houses shall be full of owls,
 [they shall echo with screechings.]
 And ostriches shall dwell there,
 and satyrs shall dance there.
- 22 Hyenas shall cry in their castles,
 and jackals in their pleasant palaces.
 Her time is close at hand
 and her days shall not be prolonged.

§ 49

I

- xiv 4 Lo, how the oppressor is stilled,
 his raging stilled !

- 5 Jehovah hath broken the staff of the wicked,
the rod of the tyrants,
6 Which smote the peoples in fury,
with a continual stroke,
Which enslaved the nations in anger
with a ruthless tyranny.
7 The whole earth is at rest and is quiet :
they break forth into singing.
8 Yea, the cypresses rejoice at thy fate,
and the cedars of Lebanon, saying :
' Since thou art laid low
no feller cometh up against us.'

2

- 9 Sheol from beneath is roused up for thee,
to meet thee at thy coming,
For thee he rouseth up the shades,
even all the chieftains of the earth,
All the kings of the nations
he maketh to rise from their thrones.
10 All of them address thee [with exultation],
and say unto thee :
' So thou also art weak as we,
and made like unto us !
11 Thy pomp is brought down to Sheol,
and the sound of thy viols :
Corruption is spread under thee
and worms are thy covering.'

3

- 12 How art thou fallen from heaven,
O daystar, son of the morning !
[How] art thou struck down to the ground,
which didst lay low all the nations !
13 And thou—thou saidst in thine heart :
' I will ascend into heaven,

- Above the stars of God
 I will exalt my throne,
 And sit on the mountain of the Gods
 in the depths of the north ;
 14 I will ascend above the cloud-peaks,
 and I will match the Most High.'
 15 Nevertheless thou art brought down to Sheol,
 to the very depths of the pit !

4

- 16 They that see thee gaze upon thee,
 and consider thee, saying,
 'Is this the man that made the earth to tremble,
 that did shake kingdoms ;
 17 That made the world a desert,
 and overthrew the cities thereof ;
 That sent not his prisoners back free,
 not one to his own house ?
 18 The kings of the nations, all of them,
 rest in glory ;
 19 But thou art flung down among the slain,
 among those that are pierced with the sword,
 That go down to the floor of the pit,
 like a carcase trodden under foot.'

5

- [How art thou shut out] from thy tomb,
 loathed like an abortive birth,
 [How thou liest all unhonoured,]
 clothed [with shame] !
 20 [As for thy fathers,] thou mayst not be joined
 with them in the grave ;
 Because thou hast destroyed thy land,
 thou hast slain thy people.
 Let not the seed of the evildoer
 be named for evermore !

- 21 Prepare ye a shambles for his sons
 because of the iniquity of their father,
 Lest they arise and possess the earth,
 and fill the face of the world.

§ 50

- xxi 1 Like the whirlwinds
 sweeping on in the South land,
 It comes from the wilderness,
 from the land of terror.
- 2 A grievous vision
 is declared unto me :
 ' The robber still robs
 and the waster lays waste.
 Go up, O Elam ;
 besiege, O Media ;
 All the groaning which he causes
 I will make to cease.'
- 3 Therefore are my loins
 filled with anguish,
 Pangs have taken hold of me
 like the pangs of travail,
 I am so tortured that I cannot hear,
 dismayed that I cannot see ;
- 4 My brain is dizzy,
 horror confounds me ;
 The twilight that I love
 is turned into trembling.
- 5 They prepare the table,
 they spread the carpets—
 Arise, ye princes !
 Anoint the shield !
- 6 For thus hath the Lord
 spoken unto me :

- ‘Go, station the watchman,
he shall declare what he seeth.
- 7 And if he seeth a troop,
horsemen in pairs,
A troop of asses,
a troop of camels,
Then shall he watch,
aye, watch diligently.’
- 8 And the watchman cried :
‘On the watchtower, my lord,
I stand fast all the day long,
And on my post
am I stationed every night.
- 9 Lo, now there cometh a troop,
horsemen in pairs.’
And he cried out, and said :
‘Babylon is fallen, is fallen ;
And all the images of her gods
are shattered on the ground.’
- 10 O my poor countrymen,
trampled on like the corn,
That which I have heard
have I declared unto you.

§ 51

- xxi 11 Out of Seir there comes a voice to me :
‘Watchman, what hour of the night ?
Watchman, what hour of the night ?’
- 12 The watchman answers :
‘The morning cometh,
and also the night.
If ye will enquire,
turn, and come again.’

§ 52

- xxi 13 In the wilderness must ye pass the night,
ye caravans of Dedanites !
- 14 O ye that dwell in the land of Tema,
offer bread to the fugitive !
To meet the thirsty
bring water !
- 15 For before the sword are they fled,
before the drawn sword,
Before the bent bow,
and before the press of battle.

CHAPTER XX

THE NEW DEPARTURE

WHEN Dean Stanley published his lectures on the Jewish Church, it required some hardihood even to suggest a separate authorship for the later chapters of the book of Isaiah. In the present day, however, a division of the book at the end of the thirty-ninth chapter is generally recognized, and 'Deutero-Isaiah' is a familiar name. The accumulated reasons for the division are, indeed, overwhelming, and far too numerous to be set forth in this chapter. Many of them must be omitted, because they cannot be understood without a knowledge of Hebrew. Others, which rest upon points of theology and style, will develop themselves naturally as we proceed, and will be better treated at the end. Here it will be enough, by way of introduction, to mention three general considerations which, though quite simple and obvious, are by themselves conclusive. They do not, however, apply to the whole of the latter part of the book. As we shall see presently, there are very strong reasons for drawing another line of division after the fifty-fifth chapter, and for considering Deutero-Isaiah's authorship to end at that point. It is in that limited sense—as author of chapters xl to lv—that the title will here be employed.

I. Had Isaiah spoken of Cyrus's career a hundred and fifty years before the event, he must inevitably have used the language of prediction, as he did about the much nearer event (as he supposed) of the Messiah's reign. But the author of chapters xl-lv takes Cyrus for granted, as a figure too well known to himself and his readers to need introduction: and his predictions about him refer only to particular acts, such as the

conquest of Babylon and the restoration of the Jewish exiles. It is inconceivable that any but a contemporary of Cyrus should have written about him in this manner.

II. To Isaiah Jerusalem is the scene of action which is always assumed, and the centre of interest. Deutero-Isaiah does not write of Jerusalem as one to whom it is familiar. For him Zion is a distant, an ideal, figure; an object of pity, reverence, and hope, but not of everyday knowledge. Babylon is the centre of the world which he knows best. His point of view is that of an exile living, not in Babylon, but among the 'nations' which are falling under the sway of Cyrus.

III. Even more striking is the contrast between the attitudes of the two prophets towards their own countrymen. From first to last Isaiah of Jerusalem denounces the sins of Israel, and foretells the coming doom. No saying of his is more characteristic than one of the latest: 'If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land: but if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall taste the sword.'¹ It is like passing into a new world to read the opening words of Deutero-Isaiah, which are no less characteristic of their author: 'Comfort ye, comfort ye, my people, saith your God. Speak ye tenderly to Jerusalem.'² The same contrast will be found to exist between whole poems. When we compare, for instance, the prophet's relentless march from threat to threat, which lends a lurid gloom to the ninth³ and tenth chapters, with the unqualified pity and unconditional promises of the fifty-first,⁴ it seems little short of amazing that writings so different in tone and in substance were ever attributed to the same author.

Instead of labouring a point which may be taken as established, I propose by way of introduction to chapters xl-lv, to explain the general structure of the prophecy, and to show how the writer's circumstances may account for some of the main characteristics both of his style and of his teaching.

The great prophets from Amos to Jeremiah delivered their

¹ i. 19 (§ 43).

² xl. 1 (§ 53).

³ § 10.

⁴ § 88.

teaching orally. Consequently their prophecies, even when translated into a finished literary form, exhibit the directness, the definiteness, and the objectivity, of words which were originally addressed to a given audience under given circumstances. Each of their utterances, whether limited to a few verses or extending over a couple of chapters, is a distinct whole, independent of the rest. Ezekiel, whose youth was passed in Jerusalem, where he must have seen and heard Jeremiah, maintained this tradition, but only in part. Some of his discourses are reported as having been spoken to groups of his exiled countrymen—to the elders, and so forth. Living in Babylon, and in touch with a large and organized community of exiles, he had a definite public to whom he could address himself, not only by words, but also by those symbolic actions which the earlier prophets employed with so much effect. But, as time went on, the influence of changed conditions affected his methods. We can trace in his writings a growing tendency to produce literary work rather than personal addresses: and the last eight chapters of his book, sketching a new constitution for Jerusalem, have all the characteristics of a pamphlet.

Ezekiel's last chapters are dated 'in the five and twentieth year of the exile', in the fourteenth year after that the city was smitten: that is, in the year 572 B.C. Though we cannot be equally exact in the case of Deutero-Isaiah, we know that he cannot have written his prophecy earlier than 550 or later than 540 B.C. He is therefore separated from Ezekiel by a considerable interval of time. It is a probable inference from his book that he was also separated by a wide interval of space. Living neither in Palestine nor in Babylon, but in some remote place of exile, there was no community to whom he could address himself in person. He is perforce neither a man of action nor a preacher, but an observer, a writer, a recluse. From his distant retreat he looks out upon a world whose two poles are Babylon and Jerusalem: he watches with eager interest the movements upon its surface, directed by the divine power in whose hand Cyrus is

is but a pawn : he translates the divine purpose into human language : but his words are written, not spoken. Consequently his message is addressed, not to 'the drunkards of Ephraim', nor to the elders of Israel, nor to any definite audience, but to the world at large. Obviously, to the difference of aim there must correspond a difference of form in his writing : and so we find it. Instead of being brief, simple, and occasional, his composition is continuous, elaborate, and constructed on a definite plan.

That plan may be roughly described as dramatic : but it is dramatic in an unusual sense. We are told that in the first stage of the development of Greek drama a single actor personated Dionysus, and did little more than give point by his presence to the almost continuous odes of the chorus. The great Hebrew drama is, as it were, an inversion of this. It is a monologue spoken by Jehovah, and rarely interrupted by brief lyric songs. But it is a dramatic monologue in a larger sense than Browning's poems which bear that title : for there are several silent personages present, whose acts and feelings we can infer from the manner in which the speaker addresses them. After the prologue (chapter xl) which is spoken by the prophet in his own name, the drama naturally divides itself into three acts. The first (xli. 1-xliv. 23) sets forth the power and foreknowledge of the God of Israel in contrast to the helplessness and ignorance of the heathen deities. The second (xliv. 24-xlviii. 21) announces Jehovah's purpose that Babylon shall fall by the hand of Cyrus. The third (xlix. 7-lv. 13) contrasts the present sufferings of Zion with her future glory. But in all three acts alike the main interest centres in the promised restoration of the Israelite exiles to their own country.

The scene of action is not defined. We are left to imagine whether it is in heaven or on the earth that Jehovah takes his seat upon the throne of judgment, and summons before him the heathen nations with their gods on the one hand, and

Israel his servant on the other. But we soon forget even to imagine the scenery, for our thoughts are absorbed by the characters in this dramatic theodicy. Though they are silent all through, we can see and feel with them as the divine speaker turns from one to the other with words of argument, reproof, consolation, or prophecy. One human voice alone is heard. The prophet, who plays a part analogous to that of the chorus in a Greek tragedy, punctuates the play with occasional outbursts of praise or thanksgiving.

Some readers may be inclined to ask whether a drama which offers neither visible action nor dialogue can be other than dull and monotonous. A partial reply may be found in a pair of analogies. The *Prometheus Vinc-tus* is practically without action: its various scenes merely exhibit the hero's courage and foresight in different lights. And yet it is, by common consent, one of the masterpieces of Greek tragedy. Again, those who attend a performance of the *Messiah* do not think of the various singers as different characters. They are only voices, uttering words which come from the same source in different tones. And yet the *Messiah* appeals to us not only as music but as drama. But the best answer to the question will be found by any one who will read the whole prophecy aloud, giving due expression to the various moods which it exhibits, and picturing the presence of the characters which are addressed. After such a demonstration he will not need further argument to prove the poem's dramatic effectiveness.

The analogy of oratorio, which has been suggested, may be pursued a little further. The *Messiah*, for example, shows that a dramatic effect may be obtained without even the suggestion of scenery, without dialogue, and without action. It presents only stages of thought illustrated by music. Variety and point are secured by the alternation of recitative with airs. While the resemblance of Deutero-Isaiah's drama to the *Messiah* in most of these respects is obvious, it may be contended that

the absence of music makes all the difference. Yet even here there is a partial parallel. The Hebrew verse almost demands a kind of chant for its delivery. And by alternating lyric odes with the ordinary 'heroic' verse the Hebrew poet obtains the same kind of effect as is produced by the introduction of airs in the midst of recitative.

Another objection may be based upon a detail of style. In several passages which should be spoken by Jehovah the introduction of the formula, 'Thus saith Jehovah,' seems to imply that the prophet is speaking in his own person. The objection is not so serious as it might appear. Micah and Zephaniah are the only two prophets who write long continuous discourses in the name of Jehovah. They both evidently intend to use only such words as are appropriate to the divine speaker. Yet both of them unconsciously repeat the familiar formula, 'Thus saith Jehovah,' and make Jehovah speak of himself in the third person. Slips of a similar kind occur in Deuteronomy, and wherever the writer puts words into the mouth of a character from whose point of view he is far removed. We cannot be surprised, then, if we find such slips in a writer who was feeling his way to a new form of literature, and yet clinging to the prophetic tradition.

These very slips, in fact, help to show us how natural it was for a prophet in the position of Deutero-Isaiah to write in dramatic form. An exile and a recluse, with no audience at hand, he could only deliver his message in some continuous literary work. Yet the prophetic tradition demanded that what he wrote should be presented as the words of Jehovah. He was thus almost compelled to create an imaginary audience, to whom the speech of Jehovah might be addressed. And when once that point had been reached, drama was there in the germ: the only question was how far it would develop.

We might, perhaps, imagine that the writer gained some suggestions from the *Song of Solomon*, which is a pastoral play with several characters and a chorus. But even if it was

written before the exile, and came within his knowledge, it could not have served as a model of construction and purpose. The only didactic drama in Hebrew is the book of Job, which is undoubtedly post-exilic. We know of nothing, therefore, which can detract from Deutero-Isaiah's originality.

The belief that his writings form one continuous work, and a work of a new kind, must clearly raise our estimation of Deutero-Isaiah as a poet. Much as individual chapters have hitherto been valued for their truth and beauty, they must acquire a new importance if they are recognized as parts of a symmetrical and carefully articulated whole. And there is a corresponding difference between the writer of a series of beautiful but independent lyrics, and the daring genius who created a new form of literature—a drama whose stage is the universe, and whose actors are not merely the nations and their gods, but even the Creator and Ruler of all.

If the prophet's own circumstances determined the literary form in which his message was presented, they help us also to account for the novelty of its substance. We need such help: for the opening words represent a complete break with the prophetic tradition of centuries, which Jeremiah summed up when he said: 'The prophets of old prophesied of war, of evil, and of pestilence.'¹ The prophet who prophesies of peace is not to be believed until his words have come to pass. From the beginning to the end of his prophecy Deutero-Isaiah promises peace to Israel, neither imposing conditions nor demanding repentance. And the explanation which the prophet offers—that the people of Israel have received double for all their sins—needs itself to be explained, for it involves an unprecedented use of personification.

We may find the needed explanation in the prophet's manner of life. A man who lives among his own people cannot but be conscious of their besetting sins. If he has the prophetic spirit, he cannot help denouncing the sins and warning

¹ Jer. xxviii. 8, 9.

men against their natural consequences. Even if the people among whom he lives are only a community of exiles, still, as Ezekiel found, they have their obvious faults, characteristic either of their nationality or of their present condition: and these the prophet may not leave out of account. But one who lives far away both from the sacred spot and from the people is able to regard both in a different way. He can idealize the city, as the home of all his best thoughts. He personifies it, so that its misfortunes move him like the wounds of a mother. The people, too, he can idealize just because they and their sins are out of sight. Instead of definite individuals before him, who are dull or selfish, idolatrous or superstitious or oppressive, he sees only an abstract Israel, whose continuous life is not divided by generations, whose sins are a matter of history, whose suffering may be regarded as expiation for the past and purification in the present. So the actual people, his contemporaries, instead of being called to repentance for their own sins and perversities, are merged in an ideal Israel, the undying servant of Jehovah, who has been purified by pain, and has a mission to perform for the benefit of the world.

Another marked feature of the book is the sympathy which it shows for the heathen world. It is penetrated with something of the same feeling which, in a later age, made the author of the book of Jonah¹ write: 'Should I not have pity on Nineveh, that great city, wherein are more than six score thousand persons that cannot discern between their right hand and their left?' How did Deutero-Isaiah travel so far from the standpoint of the earlier prophets, who regarded the heathen nations as mere monuments for the education of Israel? Surely it was by living in the midst of those teeming millions who, though they worshipped other gods, yet shared with Israel the same human affections, the same noble qualities, the same vast capacity for suffering. Although in his eyes the distant Babylon is but an abstract power for evil,

¹ Jonah iv. 11.

whose coming ruin is a cause of exultation, the rest of the nations are fellow men, whose sufferings he pities, whose salvation he desires, whose faith he longs to elevate from their false divinities to the true God. It is no mere dramatic convention that makes him represent Jehovah as addressing so many speeches to the heathen. He is genuinely desirous to convert them by demonstrating Jehovah's unique power and majesty.

Here, perhaps, we may find the explanation of a third characteristic. What is the reason for making so many appeals to the argument from prophecy? No doubt the Jewish exiles, after their long suspense and suffering, found it hard to believe that restoration was really at hand. Their doubts could best be met by a reference to the predictions of earlier prophets which had been fulfilled. For if Amos and Jeremiah and others had foretold the captivity, first of Israel and then of Judah, and both peoples had been actually carried away into exile, why should not the new prophet, who spoke with the same authority, be believed when he promised a speedy deliverance? Deutero-Isaiah had undoubtedly good reason for pressing such arguments upon his captive countrymen. Yet, as we read those reiterated appeals to fulfilled prophecy, we can hardly escape the impression that they are in fact mainly intended for the heathen, to whom they are avowedly addressed. And the impression becomes a conviction when the most impassioned of these appeals¹ leads up to the invitation—so familiar now, but then so startling—'Turn unto me and let yourselves be saved, all the ends of the earth.' In that loftiest utterance of the ancient world the prophet gives a formal recognition to the brotherhood of man.

The prophet who could write in such a strain was plainly out of sympathy with many of his countrymen, in whom the sufferings of captivity had engendered a fierce rage against all the heathen. In Babylon there grew up the bitter race-hatred

¹ § 76.

which lends a lurid colour to the book of Esther. Had Deutero-Isaiah lived in close contact with those who cherished such a burning hatred, he might indeed have passed through the flame unharmed, but he could scarcely have failed even to observe it. The absence from his book of all reference to such animosities may best be explained by supposing him to have lived in some place remote from Babylon, and not to have been a member of any large community of exiles. The same supposition would account for his silence upon two other subjects.

One of the main interests of the Jews in exile was to collect their sacred books, on which they set a new value, and to study all that tradition could tell them of the ancient laws and ceremonies. The fruit of their joint labours was the revised and enlarged code of law, first brought to Jerusalem by Ezra, which coloured the whole subsequent life of the nation. Yet of all this there is no hint in Deutero-Isaiah's writing. Still more remarkable is another omission. No movement among the Jewish exiles was more significant than the growth of personal as distinct from national religion: for it led to that belief in a future life which changed the aspect of the world. Yet even this finds no recognition in the whole drama of exile.

How can we account for the prophet's disregard of changes so momentous? The watchman whom he describes as standing upon a height near Jerusalem, looking for the approach of a deliverer, was ignorant of the changing moods of the city behind him. Even so, it would appear, the prophet himself, fixing his gaze upon the world-drama of which Cyrus was the hero, Asia the stage, and Israel's deliverance the happy conclusion, had no eye for the movements of scattered exiles, no ear for the murmurs of new thoughts which were stirring in their hearts.

CHAPTER XXI

THE GREAT ASSIZE

DEUTERO-ISAIAH'S prophecy, just because it was a literary whole from the first, has escaped most of the disorders which make the writings of Isaiah so difficult. There are a few accidental transpositions, a few passages of which the sense is confused by corruption, a few obvious interpolations: but, taken as a whole, the text is in a satisfactory condition. On the other hand, the creator of a new form of literature finds new problems which he cannot always solve completely; the difficulties which he feels reflect themselves in his style; and therefore he makes large demands upon his readers' attention and intelligence. Any analysis, therefore, which is to be really helpful, must be somewhat lengthy, and interspersed with explanations. A whole chapter, in fact, must be devoted to giving an outline of each division of the poem, and indicating its relation to the action of the whole. What we know as the fortieth chapter is a kind of overture, which briefly introduces the main themes of the drama. In order to do it justice we must restore verses 6-8 to their original place after verse 11, and omit verse 5 as an obvious interpolation. Then we see that the overture divides itself naturally into six paragraphs.

§ 53. A formal ode in four stanzas, each consisting of four long lines, enunciates the central thought of the whole prophecy. In the first stanza the prophet proclaims the approaching release of Israel from all their woes: in the second he orders a road to be made across the desert, which separates Babylon from Palestine, in order that Jehovah may lead his people to their home; in the third he bids Judah and Jerusalem be ready to receive their new inhabitants: and in the fourth he

describes the blessed reign of Jehovah, dwelling as a king among his people in Jerusalem.

It is characteristic of this prophet that his message comes to him as 'a voice'. He sees no visions: he does not even claim to hear the voice of Jehovah with the outward ear: his inspiration comes to him in an undefined shape—as a feeling, an impulse, a conviction. And yet he shows himself not a whit less confident of his mission than were his predecessors. He proclaims God's law and God's purposes with all the assurance of an Amos or an Isaiah. The forms of inspiration change with the conditions of the time, but the substance remains the same.

§ 54. A second voice now makes itself heard, bidding the prophet to cry, that is, to preach. In reply to the question: what shall I cry? the voice answers in effect: 'All human things, all worldly powers, pass away: God's purposes alone are permanent.' That is one of the principal themes, which we shall hear again and again mingling with the prophet's majestic music.

The remainder of the fortieth chapter tells us how the prophet began to obey the mysterious voices. In four short odes, connected in thought, but separate in structure, he treats four aspects of the subject which the second voice has given him—the nature of God and his relation to man. Let us consider them one by one.

§ 55. Three stanzas, each containing five short lines, celebrate Jehovah as the creator of the world, and show that creation implies incomparable power and wisdom.

§ 56. In two longer stanzas the prophet condemns the folly of those who try to represent the Godhead by means of images. With ironical simplicity he describes the process of manufacture, and leaves the reader to draw the conclusion that the result of such a process cannot be a divinity.

§ 57. Against the gods which are the work of men's hands the prophet sets his own picture of the Creator, drawn in phrases of singular beauty and power. Perhaps it inspired the striking

exhortation which a late author interpolated in the book of Amos.¹ 'Seek him that maketh the Pleiades and Orion, and turneth the shadow of death into the morning, and maketh the day dark with night: that calleth for the waters of the sea, and poureth them out upon the face of the earth—Jehovah is his name—that bringeth sudden destruction upon the strong, so that destruction cometh upon the fortress.'

§ 58. To the exiles who have been despondent, and fancied themselves forgotten by their God, the prophet addresses a word of encouragement. He reminds them that, for all who trust in him, Jehovah has unfailing consolation and strength.

So the prophet ends his prologue and is silent. But he does not pass out of sight. He remains upon the mysterious stage, of which we gradually become aware, and from time to time utters a brief strain of praise or thanksgiving. A new voice is heard now, which we recognize as that of Jehovah himself. While he speaks, we slowly realize the nature of the scene and the characters. We wrong its vague majesty when we try to describe it in words: and yet some sort of description must be offered. Imagine a cloud-capped mountain, rising so high above the flat earth as to command a view of its utmost limits, the bounding ocean and the isles. There, on the summit, Jehovah sits enthroned. In the plain below stand the human figures of the drama. On the right is the solitary figure of Israel: on the left are the representatives of all the chief nations of the world, and beside them the images of their gods. In front we see the prophet, who is not only a listener, but sometimes, like the chorus of a Greek tragedy, utters his feelings in song. His is the only human voice that we hear. The other characters are silent: while Jehovah, the sole speaker, turns from one to another as the course of his argument requires. They are silent, but not impassive. By movement and gesture they respond to the divine orator, as his words inspire them with conviction, with shame, or with hope.

¹ Amos v. 8, 9.

§ 59. Jehovah summons the nations of the world, not exactly to judgment, but to a trial in which he is one of the parties. The occasion of the trial is a strange event. All the nations are falling before the conquering might of Cyrus, and their gods give them no effectual aid. The question therefore arises, Is not Jehovah, who raised up that heroic king to be his champion, mightier than all the gods of the defeated peoples? With a few vigorous touches, the divine speaker draws the portrait of the invincible warrior, who is still his servant. But he refrains, as yet, from putting the decisive question: Which is the true God, the Lord of Cyrus or the defeated idols? That must be prepared for by a dramatic development.

§ 60. Jehovah turns to Israel with words of encouragement. The sword, he says, which makes other nations like dust, need have no terrors for the people whose title is 'the Servant of Jehovah.'

§ 61. In the formal ode which follows, this assurance is emphasized and elaborated. The first stanza describes the utter ruin to which Israel's oppressors are condemned. The second enforces the close relation between Jehovah and his people. The third applies a fresh set of images to illustrate the completeness of the enemy's destruction.

It may, however, be doubted whether this ode is not a later insertion. It bears a close resemblance to later denunciations of Israel's neighbours in Palestine. In particular, it pictures Israel himself as the agent of destruction, whereas the drama generally ascribes all activity to Jehovah and to his chosen champion, Cyrus.

§ 62. However that may be, the next ode resumes the thread of § 60, giving an example of the provident care which Jehovah will bestow upon Israel. From the bare rocks he will cause rivers to flow: the desert he will make fertile with springs of water: and he will plant the wilderness with choice trees.

§ 63. The divine speaker, having set forth in outline the deeds which he has done for Israel, and those which he is about to

do, turns abruptly to the heathen gods, who stand beside their worshippers, with a challenge. Let them do something to prove their divinity. Let them prove that they foretold some great event in the past, in order that they may claim a share in bringing it about. Or let them foretell what is to happen in the near future. They remain silent, and their silence is interpreted as an admission of defeat. 'Behold, ye are nothing, and your work is nothing at all.' Yet once more he offers them a challenge. Let them deal with the single fact of Cyrus's conquests. Jehovah, who announced his coming long beforehand by the mouth of prophets, has a claim to be deemed the author of these great events. Can any of the heathen gods establish a similar claim? If he can prove that he foretold them, he shall be reckoned their author. Still there is no answer; and the final comment upon the dumb gods is: 'Behold they are all naught: their molten images are wind and confusion.' Then Jehovah turns from the gods to their worshippers, triumphantly pointing to the proofs of his own unique divinity.

§ 64. Thereupon the prophet breaks out into a song of praise, calling upon all the world and its inhabitants to rejoice and to worship the power of Israel's God. So concludes what we may call the first scene of the first act.

Before reading further, we may pause to ask a very obvious question. If the prophet holds the conviction that there is but one God in all the world, and all other so-called gods are 'nothing'; how can he venture to present these non-entities as characters in his drama, and even to make Jehovah address a serious argument to their ears? Is it consistent? Is it reverent? Does it serve the purpose of the drama? We may admit at once that it is not consistent. The poet, with an eye for a dramatic situation, has for the moment eclipsed the prophet who has a single eye for truth. Nor again, if we are to judge by a Christian standard, can we describe the situation so created as tending to reverence. But we must remember that the Hebrew prophets—even the greatest—allowed themselves

a freedom of language which would shock modern ears. Even the first Isaiah, in describing the acts and motives of Jehovah, used images of such extreme boldness that he could not consistently have found fault with the scene which we are considering.

We have still to ask whether, from the dramatic point of view, the scene is effective. Remember that the readers for whom it was written were either heathen, who worshipped the false gods, or Israelites, who had not ceased to credit them with a real existence and power. Neither of these classes could be offended at the introduction of the idols in the drama: both might naturally be influenced by the combination of reasoning and ridicule which is brought to bear upon them. It may perhaps be urged that heathen readers would not admit the fulfilment of Hebrew prophecies. Such an objection credits them with a modern rather than an ancient way of thinking. The ancients had a considerable belief in each other's oracles. The assumption that the heathen would accept his claims is not merely due to the *naïveté* of a recluse: it is consistent with the ideas of the age. We need hardly, therefore, seek to excuse it as what Aristotle calls 'a necessary fault' in the drama. And, if once the assumption be admitted, there can be no doubt about the effectiveness of the whole scene. No one who has pictured the situation clearly, and read the speeches aloud with a dramatic emphasis, will question that the poet has attained his purpose.

§ 65. When the strains of the prophet's song have died away, the argument enters upon a new stage. Turning to the assembled heathen, Jehovah makes the revelation he had promised. The new deed which he contemplates is the restoration of Israel to their sacred city. He will make a new way across the desert, and lead his people by pleasant paths to their home.

§ 66. In the last speech a singular term was applied to Israel. Their helplessness and ignorance of the way are summed up in the name by which they are called—the blind. That new title is now taken for the text of a whole long ode, which Jehovah

addresses to Israel. The first stanza describes the wretched condition of the people—weak in themselves, oppressed by their own leaders as well as by the foreign foe, and dull to see the real issues of events. The second stanza tells how their misery was brought upon them by Jehovah, as a punishment for sin. The third and fourth promise deliverance and divine favour. The fifth foretells the exiles' glorious return from all parts of the world.

§ 67. Israel, having been thus encouraged, is now summoned to bear witness before the nations about God's providential care. Jehovah bids the blind people come forward, with a reminder that no heathen nation can produce an example of prophecy fulfilled. Then he bids Israel testify that his is the only true God, that he foretold the future, and that he has often wrought deliverance. The witness, thus adjured, gives his evidence according to the fashion of the ancient law-courts, not by speech, but by standing up and making a sign of consent to what has just been said for him.

§ 68. The first stanza of the following ode is so corrupt as to be almost unintelligible. Evidently it must have contained a promise that Babylon should fall and her captives be released; but the attempts to reconstruct it are mere conjectures. The rest of the ode is plain enough. The second stanza refers to the crossing of the Red Sea as a proof of Jehovah's power to effect a new deliverance; and the third once more describes the path which is to be made for Israel across the wilderness.

§ 69. The long ode which follows is closely parallel to that in § 66; but instead of Israel's misfortunes, it begins by reciting his sins. In the first two stanzas Jehovah reproaches the people with their neglect of worship during the exile, and traces that fault back to its root in the professional priests and prophets under the monarchy. In the next two stanzas he pronounces forgiveness for the sin, which has been expiated by the ruin of Jerusalem and its temple. He now promises to Israel

prosperity and a numerous offspring, and describes how the heathen will come eagerly to enroll themselves among a people so highly favoured.

The first lines of this ode present a curious problem. The exiles appear to be blamed for not having offered sacrifices to Jehovah in Babylon. Now the Deuteronomic law, by forbidding sacrifice to be offered anywhere except in the Temple at Jerusalem, had made sacrifice in a foreign country impossible. Thus there seems to be a contradiction. Various explanations have been offered. One scholar brings down the composition of Deuteronomy to the post-exilic age. Another urges that in this prophecy 'sacrifice' is only a form of speech, used as a general term for worship. The discovery that in Upper Egypt there was a Jewish Temple much later than this time, where sacrifices were regularly offered, proves that some exiles did not regard the Deuteronomic prohibition as binding on them; and suggests that Deutero-Isaiah may have intended to reproach the people for not offering actual sacrifices. Yet again, it might be urged that he wrote thus because, living far from Babylon, he was ignorant of the actual conditions under which his countrymen were living. But no one of these explanations appears quite satisfactory. We must admit that we are puzzled.

§ 70. The first part of the prophet's argument is now complete. It has been demonstrated that Jehovah alone is God, and that he alone can foretell the future, and work deliverance for his people. And a fresh proof has been given, at once of his care for Israel and of his power to predict, in the promise that he will lead the exiles safely across the wilderness and back to Jerusalem. All this is now summed up in a few weighty lines, which conclude with an exhortation to Israel: Return unto me, for I have redeemed thee.

§ 71. The first act is brought to a formal conclusion by the prophet, who once more utters a brief lyric strain. He calls upon heaven and earth, the mountains and the forests, to celebrate the redemption of Israel and the revelation of Jehovah's glory.

No curtain falls ; there is no indication of a change of scene ; nor are we told that any of the characters leave the stage. But the gods of the heathen have played their part ; they have been put to confusion ; and in the rest of the drama they are neither seen nor mentioned. So we cannot but fancy that, while the prophet is chanting his hymn of triumph, we see the discredited idols steal away out of the presence of their conqueror, leaving the nations whom they once misled to pay homage where it is due.

CHAPTER XXII

CYRUS THE DELIVERER

THE first act of the drama has resulted in three main issues. The gods of the heathen have been confounded and discredited. The foreknowledge of Jehovah, involving his power to fulfil predictions, has been established. The redemption of Israel has been promised. In the second act we follow the development of the promise. To Israel and to the nations, who seem to have drawn nearer to each other, two revelations are made. The name of the champion, who is commissioned to deliver Israel, is Cyrus; and he is the conqueror before whom all the world now trembles. And this deliverance of Israel is no isolated fact, but part of a providential scheme. It is the pledge and foretaste of a blessing for all nations. For behind the restored people of Jehovah there rises a vision of an universal church, offering salvation to the whole world. In the invitation: 'Turn unto me and let yourselves be saved, all the ends of the earth,' Hebrew prophecy reaches the zenith of its redemptive conception.

Yet the chief dramatic interest of this act centres in two characters who do not appear upon the stage, but are presented as it were in picture before the eyes of the nations. The twin portraits of Cyrus the deliverer, and Babylon the oppressor, are drawn with admirable skill, and artistically balanced one against the other. The hero, the anointed one, the friend of Jehovah, stands in the full light of favour, triumphant in the assurance of victory and fame. On the other hand, the mournful figure of Babylon, the oppressor upon whom he is to execute vengeance, cowers in shadows. Yet the fallen queen of the world, pros-

trate in the dust, and deserted by all whom she trusted, though drawn in dark colours by the hand of an enemy, makes a more vivid impression upon us than the bright figure of her conqueror. The contrast between these two pictures is one of the most brilliant effects in the whole drama.

The second act, though constructed on the same lines as the first, differs from it in several particulars. The disappearance of the idols, and the conviction assumed to be wrought in the minds of their worshippers, has removed an element of variety. Jehovah can no longer turn from the gods to Israel, and from Israel to the nations, with the dramatic changes of tone which enliven the first act. Jehovah's address to Cyrus, and the prophet's dirge over Babylon, vivid and poetical as they are, are dramatic only in the same secondary degree as a herald's speech in a Greek tragedy.

This change is accompanied by a slight confusion in the style. The prophet does not always distinguish clearly between his own words and those which are attributed to Jehovah. The great song of triumph over Babylon, in particular, suffers from an occasional uncertainty who is the speaker. On the other hand we observe some changes of style which decidedly enhance the effect. The thought becomes more consecutive, and therefore easier to follow. Instead of what I ventured to call recitative, we find a series of regularly constructed odes. There is less of that formal argument, which is always a little chilling in a drama, and more of that pathetic poetry for which Deutero-Isaiah has a special gift.

§ 72. The opening ode, consisting of five long stanzas, describes the commission which Jehovah has given to Cyrus. Two stanzas, forming one long sentence in the Hebrew, enumerate all the chief attributes which have been claimed for Jehovah in the first act. We are reminded of his greatness as creator and ruler of the world, his power to predict and to perform, his miracles, his promises of favour to Jerusalem, and his appointment of a champion. In the three remaining stanzas Jehovah

promises to give Cyrus the victory over his enemies, to enrich him with all their hidden treasures, and to extend his empire from the sunrise to the sunset. He will do this partly for the sake of Israel his servant, and partly in order that all nations may see that there is none other God but himself.

We cannot help noticing the resemblance, and also the contrast, between this passage and the famous address to Sennacherib, in the tenth chapter of Isaiah, § 25. Both kings are regarded primarily as instruments in the hand of Jehovah, to be used for the accomplishment of his great purpose of restoring or reforming Israel. But while the Assyrian king is a mere presumptuous tool, destined to be ruthlessly broken and cast away so soon as its work is done, the Persian is to develop from unconscious to conscious obedience, is to become a worshipper of Jehovah, his friend, and the shepherd of his people. That is clear, even though we reject the common reading in xli. 25, which expressly describes Cyrus as calling upon the name of Jehovah. Were that reading retained the case would be stronger still. How are we to account for this expectation, which was so far from being realized? Some scholars have explained it by supposing that the prophet shared the common belief that Cyrus was a Persian, and therefore an enemy of idols. But such a belief can hardly have arisen till later times. For Cyrus in his official documents described himself, not merely as a polytheist, but as a worshipper of Bel-Merodach and the other gods of conquered Babylon. If, as the book of Ezra tells us, he also professed to worship Jehovah, he did so in a mere polytheistic sense. A better explanation of the prophet's hope is to be found in his own simple faith in the power of truth to convert mankind. If he wrote a large part of his drama with a view to convince the heathen that their idols were naught, he might well hope that the experience of Jehovah's favour would turn the heart of the conqueror.

§ 73. A brief lyrical intermezzo calls upon heaven and earth to co-operate with the new revelation of righteousness. In

spite of the last line, the speaker is evidently the prophet himself. The confusion, by which Jehovah seems to speak here, has doubtless arisen in the manner already described in this chapter.

§ 74. Israel, it would seem, has not joined in the prophet's hymn of praise. He does not welcome the prospect of deliverance at the hand of a heathen or a foreigner. Perhaps we are to picture him as making some gesture of dissent. Jehovah replies to his protest, whether outward or inward, by condemning such as dispute his power to choose his own instruments. It is as if the clay should argue with the potter, or dictate the shape into which it should be kneaded. If the potter may do what he will with the clay, surely the creator of all the world may select his own agents to work his own beneficent purposes.

§ 75. The text of the important ode which follows is lamentably corrupt. The heroic attempt of our Revisers to translate it literally results in a series of sonorous phrases which yield no reasonable sense. I have therefore adopted the conjectural emendations of Professor Duhm, which are approved by other great Hebrew scholars. The sense which he obtains, by a few skilful corrections, is both appropriate and poetical. Awed by the deliverance wrought by Cyrus, the representatives of distant countries, Jehovah says, will come to Jerusalem and offer homage to Israel. They will join in celebrating the incomparable might of the God whose hidden power has wrought such a triumph for the people in whom he dwells.

§ 76. It is characteristic of Deutero-Isaiah's style that a phrase in one ode should be caught up, as it were, and made a text for that which follows. Here Jehovah, turning to the heathen, comments on the phrase 'a God hides himself in thee', which has been put into the mouth of the peasants of Egypt and the merchants of Ethiopia. However natural such language may be, he says in effect, it is altogether misleading. For Jehovah does not hide himself. He has revealed himself in creation, and proclaimed his truth by the mouth of his prophets. His

oracles are not uttered, like those of Ammon, in remote desert shrines, nor expressed in ambiguous language. They are spoken to the world, and their meaning is unmistakable.

The second stanza challenges the heathen once more to show that their idols foretold either the captivity or the restoration of Israel: and claims that Jehovah is the only deliverer—a deliverer who, in the concluding stanza, offers peace and salvation to all alike who will bow the knee before him. To the Egyptian, the Ethiopian, and the Sabaeen of the previous ode he addresses the invitation 'Turn unto me, and let yourselves be saved, all the ends of the earth'. Qualified though it is by the threat which follows against all who refuse their homage, this invitation is the divinest word in all the Old Testament.

§ 77. Once more a phrase in one poem suggests the subject of the next. The words 'They that bear about the wood of their graven image' are taken up by the prophet, who fills a pause with his lyric song, and wrought into a striking picture. It was customary in Babylon, each New Year's day, to carry the images of the gods in procession round the city. But now these very images shall go forth from their shrines, not borne reverently upon men's shoulders, but packed like luggage upon the backs of mules, as the spoil of the conqueror. And the gods themselves, unable to rescue their images, will have to follow them ignominiously into the land of captivity.

The picture of the false god helplessly following the mule which bears his own image is one of the most striking and original in the whole book. Yet a price has been paid for the use of it. For the sake of effect he has once more, as poet, attributed to heathen gods the objective existence which, as prophet, he emphatically denies.

§ 78. The following speech of Jehovah takes up the same thought in another way. In contrast to the heathen gods which always have to be supported by their worshippers, the God of Israel reminds his people that he has always been their

support. This ode is the weakest in the whole book. Except the curious play upon two meanings of the word 'carry', it contains nothing new: nor is there anything striking in the manner in which old thoughts about Cyrus are reiterated. But it serves to make an interval between two lyrics which could not well be placed side by side.

§ 79. From a literary point of view, the prophet's chant of triumph over the anticipated fall of Babylon is the most remarkable passage in the second act. There are, indeed, two obvious defects in its composition. We are left in some uncertainty as to which words are the prophet's own, and which are attributed to the divine speaker—a confusion which weakens the effect of the whole. And we not only feel the absence of any climax: we note that the first stanza is the most impressive, and the others, fine as they are, are on a lower level. Yet, after all, we cannot fail to recognize that this is a great poem. The feeling of the poet, which rises for once to passion, kindles every reader who is capable of emotion. The personification is maintained with a skill which is as rare as it is admirable. The wonderful effect of the repetitions exhibits the pathetic power of the poet at its best. And yet, moving and brilliant as the dirge is, inferior only to the still more famous fourteenth chapter of Isaiah, its moral quality is as much below, as its literary finish is above, the author's usual standard. For here alone in his writings do we find a frank utterance of that spirit of hatred and revenge which prompted a psalmist to write of Babylon 'Blessed shall he be who taketh thy children and dasheth them against the stones'.

The movement of this great ode is direct and simple. In the first stanza the prophet exults over the coming humiliation of the tyrant city. In the second he quotes Jehovah's proclamation that her fall is a punishment for her cruelty to captive Israel. In the third he describes her present self-confidence, which cannot conceive the possibility of disaster. In the fourth he ironically invites her once more to try the enchantments

in which she has vainly trusted. In the fifth he pictures the helpless and ignominious flight of all her pretended councillors and champions, who repay her benefits with cowardly desertion.

§ 80. The forty-eighth chapter of Isaiah has been deformed by interpolations of a curiously perverse type. A later editor, apparently dissatisfied with the original author's optimistic view of Israel, inserted just those criticisms of the people—those complaints of their obstinacy, their hypocrisy, and their idolatry—which are conspicuous by their absence from Deutero-Isaiah's genuine writings. Restored to consistency and poetical form by their omission, the chapter is found to consist of two long stanzas which summarize the results attained in the first two acts of our drama—the proof from prophecy that Jehovah is God alone, the commission of Cyrus, and the certain destruction of Babylon.

If we regard the whole prophecy merely as a drama, we can scarcely help feeling that these little summaries are inartistic. But we have to remember that the prophet's main object, to which literary form is subordinate, is to impress certain truths upon the reader's mind. Now, beautiful and moving as the dramatic monologue is, no one would claim that its meaning is so clear as to need no explanation. If, then, the meaning is to be brought home to men, the work of the poet must be supplemented by that of the teacher. In these summaries we have the voice of the teacher rather than the poet.

§ 81. The second act, like the first, concludes with a brief song from the prophet, who acts as chorus. He invites the exiles in Babylon to leave the doomed city, and to leave it in triumph. And he suggests a comparison between the miraculous journey of Israel through the wilderness of Sinai and the journey which, under the same divine guidance, they are to make across the desert between the Euphrates and the Jordan.

CHAPTER XXIII

ZION RESTORED

HAD the gods of the heathen been true divinities, and had Babylon stood secure in her strength, there could have been no hope of restoration for the exiles of Israel. But the first act of this drama has demonstrated the nothingness of idols, and exhibited the God of Israel as the sole creator and ruler of the world. The second act has exposed the real weakness of Babylon and presented Cyrus as her appointed conqueror. All is prepared, therefore, for the glorious conclusion, to which we have looked forward all through: and the third act may be devoted to Israel's restoration. How should this be treated? We could imagine lyrical descriptions of the departure from Babylon, the journey across the desert, and the arrival in Jerusalem, which might well suit the poet's genius. But his finer taste has taught him a better way. We are to realize the significance of the great event by seeing it through the eyes of those who are most concerned—the oppressed 'people of the land', who dwell round the ruins of Jerusalem, and the scattered exiles whose heart is sick with the delay of their hopes. The first of these groups is personified under the title of Zion: the others are appropriately treated as individuals, the sons of Zion. In order to make room for these characters the hero of the previous acts must be dismissed: for the twin personifications of Israel and Zion are incompatible. Accordingly there is a sort of brief prologue to the third act, which enables Israel to retire.

§ 82. A speech of great beauty, addressed to Israel, announces that the hour of grace has arrived; the land shall once more be

fruitful and populous ; the restored nation shall be honoured by the kings of the earth ; and all nature shall conspire to smooth the path for their return.

§ 83. While Israel takes his departure, the prophet answers for him with a song of thanksgiving.

§ 84. The main action now begins with an address to Zion, the personification of Jerusalem, the wife of Jehovah, the mother of the exiles. As she appears without any introduction, we are left in doubt whether she has just entered or has been all the time on the stage. It matters little. Indeed, the raising of such a question would probably surprise the author of a drama which is far too mystical and spiritual to require a perfectly definite envisagement. Now, at any rate, Zion is lying prostrate on the ground, in an attitude expressive of questioning despair. To her silent reproach Jehovah replies in a beautiful lyric of consolation and promise.

The personification of Jerusalem, like that of Babylon, is admirably managed : but it is not altogether consistent. Reality breaks through the veil of metaphor in the mention of walls and waste places : and the curious turn of thought by which the restored sons of Zion become her bridal robe, however picturesque, puts a strain upon the reader's imagination.

§ 85. There follow three short speeches, each comprising five long lines. Though connected in thought, they are too independent in form to be regarded as three stanzas of a single poem. Indeed, it is doubtful whether the first ought to be there at all : for its tone and language remind us of a later age. To speak of the kings and queens of the heathen nations as carrying the children of Zion upon their shoulders, and doing homage to her with their faces in the dust, is an extravagance which seems unworthy of a poet who is usually so generous in sentiment and so restrained in style. It is, therefore, with much hesitation that I have followed the authorities in printing these lines as a part of Deutero-Isaiah's composition.

§ 86. The prostrate Zion, discouraged by a long experience

of disaster, replies to the proffered consolation with a gesture of doubt. Jehovah translates it into words. Is it possible that a city so powerful as Babylon can be robbed of her prey? Then he answers the question—Yes, he says, it is possible: for your champion is one whose might none can withstand.

§ 87. From Zion Jehovah turns to address her sons, the Israelites who are yet in exile. With two homely metaphors he reassures them about their mother's position and their own. Though he left his wife for a time, he never intended to divorce her altogether. And since he sold his sons into slavery, not to meet his own needs, but to punish their sins, nothing hinders him from buying them back whenever he will.

§ 88. We have seen already how a phrase or a thought in one ode often suggests the main subject of the next. Accordingly the rhetorical question at the end of § 87—'Have I no power to rescue?'—receives an answer in a poem of five long stanzas.

In the first stanza there is an appeal to history. The God who made a great nation out of the descendants of a single pair can surely give new life to that nation. In the second stanza Jehovah promises that he will restore Judah and Jerusalem to prosperity. In the third he repeats the promise with solemn emphasis. In the fourth he proclaims the permanence of his purposes. In the fifth he bids all who serve him truly to take courage, since their deliverance is assured.

This ode is memorable for the fine image in the fourth stanza, which neither familiarity nor the ineptitude of imitators can rob of its splendour. Never has the supremacy of the spiritual over the material been more impressively asserted than in the words: 'The heavens shall vanish away like smoke, and the earth shall wax old as a garment; but my deliverance shall be for ever, and my salvation shall have no end.'

§ 89. Once more the prophet breaks out into song, calling upon Jehovah to turn against Babylon the unconquerable

might which of old cut asunder the monster Rahab¹—the personification of primal chaos—so that the land rose to view, and restored light to the world by slaying the cloud-dragon which had swallowed the sun.

§ 90. The next speech begins with a rebuke to those who have not faith enough to believe that God can deliver them from 'the fury of the oppressor'. But the latter part is so corrupt as to be untranslatable: and we gain no assistance from the editor who has interpolated some unsuitable lines of his own (verses 15 and 16).

§ 91. Happily the beautiful ode which follows has been preserved almost entire. The first stanza describes the present miserable condition of Jerusalem, first metaphorically and then in literal terms. The fine image of the cup of Jehovah's fury

¹ The form in which this little poem appears in our Bible illustrates two of the causes by which the text has been corrupted.

The parallel passage in Job (xxvi. 12, 13)—

'He stirreth up the sea with his power,
And by his understanding he smiteth through Rahab.
By his spirit the heavens are garnished;
His hand hath pierced the swift serpent'—

together with other references in the same book (iii. 8, vii. 12, ix. 13) make the meaning of the text plain. It is based upon a legend similar to that which is told at length in the Babylonian epic of creation. Rahab is a monster of the prime, a personification of the primaeval ocean or chaos, the sundering of which allowed the dry land to appear (Gen. i. 9). But some editor, ignorant of the story, imagined the words 'Was it not thou that dried up the sea?' to be an indistinct reference to the crossing of the Red Sea. In order, as he supposed, to make the sense clear, he added a marginal note: 'that made the depths of the sea a way for the redeemed to pass over.' A copyist embodied this note in the text; and so the suggestive and poetical comparison of Babylon to the primaeval spirit of Chaos was obscured.

One error led to another. A reader in later times, who was struck by the use of the word 'redeemed' in the interpolation, illustrated it by writing in the margin the whole of Isaiah xxxv. 10, where the same word occurs. The next copyist, according to the custom of his tribe, inserted this note also in the text, regardless of the incongruity both of sense and of metre. Thus a beautiful and striking little poem was robbed both of its form and of its meaning.

is plainly derived from Ezekiel¹ who says to Judah: 'Thou shalt drink of thy sister's cup, which is deep and large: thou shalt be laughed to scorn and had in derision: it containeth much. Thou shalt be filled with drunkenness and sorrow, with the cup of astonishment and desolation, with the cup of thy sister Samaria.' Possibly the poet is also referring to a passage in Jeremiah.² At any rate his borrowing is justified by the noble use which he makes of it: for his picture of Jerusalem in her fall far surpasses the sketches of his predecessors. In the second stanza Jehovah, using the same image, promises to turn his anger from Jerusalem to her oppressors. In the third he calls upon the prostrate city to rise from the dust and to dress herself in festal robes, meet for the happiness which awaits her. The fourth stanza presents three kindred pictures. Heralds are seen advancing towards Jerusalem with the tidings that deliverance is at hand. The watchmen on the walls, when they hear the good news, proclaim it to the inhabitants of the city. And then all alike, even the very ruins, join in a chorus of thanksgiving. The fifth stanza is addressed, not to Zion, but to the exiles who are so soon to leave Babylon. They are bidden not to rush away in hasty flight, as their ancestors did from Egypt, but to march out in solemn procession, bearing the sacred vessels which are once more to adorn a temple in Jerusalem.

§ 92. The next ode carries us on further, and shows us Jerusalem growing in strength and population. The imagery is a little difficult, for it is based upon the polygamous customs of the Arabs. Zion appears as one of several wives. For a time she has been neglected: but the wife of youth cannot be forgotten, and now she is restored to favour. The narrow tent which sufficed for her childless condition will now be too small: so she must make room for the children that are to be hers by lengthening the cords of the tents and enlarging the circuit which its sides enclose. Plainly the whole interest of the

¹ xxiii. 32, 33.

² xxv. 15-26.

parable centres in Zion herself, and the other wives are mere accessories. In the prophet's view there is no reality corresponding to them; but in a picture taken from Arab life they are a necessary part of the background.

§ 93. The promise of the prophet is now confirmed by Jehovah himself. With a solemn oath he gives assurance that never again shall his face be hidden from Zion his beloved.

§ 94. In this brief ode, as once before, the personification alternates with literal description. Yet it is not altogether literal: for the foundations, the walls, and the gates of the restored city are all to be made of precious stones. Here, indeed, is the first sketch of that fanciful architecture whose perfect splendour shines in the Apocalyptic¹ vision of the new Jerusalem.

§ 95. From the mother Jehovah turns to address her sons who are still far away from her in the land of exile. To each and all of them he extends a pressing invitation to return to Jerusalem and share the blessings of the new era. We are inclined to ask why there should be any need of pressure. Would they not all be eager to escape from captivity? A little reflexion will show why many of them might hesitate. Even when restoration was made easy, they might well feel doubtful about the prospect which it offered. Probably they foresaw what actually happened, that those who returned would incur both hardship and danger. If they did so, we can understand why the number of the first Return was so small. The mass of the exiles, it is plain, preferred to remain in the homes which they had made for themselves in Babylonia or Assyria. Many no doubt were actuated by mere love of comfort and security: others had resigned the religious aspirations of their people, and had settled down into conformity with the customs of their heathen neighbours. Even the pathetic beauty of this poem failed to stir them.

The two stanzas appeal to different motives. The first is

¹ Rev. xxi. 9-27.

individual, the second national, in its address. When the prophet asks, why do ye spend money on that which is not bread? he means to protest against an ignoble love of ease. Material comfort, he urges, cannot satisfy or nourish the soul. In the following sentence he goes a step further. Apart from the nation and the holy city, no Israelite could enjoy a full religious life. Not only those who deliberately chose heathenism, but those also who would not make the pilgrimage to the centre of spiritual wealth, were starving their souls.

We have seen already¹ that a new form of religious life, more individual and more spiritual, was being developed here and there among the exiles. But to Deutero-Isaiah, who was out of touch with this movement, the national life and the religious life of the individual appeared inseparable. To be cast off from Zion was to be far removed from Jehovah. Nor had the whole people felt the new impulse of personal religion. The majority of the exiles, who had no spiritual gifts beyond the common, did in fact, as the prophet implies, depend for spiritual health upon a full communion with national religious life. To the majority, therefore, this appeal was as timely as it was earnest and tender.

The second stanza puts forward the motive of patriotism. The people are reminded how Jehovah's covenant with David made him and his kingdom a power among the nations of the world. Even so, they are told, a new covenant shall once more give the leadership to Israel, but it will be a spiritual leadership. All the world will look to Jerusalem for instruction in the knowledge of God.

§ 96. According to the rule already observed, the final ode of the third act proclaims the main truths which have been developed in its course. In the two former cases we found the summary sinking towards the level of prose. But here the style rises with the greatness of the theme, and the prophet's last utterance is one of the most famous.

¹ Chap. XVIII (p. 154).

He calls upon the people to seek Jehovah while the day of grace endures. Not without an effort can they approach him, for his ways are infinitely exalted above the level of human life, and his purposes are beyond the conception of those who fix their minds upon the low cares of material comfort. (Stanza 2) And his power is as extensive as his thoughts are exalted. His word of promise is like the rain, whose unfailing influence sets the whole process of nature in operation. (Stanza 3) As surely as the rain waters the earth and creates food for man, so shall Jehovah's word loose the captives, fertilize the desert, and regenerate the land of Israel.

So the last note of our oratorio repeats the first, but with a fuller and richer sound. The restoration which was heralded in the prelude, prepared for in the first two acts, and vividly pictured in the third, is now assured by all the faith which Israel has in the power and providence of the creator and ruler of the world.

This final address is not followed by the usual lyric of thanksgiving from the prophet. Silence is better: for we can hardly imagine any words which would not sound like an anti-climax after the deep-toned music of this majestic ode.

CHAPTER XXIV

DEUTERO-ISAIAH AS POET

THE reader who has accepted the main conclusions of the last four chapters, will feel that they help us to understand the special quality of Deutero-Isaiah's poetry. Questions of style must be decided with reference both to the aim of the whole poem and to the magnitude of its scale. And from the observer who watches events from a height we do not expect the actuality which is natural in the leader who struggles in mid-stream.

Yet it is inevitable that we should, in some degree, take Isaiah's writings as the standard of comparison for a successor who was also an imitator. And it is instructive, for contrast brings out the characteristic features of both. Of course we must confine ourselves to such features as are not wholly obscured by the veil of translation: but happily these are the most important. We need not read the Hebrew in order to see that the later poet is distinguished from the earlier by a smooth uniformity of style, and by a tendency to repeat favourite words and phrases: that he lacks the passionate energy of Isaiah, but excels him in pathos and persuasiveness: or that while not so rich in imagery he is a master of personification. Obvious as these general remarks are, it is worth while to illustrate each of them by a few examples before we pass on to other considerations.

We have already seen that Isaiah's prophecies, being composed for particular occasions and addressed to particular audiences, are naturally brief, definite, and authoritative. Since he spoke to men who recognized his prophetic mission, even

though they defied him, he had little need of argument or persuasion. Each utterance is like a pebble hurled from a sling, round, complete, weighty, and aimed straight at a single mark. Deutero-Isaiah has no such clear marks to aim at: no 'drunkards of Ephraim', no 'women that are at ease', no timid Ahaz or lachrymose Hezekiah. He writes for all and any who will read: for Jews first, but also for such heathen as will hear him. He must therefore not merely present the one aspect of his message which best appeals to this or that group of men, but exhibit the whole, so that all, if possible, may find something to touch them. Unable to command attention by his presence and gesture, or to make his meaning clear by the magic of delivery, he must catch the careless reader by repetition, and the dull one by various phrases for the same thought. It is for such that he so often renews the argument from prophecy, and draws so many pictures of the miraculous fertilization of the wilderness. Perhaps there was another reason. Something in the poet's own character harmonized with his condition. A mind which is richer in fancy than in thought loves to dwell upon various aspects of a favourite idea. A nature which is persistent rather than intense finds a real satisfaction in reiterating an argument or repainting a scene.

The repetition in which Deutero-Isaiah delights is almost exclusive of any passionate energy. It is interesting to contrast his method with that of Isaiah. While the latter compresses a mass of thought into a single pregnant phrase, the former produces his effect by accumulating sentences which are not individually striking. By way of illustration we may compare § 7 with § 79. The address to the Daughters of Zion when compared with the dirge over Babylon is like a lightning flash beside a fire of coal: and yet the dirge is the most passionate of all its author's utterances. Again, we may turn from the great ode of deliverance in the ninth chapter (§ 47) to the promise of restoration in the forty-ninth (§ 84). Every line of the former contains a fresh thought; each stanza marks a step

onward to the climax. In the latter poem there is no perceptible movement. We seem to linger round one thought, dwelling fondly upon its various aspects. And there is no climax: for the concluding stanza records not a new fact, but a fresh feeling about one which is familiar. Each of the two styles has its peculiar power. While the one braces our souls by the concentration of its thought and the force of its phrases, the other charms our feeling by its diffused emotion.

I have mentioned climax as one element in Isaiah's energy of style. But its employment is so characteristic of the earlier prophet, and so foreign to the later, that it deserves a separate paragraph. The contrast between the two writers may be well illustrated by comparing the taunt-song addressed to Babylon (§ 79) with Isaiah's tremendous picture of Israel's coming ruin (§ 10). In the latter each stanza rises clear above the last, until the supreme horror is reached in the picture of an Assyrian invasion. But Deutero-Isaiah begins upon his highest note. He has nothing stronger to say about Babylon's ruin than what appears in the first stanza. Those which follow give reasons for the humiliation of the proud city, and develop the personification: but with all the enrichment of detail there is neither progress of thought nor heightening of emotion. Only in one of his poems does Deutero-Isaiah seem to have designed an effect of climax. In the great address to Zion (§ 91) we recognize a steady march upward from despair to exultation. That the author did wisely in here departing from his custom, who can doubt? For the impression which this poem has made upon millions of readers is a measure of the excellence which distinguishes it from others.

Deutero-Isaiah's continual avoidance of climax would be almost unaccountable if the various odes in his book were independent prophecies. A short separate poem which does not end with some point is like a headless arrow, unable to penetrate the target. But the case is different with a long continuous poem. A drama consisting of a string of epigrams

would be both jerky and tedious. The colour of individual speeches must be chosen with reference to the harmony of the whole effect. And where the drama is not a true dialogue, but an almost unbroken discourse by one speaker, a certain uniformity of level is indispensable.

If the two poets differ so greatly in the larger features of style, we may expect to find similar differences in the lesser elements. Let us begin with the structure of their sentences. In commenting upon the style of Isaiah I pointed out that the parallelism of Hebrew¹ poetry presents very serious difficulties. The reader of Deutero-Isaiah soon becomes conscious that these difficulties have not always been overcome. Again and again the second half of a line seems a mere mechanical echo of the first, with 'Israel' answering to 'Jacob', or 'salvation' to 'deliverance'. Such a couplet as the following cannot be called impressive:—

I have brought my salvation near, it is not far off,
and my deliverance shall not tarry:
I will grant deliverance in Zion
to Israel my glory.²

More often still a perceptible looseness of texture betrays the hampering effect of conventional forms. And sometimes the exigencies of Hebrew parallelism, like those of English rhyme, have given an awkward turn to the thought. Yet these weaknesses contribute to produce the smooth and even flow of the lines which gives the poem the same kind of charm that makes many readers prefer Tennyson's harmonious verse to the more exacting majesty of Milton's close-packed lines.

In the command of imagery the younger poet must yield to the elder. Both, indeed, are rich in simile and in metaphor: to a large extent they draw from the same source—the animal and vegetable world familiar to the Oriental: and yet the effects which they produce are by no means alike. For this there are several reasons.

¹ p. 106.

² xlvi. 13 (§ 78).

First comes one which is more easily felt than described. The difference between the temperaments of the poets nowhere shows itself more clearly than in their use of imagery. Isaiah's images are precise, consistent, and original. Those of Deutero-Isaiah are less striking, and often lack the appropriateness and consistency which carry conviction. The poet who wrote:—

As one gathereth forsaken eggs
have I gathered all the earth.¹

—has drawn a picture which none can mistake or forget. But when we read:—

His sword maketh them like dust,
his bow like driven chaff.²

—we have to reason out the comparison before it becomes an image.

Secondly, whereas Isaiah draws his most characteristic images from the life of the desert and the farm, Deutero-Isaiah seems more at home in the city. His most effective similes are derived from the dust in a balance, the treading of mortar, and the moth-eaten garment.

The third reason is more important. We always feel that Isaiah is drawing upon personal observation. The rift in the wall, for example, the shadow of the great rock, the last berries on the olive tree, are pictures taken straight from nature, with all the freshness of a first impression. Deutero-Isaiah, on the other hand, often seems to borrow his illustrations from tradition or from books. They wear a literary and conventional air, which makes them look pale beside the vivid originality of the elder poet. Such is the defect, in particular, of the series of metaphors which belong to the conception of Zion as the wife of Jehovah.

The mention of Zion reminds us that in one department of

¹ x. 14 (§ 25).

² xli. 2 (§ 59).

style Deutero-Isaiah is almost without a rival. Fond as the Hebrew poets are of personification, none of them (except the unknown author of Isaiah xiv) has created a figure at once so brilliant and so convincing as those of Babylon and Zion. Isaiah's fine apostrophe¹ to Asshur can hardly be compared with them, for by Asshur he seems to mean the King of Assyria. The brief address to Ariel² is the only real personification in his writings: and beautiful and effective though it is, it cannot compete with the more elaborate art of the later poet.

Of Deutero-Isaiah's finished pictures we have spoken already: but beside them there are a number of delicate and suggestive sketches. Movements of the soul are personified in the watchmen of Jerusalem and the mysterious voices of the desert. Heaven and earth are endowed with consciousness, and bidden to share the joy of God's people. The arm of Jehovah becomes a conscious agent in the drama of history. This large and noble use of personification is a main element in the pathos which characterizes the whole Drama of Exile. It presents the whole creation, animate and inanimate, as penetrated with human feeling, bound together with a conscious sympathy.

'Le style, c'est l'homme.' If that be true, we have not yet reached the central secret of Deutero-Isaiah's style, which must lie, not in any of these qualities, but in that which determines their employment. What is it, we have yet to ask, that makes the essential difference between the two greatest of Hebrew poets? We have seen that the most impressive characteristic of Isaiah is his elevation. He speaks as one who dwells above the level of mankind, on some sacred mount very near to the presence of Jehovah, and comes down to his people, like Moses, with a divine radiance upon his face. The corresponding attribute of Deutero-Isaiah is a certain aloofness. A like purity

¹ x. 5 (§ 25).

² xxix. 1 (§ 35)

of thought, a like largeness of view, a like sense of the great issues which were to be decided, come to him not because he looks down upon the world from an elevation, but because he looks out upon it from a distance. That seems to explain the paradox that, though his charity is more universal than Isaiah's, his view of human history more noble, his conception of God's nature more adequate, his words have not the same power to uplift and to inspire.

CHAPTER XXV

DEUTERO-ISAIAH'S THEOLOGY

No one can read the book of Deutero-Isaiah through, and study it as a whole, without making two observations. He will notice how large a space is devoted to direct teaching about God's nature and providence; and he will feel that the general tone of the teaching is more in accordance with Christian thought than anything which can be found elsewhere in the Old Testament. These two characteristics, even more than the features of style which have been remarked, distinguish the second from the first Isaiah.

The directness of his theological teaching may be explained by the conditions which determined the literary form of his prophecy. A man who addresses his fellows briefly upon definite occasions is likely to assume rather than to state the main articles of his faith. But a man who composes a literary work must give formal expression to his principles no less than to the deductions which follow from them. Here, therefore, we do not find an essential difference between the two prophets, but only the natural effect of changed circumstances.

It is otherwise with the differences between them in the substance of their teaching: for beliefs about God's nature and providence touch the springs of every man's life, even though he be not a prophet. We have therefore to consider carefully what is the extent and the meaning of the theological differences of which we are conscious when we pass from the earlier book to the later. The task is comparatively easy because we have not to trace a long process of development. Though an interval of 150 years separates the two prophets, it was a time of so

little constructive theology that Deutero-Isaiah may be regarded as building directly upon the edifice which Isaiah left. We must place the two systems side by side in our thought, just as they are in our bibles.

Even those who are most conscious of the distinct character of Deutero-Isaiah's faith will find it hard to mention any element in it which is, in the strict sense, original. The advance which we recognize is due rather to a new synthesis of existing elements, a new emphasis laid upon some attributes of the divine nature, and new deductions drawn from them. In trying to estimate these it will be convenient to follow the order observed in Chapter XIV, where Isaiah's teaching was given in outline.

I. Deutero-Isaiah touches upon the divine unity with a somewhat firmer hand. Not content to leave the rejection of heathen gods to be a matter of inference, he offers an elaborate demonstration of their 'nothingness'. Perhaps the difference lies not so much between the prophets as between the audiences whom they addressed. We have seen how largely monotheism had become the faith of Israel: and that made it natural to speak in a different tone. Still we seem to notice in Deutero-Isaiah an unquestioning assurance which could hardly be expected in him who preached the unity of God as a new doctrine.

It naturally follows that he has discarded some of the relics of anthropomorphism which Isaiah spared. There is now no question of a presentment of Jehovah in human form, even in a vision, nor of his dwelling in Jerusalem. Still more significant is the fact that, except in one conventional¹ phrase, there is no reference to the 'wrath' of Jehovah which once occupied so large a space in prophetic pictures of his dealings with men. Yet the argument from silence is not absolutely conclusive. One reason why the wrath of God is not mentioned may be that so little is said of his justice. That justice is seen at work in the downfall of Babylon: but it is not held up by Deutero-

¹ liv. 8 (§ 93).

Isaiah, as by other prophets, to be an example or a warning to the people of Israel. Writing, as we have seen, about an ideal Israel, whose sins have been purged by suffering, our prophet does not concern himself with the conduct of his contemporaries. Only on the hypothesis that he lived as a recluse can we account for the entire absence from the pages of a Hebrew prophet of all moral precept and moral judgment of his own people. Had he been in contact, like Ezekiel, with the sins of the Babylonian exiles, he would undoubtedly have appealed to the justice, and perhaps to the wrath, of Jehovah.

The creation is brought into new prominence by Deutero-Isaiah. He did not merely insist upon the doctrine that the creator must be the ruler of the world: he made it a cornerstone of his system. His preface opens with the words:—

Who hath measured the waters in the hollow of his hand,
 And meted out heaven with a span?
 And comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure,
 And weighed the mountains in scales,
 And the hills in a balance?¹

The chief ornament of his epilogue is the fine image in which God's word of power is compared to the rain from heaven. And there are few of the intermediate chapters in which we are not reminded that Jehovah is the creator and therefore the ruler of the world and all that is therein. A single example may stand for all such passages:—

Woe unto him that striveth with his Maker—
 a potsherd among the potsherds of the earth!
 Doth the clay say to the potter, What makest thou?
 and his work, Thou hast no hands?
 It is I that have made the earth
 and created man upon it.
 My hands have stretched out the heavens
 and laid commands upon all their host.²

He who has not merely believed but realized that God is the creator of all can no longer think or speak of Him in the old

¹ xl. 12 (§ 55).

² xlv. 9 (§ 74).

simple way which belonged to early Israel. He cannot fix His dwelling upon Mount Sinai; scarcely can he imagine Him, even in a vision, to be sensibly present in the Temple of Jerusalem. The effect of the change upon a later generation is finely expressed in words which a post-exilic writer puts into the mouth of Solomon: 'But will God in very deed dwell upon the earth? Behold, heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain thee: how much less this house that I have builded!'¹

In the same spirit Deutero-Isaiah exhausts the resources of language to express the interval, physical, moral, and intellectual, which separates the creator from the creature. 'It is he that sitteth so high above the circle of the earth that the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers.'² 'I am he: I am the first: I also am the last.'³ 'As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.'⁴ 'To whom then will ye liken God, or what likeness will ye set over against Him?'⁵ In fact, the consciousness of God's transcendence penetrates the prophet's whole thought, and communicates itself to every one who reads his words.

By following the path which had been indicated, though scarcely trodden, by Isaiah, the prophet of the exile advanced sensibly nearer to the Christian standpoint. We feel that we can join hands with him across the ages which part us. It is true that his theology is incomplete. Christian faith and philosophy alike teach us that to present God as transcendent only is to give a very inadequate conception of his nature. But in the age of Cyrus even that conception was almost beyond the reach of man's power to understand. The prophet who inculcated it with illuminating eloquence was the mouthpiece of a real, though a partial, revelation.

Here a question may naturally suggest itself to the reader. Can it be that the doctrine of God's transcendence is really

¹ 2 Chron. vi. 18.

² xl. 22 (§ 57).

³ xlvi. 12 (§ 50).

⁴ lv. 9 (§ 74).

⁵ xl. 18 (§ 56).

held by the writer who so dramatically represents Jehovah as the husband of Zion? Are not the two conceptions fundamentally inconsistent? I think it is clear that they are so. But we have already seen, in the case of Isaiah¹, that even the greatest of men may unconsciously hold opinions which are not reconcilable. Instead, therefore, of seeking to harmonize contradictory conceptions, let us try to discover how it was possible for both to find lodgment in the same mind.

There can be no reasonable doubt that the doctrine of God's transcendence expresses the prophet's real faith. It is so essential a part of his message to mankind that it cannot be removed without reducing the whole to nullity. Why then does he sometimes use language so inconsistent? The answer is simple. Ever since Hosea wrote his pathetic allegory, the relation of husband and wife had been one of the conventional images to express the relation between Jehovah and his people. It was passed on from prophet to prophet: it found a place in popular language: and the conservative instinct which guards religious customs and formulae preserved its simple anthropomorphism from the criticism of a more advanced age. If Deutero-Isaiah received it as a religious tradition, he certainly welcomed it as a poetical opportunity: and he made the same admirable use of it as he did of another survival from the past—the belief in the objective existence of the heathen gods. We can imagine that sometimes the poet in him did half unconsciously revert to the venerable faith which was inherited from the past, and occupied, so to speak, a corner of his mind. But remembering Milton's treatment of Baal and Moloch, we shall wisely shrink from trying to define the extent to which a poet may borrow imagery from a faith which is not really his own.

II. He who had thus realized the transcendence and the omnipotence of the Creator could not but advance beyond the old conception of his providence. No longer dwelling upon

¹ Chap. XV.

one sacred mountain, nor anchored (as it were) to the soil of Palestine, the Jehovah whom Deutero-Isaiah worships is so far removed from 'the circle of the earth' that he comprehends it in one glance; all countries are within his ken; he ordains and foretells all the great movements which agitate their inhabitants. So far all is clear. But when we proceed to ask in what manner and to what ends the divine power is exercised, we seem to hear two voices in reply, speaking in very different tones. One tells of an arbitrary monarch, the other of a moral providence.

In the forty-fifth chapter, already quoted, the prophet lays down a general theory of the basis of God's government:—

Woe unto him that striveth with his Maker!

A potsherd among the potsherds of the earth!

Doth the clay say to the potter, What makest thou?

This principle of absolutism, which lies at the root of most Oriental religions, is often so developed as to make God's government a despotism, out of relation to what we call justice. How wide an influence such developments exerted may be inferred from the vehement protest which runs through the book of Job. Its author, who was familiar with all the writings of the prophets, doubtless had the 'potsherd' passage in his mind when he put a similar argument into the mouth of Eliphaz.¹ But Deutero-Isaiah himself, after stating the principle of absolutism in such uncompromising terms, does not draw the deductions which might have been expected. In fact, such a view of the divine government, if pressed, would be inconsistent with one of his main aims—'to justify the ways of God to man.' Just because the book is largely a theodicy, it insists upon that moral relation between Jehovah and all nations of the earth which Israel had implicitly denied. The tone in which it speaks of Cyrus is a remarkable exhibition of this tendency. Jehovah, we are told, 'has raised him up in righteousness'² and 'called him by his name'.³ No blind instrument, but a conscious agent in working out the divine purpose, he receives the title of

¹ Job iv. 17.

² Isa. xlv. 13 (§ 74).

³ xli. 25 (§ 63).

Messiah¹—the Anointed of Jehovah—and is rewarded for his service by the attainment of wealth and empire.² But the treatment of Cyrus, though the most obvious example, is not the most important. The whole of the drama in which the 'nations' are silent actors rests upon the assumption that God's attitude even towards the heathen is not that of the potter, but that of the moral ruler. The object of the long argument, as we have seen already, is not merely to discredit the false divinities, but to convert their misguided worshippers. When Jehovah says, 'Turn unto me, and let yourselves be saved, all the ends of the earth,'³ he implies a mutual relation, possible only between a moral ruler and his subjects: he removes far away from him the absolutism of which the potter is the type.

Of the prophet's two voices, then, the nobler is the more characteristic and prevalent. Yet the other is not silenced. We hear it again when he devotes Egypt and the Sabaeans to the sword of Cyrus as a ransom for Israel, and when he speaks with exultation of Cyrus as 'treading the nations like mortar'. No doubt one reason for his using such language is that, like the earlier prophets, he regards the nation as the moral unit, and takes little account of the individual. His personification of Zion and Babylon is more than a mere poetic figure: it expresses a belief in national solidarity which, however strange to us, with him was instinctive. That helps him to regard the horrors of Cyrus's conquests, not as the cause of infinite sufferings to individuals, but as Jehovah's chastisement of guilty nations. When, however, he foretells the ruin of Egypt and Saba, he is not desiring to punish guilt on their part, but only seeking a victim to suffer in the place of Israel. He seems to have receded from the nobler view of divine providence, and to have fallen back upon the crude conception which represents it as a kind of tyranny.

Such occasional inconsistencies must not be allowed to obscure the main fact that Deutero-Isaiah was the first to pro-

¹ xlv. 1 (§ 72).

² § 72.

³ xlv. 22 (§ 76).

claim Jehovah as not merely the creator but the moral ruler and (in desire, at least) the saviour of all mankind. Dwelling no longer in Jerusalem or on Mount Sinai, Jehovah (according to his teaching) looks down from an infinite height upon the whole surface of the earth ; yet his arm reaches down to guide, control, and discipline all its inhabitants. All, but not all in the same degree. The prophet's interest in all humanity does not prevent him from assigning the pre-eminence to Israel. Why, it may be asked, should one people be singled out for the special favour of the Creator, and one city be entitled his bride? Have we here yet another qualification of the higher teaching, another inconsistency in the prophet's thought? The answer to these questions is not perfectly simple ; and a mere Yes or No would be misleading. If we are to understand Deutero-Isaiah's view of the position of Israel, we must have regard to the following considerations.

In the first place, as we have seen already ¹, no man realizes at once the full scope of a new principle. Old habits shackle him, old affections draw him, so that he cannot follow the fresh thought to its logical conclusion. Now from the time when Moses taught his people Israel to worship Jehovah as their only God, their protector and champion against foreign gods and nations, they had regarded themselves as the sole charge, the sole interest, of Jehovah. This belief was so firmly fixed in their minds that, though their conception of Jehovah's power was gradually extended to include the whole world, they still limited the range of his affections. If even Isaiah, whose enthusiastic faith burst the old barriers which seemed to confine the power of Israel's God, still refused to enlarge the sphere of his love, we may be sure that the multitude were even more conservative. Deutero-Isaiah must therefore have been educated in the traditional belief that God's favour was reserved for one nation ; and would not be fully conscious how far it conflicted with the new principle of which he was the prophet.

¹ Chap. XV.

In the second place, if the conflict had been pointed out to him, he might have replied that he had removed it by claiming for Israel a mere preference instead of an exclusive possession of God's favour. The argument by which he justifies God's choice of Cyrus for his champion would serve equally to vindicate a special regard for one nation. The ever-recurring phrases 'my people', 'Jacob my servant', 'Israel whom I have chosen', are proof enough that he believed, not only that such a preference was consistent with God's justice, but also that it had been exercised. If St. Paul, the herald of a higher revelation, of which the equality of men before God is an essential part, could not bring himself formally to recognize such equality, but wrote 'to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile', still less can we expect a Hebrew prophet six centuries earlier to feel that such inequality marred the moral relation between the Creator and the nations of the earth.

The third and most important consideration rests upon an argument which will be developed in the next two chapters.¹ For the present I must be content to assume a conclusion to which they will lead. There were moments, it would appear, when the prophet was not satisfied with the traditional beliefs about the position of Israel, or with his own modification of them. He saw that, if Israel had enjoyed special favour, it had also been subjected to special suffering—that, to quote his own words, Jerusalem had received from Jehovah double for all her sins. Not content with the explanation given by an earlier prophet², 'You only have I known of all the families of the earth; therefore will I visit upon you all your iniquities,' he looked for some deeper purpose than Israel's education in the treatment which gave that people a place apart in the history of the time. He found this in a new and wonderful doctrine which reconciled many seeming contradictions. The mystery of Israel's pain as well as of Israel's favour was solved by the suggestion that both alike were bestowed in the interest

¹ Chaps. XXVI, XXVII.

² Amos iii. 2.

of all mankind : that the suffering was vicarious, and the favour was its necessary complement : that God's purpose, fulfilling itself in all the vicissitudes of his people's fortunes, was not merely the punishment or the reward of a single race, but the salvation of the world. The manner in which Israel, 'the servant of Jehovah,' is presented in the drama¹ suggests that the prophet's mind was moving towards some such point of view ; but there is no clear statement, nor anything to prove that the view had been attained. For the complete presentation of this epoch-making conception we must pass on to his later and more famous prophecy, which is wholly devoted to 'the servant of Jehovah'.

¹ See §§ 60, 67, 69, 72, 81.

DEUTERO-ISAIAH'S DRAMA OF EXILE

THE PRELUDE

§ 53

I

- xl 1 Comfort ye, comfort ye, my people,
saith your God.
Speak ye tenderly to Jerusalem,
and proclaim to her
2 That her bondage is accomplished,
her atonement is accepted ;
That she hath received from Jehovah's hand
double for all her sins.

2

- 3 A voice cries : Clear through the waste
the way of Jehovah :
Make level, [make level] in the desert
a highway for our God.
4 Every mountain and hill shall be made low,
and every valley be exalted ;
The uneven shall be made level,
and the rough places a plain.

3

- 9 Get thee up into a high mountain,
thou herald of good for Zion ;
Lift up thy voice with strength,
thou herald of good for Jerusalem.
Lift it up, be not afraid
[to proclaim tidings beyond belief :]
Say to the cities of Judah :
Behold, your God.

4

- 10 Behold, Jehovah cometh with might,
and his arm shall rule for him :
Behold, his reward is with him,
and his recompense is before him.
- 11 He shall tend his flock as a shepherd,
with his arm shall he gather it.
He shall carry the lambs in his bosom,
and gently lead those that give suck.

§ 54

- xl 6 Hark ! a voice says : 'Cry' ;
and I say : What shall I cry ?
'All flesh is grass,
and all its beauty as the flower of the field :
- 7 The grass withereth, the flower fadeth,
because the breath of Jehovah bloweth upon it :
- 8 The grass withereth, the flower fadeth,
but the word of our God stands fast for ever.'

§ 55

I

- xl 12 Who hath measured the waters in the hollow of his hand,
And meted out the heaven with a span ?
And comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure ?
And weighed the mountains in scales,
And the hills in a balance ?

2

- 13 Who hath ordered the spirit of Jehovah,
Or being his counsellor hath taught him ?
- 14 With whom took he counsel for instruction ?
Who taught him how to order aright,
And showed him the way of understanding ?

3

- 15 Behold, the nations are as a drop to a bucket,
 And are counted as the small dust of the balance ;
 Behold, he lifteth up the isles like a grain of sand ;
 16 And Lebanon is not sufficient for fuel,
 Nor its beasts for a burnt offering.

§ 56

I

- xl 17 All the nations are as nothing before him ;
 they are accounted by him as vacancy and confusion.
 18 To whom then will ye liken God ?
 or what likeness will ye set over against him ?
 19 An image ! the craftsman has cast it,
 and the goldsmith spreadeth it over with gold ;
 xli 6 Each workman helpeth his fellow
 and saith to his brother : Be of good courage.

2

- 7 The craftsman encourageth the goldsmith,
 And the goldsmith the polisher,
 Saying of the soldering : It is good ;
 And he fastens it to the pedestal with nails.
 xl 20 He that carveth an image of wood
 chooseth a tree that will not rot ;
 He seeketh for himself a cunning workman,
 to set up a graven image that shall not be moved.

§ 57

I

- xl 21 Do ye not know ? do ye not hear ?
 hath it not been told you from the beginning ?
 Have ye not comprehended it
 from the foundation of the earth ?

- 22 It is he that sitteth so high above the circle of the earth
that the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers ;
That stretcheth out the heavens as a curtain,
and spreadeth them out as a tent to dwell in.

2

- 23 It is he that bringeth princes to nothing,
and maketh vain the judges of the earth.
24 Scarce have they been planted,
scarce have they been sown,
Scarce hath their stock,
taken root in the earth,
When he bloweth upon them so that they wither,
and the tempest carrieth them away like chaff.

3

- 25 To whom will ye liken me,
that I should be equal to him ? saith the Holy One.
26 Lift up your eyes on high, and see,
Who hath created yonder stars ?
He that bringeth out their host by number,
and calleth them all by name.
So great is his strength and so mighty his power
that not one remaineth behind.

§ 58

- xl 27 Why sayest thou, O Jacob, .
and speakest, O Israel,
My way is hidden from Jehovah,
and my right is unregarded by my God ?
28 [And now] hast thou not known ?
hast thou not heard ?
An everlasting God is Jehovah,
the Creator of the ends of the earth.
He fainteth not, neither is weary,
his insight is unsearchable.

- 29 He giveth vigour to the weary,
 and to the powerless increase of strength.
 30 Youths may faint and be weary,
 Young warriors may stumble and fall,
 31 But they that wait for Jehovah renew their strength,
 they put forth, as it were, eagles' wings.

ACT I

JEHOVAH

(To the assembled nations.)

§ 59

- xli 1 Hearken to me in silence, O islands,
 and, ye nations, await my argument.
 Come near ! afterwards speak !
 let us come near together to judgment.
 2 Who hath roused up from the sunrise
 him upon whose steps victory attends ?
 Who giveth nations up to him
 and maketh kings fall before him ?
 His sword maketh them like dust,
 his bow like driven chaff :
 3 He pursueth them, and passeth on safely ;
 he toucheth not the path with his feet.
 4 Who hath wrought this and done it,
 calling the generations from the beginning ?
 It is I, Jehovah, who am the first,
 and with the last am still the same.

§ 60

(To Israel.)

- xli 8 But thou, Israel my servant,
 Jacob whom I have chosen ;
 The seed of Abraham my friend,

- 9 Thou whom I fetched from the ends of the earth,
 and called from the corners thereof ;
 To whom I said, Thou art my servant,
 I have chosen thee and not cast thee away ;
- 10 Fear thou not, for I am with thee,
 look not afraid, for I am thy God.
 I strengthen thee ; yea, I help thee ;
 Yea, I uphold thee with my victorious right hand.

§ 61

I

- xli 11 Behold, all that are incensed against thee
 shall be ashamed and confounded :
 They that strive with thee
 shall be as nothing, and shall perish.
- 12 Thou shalt seek them and shalt not find them,
 even them that contend with thee :
 They shall be as nothing and as a thing of naught,
 they that war against thee.

2

- 13 For I, Jehovah thy God,
 hold fast thy right hand ;
 I who say to thee, Fear not,
 I am thy helper.
- 14 Fear not, thou worm Jacob,
 and thou puny worm, Israel ;
 I am thy helper, saith Jehovah,
 and thy redeemer is the Holy One.

3

- 15 Behold, I make of thee a threshing sledge,
 armed with sharp teeth ;
 Thou shalt thresh mountains, and beat them small,
 and shalt make them as chaff.

- 16 Thou shalt fan them, and the wind shall carry them away,
 and the whirlwind shall scatter them ;
 But thou shalt rejoice in Jehovah,
 and make thy boast in the Holy One.

§ 62

- xli 17 The poor, who seek water and there is none,
 whose tongues are parched with thirst,
 The needy, I, Jehovah, will answer them,
 I, the God of Israel, will not forsake them.
- 18 I will open rivers on the bare heights,
 and fountains in the midst of the valleys :
 I will make the wilderness a basin of water,
 and the dry land springs of water.
- 19 I will plant in the wilderness the cedar,
 the acacia, the myrtle, and the olive ;
 I will set in the desert the fir tree,
 the plane and the cypress together,
- 20 That men may see and know,
 and consider and understand, all of them,
 That the hand of Jehovah hath done this,
 and the Holy One of Israel hath created it.

§ 63

(To the Gods of the nations.)

I

- xli 21 Produce your cause,
 saith Jehovah [who is the God].
 Bring forth your strong reasons,
 saith the King of Jacob.
- 22 Declare ye the past, what befell,
 that we may consider it ;
 Or show us the future,
 that we may know the end of it.

- 23 Declare the things which are to come,
 that we may know that ye are gods ;
 Yea, do something either good or bad,
 that we may see it and marvel.
- 24 Behold, ye are nothing,
 and your work is nothing at all !
 An abomination is he that chooseth you !

2

- 25 I have raised up one from the North, and he cometh,
 from the East have I called him by his name.
 He shall trample upon rulers like mortar,
 and as the potter treadeth clay.
- 26 Who announced this from the beginning, that we might know,
 and aforetime, that we might say ' Right ' ?
 None was there that announced, none that declared it,
 none that heard your words.
- 27 'Twas I first sent word to Zion,
 to Jerusalem I gave a messenger of good tidings.
- 28 But as for these, there is no man,
 among their gods is no counsellor,
- 29 Behold, they are all [naught] ;
 their works are vanity and nothingness !
 Their molten images are wind and confusion !

(To the nations.)

- xlii 8 I am Jehovah
 that is my name.
 My glory will I not give to another
 neither my praise unto graven images.
- 9 Behold, my former predictions are come to pass,
 and new things do I now declare :
 Before they spring forth
 I tell you of them.

§ 64

THE PROPHET

I

xlii 10 Sing unto Jehovah a new song,
 his praise from the end of the earth.
 Let the sea roar, and all that is therein,
 the isles and their inhabitants.

2

11 Let the wilderness and the Arabah rejoice,
 The villages that Kedar doth inhabit ;
 Let the inhabitants of Sela sing,
 Let them shout from the mountain tops.

3

13 Jehovah shall go forth like a hero,
 Like a warrior shall he stir up his rage ;
 He shall shout, he shall utter a warcry,
 Upon his foes he shall prove himself a hero.

§ 65

JEHOVAH

(*To the nations.*)

xlii 14 I have long time holden my peace ;
 I have been still, and refrained myself :
 Now will I cry out like a travailing woman,
 I will gasp and pant together.
 15 I will lay waste mountains and hills,
 and dry up all their herbs.
 I will make the rivers a desert,
 and will dry up the pools.
 16 And I will lead the blind on the way,
 in paths which they know not will I guide them,
 I will make darkness light before them,
 and the rugged places level.

- These are my promises,
 I will do them and forbear not.
- 17 They shall be ashamed that trust in graven images,
 that say unto molten images : Ye are our gods.

§ 66

(To Israel and the nations alternately.)

I

- xlii 18 Look up, ye blind, that ye may see !
 and ye deaf, hearken !
- 20 Much have ye seen without noting it,
 and your ears were opened without hearing.
- 22 They are all of them snared in dungeons,
 and hid in prison houses ;
 They are for a prey, and none delivereth,
 for a spoil, and none saith, Restore.

■

- 23 Who among you will give ear to this,
 will attend and hear for the time to come ?
- 24 Who gave Jacob to the spoilers,
 and Israel to the robbers ?
- 25 Who poured out his burning wrath upon him,
 and fierceness like flame,
 So that it scorched him, though he knew not why,
 and burned him, though he laid it not to heart ?

3

- xliii 1 And now, thus saith Jehovah,
 thy creator, O Jacob, thy maker, O Israel :
 Fear not, for I redeem thee ;
 I call thee by thy name ; thou art mine.
- 2 When thou passest through waters, I will be with thee ;
 and through rivers, they shall not overflow thee.
 When thou walkest through fire, thou shalt not be burned,
 neither shall the flame scorch thee.

4

- 3 For I, Jehovah, am thy God ;
 I, the Holy One of Israel, thy deliverer.
 I give Egypt as thy ransom,
 Ethiopia and Saba for thee ;
 4 Since thou art precious in my sight,
 honourable and beloved,
 I will give countries in thy stead
 and nations for thy life.

5

- 5 From the sunrise I will bring thy seed,
 and from the sunset I will gather thee ;
 6 I will say to the north, Give up !
 and to the south, Withhold not !
 Bring my sons from far,
 and my daughters from the end of the earth,
 7 Every one that is called by my name,
 whom I have created and made for my glory.

§ 67

(*To Israel.*)

I

- xliii 8 Bring forth the blind people, that have eyes, —
 and the deaf that have ears !
 9 Let all the nations be gathered together
 and the peoples be assembled.
 Who among them can tell us such things,
 or announce them beforehand ?
 Let them bring their witnesses to justify them,
 to hear and say, It is the truth.

2

- 10 Ye are my faithful witnesses—
 my servant whom I have chosen—

- That they may acknowledge and believe me,
 and understand that I am he.
 Before me there was no God formed,
 neither shall there be after me.
- 11 I, even I, am Jehovah,
 and beside me there is no deliverer.

3

- 12 I have foretold and I have delivered,
 I have announced [and have accomplished].
 There was no strange god among you,
 therefore ye are my faithful witnesses,
 I am God [from everlasting],
 and in time to come I am the same :
- 13 There is none that can deliver out of my hand ;
 I work, and who shall hinder it ?
- [*Israel comes forward and makes a sign of assent.*]

§ 68

(*To Israel.*)

I

- xliii 14 Thus saith Jehovah,
 your redeemer, the Holy One of Israel,
 For your sake I am sending to Babylon
 and breaking down their bars.
 The Chaldaeans [will I cast down]
 [and make] their rejoicing [end] in lamentation,
- 15 Even I, Jehovah, your Holy One,
 the creator of Israel, your King.

2

- 16 Thus saith Jehovah,
 [your redeemer, the Holy One of Israel]:
 He that maketh a way in the sea,
 and a path in the mighty waters,

- 17 That bringeth forth the chariot and horse,
 the army and the mighty together.
 They lie down and shall not rise,
 they are trodden out, they are extinct like a wick.

3

- 18 Remember not the former things,
 neither consider the things of old.
 19 Behold, I am doing a new thing ;
 now it springs forth ; do ye not perceive it ?
 Yea, I will make a way in the wilderness,
 and rivers in the desert.
 20 The beasts of the field shall honour me,
 the jackals and the ostriches.

§ 69

I

- xliii 22 Yet thou hast not called upon me, O Jacob,
 nor troubled thyself about me, O Israel.
 23 Thou hast not brought me the lambs of thy burnt offerings,
 nor honoured me with thy sacrifices.
 I did not burden thee with offerings,
 nor weary thee with frankincense ;
 24 Thou hast bought me no sweet cane with money,
 nor filled me with the fat of thy sacrifices.

2

- Thou hast only burdened me with thy sins,
 and wearied me with thine iniquities.
 27 Thy first father sinned,
 and thy mediators rebelled against me ;
 28 So I was forced to profane [mine inheritance]
 and [break down] the holy doors,
 To deliver Jacob to the curse,
 and Israel to reviling.

3

- xliv 1 Yet now hear, O Jacob my servant,
and Israel whom I have chosen.
- 2 Thus saith Jehovah who made thee,
he who formed thee from the womb, and helps thee.
Fear not, O Jacob my servant,
and thou, Jeshurun, whom I have chosen.
- 3 I will pour water upon that which is thirsty,
and streams upon the dry ground.

4

- I will pour my spirit upon thy seed,
and my blessing upon thine offspring.
- 4 And they shall spring up as grass among the waters,
as willows by the watercourses.
- 5 One shall say : I am Jehovah's ;
and another shall call himself by the name of Jacob :
And another shall write [on] his hand : Jehovah's own,
and shall receive the surname of Israel.

§ 70

- xliv 6 Thus saith Jehovah, the King of Israel,
and his redeemer, Jehovah Sabaoth :
I am the first and the last,
and beside me there is no God.
- 7 Who is as I am ? [Let him come forward] and cry out ;
let him declare it and set it forth before me !
Who foretold the future long ago ?
then let them declare unto us what is to come !
- 8 Fear ye not, neither be disquieted ;
have I not declared it of old, and announced it ?
And ye are my witnesses whether there is a God
or a Rock beside me.
- 21 Remember these things, O Jacob,
and Israel, for thou art my witness.

I have formed thee, thou art my servant ;
 O Israel, thou shouldest not disown me.
 22 I have blotted out thy transgressions as a mist,
 and as a cloud thy sins.
 Return unto me, for I have redeemed thee ;

§ 71

THE PROPHET

xliv 23 Sing, O ye heavens, for Jehovah hath done it ;
 Shout, O ye depths of the earth ;
 Break forth into triumph songs, ye mountains,
 O forest, and every tree therein !
 For Jehovah hath redeemed Jacob,
 and glorifieth himself in Israel.

[*During this song the idols of the nations slowly steal away.*]

ACT II

JEHOVAH

(*To Israel.*)

§ 72

I

xliv 24 Thus saith Jehovah, thy redeemer,
 and he that formed thee from the womb :
 I am Jehovah, that made all things,
 that stretched forth the heavens,
 That spread abroad the earth alone ;
 who was with me ?
 25 That frustrateth the tokens of diviners,
 and maketh soothsayers mad ;
 That turneth the wise backward,
 and maketh their knowledge folly.

2

26 I am he that confirmeth the word of his servant,
 and the counsel of his messengers ;

- That saith of Jerusalem, she shall be inhabited ;
 and of the temple, Be thy foundations laid ;
 And of the cities of Judah, They shall be built,
 and their ruins I will raise up ;
- 27 That saith to the deep, Be dry,
 and I will parch up thy rivers,
- 28 That saith of Cyrus, He is my friend,
 and shall perform all my purposes.

3

- xlv 1 Thus saith Jehovah [the only God]
 to his anointed, to Cyrus,
 Whose right hand I have holden,
 to subdue nations before him,
 To open the doors before him,
 and that the gates may not be closed ;
- 2 I myself will go before thee
 and make the hills level,
 I will break in pieces the doors of bronze,
 and cast in sunder the bars of iron.

4

- 3 I will give thee the treasures of darkness
 and the hoards of secret places ;
 For it is I, Jehovah, that call thee by thy name,
 even the God of Israel.
- 4 For the sake of Jacob my servant,
 and Israel, my chosen,
 I called thee by thy name,
 I surnamed thee, though thou knewest me not.
- 5 I am Jehovah and there is none else :
 beside me there is no God.

5

[The loins of kings I ungird,]
 but I will gird thee,

- 6 That men may acknowledge,
 from the sunrise and the sunset,
 That I am Jehovah, and there is none else—
 there is none beside me—
- 7 Who formeth the light and createth darkness,
 who maketh welfare and calamity :
 It is I, Jehovah [the only God,]
 that doeth all these things.

§ 73

THE PROPHET

- xlv 8 Send showers, ye heavens, from above,
 and let the skies rain victory ;
 Let the earth open [her womb],
 that deliverance [and peace] may come forth :
 And let her cause victory to spring up withal :
 I, Jehovah, have created this.

§ 74

JEHOVAH

(*To Israel.*)

I

- xlv 9 Woe unto him that striveth with his maker !
 a potsherd among the potsherds of the earth !
 Doth the clay say to the potter, What makest thou ?
 and his work, Thou hast no hands ?
- 11 Thus saith Jehovah [Sabaoth],
 the Holy One of Israel, and his maker :
 Do ye ask me about the things that are to come,
 and charge me concerning the work of my hands ?

2

- 12 It is I that have made the earth,
 and created man upon it ;
 My hands have stretched out the heavens,
 and laid commands upon all their host.

- 13 It is I that have raised him up in righteousness,
and made level all his ways :
He shall build my city,
and let my exiles go free.

§ 75

- xlv 14 Thus saith Jehovah [Sabaoth] :
The peasants of Egypt,
And the merchants of Ethiopia,
and the Sabaeans, men of stature
Shall come over unto thee, and be thine,
and follow after thee,
And fall down before thee,
and make supplications unto thee :
'In thee alone is God, there is none else ;
there is no other God.
- 15 Surely in thee a God hides himself,
a God that is a saviour !
- 16 They have been put to shame and confounded,
all that rose up against him ;
They have come to confusion altogether,
the makers of idols ;
- 17 But Israel hath been delivered by Jehovah
with an everlasting deliverance ' ;
Ye shall not be ashamed or confounded,
world without end.

§ 76

(*To the Nations.*)

I

- xlv 18 Thus saith Jehovah, the true God,
the creator of the heavens,
That formed the earth and made it—
He established it !

Not [for] a waste did he create it,
 he formed it to be inhabited :
 I am Jehovah,
 and there is no [God beside me].

- 19 Not in secret have I spoken
 in the land of darkness ;
 I said not unto the seed of Jacob,
 Seek ye me in vain.
 I, Jehovah, speak righteousness
 and proclaim truth.

2

- 20 Assemble yourselves and come, draw near,
 ye of the nations that are escaped !
 No knowledge have they that bear about
 the wood of their graven image,
 And pray [to an idol],
 to a god that cannot deliver.
 21 Declare ye, and produce [your cause] ;
 yea, let them take counsel together.
 Who hath shewed this from ancient time ?
 Who hath declared it of old ?
 Is it not I, Jehovah ?
 and there is no God beside me.
 A righteous God and a deliverer
 there is none except me.

3

- 22 Turn unto me and let yourselves be saved,
 all the ends of the earth !
 23 Since I am God, and there is none else,
 by myself have I sworn,—
 A true word is gone forth from my mouth,
 a word which shall not return,—
 That unto me every knee shall bow,
 every tongue shall swear.

- 24 'Only through Jehovah hath Jacob
victory and strength :
For his sake shall they be shamed and confounded,
all that were incensed against him ;
- 25 But in Jehovah shall all the seed of Israel
triumph and make their boast.'

§ 77

THE PROPHET

- xlvi 1 Bel boweth down, Nebo stoopeth :
Their images are a burden to the beasts,
Laid as a load upon the weary cattle.
- 2 They stoop, they bow down together ;
They could not deliver the load,
But themselves are gone into captivity.

§ 78

JEHOVAH

(To Israel.)

- xlvi 3 Hearken unto me, O house of Jacob,
and all the remnant of the house of Israel ;
Ye that have been a burden from your birth,
a load from your mother's womb ;—
- 4 Even to old age I am the same,
and even to grey hairs will I carry you ;
I have borne you, and I will bear,
yea, I will carry and save you.
- 9 Remember the former things of old,
.
How that I am God, and there is none else,
divine, and there is none like me ;
- 10 Foretelling the end from the beginning,
and from ancient times things not yet done—

- Saying, My purpose shall stand,
 and I will do all my pleasure ;
- 11 Calling a ravenous bird from the east,
 the man of my purpose from a far country ;—
 Yea, I have spoken, and I will bring it to pass,
 I have purposed, and I will accomplish it.
- 12 Harken unto me, ye that are dejected,
 that feel yourselves far from salvation,
- 13 I have brought my salvation near, it is not far off,
 and my deliverance shall not tarry :
 I will grant deliverance in Zion,
 to Israel my glory.

§ 79

THE PROPHET

I

- xlvii 1 Come down, and sit in the dust,
 O virgin daughter of Babylon !
 Throneless, sit on the ground,
 O daughter of the Chaldaeans !
 For thou shall never more be called
 tender and delicate.
- 2 Take the hand-mill, and grind meal,
 remove thy veil,
 Strip off thy train, bare thy leg,
 and wade through rivers.
- 3 I will take vengeance inexorably,
 saith our redeemer :
- 4 Jehovah Sabaoth is his name,
 the Holy One of Israel.
- 2
- 5 Sit thou silent, and get thee into darkness,
 O daughter of the Chaldaeans ;

For thou shall never more be called
the Queen of kingdoms.

- 6 I was wroth with my people,
I profaned mine inheritance,
I gave them into thine hand, but thou
didst shew them no pity.
On the aged thou madest thy yoke
to press very heavily.
- 7 And thou saidst, I shall be always thus,
yea, a Queen for ever.
Thou didst not lay this to heart,
nor think of the end thereof.

3

- 8 Now therefore hear this, voluptuous one,
that sittest so secure,
That sayest in thine heart,
'I, and none but me :
I shall not sit as a widow,
nor know the loss of children.'
- 9 These two things shall come to thee,
suddenly, and in one day,
The loss of children and widowhood,
in full measure shall they come upon thee,
Despite the multitude of thy sorceries
and the might of thy enchantments,
And though thou wast secure in thy wickedness,
and saidest, 'None seeth me.'

4

- 10 Lo, thy wisdom and thy knowledge,
they have led thee astray,
So that thou saidst in thine heart,
'I and none but me.'
- 11 Therefore shall evil come upon thee,
which thou knowest not how to charm away ;

- And mischief shall fall upon thee,
 which thou knowest not how to avert,
 And desolation shall come suddenly,
 which thou knowest not [how to prevent].
- 12 Abide, then, by thine enchantments,
 and the multitude of thy sorceries !
 Perhaps thou mayest profit,
 perhaps thou mayest strike terror !

5

- 13 Thou hast wearied thyself with thy counsellors :
 let them now stand forth :
 Let them deliver thee, that divide the heavens,
 and gaze on the stars,
 Determining month by month
 what things are coming !
- 14 Behold they are all like stubble,
 which the fire hath burned ;
 They cannot deliver their own lives
 from the power of the flame :
- 15 Such have they proved unto thee,
 for whom thou didst toil from thy youth :
 They are fled staggering, each his own way,
 and there is none to deliver thee.

§ 80

JEHOVAH

(*To Israel.*)

I

- xlvi 1 Hear ye this, O house of Jacob,
 the former things I foretold long ago :
- 3 They came forth from my mouth, and I declared them ;
 suddenly I wrought and they came to pass.
- 5 And I told it to thee long ago,
 before it came to pass, I shewed it thee.

- 6 Thou hast heard it and knowest it all,
and wilt thou not bear witness to it?
New things I shew thee henceforth,
even secret things which thou hast not known.
- 7 They are created now, and not before,
and before their day thou heardest them not.
- 8 Thou hast neither heard nor known them,
nor was thine ear opened heretofore.
- 11 For my [name's] sake will I do it,
and my glory will I not give to another.
- 2
- 12 Hearken unto me, O Jacob,
and Israel whom I have called.
I am he: I am the first;
I also am the last.
- 13 Yea, my hand laid the foundation of the earth,
and my right hand spread out the heavens:
When I call unto them,
they stand there all together.
- 14 Assemble yourselves, all of you, and hear:
which of them hath declared these things?
My friend will work my pleasure
upon Babylon and the seed of the Chaldaeans.
- 15 I, even I, have spoken, and called him,
I have brought him, and made his way prosperous.
- 16 From the first I have not spoken in secret,
from the time that it was, I have declared it.

§ 81

THE PROPHET

- xlvi 20 Go ye forth from Babylon,
flee from the Chaldaeans!
Tell this with songs of triumph,
make it to be heard;

Cause it to go forth
 to the end of the earth.
 Say ; Jehovah hath redeemed
 his servant Jacob.
 21 When he led them through the deserts
 they thirsted not ;
 He caused water to flow
 out of the rock for his people ;
 He clave the cliff also,
 and the waters gushed forth.

ACT III

§ 82

JEHOVAH

(*To Israel.*)

xlix 7 Thus saith Jehovah,
 the redeemer of Israel, his Holy One,
 To him who is despised of men, abhorred of the people,
 the servant of tyrants :
 Kings shall see thee, and arise,
 princes, and they shall bow down,
 Because of Jehovah, who is faithful,
 and of the Holy One of Israel, who chose thee.
 Thus saith Jehovah,
 [the redeemer of Israel, his Holy One],
 8 In the time of favour do I answer thee,
 and in the day of deliverance I help thee,
 That thou mayest raise up the prostrate land,
 and give owners to the [desolate] heritages ;
 9 Saying to them that are bound, Go forth,
 to them that are in darkness, Shew yourselves.
 They shall feed in all the ways,
 and on [all] bare hills shall be their pasture,

- 10 They shall not hunger nor thirst,
 nor shall the hot wind nor the sun smite them,
 For he that hath mercy on them shall lead them,
 and guide them to springs of water.
- 11 I will make all the mountains a roadway,
 and the highways shall be exalted ;
- 12 Behold, these come from afar,
 [and these from the ends of the earth ;]
 Behold these from the north and from the sea,
 and these from the land of Syene.

§ 83

THE PROPHET

- xlix 13 Shout for joy, O heavens, and exult, O earth !
 let the mountains break forth into shouts of joy !
 For Jehovah comforteth his people,
 and hath compassion upon his afflicted.

§ 84

JEHOVAH

(To Zion.)

I

- xlix 14 Zion saith : ' Jehovah hath forsaken me,
 and my Lord hath forgotten me.'
- 15 Can a woman forget her sucking child,
 pitiless for the son of her womb ?
 Yea, these a woman may forget,
 yet will not I forget thee.

2

- 16 Behold, on the palms of my hands
 have I engraven thy walls, O Zion.
 [Thy ruins are] continually before me,
 and thy builders make haste ;

17 Thy destroyers and thy ravagers
shall go forth from thee.

3

18 Lift up thine eyes round about, and see ;
they are gathering together,
They come to thee. As I live ;
that is Jehovah's word—
Thou shalt put them on thee as an ornament,
and gird thyself with them, like a bride.

4

19 For thy ruined and desolate places,
and thy ravaged land,

.
.
.
.

5

Then shalt thou be too strait for thy citizens,
and thy destroyers be far away ;
20 The children of thy bereavement
shall yet say in thine ears :
The place is too strait for me,
make room for me that I may dwell.

6

21 And thou shalt say in thine heart,
Who hath borne me these,
Seeing I am bereaved and unfruitful ?
Yea, these, who hath brought them up ?
Behold, I was left all alone ;
and these, whence are they ?

§ 85

xlix 22 Behold, I lift up mine hand to the nations,
and set up my ensign for the peoples,

And they shall bring thy sons in their bosom,
and thy daughters shall be carried on their shoulders.

- 23 Kings shall be thy foster fathers,
and queens thy nursing mothers :
They shall bow down their faces to the earth,
and lick the dust of thy feet ;
And thou shalt know that I am Jehovah,
and they that wait for me shall not be ashamed.

§ 86

- xlix 24 'Can the prey be taken from the mighty,
or the captives of a tyrant escape ?'
25 Yea, even the captives of the mighty shall be taken away,
and the prey of the tyrant shall escape.
I will contend with him that contendeth with thee,
and I will deliver thy children.
26 I will feed thy oppressors with their own flesh,
they shall drink their own blood like new wine.
And all flesh shall know
that I, Jehovah, am thy deliverer.

§ 87

(*To the Exiles.*)

- 1 1 Where is the bill of your mother's divorcement,
wherewith I have put her away ?
Or which of my creditors is it
to whom I have sold you ?
Behold, for your iniquities were ye sold,
and for your sins was your mother put away.
2 Wherefore, when I came, was there no man,
no one to answer, when I called ?
Is my hand too short to deliver ?
or have I no power to rescue ?

§ 88

I

- li 1 Hearken to me, ye that seek for vindication,
 ye that appeal to Jehovah.
 Look unto the rock whence ye were hewn,
 to the quarry whence ye were digged ;
- 2 Look unto Abraham your father,
 and unto Sarah that bare you ;
 For he was but one when I called him,
 and I blessed him and increased him.

2

- 3 Even so [will I call you from afar,
 and bless you with increase.]
 For Jehovah hath pity upon Zion,
 and pity upon all her ruins ;
 And will make her waste places like Jehovah's garden,
 and her wilderness like Eden.
 Joy and gladness will be found therein,
 thanksgiving and the voice of melody.

3

- 4 Attend unto me, O my people,
 and give ear unto me :
 For instruction shall go forth from me,
 and my law as a light for the nations.
- 5 Very soon shall my salvation come near,
 and my deliverance go forth ;
 Mine arm shall judge the peoples ;
 for me shall the isles watch.

4

- 6 Lift up your eyes to the heavens,
 and look upon the earth beneath,
 For the heavens shall vanish away like smoke,
 and the earth shall wax old as a garment,

[The world will be consumed like]
 and the dwellers therein die like gnats ;
 But my deliverance shall be for ever,
 and my salvation shall have no end.

5

- 7 Hearken unto me, ye that know righteousness,
 the people in whose heart is my teaching.
 Fear not the insults of men,
 neither be dismayed at their revilings.
- 8 For the moth shall eat them up like a garment,
 and the worm shall eat them like wool,
 But my salvation shall be for ever,
 and my deliverance age after age.

§ 89

THE PROPHET

- li 9 Awake, awake, put on strength, O arm of Jehovah !
 Awake, as in the days of old, the generations of long ago !
 Was it not thou that cut Rahab asunder, and pierced the
 dragon ?
- 10 Was it not thou that dried up the sea, the waters of the
 great Deep ?

:

§ 90

JEHOVAH

(To Zion.)

- li 12 I, even I, am he that comforteth thee :
 how canst thou be afraid
 Of man that dieth, and the son of earth
 that is made as grass ?
- 13 How canst thou forget thy Maker, that stretched forth the
 heavens
 and laid the foundations of the earth ;

And tremble continually all the day
because of the fury of the oppressor?

[*The lines which follow are unintelligible.*]

§ 91

(*To Zion.*)

I

- li 17 Awake, awake,
stand up, O Jerusalem,
Which hast drunken at the hand of Jehovah
the cup of his fury!
The bowl of bewilderment
thou hast drunken, and drained it.
- 19 A double woe befell thee,
and who bemoans thee?
Storming and destruction, famine and sword,
and who comforts thee?
- 20 Thy sons lay fainting
like an antelope in a net,
They were full of the fury of Jehovah,
of the rebuke of thy God.

2

- 21 Therefore hear now this, thou afflicted one,
and drunken, but not with wine?
- 22 Thus saith Jehovah thy God,
that pleadeth the cause of his people:
Behold, I have taken out of thine hand
the cup of bewilderment,
No more shalt thou drink again
the bowl of my fury;
- 23 And I put it into the hand of thy tormentors,
[and of those that afflicted thee,]

Who have said to thy soul,
 'Bow down, that we may pass over':
 So thou madest thy back like the ground,
 like a street for wayfarers.

3

- lii 1 Awake, awake, clothe thyself
 in thy strength, O Zion!
 Clothe thyself in thy beautiful garments,
 O Jerusalem, holy city!
 For no more shall there come unto thee
 the uncircumcised and the unclean.
 2 Shake thyself from the dust, and arise,
 O captive Jerusalem!
 Loose thyself from the bands of thy neck,
 O captive daughter of Zion!

.

4

- 7 How beautiful upon the mountains
 are the feet of the herald;
 That proclaimeth peace, bringeth good tidings,
 proclaimeth deliverance;
 That saith unto [the daughter of] Zion,
 Thy God is King!
 8 All thy watchmen cry aloud;
 together they sing in triumph;
 For they behold, eye to eye,
 how Jehovah returneth to Zion.
 9 Break forth into joy, sing together,
 ye ruins of Jerusalem!
 For Jehovah hath comforted his people,
 he hath redeemed Jerusalem.

5

10 Jehovah hath made bare his holy arm
in the sight of all the nations,
And all the ends of the earth shall see
the deliverance of our God.

11 Depart ye, depart ye, go ye out from thence ;
touch no unclean thing !
Go ye out of the midst of her ; purify yourselves,
ye that bear the vessels of Jehovah.

12 For ye shall not go out in haste,
nor depart as in flight,
For Jehovah goes before you,
and the God of Israel is your rearguard.

§ 92

THE PROPHET

(*To Zion.*)

I

liv 1 Sing for joy, thou barren, that didst not bear ;
break into songs of triumph, thou that hast not travailed,
For more are the children of the desolate
than the children of the married, saith Jehovah.

2 Enlarge the space of thy tent,
stretch forth the curtains, and spare not ;
Lengthen thy cords
and make fast thy tent-pins.

2

3 [Enlarge the space of thy tent,]
for to the right and left thou shalt spread abroad ;
And thy seed shall possess nations
and shall people desolate cities.

- 4 Fear not, for thou shalt not be shamed ;
 be not confused, for thou shalt not be confounded.
 Thou shalt forget the shame of thy youth,
 and the reproach of thy widowhood shalt thou remember
 no more.

3

- 5 For thy husband is thy maker,
 Jehovah Sabaoth is his name,
 Thy redeemer is the Holy One of Israel,
 the God of the whole earth is he called.
- 6 For he hath called thee to him as a wife
 that was neglected and grieved in spirit.
 A wife of youth cannot be utterly rejected,
 saith Jehovah, thy God.

§ 93

JEHOVAH

(*To Zion.*)

I

- liv 7 For a little moment did I forsake thee,
 But with great compassion will I gather thee ;
- 8 In wrath I hid my face from thee,
 But with everlasting kindness I have compassion on thee.
 Saith Jehovah, thy redeemer.

2

- 9 This is unto me as the days of Noah :
 As I swore that Noah's waters
 Should no more go over the earth,
 So have I sworn not to be wroth with thee
 Nor to rebuke thee.

3

- 10 Though the mountains should be removed,
 And the hills be overthrown,
 Yet my kindness shall not be removed from thee,

Nor my covenant of peace be overthrown,
Saith Jehovah that hath compassion on thee.

§ 94

I

liv 11 O thou afflicted, tossed with tempest, and not comforted,
Behold, I will set thy bases in rubies,
And thy foundations in sapphires.

2

12 I will make thy battlements of jasper,
Thy gates of carbuncles,
And all thy border of jewels.

3

13 And all thy builders shall be taught of Jehovah,
And great will be the prosperity of thy sons ;
In triumph shalt thou be established.

§ 95

(*To the Exiles.*)

I

lv 1 Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters,
and ye that have no strength, come and eat !
Yea, come, buy corn without money,
wine and milk without price.

2 Why do ye spend your money on that which is not bread,
and your labour for that which satisfieth not ?
Hearken diligently unto me, and eat that which is good,
and let your soul delight itself in fatness.

2

3 I will make an everlasting covenant with you,
even the sure mercies of David :

4 Lo, I made him a witness to the peoples,
a leader and commander to the nations ;

- 5 Thou, too, shalt call nations whom thou knowest not,
and nations who know not thee shall run unto thee,
For the sake of Jehovah, thy God,
and of the Holy One of Israel, since he honoureth thee.

§ 96

1

- lv 6 Seek ye Jehovah while he may be found,
call ye upon him while he is near.
8 For my thoughts are not your thoughts,
neither are your ways my ways, saith Jehovah.
9 As the heavens are higher than the earth,
and as
So are my ways higher than your ways,
and my thoughts than your thoughts.

2

- lv 10 For as the rain and the snow from heaven
come down and return not thither,
Until they have watered the earth, and made it bring forth
seed to the sower and bread to the eater :
11 So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth ;
it shall not return unto me void,
Until it have accomplished that which I please,
and carried out that for which I sent it.

3

- 12 For ye shall go out with joy
and be led forth in peace :
The mountains shall break forth before you into singing,
and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands :
13 Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir-tree,
and instead of the nettle shall come up the myrtle-tree ;
And it shall be to Jehovah for a memorial,
an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off.

CHAPTER XXVI

THE FOUR FRAGMENTS

FROM the even surface of Deutero-Isaiah's uniform style four passages stand out so conspicuously that they have always attracted special notice, and have recently been the subject of much vehement discussion. All four alike are distinguished from their somewhat rhetorical context by a quiet intensity of tone, to which the reader's voice instinctively adapts itself. All alike are so plainly out of place in their present context that the most ingenious of German commentators find it hard to discover any thread of connexion ; whereas their removal restores continuity to the main argument. All four deal with the same subject—the mission of the Servant of Jehovah : and when read consecutively they appear to constitute a single whole. From these facts it would seem natural to conclude that they are four fragments of an independent poem, which have by some accident been interpolated into the larger poem.

But the question is not quite so easily settled. In the first place, there is an obvious connexion in subject and style between these fragments and the drama. The vocabulary and forms of language resemble each other so closely that scholars who attribute the two compositions to different authors are obliged to assume that one consciously imitated the other, though they cannot agree which was the original. Secondly, the subject of the fragments—the Servant of Jehovah—is also the subject of some portions of Deutero-Isaiah's long prophecy. And further, the second fragment immediately precedes an undoubtedly genuine passage which treats of Israel as the servant of

Jehovah. On these grounds many commentators claim that, in spite of difficulties, the fragments must be regarded as the work of Deutero-Isaiah and as rightly placed in their present context.

As a mere literary question this balance of arguments would be very interesting. But it is more than a literary question. The four passages in question are the most famous, the most important, and the most difficult, in the second half of the book of Isaiah. They have exercised an immense influence upon Christian thought since the age of the Apostles. They have been regarded as at once a prophecy and an interpretation of the life and death of Christ. We cannot, therefore, wonder that controversy regarding them should be acute.

It is impossible, in the space at my disposal, even to give an outline of this great controversy. I can only refer you to the writings of George Adam Smith, Duhm, Marti, and Giesebrecht, who take different sides in the debate. All I propose to do is to mention, without discussing them, some of the main questions which arise, and briefly to state the view which appears to me the most probable. The questions group themselves round two points—the authorship of the fragments and the interpretation of the term ‘Servant of Jehovah’.

As to the first, it has to be decided whether the four fragments are part of Deutero-Isaiah’s main prophecy. If not, whether they form a poem by themselves, whether they were written by Deutero-Isaiah, whether their date is earlier or later than the year 540.

As to the second, it is disputed whether the Servant of Jehovah is a personification of the people of Israel or of a portion of them, whether he is an individual prophet who is looked for in the future, or whether he is a martyr contemporary with the writer.

The mere enumeration of these questions, all of which are fiercely debated, will be my sufficient excuse for not discussing them here. If I now simply state my own opinion, it is not

because I think certainty can be attained, or because I wish to ignore other views, but because a definite statement is the basis for further study.

I start with the belief, which I have tried to commend to you, that chapters xl-lv of the book of Isaiah are not a collection of independent occasional utterances but a poetical whole, a great work of art. If that be granted, passages which appear to be excrescences, whose removal makes the general sense clearer, must be regarded as probably interpolations. Nor is their claim to their place made really stronger by pointing to phrases in the context which seem to resemble them.

Those phrases account for the interpolation being made in those particular places : but they do not prove an organic connexion. It would be easy, for instance, to divide a book of *Paradise Regained* into fragments and interpolate each, with some sort of plausibility, in a book of *Paradise Lost*, so that their keywords should find an echo in the context. It would be easy, also, to find arguments in favour of their genuineness at least as convincing as the proofs which Marti and others offer in order to justify the present position of the Servant fragments. Their defence is, in fact, more fatal than any attack.

As to the unity of the four fragments, every reader must judge for himself. My own feeling is that to read them through continuously is to be convinced that they form a whole, and a dramatic whole.

Scholars do not contend that the style and vocabulary of the fragments forbid us to ascribe them to the author of the main prophecy. Those who, like Duhm, claim for them a different origin, do so on the ground that the two poems involve conceptions of the Servant of Jehovah so different as to imply a long interval of time.

That there is a considerable difference cannot, I think, be seriously denied. In the Drama of Exile the Servant of Jehovah is introduced with a good deal of circumstance as a new char-

acter : and we are expressly told that he is a personification of Israel.¹ The fragments, on the other hand, take the Servant for granted as a familiar figure. Whether he is an individual or a personification may be disputed : but it cannot be denied that in these fragments his picture is far more definite and more impressive than the rather vague sketch in the drama. All rules of criticism, therefore, require us to infer that the sketch was made first and the finished picture afterwards.

If the ' Servant passages ' form a separate poem, and are later than the Drama of Exile, how much later are they? May we ascribe them to the same author, or must we rob him of his chief claim to immortality? A learned friend of mine ascribes them to a writer of the second century, and another eminent scholar suggests the Persian period. But either view involves the same difficulty. Unless the great majority of scholars are entirely wrong in the dates which they assign to the principal books of the Old Testament, although the Psalms bear witness to a rich vein of lyric poetry, in all other departments of literature there was a steady decline after the exile, and the writings which we know to be Maccabaeian are very poor, both in style and in thought. If Deutero-Isaiah did not compose the dramatic story of the Servant, which of these centuries of decadence produced an imitator who could excel the original? In which of these regions of sandy prose are we to seek the root which gave birth to the most brilliant and delicate flower of pathetic poetry?

We cannot decide this question by an appeal to our taste or our sense of probability. We may, however, get nearer to a decision if we can first settle another question which is closely connected with it. What does the name ' the Servant of Jehovah ' stand for in the fragments? In the drama of Restoration the Servant is admittedly and unquestionably a personification of Israel. Yet it is generally assumed that the Servant of the fragments is not a personification but an in-

¹ §§ 60, 67.

dividual. This opinion is at least as old as the Christian era. It was held by one school of Jewish doctors in the time of our Lord: but when the Christians used it to prove that Jesus was the Messiah, Jewish opinion became solid in favour of the other view. Now for fifty years there has been a division of opinion among Christian scholars. An increasing number regard the Servant as a personification, and of those who maintain that he is an individual a good many think they can identify him as an historical character who was contemporary with the author of the prophecy. A detailed examination of the grounds for these different views is hardly consistent with the plan of this book. The curious may be referred to an appendix at the end of the chapter. But the general reader will probably prefer only to see a statement of what seems the most probable view.

In the second of the fragments, in the third verse of chapter xlix, we find the words: 'Thou art my servant, Israel in whom I will glorify myself.' If the word Israel stands there, the question is practically settled. Bold critics, in spite of the requirements of the metre, simply cut it out. But even that does not establish their case. For, as Giesebrecht points out, there are in the four fragments fourteen places where the same words are applied to the Servant which are spoken of Israel in the undoubted writings of Deutero-Isaiah. For instance, in li. 7 Jehovah says to Israel, 'Fear ye not the insults of men, . . . for the moth shall eat them up like a garment': and in l. 9 the Servant says: 'Who is he that will condemn me? Lo! they will all perish like a garment: the moth will eat them up.' So many parallels might be explained by imitation, if we could believe that imitation so servile were possible to a poet of such genius. More reasonable is the alternative explanation, that Deutero-Isaiah, who is notoriously fond of repeating favourite phrases, was himself the author of the fragments. In either case the same conclusion seems to follow. Neither the poet himself nor a servile imitator would completely change the meaning of

the word *Servant*. It must continue to mean personified Israel.

This belief is confirmed by another consideration. In the fragments the figure of the *Servant* is regularly made to confront the heathen. It is for the nations, not for Israel, that he is a teacher (xlii. 4), a preacher (xlix. 2), a light (xlix. 6), a wonder (lii. 15), and a sacrifice (liii. 4, 11). Inexplicable as applied to a contemporary martyr, inconsistent with early Jewish conceptions of the Messiah, such language is a natural development of that which Deutero-Isaiah applies to Israel in his drama of restoration.

The individual interpretation of the prophecy involves serious inconsistencies. A leper, for instance, is an outcast, and cannot be brought to judgment. But leprosy and unjust judgment cease to be incongruous when both are obviously metaphorical. The continuance of life after death, again, is a natural image for the revival of a ruined nation; and the reader accepts it without asking for the miracle to be explained. And, further, the use of the tenses throughout the fragments—even the rapid transitions from past to future—becomes consistent and significant when the subject is not an individual, but a nation whose past, present, and future are all under review.

NOTE.—The following references are from Giesebrecht's list of parallels: xl. 27 = xlix. 4 : li. 5 = l. 8 : xli. 9, 10 = xlii. 1 : li. 7 = l. 9 : li. 4 = xlii. 1, xlix. 6 : li. 5 = xlii. 4 : xlv. 22 = xlix. 6 : xlv. 14 = liii. 12 : xlix. 22, 23 = lii. 14 : xlv. 23 = xlix. 3 : lv. 5 = xlii. 4 : xliii. 4 = xlix. 5.

APPENDIX TO CHAPTER XXVI

IN order to decide between the two views, which make the Servant an individual and a personification, we must examine each section separately, and see which interpretation it supports. Unhappily the text is very corrupt in some critical places, and each scholar naturally favours emendations which support his own view of the whole prophecy.

§ 97. Stanzas 1 and 3. The Servant is commissioned to present the law of God to 'the nations'. Now the duty of a prophet is always to preach to his own people. This stanza, therefore, tells against the individual interpretation.

Stanza 2. The method of teaching is not that of a prophet. It might belong to a 'scribe' as Duhm claims. But it might also be a description of the quiet influence of Israel in the world. They did not proselytize, but their patience and faith won many followers.

§ 98. Stanza 1. Here again it is not Israel to whom the Servant addresses himself but the 'peoples'.

Stanza 2. The phrases 'a sharp sword', 'a polished arrow', might be applied to a prophet. But then why is he 'hidden' and 'covered up'? Applied to Israel, the stanza would well describe the religious genius of the people, which remained latent until the time for its emission came.

Stanza 3. If the word Israel stands in the text, the personification is proved. On the strength of its omission in two manuscripts, and a supposed difficulty in the grammar, Duhm and others omit the word. But the metre requires it, an overwhelming MS. authority supports it, and most scholars find no difficulty in the grammar.

Stanza 5. The words in italics are a source of much difficulty. Does the verb 'to bring' refer to Jehovah or to the Servant? Grammatically, either is equally possible and equally awkward. If the Servant, then the Servant is an individual, who has a mission to Israel. But that is inconsistent with § 97 and § 98, 1. If Jehovah, the clause is merely an unpoetical anticipation of the first two lines of the next stanza. On the whole it seems highly probable that these lines result from an attempt to restore some words which had become illegible. The sense is quite complete without them.

§ 99. Stanzas 1-4 seem to admit of either interpretation. The conception of a trial, in which the Servant is victorious, with the aid of Jehovah, is rather more appropriate to the personified people.

§ 100. In the first line the name Israel is only a highly probable emendation, so no argument must be based upon it.

In the second stanza the Servant's mission is once more not to Israel but to 'nations' and 'kings'.

§ 101. The whole of this section admits of being applied to an individual. But there are serious difficulties.

The tenses are all past, except in the final stanza, and cannot legitimately be understood as 'prophetic perfects'. If, therefore, an individual is meant, there is much to be said for Duhm's view that the martyr is a contemporary of the author. Yet that involves a fresh difficulty. If the Servant is an historical person, his leprosy must be understood literally (stanzas 3 and 4). Now a leper is cut off from all intercourse with men; he can neither teach them, nor be brought to trial before them. The text of stanzas 9 and 10 is so corrupt that few conclusions can be safely drawn from them. All versions, however, involve reference to a resurrection of the Servant. But we have seen that a future life forms no part of Deutero-Isaiah's creed. If, therefore, the Servant is here described as an individual who will rise again, we have to deal not with a prophecy of Deutero-Isaiah, but of a much later author. These difficulties all dis-

appear if the Servant is a personification of Israel. Leprosy and judgment cease to clash when both are obviously metaphors. And the resurrection of a people was a familiar image to all readers of Ezekiel's vision in the valley (chap. xxxvii).

The above remarks may now be brought to bear upon the three current interpretations of the prophecy.

A. A review of the phrases to which attention has been drawn shows that they fall into four classes. Some of them require us to identify the Servant with Israel; others are reconcilable with an individual, but more easily applied to the nation; others, which rather point to an individual, are most naturally understood of a contemporary of the prophet; the only one which, in the English version, seems definitely Messianic, involves doubtful grammar in the Hebrew, and wears the air of an interpolation. These and other considerations make it very difficult to maintain the traditional belief that the prophecy was a conscious prediction of a Messiah for whose advent the writer looked in the distant future. They enforce at least some such modifications as will be found in Professor George Adam Smith's admirable chapters¹ on the subject.

B. The second view, being less familiar, must be stated at greater length. I cannot do better than quote the words of its chief advocate, Professor Duhm.

'The main thought of these poems, the conception of the Servant of Jehovah, is not unknown to Deutero-Isaiah, though his treatment is entirely different. With him the actual Israel is the Servant of Jehovah, chosen, protected, and destined for a splendid future, but at present blind and deaf, imprisoned and robbed, a very worm, despised by the heathen, and *full of sins*. On the other hand, the hero of these poems is *opposed to the nation*, blameless, the disciple of Jehovah, and daily

¹ Isaiah, vol. ii, pp. 231-396.

enlightened by him, *sent on a mission to the nation* and to the heathen, and executing his commission in all quietness. Very different from Deutero-Isaiah, who loves to cry aloud, he does not let his voice be heard in the streets. He suffers too; but, like Jeremiah and Job, from the insults of unbelievers, and from the leprosy with which Jehovah has smitten him; not, like Israel, from foreign oppression. He is not exactly a prophet, but a disciple of the prophet; a teacher of the Law, and therefore put forward by Malachi (ii. 5, 6) as the ideal Levite. . . . The past is so described that one is almost compelled to assume an historical foundation for the picture in the life of a contemporary. Though the poet draws much from Jeremiah and Job, there are still many distinguishing features.' Duhm goes on to suggest that the hero was a real prophet or scribe of the period between the exile and the time of Ezra.

Let us first notice the three phrases which I have printed in italics. It would be difficult to find any description of Israel more alien to the spirit of Deutero-Isaiah than 'full of sins'. From beginning to end he idealizes the present Israel and throws all their sins into the long past. The other two phrases err by substituting the singular for the plural, i. e. *nation* for *nations*—and that makes all the difference. For it is to the *nations*, i. e. to the Gentiles, not to Israel, that the Servant has a mission: it is with the *nations*, not with his own people, that he is regularly contrasted. Besides this Duhm has no explanation to offer of the references to a resurrection, which cannot be ignored. Much more might be said. The reader who desires to see a detailed refutation of this view will find it in Giesebrecht's *Der Knecht Jahwes des Deuterojesaja*.

C. Since both the interpretations, which make the Servant an individual, are open to such grave objections, there is a strong presumption in favour of the view maintained in the text, that the Servant is primarily a personification of Israel. Though this view has been sufficiently stated in the text, a word

must be said about a variation of it which has many adherents. The Servant, some argue, cannot be the whole of Israel, but may well be the pious minority who constitute the true Israel. That assumption would indeed solve the difficulty caused by the words in italics in stanza 5 of § 98 ; for it would allow the Servant to have a mission both to Israel and to the nations. But it raises a fresh set of difficulties in explaining § 101 : and it obliges us to imagine a double reference in all the other sections. On the whole it appears to me the least plausible of all the solutions which have been proposed for the riddle of the Servant.

CHAPTER XXVII

THE SERVANT OF JEHOVAH

It would be presumptuous to claim certainty for an opinion which is denied by some eminent scholars, as well as by popular tradition. But if the reasons I have given lend probability to the view that the Servant is a personification of Israel, we shall do well to test it further by inquiring whether it affords a consistent explanation of the four fragments when treated as a whole. I therefore invite the reader's attention to a short analysis. If my view is correct the fragments make up a poem which is dramatic in the same sense as Deutero-Isaiah's larger work. The characters are the same—Jehovah and the prophet; Israel and the nations. The stage is as wide and indefinite as before. The successive speeches are lyrical. The movement is one of thought—argumentative and prophetic—rather than of action. Yet there is just such a difference as we might expect. The dramatic structure is of a more advanced type. In the former drama one speaker addresses several silent characters, and is rarely interrupted by the prophet. Here all four characters take a share in the dialogue; the relations between them lend liveliness to the movement; and the human voices of the two chief speakers—Israel and the chorus of nations—bring us more into the world of actual experience. The poet now avoids the iterations which mar the earlier drama. Narrative takes the place of argument. The movement is so rapid that in twenty-nine stanzas we pass from the hero's divine commission, through his labours and apparent failure, to his triumphant vindication. That the poet's command of language as well as of construction had developed,

is sufficiently proved by the unanimous preference which seventy generations of men have given to the later poem.

§ 97. Like the larger drama, this scene opens with a speech from Jehovah, which defines the whole situation. Israel has been chosen, inspired, and commissioned to instruct the heathen in the divine Law. Not by force, nor by loud eloquence, but by gentleness and patience he will convert the world.

§ 98. The first words of the Servant, almost identical with the first words of Jehovah in the drama of Restoration, imply the same vast stage to which we there grew accustomed, and the presence upon it of the personified nations of all the world. To them he addresses himself, and tells the history of his life up to the moment of the great commission which they have just heard entrusted to him. He was chosen by Jehovah long ago. He was trained to be an instrument for the divine purposes, but long remained unemployed, like an arrow in the quiver. When at last sent forth to glorify God, he seemed completely to fail. But all the while God was with him; and now tells him that he shall not only be restored to personal dignity, but shall be a light to the world.

§ 99. We have seen in the great drama how a change from argumentative to emotional speech is accompanied by a change of metre. So here the speaker, who has made his calm statement in equal lines of three accents, now celebrates the struggle of his life in the lyric form which was usual in dirges—a halting alternation of three accents with two, which has almost the effect of a sob. Two stanzas describe his devotion to the study of the law; two more, his patient and courageous endurance of the persecution which it brought upon him; and the last two, his confidence that in the end he will be vindicated before the bar of Jehovah.

§ 100. Jehovah, to whom he has appealed, now describes the amazed confusion which will overwhelm kings and nations when they discover the true worth of the Servant, and the meaning of his destiny.

§ 101. Immediately there follows the fulfilment of Jehovah's prediction. The nations in chorus pour out a mingled strain of self-accusation and self-excuse for the way in which they have treated the heroic sufferer. When a tree is cut down, they remind us, an ill-favoured sapling may grow from its root, parched for want of the parent shade. In like manner Israel, cut off from Palestine, grew up in the drought of exile, straggling, weak, and ill-favoured, without the normal features of national life. Seeing him despised and ill-used by all, they naturally shrank from him as from a leper among nations. Yet, as they now repentantly recognize, it was for their sake that he was enduring pain. Their sin demanded punishment; and he bore the stripes which they deserved—bore them with a calm patience like that of the lamb which resigns itself to slaughter. And all the while those for whose sake he was suffering were his judges and executioners. They perverted the course of justice against the innocent and uncomplaining Israel. Their hard hearts felt no pity for his lonely death, no admiration for the nobility which provoked and endured so much suffering. Their malice pursued him even after death, and cast his corpse into a malefactor's grave. But now there is to be a change. Jehovah will vindicate his faithful servant in the eyes of the world; will restore him to life, and grant him a glorious reward.

§ 102. Jehovah brings the scene to a fitting conclusion by confirming and amplifying the prophetic words of the repentant nations. With the emphatic double phrases, which Deutero-Isaiah loves, he proclaims that the Servant's willing sacrifice, which is the salvation of many peoples, will be rewarded with a triumphant vindication in the eyes of all the world. Israel, in other words, is to rank with the mightiest of the nations, and enjoy an ample share of the wealth which belongs to the great.

Perhaps the last thought has not received all the attention which it deserves. Modern readers, who have seen only the

Messiah in the Servant, have minimized or disregarded the meaning of the words 'He shall divide the spoil with the mighty'. Such language jars upon us, even in a metaphor, when it is applied to Jesus. But if the Servant signifies in the first instance the whole people of Israel, the phrase appears natural and appropriate. And it harmonizes so completely with the later chapters of the drama of Restoration as to add a fresh reason for ascribing this poem also to Deutero-Isaiah.

The reader will, I trust, feel that the analysis of the poem reinforces the arguments in favour of identifying the Servant with the people of Israel. None of the doubts, which confessedly hang over details of the text, are important enough to obscure the general movement of the poem, which (if thus understood) is so consistent and so dramatic as to be absolutely convincing. We are thereby relieved of the main difficulty which stood in the way of acknowledging Deutero-Isaiah's claim to what has long been reckoned the brightest jewel in his poet's crown. But we have still to account for the very great difference which exists between the prophet's earlier and later presentations of the same figure. How does the Servant who needs to be saved become the Servant who is the world's Saviour? The latter is not a mere development of the former, but contains a new element. Now a prophet's inspiration does not move him to speak without some relation to circumstances: the greatest prophecies have always their occasion, if not their cause, in some outward event. We must look, therefore, for something in the history of the years following 540 B.C. which may have given occasion for the most notable of the prophet's utterances. No certainty has been attained or is attainable. It is only therefore as an hypothesis that I venture to offer what appears to be a reasonable explanation.

The author of the fifty-fifth chapter, the trumpet-call which summoned the exiles to Jerusalem, could not himself remain behind. The conclusion is irresistible that he was one of

that first band which crossed the desert with Sheshbazzar and Zerubbabel. Full of exultation he must have been, as he travelled to the fulfilment of his hopes, surrounded by those whom he had inspired with enthusiasm. Yet he was destined to disappointment. The scanty records of the returned exiles show that little or nothing was accomplished of all their plans. After a futile demonstration about rebuilding the Temple, they remained inactive for fifteen years: and even when the prophets Haggai and Zechariah stirred some of them to make a beginning, they found little beside torpor and indifference in the community at large. The explanation is not far to seek. The small number of the returned exiles, the poverty and heathenish degradation of the Jews whom they found in the land, and the hostility of the neighbouring tribes which had encroached upon the Jewish territory, were enough to damp the most fiery enthusiasm. And if others were disappointed, what must have been the feelings of our prophet, when he compared the squalid facts with his own glorious vaticinations? Unless he were ready to renounce his faith, he could not but seek for some new and profounder interpretation of the message which God had given him to proclaim.

He who had meditated in retirement upon the fortunes of an abstract Israel, whom he had idealized, was now in the midst of the individual Israelites, and face to face with the concrete problems of their weakness, their poverty, and their oppression. He must have become aware not only that Jehovah's servant was still blind and deaf and wretched, as he had described him, but also that he was worse than a leper among the nations—at once outcast and oppressed. What was the meaning, he surely asked himself, of all the suffering which yet continued after the people had received double for all their sins? Were all the promises, of which he had been the channel, to find no better fulfilment than a precarious lodging in a ruined city begirt by foes? Must there not be some real restoration awaiting Israel in future?

The inward voice which had once bidden him cry 'that all flesh is grass, but the word of our God stands fast for ever', was not, we may well believe, silent in his extremity. To his passionate questionings it returned an answer which placed the whole of human history in a new light. The meaning of Israel's position was not exhausted by a vindication of his claims. For he was more than the favourite servant of Jehovah. He was also the divinely commissioned preacher, whose words and example would in the end convert the nations. And he was more than a preacher. He was the divinely appointed victim, laid upon the world's altar to expiate the world's transgressions. The measure of his suffering was also the measure of his privilege; for the goal of his existence was not a national triumph but the salvation of all mankind. Not, therefore, until the sacrifice was complete, the teaching fully given, and the salvation realized, could the suffering Servant be restored, vindicated, and exalted to honour.

We can easily picture how, under the spell of a new thought so profound and so beautiful, the prophet's eye kindled, while his voice took those deeper tones which thrill us even now. In the sustained beauty and calm intensity, which take the place of a somewhat rhetorical brilliance, we recognize the natural language of one who is possessed for the first time by the inspiring conception of vicarious sacrifice. His spirit glows with a divine flame, which warms and illumines all who come within its influence. His enraptured thought paints his ideal hero in colours so intense and clear that they seem to present not an abstraction but a person. It is natural to the poet, who loves the concrete, to lend such touches of reality to his personification. And there was a further reason why he should do so here. The actual Israel, with whom he was in daily contact, seemed unequal to a destiny so splendid and so searching. The selfishness, the mutual jealousy, the mean vices and the timidity, which early revealed themselves as characteristic of the restored Israel, supplied little material for

an heroic figure. In the hours of brooding which preceded composition the poet's thought would sometimes turn from the ungrateful task of idealizing the unworthy Israel of the present, and dwell upon the image of a single Israelite who should be the type of Jehovah's true Servant. Now in the odes addressed to Zion, as we have seen, two strands of thought are intertwined. Phrases which describe the actual city alternate with those which belong to the personification. May it not be that something analogous took place with regard to the Servant of Jehovah? May not the fire of the poet's passion, in the moment of writing, have fused the two conceptions, kindred though distinct, which had long been present together in his mind—the personified people and the ideal person? If so, it was from no revolution of thought, but from an unconscious though inspired evolution, that there emerged that vision of a personal redeemer, which, however dimly seen by the prophet himself, was to become clear to a later generation of Jews, and to be explained, justified, and realized in the life and death of Jesus Christ.

Socrates complained that the poets of his time were unable to tell the meaning of their own words. So it has always been. The greatest poems of the world mean more to after ages than they did to their authors. That is partly because the poet sees truth in the concrete, and lacks the power of analysis and abstraction. May we not also say that it is partly due to the mystery of inspiration, which makes the poet the vehicle of a gift greater than he can fully comprehend? Then we need not be surprised if the great poet of the exile shows, by the oscillation of his language, that he did not realize the full import of the message which he bore to mankind.

THE DRAMA OF
THE SERVANT OF JEHOVAH

§ 97

JEHOVAH

I

xlii 1 Behold my servant, whom I uphold ;
my chosen, in whom my soul delighteth :
I have put my spirit upon him ;
he shall set forth the Right to the nations.

2

2 He shall not shout, nor cry aloud,
nor cause his voice to be heard in the streets :
3 A bruised reed, I will not break him ;
a dimly burning wick, I will not quench him.

3

4 To the nations shall he set forth the Right ;
he shall not grow dim nor be extinguished ;
He shall yet set fast the Right in the earth,
and the isles shall wait for his instruction.

§ 98

THE SERVANT OF JEHOVAH

I

xlix 1 Listen, O isles, unto me :
 and hearken, ye peoples, from afar !
 Jehovah hath called me from the womb,
 from my mother's lap hath he pronounced my name.

2

2 He made my mouth like a sharp sword,
 he hid me in the shadow of his hand :
 He made me a polished arrow,
 in his quiver he covered me up.

3

3 And he said unto me : Thou art my servant,
 Israel, in whom I will glorify myself :
 5b And I was honourable in the sight of Jehovah,
 and my God became my strength.

4

4 But I said : I have laboured in vain,
 idly and for naught have I spent my strength.
 Yet surely my Right was with Jehovah,
 and my recompence with my God.

5

5 And now thus saith Jehovah,
 who formed me from the womb for his servant :
 (*To bring back Jacob to him,*
and Israel shall be gathered to him :)

6

6 It is too light a thing to raise up the tribes of Jacob,
 and to restore the preserved of Israel :
 So I have set thee for a light to the nations,
 that my deliverance may be to the ends of the earth.

§ 99

THE SERVANT OF JEHOVAH

1

- 1 4 The Lord Jehovah hath given me
the eloquence of his disciples ;
That I may know how to quicken the weary
with words [of consolation].

2

- 5 In the morning he wakens mine ear
to hearken like his disciples,
And I have not been rebellious
nor turned away backward.

3

- 6 I gave up my back to the lash,
and my beard to be plucked out ;
My face I did not hide
from insult and from spitting.

4

- 7 But the Lord Jehovah helpeth me ;
therefore was I not confounded :
Therefore I set my face like flint,
and knew I should not be ashamed.

5

- 8 My vindicator is near me : who opposeth me ?
let us stand up together.
Who entereth into judgment against me ?
let him come near to me.

6

- 9 The Lord Jehovah helpeth me :
who is he that will condemn me ?
Lo ! they will all perish like a garment :
the moth will eat them up.

§ 100

JEHOVAH

I

- lii 13 Behold, my servant Israel shall be exalted,
 he shall be raised up and be very high.
 14 Like as many were appalled at his fate,
 so [shall he shine forth before many.]

2

- 15 Many nations will be amazed at him,
 and kings will shut their mouths before him ;
 For what had not been told them they see,
 and what they had not heard they shall understand.

§ 101

THE NATIONS

I

- liii 1 Who would have believed what now we hear ?
 and to whom was Jehovah's arm revealed ?
 Why, he grew up like a sapling before us,
 like a shoot out of dry ground !

2

- 2 He had no comeliness that we should look at him,
 nor beauty that we should desire him :
 lii 14 So marred was his face, out of human likeness,
 and his form from the shape of man.

3

- liii 3 He was despised and forsaken of men,
 a man of pain and familiar with sickness :
 Yea, like one from whom men hide their faces,
 he was despised, and we esteemed him not.

4

- 4 Yet it was our sickness that he bore,
our pain that he took upon himself,
While we esteemed him stricken,
smitten of God, and afflicted.

5

- 5 Yet he was pierced for our transgressions,
he was bruised for our iniquities ;
The chastisement of our peace was upon him,
and with his stripes we were healed.

6

- 6 All we like sheep had gone astray,
we had turned every one to his own way,
While Jehovah laid upon him
the iniquity of us all.

7

- 7 He was sore pressed, yet he resigned himself,
and opened not his mouth,
As a lamb that is led to the slaughter,
and as a sheep that before her shearers is dumb.

8

- 8 Shut out from justice, he was hurried away ;
and as for his fate, who regarded it ?—
That he was cut off out of the land of the living,
stricken to death for our transgressions.

9

- 9 They made his grave with the wicked,
and his tomb with the ungodly,
Although he had done no violence
neither was any deceit in his mouth.

10

- 10 But Jehovah hath pleasure in his servant :
 11 he will deliver his soul from anguish ;
 He will let him see [the light] and be satisfied,
 and will vindicate him from his woes.

§ 102

JEHOVAH

1

- lii 11 My servant is the scorn of the world,
 though it was their sins that he bore :
 12 Therefore shall he receive a portion with the great,
 and with the mighty shall he divide the spoil,

2

Forasmuch as he poured out his life-blood
 and was numbered with the transgressors,
 Though it was the sins of the world that he bore,
 and for the transgressors made intercession.

CHAPTER XXVIII

THE PROPHET OF EZRA'S AGE

SOME discoveries, when once they are made, appear so obvious that every man wonders why he did not make them for himself. Among these may be ranked the observation, which was first published about twenty years ago, that the last eleven chapters of the book of Isaiah could not be the work of the same author who wrote chapters xl to lv. For directly we put off the spectacles of tradition, and read the text of chapters xl to lxvi with eyes clear of prejudice, we cannot fail to observe that the end of chapter lv marks a division between two documents which are strikingly different, not only in their literary style, but also in their references to place and time, their political and social outlook, and their standards of doctrine and worship.

The author of chapters xl to lv is clearly in exile with his people. He writes to assure them that restoration is at hand, and to urge them to seize the opportunity of returning to Jerusalem. Though he knows that his people has been sinful in the past, he believes that it has made expiation by sufferings, and he expresses no anxiety lest it should relapse into idolatry or the other evils of the monarchy. He looks with charity upon all the world, and expects that the heathen, recognizing the supreme claims of Jehovah, will come to worship him in Jerusalem. His conception of God's nature and providence is the loftiest and purest which can be found in the Old Testament. Though not absolutely free from particularism and anthropomorphism, it approaches very near to the Christian doctrine that God is the father of all men, just and loving, spiritual and free from human passions.

On the other hand the author of chapters lvi to lxvi is obviously living in Jerusalem, for his continual references to the city and its inhabitants admit of no other explanation. The hope which inspires him is not that of seeing the exiles leave Babylon for Jerusalem, but of welcoming fresh bands of exiles who are to return from all sides and strengthen the community which is already established in Judah. The obstacle to the fulfilment of this hope is not the power of Babylon, nor the terrors of a desert march, but the sins of the Israelites among whom he lives: so that the substance of his preaching is not consolation and promise, but stern denunciation of the idolatry and injustice which delay the bestowal of God's mercy. Towards the outer world, again, his attitude contrasts with Deutero-Isaiah's. He predicts that the nations will be destroyed by miraculous plagues: a remnant of them will acknowledge the might of Jehovah, and become servants to Israel: but none will be admitted to any share of privilege or favour. For the Jehovah whom he worships is once more a tribal God of Israel alone. Red with the blood of slaughtered foes, he recalls the God whom Miriam described as 'a man of war'.

If our imaginary student were reading the Hebrew text, he would also observe differences of style which are partly concealed in the English translation. He would observe that the language of the later author is prosaic and the verse halting; that there is much repetition and confusion; that many passages are mere mosaics of phrases taken from earlier prophets; and that the whole book is not an artistic composition, but a collection of separate utterances.

He would probably go on to inquire whether a date could be assigned to their composition: and would soon discover that references in the book seem to determine at least the century in which it was written. Several times the author speaks of the temple in such a way as to show that it was not a recent building. For example, in lvi. 7 he writes, 'mine

house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples': in lxvi. 6, 'a voice from the temple, a voice of Jehovah that rendereth recompense to his enemies': in lxiii. 18, 'Why have the godless dishonoured thy temple, and our oppressors profaned thy sanctuary?' Obviously a good many years must have passed before the new temple could be spoken of as a familiar fact. Let us for the moment assume that sixteen years might suffice; and we reach the year 500 B.C. as the earliest possible date for the composition of the book. If, again, we ask what is the latest possible date, we find an answer in the passages which speak of the walls of Jerusalem as being still in ruins. In lx. 10 the writer says to Zion, 'Strangers shall build up thy walls': in lxi. 4, 'they shall build up the ancient ruins': and in lxii. 6 angels are appointed to remind Jehovah that the walls need to be rebuilt. It is plain that such words must have been written before the year 445, in which the walls were actually rebuilt by Nehemiah. Provisionally, therefore, we may conclude that these chapters were composed in the first half of the fifth century.

Here an obvious criticism has to be met. The arguments used for fixing the date depend upon the substantial unity of the book. How do we know, it may be asked, that these chapters are not independent fragments, whose dates may be very various? A formal discussion of the book's unity would be technical and tedious. Perhaps it is enough to say here that the majority of experts agree in attributing nearly the whole to a single author, and those who find a diversity of authors believe them all to be contemporaries. As we go through the chapters one by one every reader can judge for himself whether my explanations, given on the assumption of substantial unity, are convincing; and, if not, what exceptions must be made. Even if there should be exceptions, these will not, I believe, seriously affect the question of date. We know, then, what period of history must be studied by way of introduction to the writings which are commonly and con-

veniently described as the book of Trito-Isaiah. I will therefore, without going into detail, give a general sketch of the century which separates Deutero-Isaiah from the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem.

The liberal policy of Cyrus allowed a large number of Jewish exiles to return to Palestine in the year 536. He restored some of their sacred vessels, which had been brought among the spoil to Babylon: he empowered them to rebuild their temple: and he promised them the assistance of his representatives in Syria. Led by a prince of the royal house and by Joshua the chief of the priests, a great caravan crossed the desert and arrived safely in Jerusalem. Of the first fifteen years after their journey nothing is recorded, except that they built an altar on the Temple hill and organized some regular forms of worship. The rest of the story we can only infer, and that imperfectly, from the casual references of later times. One thing is certain. The high hopes of Deutero-Isaiah were not realized. The city of Zion, instead of being restored, as by magic, and filled with a teeming population, remained almost a ruin in which few were found willing to dwell. The prophet had foretold that the beauty and richness of the new city would be matched by the righteousness and peace of the restored spiritual edifice. Israel was to be glorious in itself, and a centre of illumination for all the surrounding peoples. Instead of this, the returned exiles, whether they formed the garrison of Jerusalem or settled in the cities and villages of Judah, found themselves a small minority among the people of the land, the descendants of those whom the Babylonian conquerors had allowed to remain. Weak in numbers, absorbed in the hard struggle for daily bread, they soon forgot their ideals, and accepted or tolerated the low moral standard and heathenish customs which had grown up among those deserted and miserable wrecks of the nation. Into what a state of terror they had fallen, we learn from the indignant protests of Haggai and Zechariah, who in the year 520 roused the people to begin

rebuilding the Temple. Stirred by the words of the prophets into some degree of enthusiasm, Zerubbabel, who was now the recognized leader, set to work in earnest. The objections of Tattenai, governor of the province, were overruled by an appeal to Darius; the jealous opposition of the Samaritans had little practical effect; and in less than five years the new temple was completed. A very simple structure it must have been; but it was to be the home of a more zealous worship than the splendid Temple of Solomon.

From the dedication of the Temple in the spring of 515 B. C. to the arrival of Ezra in 458, the records are a blank. We do not even know how long Zerubbabel remained governor of Judah, nor who were his successors. Some scholars infer from a phrase in Zechariah's writings that Zerubbabel was privately crowned as king. If the ambition of the Jews led them so rashly to provoke the Persian government, all authority must have been taken away from the royal house of Judah, and other rulers (perhaps Persians) appointed instead. Such a catastrophe would account for the sudden silence of the historian. However that may be, a new order begins with the sudden appearance of Ezra upon the scene. We know nothing of his antecedents, except that he was a 'scribe' of Jewish race who resided in Babylon. Somehow or other he obtained a commission from Artaxerxes to be the governor (Tirshatha) of Judah, with special authority to effect a religious reform. He carried with him, apparently, a revised code of law, the nucleus, if not the greater part, of what we know as the books of Exodus and Leviticus. It was the product of much study and enthusiasm during the exile; and his chief aim was to secure its observance in the sacred city. But the ill-judged precipitancy with which he acted upon arriving in Jerusalem took from him the power of making extensive reforms. To his great surprise and sorrow, Ezra found that the returned exiles, especially those of the upper class, had contracted many marriages with women of the neighbouring tribes—the Ammonites, the Moabites, and

the Samaritans. Mixture of race was so sure to involve mixture of religion that he naturally regarded this as a great evil. He was not content with providing against such marriages in the future. Lest 'the holy seed' should be corrupted, he set himself to annul those which had already been made. His indignant eloquence, combined with his authority as governor, prevailed upon a public meeting of the people in Jerusalem to consent to the dismissal of all foreign wives. Hastily and harshly they were sent back to the homes of their parents, whom the insult roused to fury. They stirred up the leaders of the Samaritans and other tribes with such effect that Ezra's attempt to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem was crushed, and the defenceless city was made unsafe for its inhabitants. Partly for that reason, and partly by a natural reaction of feeling, the mass of the Jews turned against him. His triumph was over, his influence was dead; very soon, we gather, his formal authority was revoked by the Persian king. Though he remained in Jerusalem he could neither reform his people nor defend them.

In the year 445 the Persian king gave a fresh commission to his Jewish cupbearer, arming him with power to rule the people and fortify the city. Nehemiah, who was a man of great practical ability, lost no time. He roused the enthusiasm of the people, organized their work, and in fifty-two days completed the rebuilding of the walls. He reformed many social abuses, and induced the people to accept Ezra's code of laws. But he could not repair the mischief which Ezra had done. The Samaritans remained obstinately hostile. Having given up the hope of union with the Jews, they made plans for building a temple on Mount Gerizim, which should rival that of Jerusalem. Though their plan was not carried out for some years, the very rumour of it embittered the hatred which the Jews entertained against them.

CHAPTER XXIX

THE SINS OF JERUSALEM

THE prophecies contained in chapters lvi–lxvi are neither wholly independent, like those of the first Isaiah, nor continuous, like those of the second. While some of them appear to be written for particular occasions, others are linked together in a literary fashion which is evidently borrowed from Deutero-Isaiah. Some of them can be dated with tolerable precision: others appear equally suitable to all the years of a certain period. Most readers recognize a break between chapters lx and lxi: and it is even questioned whether the later group of chapters is not the earlier in point of time. On the whole it seems most convenient to deal with the prophecies in the order in which they usually stand.

§ 103. The short prophecy which comprises the first eight verses of chapter lvi forms a connecting link between the second and the third Isaiah. The great prophet of the exile had expressly promised that the heathen should be freely admitted to the reconstituted community of Israel. 'One shall say, I am Jehovah's; and another shall call himself by the name of Jacob: and another shall write on his hand "Jehovah's own", and shall receive the surname of Israel' (xliv. 5). Influenced, perhaps, by such utterances, the exiles who returned were liberal in their treatment of kindred peoples. Such liberality was liable to abuse, especially since the Jews who had remained in the land were but too closely allied with the heathen: and the abuse would naturally cause a reaction. Even before Ezra came to Jerusalem, it would seem, there was a party in favour of separating entirely from the outer world, lest 'the holy seed' should be polluted. This prophecy appears to be directed

against the reaction. It claims for all foreigners the right to become proselytes, and as such to enjoy the full privileges of the Jewish church. One of its phrases breathes the very spirit of Deutero-Isaiah—'My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations'. The contrast between that saying and the whole tendency of the following chapters has caused many scholars to deny that it could have been written by the same author. But may we not very well suppose that the author soon afterwards came under the influence of Ezra, and imbibed from his teaching the separatism which is so fiercely preached in the subsequent prophecies?

That is the more probable because his use of two familiar words marks him as already a legalist. When Deutero-Isaiah spoke of righteousness and salvation, he meant morality and the restoration of Israel to their own land. But in this prophecy, as all through the later chapters, the same Hebrew words bear a meaning so different as often to demand a different translation. 'Righteousness' means the observance of the ceremonial law or else the victory which Jehovah grants as the reward of such observance. 'Salvation' means deliverance from the foes who surround Jerusalem, that is to say, their destruction.

§ 104. Whatever doubts may hang over the age and authorship of the first eight verses of chapter lvi, the ninth verse opens a series of prophecies whose date and reference can be determined with tolerable certainty. First we find a poem in nine stanzas, denouncing the evils of the time just before Ezra's arrival. Borrowing a striking phrase from Jeremiah,¹ the prophet invites all the beasts of prey to attack Jerusalem, since her watch-dogs are useless. The rulers, in other words, are given up to feasting and to drink; and their unjust judgments destroy the righteous, who find peace only in the grave. If we remember that the rulers in question are mainly the priests (for of course the Persian governor is out of the question) we shall see how closely the first three stanzas correspond with the

¹ Jer. xii. 9.

charges which Malachi brought against the priesthood shortly before the coming of Ezra.¹ In the fourth stanza a sudden turn of thought carries us away from Jerusalem. These careless and oppressive rulers were just those who (now as in Nehemiah's time) had intermarried with the foreigner or with the mixed race of the Samaritans, whose hybrid religion, placing Jehovah and heathen gods side by side, was peculiarly odious to the stricter Jews. Naturally, therefore, the prophet passes on to a denunciation of the Samaritan community. This people, half Jewish, half heathen by race and religion, who worship in high places and sacrifice to Moloch, yet claim kindred with Israel, are first described as the sons of the sorceress, and then personified, after the manner of Ezekiel, in the figure of a wanton woman. The relentless realism of the artist does not shrink from painting the coarsest details.

§ 105. Condemnation of the evil is naturally allied with consolation for the good. Therefore in the next prophecy we find words of hope and promise addressed to those pious Israelites in Jerusalem who were enduring poverty and persecution. The oracle contained in verses 14 to 21 takes its text from the words with which the former concludes—'He that trusts in me shall possess the land'. We have seen that Deutero-Isaiah sometimes connects two poems in this way: and in his dramatic style such connexion is natural. But Trito-Isaiah adopts the same form of connexion without a dramatic motive; and he does it so frequently that it becomes a mannerism.

This poem, though some of its phrases are borrowed from Deutero-Isaiah, is very far from reflecting the spirit of his teaching. The faithful Jews are described in an entirely new way, as the poor, the humble, the contrite. Their enemies are always the wicked. Our familiarity with the later psalms, in which these phrases recur continually, tends to conceal from us the importance of the change which they represent. Their author has travelled far from the wide charity of Deutero-

¹ Malachi ii.

Isaiah. How far, is shown even more clearly by the language of the sixteenth verse. By 'the souls which Jehovah has made' our author means, not all mankind, but Israel alone. And again in the nineteenth verse the proclamation of peace to him that is far off and him that is near is a promise, not to all humanity, but only to two divisions of the Jews, those who are in Palestine and those who are exiles in foreign countries.

§ 106. The fifty-eighth chapter belongs to another occasion and is addressed to a different audience. Nehemiah tells us that one of his main difficulties arose from the cruelty with which the wealthy Jews exacted debts from the poor, even while they were all alike engaged in building the walls: so that the poor had to sell their children into slavery in order to pay extortionate interest. Yet these oppressors believed themselves to be at once patriotic and pious. It was men of this class who, a few years before Nehemiah came, approached the prophet with an earnest remonstrance. They had rigorously observed the fasts which had become almost as important in their religion as the Sabbath, and yet God allowed their enemies to harass them. Why did he not reward their piety with his protection? The reply is almost an echo of Isaiah's great discourse on sacrifice. It might be summed up in his phrases: 'Bring no more oblations: punish them that do violence; help the orphan to his rights; maintain the cause of the widow.'¹ The spirit of formalism remains the same though its outward expression varies. Instead of sacrifice, we now hear of fasting as the ground of merit, while injustice and oppression do not even change their forms.

§ 107. The irregular and inartistic structure of this poem have given rise to some doubts about its authorship. It seems to consist of three divisions of unequal length. In the first of these the prophet ascribes the present unhappy condition of the people to their own sins. They had been asking why the promises made a century before had not yet been fulfilled.

¹ i. 13, 17 (§ 41).

Was the arm¹ of the Lord, of which Deutero-Isaiah had spoken so confidently, too short to deliver his people? No, replies the prophet, but the people do not deserve deliverance.

The second division exhibits a change of tone. Here the prophet, identifying himself with the people, appeals to God for pity. On behalf of all he makes confession of the sins which were named in the first part of the poem—impiety, injustice, and oppression.

The third division takes the form of an apocalyptic narrative. It describes, as in a vision, how Jehovah, seeing that there was no earthly champion of right, arms himself for conflict with the powers of evil which fill the world. Like the primeval chaos, in the legend to which Deutero-Isaiah² also refers, the foe comes on like a flood, but only to be destroyed.

This apocalyptic passage, if (as appears probable) it is a genuine part of Trito-Isaiah's writing, demands our attention. For it is the first sound of a note which in a later age will become dominant. There is an essential difference between prophecy and apocalypse. The prophet (as we saw in Chapter XIV) looks to the divinely guided process of history to bring a better era. The apocalyptic writer, driven to despair by a long series of disasters and by the weakness and wickedness of men, has no hope except in the direct and visible intervention of the Almighty. In the book of Enoch and other writings of the second and first centuries, that hope fills the whole horizon. But here, and again in the sixty-third and sixty-sixth chapters, it appears only as an episode. And in each case we may hesitate to decide how far the vision has the full character of apocalypse, and how far it rests upon earlier forms of poetry which represented Jehovah as a nature god who was manifest in the storm, the plague, and other powers of destruction. Perhaps we shall do best to regard these passages of Trito-Isaiah as intermediate between early personification and true apocalypse.

¹ l. 2 (§ 87).

² li. 9 (§ 89).

We need not assume that our author was himself the inventor of the new style. He seems to pass into it unconsciously: and he is so largely an imitator that here too he is probably following older models. Nevertheless these passages are important for us, because they are the earliest examples of apocalyptic writing which have survived.

§ 108. We come now to the most ambitious and elaborate poem in Trito-Isaiah's book. It is not, indeed, more original than the others. The general structure, as well as particular phrases, reveal a close imitation of Deutero-Isaiah's¹ addresses to Zion. The echoes, however, are skilfully and harmoniously disposed: the plan of the poem is simple and effective: the thought, if not very elevated, is vigorous and direct. The first stanza presents the figure of Zion illuminated by God's presence, while the rest of the world lies in darkness. The next three stanzas tell how the multitudes of exiled Israelites are to return from all quarters of the earth. In the fifth, sixth, and seventh stanzas the prophet celebrates the glory which Jerusalem is now to attain, as the spiritual capital of the whole world. The last three stanzas, whose language approaches the apocalyptic type, describe the wealth and prosperity which Israel is to enjoy.

It is not only by particular phrases, nor by the personification of Zion, that this remarkable poem reminds us of Deutero-Isaiah. Even more striking is the absence of all reference to the sins of the people. We may well ask whether the prophet who elsewhere speaks with such severity of the Jews can be the author of a poem which so completely idealizes them. Were he a powerful and original writer, with a definite point of view, this would be impossible. But one who is almost avowedly an imitator, borrowing largely now from Ezekiel, now from Jeremiah, and now from Deutero-Isaiah, must be judged otherwise. On the whole it seems more probable that the differences in these chapters represent the varying moods

¹ §§ 84, 85, 91, 92.

of one imitative writer, than that their many resemblances are the artificial product of a prophetic school.

Much as the prophet borrows from his great predecessor, there are two things which he fails to make his own—the lofty religious tone and the even elevation of style. In the writings of Deutero-Isaiah the spiritual always predominates over the material. But in this poem (as in others by the same author) there is a painful insistence upon mere wealth and power: the thought sinks rapidly from heavenly to earthly ideals, and with it sinks the style. On that subject more will be said in a subsequent chapter.

This prophecy contains clear indications of the date at which it was composed. It was before the coming of Nehemiah, for the walls (stanza 5) have yet to be built, and the people are poor, ill-governed, and ill-defended (stanzas 7 and 8). On the other hand the original return seems to lie in the distant past, and the semi-royal rule of Zerubbabel has been forgotten. The 'governor' is a familiar fact (stanza 8): and the ideals for the future are not monarchical but theocratic (stanza 9). The Temple is taken for granted as the centre of national life, and the people, though feeble and oppressed, are conscious of a religious superiority over other nations (stanzas 3 and 6). No date will satisfy all these conditions except the decade before the coming of Nehemiah.

CHAPTER XXX

THE COMING YEAR OF GRACE

THE sixty-first chapter of Isaiah bears a certain analogy to the sixth and the fortieth. Each of the three prophets has written a kind of preface, describing his divine commission, and giving the essence of his message. But a preface is not usually written until the book is complete. We may surmise that Deutero-Isaiah's 'voices' took their definite shape when his drama was finished. We are certain that Isaiah had been for some years preaching to his people before he described the vision which made him a prophet. We are not bound, therefore, to assume that Trito-Isaiah's preface was the earliest of his writings. Rather this sixty-first chapter marks the time when the prophet had attained a full consciousness of his mission, and could formulate in words what had at first been vaguely felt. We may fairly assume, therefore, that the second part of his book is rightly placed. There cannot be any great interval of time between his earliest and his latest compositions : but the division which stands second in our Bible is of somewhat later date than the other.

Chapters lxi and lxii form what is substantially a single poem, though it is divided into three parts, distinguished by different metres. The subject of all three is the coming year of grace in which Jerusalem is to be made rich and strong and populous. The condition of Jerusalem, which is implied by the references in all three poems, is just the same as before. Though not fully populated, Judah has received back some of its people (lxii. 8), who are cultivating the land. The Temple

is a familiar object, which can be referred to as a matter of course: but the Jews are despised and oppressed (lxii. 8, 9). The city is still encumbered by ruins, and the walls have not been rebuilt (lxi. 4, lxii. 6). The inhabitants, too few for defence, are longing for the time when a larger number of exiles shall return to strengthen and encourage them.

§ 109. In the first two stanzas the prophet has risen to a very high level of poetic thought and expression. He has described his own mission in language so ideal that the divine Prophet of Nazareth could accept it as a description of Himself, so universal that it may serve to characterize the Gospel of every age. Yet it was not altogether his own wing that bore him up in so lofty a flight. It is from the Drama of the Servant that his inspiration is drawn. He has, indeed, imitated the Servant's tone so closely that some have taken his words for one of the genuine fragments. Though the supposition is clearly mistaken, for here is no suggestion of his being a saviour or a sacrifice, it is a proof that the writer has caught much of the spirit of his great original. His inspiration does not last long. In the next three stanzas he returns to the lower ideals of chapter lx—wealth, vengeance, pre-eminence. The reader cannot but feel a shock when he finds the phrase 'ye shall be named the priests of Jehovah' explained by 'ye shall eat the wealth of the nations'; as if the prophet considered the essence of priesthood to consist in the right to live by the labours of others. Yet the bathos is in part redeemed by the view expressed in the last stanza that the prosperity of Israel serves not only as compensation for themselves but as a moral lesson to the world. In the nobler tone of the last stanza we recognize once more an echo from the Drama of the Servant. Still there remains a great gulf between the ideals of Deutero-Isaiah and his imitator. The elder prophet looks for a time when the Gentiles shall be sharers in the truth and righteousness which belong to Israel. The younger describes them as mere spectators, who acknowledge the power of Israel's

God and respect his people's righteousness, but have no personal interest in either.

§ 110. The imagery of the first stanza is obviously borrowed from Deutero-Isaiah [§§ 84, 92]. That of the second is probably suggested by a sentence of the prophet Zechariah (i. 12). In order to follow the thought we must remember that 'watchman' in this passage bears quite a different sense from that in which Deutero-Isaiah employs it. Here the watchmen are angels whose duty it is to remind Jehovah of his intention to restore the walls and the splendour of Jerusalem. The passage is best illustrated by a story which is told by Herodotus. When an Athenian army had burned Sardis, Darius vowed vengeance upon them; and, lest he should forget, he ordered one of his slaves to remind him every day of his vow.

The third stanza throws some light upon the condition of the people. Though able to cultivate their fields and vineyards, they are unable to resist the raids of neighbouring tribes, who carry off their crops. Now, it is promised, they shall no longer be robbed; but shall be able, in obedience to the Deuteronomic law, to offer portions of their produce in the Temple, and feast in its courts.

§ 111. This fragment, which is obviously out of place in the Hebrew text, is perhaps part of a reply made by Zion to the promises of restoration.

§ 112. The phrases from Deutero-Isaiah, of which this little poem is a mosaic, find a new application. For here the picture is not of Jehovah making a road across the desert for the first Return, but of the inhabitants of Jerusalem marching out to meet fresh bands of their countrymen, and preparing the road as they go. And with the new band will come Jehovah himself, to deliver Jerusalem from her foes.

§ 113. When Trito-Isaiah looks forward to the future of his people, he always sees a double picture. To use his own language, 'The acceptable year of Jehovah' is also 'the day of vengeance of our God'. In other words, the conception of

Israel's happiness is inseparable from the ruin and destruction of Israel's foes. So the description we have just read of the joyous return of many exiles demands for its completion an ode of triumph over the enemy. That is the character of the poem with which the sixty-third chapter begins—the most vigorous and most original of all Tristo-Isaiah's compositions. In form it is a dramatic dialogue between a chorus of Israelites and a triumphant warrior who approaches the city stained with the blood of battle. To the first challenge the mysterious figure replies: It is I, that am glorious in victory, mighty in power to save. Asked by the chorus why his garments are so red, as though he had been treading the winepress, the speaker reveals himself as Jehovah, and describes how, alone and unaided, he has won a victory over the enemies of Israel. No Assyrian or Persian army, as in former days, served as the instrument of his vengeance—the rod of his anger—but his own hand has wrought the victory.

The English Bible, following the received Hebrew text, represents the victor as coming from Bozrah, the capital of Edom. Scholars have searched in vain for an incident in the history of that nation which might afford some ground for such a chant of victory. And in the later verses, where the victory is described, it is not Edom but 'the peoples' that are the foe. From these facts two different conclusions are possible. Some scholars believe that the reading of the ordinary text is right, and suppose that Edom is mentioned (as in chapter xxxv) without any special reference, but merely as a type of heathen countries. A more probable view, and better supported, is that the proper names have crept into the text through a very natural misreading of the original. Particular names appear out of place in a poem whose whole character is ideal. Its dramatic form and apocalyptic tone give it the air, not of recording an actual event, but of giving shape to an indefinite hope. The poem ends abruptly, the conclusion having been lost. Perhaps that is just as well: for already the vigour of the style is

beginning to fail, and the last words which remain are little more than a feeble repetition of what has been better said already.

§ 114. After this follow two very remarkable utterances, which are closely connected both in substance and in style. They are both prayers, and both remind us of the later psalms; yet in tone they are strongly contrasted.

The first is a beautiful expression of meditative piety. After a thankful commemoration of Jehovah's mercies to Israel, which were requited with ingratitude and rebellion, it tells how, taught at last by suffering, Israel looked back with longing upon the days of old, when Jehovah led his people through the wilderness. The fourth stanza is incomplete; and it may well be that others have been lost.

§ 115. The transition from that prayer to the next is like passing from the hundred-and-sixth psalm to the seventy-fourth. For though the main subject is the same, the language has changed from quiet meditation to ardent entreaty. Such a prayer defies analysis: for each of the six moving stanzas contains a separate appeal. Incidentally it tells us a good deal about the historical situation. The Samaritans have broken down the city walls which Ezra began to build, and have even invaded the sanctity of the Temple. The people, in despair, have turned away from the worship of Jehovah, and plunged into strange idolatries. By some method of necromancy they have appealed to Abraham for aid, but have obtained no answer. Now they plead that, after all they are the sons of Jehovah: they entreat that he will cease from the wrath which frightens them into further sin, and will deliver them from the cruelty of their foes.

It was natural that sufferers in the Maccabæan age, finding this prayer so apt for their own situation, should use it as a psalm. In order to adopt it more completely they seem to have added the stanza which makes verses 9 to 11 in our Bible. It refers to the burning of the Temple in terms which remind us of the Maccabæan psalms.

The deep and true feeling which penetrates the whole of this prayer, and lends it a special dignity of style, has made it one of the most famous passages in the book of Isaiah. The characteristic defects of the author are not, indeed, altogether absent. Echoes of the earlier prophets are heard throughout : the connexion of thought is not clear : and there is the usual downward tendency at the close. But these defects, like the spots in the sun, are only visible through the telescope of analysis. The ordinary eye perceives only the glorious light and heat of an exalted passion.

CHAPTER XXXI

THE GREAT SACRILEGE

THE last eight prophecies of Trito-Isaiah form a distinct group, which offers a striking contrast, not only to the pathetic humility of §§ 114, 115, and the cheerful confidence of §§ 108, 109, but also to the moral exhortation of § 106. The tone of these last utterances is one of restless excitement, as if a great crisis were impending. The subject is no longer morality nor national hopes, but forms of worship. The persons concerned are the same as in § 104: on the one side the pious Jews who are obedient to the code of law which Ezra brought from Babylon: on the other side are the Samaritans and all who sympathize with them. The prophet turns his address from one class to the other, while his voice rings, not evenly and calmly, but with the fitful violence of a fire-alarm. A half-suppressed fury mars the style and the rhythm of all these eight prophecies: and the last of them can hardly be described as a poem at all.

What is the occasion of so much excitement? The poems do not offer any direct account of the matter: but they contain allusions which may guide us to a probable explanation. We find no traces of any external event. On the surface the situation in Jerusalem is unchanged. The pious Jews are suffering, but full of hope that their brethren will return from exile and share the glory which is to come. The unfaithful Jews, mainly the descendants of those who were not carried into exile, are intriguing with the Samaritans, and perhaps adopting their syncretic worship. At any rate they are maintaining the old custom of sacrificing in high places, contrary to the law of Deuteronomy.

The Samaritans, a people of mixed race, who combine the worship of Jehovah with that of other gods, are the objects, as before, of hatred and scorn. All that was true when the earlier prophecies were delivered. But now there seem to be two fresh movements.

I. The first verse of chapter lxvi implies that some one is proposing to build a new Temple to Jehovah, which will be a rival to that in Jerusalem. A few years later the Samaritans did actually build a temple on Mount Gerizim, which became the centre of schismatic worship for many centuries. We can scarcely doubt, therefore, that they were the leaders in the movement. The prophet, however, seems to address himself to others besides the Samaritans: to a party among the older inhabitants of Judah, who were strongly opposed to Ezra's new code, out of sympathy with the rigorism of the Restoration, and attached to old customs which the reformers reckoned heathenish. It is easy to imagine how such a party, resenting the violence of Ezra's methods, might regard him as a heretic, and be willing to join in building a new temple where the ritual would be more to their taste. Their feeling would be strengthened by a righteous indignation against the cruel insult which the Samaritans had received when all foreign wives were suddenly driven away from Judah to their former homes.

We can also sympathize with the prophet. In spite of all the differences of worship, and all the mutual outrages, which divided the Jew from the Samaritan, he had cherished (it would seem) a hope that at last the schismatics would repent, renounce their heathenish ways, and come humbly to beg for admission to the outer court of the Temple. When he realizes that after all they acknowledge no inferiority, but claim to be true worshippers of Jehovah, and propose to erect a rival sanctuary, his indignation knows no bounds. It overflows upon all who in any degree associate themselves with the impious and defiant race of bastard heretics.

II. Two of these prophecies (§ 116 and § 122) denounce a

heresy which is not, apparently, peculiar to the Samaritans nor connected with the project of a new Temple. It is also distinct from the ancient customs of sacrificing to Fortune and of worshipping Jehovah in the high places. Until recent years the references to those who 'sacrifice in gardens', and 'eat the flesh of swine and of vermin and of the mouse', appeared unintelligible. But we now know that their strange worship belongs to the class to which the Greeks gave the general name of 'mysteries'. These have a very long history. Before the Semitic clans united to form tribes or nations, each clan had its own god, who was more or less identified with a sacred animal or 'totem'. Once a year the assembled clan sacrificed one such animal and ate its flesh, in order to renew the divine life within themselves, and so to maintain their kinship with their god. This sacramental form of sacrifice is probably the most ancient, and was once universal. Though the changes of society gradually caused its meaning to be forgotten, the ritual remained, and became the instrument of a great religious revival. For in the sixth century, when the successive conquests of Assyria and Babylon had broken up nations and transported whole tribes, the old basis of religion was removed. Men found themselves no longer members of political communities which were united by bonds of religion, but mere individuals—stray stones amid the débris of ruined kingdoms. The idea of personal religion, such as might enable a man to be independent of others, was hardly yet conceived. Shrinking from what seemed the nakedness of religious isolation they sought shelter by forming new communities, which were held together, not by the old bond of blood relationship, but by that which came near to it—the sharing in a sacramental feast. The early stages of this as of all popular movements are obscure. But we know that it spread rapidly, and extended westward. In Greece of the fifth century the mysteries were at once the most popular and the most elevating form of religion. Though often degraded by coarse superstition, they stood on the whole for

moral purity and for the belief in a future life. Best and most influential of all were the Eleusinian mysteries: and he that was initiated into them must first of all sacrifice a young pig. Though to the ordinary Jew swine's flesh was anathema, it is not impossible that a Samaritan who sacrificed a pig might associate the act with real aspirations for a better life. The example of the Greeks proves that the offering of strange victims may be the expression of a genuine religious impulse. And if 'mysteries' were practised in Judah before Ezra's return, his behaviour was not calculated to do away with them. His narrowness, his formalism, his exclusiveness, might well drive many good Israelites in despair to seek communion with God in a strange way. For if the new orthodoxy presented Jehovah as a tribal god, who had no relation but enmity to the Gentiles, there may have been those who, remembering the teaching of Deutero-Isaiah, sought to approach the Father of all nations by a path unknown to the Levitical law. If there was 'evil and superstition in this revival of primitive worship which Trito-Isaiah denounces, may there not also have been a large element of good, which his eyes were unable to recognize? In the confusions of an age of change and conflict, the good is never all on one side.

Yet how natural, how inevitable, is the feeling which he exhibits! The pathos of such a situation lies in the fact that a man's virtues aggravate his errors. His zeal for God makes his narrowness more fatal; his clear logic banishes charity; his passionate hatred of evil blinds him to much that is good. While, therefore, we may make some reserves in favour of those whom he so fiercely attacks, we cannot deny him our sympathy when he is driven to fury by the thought of the mysteries and the rival temple.

§ 116. The prophet here addresses mainly 'the people of the land', that is, the descendants of the Jews who did not go into exile. Their offence is partly that they retain some old heathenish rites, such as ancestor-worship and dream-oracles (verse 4),

and sacrifice in high places (verse 7), partly that they are addicted to the more recent practice of the mysteries. No doubt the same charges might be made against the Samaritans: but they do not appear to be the direct object of attack.

§ 117. The prophet takes his text from an old vintage song which says that even a rotten bunch of grapes may have a little good juice in it, fit to make wine with. The good juice, which must be saved, he compares to the pious minority of the people; the rotten bunch to the unfaithful who persist in heathenish practices.

The worship of Fortune (Gad) was common in Syria from very early times and endured until the fifth century A.D. Even so late as that the old custom of laying a table with food for the god (*lectisternium*) had not altogether ceased. It is a form of worship which we find in many countries, especially in Italy and in Egypt. Destiny (Meni) is perhaps the goddess of fortune who was worshipped in conjunction with Gad.

§ 118. Once more the destiny of the faithful is contrasted with that of the heretics. The poem is remarkable for the change of tone which begins in the third stanza. At first the blessings and the curses are of the normal type, such as are to be found in earlier prophets. But the conclusion is in the Apocalyptic vein. It draws a picture of a new world, in which the righteous are to enjoy supernatural bliss. Growing excitement and increasing despair of the present order incline the prophet more and more to look for some direct intervention of divine power, some new and miraculous dispensation.

§ 119. The dirge-like rhythm of the last poem was hardly suitable for a description of bliss. The writer has, therefore, checked himself and has completed the picture in a separate composition with a more cheerful metre. The last verse is a close imitation of the sixth and seventh verses of Isaiah xi. We cannot help observing how the prophet limits his promises to material blessings—wealth, security, and longevity.

§ 120. To the party who are threatening to build a new Temple

in opposition to that in Jerusalem the prophet addresses a two-fold argument. On the one hand, the God whose throne is in the heavens requires no earthly house to dwell in : and therefore it is futile to build one. On the other hand, Jehovah has appointed the Temple at Jerusalem for the place of worship ; and there alone can acceptable sacrifice be offered. While the humble worshipper who approaches Jehovah at his chosen shrine is received with favour, the schismatic who presumes to sacrifice elsewhere does outrage to the majesty of God. He that slays an ox in an unlawful place is no less guilty of sacrilege than if he had slain a man : and even to burn incense away from the true Temple is to incur the guilt of idolatry. The wanton rebellion, therefore, of those who are planning this impiety will be punished with utter destruction.

At first sight it may appear strange that the poet has not recognized the inconsistency between his two arguments. The first, if followed out, could only lead to the conclusion, 'Neither in this mountain nor in Jerusalem shall ye worship the Father.'¹ Thus it would cut the ground from under the second argument. Yet the poet was not singular in failing to see the full bearing of his principle. Centuries must pass, and a religious revolution must be effected, before men could conceive the possibility of worship without a Temple.

§ 121. The contrast between form and substance, which we found in § 118, is more striking here. The 'Kinah' metre, a dirge-like line which ends with a kind of sob, is used in a description of triumph. We may account for this partly by the poet's want of mastery over language. Partly, perhaps, it is due to the influence of the mood which comes over him. For, though this prophecy starts from one of Deutero-Isaiah (§ 84), it soon passes the frontier between prophecy and apocalypse. And while prophecy always acknowledges the rules of poetry, apocalypse often defies them.

The subject of the message is simple. Once more, but in

¹ St. John iv. 21.

a new form, the prophet repeats the promise of miraculous deliverance for the righteous, and of a new era of power and splendour for a regenerate Jerusalem.

§ 122. The promise of bliss for the faithful is inevitably followed by a denunciation of destruction for their enemies. The prophet singles out for mention, not those who would build a new temple, but those who pollute themselves with the mysteries. As his passion rises, his vision of their destruction assumes a more terrible shape. It is with whirlwind and flame and sword that Jehovah will come to work a visible judgment upon his enemies.

§ 123. The book ends appropriately with a promise that all Israel shall be restored to the sacred city, amid the wonder and awe of the heathen world. The effect of the passage, as we read it in our Bible, is marred by tasteless interpolations, and by the addition of two dreadful verses at the end. It is a comfort to know that all scholars reject verses 23 and 24 as spurious: for we can hardly bear to think of the book of Isaiah as concluding with that ghastly picture of a Gehenna placed at the very gates of regenerate Jerusalem, and of the faithful worshippers going out from the Temple to enjoy the sight of their enemies writhing in endless torment. Freed from these deformities, the final prophecy appears as a simple ode in the author's apocalyptic manner. The armies of all nations are to be assembled before Jerusalem, not (as we might suppose) for worship, but for battle.¹ Most of them Jehovah will destroy: but some will be allowed to escape in order to declare his wonders to the world. The awestruck peoples will then reverently bring all the Israelite exiles to Jerusalem as their oblation to Jehovah. In the new heaven and the new earth which will be created Israel shall enjoy an endless and glorious supremacy.

The poetical style of this prophecy is much below the author's ordinary level. The versification is very rude: phrases and

¹ Here we have the first hint of a conception which later became familiar under the title of Armageddon.

images are borrowed from earlier prophets, and spoiled in the process: the connexion of thought is neither clear nor convincing. But these faults are partly redeemed by one fine simile which is entirely original. When the poet compares the exiles, whom the Gentiles restore, to the oblations which the Israelites offer in the Temple, he opens a new and rich vein of sacred imagery.

CHAPTER XXXII

TRITO-ISAIAH AS POET AND TEACHER

THE analysis of 'Trito-Isaiah's' prophecies has been written frankly on the assumption that they are substantially the work of a single author. That assumption is not free from difficulties, and has been assailed by scholars of note. All I would venture to assert is that the balance of authority and of probability is in favour of one writer rather than a group. As to the date of these prophecies there is a much more general agreement. Some scholars would assign § 115 to the time of Artaxerxes Ochus, and others find evidence of later date in individual poems. But the general opinion supports the view that they all belong to the age of Ezra and Nehemiah. In what remains to be said, therefore, about the poetical style and the doctrine of 'Trito-Isaiah' I venture to take it for granted that the name represents, if not an individual, at any rate a school, who wrote between the years 460 and 445 B.C. For some purposes the difference is unimportant: and the reader who is not satisfied of the unity of authorship will be able, I hope, to assent to many of my propositions if he takes the name 'Trito-Isaiah' as the title of a school.

In spite of some obvious differences, to which attention has been drawn, the prophecies of Trito-Isaiah have many elements of style in common. To begin with the simplest, it is a commonplace among scholars that the rhythm of individual lines is generally imperfect and their length very irregular. Those are points which cannot be appreciated without some knowledge of Hebrew, and therefore they cannot be discussed here. But even in a translation an attentive reader can judge

whether the author is skilful in managing the parallelism which is distinctive of Hebrew verse. We have seen with what admirable art Isaiah makes the latter half of each long line illuminate and reinforce the first. In Deutero-Isaiah we observed a certain lack of mastery over this difficult weapon. But when, in Trito-Isaiah, we come to such lines as these :

‘Thou shalt suck the milk of nations,
and shalt suck the breast of kings :
Thou shalt know that I am Jehovah thy Saviour,
and thy redeemer the mighty one of Jacob.’

we recognize a failure of art. Such repetition brings neither light nor strength : it is formal, mechanical, and wholly ineffective. Of course, in considering a question so delicate, we must not lay too much stress upon single instances. Style is a whole ; and it is only by reading consecutively that one can judge fairly of the use which is made of any poetic form. But I believe that any one who will so read the prophecies of Trito-Isaiah will feel that, in spite of occasional vigorous movements, the shackles of parallelism are generally too heavy for his strength.

Another test of poetical skill is the management of the stanza. No reader, who has once observed it, can forget the wonderful effect of the stanza in some of Isaiah's¹ prophecies. The great odes of Deutero-Isaiah owe much to such artificial arrangement, which gives to each thought a definite place and proportion. Trito-Isaiah has written some of his prophecies in stanzas, especially those in chapters lx and lxi. But more often he is content with the mere couplet of two long lines : and even there he gets into difficulties. Sometimes we find a couplet overflowing into the next : sometimes one couplet is divided between two unrelated thoughts. In some cases it seems impossible to make any satisfactory divisions, and the whole poem has been printed without a break.

Hebrew poetry as a whole is remarkable for its wealth of

¹ e. g. §§ 7, 9, 10, 32.

imagery. The reader of Isaiah, if he finds a single short poem which is not adorned with metaphor, simile, or personification, asks the reason of such unwonted plainness. But the writings of Trito-Isaiah are poor in ornament. Two striking images he presents—that of Jehovah treading the wine-press, and that of the nations offering their captives as an oblation to Jehovah. He compares bad rulers to dumb dogs with good effect, until he makes them say ‘let us fill ourselves with mead’. He speaks of the sorrowing Israelites as ‘groaning like bears’. But all the rest of his imagery is either purely conventional or directly borrowed from previous prophets. In two places he makes an effective use of personification: yet there is no originality in comparing the Samaritan community to a harlot, or Jerusalem to the bride of Jehovah.

We are thus led to observe how largely the prophet borrows from his predecessors. The commentators give references to every chapter which prove his dependence. For our purpose it will suffice to take a single example. The short poem which makes up three verses of the sixty-second chapter (§ 112) is a mosaic of quotations. ‘Prepare ye the way’ is from Isaiah xl. 3. ‘Lift up an ensign’ is from xlix. 22. ‘Made proclamation into the end of the earth’ from xlvi. 20. ‘Say ye to the daughter of Zion’ recalls xl. 9. ‘Behold his reward is with him, and his recompense before him’ is taken verbatim from xl. 10. ‘The redeemed of Jehovah’ is based upon li. 10.

These quotations are all from Deutero-Isaiah: but elsewhere we find echoes of Ezekiel, Hosea, and Jeremiah. Now any single such echo might be used for ornament by a great poet. Even Shakespeare did not disdain to borrow; but what he borrowed he improved. When we find borrowing both frequent and unfruitful, we know that we have to do, not with an original writer, but with one who is a pale reflection of the great poets of an earlier age.

Imitation is not limited to the borrowing of single phrases: it extends to the tone and structure of complete poems.

Having found Trito-Isaiah so great an imitator in one respect, we shall not be surprised if he is found to model whole passages upon well-known originals. Here is a probable explanation of the varieties in style, which some scholars claim as proofs of several authorships. Even a single poem may be copied partly from one original and partly from another. For instance, § 109 begins and ends in the tone of the 'Servant' fragments, while the middle stanzas reflect Haggai and Zechariah as well as Deutero-Isaiah.

The habit of dependence will account for another of our poet's characteristics. Isaiah, as we have seen, studies climax in the structure of his poems. Deutero-Isaiah prefers an even tenor from beginning to end. But Trito-Isaiah displays a strong tendency to fall below the level at which he starts. That is very likely to happen to a writer who looks to others for inspiration; and in some cases we can trace the whole process. One example may suffice. The sixtieth chapter (§ 108) begins with a striking and poetical image, which is derived from Deutero-Isaiah. The picture of Zion rising as a figure of light from the surrounding darkness, though not strictly original, is so fine that it has appealed to the imagination of every age in turn. But the second stanza, which begins at the same elevation, drops midway into a mere promise of wealth; and the third and fourth do not rise above hopes of material gain. In each of the next four stanzas the poet makes an effort to soar to some thought of power or beauty or sanctity, but each time his wing tires; and in the seventh he relapses into the praise of riches. The next two prophecies (§§ 109, 110) offer similar examples of a descent from the spiritual to the material; and there is no case in which a high level is maintained throughout.

There is something pathetic in the poet's repeated failure to maintain the high note which again and again he catches from the lips of the past. Partly, no doubt, it is explained by sheer want of poetic power. But that is not all. The continual return to an ideal of wealth and vengeance implies a concep-

tion of God and of humanity which is foreign to the prophets of a nobler era. For Trito-Isaiah Jehovah is no longer the transcendent God who dwells in the heaven, looking down with a father's eye upon all the world, and ordering the events of history to serve his providential purpose. Though armed with unlimited power, he is limited in his affections, his interests, his dwelling, and his dominion. He is as emphatically the God of Israel as he was in the age of the Judges.¹ But there is a difference. Whereas in the conception of Jephthah each heathen nation had its own god, who was its champion and support, now the heathen are utterly without hope: for there is only one God, and he is their enemy. Jehovah dwells physically in the Temple at Jerusalem: the sound of his steps is heard as he bursts forth to do battle with his foes: he 'pleads with all flesh', not with reasoning, but with fire and sword: and his warlike figure is seen by the prophet as he returns red with the blood of victory. And, though victorious over the heathen, he does not claim them for his subjects, nor extend his true dominion beyond the bounds of Palestine. He does not repeat the divine invitation, 'Turn unto me and let yourselves be saved, all the ends of the earth.' The inhabitants of remote countries are indeed frightened by the fame of his destructive might, and send a rich tribute to his Temple: but they have no hope of citizenship in his kingdom, no feeling for him but one of distant fear. Instead of the moral force which should convert the world to righteousness, he exhibits a material power which transforms the scenery and the sky of Palestine.

If we turn to the people among whom Jehovah is thus brought down to dwell, we find them very different from the nation of Isaiah's hopes or of Deutero-Isaiah's vision. A nation, indeed, they are no longer, but only a discontented province of a boundless empire. They lack the distinctive marks of a national life. The king, who occupied a small

¹ Judges xi. 24.

space in Ezekiel's sketch of a restored Israel, has altogether disappeared. In Trito-Isaiah's new Jerusalem there is no place for him. He is not wanted to lead the armies of Israel, for army there is none : Jehovah alone, unaided by man's arm, fights the battles of his people. He is not needed to administer justice ; for that rests with the shepherds and the watchmen—the priests, that is, and the prophets. Israel has neither the ambitions nor the force nor the organization which constitute a people.

The passion for vengeance which animates it is not national, but such as may be found in any persecuted sect. Israel, in fact, has become a church, ruled by priests, and cherishing priestly ideals. That is partly shown by the use of words. 'Righteousness' in the first Isaiah meant moral and political order : now it means sometimes ritual correctness and sometimes victory over persecutors. 'Salvation' formerly stood for the restoration of national independence : now it means a mere escape from suffering. 'Judgment' is used by Isaiah to mean justice, legal and moral : the word has now come to mean little more than 'our rights'.

Priestly, too, is the new conception of religious life. Isaiah and Amos declaimed against sacrifice and fast and sabbath as external things which obscured the spiritual. Deutero-Isaiah passes them by as being of little account. But Trito-Isaiah puts observances in the forefront, and will allow no quarter to those who err as to the place or the forms of worship. He does not fail to require justice and charity within the community of the faithful : and he promises that they shall be rewarded with wealth and victory. But all the force of his passion is reserved for the denunciation of heresy which is in his eyes the worst of all crimes. He is, in fact, the herald of a new era in which the priesthood is to bear rule—an era in which discipline is preferred to purity, obedience to charity, and orthodoxy to the love of God.

Trito-Isaiah, then, whether the name stand for an individual

or a group, belongs to the race of epigoni. He must be ranked, not with his two great namesakes, but with Haggai and Zechariah and Malachi. A genuine, though fitful and imitative, poetic inspiration ; a warm sympathy with the oppressed ; a deep sense of national sin ; a burning zeal for the reform of worship ; these make him, if not a great prophet, yet a good man and a serviceable guide in evil days. If his predictions have not been accomplished, nor his apocalyptic visions realized, the best of his thought has fulfilled itself by touching the hearts of men for a hundred generations. His noble picture of the prophetic office, his moving appeal on behalf of a penitent people, and his vision of Jerusalem as the lamp of the world, are undying proofs that he bore a message not only to one people and one age but to all mankind.

THE PROPHECIES OF
TRITO-ISAIAH

§ 103

- lvi 1 Thus saith Jehovah :
 Keep the law and do righteousness ;
For my deliverance is nigh to come,
 and my righteousness to be revealed.
- 2 Blessed is the man that doeth this,
 and the son of man that holdeth fast by it:
That keepeth the sabbath from profaning it,
 and keepeth his hand from doing evil.
- 3 Neither let the foreigner say,
 Jehovah will separate me from his people,
Nor let the eunuch say,
 Behold I am a dry tree.
- 4 For thus saith Jehovah,
 The eunuchs that keep my sabbaths,
And choose that which pleaseth me,
 and hold fast to my covenant ;
- 5 Unto them will I give in mine house a token and a name
 that is better than sons and daughters,
An everlasting name give I unto them
 that shall not be cut off.
- 6 The foreigners that join themselves to Jehovah,
 to serve him and love his name,
To be his servants [and his handmaidens,]
 every one that keepeth the sabbath from profaning it,

- 7 Them will I bring to my holy mountain,
 and make them joyful in my house of prayer,
 Their offerings shall be accepted on mine altar,
 for my house shall be called a house of prayer for all
 peoples :
- Thus saith the Lord Jehovah,
 which gathereth the outcasts of Israel :
 Yet will I gather others to Israel,
 to those which are already gathered.

§ 104

I

- lvi 9 All ye wild beasts in field and forest,
 come hither to devour !
- 10 My watchmen are all blind,
 and know not [how to give heed,]
 They are all dumb dogs,
 which cannot bark,
 Crouching and lying down,
 loving to slumber.

2

- 11 And the dogs are greedy,
 they can never have enough ;
 They all turn to their own way,
 each to his own gain :
- 12 'Come', they say, 'I will fetch wine,
 and let us fill ourselves with mead,
 And to-morrow shall be as to-day,
 an exceeding high day.'

3

- lvii 1 The righteous perisheth,
 and no man layeth it to heart,
 And pious men are taken away,
 but none considereth it :

For because of the evil the righteous is taken away,

2 he entereth into peace ;

They rest in their beds,

all that walked in a straight path.

4

3 But ye, draw near hither,

ye sons of the sorceress.

Seed of the adulterer and the whore,

4 of whom do ye make mock ?

At whom do ye make a wide mouth,

and put out a long tongue ?

Are ye not children of apostasy,

a seed of falsehood ?

5

6 Among the stones of the valley is thy 'Rock',

they are thy portion,

To them also hast thou poured out a libation,

and brought a meal offering :

7 Upon a high and lofty mountain

thou didst set thy bed,

Thither also thou wentest up

to offer sacrifice.

6

8 Behind the door and its posts

didst thou set up thy obscene image,

For whose sake thou didst strip and climb up,

and enlarge thy bed,

And hire for thyself men

whose embraces thou lovedst,

[And multiply thy wantonness]

when thou sawest the phallus.

7

9 Thou didst anoint thyself for Moloch

and multiply thy perfumes,

Thou didst send thy messengers afar,
yea, deep down to Sheol.

- 10 Though thou wast wearied with thy wandering,
thou saidst not, There is no hope !
Thou foundest fresh life in thy hand,
therefore thou didst not desist.

8

- 11 Of whom then wast thou in such craven fear
that thou didst play the traitor,
And gavest me no thought,
nor didst lay thy duty to heart ?
Truly I held my peace
and shut mine eyes.
Therefore [thou didst play the wanton more and more]
and thou didst not fear me.

9

- 12 But I will expose thy ' righteousness '
and thy practices ;
13 And thine abominations, when thou criest,
will neither profit nor rescue thee.
Yea, the wind shall take them all,
a breath shall carry them away,
But he who trusts in me shall possess the land
and inherit my holy mountain.

§ 105

I

- lvii 14 Bank up a causeway, clear a highway,
remove the stumbling-block from the way of my people !
15 For thus saith the high and lofty one
whose throne is for ever, whose name is Holy :
On high as the Holy One do I dwell,
and with the contrite and lowly in spirit,

To revive the spirit of the lowly
and the heart of those that are contrite.

2

- 16 For I will not contend for ever,
neither will I be always wroth ;
For the spirit would faint before me,
and the souls which I have made.
- 17 For his iniquity was I wroth for a moment,
and smote him, and hid my face in anger ;
And he turned aside into the way of his heart.
- 18 I saw his ways, [saith Jehovah].

3

- And I will heal him and give him rest,
and comfort him and his mourners,
- 19 Making their lips bear the fruit of speech,
peace to the far and the near !
- 20 But the wicked are like the troubled sea,
for it cannot rest,
And its waves cast up mire and dirt.
- 21 There is no peace, saith my God, for the wicked !

§ 106

- lviii 1 Cry aloud, and spare not ;
lift up thy voice like a trumpet !
Declare unto my people their transgression,
and to the house of Jacob their sins !
- 2 It is true that they seek me daily,
and delight to know my ways,
As a nation might that did righteousness,
and forsook not the law of their God.
They ask me about the rules of righteousness,
they delight to draw near unto God.
- 3 'Wherefore do we fast, and thou seest not ?
mortify ourselves, and thou heedest not ?'

- Why! on fast days ye pursue your business,
and exact all your debts.
- 4 Why! ye fast for strife and contention,
and to smite the poor with the fist.
Such fasting as yours this day
will not make your voice heard on high!
- 5 Can such be the fast that I desire,
a day for a man to afflict himself?
To bow the head like a bulrush,
to lie upon sackcloth and ashes—
Wilt thou call that a fast,
and an acceptable day to Jehovah?
- 6 The fast that I desire,
[saith the Lord Jehovah],
Is to loose the unjust fetters,
to undo the bands of the yoke,
To let the broken men go free,
and to break every yoke in pieces.
- 7 It is to deal thy bread to the hungry,
and bring the homeless to thy house,
When thou seest the naked, to cover him,
nor hide thyself from thine own flesh.
- 8 Then shall thy light break forth as the morning,
and thy healing shall spring forth speedily,
And thy righteousness 'shall go before thee',
and Jehovah's glory 'be thy rearward':¹
- 9 Then shalt thou call, and Jehovah shall answer,
thou shalt cry, and he shall say, Here am I.
If thou wilt do away with the yoke,
the pointing finger, and evil speech,
- 10 And give thy bread to the hungry,
and satisfy the soul that is bowed down,
Then shall thy light shine in darkness,
and thy gloom be as the noonday;

¹ Isa. lii, 12.

- 11 And Jehovah shall guide thee continually,
 and satisfy thy soul in drought ;
 He will renew thy strength,
 and thou shalt be like a watered garden,
 Like a spring of [living] water,
 whose waters never fail ;
- 12 Thy sons will build up the ancient ruins,
 foundations of old thou shalt raise up ;
 And thou shalt be called the repairer of ruins,
 the restorer of streets to dwell in.

§ 107

- lix 1 Behold, Jehovah's hand is not too short to save,
 nor his ear too dull to hear,
 2 But your iniquities made the barrier,
 your sins hid his face from you.
 3 For your hands are defiled with blood,
 and your fingers with iniquity,
 3 Your lips utter lies,
 and your tongue speaketh wickedness.
 4 There is none that sueth with justice,
 none that pleadeth with truth ;
 Ye trust in vanity and speak lies,
 ye conceive trouble and bring forth mischief.
- 9 Therefore is Right far from us,
 neither doth victory visit us ;
 We look for light, but behold darkness,
 for bright beams, but we walk in gloom.
- 10 We grope like blind men by the wall,
 we grope as they that have no eyes ;
 We stumble in the noonday, as in the twilight,
 and dwell in darkness like the dead ;
- 11 We all groan like hungry bears
 and mourn sore like doves,

- We look for Right, but it is not there,
for deliverance, but it is far from us.
- 12 For many are our transgressions before thee,
and our sins testify against us,
For we are conscious of our transgressions,
and as for our iniquities, we know them—
- 13 Rebellion and treason against Jehovah,
and turning away from following our God,
Speaking perverseness and transgression,
uttering from the heart lying words.
- 14 Right hath been driven back,
and victory standeth afar off.
For truth stumbleth in the market-place,
and uprightness cannot enter ;
- 15 So that truth is not to be found,
and understanding hath departed from the city.

- And Jehovah saw it and it was evil in his eyes ;
[he was angry] that there was no Right.
- 16 He saw that there was no man,
and wondered that none interposed,
Therefore his own arm delivered him,
and his victorious might upheld him,
- 17 And he put on victory as a breastplate,
and the helmet of deliverance on his head,
He put on the garments of vengeance,
and clad himself with zeal as a cloak.
- 18 As their deeds are, so is their recompense,
fury to his foes, shame to his adversaries !
- 19 They will see the name of Jehovah where the sun sets,
and his glory where it rises,
For the foe shall come as a rushing stream,
which the breath of Jehovah driveth on ;
- 20 But from Zion shall come a Redeemer,
and remove the rebellious from Jacob,

§ 108

1

- 1 Arise ! shine ! for thy light cometh,
and the glory of Jehovah beameth upon thee.
- 2 For behold, darkness covers the earth,
and gross darkness the peoples ;
But upon thee Jehovah beameth,
and his glory appears upon thee,
- 3 And nations come to thy light,
and kings to the brightness of thy beams.

2

- 4 Lift up thine eyes and look round,
they all assemble and come to thee !
Thy sons come from far,
thy daughters are carried in the arms ;
- 5 Then shalt thou see and be radiant,
and thy heart shall tremble and expand,
For the abundance of the sea will turn to thee,
and the wealth of the nations come to thee.

3

- 6 A stream of camels shall cover thee,
the dromedaries of Midian and Ephah,
They shall all come from Sheba,
and proclaim the fame of Jehovah,
- 7 All Kedar's flocks will gather to thee,
Nebaioth's rams will seek thee,
With acceptance will they mount mine altar,
and my house of prayer shall be glorified.

4

- 8 Who are these that fly as a cloud,
and like doves to their cotes ?
- 9 Yea, the seafarers gather to me,
in the van the ships of Tarshish,

Bringing thy sons from afar,
their silver and their gold with them,
For the name of Jehovah thy God,
for the Holy One of Israel, because he honours thee.

5

- 10 Strangers shall build up thy walls,
and their kings shall minister unto thee,
For though in my wrath I smote thee,
in my favour I have had mercy upon thee.
- 11 Thy gates shall be open continually,
they shall not be shut day nor night,
That men may bring thee the wealth of the nations,
their kings leading the train.

6

- 13 The glory of Lebanon shall come unto thee,
cypress and pine and box tree together,
That I may beautify the place of my sanctuary,
and make my footstool honourable.
- 14 They shall come crouching unto thee,
the sons of thy oppressors and scorners,
And shall call thee The city of Jehovah,
The Zion of the Holy One of Israel.

7

- 15 Instead of being forsaken,
hated and unvisited,
I will make thee an eternal excellency,
a joy of many generations.
- 16 And thou shalt suck the milk of the nations,
and shalt suck the breast of kings:
And thou shalt know that I Jehovah am thy deliverer,
and thy redeemer is the Mighty One of Jacob.

8

- 17 Instead of brass I will bring thee gold,
and silver instead of iron,
And I will make Peace thy governor
and Righteousness thy magistrate :
- 18 Violence shall no more be heard of in thy land,
nor wild havoc within thy borders ;
And thou shalt call thy walls Deliverance,
and thy gates Praise.

9

- 19 The sun shall no more serve thee for light,
nor the moon lend her brightness,
But Jehovah shall be to thee an everlasting light,
and thy God thy adornment ;
- 20 Thy sun shall no more go down,
nor thy moon withdraw itself,
For Jehovah shall be to thee an everlasting light,
and the days of thy mourning be ended.

10

- 21 Thy people shall be all righteous,
they shall possess the land for ever,
The tree of Jehovah's planting,
the work of his hands, for his glory.
- 22 The little one shall become a clan,
and the small one a strong nation,
I Jehovah [have spoken it]
[and] will hasten it in its time.

§ 109

I

- lxi 1 The spirit of the Lord Jehovah is upon me,
because Jehovah hath anointed me,

- Hath sent me to bring good tidings to the afflicted,
 to bind up the broken-hearted,
 To proclaim liberty to the captives,
 and to the prisoners free release ;
 2 To proclaim Jehovah's year of grace,
 and the day of vengeance of our God ;

2

- 3 To comfort all that mourn,
 to give them a garland for ashes,
 The oil of joy for the garment of mourning,
 a song of praise for the spirit of heaviness.
 And they shall be called oaks of victory,
 the planting of Jehovah for his glory.
 4 They shall build up the ancient ruins,
 and raise up the desolations of past ages.

3

- They shall repair the ruined cities,
 the places long ago made desolate.
 5 Strangers shall stand and feed your flocks,
 aliens be your ploughmen and vinedressers ;
 6 But ye shall be called priests of Jehovah,
 ministers of our God shall men name you :
 Ye shall eat the wealth of the nations,
 and with their splendour shall ye adorn yourselves.

4

- 7 Because their shame was in double measure,
 and the scorn of strangers was their portion,
 Therefore in their own land they shall possess double,
 everlasting joy shall be theirs.
 8 For I, Jehovah, love justice,
 I hate robbery with iniquity ;
 And I will give them their recompense faithfully,
 and make an everlasting covenant with thee.

5

- 9 Their seed shall be known among the nations,
 and their offspring among the peoples ;
 All that see them shall acknowledge them,
 that they are the seed which Jehovah hath blessed.
- 11 For as the earth puts forth her shoots,
 and as a garden makes the seeds to grow,
 So will the Lord Jehovah make victory spring up,
 and praise before all nations.

6

- lxii 1 For Zion's sake I will not hold my peace,
 and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest,
 Till her victory goes forth like the dawn,
 and her deliverance like a burning torch.
- 2 And the nations shall see thy victory,
 and all kings thy glory ;
- 3 Thou shalt be a crown of beauty in Jehovah's hand,
 a royal diadem in the hand of thy God.

§ IIO

I

- lxii 4 No more shalt thou be named Forsaken,
 nor thy land Deserted,
 But thou shalt be called Home of my joy,
 and thy land Married :
 For Jehovah delighteth in thee,
 and thy land shall be married ;
- 5 For as a young man marrieth a virgin,
 so shall thy Builder marry thee ;
 And as the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride,
 so shall thy God rejoice over thee.

2

- 6 I have set watchmen, O Jerusalem,
 to watch over thy walls ;

They never hold their peace,
day nor night.

Ye that are Jehovah's remembrancers,
take ye no rest,

- 7 And give Him no rest
until He establish,
Until He make Jerusalem
renowned upon the earth.

3

- 8 Jehovah hath sworn by his right hand,
and by his mighty arm :
Surely I will no more give thy corn
to be food for thy foes,
Nor shall strangers drink thy new wine,
for which thou hast laboured ;
9 But they that garnered the corn shall eat it
and shall praise Jehovah,
And they that gathered the vintage shall drink it
in my holy courts.

§ III

- lxi 10 I will greatly rejoice in Jehovah,
my soul shall be joyful in my God ;
For he hath clothed me with the garments of deliverance,
he hath arrayed me in the robe of victory,
As a bridegroom prepareth himself a turban,
and a bride decketh herself with ornaments.

§ II2

I

- lxii 10 March ye, march ye, through the gates ;
prepare ye the way of the people ;
Bank up, bank up, the causeway,
clear it of stones ;

- Lift up an ensign for the peoples,
 [that they may assemble ;]
 11 Behold, Jehovah hath made proclamation
 unto the end of the earth.

2

- Say ye to the daughter of Zion :
 Behold, thy deliverer cometh ;
 Behold, his reward is with him
 and his recompense before him !
 12 And they shall be called The holy people,
 The redeemed of Jehovah ;
 And thou shalt be called, Sought out,
 A city not forsaken.

§ 113

I

- lxiii 1 Who is this that cometh all crimsoned,
 his garments more red than a vintager ?
 He that is so glorious in his apparel,
 marching in the fullness of his strength ?
 It is I, that am glorious in victory,
 mighty [in power] to save.
 2 Why is thine apparel crimson,
 and thy garments like one that treads the winepress ?

2

- 3 I have trodden the winepress alone
 and of the peoples there was no man with me :
 Yea, I trod them in mine anger,
 and trampled them in my fury.
 Their blood sprinkled my garments,
 and I have stained all my raiment,
 4 For a day of vengeance was in my heart,
 and the year of my redeemed was come.

3

- 5 I looked, but there was no helper,
 and I wondered that there was none to uphold ;
 Therefore mine own arm delivered me,
 and my fury, it upheld me.
- 6 I trod down the peoples in mine anger,
 and crushed them in my fury ;
 I poured out their blood upon the ground,
 and

§ II4

I

- lxiii 7 Jehovah's loving acts will I celebrate,
 Jehovah's deeds of renown,
 According to all that he hath wrought for us—
 Jehovah, rich in goodness—
 That he hath wrought in his compassion,
 and the fullness of his grace.
- 8 For he said : Surely they are my people,
 sons that will not deal falsely ;
 So he became their deliverer
- 9 from all their affliction.

2

- No messenger nor angel,
 but his own presence delivered them ;
 In his love and in his pity
 he redeemed them,
 And lifted them up and carried them
 all the days of old.
- 10 But they were perverse,
 and grieved his holy spirit ;
 So he was turned to be their enemy,
 and himself fought against them.

3

- 11 Then Israel remembered the days of old,
 the years of past ages [saying :]

Where is he that brought up out of the sea
the shepherd of his flock ?

Where is he that put his holy spirit
in the midst of his people ?

12 That sent his own glorious arm
at the right hand of Moses ?

That divided the waters before them,
to make himself an everlasting name ?

4

13 He led them through the depths,
so that they stumbled not,

Like a horse in the pasture-land,

14 like cattle that go down into the valley.

[He led his people like sheep,
the spirit of Jehovah guided them.

[As a shepherd feedeth his flock,]
so thou didst lead thy people,

To make thyself a glorious name.

§ 115

I

lxiii 15 Look down from heaven and behold
from thy holy and glorious habitation.

Where are thy zeal and thy might,
the voice of thy yearning and compassion ?

16 Though Abraham knoweth us not,
and Israel doth not regard us,

Thou, O Jehovah, art our father,
our redeemer from everlasting is thy name.

2

17 O Jehovah, why dost thou make us to err from thy ways,
and hardenest our hearts, that we fear thee not ?

Return for thy servants' sake,
for the tribes of thine inheritance.

- 18 Why have the godless dishonoured thy temple,
and our oppressors profaned thy sanctuary ?
19 We are become as they over whom thou never barest rule,
as they that were not called by thy name.

3

- lxiv 1 Oh that thou wouldest rend the heavens, and come down,
that the mountains might quake at thy presence,
2 As when fire kindleth the brushwood,
and the fire causeth the water to boil !
To make thy name known to thine adversaries,
that the nations may tremble at thy presence,
3 When thou doest terrible things which we looked not for,
which from of old men have not heard.

4

- 4 Yea, [the ear] hath not heard,
and the eye hath not seen,
[The works and wonderful deeds]
which thou doest for them that wait upon thee.
5 [Oh that] thou wouldest be gracious unto them that do right,
and remember thy ways !
Yet behold, thou wast wroth, and we sinned,
wroth at our doings, and we were guilty.

5

- 6 We all became like the unclean,
and our righteous deeds like filthy rags,
We all faded away like a leaf,
our guilt carried us away, like the wind.
7 There was none that called on thy name,
that stirred up himself to take hold of thee :
For thou hiddest thy face from us,
and didst give us up into the power of our sins.

6

- 8 But now, O Jehovah, thou art our father,
 We are the clay and thou art our potter :
 and we are all the work of thine hands ;
- 9 Be not wroth very sore, O Jehovah,
 neither remember iniquity for ever :
 Behold, look, we beseech thee,
 for we are all thy people.

§ II6

- lxv 1 I was ready to answer those that asked not,
 to give oracles to those that sought them not :
 I said, Behold, here am I,
 to a people that calleth not on my name.
- 2 I spread out my hands all the day
 to an unruly [and disobedient] people,
 Which walk in a way that is not good,
 after their own devices.
- 3 To a people which provoke me
 to my face continually,
 Sacrificing in gardens
 and burning incense upon tiles.
- 4 To men that sit in the graves,
 and spend the night in caves,
 That eat the flesh of swine,
 and unclean broth is in their vessels ;
- 5 To men that say : Stand by thyself,
 come not near me, lest I make thee taboo !
 These are a smoke in my nostrils,
 a fire that burneth continually.
- 6 Behold, it is written before me ;
 I will not keep silence unless I have requited
- 7 Their iniquities and their fathers' together,
 saith [the Lord] Jehovah,

Who have burned incense upon the mountains,
 and blasphemed me upon the hills ;
 I will measure out their recompense upon their heads,
 and [will pay it] into their bosom.

§ 117

I

lxv 8 Thus saith Jehovah :

As the new wine is found in the cluster,
 and one saith : Destroy it not, for a blessing is in it :
 So will I do for my servants' sake
 that I may not destroy them all.

9 And I will bring forth a seed out of Jacob,
 and from Judah the possessor of my mountains.

And my chosen shall possess [the land],
 and my servants shall dwell therein,

10 And Sharon shall be a pasture for flocks,
 and the valley of Achor a place for herds to lie in.

2

11 But ye that have forsaken Jehovah,
 and forgotten my holy mountain,
 That prepare a table for Fortune,
 and pour out mingled wine for Destiny,

12 I will destine you for the sword,
 and ye shall all bow down to the slaughter ;
 Because when I called ye did not answer,
 when I spake ye did not hear,
 And ye did that which was evil in mine eyes,
 and chose that in which I delighted not.

§ 118

I

lxv 13 Therefore thus saith
 the Lord Jehovah :

Behold, my servants shall eat,
 but ye shall be hungry ;
 Behold, my servants shall drink,
 but ye shall be thirsty ;
 Behold, my servants shall rejoice,
 but ye shall be ashamed.

2

- 14 Behold, my servants shall exult
 for gladness of heart,
 But ye shall cry for sorrow of heart,
 and for breaking of spirit.
- 15 And behold, ye shall leave your name
 for my chosen to curse by.¹
 But as for my servants, [they] shall be called
 by another name.
- 16 He who blesseth himself in the earth shall bless himself
 by the God of faithfulness ;
 And he that sweareth in the earth shall swear
 by the God of faithfulness ;
 For the former troubles are forgotten
 and are hid from mine eyes ;
- 17 For, behold, I create new heavens
 and a new earth.

4

- The former things shall not be remembered,
 nor come into mind,
- 18 But men shall rejoice and exult for ever
 over that which I create ;
 For, behold, I create Jerusalem an exultation,
 and her people a rejoicing.
- 19 And I will exult in Jerusalem,
 and rejoice in my people.

¹ Cf. Gen. xlviii. 20.

5

- The voice of weeping shall no more be heard in her,
 nor the voice of crying ;
 20 No more shall there come from thence
 an infant of a few days,
 Nor an old man that hath not fulfilled
 the days of his life ;
 For the youngest shall die
 an hundred years old.

§ 119

1

- lxv 21 They shall build houses, and inhabit them ;
 they shall plant vineyards, and eat the fruit of them ;
 22 They shall not build, and another inhabit,
 they shall not plant, and another eat.

2

- For as the days of a tree shall be the days of my people,
 and my chosen shall long enjoy the work of their hands.
 23 They shall not labour in vain,
 nor bring forth children for calamity ;

3

- For they are the seed of Jehovah's blessed,
 and their offspring with them.
 24 Before they call I will answer,
 while they are yet speaking I will hear.

4

- 25 The wolf and the lamb shall feed together,
 and the lion shall eat straw like the ox ;
 They shall not hurt nor destroy
 in all my holy mountain, saith Jehovah.

§ 120

I

lxvi 1 Thus saith Jehovah : Heaven is my throne,
and the earth is my footstool.
Where then will ye build me an house,
and where is the place of my habitation ?

2

2 For all these things, mine hand hath made,
and so all this is mine, saith Jehovah.
But I look upon him that is poor,
and is contrite, and trembleth at my word.

3

3 He that killeth an ox is as he that slayeth a man ;
he that sacrificeth a lamb as he that strangleth a dog :
He that offereth an oblation, [as he that offereth] swine's
blood ;
he that burneth frankincense, as he that blesseth an
idol.

4

As they have pleasure in their own ways,
and their soul delighteth in their abominations,
4 So will I have pleasure in their disasters,
and bring upon them what they feared.

5

Because when I called none did answer,
when I spake they did not hear ;
But they did that which was evil in mine eyes,
and chose that wherein I had no pleasure.

§ 121

I

lxvi 5 Hear the word of Jehovah,
ye that tremble at his word :

Your brethren, that hate you,
that

They that persecute you for my name's sake, have said :

'Let Jehovah manifest his glory,

That we may see your joy' :

but they shall be put to shame.

6 Hark ! a noise of tumult from the city !

Hark ! from the Temple it comes !

Hark ! Jehovah rendereth

full recompense to his enemies !

2

7 [But she], before she travailed,
hath brought forth [a child] :

Before her pains came

she was delivered of a son.

8 Who hath heard of such a thing,

who hath seen the like ?

Was ever the people of a land brought forth
in a single day ?

Or was a nation ever born
in a moment ?

Yet as soon as Zion travailed
she brought forth her children.

3

9 Shall I bring to the birth and not cause to bring forth ?
saith Jehovah,

Or shall I cause to bring forth and then shut the womb ?
saith your God.

10 Rejoice with Jerusalem, and be glad for her,
all ye that love her !

Exult for joy with her,
all ye that mourn over her !

11 That ye may suck and be satisfied
with the breasts of her consolations ;

That ye may drink deep, with delight,
from her abundant breast.

§ 122

I

lxvi 12 For thus saith Jehovah :
Behold, I turn toward her
Prosperity like a full stream,
and the wealth of the nations like a river.
Her offspring shall be borne in the arms,
and dandled upon the knees.

2

13 As one whom his mother comforteth
so will I comfort you.
14 Ye shall see it, and your heart shall rejoice,
and your bones shall flourish like the grass ;
And Jehovah's hand shall be manifested upon his servants,
and his indignation upon his enemies.

3

15 For, behold, Jehovah will come in fire,
and his chariots shall be like the whirlwind ;
To render his anger with burning heat,
and his rebuke with flames of fire.
16 For with fire will Jehovah hold judgment,
and with his sword, upon all flesh.

4

17 Behold, they that sanctify and purify themselves,
to go into the gardens behind their leader,
That eat the flesh of swine,
and of the vermin and of the mouse,
18 Their works and their thoughts
shall come to an end together, saith Jehovah.

§ 123

- lxvi 18 And I will come and gather together
all nations and tongues,
And they shall come and see my glory,
19 and I will shew a sign among them.
And I will send their fugitives
to the far-off countries,
Which have not heard my fame,
neither have seen my glory.
They will shew forth my glory among the nations,
20 and bring all your brethren from all nations,
As an oblation unto Jehovah, to my holy mountain,
even to Jerusalem, saith Jehovah,
Just as the Israelites bring their oblation
in a clean vessel to the house of Jehovah.
21 And some of them also will I take
to be Levite priests, saith Jehovah.
22 For even as the new heavens
and the new earth, which I will make,
Will remain before me, saith Jehovah,
so shall your seed and your name remain.

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