THE MESSIANISM OF THE BOOK OF ISAIAH

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Many scholars of the conservative school, and especially those not influenced by present day criticism, believe that the prophet Isaiah in his Messianic messages referred directly to Jesus the Christ or His kingdom.

In the book of Isaiah about forty-six passages are made to refer to the Christ: His advent, His divinity, His human generation, His fore-rummer, His nativity and early years, His mission and office, His ministry and preaching, His miracles, His spiritual graces, His rejection by his countrymen, His relation to the Gentiles, His persecutions, insults, buffetings, and scourgings, His vicarious sufferings, and the patience with which he bore them, His burial with the rich, and His second advent are all set forth. This interpretation, however, is made only by removing the passages from the body of the writings in which they are found embedded, and by applying them to conditions and times far remote from the present, to which the context clearly refers. Such an interpretation is a violation of the principles of exegesis and cannot stand.

It is not to be understood that many of these sublime traits of character were not fulfilled in the person of Christ. This parallelism in some instances of prediction and fulfilment seems at first thought to be miraculous. It ceases to be so, however, when it is understood that it is not due to the prophet's ability to read the future with respect to the
coming of the personal Christ, and the nature of His character, but the capacity which was found in the life and character of Christ to carry all the divine character-trait of which the prophet could conceive and proclaim. Hence this paper will not deal with all these isolated passages, except in a general way and in so far as they are related to the chief messianic sections of the book.

It can easily be seen in the study of Hebrew history that the prophet held the most exalted and most powerful position among his countrymen. He was the interpreter of Jehovah's will both in religion and politics. He was a preacher of righteousness, and moral and political reformer. He was identified with the various social classes and political parties of his day, and was a potent factor in the enforcement of legislation. He was interested also in international affairs and often preached international peace. This exalted position of the prophet, and the power and influence which he exerted could never have obtained had he been an "abstract personality, living apart from men and speaking oracles which had their only significance in and for the future." His message was always applicable to the age in which he lived, and delivered to the people with whom he associated. Therefore to comprehend the prophet's message it is necessary to know the religious and political conditions of his age, and, rightly to interpret his message, it is necessary to study him from an historical standpoint, for historical events furnished the need of and the inspiration for his prophecies.
In the prophecies of the great writing prophets and especially in Isaiah, among dark and foreboding messages of woe and warnings of destruction to the nation morally and politically corrupt, invaded by enemies, and seemingly about to be utterly made waste, there are interspersed optimistic outlooks and glorious vistas of Israel's future greatness. This conception, that Israel would finally triumph and would have a glorious national existence in the future, is what may be called the Messianism of the prophets. Dean Matthews defines it thus:

It is that fixed social belief among the Jewish people that Jehovah would deliver Israel, erect it into a glorious empire to which a conquered world would be subject. It sometimes, indeed frequently, involved the hope of a personal king - the Messiah, the anointed one of God - but such an element is far less essential than is implied by the term. The central and ever present element of the Messianic hope was that of a Jehovah-guided deliverance, and the establishment of a kingdom that would be world-wide in its power. The king was but an accessory and might not figure except by implication in one's hope for the nation's future."

(Matthews "Mess. Hope, N.T., p. 3.")

The Messianic idea seems to have been a development among the prophets. It probably grew out of a deep feeling of national patriotism based upon the abrahamic promise, and found its first historical setting in the glorious reigns of David and Solomon. The division of Solomon's kingdom furnished an occasion to the early prophets Elijah and Elisha to proclaim the sin of idolatry as the cause of division and to urge higher ideals, but Messianism is almost entirely wanting in their prophecies. The calamities that threatened Israel, the oppression
of the poor, the moral corruption that existed during the reign of Jeroboam II, furnished texts for Amos's preaching, which was composed mostly of awful woes, dark and gloomy, with but few illuminations of the Messianic hope occurring here and there. These same horrible conditions in the nation's life furnish the setting of Hosea's prophecies, but Hosea being of a more optimistic temperament and having the Messianic hope more highly developed in his mind, paints pictures of peace and prosperity which will come to the "remnant", that will break with foreign alliances, give up heathen idols and return to Jehovah.

Schooled by the awful disasters and miseries that came to both kingdoms by the hands of Tiglath-pileser III, Shalmaneser IV, Sargon and Sennacherib, Isaiah carrying forward the Messianic ideal, unfolded to Judah an international policy, religious and political in character, that promised deliverance and prosperity, under a divinely appointed king.


A remnant will survive each successive overthrow and become the nucleus of the new kingdom. The Messianic idea is carried to its ultimate conclusion in the mind of the prophet, as recorded in "Second Isaiah," at the time Cyrus actually permitted the "remnant" of Israel in Babylonian exile to return, when he sees Jerusalem and the temple rebuilt and all nations coming and subjecting themselves to Israel and confessing Jehovah as the only true God.

With this conception of Messianic hope in mind, the chief Messianic sections of Isaiah may briefly be considered.

I. THE MESSIANISM OF CHAPTER 1 - XXXIX.

Isaiah, the son of Amos, (Is. 1:1) received his call to the office of prophet in a vision, in the year that king Uzziah died, (6:1-8) and prophesied during the reigns of Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, 740-700 B.C. The book not being arranged in the chronological order of the prophet's works, it is necessary to consider the message of the sixth chapter first.

Immediately following his call, he received from Jehovah his first message (6:9-13), which he is to proclaim to a people morally corrupt, idolatrous, stiffnecked and perverse, (6:9,10). The message is ironical. The nation is exhorted to hear but understand not, to see but perceive not, to make fat their hearts, heavy their ears, blind their eyes. This is to continue until the "cities are wasted and left without inhabitants, the houses without a man and the land is utterly desolate." In the closing verse (thought by some scholars to be a late interpolation, since it is not found in the LXX) appears the first glimpse of Isaiah's doctrine of the "remnant" or the "holy seed" which became from this time a fixed ideal in his preaching. The nation which has become in the prophet's mind so wasted that but a tenth part remains, which "must again pass thru the fire," (C. B. V.) is likened unto a felled oak in whose stump remains the life germ of a new tree. So the ruined Judah contains the "holy seed," the indestructible germ of a new nation.

THE EXALTATION OF ZION, 2:2-4.

The origin of this section is unknown. Practically the same words are found in Micah 4:103, where they seem to fit the context better than in Isaiah's message. Hence it might be inferred that
Isaiah borrowed from Micah. But since Isaiah is the stronger and more original prophet of the two, it is generally supposed that both Micah and Isaiah borrowed the lines from an earlier and unknown prophet. The passage, whether Isaiah's or not, expresses Isaiah's mind and therefore may be considered. The nation is pictured in its final state; ideal in its location, exalted among the nations of the earth and made as conspicuous as a house on the top of a mountain; ideal in its influence, the goal of the pilgrimage of the nations, the center of instruction and the seat of judgment; ideal in its government, a theocracy having Jerusalem for its capitol and Jehovah for its king, whose reign will result in the cessation of wars and the establishment of universal peace.

This gem of the prophet's imagination has never had its complete fulfillment, and it is safe to say that it never will on the earth, for its sublimity transcends all that is physical. If it ever approached its fulfillment, it will be in a spiritual sense when the teachings of Christ dominate universally the minds of men. The exaltation of Christ and His church, however, was not in the mind of the prophet. It was the awful depth of iniquity into which Israel had fallen that engaged his attention and these beautiful lines which were evidently well known and oft repeated, (Micah 4:103; Joel 2:10,) are used by Isaiah as an introduction to one of his greatest sermons (2:1-4:6), that finds its historical setting during the reign of Ahaz, when Judah was morally at her lowest ebb. In the body of the sermon, which is a most scathing condemnation against the nation, Isaiah exposes all her wickedness and predicts that her haughty rulers shall be brought to deepest humiliation, and that her false glory shall be annihilated by the glory of Jehovah in the day
of judgment (2:5-4:1). This picture of the nation in the blackness of its sin-cursed condition and in its coming desolation is highly imaginative; and, to make the picture still darker and the contrast as great as possible between what Israel ought to have been and what she really was and his message effective and keen enough to sting the sleeping conscience of the nation, Isaiah quotes these Messianic lines to point Israel to her true mission to the world and to present to her a picture of her true glory.

REDEEMED ISRAEL, 4:2-6.

In his characteristic manner Isaiah chooses the great sermon as he opened it with a gleam of hope. He sees a vision of an ideal religious community living in a land of great fertility of soil, producing luxurious fruits (vs. 2), whose inhabitants are the "holy" survivors of a great catastrophe purified from sin (vs. 14) and enjoying the overshadowing and protecting presence of Jehovah (vs. 5, 6). The branch mentioned in verse two is thought by many scholars to refer to the Messiah because it is used in that sense elsewhere (Jer. 23:5; 33:15; Zac. 3:8; 6:12). It cannot from the context be so interpreted. In the first place, it is better translated "the growth of Jehovah", in the second place it is paralleled in the next clause by "the fruit of the land," which clearly refers to the rich products of the soil as Jehovah's reward to the "remnant" of Judah that remains true to him. Luxuriant vegetation is a metaphor common to a great number of Messianic sections, and is used to represent the prosperity of Jehovah's people. The appropriateness of such a conclusion is evident. It would strengthen those who were faithful to Jehovah and furnish an incentive to others to break with sin and idolatry and join the ranks
of the "remnant".

THE CHILD IMMANUEL, 7:10-18.

This section, aside from the sentiment carried in the name "Immanuel" is not considered by most modern scholars as Messianic, but because of the traditional interpretation which made it one of the strongest Messianic passages, it will be considered. From a careful study of the context as it is related to historical events, the prophecy seems to be one of despair rather than of hope. Rezin, king of Syria, and Pekah, king of Israel, formed an alliance against Ahaz, king of Judah, (7:1; II Chron. 28:6), to compel Ahaz to join them in an attack against the king of Assyria, who was threatening to invade Syria and Israel. Ahaz is greatly terrified (7:2) and is seeking help from the king of Assyria (II Chron. 28:16, 20, 21) when Isaiah meets him and tries to comfort him by a prediction that the alliance against Judah will fail (Is. 7:408), and, to prove the truth of his prediction, he urges the disbelieving Ahaz to ask a sign of God. With an assumption of piety Ahaz refuses to put God to a test, whereupon Isaiah gave him a sign (7:14-17) a virgin (which meant a woman either married or not) shall conceive and bear a son and shall call his name Immanuel and before the child reaches the years of discretion the two kings whom he fears will be overthrown. Following this prophecy one is given just as severe against Judah. The condition seems about as follows: Judah had long boasted of the protection of Jehovah, and often in times of great calamity, proclaimed declarations such as, "Immanuel - God is with us," and it became very common for parents to give to their infant sons such names, for example, "Elisha - God is Saviour,"
"Eleazer - God is helper," "Joshua - Jehovah saves," "Isaiah - Jehovah is helper," Isaiah's son "Shear - jashub a remnant shall return." So in this time of distress there were evidently those who believed that the nation would be saved and proclaimed, "Immanuel - God is with us," and Isaiah in giving the sign to Ahaz made use of this significant and well known saying in order to impress his prediction upon the mind of skeptical Ahaz. This sign is often made to refer to the miraculous birth of Christ, but to look at the prophecy correctly the mind must be entirely disengaged from the birth of Christ for nothing could be further removed from the prophet's mind than to make an event of eight centuries distant in the future, a sign to a disbelieving king, of things which from the context, are soon to take place. Isaiah had warned Ahaz not to make an alliance with Assyria, but to trust to Jehovah. Ahaz is stubborn and will not listen to the prophet's counsel, so the sign is given to prove to Ahaz and the nation that the prophet's political advice were from Jehovah. If Isaiah really expected the Messiah to come in his day, as he evidently did (9:6,7; 11:1-9), still there is nothing miraculous in the story as many have thought. The Hebrew word "Almah," translated "virgin" (7:14), does not simply mean a virgin in the sense in which it is used in English or an unmarried woman which is usually expressed by a different word, "Bethulah," (Gen. 24:10; Lev. 21:3; Deut. 22:19, etc.) but means a young woman, married or unmarried, of an age to be a mother (Prov. 30:19; Cat. 6:9). If the woman were a virgin there is nothing in the text or context to indicate that the child might not have a natural father. Finally, the mother who has been by so many commentators unduly magnified,
the child and its name are not the chief features of the sign, but are only implications in the narration of the signal story. The chief point of the story, that constitutes the real sign, is that the prediction of the destruction of Ephraim and Syria (vs. 16) and the affliction of Judah (vs. 15,17) will come to pass before enough time has elapsed for the child to reach years of discretion (vs. 10). The Messianic element then is secondary and incidental and is found only in the name Immanuel, which any mother (*), living in the dark days of Ahaz, might give to her son as a monument of the current idea and of her hope that Jehovah would be with his people.

(*) NOTE. Critics are greatly divided as to who this Almah may have been. Jewish scholars of an early day made it refer to some woman in the harem of Ahaz. Some modern scholars, especially Thirtle, hold that the mother of Hezekiah was meant and account for the chronological difficulty of II Kings 16:2-18:2 by showing how uncertain are the numerical statements of the Bible and especially chronology. Rushi, Abenezra, Jewish critics, and Schultz a German critic fit the reference to the wife of Isaiah, but Is. 7:3 denies this, as she could not be called Almah because she was already a mother. The most plausible explanation is advanced by Meier, supported by Hoffman, Kuhler, Weir, Adeney, Whitehouse and others who hold that Almah referred to a personification of the royal line of David or the Zion community from which the ideal ruler is to come after Judah has recovered from the Assyrian invasion (9:1-5; 11:1-9).

In the eighth chapter Isaiah presents a dark picture of despair and affliction which has been brought upon Israel and Judah by the mighty Assyrian king, Tigrath-pileser III. Damascus has been overthrown, the provinces of Israel taken, her king slain, Judah over-run, many of her cities laid waste, the inhabitants of Jerusalem imprisoned within her walls, reduced to want and appealing to the weak and helpless Ahaz for protection. In the midst of this despair and gloom Isaiah promises light to those who were sitting in deepest shadows. Instead of the destruction that seemed inevitable, will come a multiplication of their forces; instead of sorrow, rejoicing; instead of tyranny and oppression, freedom and peace; all this will come with the coming of the new-born king, whose names are to be "Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace," the increase of whose government and peace will be endless, whose throne will be that of David. This passage is thought to be the result of the prophet's contrasting in his mind Israel's coming king with the mighty invader, Tigrath-pileser, for this great king is said to have been a wonderful counselor, a hero god or godlike in his heroism, and he also could easily be called the father of booty, since the Hebrew word permits of this translation, (See also Gen. 49:27; Is. 33:23; Ap. 3:8, Orelli). Hence in this critical hour of the nation's history, to make his message strengthen and console the people, the prophet gives to Israel's coming king and deliverer these attributes found in the great king whom they so much dreaded, but unlike Tigrath-pileser, the prince of war, he is to be the Prince of Peace.

This section presents again the advent of the Messianic king. The idea and the figure used is the same as those used in 6:13. Just as the "holy seed" will spring up and bring forth a new Israel from the stump of the national tree that has been felled, so in this section a "branch", the new king, will grow out of the decayed family roots of David which will bear the fruits of wisdom and understanding, counsel and might, knowledge and fear of Jehovah, righteous judgment and equity of reproof. As a result of such a reign the prophet sees the people enjoying wonderful peace and quietude and describes it allegorically as follows: "And the wolf shall lie down with the lamb; the leopard with the kid; the calf, the young lion and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them." This message is thought to have been given just before the invasion of Sennacherib, king of Assyria. In the previous chapter the prophet predicted the coming and the final defeat of the Assyrians. "Tho they are lofty as great trees, their boughs will be lopped off." At the same time Israel will be greatly mutilated but a "remnant" will survive the hardships escape the Assyrian sword, and return to Jehovah (10:20-25).

The purpose for which the Messianic picture was given was to strengthen and encourage Judah for the siege and to hold up before her an ideal for which to strive. It is not definitely known who the king referred to, but many scholars, and especially Thirtle, hold that he was Hezekiah.
This prophecy was given to Judah at a time when Northern Israel was reeling with dissipation and drunkenness and verging upon their awful destruction and captivity which came in 722 B.C. Israel, instead of trusting in Jehovah for strength to withstand the Assyrians, made a secret alliance with Egypt (28:15 cf. 29:15; 30:2 ff; 31: ff.) and was boasting of its independence of Jehovah's protection (28:15). Judah also was morally corrupt and had, thought not to as great an extent as northern Israel, lost faith in Jehovah and was trusting to worldly power for protection, namely, Assyria, from whom she received little or no protection and to whom she paid heavy tribute. The message having the wickedness and infidelity of northern Israel as its object lesson, came at an opportune time and with great force. The prophet speaks first of northern Israel, "Woe to the crown of pride to the drunkards of Ephraim whose glorious beauty is a fading flower," (28:1) The message proceeds graphically to describe the drunken debauchery in which people, priest and prophet were living (28:7,8). The prophet sees redemption thru the teaching of "knowledge" and "understanding" (28:9a) but holds out no hope for Israel because there are none to teach save the babes "drawn from the breasts of their mothers" (28:9b). For this wantonness he predicts their destruction (28:1-4). Then the prophet, turning his rebuke against the haughty rulers of Jerusalem, says: "Wherefore hear the word of Jehovah, ye scoffers, that rule the people in Jerusalem," and concludes by saying: "Therefore thus saith the Lord Jehovah, "Behold I have laid (founded) in Zion a stone, a touchstone, a cornerstone precious, in founding well founded. Whoever trusts shall not need to flee." (orelli). Much discussion was centered on the "corner-stone." Some critics do not consider this section as Messianic at all, others make it refer
to the Messiah who is to come in the future and they explain
the past tense of the verb by the use of the prophetic perfect,
which permits the prophet in his imagination to go beyond a future
event, look back upon it as an historian, and describe it as having
come to pass. From the context the last view seems hardly probable.
Such use of the Hebrew verb is allowable and is often employed,
but it is extremely improbable that the prophet, in describing an
event that is soon to take place, as the coming invasion and captivity
of northern Israel by Shalmanezer in the present section, in which
the future tense is used throughout, would describe an incident
related to the coming event, and embodied in the narration of that
event, as if it has already happened, by the use of the past tense
of the verb. It would seem then, that the stone laid in Zion which
is to be a testing stone, might refer very naturally and reasonably
to Jehovah's Torah which he had long ago established in Zion (32:5,6).
This stone of moral and religious law, this stone of truth, was,
and is still, God's touchstone with which he tests all moral and
religious truths. The prophet closes by saying that by this stone
Jehovah will lay "judgment to the lie and righteousness to the
plummet," uncover their lies (vs. 17), and annul their covenants
with worldly powers (vs. 18).

The Messianism that is found, if there be any found, in
this section, is that Jehovah's moral and righteous laws and counsels
are as substantial as a corner stone and will never fail those who
live by them and put their trust in Jehovah, and is expressed in the
clause "Whoever trusts shall not need to flee" (Hebrew text", or "he
who trusts shall not by any means be ashamed" (LXX text")
This most beautiful of all Isaiah's discourses found its historical setting in the reign of Hezekiah, and during the Assyrian invasion under Sennacherib, 701 B.C., (II Kings 18:13 ff. Is. 36 and 37) when nearly all the cities of Judah were in ruin, 200,000 people taken captive, the inhabitants of Jerusalem shut within her walls reduced to want, while the besieging invaders demanded for the cities' surrender. In this night hour of the nation's life, the great prophet, with infinite faith in Jehovah as his refuge and deliverer, and with an inspired imagination, sees for Judah the dawning of a new day, whose sun at his Zenith, will shine upon a glorious empire with far extending borders (vs. 13,17) with ideal citizens walking "righteously", speaking "uprightly," despising the "gain of oppressions", removing their "hands from the holding of bribes," stopping their "ears from the hearing of blood," and "closing their eyes from the seeing of evil" (v. 15), with Jerusalem as its ideal capital, "a quiet habitation," a city of great "solemnity" that will endure forever "v. 20) and with a beautiful and glorious ruler (vs. 17,21) even Jehovah, who will act as judge, lawgiver, king and saviour, (v. 21).

"This prophecy is possibly the best example of Isaiah's custom to select an occasion of great distress and deep despair to utter his most hopeful and encouraging predictions. In this way he was enabled not only to present valuable Messianic announcements at a time when they would be most gladly heard and receive greatest attention, but also when they would serve to strengthen faith, encourage loyalty, and inspire greater righteousness among the chosen people."

(Lockhart's Messianic Message, p. 180.)

The picture is ideal and the prophet expected its ful-
filment after Judah was freed from Assyrian oppression, it never came and the world still awaits its realization in a spiritual sense when the "knowledge of Jehovah covers the earth as the waters cover the sea," and when the "kingdoms of the world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ." (Rev. 11:15).

II. THE MESSIANISM OF CHAPTERS XL - LXVI.

Since the date and authorship of the so-called "Second Isaiah" (chapters XL - LXVI) will largely determine the nature of its Messianism, it is necessary in a discussion from an historical standpoint to consider these questions first.

There are two general views held: First, that this body of prophecy refers to the exiled Jews in the Babylonian captivity, to their return to Jerusalem, and the restoration of the old landmarks. Those who hold to this position are divided as to its author and date of writing. Some conservative critics believe that Isaiah, near the close of the reign of Hezekiah, looked forward one hundred and fifty years, seeing what would take place during that time in Judah's history, wrote these chapters and left them for the Jews to read while they were in exile, to furnish encouragement and inspiration for their return to their fatherland. This is unlike the Isaiah in the first part of the book where he had a message that fit the people, the time and the occasion. Quite a number of conservative and most all the more liberal scholars, give this body of prophecy an historical setting in the dark days of Babylonian captivity and make a great unknown prophet who lived in that age its author.
The second view held by some scholars, chiefly Thirtle, is that this body of prophecy belongs to Isaiah and is applicable to the last years of Hezekiah's reign. The desolation mentioned in these chapters is made to refer to the forty-six cities of Judah which were destroyed by the Assyrians; the exiles and their restoration mentioned in this section are the two hundred thousand captives carried away by Sennacherib, whom the prophet sees returning. The "servant" passages, which run throughout the chapters and make it one continuous body of prophecy, according to Thirtle, refer to Hezekiah. The servant's suffering (chapter LIII) is made to refer to Hezekiah's sickness and expected death; the servant's triumph over death and exaltation (chapter LIII) to Hezekiah's wonderful recovery, restoration to power, and the long, peaceful and prosperous reign which followed. This view has but few advocates and is hard to maintain.

The strongest arguments are with the view that these chapters were written by an unknown prophet near the close of the Babylonian captivity, and that they contain a message for the discouraged exiles. Many internal evidences to establish this view have in recent years been set forth by a great number of modern scholars who are practically agreed as to the following points taken principally from Driver's Isaiah, pp. 180-215.

Jerusalem is referred to as deserted and in ruins, (Is. 44:20; 63:18; 64:10 ff.). The exiles have experienced and are experiencing sufferings from the Chaldeans, (42:25; 27:6; 42:22, 52:5). The prophet speaks of a return from this captivity, (40:2; 46:13; 48:20). Jerusalem's desolation is one of long standing, (58: 12; 61:4). Those addressed by the prophet are not men of Jerusalem in the days of "First Isaiah", but exiles with whom the prophet is closely associated,
and with whom he passionately pleads (40: 43:10; 48:8; 50:10 ff; 51:6, 12 ff; 58:3 ff).

These passages show conclusively that the prophet was not writing for a distant age and people, but, like a true prophet, was exerting his whole strength to make an impression upon the hearts of those who heard him. The very first words of this section, "Comfort ye, comfort ye, my people," are the passionate words of a great preacher, and not at all the words of an author writing in the retirement of his chamber.

Cyrus, who founded the Persian Empire, 538 B.C., is twice mentioned by name (44:28; 46:1).

Jehovah, the God of the Israelites, and Bel and Nebi, gods of the Babylonians, are represented as having controversy with each other (XLVI).

Isaiah's name is found repeatedly in the first thirty-nine chapters, but nowhere mentioned in the last twenty-seven chapters. Isaiah's greatest prophecies in the first section of the book found their occasion in the circumstances surrounding him. He constantly betrayed his interest in persons and nations, Ahaz, Hezekiah, Pekah, Rezin, Judah, Ephraim, Syria and Assyria are all mentioned but are not spoken of in the latter part of the book. It is not reasonable to suppose that he would add to his messages in "first Isaiah," which were so full of meaning for his times, twenty-seven chapters wholly alienated from current events. It is said also that the two sections are unlike in language and style. Phrases which Isaiah used repeatedly in the first section are absent in chapters XL - LXVI. Conversely, expressions found in chapters XL - LXVI and not found in chapters 1 - XXXIX. There are thirty-one phrases, as pointed
out by Dr. Driver, used by Isaiah in the first section of the book, not one of which occurs in XL - LXVI. Thirteen of these phrases are peculiar to Isaiah alone. Twenty-nine phrases are peculiar to the author of chapters XL - LXVI which nowhere occur in chapters I - XXXIX.

Theology and thought are different. In the first chapters the Messianic king is prominent in the Messianic section, in the latter chapters the servant of Jehovah is the prominent character. In second Isaiah a broader view of the Jews' mission is found and the universality of their religion appears. But this will suffice.

JEHOVAH'S SERVANT.

1. THE RESTORATION OF JEHOVAH'S SERVANT, XL - XLVIII. (*)

In this section comforting promises are made to the afflicted exiles (40:1-11) that Jehovah the omnipotent God (40:12-17; 26-31), the incomparable God (40:18-26), the merciful God (40:10,11; 41:10-19) will protect (41:11-16), provide for 41:17-18) and release Israel, his servant (41:8,9), from captivity by raising up the great Syrus, king of Persia, to overthrow Babylon and set at liberty the enslaved exiles (41:2,3; 44:28; 45:1-4; II Chron. 36:20,22,23). Jehovah's ideal servant is introduced as the object of his choice and delight (41:8,9; 40:1-7), endowed with a divine spirit for the accomplishment of great deeds of mercy (40:7) and called to set forth Jehovah's law and judgment to all the nations of earth (40:11,4).
The prophet descends from Jehovah's ideal servant to Israel his actual servant (42:18-25, cf. 41:8,9; 43:10; 44:1,2,21; 45:4; 48:20; 29:3), "blind", because he refused to see, "deaf" because he refused to hear, ignorant because he refused to be taught Jehovah's will and as a consequence, overwhelmed by the calamities of the exile. Yet Jehovah is to be with him (43:1-7) as his God and Savior. Israel is still His servant, beloved of Him (vs. 4), ransomed at the cost of the nations (43:3,4), His scattered hosts gathered from the ends of the earth (43:5,6) and graciously led from Babylon back to Canaan, upon a specially prepared and well watered highway thru the great Syrian desert (43:18-21, cf. 20:3,4).
(*) NOTE. (Servant passages). Some reasons for making the servant passages in chapters XL - LXVI refer to Israel or the faithful Israelites who constituted the core of the nation may be given:

Israel as a nation is definitely called Jehovah's servant in the following passages: 41:8, 9; 43:101 44:1, 2, 21; 45:4, 48:20; 49:3. 42:1, 19 assigns no name to the servant but the context vs. 22-25 shows that Israel is referred to.

44:26 might mean any servant of Jehovah as a prophet, or from ver. 21, the nation, but cannot refer to any particular servant.

From 49:103 it seems evident that 49:5, 6, 7 refer to the faithful remnant of Israel in exile that is to be the means of restoring the entire nation.

52:13-53:12 is particular and personal, but from its subject matter and method of presentation it clearly refers again to the faithful element of the nation.

In 54:17; 56:6; 63:17; 65:9, 13-15; 66:4 the Israelites are definitely called Jehovah's servants.
2. THE WORK AND CHARACTER OF JEHOVAH'S SERVANT, XLIX - LIII. (*)

There seems to be a well developed line of thought running thru these latter chapters. The main themes of the first section, XL - XLVIII, are, consolation, the divinity of Jehovah, and the restoration with an introduction of the servant. In the second division of this prophecy, XLIIX - LIII, there is an evident advance in the development. The references to Cyrus, to the fall of Babylon, to the superiority of Jehovah over the heathen gods, disappear. But one great conception is carried over and forms a link between the two sections of prophecy. This is the work and character of Jehovah's servant.

(*) NOTE. Most all scholars divide this body of prophecy into three divisions. The traditional method, because of a re-occurring phrase (48:22) made three equal divisions of it in nine chapters each. Most modern scholars are agreed upon the first division XL - XLVIII, which deals with the restoration with an introduction of the servant, but many differ as to the placing of the point between the second and third divisions. This paper closes the second division with chapter LIII, because from LIV - LXVI the messages are addressed no longer to Jehovah's servant, but to Jehovah's servants who seem to be thought of as citizens in a restored Zion.
In 29:1-12 Israel is represented as Jehovah's servant (vs. 3), soliloquizing about his high calling (vs. 1), the mission intrusted to him by Jehovah (vs. 5-6) and his sense of disappointment at the fruitlessness of his labor (vs. 4). But he affirms that Jehovah has removed his shortcomings (vs. 8) and will make him an instrument of revelation to the world (vs. 5,7,8).

Then follows another Messianic section (50:1-52:12) with fresh promises to Israel of her near approaching return. The servant of Jehovah again soliloquizes (50:4-9) upon his resignation to divine will, upon the persecution which he is willing to bear in the discharge of his duties (vs. 5,6) and of the final triumph of his cause by the help of Jehovah (vs. 7-9). Then follows an urgent appeal (51:10-12) to the despondent exiles to awake and throw off their fears and renew their confidence in Jehovah. The prophet in three passionate and jubilant apostrophes urges Israel to remember her father Abraham and the promises made to him, and reminds her that Jehovah will keep his promises and will yet comfort Zion and make her waste places bloom as the "Garden of the Lord" (1-3); directs the hope of Israel toward an universal and eternal salvation that Jehovah will establish (4-6) and encourages Israel by reminding her that the reproaches and revilings of men are of short duration, but Jehovah's salvation will last forever (7,8).

The last and greatest of the servant passages is found in 52:12-53:12 and gives an account of the sorrows, deep humiliation, vicarious sufferings and death of Jehovah's servant, and a glimpse of his future glory when the people of the world have come to recognize his true worth and mission. This is the most highly imaginative passage in the servant sections. If the servant of Jehovah in this section, as in practically all the former sections, refers to Israel,
its being individualized will have to be attributed to the flight of the prophet's poetic imagination. Since the whole section is a poem and a splendid one too, the central figure in the poetic picture could easily have been personified and treated as it is.

In an interpretation of the poem, however, from this point of view the servant cannot be made to represent the entire nation, but only the true Israel, the faithful "remnant", the holy core of the nation, throughout its history up until the prophet in the exile could see Israel's restoration. With this in mind the two sets of pronouns are easily explained, the singular pronouns "he, his, him," referring to the faithful "remnant" as the servant; the plural pronouns "we, our, us" to the unfaithful ones of Israel. The death in ver. 9 can hardly refer to the death of the entire "remnant", but since the word "death" in the Hebrew text is in the plural number, the interpretation will permit many of the faithful to have suffered and died for the transgressions of the unfaithful, which was certainly true. The Prologue (52:13-15 is Messianic. The verbs used are in the future tense, Jehovah's servant is to be prudent, act wisely and be exalted (13) and as the nations were astonished at his marred visage (14) which was once so glorious, so will he astonish them in the future, by the great things they shall see and hear from him (15).

The body of the poem 53:1-9 is a reminiscence of the trials and sufferings already endured by Jehovah's faithful servant. The verbs used are in the past tense, the natural form for such a purpose. Those who would make these verses refer to the Christ cannot explain the use of the past tense of the verbs by means of the "prophet perfect", for the following reasons. The whole section 52:13-53:12 clearly has reference to the sufferings and exaltation of but one
object, namely, the servant of Jehovah and if vs. 1-10a, which are bounded on both sides by three verses, Messianic in subject matter, and using the natural forms of the future tense, are thought of as referring to future events as 52:13-15 and 53:10b-12 clearly do, why should the prophet cast vs. 1-10a in the past and not keep the future tense thruout? Then to make 53:1-10a refer to the servant's past history and 52:13-15: 53:10b-12 refer to his coming restoration and exaltation, will make the whole passage harmonize with the other Messianic passages of this section of Isaiah, and will give it a vital meaning for the exiles for whom it was written.
3. JEHOVAH'S SERVANT LIVING IN THE RESTORED ZION,

LIV - LXVI.

The thought of the whole section seems to advance another step in this division. The division opens with a fresh promise of the restoration. Zion is represented as a woman, now desolate and bereaved, but soon to be clothed in beautiful garments, and comforted by a reunion with her divine husband and the return of her children (chapter LIV). Only once more is Jehovah's ideal servant mentioned (b:1:1-3, cf. 42:3,7; 49:9), while the true Israelites, those who have confessed and turned from their sins and are now ready to trust in Jehovah for deliverance, are introduced repeatedly as "my servants", (54:7; 56:8; 63:19; 65:8,9, 13-15; 66:14), soon to live in the restored and glorified Zion. These faithful Israelites, servants of Jehovah, and "also foreigners that join themselves to Jehovah to be His servants" (56:6), will live in Zion, undisturbed by thoughts of oppression and war (54:17). All apostates will be condemned and destroyed (55:10-15), but the faithful servants will be protected, prospered and brought into a quiet life of peace (65:9,9,13,25) by Jehovah their Father (63:16).

In conclusion, it may be said that whether it was the remnant, the holy seed, the spiritual kernel of the nation that survived successive waves of judgment and calamity, to spring up and blossom out into a perfect kingdom of God; whether it was the Messiah, "the anointed One of God", the Immanuel, "God with us," the ideal king on the throne of David ruling over an universal and eternal domain, with wisdom, knowledge, power, righteousness and equity, bringing prosperity, happiness and peace to all his subjects alike; or whether it was the exiled servant of Jehovah, springing
up as a tender plant from the dry ground, uncomely, despised and rejected of men, acquainted with grief, wounded for the transgressions of others, led dumb as a lamb to the slaughter, and then triumphantly exalted and made the world's Savior; whether remnant, king, servant, the ideal is Messianic and the great central figure, that stands in the foreground of the prophetic literature so imaginatively painted by the prophet, is the Hebrew nation, called by Jehovah to carry to every people of earth the true monotheistic religion. This is Messianism.
THE MESSIANISM OF THE BOOK OF ISAIAH.

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